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THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER 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.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Queensland Branch

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I remind you all that the annual general meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of the Queensland branch will be held in the Legislative Assembly chamber at 1 pm today, and I would thank those of you who are able to attend.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Local Government Reform

Miss Simpson, from 60 petitioners, requesting the House to pro-rogate the Government of Queensland over the forced amalgamation of local councils and to repeal the recent Amalgamation of Local Councils Bill.

Cash Call

Ms Male, from 68 petitioners, requesting the House to abandon the proposed legislative changes that may stop Cash Call micro lenders from providing short-term cash loans.

Sarina State School, Pedestrian Crossings

Mr Malone, from 548 petitioners, requesting the House to assign a crossing supervisor to both pedestrian crossings used by Sarina State School students to cross the Bruce Highway.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Health (Mr Robertson)—

- Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition (859-07) presented by Mr Hobbs from 46 petitioners regarding the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

Acting Minister for Health (Mr Welford)—

- Report by the Acting Minister for Health (Mr Welford), pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, in relation to the Health Regulation 1996

Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Mickel)—

- QLeave Annual Report 2006-07
- Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority Annual Report 2006-07
- WorkCover Queensland Annual Report 2006-07
- WorkCover Queensland Statement of Corporate Intent 2007-2008

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled—

Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Mickel)—

- WorkCover Queensland Annual Report 2006-07
- WorkCover Queensland Statement of Corporate Intent 2007-2008
- QLeave Annual Report 2006-07
- Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority Annual Report 2006-07

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Traveston Crossing Dam, EIS

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.34 am): I am very pleased this morning to inform the House that the construction of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam has taken a significant step forward with today's release of the environmental impact statement for public comment. On behalf of the 2.2 million people in south-east Queensland, this government has held its nerve in the face of a concerted and disgraceful campaign of misinformation by our opponents, particularly National Party senators who purport to represent people right across Queensland. Now, after almost a year of studies, research, modelling and consultation, we have a 1,600 page, five-volume EIS that delivers a scientific investigation of the project. I encourage anybody with a genuine interest to read the EIS and to come to an informed decision based on fact and fact alone. The EIS has clearly determined that Traveston Crossing is not only an appropriate site for a dam; the EIS establishes that Traveston Crossing is the best site in south-east Queensland for a dam. The scientific assessment contained in the EIS shows that the catchment is first class—and didn't we see that in August this year—and it will provide a secure water supply. In fact—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Again, we hear opposition from the National Party and the Liberal Party to new dams in south-east Queensland. In fact, the latest modelling determined that the dam would have filled four times since 2003, the most recent resulting from heavy falls in August-September. So this dam would have filled four times. Four times the Traveston Crossing Dam would have filled since 2003! Would it be full today? You bet it would! Importantly, the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation, the firm lauded by Nationals Senator Barnaby Joyce, rates the risk of leakage as insignificant. The EIS was required to assess reasonable alternatives to the project such as desalination, recycling and other dam sites. What this work has found is that no other alternative could match Traveston Crossing for either price or reliability. In fact, economists from Monash University and Marsden Jacob confirmed that Traveston Crossing Dam would cost between \$318 million and \$1 billion less than the proposed alternatives.

However, projects of this magnitude very clearly have impacts. Those impacts must be managed, and the government has never shirked in that regard. The EIS process requires impacts to be identified and mitigation strategies to be outlined. Queensland Water Infrastructure, the company building the dam, engaged the CSIRO, Australia's most respected scientific organisation, to develop guiding principles to manage environmental, social and economic concerns. I have already detailed last week in the House the proposed establishment of a \$35 million freshwater species conservation centre in response to environmental concerns about species such as the Queensland lungfish, the Mary River cod and the Mary River turtle.

Other environmental initiatives include the establishment of native timber plantations to offset greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operation of the dam. Socially, measures will ensure the revitalisation of Mary Valley communities, most importantly the township of Kandanga, including financial assistance to create a new community and sporting hub. Economically, more than 400 local businesses have registered to supply goods and services during the construction of the dam, providing a much-needed shot in the arm to the region. Some 400 local businesses all want a piece of this action, and we will do everything in our power to make sure that the dam is built as locally as possible. In all, these documents outline 288 separate strategies to mitigate the possible effects of the dam. The process from here is that the EIS will be available for public input for six weeks before that feedback is included in further rigorous assessments by the Coordinator-General, who may request a supplementary report. Only then will it be forwarded to the federal environment minister for assessment and final approval.

This work is rigorous. It is based on the best available science and engineering advice. It demonstrates that this dam is being located in the best site in south-east Queensland for a dam. It continues to have the support of this government, despite the concerted opposition from the Queensland National Party and the Queensland Liberal Party.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, before you go on with your next ministerial statement I advise members that I have given approval for a photographer from the *Courier-Mail* to take photographs in the chamber this morning in accordance with the guidelines of the House.

Queensland on Show Work and Play Expo

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.39 am): Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the best display of Queensland's work and lifestyle opportunities ever seen south of the border at the Queensland on Show Work and Play Expo in Sydney on Saturday, 6 October. Sydney was not the only target for the skills raid. The Queensland government also participated in the same expo in Melbourne in August this year.

Our population growth rate remains higher than the national average and the highest of all Australian states. Last year, 20,351 people left Victoria for Queensland, second only to the 50,488 people who left New South Wales to do the same. People are voting with their feet. Queensland is experiencing the effects of the skills shortage being felt throughout Australia. We are determined to entice people to move to our great state—people who have the skills that we need to provide our services and build our projects. We have many jobs on offer across a wide range of fields, such as health, education, construction, engineering, mining, tourism and hospitality. More than 10,000 southerners visited the Queensland on Show expos in Melbourne and Sydney, most looking to relocate for work opportunities or a change in lifestyle.

From Melbourne, research revealed that most visitors were interested in relocating to south-east Queensland, but not far behind were our state's attractive regions: Mackay, Wide Bay-Burnett, Cairns and far-north Queensland. From the research conducted, 66 per cent of visitors to the Melbourne expo said that they planned to move to Queensland in the next six to 18 months, further adding to the figures that show that 1,500 people move to Queensland each week. The most predominant occupations looked at by visitors included education and teaching, mining, nursing, construction and engineering. Approximately 480 genuine leads were taken by Queensland government representatives from 24 agencies. Queensland government staff are now progressing those leads.

The expos initiative also demonstrates our commitment to support Queensland businesses, with Energex, Virgin Blue, Ergon Energy, Ausenco, many regional councils and a host of others attending, many of them for the third time. Health exhibitors reported strong inquiries from well-qualified professionals. More than 150 healthcare and medical professionals preregistered to attend the Sydney show. Some other examples include Technology One—a Queensland IT company—which secured a new programmer from the Melbourne show. The Mackay Health Service District is in discussions with an anaesthetist, a number of nurses, an occupational therapist and a therapy assistant. St Andrew's in Toowoomba is the same, with registered nurses, several GPs and an obstetrics specialist all involved in interviews as I speak.

But the interest in the expo was not just from people who lived in Sydney or Melbourne. Forty-year-old Andrew Thomas got out of his Adelaide bed at 4.15 am on the Friday of the last expo to catch a flight to Sydney. His brother had read about the expo in an education magazine and sent him a text message with the details. He is presently in the print industry but he and his wife Linda are looking for a sea change and they flew to Sydney to see what was on offer.

Aside from these tangible outcomes, the expos also raised awareness of the many benefits of working and living in Queensland. Repeat exhibitors told me that the contacts made at the expo often lead to follow-ups many months later. They believe that it is a good investment in the recruitment of very highly trained staff.

Breast Cancer

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.43 am): This morning I want to make mention of a special community initiative that is being promoted by the member for Aspley, Bonny Barry. On Monday I will join the member at Marchant Park in Aspley to support those who are experiencing breast cancer. Mini-fields of Women is a visual display consisting of pink silhouettes symbolising the 13,000 Australian women diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Breast cancer is the second most common cause of death among Queensland women. Approximately 2,200 Queensland women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year of which, tragically, about 450 will die.

Last month I launched a \$1.5 million campaign to increase the number of Queensland women aged between 50 and 69 years having regular screening against breast cancer. Despite significant research, the causes of breast cancer remain unknown and having a breast screen every two years is the best way of detecting any early signs of breast cancer. The BreastScreen Queensland campaign, featuring prominent Australian broadcaster Jana Wendt, is designed to be a critical reminder to busy Queensland women of the importance of having a breast screen every two years.

Current figures show that just over half—just 58 per cent—of Queensland women aged in this age group of 50 to 69 years are having regular breast screens. This is of real concern. Breast screening is available. It remains the best-known way of detecting breast cancer early. It is free of charge. We need to see more women in that age group having checks on a regular basis.

Many in our community have been touched by the impact of breast cancer. I encourage everyone to do all they can to help find a cure for this disease and provide support to victims.

Poet-in-Residence Program; Durcan, Mr P

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.45 am): The Poet-in-Residence program enables a visiting poet to stay in Queensland for around six weeks to share their work with local audiences. It is a program that benefits Queensland writers and poets by opening up new links and partnerships with the international literary community. Paul Durcan is our third poet-in-residence. From August to October this year he will reside in Queensland as the 2007 Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts Poet-in-Residence.

Paul Durcan is the recipient of a number of poetry awards and I am sure he will be the future recipient of many more. He is an author of more than two dozen published collections of poetry, including *A Snail in My Prime* and *Daddy, Daddy*, which won the Whitbread Prize. His most recent collections of poetry are *Cries of an Irish Caveman: New Poems*, published in 2001, and *The Art of Life*, which was published in 2004. Paul is currently the Irish Professor of Poetry at Trinity College in Dublin.

During his residency, in addition to appearances at the Queensland Poetry Festival and the Brisbane Writers Festival, Paul has presented readings around the state. I am sure the member for Gregory will be pleased to know that that included travelling by train for a reading to Longreach. Paul actually travelled all the way on the train with a former member of this House, Matt Foley—a feat for which I am sure he deserves a further award.

Last week I had the great pleasure of meeting Paul Durcan, who is a very warm and engaging man. I was introduced to Paul by a former poet of this House, Matt Foley. However, I am pleased to advise members that Matt did not take the opportunity to regale me with any of his own efforts on that occasion.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms BLIGH: For those members who have ever heard Matt recite poetry, they may well have heard him recite the *Kilfenora Teaboy*, which is, of course, one of Paul Durcan's greatest and best-known poems.

I was, however, fortunate enough to hear some of Paul's work and I have to say that I was very moved by the depth of his talent. He has a new book of poetry called the *Laughter of Mothers*, which is about to be published. He gave me an early copy for which I am very grateful.

As someone who opens my newspaper every morning with a small degree of trepidation, this small and very short poem caught my eye. It is called *Newsdesk*.

The bad news is that I buy a newspaper every day.

The good news is that I do not read it.

I do not mean any offence to any newspaper journalists who might be sitting in the gallery, but I am sure they would understand how that might have tickled some of us who open our newspapers, as I said, with some trepidation every morning.

It was a great pleasure to meet Paul Durcan. He truly is a great man of letters and I wish him every success in the future. I am very pleased this morning to reaffirm our government's support for the Poet-in-Residence program.

Mr SPEAKER: I say to the Premier that it would be quite pertinent to send to the former member for Yeronga that statement in the *Hansard*, including the 'Hear, hear' this morning.

Before calling the Deputy Premier, I note that the Deputy Premier held up a sign before. I would like to reiterate my ruling in regard to a member holding up a sign, like a newspaper headline. Individual members can use a newspaper or a chart individually, but I remind the House of my previous ruling in that regard.

Traveston Crossing Dam, EIS

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.49 am): I will comply with that, Mr Speaker. The Traveston Crossing Dam EIS released today for a six-week review period places on public record comprehensive engineering and environmental studies—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I beg your pardon? So individual members are able to hold it up when they are speaking on something but—

Mr Seeney: You just get on with what you are doing.

Mr LUCAS: I am happy to hold it up again for the member if he does not like it. The EIS has been prepared by SKM with support from Australia's top environmental—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Parliamentary Rugby won, now that the member asks for it. I got mine—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I am happy to answer that.

Ms Bligh: On the Champs Elysees?

Mr LUCAS: Did I get it in France? No, I got mine at Ballymore. Thank you for asking me. I do appreciate that. I got mine at Ballymore. How did I get there? I drove there. The EIS has been prepared by SKM with support from Australia's top environmental, engineering and economic consultants. In fact, the main 11 engineers—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I know we have an interest in people's ties but let us hear the Deputy Premier's statement.

Mr LUCAS: I will have to see what other ties I can wear—one for the member for Southern Downs and a few others.

The EIS has been prepared by SKM with support from Australia's top environmental, engineering and economic consultants. In fact, the main 11 engineers who worked on the project have a combined 400 years of experience on 350 dam and weir projects in over 25 countries.

The EIS clearly identifies that this dam would provide a reliable source of water for 2.2 million people who reside in south-east Queensland. Importantly, it also acknowledges the environmental impacts that a project of this size will have within the region. It provides a comprehensive suite of commitments—288 in total—and sustainable mitigation measures to address those matters raised in the terms of reference, including matters of national environmental significance.

The EIS highlights that the dam, which is 207 kilometres from the mouth of the river, will have no impact on the World Heritage properties on Fraser Island, and that there will be no physical or natural sediment disturbance to the Great Sandy Straits. In fact, there will be lower sediment levels at the mouth of the Mary River.

There are also some environmental initiatives that I would like to draw to the House's attention. Last week we announced one of the key sustainability initiatives that will be delivered with the Traveston Crossing Dam project, a \$35 million freshwater species centre operated by the University of Queensland. The centre's primary role will be field research into the breeding and habitat requirements of the turtle, the cod and the lungfish and then implementation of key findings—not just at Traveston Crossing Dam but also at other water storages throughout south-east Queensland. But it is important to note that this centre is only one section of a multi-tiered approach to protecting the significant species, with a number of initiatives detailed in the EIS that are aimed at improving the status of the species and providing suitability of habitat beyond the project footprint.

QWI, in consultation with the CSIRO, has proposed a number of sustainable initiatives that go beyond the requirements for the project. In brief summary, these include revitalisation of the Kandanga township, including a multi-sport and recreational centre, with MOUs signed with a number of local organisations, including the Kandanga Bowls Club and Friends of Kandanga. The development of a native timber and honey tree plantation has been proposed, which could be greater than 2,000 hectares, helping to deliver a better than carbon neutral profile for the project. There are also business opportunities for local suppliers. Already over 520 businesses, 80 per cent of them local, have signed up for opportunities associated with the project. An amount of \$2.7 million has been proposed for the DPI's Food and Fibre Futures Strategy to assist farmers in the area. There has also been outdoor recreational facilities proposed, including extensive horse, walking and mountain bike tracks, canoe trails and picnic and boat access.

From today, the five volumes of the EIS and supporting data will be made available for the public to review in 19 locations across south-east Queensland. Queensland Water Infrastructure will distribute a newsletter to over 100,000 people through local papers, post offices and letterbox drops, with an EIS information pack to be provided to over 2,000 stakeholders. An advertisement will appear in this weekend's newspapers telling people where they can view the EIS and how they can have their say.

There is no do-nothing option when it comes to securing south-east Queensland's water supply. This dam is a key element of securing Queensland's future. Our water grid is about security and it is about balance. That is why, even after the construction of the Traveston Crossing Dam, the use of recycled water would be higher than any major city in Australia and our use of desalination would be the highest contribution to any capital city urban supply in Australia.

Submissions to the Coordinator-General on the EIS will close on Monday, 3 December. I encourage all those with an interest in this project to read the EIS and participate in the assessment process.

Numeracy

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (9.54 am): As Kevin Rudd prepares to roll out his education revolution, here in Queensland we are continuing to roll out our own education revolution. Our government wants every child to develop excellent numeracy and literacy skills during their time at school. Already we have launched a number of initiatives to build the basic building blocks of a quality education such as the Healthy Choices tuckshop menus, the Smart Moves Physical Activity Program and the literacy framework that we launched previously. Today I am pleased to announce to the House that I am releasing another document titled Numeracy: Lifelong Confidence with Mathematics—Framework for Action 2007-10. We are committing \$1.5 million in this year's budget to drive numeracy initiatives and give our schools and teachers the skills and resources needed to improve numeracy levels.

We recognise that numeracy, like literacy, is a key pillar of learning and an essential part of our school curriculum. This document is an action plan to improve numeracy education in Queensland state schools. It sets out a range of actions—32 in all—that will improve numeracy education and give our students an even better start in life. Numeracy is about students having the confidence to choose to use mathematics skills they learn at school during their everyday life as well as the classroom. It is not just about mathematics skills.

Numeracy skills apply right across the school curriculum. For example, numeracy is used in science class when students independently interpret graphical information. It is also used in woodwork when students confidently measure a piece of wood or in cooking when a student halves a recipe. So every classroom teacher has a role to play in helping students develop numeracy skills.

Through this framework, Queensland state school teachers will be supported to develop students' numeracy skills. We are developing a focused professional development strategy and support materials for teachers to enhance their knowledge and their skills. We will implement this strategy throughout our state school system and identify and promote ready access by teachers to the quality resources and research materials that are available. We are also working with colleagues at a national level to ensure our work is consistent with the national approach to numeracy education.

This is a comprehensive framework that ensures that our aims and strategies for improving numeracy education in our schools will strengthen the quality of schooling throughout our state. We want all students to have the confidence to apply mathematics in their everyday lives, and this framework for action is the road map we will use and report against to achieve that objective.

Queensland Economy

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (9.56 am): Yesterday I touched on the latest assessment of the Queensland economy by independent private forecaster Access Economics. That forecast reaffirms the strength of our current economic conditions and the outlook for the Queensland economy.

In its 2007 September quarter business outlook report, Access argues that the Queensland economy 'is gathering pace once more'. This follows the March quarter Queensland state accounts, which already showed significant momentum in the state economy. According to these accounts, economic growth in Queensland accelerated to 5.9 per cent in trend terms for the first three quarters of 2006-07—more than double the 2.8 per cent in the rest of Australia. While Access is forecasting 5.4 per cent as the final figure for 2006-07, it is even more bullish than our own forecasts for 2007-08, with a predicted growth rate of 6.5 per cent. The final figure of 2006-07 should be available to the House at the next sitting. Access highlighted the great strength of the 21st century Queensland economy. Our modern economy is much more than a one-trick pony. As Access said, 'Queensland comes blessed with a great set of comparative advantages across a range of industries.'

Access also noted the positive outlook for the resources sector, arguing that, 'The output lift is here and has a way to go.' This affirms our strategy when investing in infrastructure, reinvesting the proceeds of the wealth being generated in the economy in future productive capacity. Members will recall the very significant investment of over \$654 million in rolling stock and other infrastructure for Queensland Rail that was announced last week by the Premier as we as a government seek to position ourselves ahead of the game to lock in future growth opportunities.

With strong global demand, coupled with significant business and public sector investment in productive capacity, Access argues—and I agree—that 'Queensland ... remains a beaut bet for the longer term.'

Lexmark Indy

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport) (10.00 am): The Lexmark Indy 300 is today revving into action after last night's official welcome reception hosted by the Premier on the Gold Coast.

Today is students' day, which will see over 10,000 schoolchildren from primary and secondary schools across south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales flock trackside to get a taste of the action. The Department of Sport and Recreation has a number of activities for the students to take part in at the Kanga Cages where they can also get some handy tips about healthy and active living.

Yesterday I informed the House of the 1,700 volunteers who are taking part in this year's Indy. Of course, there are also a lot of paid employees working hard for their keep who are contributing to the great success of the four-day event. The Lexmark Indy 300 is organised by more than 20 full-time staff on a 12-month basis and more than 60 companies are contracted to supply services throughout the event, with the total number of employees close to 1,000. More than 650 trained casual staff are employed in hospitality roles, servicing more than 140 corporate facilities throughout the Indy precinct.

The event is, of course, a huge drawcard for more than 350 national and international companies who pour into the Gold Coast to take part in the festivities, bringing with them great financial interests for the Queensland economy. As the Premier said yesterday, the economic impact of the Indy on this state has been valued at at least \$60 million. The biggest industry to benefit is the hospitality industry, with over 173 visitor nights generated from the event in previous years. All those visitors fill the hotels, cafes and restaurants making this one of the busiest times of the year on the Gold Coast. Spectators in all areas of the precinct are expected to consume around 28,000 ice-creams, 6,000 meat pies, over 10,000 hamburgers, more than 12,000 hot dogs and 42,000 serves of hot chips.

There are more than 140 entries for this year's Indy events, including as many as 36 Queensland drivers, and each champ car and V8 car driver has a team of as many as 50 people all striving to see their car get the chequered flag. The efforts of all these people involved in the Indy will ensure that this year will be bigger and better than ever and Queensland will continue to enjoy the benefits of this premier sporting event for years to come.

Lexmark Indy; National Firefighter Championships

Hon. N ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.01 am): Additional paramedics and crews from the SES will be trackside each day of the Lexmark Indy this weekend. SES volunteers will provide assistance with first aid, crowd control and transport. Paramedics will be available to treat spectators and race drivers alike should they require medical assistance. These paramedics are in addition to those rostered to work in the Gold Coast region over the weekend. Last year, 109 patients were treated at the Indy carnival. I am advised that the majority of cases related to blisters and minor foot injuries, sunburn and dehydration. People attending Indy should heed the advice of the Queensland Ambulance Service—that is, drink lots of water, wear light clothing, a hat, sunscreen and comfortable shoes.

I am pleased to confirm that a new Queensland Ambulance Service vehicle will be available for use at the Indy carnival this year. This vehicle is unique for two reasons. Firstly, the vehicle, which is an Argo Avenger, is an eight-wheel, all-terrain, amphibious vehicle that is capable of being deployed in a wide range of environments. Secondly, the \$38,000 vehicle was purchased through the generous financial assistance of the Builders Labourers Federation of Queensland. I acknowledge a generous gesture from a union on behalf of our community. This is the second Queensland Ambulance Service vehicle that has been provided by the Builders Labourers Federation and I thank it for its community spirit and its generosity. Each year the union selects an organisation or community group that it feels deserves a donation to continue delivering services to the community.

On another matter, this weekend five Queensland firefighter crews will be competing in the National Firefighter Championships at Lakes Entrance in Victoria. When these championships were last contested in 2005, they were held at the Gold Coast. Five teams from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service will participate. They are from Wondai, Monto, Atherton, Mount Tamborine and Withcott. I congratulate all of those teams on their selection and I am sure that all members will join me in wishing our fire crews success at these championships.

Crossland, Mr I

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women) (10.03 am): Women around Queensland would have been just as outraged as I was to read the claim in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* that when it comes to politics women simply are not up to it. The National Party candidate for the federal seat of Leichhardt, Ian Crossland, would have lost scores of votes in the far north when he said that a woman could not properly represent the vast electorate. The job, he claimed, was too tough for a woman. What a joke! Mr Crossland's comments prove that there are still people in the National Party who are stuck in the 1950s.

Ms Bligh: They are all stuck there.

Mrs KEECH: I take the Premier's interjection. His comments reveal the National Party as the dinosaurs many of them are. There are obviously those like Mr Crossland who still believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant. For Ian Crossland to suggest that a woman could not represent the constituents of Leichhardt is offensive to women and men. Those of us on this side of the House are proud to be serving the people of Queensland alongside our first female Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh. The people of Australia have the opportunity on 24 November to vote in the nation's first female Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. Women like Qantas chairperson Margaret Jackson, businesswoman Janet Holmes à Court and hundreds more have proven themselves in the corporate jungle.

I am sure that the member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, who serves a massive electorate very well indeed, would have something to say to Mr Crossland. I had wondered how outspoken National Party MP De-Anne Kelly reacted when she read the outrageous claims. Now, thanks to today's *Courier-Mail*, we all know. Her words—

He is so politically incorrect that I am sometimes rendered speechless.

Ms Kelly revealed that Mr Crossland regularly calls her 'the dumb blonde'. So it is probably not surprising that National Party senator Barnaby Joyce and former National Bob Katter found time to support Mr Crossland. I wonder what people like Annie Clarke, the mayor of Burke Shire, former Cook Shire mayor, Fran Seagram, and Cook Shire deputy mayor, Robyn Maxwell, thought of Mr Crossland's outburst. I bet they will not be voting for him on 24 November.

Last Saturday the newest Labor member was voted into the Queensland parliament. Grace Grace, the new member for Brisbane Central, is the 25th female Labor MP in this parliament. There are 25 women out of 59 members in the Labor ranks—that is just over 42 per cent of government members—who have been voted in by electors across Queensland. That is a statistic that we are very proud of.

Export Week

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.06 am): Next week marks the beginning of Export Week 2007. The Queensland government is hosting a number of events to celebrate the important contribution exporters make to our economic performance and to creating more jobs for Queensland. Exporting remains a key driver of Queensland's economy and is responsible for one in five jobs and one in four jobs throughout the regions. That is why, as part of Export Week, our trade commissioners will be hosting 14 regional export seminars throughout the state in order to assist Queensland businesses to sell their products and services to the world.

As part of Export Week, I am pleased to inform the House that South Carolina's Secretary of Commerce, Mr Joe Taylor, will be leading a trade mission to Queensland. This is our sister state's first official trade mission to Queensland and will provide a great opportunity for our local businesses to establish links into the United States market. In addition, the Hon. Don Poyle MP, Minister for Works, Transport and Civil Aviation for Papua New Guinea, has confirmed that he will be visiting Queensland during Export Week to participate in the PNG Pacific Partnership Forum on 25 October.

Export Week will also feature a one-day expo on 24 October targeted at new exporters which will showcase the export services provided by the Queensland government and industry partners. I invite all interested Queensland businesses to attend. New exporters make a key contribution to the state's knowledge-intensive exports. In the five years since 2000-01, Queensland's knowledge-intensive exports have grown by 53 per cent, which is more than double the Australian average.

I am pleased to inform the House that since the launch last year of the Queensland government's new export strategy, 263 businesses have been assisted in becoming new exporters. A highlight of Export Week will again be the Premier's Export Awards, which acknowledge the valuable contribution our exporters are making to the Queensland economy. I am pleased to announce that this year more than 180 businesses have applied for the awards. I take this opportunity to wish all of these Queensland exporters the very best of luck on the night.

Remote Aboriginal Communities, Housing

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.09 am): Today I would like to update the House on two programs currently underway that aim to improve housing in remote Aboriginal communities in Queensland. The first is the Housing Improvement Program managed by the Department of Housing. The program aims to improve maintenance, target upgrades of existing properties, improve management of council wait lists and also provide new houses.

In 2007-08 funding of \$98.2 million is being provided for maintenance and capital works under the Housing Improvement Program to improve social housing in remote Indigenous communities. However, I made it clear that the program would require councils to improve their performance in relation to rent collection, housing allocations and meeting program requirements, and I would not hesitate to withhold funds from councils which did not meet program requirements. In August, notices to remedy breach were served on 19 councils for failing to provide a quarterly report, an annual report or both by the required date. I am pleased to report that 17 of the 19 councils have now complied. Funding for the remaining two councils—Aurukun and Mapoon—has been suspended until the necessary reports are received by the department, and the department is working with these two councils to help them comply.

The second program, the Department of Public Works's planned and responsive maintenance program for Deed of Grant in Trust, or DOGIT, communities, is going from strength to strength. The program started in July 2006 in 34 Indigenous communities in remote areas of the state with the aim of managing maintenance required on more than 3,600 dwellings in these communities. Q-Build is responsible for helping the communities by delivering maintenance works to these dwellings.

Since it started, nearly 32,000 maintenance work orders have been raised. About 7,500 of these are for planned maintenance works. The number of calls to the housing call centre is up by 60 per cent this financial year compared to the same time last year, which shows the program is being supported by the residents and it obviously demonstrates their confidence in it. Looking ahead, more than 1,500 safety switches and smoke alarms will be fitted in DOGIT dwellings as part of the program which improves safety in Indigenous communities.

Mortgage Brokers, Code of Conduct

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.11 am): Last week the media reported a Canberra mortgage broker had been found guilty of unconscionable conduct for writing loans a borrower was unable to repay. The judge found the broker had engaged in misleading and deceptive conduct in writing a \$360,000 loan for a man who clearly could not afford it. This case is a perfect example of the need for a code of conduct for finance brokers. It is estimated around 50 per cent of home loans are negotiated by brokers on behalf of Queenslanders yet there is no regulation. That is why the former fair trading minister, Margaret Keech, announced in May that the government would introduce a new code of conduct to protect Queensland borrowers. This code of conduct will require brokers to meet new standards in dealing with their clients.

The vast majority of brokers operate ethically. However, there is a minority of less scrupulous brokers who do pose problems. Borrowers need to be aware that some brokers may give biased advice because they are paid by certain lenders and may even persuade people to borrow more money to drive up their commissions.

The code of conduct is currently being drafted and it is expected the code will require brokers to provide specified disclosures about costs and services before negotiating a broking agreement with a client; prevent brokers from demanding, receiving or accepting any commission from a client before securing their credit needs; include general behaviour provisions requiring finance brokers to act within the Fair Trading Act 1989; and require brokers to establish and maintain an internal dispute resolution process and inform borrowers of its existence.

This government is moving now to protect Queenslanders because national regulation is not expected to be in place until 2009. We need regulations in place earlier and that is the reason we have moved to draft this code of conduct which will set minimum standards to those proposed nationally. It is expected the code will be introduced early next year. I expect consumers will be happier knowing the brokers they are dealing with will be regulated.

Local Government Reform, Roundtable Meeting

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads and Local Government) (10.13 am): Yesterday I attended an important meeting with peak industry bodies and business representatives about local government reform. This industry roundtable involved representatives from our B4B partners AgForce, the Australian Industry Group, the Queensland Resources Council, the Queensland Farmers Federation and Commerce Queensland. The roundtable was important because the local government sector will be at the forefront of providing economic opportunities for Queensland businesses and industries in the coming decades.

Thanks to this government's strong economic management, we are currently enjoying a period of economic and population growth. This growth brings prosperity and also brings challenges. Furthermore, industry and business will play a key role in meeting these economic challenges.

Since becoming the minister for local government, it has come to my attention that there have been concerns in some quarters about the impact of local government reforms on industry and business. Generally, these concerns are misplaced. I am more interested in promoting recognition that these reforms present opportunities to business as well as to communities and their councils.

I am committed to ensuring that any negative impacts of the reform process are minimised whether they relate to industry and business, communities or council workers. I am also committed to ensuring that we lay the groundwork for communities and industry and business to make the most of the opportunities that will inevitably arise from this process.

I convened the roundtable meeting yesterday to give business and industry an opportunity to raise concerns and get more information about the reforms. By being well informed about the reform process, industry will be in a better position to make the most of any opportunities. The meeting was very positive, with the organisations recognising that the reform process provides an opportunity for councils to move to a regional approach to economic development.

The meeting has also further opened the lines of communication between these peak bodies and the State Transition Committee. All participants have agreed to meet again in February next year to gauge the progress and bring any new issues to the table. This meeting was another important step forward towards our goal of building a stronger system of local government for all Queenslanders.

Water Charges

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.16 am): As water minister, I am concerned about continuing allegations that Queensland irrigators are being forced to pay for water they are not getting due to the drought. The opposition—notably the member for Darling Downs and the member for Warrego—has promoted this misconception in an irresponsible way. SunWater is very conscious of the difficulties its customers are facing during the state's extended drought. It has offered alternative payment plans to customers experiencing financial difficulty. However, SunWater is obliged to ensure that water infrastructure, as opposed to the actual water, is maintained for the future when irrigators will have a good water supply. In doing so, SunWater incurs substantial costs which are recovered through charges to all water entitlement holders.

SunWater again assures me that it does not charge customers for water they are not getting. If any Queensland irrigator believes that this is not true in their case, I would certainly like to hear from them. Customers pay the so-called part A charges for water infrastructure—the storages, channels and pipelines required to provide water. Water infrastructure must be maintained even if no water is flowing. The infrastructure needs to be kept in working order.

Mr Hobbs: You can't keep doing it.

Mr WALLACE: Member for Warrego, I am talking. The opposition has particularly highlighted the case of irrigators in the St George region. One St George irrigator who said he was charged for water he did not get was in fact found to be overwhelmingly paying part A charges—the charges for infrastructure. SunWater operates the St George water supply scheme in accordance with state government pricing policy that says only the ongoing costs of infrastructure services should be recovered. There is no recovery of the original capital investment which provides this service. SunWater informs me that it sets these charges in consultation with customer groups to recover the costs of infrastructure management.

The member for Darling Downs made a hash of the part A issue when he last raised this issue in the House in August. He said that Queensland irrigators could not get assistance from the Queensland government to help them pay part A charges. On the date he said that, 1,000 irrigators had received assistance. I am pleased to inform the House that this figure has now risen to 1,247 irrigators who have benefited under the scheme administered by QRAA.

Electricity Supply

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.19 am): The power supply to regional Queensland is about to get even better for the 600,000-plus customers. Ergon Energy is entering into a multimillion-dollar contract for 3,000 low-voltage regulators to boost its electricity network. These regulators are designed to reduce power surges and maintain a steady voltage to homes and businesses. This will be particularly helpful for businesses that use industrial machinery and other equipment. Ergon advises that it will lead to reduced wait times in fixing voltage problems, lower electricity bills and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is about quality control and will fix issues such as the lights going dim when at other times they go bright.

Low-voltage regulators stabilise the voltage and keep the quality of electricity steady. Customers expect reliable power, and that is the main reason why these low-voltage regulators appeal to Ergon. It trialled the new technology for about six months and achieved excellent results. According to Ergon, the way in which this simple innovation works is better than anything else it has seen. Previously, some voltage problems on the network had been difficult and even impractical to solve by conventional means. The regulators, the size of a briefcase, have been adapted to suit our Queensland climate. Delivery is expected early next year. Ergon plans to install the regulators on power poles in parts of its rural network and in the remote Torres Strait. This is yet another example of the Bligh government delivering better services to people who live and work in regional Queensland.

AusBiotech National Conference

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry) (10.20 am): Starting on Sunday and going through to Wednesday, Brisbane will host the 2007 AusBiotech National Conference. It is the most prestigious biotechnology conference in the Asia-Pacific region. We are expecting about 1,200 participants from some 30 countries including the United States, Italy, Taiwan, Korea, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Some of the world's top scientists will be here as well as business leaders, investors, and legal experts.

With so many influential people attending, this is a tremendous opportunity to showcase Queensland's achievements in biotechnology. Our scientists are working on discoveries that will help all of us not only in Queensland but around the world. To name just a few, we are scouring the ocean for new drugs, developing vaccines to ward off cancer, fighting flu with carbohydrates and helping repair damaged brains.

In terms of opportunities for agriculture and exports, scientists are identifying genes in beef that will make meat tender. Topics on the conference agenda include biofuels, biotechnology in agriculture, developing drugs from the sea, and creating vaccines for global diseases. There will also be advice for scientists on how to get their important discoveries out of the laboratory and into the marketplace. Sessions will cover business establishment and operation, investment and business partnering, and accessing lucrative overseas markets, especially in China and the US. There will be plenty of opportunities for the Australian industry to firm up ties with counterparts from New Zealand, Italy, the US, China and Canada. Among a line-up of prestigious guest speakers is Dr Carol Dahl from the renowned Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Biotechnology is at the heart of our Smart State Strategy. It has the potential to grow our regions by creating new industries in biodiscovery and biofuels and to boost the economic and environmental performance of our traditional industries such as agriculture and mining. Not only that but the research and products it will produce have the capacity to improve the quality and the availability of food and nutrition, reduce our environmental footprint and radically change health care.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to recognise students and teachers from the Peachester State School in the electorate of Glass House, which is represented in this House by Mrs Carolyn Male.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Hon. Al McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (10.23 am): The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service takes very seriously its responsibility to manage the natural estate. Part of that responsibility includes conducting controlled burns in identified areas where there is a potential danger to nearby houses or where there is a need to control undergrowth or invasion of introduced plants species.

In managing fire on its lands, the QPWS places the highest priority on protecting human life. In the last three years the QPWS has carried out planned burns over an area totalling more than 1.7 million hectares of its estate. The QPWS will invest approximately \$5.5 million in 2007-08 to enhance fire management in parks and forests. This includes almost \$1 million on specified projects to enable priority fire safety track works and major hazard reduction burning. In addition, funding will be spent on upgrading and expanding the radio communications network and equipment essential for effective operations and on purchasing personal protective equipment to meet firefighters' safety requirements.

Under its good neighbour policy, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service places an emphasis on working with adjoining landholders, local communities and traditional owners to manage fire on land that it manages and surrounding areas. Ongoing reviews of its operational fire practices ensure that the QPWS maintains capacity to manage fire effectively on its estate. All these actions underscore the importance that the Queensland government places on maintaining a balanced approach to environmental and social aspects of fire management on public lands and maintaining a high state of preparedness for any wildfire outbreak.

Each year annual planned burning programs are reviewed in relation to protection and ecological targets, and an expert panel in consultation with fuel managers sets a new forward program. Most of the bushfires people see are not planned burns but are wildfires caused by lightning strikes and other natural causes or, sadly, deliberately lit sometimes by arsonists. During the 2006 fire year the QPWS responded to 238 wildfires on and adjoining its estate. Of these wildfires, 45 per cent are known to have started off the QPWS estate and at least 32 per cent are believed to be the work of arsonists.

National Fire Ant Eradication Program

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (10.25 am): The National Fire Ant Eradication Program has been very successful in reducing the number of fire ant colonies in south-east Queensland, with approximately 600 colonies detected in 2006-07 compared to an estimated 65,000 colonies in 2001. Initial scientific modelling has indicated that a tail of infestation is to be expected and we will probably continue to find small infestations and colonies until 2009-10. Biosecurity Queensland is currently working with scientists from across Australia to update this modelling to reflect the current state of the program, provide more accurate predictions of the possible eradication tail and to give scientific based milestones to assess progress.

Recently a large number of colonies were detected near Amberley on a rehabilitation area of a coalmine that is no longer actively mining but still operates their coal wash plant for other mines nearby. Delineation surveillance of the surrounding area found a few dense pockets of infestation. One of these pockets is associated with a landfill site and historic movements of infested material to this site may account for all infestation that is currently being detected in this area.

While these detections are of concern, pockets of dense infestation have been detected at various times throughout the program. This pocket of infestation has provided the opportunity to test a new, safe treatment bait. If results seen in the United States with fire ant treatment using this bait can be duplicated, this bait has the potential to reduce the number of treatment applications required and provide significant savings to the program. There has also been recent additional detection of fire ants at Capalaba, Marsden and Mount Gravatt. Each of these consisted of a single colony.

Bait treatment of the Amberley area has begun, and the detection allows for the destruction of the fire ant colonies which will prevent any potential further spread. The detection of these infestations is part of the normal operating cycle of the eradication program. The National Tramp Ant Committee has been advised of these detections. The national committee noted that the recent detections are not program threatening and has reinforced its support of the program.

Indigenous Partnerships Agreement

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth) (10.28 am): Tomorrow, on Friday, 19 October, I will host a ministerial round table in Cairns following on from the historic Indigenous partnerships agreement signed in Yarrabah on 23 July this year. Tomorrow's meeting complies with this government's commitment under the partnership to convene ministerial round tables to check progress, commitments and priorities. Signed by the former Premier, my predecessor Minister Warren Pitt and 17 mayors from Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities, the partnership is about achieving a real change for Indigenous Queenslanders. So tomorrow will be about rolling up our sleeves and getting on with the job.

I will be working with the mayors and CEOs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils to progress the nine priorities identified in the Indigenous partnerships agreement. Among the issues we will be discussing tomorrow are land tenure reform, alcohol and governance. I am very pleased Ministers Craig Wallace and Warren Pitt are joining me tomorrow, and Minister Fraser will be represented by his parliamentary secretary, Julie Attwood.

This level of participation is testimony to the priority given by the Bligh government to building meaningful and effective partnerships with the Indigenous peoples of this state and addressing the challenges and opportunities confronting them. I look forward to working closely with my ministerial colleagues on initiatives to help improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The round table is also about mayors and CEOs sharing their experiences in developing their own local Indigenous partnership agreements. Of special interest will be advice from Mayor Sewter of Mornington Island, where the first local Indigenous partnership agreement has been operating for more than three months. We will work hard to strengthen governance arrangements, support improved service delivery and build capacity within communities. It is important that we continue to work in active partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to help improve the lives of those living in Indigenous communities.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Report

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (10.30 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee which attaches a report by the Parliamentary Commissioner, Mr Alan MacSporran SC.

Tabled paper: Report No. 73—A report on complaints against the Crime and Misconduct Commission made by Cr David Power.

Mr MacSporran's report is on his examination of complaints about the Crime and Misconduct Commission made by former deputy mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Mr David Power.

On 23 May 2006, Mr Power wrote to the committee raising a number of concerns about the CMC's inquiry and report into the Gold Coast City Council's 2004 elections. On 8 June 2007, the PCMC referred Mr Power's complaints to Mr MacSporran. Mr MacSporran reported to the committee on 5 December 2006. He concluded that he is—

Firmly of the view that the actions of the commission were appropriate in all the circumstances.

The committee has deferred the tabling of Mr MacSporran's report until completion of court proceedings involving Mr Power. I commend the report to the House.

Annual Report

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (10.30 am): I also lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Crime Misconduct Committee's annual report for 2006-07.

Tabled paper: Report No.74—Annual Report 2006-07.

The committee's annual report outlines the activities of both the current committee and the committee of the 51st Parliament. As chairman of the committee, I wish to acknowledge the valuable input made by the members of both the current committee and the previous committee and the work of the committee secretariat throughout the year. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Political Advertising

Mr SEENEY (10.31 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the use of Queensland ports infrastructure and the Queensland Ports Authority executives to promote Labor candidates in the federal election campaign, particularly in the seats of Hinkler and Flynn. Garry Parr used the Bundaberg Port Authority wharf and the authority's chairman, Glen Toll, to promote himself as Labor's candidate for Hinkler. The Premier's predecessor gave me an assurance in response to a previous question about Mr Parr that Queensland Emergency Services personnel would be directed not to inappropriately appear in his political advertising. Will the Premier issue the same directive to executives of Queensland's port authorities and ensure that our state owned ports concentrate on meeting export demand rather than promoting Labor candidates in the federal election?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. We have entered into the federal election campaign and I do expect to see this sort of stuff come out about candidates across the state and these sorts of issues bubble up from time to time. I endorse the comments of the previous Premier that no public servant should in any way act in an inappropriate manner that brings the Public Service either into any disrepute or in any way politicises it.

It is, however, a very fine line to walk sometimes. People who join the public sector or who are engaged in a government owned corporation do not relinquish their rights as citizens to participate in a democracy but they do need to do that in a way that, in my view, does not overly or unreasonably or inappropriately politicise or lead the public to the view that the public sector in some way endorses one candidate against another.

I have not seen the material that the honourable member refers to but I am aware that it does exist. I have not had an opportunity to see it. I understand that while there is a photo of the person involved there is not anything in the captions that would identify the person in the capacity that they hold within the government owned corporation and is not an attempt to imply that the government owned corporation in any way endorses a particular candidate.

I note concern that the CEO of the Gladstone Port Authority is being criticised for appearing with a Labor candidate.

Mr Mickel: The Prime Minister visited the Townsville port.

Ms BLIGH: I understand that the CEO of the Gladstone Port Authority also appeared in an ad with Barnaby Joyce. I do not think that anybody could say—

Mr Lucas: All that shows is bad taste.

Ms BLIGH: It either shows demonstrably bad taste or a great deal of confusion. Either way, it certainly does not indicate that this person has acted in a way that is only in support of one candidate.

I take the interjection from the member for Logan, who indicated that the Prime Minister has visited the Townsville port. I endorse candidates and people who aspire to hold government office finding out about the services and industries in their electorates but I do encourage them, and I require public servants, to act appropriately and to walk what is sometimes a fine line as carefully as they can.

These matters are covered, by and large, by codes of conduct for each government department. In light of some of the issues that have been raised, there are grounds for a broader, comprehensive policy that provides guidance directly to people in these circumstances. I have asked the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to work with government agencies to develop a whole-of-government guideline in this regard. I will certainly bring that to the parliament's attention when it has been completed.

Traveston Crossing Dam; Local Government Reform

Mr SEENEY: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's comments earlier this week that she will be campaigning with Kevin Rudd in the lead-up to the federal election. While the Premier is campaigning with Kevin Rudd does she think she might be able to get him to finally tell the voters what his position is on Traveston Dam? Does she think she might be able to get him to finally tell the voters of Queensland what his real position is on this government's forced council amalgamations?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. In relation to the latter part of the question, the position is abundantly clear and has been in the public arena on numerous occasions.

In relation to the Traveston Crossing Dam, my understanding is that Kevin Rudd's position is, by and large, very similar to that of the federal environment minister—that is, if Labor becomes the government of Australia it will exercise its judgement, its powers and its obligations appropriately under the legislation that governs this matter from a federal perspective. It will look at the environmental impact statement, which has proceeded full steam ahead this year and is now in the public arena for comment, and make a judgement.

I know that Kevin Rudd and his team understand the need for water security for south-east Queensland. It was Kevin Rudd who delivered the money for the recycled pipeline. Having spent six months—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South, I am on my feet. I have said order and I expect you to comply.

Ms BLIGH: What short memories they have. I spent six months knocking at the door of the federal government—six months trying to get John Howard to deliver one dollar to the people of south-east Queensland. Kevin Rudd stood with me at Kangaroo Point one Sunday morning about six months ago and rolled up his sleeves and said, 'A Rudd government will deliver these dollars.' Within weeks John Howard and Malcolm Turnbull finally coughed up the dollars.

What I do know and what I have absolute confidence about after discussions with Kevin on the issue of the Traveston Crossing Dam—

Mr Johnson: Premier, have you answered the bit about amalgamations?

Ms BLIGH: I did. The member should have listened when I first stood up. In relation to Traveston Crossing Dam, what I know for absolute certain is that Kevin Rudd and his government, if the people of Australia put them in that position, will decide it on the basis of science, not on the basis of hocus-pocus like Ron Boswell is proposing.

Let me go back to the position of those opposite on the Traveston Crossing Dam. They have opposed the Traveston Crossing Dam from day one. They had the opportunity last Saturday to go to the people of Brisbane and say, 'What do you think about the Traveston Crossing Dam? Give us your views on the Traveston Crossing Dam.' They could have made the Traveston Crossing Dam the central issue of the Brisbane Central by-election but they could only do that with a candidate. They can only be on the field if they have a player on field and they squibbed it.

Traveston Crossing Dam

Ms MALE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, the Traveston Crossing Dam is not without its detractors and, to be fair, not without its supporters, especially amongst south-east Queensland's two million residents. It has also been the subject of a politically motivated Senate inquiry. Could the Premier advise the House of how serious south-east Queensland dam opponents really are?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and for her interest in ensuring that the 2.2 million Australians who live in the fastest growing part of our country get the water that they need. As we all know, Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble—Ron Boswell and Barnaby Joyce—have been riding around the countryside desperately trying to whip up fear and concern—

Mr Seeneey: That's a bit childish. Come on! Grow up. You have an important job now. Grow up a bit!

Government members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: When I said Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble, those opposite knew exactly who I was talking about, didn't they? The politically motivated campaign and the Senate inquiry into this issue is in my view probably one of the most disgraceful misuses of the resources of the Senate and one of the most false and misleading campaigns I have ever seen with two senators going into the Mary Valley

and offering false hope—offering hope that the Senate inquiry might make some difference when it never, ever could. But I am pleased to note that not everybody on that side of politics opposes the dam. I have actually discovered and unearthed a very quiet and silent press release from July last year. It says—

Liberal member commends Beattie government on dam announcement

The federal member for Ryan, Michael Johnson MP, today announced his support for the Queensland government's proposal to construct a dam at Traveston.

A government member interjected.

Ms BLIGH: That is right; he knows what the people want. The issue of water requires strong leadership from all tiers of government. Well, he will not find any of that in the state branch! The press release continues—

I want to take the unusual step for a federal Liberal MP and actually congratulate the Queensland Premier on taking action to address Queensland's future water needs.

He says—

Water is liquid gold and it should be an issue that is beyond partisan politics.

I thank the federal member for his support for the dam. Of course we know that not everybody supports it; the member for Gympie has been a vocal advocate against the dam. But of course he has actually only been a vocal advocate when he is not in this House. I had a look at question time over the last 12 months and what did I find? Despite the fact that there have been more than 300 non-government questions put to the government since the beginning of this year, only one of them has come from the member for Gympie on the Traveston Crossing Dam.

Mr Gibson: Were you here yesterday? Look at the speeches!

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Those opposite protest that he has made some speeches. But we all know why they will not let him get a question up: they will not let him get a question up because they know that the people of south-east Queensland drink and vote.

Green Vehicles Concession

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the member for Burdekin's bill defeated last night by the Premier's government voting along party lines. This bill would have—

Mr Mickel: And you didn't!

Dr FLEGG: No, we did not defeat it; it was you guys who defeated it!

Honourable members interjected.

Dr FLEGG: This bill would have encouraged more Queenslanders to buy green cars by making them more affordable at only a modest cost to state finances. Even the Premier's federal leader said on radio earlier this year that he supported state governments offering registration fee relief for hybrid vehicles. Why did the Premier, when she had the opportunity to take the politics out of the climate change debate and have bipartisan support, choose to play party politics?

Ms BLIGH: I understand that the question is about a debate that was held last night in which the government's position was outlined by the speakers in that debate.

Mr Seeney: Only one!

Ms BLIGH: We only needed one to put the government's position. I am very happy to take this question, because we actually did make some changes to stamp duty for vehicles in this year's budget.

Dr Flegg: You put it up!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Moggill, you will be warned next time you interject. You ask questions and you have continually interjected after you have asked them. I would just ask you to be quiet while the Premier answers the question.

Mr Rickuss: The more efficient LandCruisers are dearer!

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just say to the member for Lockyer that a hand over the mouth does not actually work here. We still hear you.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We are wasting the time that has been allocated to answer the question.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As the member for Moggill well knows, this matter was canvassed widely as part of the budget debate earlier this year and the government's position on providing incentives for people to buy smaller cylinder cars and green and efficient vehicles was put comprehensively.

Mr Cripps: It's penalties, not incentives.

Ms BLIGH: There were increases put on stamp duty for those buying larger cylinder vehicles that use—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I just say to members on my left that you had the chance to be involved in the debate on this last night. The Leader of the Liberal Party has asked the Premier a question. It is now over to the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. So that matter I think has been canvassed very widely. It did not have the support—

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burnett!

Ms BLIGH: They are just incapable of it, aren't they, Mr Speaker? Those issues were canvassed very widely. Again, I stand by the decision that this government made to put substantial funds into the mental health budget which, in my view, was crying out in need. But it beggars belief to hear the new green extremist from Moggill talking in here about climate change when he comes from a party that federally has lagged the world in acceptance of this issue. These are the people who opposed our laws on tree clearing. These are the people who are out trying to stop public transport infrastructure being built on the Gold Coast. These are the people who have never supported our programs on ethanol.

Mr Wallace: Opposed wild rivers.

Ms BLIGH: These are the people who opposed wild rivers.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: They did not have any trouble with the first three accusations! The credibility of members of the Queensland National Party and their friends who lob up to them time and time again in the Liberal Party on the environment is the worst in Australia. Coming in here trying to trumpet green credentials is just implausible.

Federal Election

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Premier. Could the Premier please outline the importance of strong Commonwealth-state relations in helping drive the Queensland economy?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. We are now in the midst formally of a federal election campaign and in just over five weeks time the Queensland electorate will have a unique opportunity. Queenslanders are faced with the prospect and the real possibility of putting a Queenslander in charge of the country. It has been almost a century since Andrew Fisher became a Queensland Prime Minister of Australia. The last time that a Queenslander had an opportunity to be elected to the prime ministership—

Mr Lucas: They wanted Joh for Canberra. That was a great success!

Ms BLIGH: Yes. There was an opportunity many years ago with the Joh for PM campaign, but I think the campaign we are facing this time is of a much different order. What we have as a state at a very critical point in our development is an opportunity to see the political centre of gravity in this country move to Queensland. If we have the Prime Minister and the Treasurer of this country located here in the fastest growing part of Australia, then we really do have a prospect for the first time in more than a decade of seeing the critical needs of Queensland in infrastructure and other services being addressed in a real way. What Kevin Rudd wants to do is end the blame game. John Howard, as we know, has made it an art form. What we want to see—

Mr Springborg: He's taken the health system off you.

Ms BLIGH: What we want to see—

Mr Springborg: Is that blaming him?

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Cunningham, you have interjected about four times in the last 30 seconds. I would ask you to stop—four times.

Ms BLIGH: What I want to see as the Premier of Queensland is that the next Prime Minister of this country is someone who is prepared to sit down around the table and do the hard yards required in a federation. A federation—whether it is in Australia or in Canada or in other parts of the world—requires the different levels of government to work together. It is the fundamental nature of Australia's federation that the Commonwealth and state governments have to be able to work in the public interest.

In my view COAG has become a moribund organisation that is no longer serving the interests of this country, because the Prime Minister has simply walked away from it. We have critical issues to deal with and they cannot be solved by any one level of government. They can be solved only by people working together, and it is going to be tough. But Kevin Rudd has actually come out and put this on the political agenda. In a state such as ours, at this point in our development, it is time for us to see a Queenslander in the Lodge—a Queenslander running the country, a Queenslander who understands the importance of investing in infrastructure; building roads, building schools and rolling out broadband. This is an opportunity that Queenslanders should not miss. I am very confident that, given the opportunity in four and a half weeks time, they will not.

Bligh Labor Cabinet, Unionism

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that nearly 90 per cent of her cabinet is made up of union members, former union officials and party hacks—a figure higher than the wannabe proposed Rudd cabinet?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask all members—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr McARDLE: I will start again to elaborate—

Mr SPEAKER: No, you will not start again.

Mr McARDLE: I am happy to pick it up—

Mr SPEAKER: Sit down, please. I ask all members to give the member for Caloundra a go in asking this question.

Mr McARDLE: I will ask the question again.

Mr SPEAKER: When I am on my feet, you sit down; when I sit down, you get on your feet. Those are the rules in every chamber in the Westminster system.

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that nearly 90 per cent of her cabinet is made up of union members, former union officials and party hacks—a figure higher than the wannabe proposed loser Rudd cabinet? Is the Premier now setting the union domination benchmark for Kevin Rudd?

Mr Lucas: That's a Walkley Award winning forensic job.

Ms BLIGH: Yes, a Walkley Award winning, forensically designed expose of the great secret of the Bligh cabinet. They are union members. Freedom of association, that is, the right to belong to a trade union, is guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and under the federal law of this country.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr Seeney: It is a prerequisite on the application form.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cunningham and I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms BLIGH: I remember a time when the Liberal Party of Australia stood up for the human rights of the citizens of this country. Now we find an all-out campaign to swing to the far Right and undermine the human rights of the citizens of this country.

Dr Flegg: There is an equal opportunity rule, too, you know.

Mr SPEAKER: If the Premier would not mind sitting down for a moment. I will give her some extra time. This is a ridiculous situation. The member for Maroochydore comments in a low tone. She does not think we can hear her. I think we are all hearing her. I say to the member for Moggill that he is a serial interjector when questions are being answered. I have already warned under standing order 253 both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cunningham. The members of the opposition are asking these questions. I am going to give any minister the chance to answer them.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question again and I will do my best to answer it against the opposition's unruly, ill-disciplined and disgraceful behaviour this morning. I believe the question was whether 90 per cent of the members of my cabinet are union members. I think the answer to that is no. I believe that 100 per cent of my cabinet are members of relevant trade unions. Not only are they members of their relevant trade unions; they are proud members of their relevant trade unions. They are proud of that, because trade unions have been one of the organisations that have built this country. They secured the eight-hour day. They secured decent working conditions so that people could feed their families and be safe in their workplaces. There is no shame in it—none whatsoever.

The member wants to come snivelling in here doing the dirty work of John Howard. We do not resile for one minute from the fact that people on this side of the House care about the interests of working people. In terms of the talent of my cabinet, I will stack them up one by one against every runt of the litter that the other side lines up. My cabinet will be seen for what it is: the most talented cabinet that Queensland has ever had.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Mount Ommaney, I welcome to the chamber today teachers and students from North Lakes State College, which is in the electorate of Murrumba, which is represented in this House by the Hon. Dean Wells.

Federal Government, Queensland Infrastructure

Mrs ATTWOOD: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Could the Deputy Premier tell the House whether the current federal government has been a nation-building government? What has the federal government done to use the bounty from the resources boom and the burgeoning economy to build vital infrastructure for Queensland?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for her question. The active and studied neglect of Queensland infrastructure by the federal Howard Liberal government has been aided and abetted by this state opposition. In fact, the only time it ever took the federal government on in terms of an infrastructure project was when it did not want one built, and that is the famous half northern bypass in the electorate of the Leader of the Liberal Party. At no time did the members opposite get out there and put the wood on the federal government, unlike people such as Campbell Newman, for example, who did.

This election is a wonderful opportunity for people to cast their verdict on what has happened over the past 11 years. We have experienced economic boom times that have been very significant for this state and this nation. One would have thought that this was an opportunity for a federal government with leadership to put down money for infrastructure—to have a plan for the infrastructure that will serve us well when times are not as good as they are now. But the federal government has been missing in action. When it comes to investment in infrastructure that Australia's growth state needs, it has been only through the intervention of people such as Kevin Rudd that the federal government has finally been dragged kicking and screaming to the table.

Mr Wallace: The Townsville port access road.

Mr LUCAS: The honourable minister mentions the Townsville port access road, or Tully. We know, and the member for Hinchinbrook knows, that Tully only got promised that infrastructure in the course of the last election campaign when Martin Ferguson came up and announced it. Then it got matched and now it is being built. Yesterday we saw a massive commitment from Rudd Labor, promising very significant investment in south-east Queensland.

Of course, when we look at the Brisbane City Council and some of its projects, who has been its saviour? The state government. The massive Airport Link project has a \$20 million commitment from the state government. The balance in relation to the injection that will be needed is being provided by the Queensland Labor government. The other project that is very dear to the heart of the honourable member and others is Northern Link from the Toowong roundabout into the city. Who has put up the money for that? Again, \$500 million from Labor.

The federal government has been missing in action. It took it two years to get dragged kicking and screaming to give a commitment to the M1. We had our money put aside. It was burning a hole in our pocket. Finally, the federal government came to the party with that money. Now is the time for the federal government, with the country experiencing these economic boom times, to put aside money for infrastructure. Who could forget the rapid transit system on the Gold Coast, which the member for Clayfield spends his life opposing? All we saw from Steven Ciobo was some money early on for a study. When it comes to financing it, the federal government is now missing in action.

The federal government does not have a cities policy. It does not have an infrastructure policy. It does not want to put down the money for planning for our future. We will do this at a state level with our spend greatly in excess of that of other states. But it is about time that we had federal leadership on putting money down for infrastructure once and for all.

Traveston Crossing Dam

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Traveston Crossing Dam environmental impact statement, which was released this morning but has not yet been tabled in this parliament. The Premier claimed that the Traveston Crossing Dam was supposedly the lowest-cost option when compared to other alternatives, such as a series of smaller dams and desalination. However, is it not true that the Traveston Crossing Dam will have the highest social impact because more people will be kicked off their land and lose their homes as a result of this dam than with any of the other alternatives? Is it not typical of the Premier's cold and heartless government to be focused more on dollars than on people?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Again we see another attempt to undermine this government's efforts to ensure that the people of south-east Queensland have the water that they need. I take one issue with the point raised in the question, and that is about the documents being tabled in the parliament. As I indicated, it is a five-volume report containing 1,600 pages. It is available on the web site. There is ample opportunity for any member of the House to look at that material.

The member is correct in identifying that there is more than one impact to any dam or any piece of infrastructure of this size. Of course, one of those impacts is a social impact. In order to build this dam there is a need for us to purchase properties and to acquire land. That will cause significant disruption and, as I have acknowledged in the past, significant pain to a number of people. Ultimately, governments have to make some very difficult choices. Along with my colleagues, I have made a decision that the water supply needs of the fastest growing part of Australia have to be the government's first priority. The priority is not only for the drinking water needs of people in Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast but also for water needs of business and industry on the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, of those people who employ people, who provide jobs that mean that people can feed their families and have a prosperous and high quality of life.

We have an obligation as a government to ensure that we treat the people who are being displaced very well. We have now secured through voluntary acquisition close to two-thirds—more than 60 per cent—of all properties that will be required for the Traveston Crossing Dam. I put it to the parliament that we would not have acquired those properties on a voluntary basis in that order if we had not been offering a reasonable and very favourable compensation package. The fact that we have had so many people take up that package is a clear indication that it is a very fair package. In fact, on any reasonable assessment people would say it is a very favourable one. I am very happy that we are in a position to do that so that people can be looked after and people have actually adopted that package.

I understand there will be tougher times ahead next year. If the federal government makes the decision to approve the dam, we will then have to talk to those people who have not yet made that decision. We will try to do that as soon as possible and give people certainty as quickly as we can.

What we have heard this week is a very desperate attempt to get up a theme. What we hear constantly during questions are these two words—'cold' and 'heartless'. This is the new theme that the opposition is trying to get up against the government. I think it is trying to say that the Deputy Premier is cold and I am heartless or the Treasurer is cold and the Deputy Premier is heartless. There could be nothing more cold and nothing more heartless than to allow the 2.2 million Australians living in south-east Queensland to go without water, and we are not going to do that. But we will look after the people of the Mary Valley.

Gold Coast, Public Transport

Mr LAWLOR: My question is directed to the minister for transport. As the Gold Coast is one of the most rapidly growing areas of Australia and a prime tourist destination, can the minister detail what the government is doing to provide a world-class public transport system for the Gold Coast?

Mr MICKEL: I thank the member for Southport because it gives me an opportunity to outline again the tremendous efforts that are being made—unfunded, I might say, by the federal government—with regard to public transport on the Gold Coast. Firstly, we are undoing the wrongs that were done to the Gold Coast in the sixties. We are extending the rail line to the Gold Coast. In addition to that, we are putting on 72 new buses to the Gold Coast. An amount of \$8.6 million is spent on service improvements annually. An amount of \$85.9 million has been spent on infrastructure to support that. We have introduced a 24/7 bus route from Southport to Tweed Heads. We have restructured the Gold Coast Highway routes to improve on-time running. Last week we announced flat fare taxis.

In answer to the question asked by the honourable member for Southport, we are delivering the infrastructure that was so long neglected, but there has been no funding at all from the federal government. One thing I want to say to the member for Southport is that the honourable gentleman did support the Gold Coast rapid transit system. I thank him for that because it was delivered after extensive consultation. Honourable members can imagine my dilemma last week in this House when the shadow minister for health, the member for Surfers Paradise, announced in this House that it was okay for teenagers to drink-drive because there were no public transport options. Where was the leadership from the Liberal Party on this one? We have had the shadow transport minister say that the road toll should be addressed while we have the shadow minister for health, no less, condone drink driving by teenagers.

He also said on the Gold Coast that there had been no consultation on the Gold Coast rapid transit scheme. What is this document if it is not consultation? We had it in Southport. This document went out—no consultation! This document went out—no consultation! This document went out—no consultation! It is a bit like the *Life of Brian*—'What have the Romans ever done for us?' It is the same—no consultation!

Earlier this week I had a meeting with representatives of the Gold Coast City Council. What did they say to me? I met with TransLink officials recently. Council's position is shown by the formal resolutions (1) to support the financial involvement by council in the project—no consultation; (2) to support the heads of agreement signed by the mayor and the former minister—no consultation; (3) to support the detailed MOU between TransLink and Gold Coast City Council; (4) to support the Southport CBD route. The point is that we are trying to deliver for an international city a first-class public transport system. The person opposed to it who does not talk to his electorate is the member for Surfers Paradise.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Before calling the member for Nicklin, I would like to recognise in the public gallery student leaders and teachers from Palm Beach State School in the electorate of Burleigh, which is represented in the chamber by the honourable Christine Smith.

Northern Pipeline Interconnector

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. I understand that the corridor currently being investigated for the proposed location of the northern pipeline stage 2 goes through a number of private properties. I table two letters I have received from my constituents expressing concern about the current proposed pipeline corridor.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 12 October 2007, from SG & JE Prentis to Mr Wellington relating to the South East Queensland water grid-northern pipeline.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 12 October 2007, from Andrew Page to the Minister for Infrastructure relating to Stage 2 of the Traveston Dam water pipeline.

I ask: will the minister commit to genuinely reviewing the current proposed corridor by investigating to see if more of the proposed pipeline can be located in road reserve and not across private property?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for his question. He approaches these sorts of issues in a sensible and a mature fashion. In our construction of stage 2 of the northern pipeline interconnector we will seek to use existing easements or follow the existing road corridors as far as we can. It is not our intention to cause any more disruption than is necessary. Stage 2 is a 53-kilometre—and I will get to the member for Maroochydore in a minute—pipeline and adjoins stage 1 at Landers Shoot in Cooroy. At this stage of route planning the indications are that easements for stage 2 will be required for approximately 270 properties, and about 42 per cent of these will be in existing public utility easements. It is important to note that, by and large, we can actually put pipelines underground. So particularly in a rural area they are far less disturbing than an electricity easement or indeed a road for which we would have to acquire the full freehold. In relation to stage 1 of the project, more than 75 per cent of the properties have been, or are being, acquired using existing easements. That is 216 out of 282. We do try to do that as much as we can and we will have a look at that in that context.

Having said that, I see again that the 'Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the Sunshine Coast' was asking a question on notice of me the other day again about water supply security on the Sunshine Coast. That is the area that gets electricity from the rest of Queensland but, according to her logic, a different rule should apply when it comes to water. Let us have a look at the details—and the member for Maroochydore might want to do that—before Baroon Pocket Dam was built in 1988 when Caloundra and Maroochydore faced water shortages. One of the things about Traveston Dam is that it is going to have a pipeline connecting it. We saw the Leader of the Opposition, with his ridiculous comments the other day, trying to retreat a little bit from the position of the hole that the member for Maroochydore had dug herself into. He said, 'We want the pumping capacity north installed upfront.' That is a ridiculous statement and proposition even though it will have the capacity to be retrofitted for that.

As the EIS indicates, Traveston Dam is the best possible proposal for delivering our water needs into south-east Queensland, and guess what? Here is a geography lesson. The pipeline from Traveston Dam, just south of Gympie, goes along the back of the Sunshine Coast. The good news is that when the Traveston Dam is built there will actually be water that can flow north to the Sunshine Coast and also increase its water reliability.

We will have a water grid that has security—a water grid that those opposite opposed. The dams policy of the former Leader of the Opposition did not have any pipelines connecting anything and would not have the security of a water grid. We will have a water grid that has security. We will have Australia's best practice when it comes to desalination. We will have the most recycling in Australia. But we will also have a dam project that is the best possible alternative for the people of south-east Queensland. We will not let the water run dry even if the silly policies of those opposite might.

Intensive Care Paramedics

Mr REEVES: My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. As the House is aware, the Queensland Ambulance Service is a leader in emergency prehospital clinical practice. Can the minister inform members of any additional boost to the ranks of our intensive care paramedics?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to advise the House that the latest group of intensive care paramedics is about to be disbursed throughout Queensland. There are 14 ambulance officers who have taken up the opportunity of undertaking intensive care training which includes the completion of a Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Paramedical Practice. Another five officers are currently undertaking the training and it is expected that they will be on the road very soon.

In addition to the high level of skills already held by our advanced care paramedics, the intensive care paramedics can administer a greater range of medicines and also perform more complex procedures on patients. They now join the ranks of some of the most highly trained paramedics in the country and, indeed, are the equal of any in the world.

In order to be one of the best, the Queensland Ambulance Service ensures that our applicants are rigorously tested, both practically and theoretically. They spend several weeks in hospital placements and also spend at least 25 weeks on the road with already qualified intensive care paramedics. The training that they undertake, both theoretically and practically, is very intense and very rigorous. They are also required to work through a number of simulated activities such as serious road traffic incidents and multicasualty incidents to give them a realistic experience of what they might expect when they take to the road and also what it is like to be the primary care provider in those emergency situations. I take this opportunity of congratulating the latest group of intensive care paramedics and look forward to them taking up their positions across the state.

In addition to the intensive care paramedics, I can also advise the House that the first two groups of paramedics that are undertaking the Graduate Certificate of Rural and Remote Paramedic Practice at James Cook University are also about to complete their course. There are 30 paramedics who will graduate with the certificate in November. I can advise that this certificate provides these paramedics with an extended scope of practice. One of the significant issues in rural communities, of course, is having access to appropriate medical services. The advanced care paramedics who obtain this rural and remote paramedic practice certificate can provide an extended scope of practice and support to those communities but also provide additional support to allied health professionals who operate in those districts.

An additional 19 paramedics are expected to complete that course towards the middle of next year. The rural and remote paramedic practice certificate is a world first. Recently in Townsville I met with some international visitors to this country from emergency services operations in Canada, the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. They commented on how far advanced our paramedic services are with regard to training.

Sunshine Coast, Multimodal Transport Corridor

Mr DICKSON: My question without notice is to the minister for main roads. Will the minister advise how planning for CAMCOS and the new multimodal transport corridor has taken into account the additional impact of the new Kawana Hospital which was announced after the regional infrastructure plan was gazetted? Can he also advise how planning for this transport corridor has been affected by the Caloundra LGMS strategy which provides for significantly increased housing density in the area adjacent to the CAMCOS corridor and the new hospital site? What impact will this have on the provision of on- and off-ramps from the new corridor and linkages to the existing road network? What is the current status of planning for this transport corridor and CAMCOS and when will those plans and costings be made public?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, that is more like an essay than a question. I will take the question at this stage, but I would ask you to curtail your questions in the future.

Mr DICKSON: I was giving the minister a briefing so he understood the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I am well aware of what you were doing, but under standing orders—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, members on my right; I am actually speaking to the member for Kawana. Future questions must be much shorter than the question asked. I am accepting the question today.

Mr PITT: I am quite amazed that a question of that detail could be asked of a minister and a response expected with that level of detail.

I guess the short answer is that I am led to believe it is going well. I would like to bring to the attention of the House the member's continuing attacks on what is in his view this government's failure to plan adequately for transport arrangements on the Sunshine Coast. I refer to an article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on 5 October, with the by-line Carolyn Tucker, that says that a Liberal MP—referring to the member who has asked the question—has been reliably informed that many of the coast roads will be choked within five years and the government has encouraged an influx of new residents without sufficiently planning for their transport needs. I think I would be correct in saying that the member opposite was a member of the very council that is encouraging people, through its development programs, to come to the coast and put further pressure—

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order. Just to clarify the position, I was a member of Maroochy shire, not Caloundra.

Mr Reeves: Are you going for mayor?

Mr PITT: We understand that he is considering a position of higher authority, perhaps on the Sunshine Coast with the new amalgamated council, so no doubt he is taking an interest in these matters. The Sunshine Coast, like every region in Queensland, is under some stress when it comes to providing necessary infrastructure. It is a shame that the member opposite did not give some credit to the government for the good planning that it is doing in that respect.

There is some \$1.8 billion in roadworks planned for the region. The CAMCOS rail line will also substantially reduce future congestion. It is interesting that in this article is a quote from the member that 'they keep holding up some old mantra about the SEQ infrastructure plan that does not really address this issue'. The comprehensive SEQ plan is just that—it is a plan that is comprehensive enough to take into consideration the Sunshine Coast and it does not need the politically motivated negativity coming from the member opposite to try to stymie that.

For the interest of the member, there is a fair bit happening on the Sunshine Coast. There is construction underway on a number of projects: \$66 million for the Sunshine Motorway, Sippy Downs to Kawana Way, duplication of four kilometres and construction of a new interchange to improve safe access to the Sunshine Coast University and adjoining schools; \$210 million for the Sunshine Motorway, Maroochydoore Road to Pacific Paradise, including interchange upgrades and additional lanes; \$75 million for the Caloundra-Mooloolaba Road, Caloundra Road to Beachside Boulevard, duplication of five kilometres; and \$75 million to improve access to Kawana town centre and cut travel time from Caloundra to Mooloolaba. There is more: \$109 million for Maroochydoore Road, Bruce Highway to Martin's Creek, providing additional lanes; \$80 million for Caloundra Road, Bruce Highway to Pierce Avenue, duplication of 4.3 kilometres to provide a high standard of access to regional businesses in the industrial park; and \$2.47 million in planning is underway and in the future we have planned \$110 million for improvements to the Nambour Connection Road and Maroochydoore Road.

Mr SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery today the principal and school captains of Glenala State High School in the electorate of Inala, which is represented in this House by Annastacia Palaszczuk. I also welcome a further group of teachers and students from the North Lakes State College in the electorate of Murrumba, which is represented in this House by the Hon. Dean Wells.

Mine Simulators

Mr FINN: My question is to the Minister for Mines and Energy. Recently I joined the minister at the launch of the new mine simulators at the mining skills training centre in my electorate. I was impressed with the virtual mining experience that these simulators provide to trainees. In the light of this government's commitment to regional Queensland, are there any plans to send these simulators out and about in the regions?

Mr WILSON: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly. I do acknowledge the keen interest he has in the mining industry and also in training and the opportunities there are to improve on the skills of those working in the mining industry and those going into the mining industry.

These special simulators that the honourable member referred to create a safe and realistic training experience for miners working in surface and underground mines in Queensland. They will go a long way towards overcoming the skills shortage in our booming resources sector. We have 18 of them at a cost of about \$120,000 each, which is a total of about \$3 million for the whole set-up. What is exciting is that they can also be used to train mining employees to help them deal with emergencies and crises in a controlled and safe environment.

The Mining Industry Skills Centre is in the member's electorate, as he acknowledged, and the Queensland Mines Rescue Service and the Department of Mines and Energy are working together to develop mine rescue simulations. The concept is in its early stages but it offers great potential to lift the industry's skills in mine rescue training. There are many hazards, as we know, in the mining industry and the people involved from the ground up are striving to find ways to improve mine safety. Through video headsets, simulators offer a virtual experience in operating machines such as excavators and continuous miners. They cover surface and underground mining machines, including loaders, draglines, longwall shearers and continuous miners, as well as haul trucks, wheel loaders and dozers.

In answer to the question, three of the simulators will be trailer mounted and fully mobile by the end of the year. There is also great scope and hope for the simulators to be used in schools around the state, offering students a virtual reality experience of working on a mine site. There is already one simulator in operation at the Coppabella Mine in the Bowen Basin. This is all about boosting safety in surface and underground mines throughout the state, as well as boosting the production skills that our current mine workers have and new entrants to the mining industry will have. I commend the Mining Industry Skills Centre for its excellent work in this area.

Gas Supply Charges

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Premier. The government's \$55-a-year rebate for pensioners hit with massive increases in gas supply charges will cover a third of the higher charges, given most were paying \$15 but are now being slugged \$55 a quarter. What about the pensioners outside Brisbane on bottled gas? Why are pensioners in Brisbane—most of whom reside in Labor electorates—deemed more deserving of a rebate than pensioners using gas elsewhere in Queensland who have also been hit with price hikes?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Ultimately, what this whole problem boils down to is that no retailer can continue to sell a product for less than it costs to supply it, and that is in fact what has happened with reticulated gas in Queensland for a very long time under all sides of politics. Prices have been regulated to keep them artificially low, with private providers cross-subsidising between industrial and domestic customers but making no investment to extend the network. If we are serious about climate change, we really do need to see gas as a transition fuel and we need to see more of the gas network rolled out so that more consumers can be relying on gas.

What we have done this week, which I announced earlier to the House, is put in place a gas rebate for those pensioners who are on the reticulated gas system so that we can alleviate some of the difficulties they are experiencing as we move from a regulated to a much more commercial environment. That is a painful process. It is a process, however, that I would have thought the conservative side of politics would have actually supported. I would have thought they would ultimately believe, as I do, that competition in the free market will see, over time, prices moderate and more investment come into the network and therefore accept that ultimately consumers will have to share some of the transition costs. But I do not believe that pensioners should have to bear that on their own, and that is why we have put in place this rebate.

Those Queenslanders who live outside the south-east corner of our state already enjoy very, very significant benefits from cross-subsidisation through the community service obligation arrangements in relation to their energy. The member for Charters Towers would know that it is not only pensioner rebates that ensure that affordable electricity is supplied right across the state. If it were not for the cross-subsidisation by people in the south-east corner of the state in their electricity pricing over a long, long period of time, there simply would not be electricity supplied into most parts of regional and rural Queensland. I do not for one minute support any move away from those arrangements because an affordable, reliable supply of electricity is what is driving the development of regional Queensland and driving industrial expansion. We are going to continue to ensure that those arrangements apply.

In relation to bottled gas arrangements, my understanding is that bottled gas prices and service charges have always been deregulated. So there is nothing in relation to the recent changes that makes any difference to the pricing arrangements of the service charges in relation to bottled gas. The \$55 rebate is about the service charges for connecting to the network.

Broadband Access

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry. The minister recently met with leaders of the ICT industry who raised ongoing concerns about access to broadband. What are the issues with broadband access? Why is this a problem in a modern nation like Australia?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for Mount Isa for this question which is of great interest surely to all those members who represent regional and remote areas around Queensland. In fact it should be a concern to all Independents and members on the other side of the House as well.

The situation so far as broadband in Queensland is concerned is diabolical. Let me explain. Our existing broadband coverage across Queensland is already woefully inadequate. The inadequacy applies to both infrastructure and interconnection speeds. Broadband services in Queensland cities are second rate by world standards, while much of regional Queensland suffers a Third World service. This is because the broadband speed currently available falls well below some of our major trading partners. Indeed, we are behind Mexico and the Slovak Republic.

In Australia, broadband is defined by access speeds equal to or greater than 256 kilobits per second. In most other advanced countries, a service is not even considered to be broadband unless it provides minimum speeds in the megabits, or 1,000 kilobits, range. In Hong Kong, for example, the slowest broadband is 1.5 megabits per second. In Australia, fewer than half of the households have access to broadband speeds in excess of two megabits, whereas in the UK, Sweden, France, Italy, Canada and the USA, 80 to 90 per cent of households have access to faster broadband.

World-class broadband coverage is critical in Queensland if we are to remain the national powerhouse of economic and employment growth. Broadband speed matters in Brisbane for all of our major businesses. It matters in the regional cities for all business and industry activity and public and private sector activity. It especially matters in our rural and remote communities if they are to survive in business and of course for their lifestyles.

What has led to this problem? It is the head-in-the-sand attitude and the flat-earth policies of the Howard government. It announced a deal with OPEL some months ago that will not even work to make us competitive in Queensland. It is too little too late. It is a two-tiered system. It does not look after the rural and remote areas. I call on the Prime Minister to admit his mistakes during this election campaign—in line with the requests in all the major dailies today around the nation—and say that he has failed all of Australia, especially regional and remote Australia, with his failure to address broadband through an inadequate deal with OPEL. It is high time he absolutely committed that he will fix this if he is returned.

Basil Stafford Centre

Mr LINGARD: My question is to the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services. I refer to a recent resignation letter from an employee at the Basil Stafford Centre in which he stated—

I have witnessed clients' bank accounts tampered with by managers, clients' fundamental basic personal liberties and human rights repeatedly violated, clients' dignities unashamedly maltreated and the continual and ever expanding false imprisonment and deprivation of liberty of numerous clients.

This was five weeks ago. What have the minister's investigations found out about these claims?

Ms NELSON-CARR: In relation to the member's question, obviously I do not have the details in front of me. But can I say that employment related issues like that are departmental issues and they must be handled by the director-general. Therefore, in this particular instance it would be inappropriate for me to comment. But these are very serious allegations that the member is making this morning, and I think something as serious as that should be investigated further.

What the member needs to know is that all allegations of abuse, harm, or danger to clients are taken extremely seriously, as I take the member's question this morning, and they are investigated accordingly. That will be done according to public sector policy, procedures and practice. But these investigations can result in a range of outcomes including systemic and operational improvements as well as disciplinary action where required. In this instance I will take this on board, look into it and get back to the member with further detail.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That concludes question time.

QUEENSLAND HERITAGE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 October (see p. 3697).

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (11.31 am): As I said previously, the amendments in this legislation will increase the Environmental Protection Agency's heritage responsibilities and consequently the level of resources required to administer heritage matters. While the EPA will assume significant new roles, it is anticipated that the increased workload can be absorbed into the current allocation, according to the explanatory notes. This is of serious concern to the opposition because historically it has been underresourced. I will be looking for further clarification from the minister as to the significant amount of resourcing that the department will be given to ensure these new functions can be completed correctly.

Regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles, we note that there are limited appeal rights. An owner of a place may appeal against a decision of the council to enter their place in or remove their place from the Queensland Heritage Register. A nominator or submitter does not have to have a material interest in the place.

The amendments introduce appeal rights for an applicant only when, as a result of the council failing to make a decision in time, a deemed refusal is given. A property that is a place of cultural heritage significance may be entered in a local heritage register by a decision of the local government.

The effect of the entry of a property in a local heritage register will be to increase the level of regulation of any development on the place by requiring it to be assessed for its impact on the cultural heritage significance of this place. This is likely to have an impact on an owner's ability to develop the property.

No appeal has been provided as it is preferred to make this provision consistent with the approach taken in the Integrated Planning Act 1997, under which local government generally operates. Therefore, if the decision of the local government to enter a place in their register has a negative effect on the potential value of the property, an owner is entitled to claim compensation as set out in the Integrated Planning Act 1997. There have been some concerns raised about the actual passing of this responsibility through to the local government area, and I will be asking for further clarification from the minister on this as well.

I note that this legislation introduces an obligation on an owner who has been issued with a maintenance notice to carry out essential maintenance work on a state heritage place. It is an offence for an owner to fail to comply with a notice. A notice may only be about work that is urgently required and is essential to prevent serious or irreparable damage. It is an obligation on the owner and it could also be an imposition. The chief executive may only issue a notice after taking all reasonable steps to consult with an owner. Because a notice is about work that is urgently needed to prevent a registered place from being damaged, no appeal has been provided. To ensure that a notice does not have an unreasonable impact on an owner, I note that this legislation notes only minor work—which is seemingly refixing roof sheeting or securing doors and windows—which may be required. However, this can be quite a large cost impost, and this is also an area that I will be looking at for further clarification from the minister—the level of imposts or the level of costs that would be looked at under this particular obligation that will be put upon an owner.

Interim protection orders have been introduced. The chief executive will have the power to give an owner an interim protection order. An interim protection order may be given about a place that has been nominated for entry to the Queensland Heritage Register but has not yet been decided. So it is given the protection, which does seem to be a sensible suggestion. The chief executive may only give an order for a place if satisfied that it is necessary in the circumstances to conserve the cultural heritage significance of the place. The effect of an order is to temporarily enter a place in the register for a maximum period of 60 business days. This provision replaces the temporary protection that was given by a provisional entry in the register. Unlike a stop order, it will allow development of a place to commence or continue provided the appropriate approvals have been obtained. No appeal has been provided. As the effect of the interim protection order is temporary, an appeal is provided once a decision to enter the place on the register has been made.

The bill also introduces a provision for the state to be able to assert ownership of an archeological artefact. This provision will only be used in exceptional circumstances as a last resort to protect an artefact of particularly important historic significance. To ensure that a person who suffers loss as a result of a declaration is appropriately compensated, compensation provisions and appeal rights against a decision of the chief executive about compensation have been provided.

It is noted that some new penalties have been introduced and some existing penalties have been increased to help achieve the purpose of the act. The purpose of the act is to conserve Queensland's cultural heritage. It is deemed to be necessary to effectively discourage demolition of registered places. Apart from the highest level, penalties are similar to the penalties set for comparable offences in the Integrated Planning Act 1997, and the highest level of these penalties is certainly significant. To create a consistent approach and to provide a more effective deterrent to destroying significant artefacts, the lower penalties have been increased. A new penalty has been introduced for failing to comply with the maintenance notice.

Because the effect of failing to carry out the urgent work required by a maintenance notice can be demolition through neglect, a maximum penalty of 1,000 penalty units for a corporation and 100 penalty units for an individual is provided. The current penalty of 1,000 penalty units for destroying a protected area is substantially less than those that apply to other registered places. Given that protected areas are declared by Governor in Council and are intended to provide the highest level of protection, this is an anomaly. The amendment corrects this by increasing the penalty for destroying a protected area to a maximum of 17,000 penalty units for a corporation and 1,700 for an individual.

As I said earlier, this particular legislation amends two acts. The amendments within the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 set out the functions of the Queensland Heritage Council to give greater emphasis to the council's strategic and policy functions, and the revised list intends to simplify and clarify the council's functions. This legislation clarifies that the term of the appointment of the chairperson and the deputy chairperson cannot exceed three years and it introduces a maximum period of six years for which a person can continue to be a member. It also reduces the number of mandatory meetings per year from 10 to six to allow the council greater flexibility in the way it carries out its functions. The amendment does not limit the number of meetings the council may hold a year. However, the mandatory number will now be six. Obtaining a quorum for meetings can sometimes be difficult. This may be a common-sense approach. I note that this legislation does not limit the number of meetings so more meetings can be held.

The bill proposes significant amendments to the existing heritage register. It transfers responsibility for keeping the Queensland Heritage Register from the council to the state executive, it changes the name of registered places to state heritage places and includes a new category in the register—archaeological places. It sets out the cultural heritage criteria for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register and clarifies that this section applies to state heritage places.

The amendment is intended to simplify the test for entry by removing secondary and redundant requirements. The principal test in the act of satisfying one or more of the eight cultural heritage entry criteria continues to be used to determine whether a place may be entered in the register. The cultural heritage criteria are based on national standards and are specific indicators of cultural heritage significance. The amendments remove the requirement for a duplicate test of cultural heritage significance.

This legislation also removes the section which prohibits the entry of places in the register if there is no prospect of the cultural heritage significance of the place being conserved. I note that a new provision has been inserted which will ensure that the physical condition and structural integrity of a place may still be taken into account when considering a place for listing. I commend that provision. There is a great deal of sense in that. The physical condition and structural integrity of a place are important. Things can sometimes be past their use-by date, which is disappointing.

The legislation sets out the process for entering a place in or removing a place from the Queensland Heritage Register. The purpose of this amendment is to provide an improved process for dealing with applications for state heritage places. The new process introduces end-to-end time frames, earlier engagement with owners of nominated places and the community, an expanded role for the chief executive and greater access to the decision maker for affected parties.

Under this legislation a person is prevented from making application for the entry of a place in or removal of a place from the Queensland Heritage Register if the council has made a decision about the matter in the previous 12 months. It provides for the early notification and provision of relevant information to affected parties. The chief executive must give notice of the application and a copy of the application to the owner and the relevant local government within 10 days after its receipt. I commend the provision related to a 10-day turnaround. Hopefully, this will streamline the process.

The legislation sets out how the chief executive must give the Queensland Heritage Council a heritage recommendation for an application within a set period, generally 80 business days after its receipt, to ensure a timely and transparent process. This has real merit. The onus will be on the EPA to deliver in that time. Eighty business days is a significant time.

It provides for the chief executive to extend this time frame for considering an application if circumstances such as the remote location of a place or the complexity of the matters under consideration mean that more time is required. The chief executive may extend the time for making a recommendation by up to 40 business days. This allows affected and interested parties to request oral representation with the Queensland Heritage Council before a decision is made. That is common sense.

The legislation provides for the council to make a decision on each heritage recommendation within 60 business days. This time may only be extended with the agreement of the owner to a maximum of 100 business days. My maths tells me that this means that the total process should take no more than 140 business days or 28 weeks, or with agreed extensions of time a maximum of 56 weeks which is over a year from start to finish. That would be the absolute maximum time.

The council may enter a place in the register as a state heritage place only if it satisfies one or more of the cultural heritage criteria. The council must remove a place if it is satisfied that it no longer meets any criteria.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Burdekin, I do apologise for interrupting you but I would like to acknowledge in the gallery teachers, students and parents from North Lakes State College in the electorate of Murrumba represented in this House by Dean Wells.

Mrs MENKENS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly acknowledge your welcome to the wonderful children. This legislation also provides that where the council has not made a decision about a heritage recommendation in the time allowed the application is deemed to be refused.

The legislation sets out a process for applying and giving a certificate of immunity. A certificate of immunity prevents a place from being entered in the Queensland Heritage Register for a five-year period. I would be interested in further clarification of the areas where this would be put into practice and a little more explanation of the background that the certificate of immunity would give.

The legislation requires an owner of a nominated place to advise the chief executive about any development that the owner is aware of that may affect the place while it is under consideration as a state heritage place. Criteria for entry in the register of an archaeological place are set out in the legislation. They are a test of its importance to Queensland's cultural heritage. A place may only be entered in the register as an archaeological place if it satisfies these archaeological criteria.

It provides for notification to the owner, local government and the public if the chief executive intends to recommend a place for entry in or removal from the register. I would assume that an archaeological place could involve a certain amount of space. It could be a very small space. It might even be a very large area. I would ask the minister to outline what size he would envisage an archaeological place being.

The legislation also makes the chief executive rather than the Queensland Heritage Council responsible for assessing applications for state heritage places under the integrated development assessment system. It removes the Queensland Heritage Council from any role in approving development for liturgical purposes and removes the restriction prohibiting demolition of a registered place.

This legislation expands the ability of religious organisations to change a state registered place without approval from the Heritage Council or the chief executive. It also provides for heritage agreements, to make heritage agreements more flexible and to encourage greater use of them. Because most heritage agreements are about development, the amendment makes the chief executive rather than the minister responsible for entering into agreements. Interim protection orders may be given by the chief executive for a place that is nominated to the Queensland Heritage Register. An interim protection order allows for the temporary protection of a place that is under consideration for entry limited to a maximum of 60 business days. Provision is made for the chief executive to issue a notice about essential maintenance work. Only minor work such as securing doors and windows or removing fire hazards may be required. The amendments also introduce a penalty, and I mentioned this earlier, for failing to comply with a notice of a maximum of 1,000 penalty units for a corporation and 100 penalty units for an individual. This legislation also intends to help to align protection for historic shipwrecks in Queensland waters with the Commonwealth provisions and provides blanket protection for all shipwrecks in Queensland waters that are over 75 years old, and there certainly are quite a few of those.

The legislation also provides for compensation matters that arise from a declaration being made and states that the person who suffers loss because of a declaration is entitled to claim compensation. The legislation makes it an offence to destroy a protected area and increases the penalty from 1,000 penalty units to 1,700 penalty units for an individual and 17,000 penalty units for a corporation. That equates to a fine of \$1.275 million for a corporation for destroying a protected area or \$127,500 for an individual, and that is a significant fine. With regard to a protected area, I would assume that it would be a very large area under public or private ownership and it would be distressing to think that someone unintentionally moved on to a protected area and was unaware that it was a protected area. I am allowing my imagination to run wild in case someone should inadvertently be caught up in this area. However, I certainly commend the legislation for the whole intent of a protected area.

The legislation, as I said earlier, provides for protecting local heritage places. Local heritage places are places of local rather than state cultural heritage significance in a local government's area. This amendment ensures that all local governments will have a workable system for dealing with heritage matters. It will particularly assist those local governments that do not have adequate provision for identifying and protecting heritage places incorporated into their planning schemes. The local government decides what is entered in its register. Many local governments are already doing this, particularly the larger councils, and I am aware that some particularly good registers have been set up in the larger councils. I want to know what the compliance will be for local government, because I understand that it will now become mandatory for all local governments to set up a local heritage register. Is this going to be an impost on local governments? How strong will the actual impetus be to make local governments comply with this?

An honourable member: They should already be doing it.

Mrs MENKENS: I hear a comment that they should already be doing it, but sometimes in distant rural and remote councils these matters become a lot more difficult. I am just interested to know what the processes will be and whether assistance will be given to some of those councils, because in some cases it could be a further impost on the local government area. This legislation allows the chief executive to recommend a place to a local government for consideration for entry in its register and it requires the local government to promptly inform the owner and any submitters of its decision and the reasons for the decision within 10 business days of making a decision. That is important, because a constituent came to me about a matter. This actually happened in another town that was not in my electorate even though they were one of my constituents. In this case the local government had listed her mother's home and the mother at no stage had any notification or documentation about it, and they were not happy. This is very much an important part.

The bill provides for an integrated development assessment system assessment code to be prescribed in a regulation. The code, which will provide a consistent basic level of protection for local heritage places, is essential to ensure that all local governments have a workable system to protect their heritage. It allows a local heritage register to be incorporated into a planning scheme. There is no appeal against the entry of a local heritage place in a local heritage register that is provided. However,

compensation for potential loss of value is provided. With regard to that compensation, will that compensation come from the local government? Will it come from the state? Who will provide the compensation in the local heritage area?

Appeal rights continue to be provided to the owner of a place against a decision of the Queensland Heritage Council to enter a place in or remove a place from the Queensland Heritage Register. The legislation also provides for the nonapplication of this act to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander places. Places that are of significance exclusively for their value to the culture and history of Indigenous people are not able to be dealt with under the Queensland Heritage Act as, as I understand, they are covered under other acts. The Integrated Planning Act 1997 sets out a process that ensures that work can be carried out in an emergency but the impact of the work on the cultural heritage significance is minimised. The legislation sets out what is assessable development on a heritage registered place. The amendment replaces 'heritage registered place' with 'Queensland heritage place' to differentiate it from a local heritage place.

Consultation that we have had with members of the Heritage Council indicates that members of the council seem to be in accord with this legislation and have been consulted by the department during the process. The review started in 2004 and has been ongoing until the legislation was presented earlier this year in parliament. It does seem that the majority of stakeholders believe that this bill is a positive step, and one of the most important elements is that owners of buildings et cetera have retained rights of appeal against listing and delisting. It is the third-party applicants who now have their appeal rights limited. I do have a concern that enough resources will be made available to make this legislation work. The EPA has been historically underfunded in many other areas, particularly the parks and wildlife area, and I have some very real concerns that the same could apply in the implementation of these new rules that now give the EPA greater responsibilities. That this is being done within the same allotted budgets is a huge concern, and we will be monitoring the success or otherwise of this.

I ask the minister what assurance he can give us that sufficient funds will be made available by the government for restoration of heritage registered places. If a place is declared worthy of preservation by his government, sufficient funds must be made available to assist in their restoration. It is not right that imposts and penalties are placed on community members if the government is not willing or, more importantly, departmental staff are not given the resources to support them. There are huge imposts and punishments placed on people who do not comply with the provisions of these amendments and the current act, and it would be most concerning if there is insufficient support from the EPA towards them.

The coalition is asking the minister for a solid commitment of the government's resourcing before it can fully support this legislation. I support wholeheartedly the preservation of our heritage but to do this entirely at the cost of the owner is not acceptable or, in many cases, not even possible. The upkeep on some of these aged buildings is enormous.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Traveston Crossing Dam

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (11.59 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. This morning the Premier implied that I had not been vocal enough in the chamber on the issue of the Traveston Crossing Dam. For the benefit of the House, I advise that since arriving in the chamber in October I have asked 13 questions on notice and three questions without notice about the Traveston Crossing Dam, I have made 11 speeches in which I make reference to the Traveston Crossing Dam and I have lodged one petition in relation to the Traveston Crossing Dam.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! That is not a matter of privilege; that is an explanation to the House.

QUEENSLAND HERITAGE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (11.59 am): I congratulate the member for Gympie on his previous remarks. I rise to speak to the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. This bill highlights and identifies a number of welcome provisions, which include the release of the Queensland Heritage Council from the bureaucratic burdens of the day-to-day management of the Heritage Register. The bill also allows it to focus on strategic management for the protection of Queensland's heritage sites. The bill will also remove complications from what was a terribly convoluted

and confusing process. I welcome these kinds of changes, which reverse the state Labor government's trend towards increased bureaucracy and inefficiencies. I cannot help but welcome another reversal of Labor policy and that is to recognise and empower local government. Rather than to disengage and bureaucratise local councils, this bill will allow local councils to decide what sites are important to their ratepayers and empower them to protect and care for them.

Heritage sites, whether they are homes, the local town hall or the shire office, come in various designs and from different eras, but they hold special significance for individual communities. A structure that is an important heritage site in one town or city may not hold the same importance in another. That is why community input is vital at a grassroots level to ensure that not only are sites and structures preserved because the state thinks that they are essential but also for sometimes differing reasons a local community holds them of great value owing to social and historic reasons.

On 10 October in this place we heard the member for Townsville speak about the historic Townsville Showgrounds. On that occasion the member tabled a petition signed by 10,572 locals who want that part of their city's heritage protected. Hopefully, this bill will foster more local community and local council engagement in the decision to list sites on the Heritage Register.

So for those three reasons—the reduction of Labor's bureaucratic red tape, new processes that simplify dealings with the government and the recognition and empowerment of local government—I support the intent of the bill. But I have a concern and I would like the minister and also the Treasurer to consider this concern in depth. It is possible under the existing framework—which may be worsened by these amendments—for a property owner to have their property listed as a protected site which they may not be able to afford to maintain to the appropriate standard that the heritage listing warrants.

Under this bill, people who have lived at properties for a long time and who may have seen the value of those properties increase but have not had the corresponding increase in incomes, such as pensioners or retirees, may be slugged with an obligation to maintain their properties but may well be unable to afford such an ongoing liability. Equally, community organisations using community buildings may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to raise the funds required to meet maintenance bills. There is more involved in the maintenance of a heritage site than simply throwing money at it. The day-to-day loving care of heritage listed buildings by responsible owners is also an absolute necessity. Those carers should be encouraged and supported financially as and when the situation demands.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also realised this effect of the bill and raised it with the then minister. The then minister's response is found on pages 42 and 43 of the committee's *Alert Digest No. 10*, which was tabled in this place on 9 October. I do not think that the response was satisfactory, because the then minister attempted to emphasise that only minor works would be ordered of property owners. If a building is in grave danger, then it would be appropriate for the government to act. But it would be preferable for the government to provide the funding rather than to shift the cost to the property owner. I hope the new minister takes my comments on board.

Simply put, Labor is not doing enough to support people in a situation where they have a property that is subsequently heritage listed but they are unable to maintain the property satisfactorily for one reason or another. If a property is special enough to warrant inclusion on the register then it is special enough to be preserved. In that case, if the property owner is unable due to financial constraints to preserve the property properly then the government should contribute or perform the works on the owner's behalf. If that is not the case then one could only assume that the property is not of sufficient heritage value and that it should be removed completely from the Heritage Register.

For instance, last year on 30 November the then minister announced financial assistance for the owners of heritage listed properties under the Living Buildings heritage conservation fund. The sum total of the assistance promised for the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 was \$5 million, or just \$2.5 million for each of those years. I have been advised that following that announcement about 800 applications for funding were received by the Queensland Heritage Council. According to the data provided on the EPA's web site, of those 800 applications only 57 applications for works funding were successful and 50 were successful for funding to create management plans. What happened to the other 693 buildings or structures for which funding was applied? Are they worthy of preservation? Where are they? What will the effect of nonfunding have on the preservation of the structure of those buildings? Clearly, there is a critical imbalance between what Labor says and what Labor delivers. Nothing is new in this Labor government's approach to saying anything and delivering the least amount possible. Plenty of opportunities were presented to this government to support heritage locations yet it chose to support only a small percentage of them.

But what I find even more frustrating is that Labor is now going to spend \$2.7 million to identify even more heritage sites when it has not provided sufficient cash to support and maintain the ones that have already been identified. Nor has the government outlined where the money will come from to maintain and enhance what could be hundreds of additional heritage sites across Queensland.

I agree totally with maintaining the heritage of Queensland. It is our history, it is what we are, but we must ensure that any building or structure that goes on the heritage list is matched with the financial capacity to maintain it. I do not want to see the heritage places in Queensland treated in the same way as the national park estate, where this government has created new national parks without providing adequate resources, particularly in terms of manpower, to maintain them. As I said before, that is \$2.5 million in funding over each of the last two years. To me, a real concern is what amount of money is going to be put aside in the years to come to adequately maintain and preserve the hundreds of heritage sites that we have already and the likelihood of hundreds more that will come about because of this new research that the government is about to undertake?

I agree with the significant fines that will be imposed on anyone who destroys or damages a heritage listed building, but I must make the point to the minister that if the owner of a heritage listed building is unable to comply with a work direction or to undertake the necessary repairs or modification, what is the sense of fining that person or a corporation up to a figure of \$1.275 million? My question to the minister is: why should ordinary Queenslanders have to pay for what the Labor government will not?

I support the aims of this bill, but the government should ensure that when it drafts bills that have an enormous impact on the ordinary citizens of this state it proves without doubt that it is prepared to back its own legislation with cold, hard cash to achieve what it promises. To me, this spasmodic funding, which leaves critical gaps in support for some property owners, highlights the tragic record of financial management of Labor in this state. It also sends a clear message to all Australians as to how dangerous a federal Labor government would be, given that it has been to the same school of financial irresponsibility. It just goes to show that you cannot trust what Labor says; you have to look at what Labor does.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (12.09 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to this debate on the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. This bill follows a review which concluded that the existing Queensland Heritage Act 1992 was out of step with best practice legislative standards and with community needs. Amendments in this bill address four broad areas. Firstly, they set out the roles and responsibilities of the Queensland Heritage Council and the chief executive of the Environmental Protection Agency so that the council focuses on strategic and high priority issues while some day-to-day regulatory processes are moved over to the EPA. Secondly, these amendments propose to improve accountability for the timeliness of processes for entering places on the Queensland Heritage Register. Thirdly, it will integrate regulation of archeological sites into the Integrated Planning Act 1997 and, finally, it will introduce processes for keeping local heritage registers to ensure all local governments have a workable system in place for identifying and protecting local heritage places.

I intend to use this opportunity to bring to the minister's attention the town of Irvinebank, which has a number of heritage listed buildings. They have been heritage listed for many years but have received little or no funding for the repairs and maintenance of these buildings. Irvinebank had its heyday around the turn of the 20th century—from around the 1880s to 1920. John Moffat, who was the architect and giant of mining in far-north Queensland around that time, centred his operation in and around Irvinebank. It was largely through him that the tablelands and areas to the west opened up in the first place. This was a time when mining actually boomed in and around Herberton, Irvinebank and Chillagoe. People on the Labor side might have heard of 'Red Ted' Theodore. He came from the Chillagoe area and was Premier of Queensland in the 1920s.

There is a lot of history involved in this area. It is history that really should be kept. A lot of it is still there. It has been held up because there was a dispute involving that area for about 20 years. It started in the days of the Bjelke-Petersen years in the early eighties and went through the nineties and was not resolved until around 2004. Around that time there was a dispute about some objects that were taken from the area. It is now three—going on four—years since that all happened. I think it is high time that that matter was resolved one way or another. The property settlement should be fixed up and what needs to come back should come back. If it does not come back, it does not come back, but let the people of Irvinebank get on with restoring those buildings. It has now become a tourist town. It is a lovely, quaint little town. When people travel over the Great Dividing Range they will see it sitting there on the other side. The tourists love it. John Moffat's house is still there. It has been turned into a very popular museum. There is a school of arts building, the old bank building, the state treatment works and a number of miner's cottages. All of these need to be fixed up and repaired so instead of only having a museum we can have all these other attractions as well. That would turn Irvinebank into a wonderful, historical tourist town. I wanted to raise that matter with the minister. This debate gave me the opportunity to do that.

The contrast between the intention of legislation such as this to protect and preserve our heritage as much as possible and the funding resources provided by this government is sharp. I believe that certain heritage values do need to be recognised and appropriately protected. However, as often is the case, while it is easy to pass legislation, it is often a different matter when it comes to funding. I do call on the minister to see if he can resolve this particular matter with regard to Irvinebank and see if some funding can become available so that people up there can move on with their lives.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (12.14 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. In this parliament we have spoken on many occasions about the dramatic changes occurring in Queensland as a result of the rapid economic and population growth, and we have debated major new pieces of legislation developed to plan for and manage this growth, thereby ensuring that Queensland remains the best possible place to live.

In 2009, Queensland will celebrate 150 years of growth and prosperity. As we approach this marker of our maturity as a state, I think it is appropriate that we revisit Queensland's heritage legislation to ensure it provides the best possible protection for our irreplaceable historic heritage. The Queensland Heritage Act 1992 is now 15 years old, and a lot has changed in Queensland in the past 15 years.

Queensland is renowned for the special character created by its natural and cultural features. This character attracts many tourists and residents to our state. Some of Queensland's most highly prized historic features are our iconic timber and tin buildings, our unique country towns, our splendid historic homesteads, our fine selection of nineteenth century government buildings and our distinctive tropical architecture. At times, development pressures associated with rapid growth have created conflict between urban and infrastructure development and the need to preserve for future generations the important elements of our past. Although it is not possible to save every historic place, there is no irresolvable conflict between planning for our future, carrying out exciting new development and valuing and preserving our history.

Many major development projects underway across Queensland demonstrate the social and economic benefits of incorporating rather than demolishing irreplaceable historic elements. For example, projects such as the reinvigoration of the Teneriffe Wool Stores in Brisbane or the redevelopment of Townsville's defunct railway yards demonstrate the value of combining the best in contemporary planning and architecture while giving new life to our heritage places.

This bill supports the move towards a more proactive, strategic and policy driven approach to heritage. It will deliver timely reforms to address criticisms made about the operation of the Heritage Act and help the Queensland Heritage Act strike the correct balance between protecting heritage places, engaging with the community, encouraging appropriate development and respecting the interests and rights of Queenslanders. By emphasising the need for the Queensland Heritage Council to take a more strategic approach, we look to and help plan for the future. By improving the operational efficiency and accountability of administrative and decision-making processes, the bill is a further demonstration of this government's strong commitment to delivering regulatory reform.

The introduction of maintenance provisions to prevent heritage buildings from being deliberately run down and the inclusion of local heritage registers to allow local governments an easier way of managing heritage places in their area will fill gaps in the current regime that have, at times, resulted in the loss of important heritage places. Currently, the legislation contains no proactive management for archaeological sites, and archaeological finds are often not discovered until they are unearthed during development. Major infrastructure projects, such as Brisbane's bus tunnel, have demonstrated that unexpected archaeological finds do crop up and have the potential to delay essential work.

As part of a cutting-edge approach to archaeological management in Australia, archaeological places are being mapped in the statewide heritage survey. The amendments propose a new category in the Queensland Heritage Register to ensure that information about a site's potential to contain archaeological relics is easily accessible. However, much work remains to be done before we truly have a planned approach to heritage. That is why this government is carrying out a statewide survey of Queensland to identify our heritage and make the Queensland Heritage Register a comprehensive inventory of our most important heritage places. I believe that this comprehensive suite of changes to the Queensland Heritage Act will be broadly welcomed in the community as a balanced approach that provides more efficient processes, respects the rights of affected parties and maintains an effective system to protect Queensland's historic heritage. Consequently, I ask all to support these improvements. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (12.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. This bill is an important reform to ensure that Queensland heritage protection legislation is a strong and effective protection of sites of significance to Queensland's cultural heritage. This bill proposes some significant changes to the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. This legislation has been in place for 15 years and has served us well but this review is timely. It is important that the House note that under the National Liberal Party government of the 1970s and 1980s Queensland lagged behind the rest of the nation in protecting cultural heritage. Similar Commonwealth legislation had been in place for 15 years when the newly elected Goss government introduced the Heritage Buildings Protection Act 1990. Who can forget the tragic loss of the Bellevue Hotel, the Cloudland Ballroom and the Commonwealth Bank in Queen Street?

The Goss Labor government was the first government to move to protect Queensland's cultural heritage. It is entirely appropriate that 15 years after the introduction of the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, the Bligh government is continuing to expand and improve this important area of legislation. This bill will be applauded by the people of the Waterford electorate, particularly those who reside in the historic towns of Beenleigh, Waterford, Bethania and surrounding areas. Beenleigh and surrounds is a place of significant historical value. Our long and valued history is what makes Beenleigh the place that it is.

We are particularly lucky to have a group of hardworking volunteers who work to preserve, protect and celebrate the historical value of Beenleigh and Logan. The Beenleigh District Historical Society has a large group of volunteers preserving local historical buildings and historical artifacts at the Beenleigh Historical Village in Main Street. This is of particular relevance to this bill as the Beenleigh Historical Village is home to a building on the cultural heritage register, the St George's Anglican Church, Beenleigh's first church built in 1876, formerly in Tansey Street.

I pay particular tribute to the executive of the Beenleigh District Historical Society—Anker Laursen, Wendy Charter, Sean Leader, Eric Emmet, Bill Heck, Linda Hetet, Colin Foot and Elveena Byrne. The village is run to a very professional standard by a group of committed volunteers. The Beenleigh Historical Village has gone ahead in leaps and bounds over recent years. Improvements have not only protected and beautified the village but have also allowed the village to become a popular excursion destination for local schools. This means that the village is sharing Beenleigh's heritage value with a new generation of children.

The role of the Beenleigh District Historical Society goes beyond the maintenance of the village to being a strong advocate for the protection of buildings and places of heritage significance in Beenleigh and surrounds. The village is also home to the Logan River and District Family History Society which works to bring together the genealogy of the local area, including both our founding families and newer families. The Logan River and District Family Society, particularly Graham Popple, Kevin Egan and Glenys Prins, have also been strong advocates for the protection of heritage sites in and around Beenleigh.

I will now turn to some of the specific provisions of the bill. The central plank of reform in this bill is the restructure of the role of the Queensland Heritage Council. The changes proposed will see a separation of the cultural heritage assessment and registration function from the administration and enforcement of the register. In short, the EPA will take over the administration of the register and the assessment of planning and development applications against the requirements of the Queensland Heritage Register. This will leave the Queensland Heritage Council with a strategic heritage protection focus rather than being weighed down by administration. This is not a new concept. Planning and development processes in Queensland have consistently moved towards focusing on good planning rather than arguing about individual applications on a case-by-case basis.

Importantly, this bill also ensures that that Queensland Heritage Council can, if requested, provide advice to the chief executive on how cultural heritage value should be protected in a particular case. Tough new penalties of up to \$75,000 will apply if a person carries out development contrary to the requirements of the act. The bill will also remove a restriction from the inclusion of properties on the Heritage Register, namely, that 'there is no prospect of the cultural heritage significance of the place being conserved'. This is a sensible change which will ensure consistency with the scheme of cultural heritage protection contained in the act.

The bill also proposes a series of decision-making time frames to give both applicants and property owners some certainty with this process. Currently, owners and local governments are only required to be notified after a place has been provisionally listed in the register. The process provided by this bill will allow owners, local governments and applicants to have input to the Queensland Heritage Council decision rather than responding to the outcome of the provisional listing decision. Under the proposals contained in this bill, owners and local governments will be notified within 10 business days after an application is received, with a further 10 days for the application to be advertised in newspapers and on the EPA web site.

The unwieldy provisional listing process will be replaced with interim protection orders, providing temporary protection to places while an application for heritage listing is being considered. In order to issue an interim protection order, the chief executive must be satisfied of the cultural heritage value of the place and that an interim protection order is necessary to conserve the significance of the place. This process will mean that a heritage recommendation must be given to the Queensland Heritage Council within 80 business days of the application being received, although this may be extended to 120 business days in some circumstances. The recommendation must then be provided to the applicant, owner, local government and submitters within 10 days, and they have a right to appear before the Queensland Heritage Council to make a submission.

The Queensland Heritage Council will have 60 business days from the time of receiving the recommendation to make a decision on whether a place should be heritage listed. While these steps may seem to cumulatively take some significant time, it is important that we get it right when balancing

property rights and cultural heritage value. This bill will also give the chief executive of the EPA the ability to issue an order for essential maintenance work, requiring owners of state heritage places to carry out maintenance work that is urgently required to protect the place from serious or irreparable damage. This power will ensure that properties cannot be left in a state of disrepair or neglect that might lead to the building being demolished. I am sure this change will be welcomed.

Although it is difficult to know, many who are involved in the protection of Queensland's heritage are suspicious that owners who resent the heritage listing of their property may let the place deteriorate to the point where the building must be demolished. This power will ensure that the chief executive can intervene to ensure that this will not happen. Owners will have 20 business days to comply with the order or face a fine of up to \$75,000. In order to protect places of cultural heritage significance urgently, the minister may issue a stop order, requiring a person to stop and not start work that may affect the cultural heritage significance of a place. Contravention of this order carries a maximum penalty of \$1,275,000.

This bill maintains the distinction between those places of cultural heritage value to the state as a whole and those places of cultural heritage value to a local community. While the former are protected by the Cultural Heritage Register, the latter are protected by town planning schemes and local heritage registers put in place by local governments. This bill proposes a new part 7B to ensure that local governments are making provision for the protection of local heritage matters. These provisions are aimed at those local governments that have not made adequate provisions for identifying and protecting heritage places through their planning schemes. These provisions will require that local governments maintain their own local heritage register. Importantly, these registers are required to be available for inspection free of charge. Local government will remain the decision maker for the listing of heritage places.

In looking at the area that I represent, I must pay tribute to the local heritage protection scheme contained in the Logan City Council Town Planning Scheme. Chapter 4 part 9 of the Logan City Council Town Planning Scheme protects 29 heritage places, including five places also protected by the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. In my electorate there are many important places on this list, including: the Kingston Butter Factory and neighbouring pre-war residences; the Dewar Drive homestead, part of the original dairy farming homes of the Loganholme area; cemeteries in Waterford West and Logan Reserve, including the 1864 Logan Reserve Irish Catholic Cemetery and the nearby Lutheran Cemetery; and the Loganlea Railway Station, reflecting the importance of railways to the development of the Logan and Beenleigh area in the 20th century.

Unfortunately, the Gold Coast City Council's efforts to protect the heritage precincts of Beenleigh, Bethania and Waterford have not been anywhere near as robust. Despite their significant heritage value, the Gold Coast Planning Scheme protects only three local heritage places in Beenleigh: the St George's Church at the Beenleigh Historical Village; the Bethania Lutheran Church—both protected by the Queensland Cultural Heritage Register; and the old garage at 14 Main Street, now a barber's shop.

Surprisingly, the Beenleigh Rum Distillery, while protected by state legislation, is not protected in the Gold Coast Town Planning Scheme. The Gold Coast City Council has recently taken a step in the right direction with the commissioning of the Beenleigh and Sugarcane Land Heritage and Character Study. I must thank Graham Popple, Glenys Prins and the Logan River and District Family History Society who have made strong representations to me about the need to implement the findings of this report as well as their concern about development proposals for Beenleigh's Sundowner Hotel. This report identified five places in the Beenleigh area that are likely to meet the requirements of the Queensland Heritage Register, including the Waterford Primary School, Rocky Point Sugar Mill and surrounding buildings and the old maternity hospital on Boundary Street. Unfortunately, the old maternity hospital was demolished before an application for registration could be made. I understand that the Gold Coast City Council is currently investigating whether this demolition was unlawful.

The report identified 32 further places in the Beenleigh area which are of local heritage significance that are not currently protected in the Gold Coast Town Planning Scheme. I strongly urge the Gold Coast City Council to amend its town planning scheme to include these places as a matter of urgency. Once these places are lost, they are lost forever. Given Logan City Council's strong record in this area, I have referred this matter to the Logan City Council transition committee for consideration by the new Logan City Council in the hope that a new council will take some action on this report.

I hope that this matter can be resolved by our local government, whether that is Gold Coast or Logan. I am glad that the new part 7B proposed by this bill ensures that local government is fulfilling its role in local heritage protection. I am also glad to see that the EPA chief executive will be able to investigate heritage places and make recommendations to local government in respect of places of local heritage value.

This is a tremendous bill which ensures that Queensland's places of cultural heritage value are protected in a way that balances the rights of property owners and the need to protect our cultural heritage. This bill also ensures that local government is doing its bit to protect places of cultural heritage value to local communities. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (12.31 pm): Liberal Party members can walk into the parliament here and say that we have placed a high priority on Queensland's cultural heritage for many, many years. From the days when my friend Rob Akers and others tried to defend the Bellevue Hotel to more recent times, the Liberal Party has consistently emphasised the importance of the cultural heritage of this state and the need to protect it. I am glad to be able to speak today on this bill and raise some of these particular issues.

When I came into this place, one of the first issues I took up—and I am very pleased to say it is probably the first win, if I can put it in those terms, that I had—was the Heiner Road Bridge at Ipswich. It is a very important 1860s sandstone rail bridge that this government had earmarked not for demolition but to be buried under the concrete slab of a K-Mart. It was part of the first railway in the entire world to have been built as a government enterprise, it was one of the first railroad structures built in Queensland, yet this government was going to bury it under the cement slab of a K-Mart.

I took up that issue vigorously in this House, as members would be able to see if they read the *Hansard*, and I was joined by some local residents in Ipswich. I am pleased to say that on that occasion the Heiner Road Bridge was protected and the property development in that area was redesigned, something they initially tried to tell us could not be done.

One of the purposes of this bill is to facilitate the entry and removal of places on the Heritage Register to allow places to be declared as an archaeological place and to protect various items that may come up. The stated aim of the bill is to improve the protection of heritage sites and buildings. The opposition, as my colleague the member for Burdekin said, supports this bill, but it is important to make some critical observations about heritage protection in this state because we have not done it well and we continue to not do it well.

In recent times, another heritage issue that I have attempted to champion when I have had the opportunity is the North Bank development in Brisbane. The North Bank development would obscure Brisbane's major heritage site along the bank of the Brisbane River. A few comments about the heritage value of that site that we stand to lose if the government proceeds with North Bank came from the National Trust of Queensland, which wrote on 14 March 2007—

The National Trust of Queensland is strongly opposed to the North Bank Proposal in its current form. The proposal is grossly over-scaled and further separates the City of Brisbane from its river and its past. The North Bank proposal is located where the Queen's Wharf was situated during Brisbane's convict period, and this is the point from which the city grew. This location will be decimated by the proposal.

This proposal will also substantially diminish views to and from the highly-significant precinct of early buildings along William and George Streets, which extends from Parliament House through to the Treasury (Casino) Building. Brisbane is a river city, and a very important part of understanding Brisbane's origins and cityscape is the ability to see and tell the stories of this historically significant precinct as a whole, rather than catching occasional glimpses of some of its individual components.

The fundamental principles underpinning this proposal need to be seriously questioned.

And it continued. We are here debating a bill to increase the protection of heritage sites in Queensland, yet we have a government intent on building a string of high-rise towers on top of the Brisbane River which would actually hide the historical precinct of Brisbane and cover up forever that part of Brisbane's heritage from which this city grew. If this government is serious about protecting heritage in Brisbane, let it start by protecting the largest historical precinct of early times in Queensland—one which I have barely heard a word about in this House since the introduction of that proposal.

The issues surrounding the preservation of heritage listed sites are complex, and I am pleased so far as these measures go that we are at least acknowledging that. A considerable burden can fall on the owners of heritage listed buildings. We saw that recently with the National Trust of Queensland—an organisation that owns and administers a number of heritage sites and buildings around Queensland—because the ownership structure of these buildings is integrally involved in their preservation.

The National Trust of Queensland enjoys minimal financial support from the state. In order to continue to manage the maintenance of some of its historic products, it had to embark on asset sales. It sold furniture from one of its historic homes to help pay the upkeep on that home. It sold Little Goat Island in Pumicestone Passage in order to raise funds, yet Little Goat Island in its own right had been put aside by a deceased owner expressly for the purpose of heritage protection and education. Yet, because of a lack of government support for the trust and the properties that it has to maintain, the National Trust was forced to sell that asset.

Mrs Sullivan: That is not true, Bruce, and you know it.

Dr FLEGG: I hear the member for Pumicestone interjecting. She did precious little to protect Little Goat Island and its heritage—not just its cultural heritage but also its environmental heritage. It is slap-bang in the middle of Pumicestone passage and one of the most sensitive environmental parts of Queensland.

The National Trust and its financing raise a broader issue, and that is that heritage properties are very expensive to maintain. Whether they are in government ownership like Parliament House, where we stand today, whether they are publicly accessible, like Palma Rosa at Hamilton, whether they are owned by the National Trust of Queensland, or whether they are private homes, they are a very

expensive proposition to maintain. If this government is finally going to get serious about protecting cultural heritage, the issue of the cost of maintaining these buildings as they get older will need to be addressed.

I do not think any of us here are suggesting that the government should be picking up the tab for all the maintenance, but at some stage the government will have to address this issue that for many of these organisations—whether it is the National Trust, which has had a very serious issue with it, whether it is a club or society like Palma Rosa, or whether it is a private home—needs to be addressed, and it is certainly not addressed within the contents of this bill.

I visited Palma Rosa recently. I had a tour with members of the English Speaking Union who have owned that building for quite a long time. They were able to show me firsthand the issues that confront people in Queensland who own major heritage listed assets. Palma Rosa is a magnificent building in Hamilton. It was formerly owned by the family of a Queensland Premier, Sir Arthur Palmer. His family held that for three generations. It was built in 1887 and it was bought by the English Speaking Union in 1972.

The English Speaking Union have made that home available for a number of purposes, but by and large it is available to the public of Queensland to use for functions. If I could give the English Speaking Union in Palma Rosa a small plug while on my feet, it is a magnificent heritage listed property, and it was a privilege to share in an activity there and do a tour of inspection. This property, which needs millions of dollars in upkeep, is something that a small community group such as the English Speaking Union is going to have enormous difficulties with. I note the gratitude that the owners of Palma Rosa showed to Brisbane City Council. Campbell Newman, who has always placed a high priority on the protection of Brisbane's heritage sites, allowed significant rate relief. Otherwise that particular property may well have come into considerable distress.

I look forward to the minister commenting on that issue, because it is a serious issue. I do not raise it in a political way. I think it is an issue which the minister is well and truly aware of. It is probably an easier matter for the government when buildings are held either by the National Trust or the English Speaking Union and they are available to the public. But there would be private homes as well where people, as they enter retirement, will have a lot of difficulty keeping them in the sort of condition we would expect from our heritage sites. It will become a growing issue into the future.

Another heritage issue in Queensland, and I have not heard anyone raise this today, is that of the Shingle Inn.

Mr Lawlor: How old are you?

Dr FLEGG: Mate, I can remember a lot of Brisbane heritage sites and I would like to see them protected. The Shingle Inn was housed on the ground floor of what was known as the City Building in Edward Street between Adelaide and Queen streets. Over 100 cafes were operating in Brisbane city by 1937. The Shingle Inn was the only one of these that survived unchanged in a significant manner until recent times. Of a whole slab of Brisbane's early 20th century history, the only one remaining of 100 was the Shingle Inn.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Dr FLEGG: It is interesting to hear interjections from the member for Southport. What happened to the Shingle Inn? Under the watch of the government, which tried to bury the Heiner Road Bridge under the cement slab of a K-Mart, what happened to the Shingle Inn?

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin, because this is very much heritage in a box. The owners, in order to make way for a development, were given approval to dismantle the Shingle Inn, the last remaining cafe of that era from Brisbane, and put it in pieces in a box. Where is the Shingle Inn today? It is in pieces in a box.

Mr Lawlor: Where do you think it should go?

Dr FLEGG: When this matter was raised in this parliament in a petition from people who have a lot more concern about protecting the heritage of Brisbane than the member for Southport, what was the response of the then minister, Desley Boyle? I will read from a letter and I will table a copy of it for the information of the House. The minister said in reply to a petition to this House—

The Heritage Council was most unhappy with the outcome as it went against the spirit of its original development approval decision. However, there were no lawful alternatives available that would reflect that original agreement.

The minister went on to say—

However, there is no mechanism under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 to require that this occur and therefore neither myself as the minister nor the Heritage Council has the powers to insist that the Shingle Inn interior is incorporated into a new development in the central business district.

I will table a copy of that letter for anyone who may be interested

Tabled paper: Copy of a letter, undated, from the then Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government and Planning and Minister for Women (Hon. Boyle) to the Clerk of the Parliament, responding to a petition relating to the Shingle Inn.

I look forward to the minister in his summing-up indicating to me whether this bill would in fact change that situation, because the Shingle Inn was nothing more than a loophole that has allowed the elimination of a significant part of Brisbane's cultural heritage. I will also table for the benefit of the House some information on the history of the Shingle Inn.

Tabled paper: Copy of an information sheet relating to the Shingle Inn, from the Environmental Protection Agency web site.

I notice that a significant portion of the effect of this bill will be to shift certain responsibilities from the Heritage Council to the EPA. I had a close look at this and I have some reservations with regard to it. Certainly the opposition has been prepared to support the majority of this bill in the hope that the government will ensure that it improves the protection of our heritage. What we want is for someone within the heritage community to be able and willing to speak out. We saw it with the Bellevue, the Heiner Road Bridge and the Shingle Inn, and we are seeing it today with Northbank.

Often the only protection the heritage sites of this state have is when someone is courageous enough to speak out. I certainly hope I see the day when the EPA is prepared to run a campaign to defend parts of our cultural heritage. Too often the running of such a campaign has been left to private citizens, community groups and historical societies. I will be looking for this with great interest. What is needed to protect heritage is people with the willingness to speak out.

In the future I think people will have a very dim view of the act of this present government in burying forever the magnificent city scape of heritage sites of Brisbane under the Northbank proposal. I specifically went to the trouble of driving over the Victoria Bridge. It is not easy to drive over the Victoria Bridge these days. I specifically drove over the Victoria Bridge to have a look at the beautiful cultural and historic area from the Treasury building, which is now the casino, the Conrad hotel, the State Library right down to Parliament House. It is our most important heritage precinct. It is a beautiful sight to look at from South Bank or the Victoria Bridge. Future generations will never get to see that view in the form that we see it today if this government proceeds with hiding it behind and burying it under its ill-conceived Northbank proposal.

The final comment I will make is that there may be occasion—and I look forward to the minister's comment on this—when the government needs to acquire a building as the only way to protect it. I think it should be the exception. I am sure the minister would agree with me on that. We have an increasing burden as these historic buildings get older. I believe in a minority of cases that the government will need to look at setting up some sort of fund to purchase the odd example where it cannot be adequately protected in any other way. We have lovely heritage here in Brisbane. We have lost a fair bit of it already. I want to see us fight to preserve what we have left of it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Before I call the member for Currumbin, I would like to welcome the principal and captains from Mitchelton State High School in the electorate of Minister Geoffrey Wilson.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (12.52 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. As members have heard from the shadow minister, the honourable member for Burdekin, the coalition supports the overall intent of this bill, albeit with some reservations which she has clearly outlined already in this House, as have other opposition members.

As stated in the explanatory notes the objectives of the bill are to amend the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 to enable the Queensland Heritage Council to perform a more strategic role in conserving Queensland's cultural heritage; to introduce more accountable, transparent and efficient administrative processes; to integrate the identification and protection of historical archaeological places into the management framework of the Queensland Heritage Register; and to introduce improved protection for local heritage places.

At the outset, I would like to place on record my full support for strategies which appropriately recognise places and buildings of heritage value in Queensland. However, I also fully support the upholding of fundamental legislative principles with regard to the rights and liberties of individuals in this regard. In doing so I note that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in *Alert Digest No. 10 of 2007* raises several concerns with this bill that resulted in several pieces of correspondence to the minister seeking clarification.

Moving from Adelaide 20 years ago where sizeable value is placed on the heritage factor and the accompanying traditions these structures of bygone eras embody to the modern, rapidly expanding Gold Coast—which back then was unkindly described as a cultural desert—was quite a shock to my family and I. Despite our scant supply of older buildings, I would like to congratulate the Gold Coast City Council and its Urban Design and Heritage Unit on the dedicated efforts it makes to recognise and protect local buildings of historical significance. They are few and far between, as I have stated, due to the rapid urban development of the Gold Coast. I was surprised at comments by the member for Waterford concerning the Gold Coast City Council as I believe much is being done.

Having lived in a sandstone and then a bluestone cottage, both with bullnose verandahs, leadlight windows, ornate cornices and ceilings, I have a lot of respect for old buildings with their quaint and detailed handiwork showcasing the talents of the tradespeople and society of that era. However, a greater shock than moving to the Gold Coast with its absence of old architecture was being elected into parliament and witnessing this current Labor government's abysmal track record with regard to the level of assistance provided for such places. As heritage legislation was only introduced in 1992 one shudders to think what was already lost.

Therefore, when this bill was tabled and came before the scrutiny committee, certain sections did arouse a degree of suspicion, despite the overall objectives and intent of the government, as presented in the explanatory notes accompanying this bill, heralding positive changes. I remind members of this House that on 25 May 2006 the member for Cairns, in her role as minister for environment, local government, planning and women, announced an audit of heritage places in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. This announcement came on the heels of the National Trust campaign highlighting government neglect.

Of note are the figures the then minister provided to the House of heritage places already included on the register. Listed were 1,400 places, 124 religious places, 123 memorials or cemeteries, 33 parks or gardens and 241 commercial places. I ask the minister whether he believes that this bill will properly address the shortcomings of the past and will our recognised heritage listed places enjoy real assistance?

How can this government justify pumping millions into audits to identify additional places while a number of the places currently on the register have been left underfunded, neglected and subsequently fall into disrepair? It is also important that appropriate resources are provided to the Environmental Protection Agency to facilitate the necessary follow-through which is required when assessing many of these heritage issues. This is of genuine concern and was raised by the honourable member for Burdekin earlier in this debate.

As a member of the National Trust Queensland for numerous years, I am well aware it has long been crying out for more funding. May I remind members of the petition the National Trust established in 2006 exposing the shameful neglect and absence of any community based heritage incentive scheme for two years and which called for the reinstatement of this worthy program. It cited the fact that New South Wales and Victoria have programs in the millions of dollars and all other states and territories have incentive grant schemes.

We have only to look at the front-page headline on the trust's June 2006 newsletter which states 'Trust challenges government on heritage inactivity'. It states—

The National Trust of Queensland asks for your support in its campaign to convince the current State Government that the conservation of Queensland's rich heritage is worth a far greater priority than it is now receiving.

It further states that it has—

... mounted a campaign to draw public attention to what it sees as an urgent and immediate problem.

I turn to the impacts of this bill. It seeks to transfer the day-to-day responsibilities of the Queensland Heritage Council along with its role as a referral agency for development applications to the EPA. As we have encountered in the Currumbin electorate, development applications can be fairly contentious and our community has voiced its concerns numerous times over deficiencies with the Integrated Planning Act. What this bill does not address is some of the issues which have been raised over time with respect to IPA and heritage value properties.

Many times in this House I have raised the concerns of my local community about a particular place believed to possess significant heritage value, specifically the former Coolangatta State School building atop Kirra Hill. As members of the both the 51st and 52nd parliaments have heard on many occasions, residents in my electorate have been fighting hard to have the former state school building listed on the Heritage Register.

In the four years since the formation of the 'Save Kirra Hill' group comprising passionate residents, many of whom attended the school, the site has been gifted to the community but it is awaiting final gazettal and transfer by the state government. Applications for heritage listing have been lodged and these dedicated locals have made it clear that they will continue their fight.

One application for heritage listing was knocked back. This occurred at a time when the National Trust was waging its campaign against the government's neglect of our state's historical places. It has been said that the thought of having to spend money to restore a building would rule out the old school building as the government had ceased funding for special incentive programs and that was one of the reasons for this rejection.

Kirra Hill has always been an important visual landmark on the southern end of the Gold Coast and the beach at the base has historically been one of the most frequented since surf bathing became popular on the Gold Coast in the 1800s. It should be preserved as an important part of the Gold Coast scenic amenity and local character. I refer to section 42H regarding the transfer of responsibility for administering the Heritage Register to the chief executive of the EPA.

What we have on the Gold Coast is almost a reverse situation. The Gold Coast City Council has recognised the local historical significance and cultural value of a building on this premier site. Without doubt, the Coolangatta State School has strong local ties with the community and due to its age has a rich history. It was the first school in Coolangatta and was called into existence due to a border closure between Queensland and New South Wales.

The Gold Coast City Council recognised the Coolangatta State School in the Coolangatta Urban Heritage and Character Study published in 2000 and recommended that the main components of the buildings be preserved on site. Further, it recommended that Kirra Hill parkland as well as the building should remain in public ownership. This property has been allowed to languish due to the neglect of the state government and the government not having the foresight to fund a proper maintenance program.

It is also a sad situation when war memorials of symbolic, historical and national significance have to be removed from a site due to the lack of action by this government.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Before calling the member for Currumbin, I recognise in the public gallery students and staff from the Miles State School in the electorate of Warrego, which is represented in this parliament by Mr Howard Hobbs.

Mrs STUCKEY: In 1948 at the Coolangatta State School there was a dedication of a small white obelisk to the memory of four past pupils who were killed in World War II. The memorial itself is about a metre high. It is in good condition but it is grubby and the paint is peeling. It is very obvious the plaque has not been polished in years. Unfortunately this memorial was removed by the local RSL club in October 2005 for fear of its future once the school was vacated. If the state government had got its act together in 2004, then this situation would not have even eventuated. I ask the minister for consideration to be given for an interim protection order to be applied against Kirra Hill and the Coolangatta State School building.

I would also ask the minister to clarify if under section 42F taxpayers will be afforded the right to make oral representation about a heritage recommendation before a heritage decision is made on properties which fall under the ownership of the state. As I have said, I support the recognition of heritage value properties but I am concerned if owners of these properties are severely financially compromised. I am sure that many local residents would like more opportunity to plead their case before the Heritage Council and, at the passing of this bill, the EPA.

Another issue that deserves clarification is if someone who is not the owner of a privately owned dwelling can in fact apply for that property to be heritage listed, and perhaps the minister could enlighten us in his reply. Section 54E introduces an obligation on an owner of a heritage listed property who has been issued with a maintenance notice to carry out essential maintenance work on a state heritage place. It is an offence under this legislation for an owner to fail to comply with a notice. It is important that this obligation on owners is not taken too far. During this debate other members have echoed these sentiments. In the explanatory notes it is outlined that, so a notice does not have an unreasonable impact on the owner, only minor work may be required.

The previous minister stated in a ministerial media statement dated 30 November 2006 that the \$5 million Living Buildings heritage conservation fund was a Beattie government election commitment to help Queenslanders to manage their properties. It is a welcome injection for sure, but when one adds up the number of existing properties, as I listed earlier in my speech, many of them requiring repairs, then this fund will not go very far. I am genuinely worried about the impost. Some homes have been kept in families for generations in the private dwelling sector in terms of heritage listed properties. There is enormous emotional attachment to these properties and there perhaps is not the same enormous financial capacity.

Also in the previous minister's 30 November statement she said that there is lots of scope for owners and communities to adapt heritage buildings for modern use while conserving their heritage values. In reality, this is difficult to do, particularly from an aesthetic viewpoint. Much of the work we are talking about here requires skilled and uncommon tradespeople. In fact, they would be called artisans when looking at the lacework, the window frames, the cornices and the shaped verandas.

As much as I value the heritage listing, as I have said, these properties can become an absolute financial nightmare. I speak from firsthand experience here after owning a property, admittedly in another state, that was registered without our knowledge, and that is why I asked the minister to clarify whether people who are not owners can apply to have somebody else's property listed. Having strangers walk around your property asking how to get in and being told that a wrought iron staircase is rotting which you know will require specialist help but is essential work can be quite financially forbidding, as can having to put up scaffolding and the like to repoint stonework or to fix roofs.

I would appreciate it if the minister could spell out more clearly as to where the defining point falls between minor and major work here. As I have said, essential work can amount to many thousands of dollars and be exorbitant in some cases. In addition, I would encourage the government to look at

innovative ways to let all Queenslanders know about valuing their heritage and perhaps running some sort of competition or education program that will involve a lot more people than it currently does. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (2.35 pm): The Queensland Heritage Act 1992 was breakthrough legislation in the conservation of our state's unique cultural heritage, especially in relation to the built form of that heritage. After decades of destruction—more often than not sponsored by government and more than a few pairs of white shoes—the Queensland Heritage Act was an integral element in the Goss Labor government's reform program for Queensland. Often in an instant iconic Queensland places were swept away. Places such as Cloudland and the Bellevue Hotel are, as the Dean Brothers would say, nothing but memories. So the legislative protection of our heritage places was long overdue. Equally, 15 years after that legislation this update and response to different community expectations and needs is very welcome.

The bill before us amends the 1992 Queensland Heritage Act, the Integrated Planning Act 1997 and makes minor amendments to other relevant legislation. The key elements with regard to the objectives of the bill are that it gives a more strategic role for the Queensland Heritage Council; accountable, transparent and efficient administrative processes for entering places in the Queensland Heritage Register; efficient integrated development assessment; and those issues that speakers before me have made mention of, particularly the identification and protection of historical archeological places and also, and very importantly, as I will mention again in a moment, improved protection for local heritage sites.

The operation of the system under the 1992 act is largely reactive and, as a consequence, there has been a concern that the protection and promotion of places of cultural heritage is not perfectly served by that current system. Notably—and I note the contribution made by the member for Currumbin immediately preceding mine—the nomination of places and properties often occurs as a reaction to a proposal for development. In some cases the owners of the property are unaware of the claims of cultural heritage significance at the time of conception of their proposal. Were the owners aware of the details—were they aware of the cultural, historical and heritage significance of their properties—I would contend that in today's environment it would be more than likely that they would incorporate, accommodate and recognise these issues in their proposals for development.

It is my very strong contention from my experience in working with a range of people in relation to the support of heritage buildings, particularly in our great city of Brisbane, that a living heritage is often a much better heritage. A building that is operated and used for current and useful purposes rather than set aside as some sort of museum piece is a much better way of maintaining and supporting our cultural heritage. I make reference in that sense to the Bellevue, and I have mentioned that before, and I know other speakers, including the member for Waterford, have made mention of it. That historic place was swept away, as I say, by the lack of protection for heritage sites.

I mention that because it is very true that that building was a very degraded and unsustainable building at the time of its destruction. Frankly, it would have been very difficult for it to have been restored. That is something that not many people who opposed its demolition at the time were willing to admit. But the building became like that because the government let it become so. It became like that because it was in the hands of the government—or indeed the parliament—and it was allowed to fall into that state of disrepair. If there were the declaration and the setting out of that site on the Heritage Register, there would have been a greater incentive to do the maintenance and to give the building that support. That is why I also appreciate and congratulate the minister on the content of this legislation in terms of requirements for remediation and for the protection of heritage places into the future.

Further, in relation to that concern that I had about owners who would sometimes not be aware of the heritage issues associated with their property before they even conceived of their development proposals, these situations would often happen where, as I say, a listing might be sought to be made after a proposal has come forward. It would be a reaction to a proposal. So there would be further confrontation and conflict often inevitably leading to court hearings. That was effectively being encouraged by the circumstance where nominations for listing arose after owners had already expended considerable resources and energy on designing a proposed development. It would be much better, under the regime that we are seeking to bring forward through these amendments, to have a situation in which the heritage values of these places are well known to everyone in the community, and particularly the owners, who would then have the ability to be aware of that and be able to take that into account in any proposals that they may seek to make. That is why the government's action to conduct a comprehensive statewide survey of Queensland's cultural heritage places is extremely important and vital to the implementation of these amendments to the legislation.

I particularly want to acknowledge and thank the minister, and indeed his predecessors in this role, who have been involved in the long consultation around this legislation and the review of the Queensland Heritage Act—Minister Nelson-Carr and Minister Boyle—and for the provision of the \$2.725 million over five years to complete the survey that will make this register a much more comprehensive and transparent document. So rather than relying purely on nominations arising in

reaction to development proposals, the more strategic role for the Queensland Heritage Council, based upon this aforementioned statewide heritage survey identifying the places for potential addition to the register, is a much better process and a much more appropriate way for the council to be dealing with things rather than in that totally reactive manner.

A more accountable, transparent and efficient administrative process for entering places in the Queensland Heritage Register is indeed welcomed not only by owners and managers of properties but also by those people who are passionate about protecting our heritage places. I also note the objects of an efficient integrated development assessment system conducted by the EPA rather than by the Heritage Council itself, aside from those instances that I referred to in relation to the Bellevue where the government was the owner of the property.

I wish to turn now to that handful of places that are on the state Heritage Register in my electorate of Stafford. They are indeed a handful, but they are very important places and places that I wish to acknowledge have a right to be on that register. I trust that the survey will potentially identify others that would be appropriate to place on the state register. I also make the distinction between the state register and the provisions in the legislation that allow for a local heritage register.

At Lutwyche in my electorate there is the Conon property, which was built by the McLennan family in 1863. Certainly, to some extent it is under threat from a local neighbourhood plan that has been brought forward by the Brisbane City Council for the Lutwyche Road corridor. But despite the fact that the original property has been subdivided and the house is now surrounded completely by residential development, I think it will be able to be accommodated in that redevelopment and be available for the enjoyment of the wider public, despite the fact that it is a private residence. By 'the enjoyment of the wider public' I mean being open as a vista that the rest of the community can enjoy rather than being hemmed in by scrappy remnant residential development.

I also note in my electorate there is the former Albion Fire Station, which was built in 1927, and which is indicative of a certain period of early 20th century fire brigade buildings around Brisbane. It is a great icon for the local community. I also refer to the Holy Cross Laundry at Wooloowin, which has continuously operated under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy since 1888. That property is a fantastic piece of heritage architecture, but also imbued into it is an extraordinary history of the community of Brisbane. Of course, the Holy Cross Laundry continues to service a wide range of institutions in greater Brisbane, but it has its traditions in being a place that unmarried mothers would go in our city. In an era when there was a very different attitude to the circumstances in which these women found themselves, they would spend some time working at the laundry and then return home to their communities. It is important for all of us in the community to recognise, understand and interpret the heritage of the Holy Cross Laundry, but it is even better that it can continue to be an operating laundry that continues to provide great services to a large number of people in the community under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy, who, as I said, have been operating that site since 1888.

There is also the iconic Stafford State School building, which was built in 1948. It is a great example of Department of Public Instruction property. Obviously, it continues to be used for its original purpose and I am sure it will continue to play a great role, no matter what its future might be, in the Stafford community as a real icon for the whole of Stafford.

I note the provisions in the bill that ensure that local authorities establish a local heritage register. I also note the comments of previous contributors to this debate, including those of my colleague the member for Waterford, who expressed concerns about the poor management of heritage sites by some local governments. I am pleased to report that in this instance the Brisbane City Council has been quite good in maintaining a high-quality local heritage register which, by way of completeness, I should note includes one heritage site in my electorate over and above those that are on the state register, and that is the former Stafford Police Station, which is located on the corner of Stafford and Webster roads.

While talking about these local sites, I want to acknowledge an institution that is not listed, because it is a group of people, which is very dear to my heart and with which I am very proud to have been associated, and that is the Chermside and Districts Historical Society. Although the Chermside and Districts Historical Society has not had the great opportunity to be directly involved in the heritage sites that are on the state register or the Brisbane City Council register, it captures and maintains a lot of important heritage not only about local communities and local people in the old Kedron shire but also about buildings—and some buildings that have been demolished.

The Chermside and Districts Historical Society, of which I was the founding president, was able to capture a fantastic record of buildings that had to then go. For instance, there was the Chermside Fire Station and the former Chermside Police Station which went by the by to make way for an earlier extension—not the latest extension—of Westfield Chermside. There has also been more recently—and I will come to this in a little bit more detail in a moment for the minister's benefit—the demolition of the Dawn Theatre, a picture theatre dating from the 1920s, on Gympie Road at Chermside.

I want to pay tribute to a whole range of people from the Chermside and Districts Historical Society who have played a tremendous role in maintaining the history of that local community and obtaining and establishing a terrific archive. They include some members of the executive such as Pat

O'Shea, Beverley Isdale, Carol Cunningham, Margaret Argo and Gaye Sparkes, but there are many others who continue to do a lot of great work capturing the history of the local area, maintaining it for future generations and ensuring that we go back and find the places and ensure that there is an awareness about place and the impact that it has had on people over many generations in our community.

In conclusion, I want to encourage the minister to consider some matters for the future in terms of how this area of governance might be further enhanced. I know it is extremely important that we protect the detail of the physicality of many of these heritage sites, but in some instances there are sites—and I mentioned the Bellevue—which are not going to be able to be saved. Some of the sites have structural problems and some have issues surrounding the redevelopment potential of those sites which means they may not necessarily be saved in perpetuity. That is why I would want to flag the concept of acknowledging the past of places in necessary development as it goes on.

For instance, I mentioned the now vacant site where the Dawn Theatre stood on Gympie Road. That place was very important to the cultural life of the north side of Brisbane for a long time. It is situated in an area that is very likely to see significant development in the important Chermiside area as part of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. I think it would be appropriate and fantastic to see any redevelopment of that site which might include commercial, retail and indeed residential redevelopment incorporate some level of an acknowledgement, a recalling, an emoting on the redeveloped site of the old facade, which was very famous. There was a high facade at the front of the old theatre with 'Dawn' emblazoned across it. I think it would be terrific to see that incorporated.

Mr Lee: It would be a new dawn.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: It would be a new dawn. I acknowledge that interjection from the member for Indooroopilly. That emoting and that acknowledging of place and practice is not always about maintaining the bricks and mortar but about ensuring that the memories continue and that there is a nod to those little things in ongoing development. It is on that note that I congratulate the minister and his predecessors on the review of this legislation and on the very worthwhile changes that are contained within the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (2.54 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. I applaud the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation and also the Environmental Protection Agency for undertaking such a far-reaching reform of the Queensland Heritage Act. It is not hard to see why it is that the Liberals and the Nationals do not get on when we sit in the parliament and listen to presentations such as that which we received from the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Moggill. He addressed the parliament and for the best part of 20 minutes he absolutely, completely and utterly denounced the Queensland National Party's record on heritage issues. He was scathing in his criticism of the Queensland National Party on heritage issues. There have not been many occasions when I have listened to the member for Moggill and thought, 'He has really nailed it this time.' But his criticism of the Queensland Nationals was spot on. Their record in this state on heritage matters is abysmal and is appalling and we should never forget exactly how bad it was when the National Party was running this state.

In the interests of fairness, it would only be appropriate for me, having praised the member for Moggill, to offer some critique of his speech to this parliament. I did want to set the record straight in relation to a matter on which he was clearly very confused and that was his comments about Little Goat Island. I would refer all honourable members to a speech delivered in this place by the member for Pumicestone on Tuesday, 29 November 2005 in which she very clearly set forth exactly what was going on involving the National Trust and also Little Goat Island. Let me put this on the parliamentary record.

The vast majority—I am told well over 90 per cent of Little Goat Island—is clearly protected and will not be developed by the rapacious developers that the member for Moggill seemed to think were going to arrive there. The other portion of Little Goat Island which was that small portion that was owned independently by the National Trust is also, I understand, in very good hands. It is zoned residential A. There is going to be a house built upon it. I am very confident that Little Goat Island is in great hands in terms of protection of its heritage values and in terms of protection of its natural and environmental values. I would encourage the member for Moggill to fully educate himself and appraise himself of all of the issues associated with Little Goat Island. Frankly, it would be wise of him not to take on board some of the mischief that has been spread around the place by some of his party colleagues from that part of Brisbane. Far be it for me to suggest that they may have some financial or other interest in seeing particular things happen on Little Goat Island. The member for Moggill is completely wrong in suggesting that the state government was anything other than sensible in its dealings there.

Queensland's rich and varied cultural heritage combination of geographic, economic and political factors has contributed to a marked regionalism in Queensland. This distinct regional character is evident in our heritage places ranging from historic mining towns like Charters Towers and Mount Morgan to the sugar towns of Mackay and Innisfail. They are typified by our unique elevated tropical timber and corrugated iron roofed Queenslander houses. Queensland is undergoing unprecedented growth fuelled by the mining sector and by population migration. The Queensland government is

planning to provide for and manage this growth through its infrastructure planning, main roads planning, affordable housing initiatives and a review of the Integrated Planning Act 1997. This bill is a critical part of this future planning. The bill will ensure that the development of the state is not at the detriment of the heritage places that characterise our state. While we plan for growth, we must preserve the special character that sets Queensland apart from other parts of Australia.

In closing, I put on record my very grave concern for the condition of Keating House on Westminster Street, Indooroopilly. It is a delightful example of some of the great architecture that existed in the western suburbs of Brisbane when that area was first settled. Keating House, which I think has seen better days, members may know as that old building that is diagonally opposite the Indooroopilly Railway Station. I am told one of the fascinating features of the house is the fact that the original stables are still standing on the site. I believe that it is a building with some value and in need of protection, but I must say in need of urgent repair. I support the legislation.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.00 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to put on the record a small number of issues in my own electorate in relation to heritage listed buildings. People who find themselves the owners of heritage listed buildings—I will not say accidentally, but as a result of a process—have to be regarded with a great deal of respect and have to be afforded support in terms of the additional cost of upkeep on those buildings. There is an additional cost to them as custodians of what we are claiming as our heritage. They need consideration in terms of the financial burden of ownership of those buildings.

There was an incident in my region, which is resolved now, where one of the local councils nominated an old picture theatre for heritage listing. The member for Stafford was talking about the picture theatre in his electorate. This was not the original picture theatre, but one of the original picture theatres in the Gladstone City area. It was nominated by council for heritage listing. It was accepted onto the heritage list. The majority of the building was made of corrugated iron, which pits over time. Some of the fallout in our area is particularly corrosive for metals.

In the last four or five years the family who owned the theatre, the Upton family, found themselves with a building that was uninsurable because nobody would take the risk for it. The fittings were timber but the externals were corrugated iron. There was a lot of aged timber in the building that obviously was very susceptible to fire. It had not been used as a picture theatre; a new modern picture theatre, as occurs, had been constructed. This building occupied prime real estate. The older Mr Upton, who was part owner of the building, had operated the theatre right up to his retirement, which was quite late. He had a great deal of respect for the city's built infrastructure, in particular its heritage listed infrastructure. This building had practical problems such as a sloping floor and it was difficult to use it for anything.

When it was nominated for heritage listing, the heritage group went through and accepted it as a heritage listed building. After a couple of years Mr Upton applied for the listing to be lifted because he could not get tenants for the building. There had been an attempt by one of the cultural groups to get funding to establish a cultural organisation but it was unable to achieve that. This building was slowly deteriorating. Periodically young people—we assume—broke in because of what was left behind. They were not particularly destructive but they would get in and spend a couple of nights inside. This was becoming very worrisome for the old gentleman. It was only through protracted negotiation and then potential court proceedings that the listing was lifted. For all the time that the building was heritage listed and not being used for anything he had to pay full rates on that block of land. It really impacted on his quality of life and his health. The issue has been resolved now. With the heritage listing of a building, whilst we are the benefactors in terms of our cultural heritage being maintained for us and for future generations, we need to also share in some of those costs.

Another building in my electorate, the Star of the Sea Catholic Church, has been listed. I would not say it is a big church. It is a wooden building. I would like to speak generically on purpose-built facilities, churches in particular. Congregational needs change over time—not only needs in terms of the style of service and the facilities that churches and other purpose-built buildings have to provide but also accountability responsibilities change. The heritage commission needs to be flexible in the right way. I do not mean so flexible that the entire heritage value of a building disappears. If one looks at the practicalities of the Catholic Church or a denominational church wanting to retain its congregational worship or fellowship, there are also demands to have more social times so perhaps they require facilities such as a covered area, because we are all sun smart now. One of the issues that many churches face is that of answering the concerns of parents in terms of supervision. Wherever the church congregation is, irrespective of age, there needs to be visual supervision of children. If I have little children and they are off in another part of the church building, there needs to be ample supervision of them in terms of their own safety. I am not saying that to cast aspersions on anybody. In our day and age it is a practical consideration.

In maintaining those cultural and heritage values, changes made to the infrastructure need to be flexible so that they are still in harmony with the style and construction type and so that the users of the facility, whether it is a church congregation or another specialist group, are able to achieve what they want in terms of the use of the building. There are occurrences where the core purpose of the building

has not changed but the way that service is provided—whether that is a church service or some other sort of cultural pursuit—has changed because of accountability and supervision requirements in this day and age. The owners and custodians of those buildings have been unable to modify or change in any way the layout of the building because of its cultural registration, and that hampers their ability to continue to provide the service that is their core business.

As a state we in some ways are the poorer because we do not have an area like The Rocks. The member for Moggill talked about the precinct along George Street where there are those beautiful old buildings. One is now a casino, which raises a question, and one is a motel. The facades and the architecture are absolutely beautiful. This building here is a gift to our community. It gives me a great deal of pride to be able to ask schoolchildren in my electorate who have been to Parliament House whether they know that this building is theirs and that it is part of their and their parents' heritage. I tell them to come and have a look and understand and respect the beauty and the talent of those who not only designed but also built these buildings. The investment that is made over time to maintain the buildings in good order and condition is an investment not only in the future but also in the past.

The architecture that we find in our rural communities is diminishing. Things like the old tin sheds and old-style buildings are lost because of the privations of time. The deterioration of buildings—unless the owners have the resources to keep those buildings up to scratch—will, in a relatively short period of time, mean the loss of them. I drive up to Rocky on not a regular basis but often when I have to because a lot of regional meetings are held up there. There are a couple of little old tin shacks on the way up that would probably have no cultural value to some; they are the old settlers shacks with a skillion out the back. One of them is at a very precarious lean at the moment, and I think it is probably past being restored. There is another corrugated iron shed near the Marmor garage that has always caught my attention. It would have to be on a dirt floor because of the style of it. At one stage, it had a very impressive bougainvillea out the front that was haunting the front door. It had a character about it. Whoever owns the property has cleared up the noxious weed, so that is a plus, but the building has been left there and I hope it stays. Because it is not on stumps, nothing can really go too pear-shaped in terms of its structural integrity. It is more about the integrity of the cladding, which as I said is predominantly corrugated iron.

Those buildings are as much a part of our heritage as some of the sandstone buildings. I hope we can keep enough of those buildings so that our kids and their kids can see that the settlers of our state—and I am sure it is the same in other states—survived in some fairly austere circumstances. They worked hard, tirelessly and in pretty poor conditions to give us the affluence that we enjoy today.

There are two groups in my electorate that I would also like to acknowledge. The larger of the two is the Calliope River Historical Village. The inaugural president was Lloyd Curtis and his wife, Val, who was a stalwart. They were instrumental in the establishment of the historical village. Calliope Shire Council has always been enormously supportive of the village. The current president, Harold Harvey, and all of the subsequent committees work on a voluntary basis. The historical village markets are held about eight times a year, so not every month, and they generate quite a bit of funding now to reinvest into the historical society.

A lot of the buildings that they have relocated to the village are not heritage listed, but they are very much a part of our local heritage. They include homesteads, a church, a school building, the old Calliope police lockup, one of the original slab huts, the Barmundu station, the old station shed from Gladstone and the Raglan Dance Hall—which is fully corrugated iron on the outside with a beautiful hard timber floor and exposed timber beams. It is a lovely stereotypical bush hall. The historical village has very patiently and very responsibly renovated those buildings when they have been moved on to the site. Small businesses, in particular, and larger businesses in the electorate have provided a lot of support with things like trailers, cranes, the materials for renovations and those types of things.

That whole village precinct is a wonderful replication of some of our earlier buildings. It has been achieved through the dedication and hard work of those committees, and it has been on a voluntary basis. People from a couple of unemployment schemes have worked out there. That whole village precinct is a tribute to everybody who has had input into it. It will be a place where groups can go for many years into the future and have a look at the architectural style that was prevalent in the early and mid 20th century.

The other group is a relatively new group, and that is the Ubobo Historical Society. It has only one main building of an historical nature on its site at the moment, and that is an old homestead. It is unique because of the timber panelling that is inside. It is all local timber which has been painstakingly gouged out—or what would you call it?

Mr Weightman: Restored.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Yes, that is a good word. It is beautiful panelling and a lot of work has gone into it. The word I was looking for was 'routing', and it has all been hand done. It is a lovely example of a country farmhouse out in the Boyne Valley. That little group—and there are only a handful of them who work at the Ubobo site—is also establishing camping type facilities so that school groups can spend a weekend there and learn about the valley's history, not only its architectural history but its cultural history as well.

I think every one of us here would have smaller or larger groups in our electorates that are dedicated to the preservation of our past—whether that is built structures, cultural articles or a cultural phenomenon. They are priceless in terms of their ability to be able to retain the history of our state—as I said, both our built history and our oral history. I want to put on the record my appreciation to all of these groups. As I said, I support the legislation but I implore groups like the Queensland Heritage Council to be practical in their application of the protections that they administer to ensure that people who are custodians of our heritage listed buildings are also able to function in those buildings and carry on the pursuits that the buildings were initially built for.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (3.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. The bill is an essential part of the comprehensive reforms the government has initiated to develop a more proactive and strategic approach to heritage in Queensland. The changes reflect the government's clearly established priorities: to deliver sustainable outcomes, to improve engagement with the community and to reduce the burden of unnecessary red tape.

I would like to speak in particular about improvements that the bill will make to an area that has not previously been dealt with in a systematic way, the management of local heritage places by local government. There are places that are significant to the local community that do not, on balance, meet the very high threshold for entry into the Queensland Heritage Register. Currently, the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 makes no provision for the management of local heritage places which are often of great importance to their communities and certainly warrant consideration for preservation. An inconsistent approach and variable management of heritage issues by local government has fed uncertainty and encouraged reactive responses by community groups to development proposals that affect their valued heritage places.

The preliminary findings of the statewide heritage study, which is currently underway in three regions across Queensland, indicated that in recent years many heritage places have been lost as a consequence of urban expansion. Demolition of landmark buildings without any planning approval or community input has highlighted the pressing need to improve protection for important local heritage places. Unless a particular local government has made the effort to survey its region and incorporate heritage into its planning scheme, there is no mechanism to appropriately consider the importance of the place while assessing a proposed development.

Some local governments, such as the Charters Towers and Ipswich councils, have consistently shown commitment to preserving the outstanding character and heritage of their area. However, they remain the exception. My own local government area of Cairns City Council is certainly a council that needs to improve its attitude towards protecting heritage buildings in that city. There has been an increase in the last few years in the number of local planning schemes dealing with heritage. The majority still have inadequate heritage provisions. The aforementioned Cairns City Council has produced a heritage plan, but whether it vehemently sticks to that plan when the crunch comes at development approval stage is another question.

Currently, only about 35 per cent of Queensland local government areas have a local heritage register, leaving large areas of Queensland with no viable system for managing its heritage and many regional heritage sites vulnerable. To prevent further unplanned losses of historic heritage places and to reduce reactive nominations to the state Heritage Register, a workable system for local heritage in all local government areas is urgently required.

By providing a simple, accountable process for keeping local heritage registered and supporting the registers with a code to guide development assessment, these amendments will especially assist local governments with limited resources. This amendment is designed to empower local governments with a robust system. A local government will decide what is entered into its heritage register. The new system for keeping local heritage registers, which requires the register to be kept readily available to the public, will make identification and protection of local heritage places more practical. By providing a flexible approach that takes account of a local government's planning scheme, the new system for local heritage will mesh effectively with the imminent changes to the local government boundaries and the important reforms being proposed for the Integrated Planning Act 1997.

The improvements to the heritage management framework contained in this bill deliver significant regulatory reform and are an important step towards a more consistent statewide approach to heritage.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Douglas Shire Historical Society. It is trying to do something different from what most members have spoken about. Most members have spoken about preserving buildings and significant landmarks like the Dawn Theatre, which the member for Stafford talked about, for example. The historical society in Port Douglas is trying to return a natural area to the community. Land beside the sugar wharf in Port Douglas should be excavated and returned to beach sand to help restore the waterfront, according to the Douglas Shire Historical Society. So we can see that what is important to local communities can take all sorts of different forms and people's attempts not only to protect but also to restore heritage sites can take unusual methods or unusual paths.

I think the Douglas Shire Historical Society should be commended for its work. It is an important community organisation in my electorate. There are still some important heritage places remaining in Port Douglas, such as the Port Douglas sugar wharf, which hosted for many years the Ben Cropp Shipwreck Museum. Some people might remember that. Its efforts to preserve this site in particular but also other areas in the Douglas shire are to be commended. I table for the information of the House an article from the *Port Douglas and Mossman Gazette* of 11 October that deals with some of those issues that I am talking about.

Tabled paper: Copy of an article, dated 11 October 2007, Port Douglas & Mossman Gazette, page 5, titled 'Reclaim beach site'. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (3.21 pm): I join my colleague in rising to speak in support of the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I acknowledge the work of the former minister who brought this bill into the House and the ongoing work of the current minister, the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, who has carriage of this comprehensive reform to the Queensland Heritage Act that we are debating today.

The Queensland Heritage Act recognises and protect places throughout Queensland that tell the story of our state. Many members have commented on particular things in their electorates and talked about how heritage helps us to understand how people have dealt with challenges and opportunities that have unfolded throughout Queensland's history. Heritage also tells us how events in that history, along with Queensland's broader environment, helped shape the lives of Queenslanders throughout the times. In Queensland we have a rich and diverse history, from our modest workers cottages to our grand buildings. This building that we are in today is an example of one of those grand buildings, and the member for Gladstone spoke eloquently about this building. However, as mentioned by others, heritage is not confined to grand buildings. It might be captured in bridges or railway stations, historic mines, commercial buildings, war memorials or country halls. All of those particular buildings and facilities tell their own story.

In my electorate there are a number of important heritage places. There is the former Yeronga Fire Station on Ipswich Road—a building that is noticeable for its heritage and character value. There are a number of army reserve Second World War sites in my electorate. The reserve drill hall on Dudley Street in Annerley is one of those important places. There was recently some development near that drill hall that created quite a significant community reaction which showed me how important the community feels these historic places are.

The Second World War igloos in Archerfield are another heritage listed site in my electorate. In reading the story of those igloos, you learn about the history of the construction of igloo style hangars and also that they represent an important part of development in Australia. The government in preparing for the war developed dual-use facilities, as I think it was called then, or dual-purpose planning, which I think was the philosophy used by government, with the aim of establishing wartime infrastructure that could then be used for other purposes in the future. That can be clearly seen in the Second World War igloos. They housed planes at the Archerfield aerodrome during the war and they are now part of an industrial complex. That phase of planning in that wartime preparation can be seen very clearly by these igloos.

Whilst I am talking about Archerfield, in my electorate there is also the Archerfield Speedway. The Archerfield Speedway is not on the heritage list, but I have been strongly lobbied by the member for Waterford, who represents an electorate that probably has a great interest in the speedway. I know that the former member for Waterford was passionate about the speedway and the current member for Waterford is carrying that on. I undertook to help him look into how we could list the Archerfield Speedway. I see that he is now sitting with the member for Algeester, and that is probably exactly what he is talking about right now.

Queensland's current period of rapid growth and development is often spoken about in this place, and it is what is driving the planning and development challenges that we face today. Dealing with these challenges in accommodating that growth is what this bill is planning for. Whilst we work on infrastructure, transport and affordable housing, it is these amendments to the Queensland Heritage Act that are part of the strategic planning that helps to identify and preserve those important sites that are embedded in Queensland's culture.

This bill provides significant scope for a more strategic role for the Queensland Heritage Council to identify and protect Queensland's heritage. The council is the government's key adviser on heritage issues, and under current legislation has extensive decision making and administrative responsibilities. This bill relieves the Heritage Council of many of its day-to-day management tasks such as administrative aspects of the Heritage Register and deciding development applications. Thus it gives the council more opportunity to focus on its strategic projects which advance cultural heritage.

I understand that the minister and the Queensland Heritage Council will be working in collaboration to develop a vision and strategy document for heritage in Queensland. This collaboration will establish a future framework for Queensland's heritage and consolidate the government's heritage initiatives such as the \$5 million Heritage Grants Program—Living Buildings and Places and the

\$2.7 million statewide heritage survey. The Heritage Council will retain primary responsibility for the register and decide what places are put on to it or removed from it. This is the key function of the council's strategic role—that is, ensuring that the Heritage Register consists of places that are important to Queensland's history and development.

The bill also gives the Heritage Council a new role in receiving oral representations from owners and other parties with an interest in places that have been considered for the register. This is a crucial mechanism for the council, as being able to take those oral representations will aid and assist the understanding of community concerns about heritage, and will enable them to use that information to inform the development of strategies and policies to protect heritage.

I believe that a feature of the transparencies and accountabilities built into this bill is that the Heritage Council retains its advice role to state agencies on development affecting heritage places owned by the state. This ensures that government is receiving advice on the development of its own heritage places from an independent body. These amendments enable the Queensland Heritage Council to perform a more strategic role in conserving Queensland's cultural heritage and to concentrate on providing a vision for heritage into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. In doing so I would like to touch briefly on what I think is at the core of this legislation. Underlying the idea of heritage is the concept of the aesthetic. Some years ago in my youth when I painfully ploughed through *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*—and I know the minister is an avid reader of Kant—I was left to ponder where aesthetic theory was going generally. Whilst Kant rested on the divine as a final place where aesthetic values were formed, I think it was a departure point for other aesthetic theories.

Kant's view of the world was that man found himself or herself through the divine. Essentially, ideas of aesthetic judgement from that point really, through sociological theory and so on, attempt to establish aesthetic principles and ideas through the way in which human beings define themselves in the world. In doing so, they define themselves through their history—that is, where they have come from, where they are today and certainly where they are going.

As a society, heritage is a very important element of our lives in simply defining who we are, what we appreciate in terms of beauty and what is valuable. We can certainly engage in healthy arguments about what is valuable and what is beautiful. We certainly wonder sometimes about what is perceived as valuable and beautiful among some of the things that often are identified as valuable for heritage purposes. There again, what might be valuable to one person might be very different to another.

To find a commonality among society in terms of these items of value and places of value is a very important exercise. It is an exercise which fundamentally acknowledges that we must transcend generations when preserving these places and these things so that other generations can appreciate these things of beauty or value. This will certainly help future generations define themselves as people in society in general and in Queensland society.

It gets down to how we define ourselves in our regions and where we came from. Personally, I love going back to the little Catholic primary school where I went to school and seeing the tiny bell tower that seemed very big when I was a kid. That tiny little bell tower has great value. I looked up into the old bell and heard its tiny tones in those days. That is of personal value to me. I would probably argue until the cows come home that such a small thing be preserved.

We have come a long way in Queensland in terms of how we preserve our heritage and the way we have adapted as a society around that. One of the great icons that stands out for me in this sense is the Treasury building. I recall in the early days of heritage legislation the debates that took place in this place and in the wider community about the use of the old Treasury building as a casino. I remember the howls of discontent from my own community and others across Brisbane about what a travesty that would be. Today, we would not find anybody who does not think that that has not been a good—

Mr Purcell interjected.

Mr FENLON: I take the interjection. Today, we would not find anybody who does not think that that was not a good idea. That place would have been a great residence for pigeons. God knows who else might have continued to use it—public servants in Queensland, for example. It was clearly going to be a millstone around the neck of taxpayers in terms of maintenance and using it in a valuable and realistic way for many decades. We have found a solution where the place pays for itself and is well used. People can go in there and appreciate its beauty any day of the week and practically any hour of the day. It is a magnificent use of that building.

What we faced in the past and what we face now is a challenge in terms of our heritage buildings and sites around the community. There are challenges for the government as an owner of many of these facilities and challenges for private citizens who may be the owners of these facilities. This bill goes some significant way, and creditably so, in assisting private owners who need to maintain these premises.

More and more in the future I hope that as a community and as a government we can be creative about how we find solutions to maintaining these facilities and how we find solutions to using these facilities in a good way for the benefit of the wider community or using them for commercial purposes. It has to be done in a balanced way. We have to continue to be flexible and creative in the way that we do this.

One example in my electorate is the Queen Alexandra Home and Community Centre, which had an interesting history over the years with different government landlords. It went from the Nicklin family, as the original resident and owner of the site, through to it being used as an orphanage. It has a magnificent history. Today it is being used by the department of education—as the principal landlord—and the community in general. I am sure in the future that we can look to diverse commercial uses et cetera to ensure that places like that have a return and use to the community and are not maintained simply as a debt to taxpayers. That is a challenge for that place in the future and for all of these great places that we have inherited.

The other important element of this bill is that it addresses what we hope as a community to address in all of our regulations—that is, to give people in the community certainty about where they stand in relation to these matters. This is a bill that clearly goes out of its way to create that certainty. It is streamlining the procedures and establishing a more strategic approach to heritage, including expanding local government heritage responsibilities, transferring development assessment to the EPA, developing heritage principles for state owned heritage and introducing the heritage grants program that I mentioned before to balance these measures. People will know more clearly where they stand, and this point has been reached by very sound consultation with stakeholders, and the legislation will work far more smoothly with this approach.

The bill also requires that local governments establish local heritage registers. Indeed, I trust that this will be an opportunity for local communities to engage in this process more readily because, again by reference to my own memories of my youth and my life, it is the local communities that will give meaning to these sites. It is the people who have lived with them and experienced these sites who will add to their meaning because it is the connection between these physical environments and the human beings who have lived in and around them that breathe life into these places as heritage entities. They do not sit as inanimate objects; they are real social entities because of their connection to human beings and communities in the past. The other element that is clearly acknowledged in this bill which goes back to my comment about making sure that we find diverse and creative ways of preserving these great places is that notion of demolition by neglect. We have to continue to be observant and to be vigilant in ensuring that these great places are not simply left to wind down and deteriorate; rather, we have to be vigilant all of the time about ensuring that they are maintained. This bill will put in place stronger measures to do all of those things, and I commend the minister for bringing this bill to the House.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (3.41 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to support this bill. I want to briefly mention a couple of the very significant heritage places that are preserved in my electorate of Barron River. The first that I shall mention will be well known to all honourable members throughout the state and around the country—and in fact around the world—and of course that is the Kuranda Scenic Railway. As a heritage listed place, the Kuranda Scenic Railway is one of the major tourist attractions in Queensland and one of the major tourist attractions in Australia. Thousands of people come to far-north Queensland and jump on the train for the scenic railway journey from Cairns to Kuranda.

I thought it might be worth mentioning just a couple of facts about the history of the Kuranda railway. It actually arose as a result of calls by miners in the Herberton district for a transport link to the coast because of flooding, and that goes right back to the wet season of 1882. The miners were unable to obtain supplies and were on the verge of famine. The road was proving impassable and they raised their loud and angry voices to the politicians to agitate for a railway to the coast. General elections and increasing cold weather in the south meant that there were many visits to the north by leading politicians, and some things never change. They all promised a railway, and in March 1882 the then minister for works and mines announced the search for a route from the tablelands to the coast.

Christie Palmerston was commissioned to find a suitable route. Railway leagues were formed in a long and bitter fight for the right to the railway between Port Douglas and Cairns and eventually the Cairns to Kuranda route was selected as the favoured route. The construction was an engineering feat of tremendous magnitude. Dozens of lives were lost of the brave and courageous workers who forged the line by hand. Hundreds and hundreds of men were involved in its construction and it stands today as a monument to their courage and their tenacity. In 1886 the then Premier of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith, used a silver spade to turn the first sod and celebrations involving almost the entire population of Cairns lasted all that day and long into the night, and those traditions are continued in our town also.

There were three separate contracts for the various links out of a total line of 75 kilometres. The climb begins near Redlynch and continues to the summit at Myola with an altitude of 327 metres. There are 15 tunnels, 93 curves and dozens of difficult bridges mounted many metres above the ravines and waterfalls. It was constructed by pickaxes and by hand and during its construction navy camps

mushroomed at the tunnels at cuttings and even narrow ledges supported stores catering for the men's needs for groceries and clothes. Townships developed at the tunnels—at Stoney Creek, at Glacier Rock, at Camp Oven Creek, at Rainbow Creek, at Kamerunga. There were even five hotels along the track. Just last week I had the pleasure of attending the Tropical North Queensland Tourism Awards. In recognition of the magnificent contribution that the Kuranda Scenic Railway has made, it was awarded the major tourism attraction award. I want to take this opportunity of congratulating all of the staff and the team that operate the Kuranda Scenic Railway. Earlier this year they had to overcome a closure of the railway whilst a landslip was formed.

This really just goes to show the value of heritage. It is one of the most significant and major attractions in the Cairns region, but of course there are others—Xavier Herbert's Cottage in Redlynch; the magazine depot in Stratford, which is the suburb where I live; the former Innisfail Court House, which is a remarkable timber dwelling that has been relocated to Yorkeys Knob; and of course the Flecker Botanic Gardens in Edge Hill. But it seems that heritage is never far from controversy, and it is to be certainly hoped and expected as a result of the streamlining provisions in this bill that some of these nominations will be less controversial. One example recently that I will briefly mention was a nomination by the Edge Hill-Whitfield Progress Association to have the Progress Hall in Mayers Street listed on the Queensland Heritage Register. I was very happy to lend my support to its bid to have that listed on the Heritage Register and so was the member for Cairns, the Hon. Desley Boyle. The Mayor of Cairns, Kevin Byrne, was not, fearing the difficulties that would be associated with its listing on the Heritage Register and its possible devaluing. But I think that is exactly why the provisions of this new bill are so important and so timely. That hall was used in 1923 by many members of the community as a dance venue and has been home to a kindergarten, a child health clinic and as a communications centre during World War II. The bid to have it protected attracted a range of support from community groups in north Queensland and certainly I am hopeful, without pre-empting any decisions, that it will get the level of protection it deserves. With those few words and reflections on some of the magnificent heritage places in far-north Queensland, I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. Al McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (3.49 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have taken part in this debate over the past two days. After listening to my parliamentary colleagues speak in support of this bill, it is very obvious to me that Queenslanders place a very high value on their cultural heritage. Queensland's historic places help distinguish us from other parts of Australia. They help to define us as Queenslanders—how we see ourselves and in turn how we see others. These important places deserve heritage legislation that is effective and balanced. That is what this bill provides.

Honourable members have reflected on how planning for Queensland's continued prosperity must recognise and protect the places that we hold dear. It is not possible, nor even necessary, to prevent the loss of every old building, which is a point that was made very well by the member for Stafford. However, the best examples of Queensland's heritage should be identified and should be preserved. Any tensions between development and heritage protection need to be addressed early and resolved in a way that is transparent, consistent and even-handed.

The Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007 is the key response by this government to a review of Queensland's heritage management system. During the review of the act there was extensive consultation with the community as well as heritage advocates, the Queensland Heritage Council, the National Trust of Queensland, local government, religious organisations and representatives of the commercial property sectors. Considering the very different positions that these groups brought to those discussions, I was very pleased to see the high level of consensus that emerged from that consultation process. That process was supplemented by the recommendations from a cultural heritage ministerial advisory committee, which was originally appointed by the honourable member for Cairns when heritage fell within her portfolio responsibilities. The vast majority of these recommendations have been adopted in one form or another and I believe that the resultant amendment bill is a reasonable and balanced reflection of the range of views that were expressed.

This bill and other policy initiatives, such as the statewide heritage survey, are designed to help bring heritage issues to the fore earlier than may have been the case in the past. Through this bill, the Queensland community and commercial interests alike will have a higher level of certainty about where important heritage places are and how to best manage the impacts of population growth and demand for infrastructure on heritage.

These actions will all contribute to reducing the reactive responses to heritage that have occasionally been characterised by 11th hour nominations to the Queensland Heritage Register, often only when a place is believed to be threatened by development. I commend the members of the Queensland Heritage Council for the way in which they have impartially discharged their possibilities and made register-entry decisions on the merits of the information before them notwithstanding that some nominations can arise out of difficult circumstances.

Fifteen years ago after first enacting comprehensive legislative heritage protection, these amendments to the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 will put heritage management in Queensland on a fresh footing. Queensland heritage places will now receive the highest level of support yet provided by

any state government. We have moved closer to attaining a useful working balance between statutory regulation and the practical incentives that encourage owners to conserve their properties for the benefit of all Queenslanders and for those generations of Queenslanders to come.

The honourable member for Yeerongpilly spoke in support of a more proactive strategic and policy driven approach to heritage. I thank him for his contribution. The changes contained in this bill will enable the Queensland Heritage Council to focus more of its attention on the bigger policy picture rather than involving itself in the fine detail of routine development approvals. The bill proposes that this development assessment role will be undertaken by the Environmental Protection Agency operating as a concurrence agency under the Integrated Planning Act 1997. The Environmental Protection Agency already assesses development applications for works to heritage places and makes a recommendation to the Heritage Council. So in addition to relieving the Heritage Council of this task, the changes will bring owners into closer contact with the actual decision maker. This amendment is expected to reduce the number of appeals and encourage early and negotiated outcomes.

I thank the member for Waterford for his contribution. His speech reflected an obvious close relationship with the heritage of his own electorate and the people who are devoted to preserving it. In his contribution the member referred to gaps in the present regime where a lack of basic maintenance, sometimes described as demolition by neglect, has led to the loss of valuable heritage buildings.

Once again, I reinforce that the government has listened to all interest groups and has come up with a solution that is fair and balanced. These new provisions, which enable the Environmental Protection Agency's chief executive to issue an owner with a maintenance notice, cannot be used to make owners restore heritage buildings. These notices will be restricted to minor work or steps that will ensure the security of the property and may be issued only after first consulting with the owner. In short, they are in the interests of the property and the property owner. They will not create an unreasonable burden on the owners of a heritage place.

I make no apology for wanting to make it more difficult for people to deliberately allow a registered heritage building to deteriorate to the extent that its poor condition or uncontrolled access suddenly results in a mysterious fire in the middle of the night. Those days are over. I invite the House to remember that once a heritage place is lost, it is gone for good.

The government's current \$5 million Heritage Grants Program—Living Buildings and Places balances these regulatory measures with practical financial incentives to help owners maintain heritage buildings. We acknowledge the great work done by the majority of owners to keep their properties in sound condition and access to conservation grants is one practical way of expressing the community's appreciation.

Looking to the future preservation of our heritage, the Queensland Heritage Council and my portfolio will collaborate to produce a heritage vision document for Queensland. That is consistent with the bill's objective of a more strategic approach to heritage. That vision document will guide heritage management into the future and will be crafted to reflect the new regime proposed by this amendment bill. It will be a directional statement that brings together the government's recent heritage initiatives and maps out where we want to be in the years to come.

The member for Stafford who, of course, is the House's unofficial historian, highlighted that our knowledge of the state's heritage is being improved by the statewide heritage survey being undertaken by the Environmental Protection Agency. I certainly had a lump in my throat as he talked lovingly of the old Dawn Theatre. I thank the honourable member for his comments and make the observation that the register as it currently stands is still an imperfect representation of our state's historic places. Much of the south-east corner is well represented and some parts of the state have been researched in considerable detail, but the stories associated with other areas are less well known. In filling these gaps in our knowledge, the results of the statewide survey will give the Queensland Heritage Council improved contextual information on which to base its decisions on nominations to the register. That will also result in faster decisions.

Through the changes contained in this bill, these entry decisions will now be made in a more timely way. The process from receipt of a nomination to obtaining the Heritage Council's decision must be completed within 140 business days. These changes will increase the level of certainty for all parties—the nominator as well as the owner—but the system still allows for mutually agreed extensions if more time is needed to resolve management issues, such as the boundary of the proposed heritage area.

We have discussed how places of state heritage significance will continue to be determined by the Queensland Heritage Council, which may decide to add them to the Heritage Register if they satisfy particular criteria prescribed by the act. But what about places that do not meet state significant thresholds yet remain very important to their local communities? The member for Cook noted that currently the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 makes no provision for these local heritage places. Although some local authorities deal very effectively with local heritage places, performances across the state have been variable.

The council in my electorate—Hervey Bay City Council—has its own heritage register and is doing a very good job. It has nominated, I think, very worthy additions to a representative heritage protection group for Hervey Bay, including the TS Krait War Memorial at Urangan, the Urangan Pier, the old Pialba Railway Station and the old Takura school. That is a very good example of a local council being proactive and recognising that preserving those buildings is very much in the long-term interests of the city.

However, as the member for Cook indicated, only 35 per cent of local authorities in Queensland are maintaining a local heritage list. That leaves many local heritage places without recognition or protection. To remedy this situation these amendments will now make it mandatory for local governments to have a local heritage register. I know that this House recognises that local government faces substantial challenges at present. So the government's response to this issue has been very measured. It is designed to encourage incremental improvements in this area. Although local councils must now maintain a local heritage list, it will be up to the local authorities themselves, reflecting the views of their communities, to decide what local heritage places they wish to recognise and when.

By using a code to guide development assessment, even modestly resourced councils will be better placed to manage their local heritage values than is possible at present. To assist local authorities, these changes will be phased in gradually over a two-year period. People in these communities and commercial developers will be able to search these local lists as well as the Queensland Heritage Register. Everyone will be better informed about where heritage issues exist before substantial redevelopment projects are commenced. If heritage is factored into the planning mainstream and addressed early in the process, there are many innovative solutions which can produce sound economic returns, retain heritage values and create exciting streetscapes.

The member for Greenslopes spoke about the need to be creative, and he is completely correct. A fine example of a successful, adaptive reuse of a registered heritage building is the conversion of the former CSR Sugar refinery at New Farm here in Brisbane. This was a complex site and posed several challenges for the developers and the Heritage Council. However, the results speak for themselves and the parties understood what they were dealing with right from the beginning. However, when heritage issues are ignored or addressed only at the last minute, we inevitably find ourselves dealing with a crisis. These amendments are intended to take much of the crisis element out of Queensland's heritage management.

I would like to now turn to some of the comments made and asked by members opposite. At the outset, I would like to again acknowledge the general support for this bill that was expressed by the members opposite. I would like to respond to their requests for clarification on some issues. The member for Burdekin referred to the resourcing implications for the EPA in assuming these new responsibilities, as did the member for Noosa. In fact, the EPA is already currently undertaking site inspections. It is assessing the impact of proposals and it is making recommendations to the Heritage Council. It already carries the overwhelming bulk of the effort. These amendments now transfer the final stage of this process to the EPA. As such, I do not expect that it will place a significant new burden on the agency's resources.

The member for Burdekin also noted correctly that there continue to be no appeal rights for places put on a local heritage list. This is consistent with other principles contained in the Integrated Planning Act 1992 that reflect other appeal rights for people who want to appeal against local government decisions. I can assure members opposite that owners' rights to appeal decisions relating to places of state heritage significance—that is places entered on the Queensland Heritage Register—are preserved and are not diminished in any way by this bill, nor can this bill be characterised as dumping former state responsibilities on local government. At no previous time has the Queensland Heritage Act made specific provision for the recognition of protection of places of local heritage significance.

The act's focus has traditionally been on heritage places of importance at the state level. The amendments will not impose a significant new impost on local governments. The main reason for that is, as I have already mentioned here today, some local governments are already managing their heritage very effectively. These amendments are designed to assist smaller, less well-resourced local governments to meet their obligations to manage their heritage. They do that by providing a tool for identifying and regulating local heritage places. The requirement to have a local register will fill major gaps in the existing planning schemes. Local government, however, decides what is entered in the register and, therefore, the extent of its own commitments. The EPA is also able to assist local governments and to keep their costs down by itself identifying, in its heritage places information, material from the statewide heritage survey that may be of interest and significance to local governments, thereby, effectively doing that work for them.

The member for Burdekin also touched on the issues of certificates of indemnity. These, of course, are a very important part of the overall act because they are used to give certainty. They can provide certainty in two ways. When a place has been nominated and not entered, they can then provide certainty to the owner of the site that the issue will not arise again. Similarly, an owner wishing to

develop a site can apply to ensure that it is not nominated. They can then proceed with the development process in that five-year period knowing that nothing will change. The most important part is that they are already a tool in the existing legislation. That is something that is important. It stays because it gives that certainty going forward for five-year periods.

The member for Burdekin also touched on the issue of archeological places. This is something that I truly hope the act really does assist with. As we dig more tunnels and build more of Queensland's infrastructure, I really do hope that we find more places of archeological significance—areas that contain significant historical artefacts. Members would probably be aware of the World War II bunker that was uncovered during the construction of the inner northern busway. The extent of the infrastructure development in Queensland means that we can expect to find more of these sites. This act will again provide that onus that we will map the sites and be much more aware, through the process of the statewide survey, of these sites and can, again, make provision going forward for them.

The member for Tablelands referred to the important heritage site at Irvinebank, which is almost a heritage town in its own right. I acknowledge that it is a very large site and poses particular conservation challenges. I am pleased to confirm that this government has provided practical assistance in the form of a \$35,000 grant to the Loudoun House Museum at Irvinebank to assist in its conservation. There will, of course, always be more applicants for grants than there are grant moneys available. However, the government's current program is focused on those places in most need of assistance. I look forward to continuing to provide practical support for owners in future funding rounds.

The member for Noosa in particular addressed the issue of reducing red tape and making sure that the processes here do not strangle business or get in the way. I assure him that that is my intention as well. Indeed, reducing green tape—as we might call it for the purposes of this bill—while at the same time improving heritage protection will be an intention that I will bring to everything I do in the implementation of this legislation. What we need to do is streamline processes, give certainty to both developers and heritage site owners, and not have applications tied up interminably. Accordingly, I give the commitment that removing green tape but improving heritage protection will be a focus of this government.

It is precisely for these places that have been judged to be extremely important to their local community that the government is taking steps to encourage local authorities to also actively manage local heritage places. The member for Currumbin referred to the former Coolangatta Special School near Kirra Hill. This former school was nominated to be included on the Queensland Heritage Register and was considered by the Queensland Heritage Council. The Heritage Council acknowledged its importance to the local community but decided that it did not meet the requirements for recognition at a state level. In the past some local heritage places have had nowhere to go if the local authority did not have its own local list in its planning scheme. These amendments will rectify that situation.

I applaud the extensive memory of the member for Moggill of the places of Brisbane's yesterdays. I share his concern about the ultimate fate of the Shingle Inn and its very delicious cakes. At the time that the Queensland Heritage Council made its decision it was unable to enforce the reinstatement of the Shingle Inn's fittings when it conditionally approved the development application. Because heritage development assessment is now integrated with provisions of the Integrated Planning Act, that situation will not arise again.

I can also assure the member for Moggill that the government is working with the Queensland Heritage Council to examine a range of heritage conservation incentives to further support the owners of heritage buildings. The council is examining the current operation of unimproved property valuations applicable to registered heritage places to improve outcomes for owners. It is also considering the establishment of a heritage fund to provide ongoing support for heritage conservation.

The Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill positions Queensland for its next phase of heritage management and protection. We have moved well beyond the clandestine demolitions of the late seventies and early eighties that saw the likes of Cloudland and the Bellevue Hotel disappear forever. After 15 years Queensland's heritage legislation is ready to be refreshed.

In summary, these changes that the government proposes are wide ranging, but the amendments retain the key elements that originally gave Queensland's heritage management system its integrity. The Queensland Heritage Council will remain a statutory authority independent of government and it will continue to decide what places are entered into or removed from the Queensland Heritage Register. The Heritage Council will have a new flexibility to delegate its entry decisions and the existing provisional entry system will be changed to a single-stage process with the Environmental Protection Agency CEO empowered to issue interim protection orders for nominated places. The cumbersome two-stage entry requirement has been streamlined so that the place may be entered because it satisfies one of eight entry criteria. The physical condition of a nominated place can also be considered by the council. Nominations must be decided within the prescribed time frame or the application is deemed to be refused.

Owners will be involved earlier when a place is being considered for entry in the register and they will now have a right to be heard by the Heritage Council before it makes its decision. Development assessment decisions will move to the Environmental Protection Agency thereby freeing the Heritage Council to deal with higher order strategic policy questions. The Heritage Council will continue to provide advice to the minister on heritage policy matters and on development proposals affecting government owned heritage buildings. Places having archeological value will be mapped and are searchable. Religious organisations will be able to undertake works to their registered places without seeking approvals as long as the development works are required by the liturgy. The protection of local heritage places will be enhanced by the new requirement for local authorities to create local heritage lists and adhere to a code for managing those places. Local governments that already have a comprehensive management system can be exempted from the new requirements.

With this amendment bill we have produced a well-balanced, sensible response to a potentially difficult and testing subject. But this government's balanced response to its heritage review does not simply rely on regulatory solutions. The comprehensive statewide heritage survey that is currently underway and the new online heritage database that will be part of the Smart State Queensland system will also make heritage more visible and accessible to the Queensland community. Add to this the \$5 million Living Buildings and Places heritage grants program that the government introduced in 2006 and I think we can safely say that the bad old days of the demolition of Cloudland and the Bellevue are well behind us.

I thank the Queensland community for its active involvement in the heritage review. I thank my parliamentary colleagues for their support for this amendment bill, particularly my ministerial predecessor, Lindy Nelson-Carr, who brought this bill to the House. I also want to thank the departmental staff and my ministerial staff who have been working very hard to get the new boy up to speed. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to

Clause 6—

Mrs MENKENS (4.12 pm): I note that the composition of the Heritage Council has remained the same but that there are changes specifically to its functions. One of the main changes to its functions has been removing the keeping of the register. How much work would the keeping of the register have entailed? Will the reduced duties that the members have make a difference to their remuneration or will there be changes from that perspective?

Mr McNAMARA: The intention of this particular clause, and indeed the thrust of the legislation, is to get the Heritage Council to work in a more strategic way, to work at a higher level and to remove from the Heritage Council those purely bureaucratic functions for which no great technical skill is required. The keeping of the register is not a very large job; nevertheless, it still has to be done. It is more about the attitude that we want to bring to this new era in heritage protection. Cutting back on the council's day-to-day administrative functions is a practical way of doing that but also sends out the message that we are looking for this strategic and policy approach being brought to bear in everything that they do.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—

Mrs MENKENS (4.15 pm): I thank the minister for the previous clarification. I am interested in asking the minister about clause 17 relating to applications for entry of places on the register. I understand that a person or other entity may apply to the chief executive. To put forward a hypothetical situation, if a private person owns a home but they have not registered it themselves, can a third party register that home without the knowledge of the owner of that home? I see the criteria for the nomination and the actual various details and so forth that are required, but there is no mention of ownership or who owns it. Hypothetically, if I or the minister own a wonderful old Queenslander, can the next-door neighbour actually put that up for registration over our head?

Mr McNAMARA: The answer is yes, but seeking to have registration is not the same thing as having it. This is an open process whereby owners, developers or third parties can come and say that they think that a site should be registered and once that happens then there is a process that is gone through to assess that registration. The intent of clause 17 is to make that process as quick as possible for all concerned, particularly the owners who have someone, perhaps not themselves, suggesting that their property should go on that heritage register.

For the first time this bill introduces maximum time frames for nominations to be decided. As we have mentioned, the EPA will receive the nomination, give public notice—so again the public is invited to comment on it at that stage—it will take submissions, investigate the nomination and then make a recommendation to the Heritage Council within 80 days of receiving the nomination. The Heritage Council then has 60 business days to decide the application during which time it may very well—and I would expect—hear directly from the owners. If the Heritage Council does not make a decision within that time frame—and this is really important—then it is a deemed refusal and that is the matter disposed of.

Mrs MENKENS: Back to our hypothetical situation, if that owner really does not want that house heritage listed—say it is grandma's house or whatever—at what stage can they put in an objection and how much importance is put on the owner's feelings and thoughts over the intent of the council or the wider community?

Mr McNAMARA: Right at the outset, when a nomination is put in, the affected property owner is invited to put in a submission. They are advised by a formal written notification that a nomination has been put forward and they are invited to respond. They also then have the right to make an oral submission during the process. So they are invited to be in the process at least twice. Given that it is their property, I would be surprised if most people did not avail themselves of that process—regardless of whether they supported the nomination or did not support it. Certainly, they are the first person notified when a nomination has been put up.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): At this time, I would like to welcome women from East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, current MPs and also former MP Lesley Clark into the public gallery.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

Mrs MENKENS (4.20 pm): We discussed earlier that archaeological places are deemed so because of archaeological artefacts. May I show my ignorance to a great extent here. What exactly are archaeological artefacts? The minister mentioned Second World War bunkers. I realise that we are not like England where we could find lost cities and so forth underneath. What we find instead are dinosaur bones, but they are of paleontological significance. What is the difference here in relation to the definition of an 'archaeological artefact'? What does that actually mean?

Mr McNAMARA: The definition of 'archaeological' is in the definitions clause in the bill. Quite simply, it is something of historical significance to Queensland. There is no minimum age; it does not have to be more than 100 years old or anything like that. It is something of historical significance to Queensland. It may be quite recent but, nevertheless, an important part of Queensland's history.

The bill is setting out on new territory in recognising that it is important in a young country and a young state to explicitly turn our minds to things of archaeological significance. It does not attempt to be too prescriptive. For many people, the Second World War is not that long ago, but for others it seems like a very long time ago. We have avoided trying to put a prescription in; we have avoided a definition that simply puts a number of years on it. It will be more a qualitative assessment of the historical importance of the building, place, tunnel or whatever that comes to light that should be recorded in this way.

Mrs MENKENS: My question then relates to the dinosaur bones again and the area where Elliot is currently being dug up. Could that area actually be declared an archaeological site and a protected area because of what is actually being dug up there? It may possibly be in a national park—I do not know where that area is—although I think it is on private land. That is the type of area I was thinking of.

Mr McNAMARA: I need to make it clear. We are talking about built environment, so we are not talking dinosaur bones. We are talking about Queensland's heritage as constructed by people who lived here. So there are no dinosaur houses to be entered because they did not build houses.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34—

Mrs MENKENS (4.25 pm): This clause relates to local government, and I thank the minister for his answers on this area because it certainly did clarify a great deal. Is the minister aware of which councils have local heritage listings? I am certainly aware of a couple of councils in my area which are doing it very well. I am interested in this because I expressed my concerns on whether this was an impost, and the minister assured me that he would be giving them time and hopefully assistance in this as well. Are there many councils which are not doing this at the moment?

Mr McNAMARA: I have a list, although I do not have it here, of all the councils that are currently doing it. From memory, 35 per cent of councils are currently running their own local heritage lists and are overall doing a very good job of it. They are to be congratulated in that regard.

In terms of the impost, obviously there is little impost for those councils that are already doing it. In fact, the intention here is to make it easier for them by giving them access to state material and the information that is currently being collected. Certainly, those which are not doing it are often the smaller councils with less financial resources, but frequently they have some of the more important buildings in their areas. Smaller councils in the far and wide parts of Queensland often have buildings that very much need protection because they are a significant part of Queensland's cultural heritage. Allowing them to take two years to implement these changes, setting them up with a tool provided by the state and letting them know of any sites that have already been identified in their area are significant steps in giving them that assistance to get up and running for as little cost as possible.

Mrs MENKENS: Very briefly, I understand then that the EPA or the heritage councils—whichever it happens to be, and I imagine it would more than likely be the department—would give assistance and advice to those more remote councils, as the minister mentioned. I was concerned about that, too.

Mr McNAMARA: Certainly, the intention of the bill and my intention as minister is to make sure that every assistance is provided. For example, the bill explicitly provides that the chief executive—who is the director-general of the EPA—will recommend places to councils. So the director-general will be very proactive and go to them and say, 'This is the information we've already got. Here's how you set up a register.' That process will be made as painless as possible, while recognising that all Queenslanders, not just those who live in particular council areas, have a strong interest in good heritage protection.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 52, as read, agreed to.

Clause 53—

Mr ELMES (4.29 pm): I would like to thank the minister for the forthright way in which he has provided answers to our questions this afternoon. One of the real concerns that the opposition has, and I mentioned it in my speech, is the amount of money put aside for restoration work, which was \$5 million over two financial years—that is, last year and the current year—and the fact that the government is planning to spend another \$2.7 million to identify new sites. Can the minister tell me when that \$2.7 million is proposed to be spent, and over how long? Can the minister also confirm, as I think I heard in answer to a previous question, that there are no plans to provide any additional staff to the EPA?

Mr McNAMARA: Can I just confirm that there are two lots of money. There is \$2.7 million in survey money to conduct the survey of all of Queensland's heritage sites, and that will run over a five-year period. Then there is \$5 million to assist owners in the process of ensuring that their properties are looked after and that this is not too onerous on them. I should say that that \$5 million is a very significant increase on what has previously been provided, and it represents real money on the table to make this process work.

In terms of additional resources at the EPA, as I outlined in an earlier answer, a great amount of this work is already done inside the EPA. So it is not anticipated that taking on the back-end development assessment work will require additional resources. We will make that work and see how it goes over time. We wanted to put extra money into the community and into doing surveys rather than put extra money into the department.

Mr ELMES: The concern I had was that we are looking at identifying probably hundreds of additional heritage sites and whether or not the money that was in the bickie tin to look after, restore and maintain those sites was going to be sufficient. It really is a sticking point with us. Could I suggest that, rather than having a division on this clause, we look at a situation where perhaps in the middle of next year the shadow minister, the minister and I might get together and look at the way the project is running.

Mr McNAMARA: I am more than happy to update the House from time to time. In fact, I imagine I will have to be stopped from updating the House from time to time about how the process of identifying heritage sites around Queensland is going. In terms of resourcing, the point is that \$2.7 million is being put into resourcing the survey process. To the extent that the member is worried that there is not enough money to do this, that is the whole point. Money has been put explicitly towards this project, not out of existing allocations in the EPA. I do not see at this stage that clause 53 has anything divisible in it. But, as I said, I am more than happy to update the House from time to time as to how we are going in identifying further sites, how many we have got up to, where those sites are and how the process is working in terms of the changed relationships with the council and the EPA.

Mr ELMES: In the absence of my shouting for coffee, I will look forward to the report, Minister.

Clause 53, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 54 and 55, 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.

SPORTS DRUG TESTING AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 October (see p. 3622).

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (4.35 pm): I rise to speak to the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. I am very happy to support this bill. The bill seeks to make improvements to the Sports Drug Testing Act to provide for the testing of state athletes for antidoping. It seeks to make amendments to sports drug testing to limit the potential use of drugs by sportsmen and women. Existing legislation fails to include any stipulation relating to the antidoping and safety of athletes.

The objects will be achieved by providing for the state to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth under which antidoping testing services and educational services about doping in sport are provided for state athletes. The objectives are to align the state's drug sports testing legislation to new Commonwealth legislation and Australia's commitment to the World Anti-Doping Code. To that extent I certainly support it.

The agreement between the state and Commonwealth will provide antidoping testing services for state athletes along with educational services for these athletes regarding doping in sport. The agreement must support the achievement of the objects of the act including, for example, ensuring that state athletes are tested for the use of drugs or doping methods under the NAD scheme. This bill will also amend the existing Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill, and all relevant points presently in the act in relation to drug testing and antidoping are maintained in the bill but they have been redrafted to contain the changes to be implemented. I support the shadow minister's comments that he has made along these lines.

It is understood that the implementation of the bill will have no new or additional costs incurred by the government, as drug testing is currently funded by the state and will be funded under a new agreement with the Commonwealth. These things do hit the news very seriously. As we all heard only a few weeks ago, we were shocked and saddened to hear of a sprinter at the Sydney Olympics who admitted to taking drugs and cheated to win gold medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

As we know, lives are being ruined as a result of drug taking by athletes. However, in many instances drugs are pushed on athletes by unscrupulous coaches. It is instances like this that deprive other athletes in the race of rightfully achieving the honour of a gold medal. However, it is one thing to be critical of young people and it is another thing to be supportive. It is very important as well that we support these young people, because those young athletes who are achieving well are under a huge amount of pressure. I have no doubt that this is also one of the reasons that may lead them to using recreational drugs or that feeling of the need to achieve further and further.

The further up the ladder a person goes in any area the more pressure is put on them. We have seen football players and quite a few other athletes found with drugs. This is of major concern. Any legislation that can assist in picking up and testing these people is supported. We need to provide a deterrent that they are fully aware of and lets them know that it is not acceptable and cannot go on.

Each year at world sporting events we hear of athletes caught taking drugs. As I said earlier, it does beg the question: is there too much pressure being put on our athletes to achieve? Athletes and sporting people are now modern heroes. These are the people that young ones look up to. With the advent of modern media they see these people. Sport and sporting people is probably the No. 1 topic of conversation among people. There is pressure on these people. Athletes coming up through the ranks look up to these men and women—they are their idols. It is unacceptable to think that they cannot perform without drugs. There are so many mixed messages that come through. Athletes and sportsmen are popular heroes so their actions must be totally beyond reproach.

Drug taking might enhance the performance of athletes but, as we have seen at times in the past, it makes a mockery of some sports. It is a disturbing problem and has to be tackled directly. That is what this bill is attempting to do. The issues involved in the control of doping in sport are not easy to resolve and without stringent controls can only do an injustice to sport as a whole. Ultimately, we must

endeavour to rectify these issues to wipe out any taking of drugs by athletes and align our Queensland legislation with the Commonwealth legislation to provide stricter laws regarding the drug testing of athletes.

In my electorate of Burdekin we do have an above average number of young athletes who go on to become sports stars on the Australian and international scene. Those in the Burdekin region have excelled in sports such as golf, tennis, soccer, football and BMX. The area has had excellent representation by our athletes at both junior and senior levels. I have spoken at length about our wonderful world-class golfer Karrie Webb.

The standard of sporting facilities provided for our athletes in the Burdekin region—and I talk about the Townsville end of the region as well—is second to none. These facilities provide extraordinary opportunities for young athletes to advance their sporting aspirations. While I am discussing sport I must also mention women's basketball. Queensland has only one national women's basketball team and that is the Townsville Fire who are in the Burdekin electorate. I can assure members that I was delighted to be at their match last Saturday even though they may not have done quite as well as they would have hoped.

The taking of drugs certainly enhances performance for the disabled or those people who might otherwise, if deprived of medication, be no more than spectators. Rightly, these competitors are not breaking rules, but where should the line be drawn? We do have to consider what allowances have to be made in special situations and as the competitive arena embraces more and more people—the handicapped as well as the fit.

Sports and health services work together to encourage more active lifestyles. As competition becomes more extensive without doubt there will be those who will have to take medicines to survive let alone to compete. It may be argued that the sporting powers that be have devised their plan at least in part because they are concerned about the wellbeing of the athletes at the end of the day. One would have to assume that the lack of consistency and the failure to tackle the medical and pharmacological issues make the present package untenable. The predicament is that the schemes devised have been produced by the sporting associations in obvious isolation. The implications are far wider than sport alone.

I believe all members in this chamber would be very concerned about these issues. I have no doubt that all members have looked seriously at the purpose of this bill. We do care about our sportsmen and women. We certainly do want to have the highest standards in sports for our athletes in the future. We certainly want to see our athletes achieve on their own merits and without the use of drugs. I fully support the amendments contained in the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (4.44 pm): Queensland is a proud sporting state that is part of a proud sporting nation. In my own electorate there are many fine sporting organisations that provide opportunities for adults and kids to pursue a range of activities. I make mention of Brothers Junior Rugby Club and its President David Hine and Vice-President Tony Barrett. It is also home for two Nicholls junior Rugby players who love training, playing and mingling with their mates together with an average manager and referee.

Brothers Rugby Club, as my friend the member for Southport will attest, is itself home to some of the most famous names in international Rugby, people like 'Budda' Handy, Sean Hardman—current Reds and sometime Wallaby hooker—David Crofts, Elton Flatley, Paul McLean, of course John Eales and that paragon of fair play, clean rucks and mauls, club president Tony Shaw. Coming from Churchie and going to Brothers to watch a game really comes pretty tough when in the old days I would have been over at Ashgrove or something like that. It is almost as tough as getting out to Sunnybank on the south side.

I also mention the Allstars Baseball Club and its President Ian Maurice as well as Sue Wallace and the Dragons Rowing Club. People may not know about the Dragons Rowing Club, but it provides great opportunities for people who otherwise may not be involved in rowing—particularly women and those with a disability. It runs a great disabled rowing program at Breakfast Creek in my electorate. I also have the privilege of having the Mayne Juniors AFL, the Toombul Cricket Club and the Sporting Wheelies in or next to my electorate. I have a great number of bowls clubs in the electorate, including Hamilton Bowls Club, the Clayfield Bowls Club and the Hendra Nundah Bowls Club.

These are all fine organisations dedicated to the best sporting traditions of playing hard but playing fair. Our athletes represent the high level of talent that is cultivated and finetuned from a young age to be the best, without relying on drugs. This bill takes an important step in protecting that image and the wellbeing of our athletes. By aligning Queensland's standards with those being implemented nationally, we help to provide a fairer future for Queensland sports and maintain our reputation as a clean sporting nation.

This year alone we have seen some sports greats dragged from their podiums because of drug scandals. Many members have mentioned Marion Jones, the 2000 Olympics sprint star who this month admitted to steroid use. It was a steroid that was undetectable seven years ago. It gave her an

advantage which saw her win three gold medals. Former Australian sprinter Lauren Hewitt was one of those beaten by Jones at the Olympics. She made a vivid description of 18-year-old Jones who was able to run the same times as the men. It gives an idea of how distinct an advantage drugs can provide and how tough we need to be to ensure a fair playing field.

Closer to home, one of Australia's most respected role models, Andrew Johns, admitted to having taken drugs throughout his sporting career. This is proof that even high-profile competitors are able to slip through the system again and again. We have been reading over the last couple of days about West Coast Eagles player Ben Cousins who ended up in Arizona at a drug and alcohol clinic and has just been involved again in misfortune surrounding illegal drugs. There was the suspension of Wendell Sailor last year after he was found to have used cocaine. There was the tragedy of former AFL player Chris Mainwaring who has just been laid to rest and the allegations of an alleged drug overdose.

Then there are the athletes disqualified from the Olympics. I asked the Parliamentary Library to do some research. The figures reveal a growth in the number of people attempting to cheat. The figures reveal the magnitude of the issue. In 1996 at Atlanta just two people were disqualified for doping. In Sydney in 2000, 10 were disqualified, not including Marion Jones. Those included winners of three gold, one silver and two bronze medals. By 2004 in Athens the number of drug cheats detected had grown by almost 300 per cent to 27, including five gold, one silver and two bronze medallists.

It is not just the athletes whom we should be looking at. In June this year Sevdalin Marinov, an Australian weightlifting coach, received a life ban for a second doping offence after he was found in possession of prohibited substances including testosterone and anabolic steroids. A three-time world champion and an Olympic and Commonwealth gold medallist, in 2003 Marinov was also employed as the head coach of Victorian Weightlifting and the Australian junior national coach. This illustrates that we must be aware that doping can occur at all levels and even a coach can lead our sporting greats and our youth down the wrong path. We can never be too vigilant. There are some who say, 'Why bother? Let them all take drugs and create a level playing field that way.' I reject that argument. As the Prime Minister indicated yesterday, all types of problems lie down that path for our children and our reputation as a clean sporting nation, and in many ways the world has moved on and rejected that argument. It would be impossible to implement even if it were accepted here.

We should also think of the example it sets for our kids. I am sure many of us have children who have worshipped and have idolised some of the sporting greats. I took my own two boys to see the Broncos play only two months ago and witnessed their enthusiasm and their thrill at going to see a game live, and we were fortunate enough to get some tickets to go down to the dressing rooms afterwards to see their stars after a game. They had been beaten and pummelled and looked hot and hard and sweaty but the kids just had a great time. I asked my oldest boy whether he had had a good day and he said, 'Dad, it was the best day of my life.'

Mr Dempsey: Hear, hear!

Mr NICHOLLS: That is what sporting heroes do for our kids. The member for Bundaberg just hit on how important it is for them and how much they take it on board. What sort of example would we be giving if we said, as has been suggested by some commentators recently, 'Let them take drugs. Let's have a level playing field'? That is not the atmosphere we want for our children, that is not the atmosphere we want them growing up in and that is not the example we want to set.

Additionally, athletes are not always aware of just how dangerous the side effects can be from the extended use of these drugs. There is the risk of heart attack, stroke and lung clots—all a result of EPO, or erythropoietin. Then there is the change in appearance—protruding eyebrow and jaw bones—caused by the excessive use of human growth hormones. Even narcotics—drugs that are accessible outside the sporting arena—obviously pose the risk of physical dependence and addiction. Education must play an important role in eliminating these substances from Queensland sporting arenas. By allowing the Commonwealth Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, which incorporates the drug agency role with further powers and functions to provide Queensland athletes with educational services, we give our athletes the knowledge and the power to beat the scourge of drugs. This bill will provide Queensland with the opportunity to further harmonise its antidoping stance with that in place at an international standard and something that is already being achieved at a national level.

It is interesting to note the history of the World Anti-Doping Agency with which this legislation is ultimately bringing us into line. It was as a result really of a large number of prohibited medical substances being found by police in a raid during the Tour de France. It led to a major reappraisal of the role of public authorities in antidoping affairs. In the 1980s and before that there was a marked increase in cooperation, but before the 1998 debate took place following that scandal in the Tour de France there were a lot of discrete forums. There was no unified body and they often had different standards so it was difficult to reach common ground and for common policies and for common penalties to apply across-the-board. That Tour de France highlighted the need for an independent international agency that would set unified standards for antidoping work and coordinate the efforts of sports organisations and public authorities throughout the world.

The IOC took the initiative and convened the World Conference on Doping in Sport in Lausanne in Switzerland in February 1999. Following the proposal of the conference, the World Anti-Doping Agency was established on 10 November 1999. It is structured on the basis of equal representation of the Olympic movement and public authorities. In 2001 the foundation board voted to move its headquarters from Lausanne to Montreal and the Montreal headquarters were inaugurated in April 2002. In fact it is the case, as the research brief provided by the Parliamentary Library shows, that if a sports organisation or government does not accept the World Anti-Doping Code then it has very severe repercussions including that only sports that do have that code can compete at the Olympic Games. So by unifying and harmonising those rules and setting up a common standard, the international sporting community and public authorities are moving to eliminate the scourge of drugs in sport.

In that respect, Australia is playing a strong role, and always has played a strong role. Most recently we only have to look to former New South Wales Premier and federal minister John Fahey who, according to today's press, appears set to become the head of the World Anti-Doping Agency following a tremendous effort by Senator George Brandis and the Prime Minister in supporting him in his attempt to get into that position. His success at this international level shows just how high a standard Australia has already set in combating drugs in sport. In addition, Senator Brandis has proven that he is equally tough when it comes to banned substances. This month the federal government committed \$21 million per year over the next four years towards the testing of elite athletes.

But there is also the issue of people being under pressure, and a number of members have mentioned that today. My colleague the honourable member for Bundaberg has just talked to me about the pressure that he faced during his sporting career, and I suspect that the pressure that high-grade athletes are in fact under is different from his. But nonetheless we know the pressures that these sporting stars face. Again, the member for Toowoomba South raised these issues when he talked about what it was like to run out in front of a crowd of 50,000 and to feel the high of being on a field and playing your best and the adrenalin buzz and rush that comes with that and then coming off the field and having to come down from that high that you got through physical activity and the thrill of being there. We are also hearing more and more about the use of illicit drugs amongst our sporting heroes. There has to be an opportunity for those people to be educated and to be given support so they do not fall down that path but if they do fall down that path they can get off it and are supported so that they are able to make a comeback.

I also support the amendments made to the bill regarding minors. I support fully the requirements for the protection of minors as set out in the bill. Again, the shadow minister has outlined the issues surrounding the testing of minors and there is no doubt that we must ensure their safety and their protection. The changes to this bill provide Queensland with the chance to align its policies with the principles and legislation that is sought at both a national and international standard. Queensland's athletes represent not only our state but are the role models who represent the dreams and aspirations of our kids. Supporting this bill is about supporting an antidrug culture within the sporting world that will ensure not only a fairer future for our current sportsmen and women but our upcoming stars.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (4.57 pm): I rise to contribute a few words to the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. On 5 March 2003 at the Copenhagen World Conference on Doping in Sport, 50 countries including Australia signed up in support of the adoption of the World Anti-Doping Code. This was a momentous occasion for all of the sporting organisations and their athletes, who chose to place their ethics ahead of their sporting successes and continue the fight against drugs in sport. The challenge ahead was the successful implementation of the code and the subsequent adoption by all sporting organisations in Australia. This could only occur through the education of the whole sports community and the establishment of a cohesive model to administer the code which resulted in the establishment of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority in 2006.

I support the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill and recognise the intent of removing performance-enhancing drugs from sport. In recent times during debate of this bill we have heard some very public exposure of athletes who admitted to the taking of both performance-enhancing drugs and recreational drugs. The fallout from the Andrew Johns affair was devastating for many NRL fans, and similarly with Ben Cousins in the AFL. The tarnished glory of Marion Jones as she admitted to cheating her way to five Olympic gold medals and then lying about it for years was equally devastating. Floyd Landis, the 2006 Tour de France victor, was stripped by the International Cycling Union on 21 September this year after he was found to be using synthetic testosterone during the tour.

All of these athletes and many others have been role models for many of our youth as upcoming athletes. It is clear that this type of legislation is needed and must continually be enhanced. The issue of performance-enhancing drugs is a moving target. The intention may be to keep the definition broad in order to capture any new drugs. Perhaps it is indicative of the technological era in which we live that the extraordinary array of chemicals that are available and that our knowledge of the body chemistry is so refined that we can hone in on specific substances to generate specific performances.

With the emergence of genetic enhancement technologies that can also be used on athletes, it will be necessary to change our approach to antidoping as well. Some day in the future I imagine we will be discussing an amendment to include these areas so that we continue to provide a level playing field. Antidoping programs seek to preserve what is intrinsically valuable about sport. This intrinsic value is often referred to as the spirit of sport. It is the essence of the Olympics. It is how we play true. The spirit of sport is a celebration of the human spirit—body and mind—and is characterised by the values of ethics, fair play and honesty. Doping is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport. The Olympic motto—'Citius, altius, fortius' or 'faster, higher, stronger'—expresses concisely that sport is about expanding the range of what is humanly possible. The athletes are always looking to go further and extend the boundaries of human performance. There is always another world record that needs to be broken. There is always another Olympian who is looking over his shoulder at the upcoming athletes.

But these achievements must always be attained within the boundaries of what is natural and human in our athletes. True heroes are like those Special Olympians. In Gympie, our Special Olympians returned from the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai with a swag of medals. I would like to mention their names. Molly Roadley, Codey Rowe, Michelle Cotter, Elijah Bond and Phillip King brought back nine medals in total. They competed in gymnastics, football and track. They were the true heroes, because they were able to embrace the true Olympic motto. They have taken their abilities and pushed themselves faster, higher and stronger than even they could believe they could. They have come home from Shanghai proud of their sporting achievements. They are the heroes to whom we should be looking. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (5.01 pm): It is indeed a pleasure to rise to add my contribution to the debate on the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006. I would like to acknowledge the lively speech that was given by the honourable member for Toowoomba South as shadow minister for this portfolio. As members heard from all of the coalition speakers, we will be keenly supporting this bill.

As stated in the explanatory notes the main objective of this bill is to align Queensland's sports drug testing legislation with new Commonwealth legislation and Australia's commitment to the World Anti-Doping Code. In doing so the bill aims to maintain a strong stance against doping in sport. This bill changes little of the Sports Drug Testing Act 2003. It purely confers similar powers upon the new Commonwealth antidoping authority to the powers that were conferred on the previous Commonwealth antidoping authority.

Clause 2 provides that the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill amends the Sports Drug Testing Act 2003, whilst clauses 3 to 5 amend the terminology used within the Sports Drug Testing Act 2003 to reflect the terminology adopted by the new Commonwealth legislation.

Clause 6 will remove the current section 6 from the Sports Drug Testing Act as it now has become redundant under the broader scope of the Commonwealth legislation. Clause 7 omits the current part 3 of the act and replaces it with a new part 3, which provides for agreements between the state and Commonwealth to allow for antidoping testing services and educational services about doping in sport to be provided to state athletes by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority. Clause 8 amends section 11 of the act to reflect the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority's new power under the Commonwealth legislation to test state athletes under 18 years old with the consent of the athlete's parent or guardian.

The need to introduce these amendments in order to realign Queensland's sports drug testing legislation with that of the Commonwealth has come about as a result of changes to the Commonwealth legislation. Prior to those changes in 2006, Queensland's Sports Drug Testing Act conferred the powers to the Commonwealth, allowing the now defunct Australian Sports Drug Agency to provide drug testing and drug education services to Queensland athletes under the Australian Sports Drug Agency Act 1990.

However, in more recent years there has been an international push to synchronise antidoping practices worldwide. I do not think that any members of the House would disagree with that initiative. As such, in March 2003 the Commonwealth government adopted the World Anti-Doping Code and ratified the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Convention Against Doping in Sport in January 2006. In order to bring the Commonwealth's sports antidoping legislation into line with its commitments under this United Nations convention, the Commonwealth enacted the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006. This act established the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, which replaced the Australian Sports Drug Agency as the national sports antidoping body and conferred wider powers and functions upon the new authority. In light of these changes to Commonwealth legislation regarding antidoping in sport, the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006 is necessary to rectify the inconsistencies that have been created within the current Queensland legislation.

Specific drugs are not defined in the legislation—either at state or Commonwealth level. Prohibited substances are set by the relevant association for each specific sport and under the Commonwealth legislation—the ASADA—can test for any prohibited substance relevant to the

particular sport that the athlete is competing in. Most sporting associations use the world antidoping prohibited list as set by the World Anti-Doping Agency. This list is reviewed annually. However, some sports do not recognise this list and write their own separate list into their antidoping policy.

As there are so many different performance-enhancing drugs available, it is hard to determine which one is the most frequently abused. Just as the different medications alleviate different ailments, different performance-enhancing drugs are effective in different sports. According to an article written in 2005 by David Gerrard, who sits on the board of the World Anti-Doping Agency, the most popular types of misused drugs are anabolic androgenic steroids and glycoproteins, such as human growth hormone.

Cheating in sport has long been abhorred in this, our sport-loving nation, and the use of prohibited drugs by athletes is seen as particularly heinous. On 23 March this year Prime Minister John Howard said, 'You can't be tough enough when it comes to drugs.'

Many Australian athletes have fallen from grace owing to drug use. Shane Warne was banned for a year after returning a positive drug test ahead of the 2003 Cricket World Cup.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: I take that interjection from the honourable member for Clayfield. I think Shane faces bans from another member of his family. In 2006, Rugby Union star Wendell Sailor tested positive for cocaine and received an automatic two-year suspension. Illicit drugs such as cocaine and MDMA, or ecstasy, are also classed as performance enhancing if they are detected during competition. It can be argued that these drugs have the potential to stimulate or relax an athlete and, therefore, improve their performance. Sailor had not taken cocaine for the best part of a week and, therefore, he did not think that it would show up in a random urine sample.

Even a suspicion of drug use is enough to taint an athlete's reputation. News that one of our greatest swimmers, Ian Thorpe, was under investigation for a suspicious drug test last year rocked Australia. The abnormal test result cast a shadow over Thorpe's illustrious career. Only a couple of months ago Australians learned that Ian Thorpe's name was cleared by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority. In March this year it was revealed that the international body FINA called in the Court of Arbitration for Sport to probe a test that Thorpe took in May last year. Thorpe, who retired in November 2006, commented to one media source—

My reputation as a fair competitor in swimming is the thing I value most.

...

I took my obligations to comply with the anti-doping codes very seriously and prided myself on this.

In another highly publicised case a few years ago antidoping policies did not automatically spell doom and gloom for all athletes. Australian swimmer Samantha Riley successfully contested a positive drug test in the lead-up to the 1996 Olympic Games. Riley argued that she inadvertently consumed the banned substance in a headache tablet and ended up receiving only an official warning rather than a ban.

However, the damage is done to reputations and it is not just the reputation involved; it brings the country that these athletes represent into disrepute. I ask members to take a look at the Chinese swimming team, which was constantly hounded by drug scandals during the 1990s. For instance, during the 1998 world championships four Chinese swimmers tested positive for banned substances and vials of human growth hormone were found in breaststroker Yuan Yuan's luggage. That is but one example. Since 1990 over 40 Chinese swimmers have failed drug tests, which is more than triple the number from any other swimming team from any other country during the same time. The result is that, thanks to a generation of cheaters, up and coming Chinese swimmers will be competing under a shadow of doping doubt for many years to come.

It is for these reasons that these legislative amendments are necessary. Queensland and Australia as a whole needs to toughen and unify its stance against doping and also the taking of illegal drugs in sport to ensure the integrity of both Australian athletes and elite sporting events held in Australia. We must continue to strive to provide a fair playing field.

Recent news of Andrew Johns's drug abuse throughout the many years of his illustrious career sent shudders through the football fraternity. Thousands of children who held Johns up as their role model have been cruelly short-changed by a person who played Russian roulette with his drug taking between matches. While some people no doubt feel a degree of sympathy for him, there really is no excuse for an elite, highly paid athlete to cheat his team, his sport and average Aussies who worshipped him as a sporting hero. Johns had the money and access to specialist help at his fingertips, unlike many Australians who have unmet needs and suffer from challenging illnesses.

I hear the argument time and again that high-profile footballers in particular despise the words 'role model' and some feel they should not be treated more harshly than other members of the community on drug charges. After all, many of them have little life experience as they are plucked as potential youngsters and groomed for the game and also for fame. Receiving enormous amounts of

money, fame and all the other trappings that accompany sports star status, they have few real skills to equip them in handling the pressure that this fame brings. However, the fact remains that the higher the profile, the higher the influence of the role model and, as they say, the price of fame. At least by being caught, Johns was forced to admit he had a problem. Rather than putting forward mental illness as an excuse, I hope he will commit himself to undergoing whatever counselling and therapy that his treating medical professionals recommend. In common with many members of this House, I enjoyed watching Joey, even though he was from over the border, displaying his remarkable talents on the field on numerous occasions. I wish him a clean and full recovery.

Sporting bodies such as the ARL, NRL and AFL have a responsibility to their players and to keeping their respective codes clean and drug free. Failure to do so is not only irresponsible but it could result in the death on or off the field of a player, as was the case with the tragic passing of ex-AFL player Chris Mainwaring and the alleged drug use of Ben Cousins, also from the west coast of Australia.

But it was Wendell Sailor who received a tough sentence compared with those received by the general community. It was Wendell who commented that drug use is less common among footballers than people of the same age group in the wider community. When out and about speaking to kids about the dangers of drugs, Wendell was frightened by what he heard and the extent of drug use amongst young kids in the bush and the cities. I hope for Wendell's sake that he enjoys the clean life and a return to the game that has brought him pinnacles and also some troughs. I hope he can influence young Australians in a positive and inspirational way.

Marion Jones, another in a long line of fallen heroes, or villains depending on people's stance on sports cheats, pleaded guilty in New York last week to using steroids in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympic Games. That plea meant that her three gold and two bronze medals had to be forfeited and her reputation was left in tatters. Ben Cousins, as I mentioned, is the most recent high-profile sportsman to be caught in possession of drugs. The message that this sends to our youth and society in general is wrong, so terribly wrong.

This week Senator George Brandis announced the Howard federal government's \$20.8 million Tough on Drugs in Sport initiative to provide a voluntary regime for out-of-competition testing for illicit drugs. In response to a growing community concern about the use of drugs by sportsmen and women, this initiative will encourage sports to adopt sanctions which ensure consequences apply from the first illicit drugs breach. He said—

Sporting codes will need to adopt testing regimes that apply sanctions to players after each positive test—this sends the message that drug use will not be tolerated.

I would like to add my congratulations to former premier and federal minister John Fahey who, it was announced on television last evening, will become head of the World Anti-Doping Agency in the new year. I am sure he will bring integrity and sensitivity to the role as well as enormous passion to help keep our athletes drug free.

The AFL needs to support the strongest illicit drug policy, especially in light of Ben Cousins and others. Coming from the southern states, I grew up absolutely adoring this game and I have to say that it is disappointing to see so many of their players now receiving slaps on the wrist. We must not worship the almighty dollar over the welfare of an individual. In the quest to be a top sportsman and celebrate the best, let us not lose sight of the human being in the middle.

I wish to commend the Howard government's continued commitment to zero tolerance of drugs in sport. I also commend this bill, which follows in the footsteps of Commonwealth legislation and Australia's commitment to the World Anti-Doping Code. There should be no such thing as a consequence-free positive drug test.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (5.14 pm): I must confess that I am an absolute sports nut. I have played numerous sports in my time and I actually studied a Bachelor in Human Movements Degree at the University of Queensland. I am a keen advocate of sports of all levels and enjoy watching and participating in a wide range of sports myself.

I agree with other speakers this afternoon that Australia has done much in its fight against drugs in sport. However, I feel that I must point out that Australia still has a huge problem in relation to its attitude towards drugs in sport. I would like to highlight the many speakers who have mentioned the recent case of Andrew Johns and his drug use. I do not wish to harp on about what occurred in that instance, but I feel it shines a spotlight on our poor attitude towards drugs in sport in Australia in that Andrew Johns is actively being courted by the New South Wales Rugby League team for the State of Origin series next year. This high-profile professional player has admitted to extensive drug use over many years and yet many of us—many in the media and many of us gathering around the water coolers, to use an old adage—are saying, yes, it is okay that he should be coming in and helping out by coaching at the elite level. I disagree.

I do not expect Andrew Johns's drug use to be a life sentence for him. However, for him to be actively courted at the elite level so soon after his offences and so soon after his 'road to Damascus conversion' lets us all down. It sets an example to others that 'drug use is sort of okay if you are good

enough'. I disagree. I am very disappointed in the Australian Rugby League and its attitude towards this incident. I call on New South Wales Rugby League not to appoint Andrew Johns in any coaching role for at least the next year. Certainly, this increases my resolve as a passionate and born and bred Queenslander to cheer for Queensland in next year's State of Origin.

The major professional codes of football in Australia—the Australian Rugby League, the AFL and the ARU—have let down their players. We should all be critical of their performance, of their acceptance. To say that they did not know what was going on is garbage. They knew that their players had drug problems. In many cases, they deliberately turned a blind eye because of the performance of the athletes. It is incumbent upon all of us, not just in this chamber but also throughout Australia, to put these organisations on notice that we expect better of them. I do not believe that fantastic performance is a reasonable excuse or a reasonable cop-out for drug use or abuse.

Many speakers here this afternoon have highlighted numerous high-profile and elite athletes who have used drugs, either performance-enhancing drugs or that awful term 'recreational drugs'. I would like to take another tack and encourage people not just to think about elite sports. As honourable members can see by my physique, I am hardly an elite athlete. However, the sports in which I partake make me subject to random drug testing. Please do not encourage only the elite athletes to do the right thing. When we are out and about talking to the average kids and the average sportsman—very much like myself—we need to make sure that this issue is relevant to them.

Over the last few years we have heard professional athletes plead ignorance. In my opinion that is an absolutely gutless excuse. As I said, I am not an elite athlete. I do not have a whole lot of hangers-on helping me when it comes to my sporting activities. However, I have an IQ above 20. I suspect that some of our elite athletes do not.

An opposition member: We might disagree on that.

Mr ENGLISH: You might like to divide. However, it is important that I put on record how easy it is to get advice. I have done this on a number of occasions. When I have had colds and flus during winter and I have had to take some medication for it this is how difficult it is—it is important that all members in this House understand—one picks up the phone, any time between 8 am and 8 pm seven days a week, and dials 1800 020 506 and on the end of the line will be someone to ask about that drug and to find out whether it is on the banned list and what the conditions are. It is not that hard. For these professional elite sportsmen to go on with this ignorance plea turns my stomach.

The federal government has done a good job in setting up the Anti-Doping Hotline. It is as simple as picking up the phone and dialling that number and the advice is there. Doctors have access to the MIMS manual which provides advice as to what drugs are and are not on the banned list. Ignorance is no excuse in law and when it comes to drugs in sport ignorance is no excuse. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (5.21 pm): This bill, the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006, is yet another example of the state and Commonwealth enacting supporting legislation—in this case to enable the state to conduct drug testing and provide educational services to our sporting bodies and sportsmen and women and, I might add, to get the message through to team management, trainers and coaches, parents and young people that drug use in sport simply will not be tolerated and is really a dumb thing to do.

The glare of publicity surrounding recent high-profile sportsmen and women who have admitted to drug taking during their sporting years—sporting stars such as Marion Jones and Andrew Johns—has highlighted the huge emotional toll it can exact, but also the futility of winning at any cost and the huge disappointment to fans who held such sporting heroes in such high regard.

It appears that many times our drug testing is just behind the production of more and more sophisticated drugs which initially may remain undetectable. In recent days I have heard a former coach suggest that maybe we should make it open slather and just remove drug restrictions. I can only imagine that that would result in parents everywhere discouraging their children from playing sport at all lest they advance to a higher representative level where they may be encouraged to take drugs. Let us not kid ourselves, taking drugs, be it for performance-enhancing reasons or because of peer pressure, is illegal and takes its toll on the individual and often their family members and friends. It is magnificent to see fit and healthy athletes striving to reach the peak of their ability and, for the very few, winning the highest accolade in their sport through their own hard work and determination. Being an elite athlete not only requires physical strength and often natural ability but also huge personal dedication and commitment, the ability to control emotions under stress, to keep a cool head and to really want to win and believe in your own ability. While I believe that the number of athletes willing to take the risk of being detected is small, it is simply unfair and undermines the image of their sport.

It was two years ago in October 2005 that Australia adopted the International Convention Against Doping in Sport established by the United Nations. Queensland was the first state back in 1999 to adopt drug testing of our state athletes on behalf of the Australian Sports Drug Agency. The amendments before the House today will bring about consistency with Commonwealth legislation. There are currently

20 state sporting bodies working with the Commonwealth to contract antidoping services from the national antidoping authority. One area of concern is the lack of parental consent required by the Commonwealth to drug test children under 18 and this will be pursued in the future.

Queensland has produced many outstanding world-ranking sportsmen and women. Most of these athletes are great role models and we can feel justly proud of their achievements. As a nation, we love to bask in the success of our sporting heroes. At a time when we hear everywhere the importance of physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle, it is important to uphold high standards in all of our sporting codes. Today an international testing regime exists and Australia takes a strong stand against drug cheating in sport. I strongly support the intent of this bill.

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (5.25 pm): Following the events of the last few weeks, with Olympic sprinter Marion Jones admitting to taking performance-enhancing drugs and yesterday's arrest of an AFL player in Perth, this is an ideal time to reinforce the notion that drugs in sport are not acceptable. We encourage everyone, but particularly our young children, to take up sports, to play to the best of their ability, to respect other players, to be fair and honest. When sporting stars are found to be wanting, I believe it has an adverse effect on young sportsmen and women.

In relation to the provision of antidoping services to sports in Queensland, this bill will support and form a core component of the Queensland Drug-Free Sport Program. The Drug-Free Sport Program has been introduced to eliminate the use of prohibited drugs and doping methods by state-level athletes in Queensland.

The program aims to level the playing field for the vast majority of Queensland athletes who rely on hard work and dedication to achieve their success. By focusing on athletes at the state level, it helps expose drug cheats before they reach high-profile international level competition. Under this program the state works in partnership with state sporting organisations to co-fund the delivery of drug testing and educational services to sports in Queensland. Without these agreements there is no guarantee that the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority's priorities and resources would deliver the services desired by Queensland, nor that these services would target the sports prioritised by Queensland.

Testing under the Drug-Free Sport Program is only for athletes at a state open age level. Club, school and age-level competitions are not affected. As part of the program, Queensland state sporting organisations may be eligible to receive financial assistance towards the cost of testing their athletes. Additionally, the agreements enable Queensland to ensure that appropriate services are provided to support the programs of the Queensland Academy of Sport. From 1999 to June 2007, the government spent \$314,000 on drug testing for Queensland athletes. Since 1999, the government has allocated an additional \$885,000 to the Commonwealth for the development of other antidoping services in Queensland, including education and training services. This includes \$330,000 for the period from 2005-2007.

In the Burleigh electorate, we are well serviced with sporting facilities. The Tallebudgera Outdoor Recreation Centre is perhaps the most well known and students from all over Queensland come there to engage with their peers in sporting pursuits. The Gold Coast Albert Junior Tennis Club has hundreds of budding tennis stars—my own grandchildren included—and they are nurtured in an environment of fun and fairness, with winning important but not at the expense of good sportsmanship. The Pizzey Park sporting complex houses the Australian Institute of Sport canoeing program, Burleigh Bears Junior and Senior Rugby League teams, the Gold Coast Gymnastics Club and the Miami Swimming Club. Potentially, stars of the future are training at these facilities. At this stage drugs in sport are not on their agenda but if we do not take steps to eliminate this scourge now, many young lives may be harmed in the future.

Queenslanders have a strong tradition of succeeding at sport by relying on the principles of fair play and their own ability. This bill, in supporting the Drug-Free Sport Program, assists in maintaining these principles. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (5.29 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. I note it is a joint initiative of the state and federal governments to ensure sports are drug free and steps are taken to ensure those sportsmen and women who deal in drugs are eliminated from competition.

We live in a society where people who excel in sports are held up as examples for children and young people. While the stress we place on these young people can be seen as very unfair given the age of some of them, there is no doubt they play a major role in many children's lives.

I must also say that the same pressure placed on these successful young sportsmen and women is an issue that we have not as a society properly dealt with. There is certainly an obligation on club officials to ensure proper mentoring and financial management is put in place. These men and women are paid significant salaries, commissions and appearance fees, but one of the concerns is that their youth does not in many cases equip them to deal with the pressures that come with fame and fortune. As I said, this is a question we as a society do need to grapple with—not just for the sake of young sportspersons but because of the impact the negative publicity we have seen of recent times has on them as role models to young children and in fact our own children.

One point I would like to raise before going into the substance of the bill is the often used term 'recreational drugs'. The use of that term somehow implies these drugs are of a less dangerous standard. In my opinion, the term is one of the greatest misnomers and a threat to how young people see drugs. The use of the word 'recreational' implies non-threatening and, in a sense, generates a positive feel towards them. The drugs we are talking about here are amphetamines, ecstasy, ice and the like. They are not recreational drugs. They will kill or forever psychiatrically alter a person and make their lives and those of their families and friends an absolute misery. It is not a term that should be used when we are talking about things that can kill a person, particularly our young people.

This bill has a clear aim to eliminate drug use in sport. I would like now to take the opportunity to condemn totally and absolutely those men and women who produce drugs that hook our young people, destroy their lives and cause them so much untold misery and pain. It does not matter whether they are sports enhancing or illicit drugs under the Drugs Misuse Act. They are produced by men and women who have absolutely no regard for the young people of this state and this nation and who are willing to subject them to untold misery for their own personal gain.

I would also like to condemn totally and absolutely those men and women who push these drugs—whether they are the dealers, the coaches, the support personnel or simply the hangers-on. They are equally as guilty as those who produce the drugs and should be condemned out of hand. They have no place in sports and often prey upon young people who do not have life experiences and who are under enormous strain to perform and achieve. These dealers and producers are the lowest form of life on this planet as they act for their own gain. They subject young people to despair and misery.

As I said earlier, the intent of the bill is a joint federal-state initiative to ensure sportsmen and women do not take drugs at any level and ensure those who are using performance-enhancing drugs are removed from the field of play. There is always going to be a question of who will win the drugs race, and setting benchmarks can be very difficult. The Australian Academy of Science in March 2006 highlighted the fact that there are times when mental and physical stress can affect the natural production of hormones in an athlete's body to a point where nonusers return positive test results. It highlighted the example of the Finnish cross-country skiing champion, Eero Mantyranta, who in 1964 won two gold medals at the Winter Olympics. He had a genetic mutation which enabled him to produce higher levels of EPO than normal individuals or athletes.

Australian scientists have in fact been developing what they term blood profiles for the detection of EPO use. The Australian Academy of Science publication stated—

This involves administering either EPO or a placebo to volunteer athletes and then tracking changes in the blood over time. Those athletes administered with EPO may be expected to show increased numbers of red blood cells, including a higher number of new or maturing red blood cells. The study, which initially involved 27 Canberra-based volunteers, is now being extended worldwide so that an international statistical profile can be developed.

The challenge will be to keep ahead of the cheats and illicit drug manufacturers.

We have in this state and this country some wonderful athletes—men and women who achieve personal, national and international bests on a daily basis; men and women who attend the Olympic Games and win medals putting this country at the forefront of sport in many different endeavours. In that vein, the World Anti-Doping Code has been established which forms the basis of the World Anti-Doping Program that aims to harmonise rules governing all athletes, with the fundamental principle of the code being the protection of athletes who compete cleanly and fairly. Rightly, strict sanctions apply and if people are found guilty of trafficking or administering substances, they face tough penalties including a lifetime ban.

We often hear terms such as anabolic steroids, human growth hormones and EPO, but I expect many people have little understanding of exactly what they are and what they do to the human body. In essence, they are all performance-enhancing drugs. Anabolic steroids are drugs that resemble testosterone which affects muscle growth and raised levels in the blood and can therefore lead to increased muscle size and strength. It is also claimed that it reduces body fat and recovery time after injury. Famously, anabolic steroids were used in the 1970s and 1980s by the East German Olympic swimmers. Many would recall the size of many of those swimmers compared to our own Australian men and women. There are significant dangers in the use of this drug. For example, they can cause high blood pressure, abnormalities in liver function, alterations in the menstrual cycle in women, decline in sperm production, kidney failure and heart disease. It is also a drug that increases aggressiveness.

The second drug is human growth hormone which promotes physical development, in particular bone growth during adolescence. It increases the red blood cells, boosts heart function and makes more energy available. Thus, there is a clear correlation between it and enhancing the performance of athletes. This drug, however, is equally dangerous and can lead over time to heart failure and diabetes.

EPO first came into prominence in 1998 during the Tour de France. It again stimulates the production of red blood cells and bone marrow and regulates the concentration of red blood cells and haemoglobin in the blood. The danger is that too high an EPO level can lead to blood clotting, heart attack and stroke.

There are many other substances out there used by athletes to enhance their performance, but at the end of the day they are risking a lot more than they will ever gain. Death or long-term permanent incapacity is a real risk of performance-enhancing drugs. But not only that, what they are doing is taking away from the glory of competition and the true spirit of sportsmanship that exists between clean athletes.

Of recent times, we have been subjected in this country to many high-profile sportspersons using illegal drugs, causing them and their family enormous pain—not to mention the thousands of young children who look up to them as a role model. As I said earlier, we are a society that provides accolades to athletes but sometimes I suspect we do forget their age and level of maturity. That does not exempt them from liability, but I sometimes wonder how without proper guidance, advice and mentoring someone as young as 18, 19 or in their early 20s can handle contracts worth many hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars.

I have no doubt that the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescription drugs is wrong. Perhaps the debate should now commence on how we protect young people from themselves and increasingly guard the good name of sports. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.37 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006. I am pleased to offer my full support for the bill and note the contribution of the member for Toowoomba South, the shadow minister. This bill was introduced by the member for Mount Coot-tha and now has carriage by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport. I commend the former minister for his initiative in amending Queensland's antidoping legislation in order to achieve uniformity with the Commonwealth's Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006.

The Queensland coalition endorses the amendments to Queensland's Sports Drug Testing Act. These bipartisan amendments are necessary to align Queensland's sports drug testing legislation to new Commonwealth legislation and underline our commitment to upholding the integrity of our athletes and proud sporting tradition in Queensland. Australia has taken a tough stance with regard to drugs in sport. Only recently the Prime Minister stated, 'You can't be tough enough when it comes to drugs.' As a nation we are at the forefront in detecting and deterring the use of drugs and doping methods in sport. The fact that very few Australians have been disgraced on the international stage for taking performance-enhancing drugs is testament to the fact that our national policy against drugs in sport is working.

It is a little disappointing to see that the number of Australians who have been involved in doping cases is increasing. Many times, Australians do not want to believe that fellow Australians would be involved in such matters. I will refer to a research brief commissioned by my colleague, the member for Clayfield—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: My learned friend, the member for Clayfield. He commissioned a Parliamentary Library research brief which under the heading 'Australian sports people in doping cases' stated those who had—

1. Been suspended by a sporting body ... for illegal performance-enhancing drug, and/or banned drug, use 2. Publicly admitted such use
3. Been found to have taken illegal performance-enhancing drugs by a court of law
4. Been suspended by a sporting body for failure to submit to mandatory drug testing

That list includes people like Nathan Baggaley, Mark Bosnich, Sergo Chakhoyan, Justin Charles, Wendell Sailor, Mitchell Sargent and Shane Warne. We have heard some very prominent names mentioned in the chamber today. It is very disappointing and it shows the pressure that our Australian sports people are also under in an effort to win and perform to the best of people's abilities but with some sort of assistance.

We all know about the 2000 Olympics, which people have been talking about with regard to the Marion Jones incident. I did attend the Olympic Games in 2000 for a couple of events. I did not see the 100 metres or Marion Jones compete, but it was a remarkable experience. I think most of us who remember it cannot believe that as recently as 2000 there could have been an athlete proclaiming her innocence. We all want to believe in people's innocence, so it was very disappointing to see what happened recently in the Marion Jones case.

Internationally, the use of performance-enhancing drugs started becoming more prevalent at the turn of the 20th century, but instances of doping methods predate the modern Olympics. I want to refer to something else that I found out. From a historical point of view, the start of the more specific search for the substance forming boys into men was when in 1889 Harvard Professor Charles-Edouard Brown-Sequard self-injected subcutaneously a 'rejuvenating elixir' consisting of an extract of dog and guinea pig testicle. He reported in the *Lancet*—that fine journal of medicine—that his vigour and feeling of wellbeing were markedly restored but, predictably, the effects were transient. In 1927, Koch—and that is not David Koch from *Sunrise*—and his student, Lemuel McGee, derived 20 milligrams of a substance from a supply of 40 pounds of bull testicles that when given to castrated roosters, pigs and rats remasculinised them.

The Organon group in the Netherlands was the first to isolate and identify the hormone—the good old Dutch, at the forefront of scientific experiments. In 1935 the paper 'On crystalline male hormone from testicles (testosterone)' by KG David, E Dingemans, J Freud and E Laqueur appeared. The chemical synthesis of testosterone was first reported in 1935 by A Butenandt and G Hanisch. Only a week later the Ciba group in Zurich announced a patent application. These independent partial syntheses of testosterone from a cholesterol base earned both Butenandt and Ruzicka the joint 1939 Nobel Prize. So we can see that it goes back a long way. I note also from the research brief that as early as 1963 France had been the first country to enact antidoping legislation.

In 1967 the International Olympic Committee—IOC—mandated a ban on doping in sport. Since then, through the efforts of the IOC, the World Anti-Doping Agency—WADA—as well as individual nations, we now collectively fight the scourge of performance-enhancing and illicit drugs in sport which undermine the integrity and spirit of the game.

The bill before the House effects a number of changes pursuant to Queensland's and Australia's obligations in this international fight against drugs in sport. On the front line of this battle is the WADA, established under the Lausanne declaration, born of the IOC World Conference on Doping in Sport. The 1999 conference, held in Switzerland, was convened by the IOC following the doping scandal which plagued the Tour de France a year earlier. The scandal highlighted the need for a standardised, international approach to antidoping and was the impetus for the establishment of the World Anti-Doping Agency, responsible for promoting, coordinating and monitoring the fight against doping. One of the tasks charged to WADA was the development of a universal World Anti-Doping Code, which sets out a framework for effective antidoping rules and programs across all sports and countries. The Australian government ratified the code in 2003, and in doing so adopted a series of binding clauses; namely, those stipulating a list of banned substances and imposing a mandatory two-year suspension for athletes caught competing in contravention of the world policy on antidoping.

Australia reiterated its commitment to the fight against doping in sport by signing the International Convention Against Doping in Sport, instituted by the UNESCO. Subsequently, the federal government brought in the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act last year, giving legal effect to Australia's commitment under the international convention. The Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill before the parliament harmonises Queensland and Commonwealth legislation in this respect.

Clause 4 of the bill amends the short title of the act to 'Sports Anti-Doping Act' to promote consistency between state and federal legislation. Many of the subsequent clauses are also to this effect. The principal change is contained in clause 5 of the bill, which seeks to clarify section 3 under part 1 of the act, setting out the objectives of the legislation. Whereas under the previous act the objects were to be achieved primarily by conferring functions and powers to the former Australian Sports Drug Agency to carry out drug testing of Queensland athletes, the amendments contained in this bill will provide for the state to enter into an agreement with the new Commonwealth agency to carry out this function, as well as educating athletes about drugs in sport. This function is more thoroughly detailed in clause 7 of the bill.

In his second reading speech the former Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, and now Treasurer, stated that the agreements formed under the new part 3 will be fundamental to Queensland's Drug-Free Sport Program and its antidoping policy. It is important to note that the changes this bill effects give Queensland a greater role to play in the national fight against antidoping. The new legislation facilitates a closer working relationship between the minister, the Queensland government and state sporting organisations and the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority. The bill gives state based groups the opportunity to assist the ASADA and the Commonwealth in identifying the priorities and services needed to achieve and sustain a drug-free state when it comes to elite sport.

I would encourage the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport and her government to exploit this opportunity as far as is practicable so that Queensland becomes a global leader in antidoping practices. This will involve enhanced dialogue between the government, the Queensland Academy of Sport, state sporting organisations and other stakeholders to formulate a war plan against doping in sport as well as distinguishing targets and priorities for Queensland sport. Focusing on athletes at a state level enhances the likelihood of exposing the few rogue elements of elite sport before they reach a high-profile international level. Such measures as these amendments will only produce more positive outcomes for Australian sport.

The other element of the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill that should be commended is that pertaining to young athletes under the age of 18. Under the current Sports Drug Testing Act 2003, Queensland's underage athletes may only be subject to drug testing with the written consent of a parent or guardian. Commonwealth legislation does not require the ASADA to seek parental permission before drug testing young athletes. I would like to note, however, that whilst the Commonwealth agency is not legally required to notify a child's parent or guardian where an underage athlete is obliged to submit to drug testing, it is currently common practice for the ASADA to inform the parents or guardians about the rights and responsibilities of their young athletes.

Clause 8 of the bill reflects the new powers of the ASADA to test state athletes under Commonwealth legislation but also prescribes a method by which consent may be provided. I commend the minister in codifying this process and I am supportive of her efforts in seeking endorsement of this process at the federal level. It is important that all athletes, regardless of age, be subject to and expected to uphold Australian and international antidoping policies, but I also believe younger athletes should be protected through parental guidance. In essence, this bill underlines Queensland's commitment to upholding the integrity of our athletes and proud sporting tradition in Queensland.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (5.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. I have been motivated to do so in the wake of recent events involving Andrew Johns, a former Australian Kangaroos captain, winner of the National Rugby League's most prestigious award, the Dally M Medal, in 1998, 1999 and 2002; the Clive Churchill Medal in 2001; the most valuable player of the 1995 Rugby League World Cup; and three times Rugby League's Player of the Year in 1998, 1999 and 2002.

Prior to these events, the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill was an important bill that was taking much-needed steps in the area of sports drug testing but was not legislation about which I felt compelled to make a contribution, save to support it in the parliament. I was pleased to see the bill and its proposed legislative changes on the *Notice Paper* but did not think it critical that I put my views on the record. But this view changed when we literally watched a tragic saga very publicly unfold on television involving one of Australia's best known and most talented Rugby League players.

Andrew Johns's career and reputation has disintegrated in very dramatic and controversial circumstances. There was an avalanche of media and public comment from fellow players, fans, journalists, politicians, sports administrators, medical professionals, friends and family. Initially it made the issue of drugs in sport and illegal drug use generally a topic that was being widely discussed across the community. However, more recently there seems to be a trend to refrain from further comment about this issue. I have been very concerned and disillusioned at the attempts by many to be apologists for Andrew Johns and to offer excuses for his repeated use of illicit recreational drugs over many years.

I will make more comment about that issue and its impact on sport and the wider community a bit later in my contribution. The legislation itself deserves some attention. The Australian Sports Drug Agency Act 1990 established the Australian Sports Drug Agency to provide drug testing and educational services for national level athletes. The act did not directly enable the agency to test state-level athletes but provided for state legislation to confer powers on the Commonwealth allowing testing of state athletes under contracts between states and the agency.

In Queensland the Sports Drug Testing Act 2003 enabled testing of state-level athletes to be conducted under contract to facilitate satisfactory levels of service to sports in Queensland. This testing has been a core component of Queensland's Drug-Free Sport Program. In recent years there has been progress towards standardising sports drug testing practices internationally. The Commonwealth government adopted the World Anti-Doping Code in March 2003. In March 2006 the Commonwealth passed the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006.

This Commonwealth act established the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, which incorporates the prior role of the Australian Sports Drug Agency with wider powers and functions. Since this act has been implemented, the Queensland department of sport and recreation has been reviewing Queensland's legislation with respect to its role and consistency with the new Commonwealth legislation. By aligning the state and Commonwealth's sports drug testing legislation, the bill aims to provide a strong framework to battle drug use in sport. I support the government's efforts to this end. It is important that there is a united and coordinated approach to the testing of athletes for performance-enhancing and illicit recreational drugs to ensure administrative inconsistencies and bureaucratic loopholes do not allow those athletes who take drugs to avoid detection and/or the punishments that accompany positive tests.

The issue of drugs in sport is an age-old question, but the fight against them has become more and more difficult as pressure on athletes to perform at higher and higher levels has significantly increased following the professionalisation of many sports and the commercialisation of sports for television coverage. The almost fanatical scrutiny of the professional performance and private lives of athletes by all sections of the media—radio, print, television and electronic—has put an enormous amount of pressure on athletes to be role models and ambassadors for their respective sports to the wider community.

We also have a problem with the parallel struggle between fighting against the development of more and more sophisticated performance-enhancing drugs and the development of more and more sophisticated masking agents to cover those drugs. The problem is that these athletes are trained to play sport professionally, not be professional public role models. Many of these athletes are good community role models and have the capacity to handle the scrutiny by the media. There are those, however, as we all too frequently find out, who cannot adjust to or cope with the public obsession with their form on the field, on the court or in the water. This level of scrutiny is a reality and high-profile

athletes have responded by engaging the services of professional agents, minders, advisers and personal assistants, reflecting their significant remuneration and the importance of maintaining a good corporate image as well as continuing to perform in their chosen sport.

There has been further media coverage in recent times about the former American athlete Marion Jones, who has pleaded guilty to two felonies in connection with a steroid investigation. That felony has cost her the five medals that she won at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. That is a very high price for an athlete to pay. However, it is obviously the only correct course of action.

Drug use by athletes brings shame and dishonour on the individual. The athlete has not only cheated themselves but their chosen sport, their team mates, their fellow competitors, in many cases their country or their state, their supporters and their local communities. As the youngest member of this House, it is important for me to put on the record the enormous impact that cases like this have on young people in the community who look to their heroes for inspiration.

As a young man growing up in Tully I played a lot of junior cricket and a lot of junior Rugby League. I had heroes whom I sought to emulate. As a junior cricketer my heroes were the great David Boon and Shane Warne. Later in his career Shane Warne served a suspension from representative cricket for testing positive for the use of a banned substance. By that time in his career I was no longer a junior cricketer. I was thankful for that because I could remember how much regard I had for Warne's cricketing ability and how much I would have been terribly disappointed had that occurred earlier thinking Warne had tried to enhance his performance on the field by taking a banned substance.

Playing junior Rugby League my heroes were the great Gary Larson and Andrew Gee, both forwards of course, who represented Australia but, more importantly, represented Queensland. I would have been greatly distressed if either of those great former Queenslanders forwards had been caught using performance-enhancing drugs. For young Queenslanders, their sporting heroes are highly influential people in their lives because their performance, attitude and behaviour are delivered into our homes on a regular basis through the television, on the radio and through the print and, nowadays, electronic media.

This brings me back to the controversy surrounding Andrew Johns. I said earlier that I have been very concerned and disillusioned at the attempts by many people to be an apologist for Andrew Johns and to offer excuses for his repeated use of illicit recreational drugs over many years. One of the typical lines of argument utilised to promote this view is that Johns used illicit recreational drugs to escape problems associated with his reported mental health condition. This excuse is used to engender sympathy for Johns and to divert attention away from the illegal use of illicit recreational drugs over many years.

Mental illness is a very serious issue in Queensland and indeed throughout Australia. In no way do I wish to trivialise or to understate the size or scope of mental illness issues right throughout the community and nor do I deny that there is often a strong link between instances of illicit recreational drug use and mental health issues. There is certainly a link there and perhaps in this particular case Andrew Johns has convinced himself that he needed to use illicit recreational drugs over many years as a mechanism to cope with the highs and lows involved with his particular mental health problems. I think it has been reported that Johns suffers from bipolar disorder.

The question that confronts us as a society is whether or not we can accept that as an excuse for illicit recreational drug use, not just on one occasion but what appears to be a consistent use of illicit recreational drugs over many years. I am very concerned that there has not been sufficient formal pursuit of this issue involving Johns in relation to his illicit recreational drug use. What message is this sending to young people throughout the community? That if they can demonstrate some sort of excuse to justify or explain away their drug use they might be able to avoid the penalties associated with that offence.

Barriers to securing support for mental illness issues frequently but not always relate to access and sometimes the affordability of treatment from mental health professionals. I cannot imagine that any of these barriers were faced by Andrew Johns during the time that he took illicit recreational drugs. I find it very difficult to accept that in the environment that Andrew Johns has been in throughout his career—well remunerated, surrounded by support staff and fellow players, friends and family—he did not have the opportunity to access mental health support to deal with his reported problems with bipolar disorder.

I make those remarks without any particular maliciousness towards Johns personally. But in view of the barriers with respect to access and affordability of mental health support to those on lower incomes or those in rural and regional areas who have access problems, I am not satisfied that we as a community should accept his excuse and the excuse provided by some who have defended and apologised for Johns's behaviour on his behalf that he needed to use illicit drugs to help him cope with the highs and lows that he experienced while dealing with his particular mental health issues.

While Marion Jones lost her medals, what has Johns lost apart from his public credibility? The slight on the reputation of the great game of Rugby League has been much more significant. We must adopt a very strong attitude towards the use of drugs in sport, illegal performance-enhancing drugs and

illicit recreational drugs. In view of the impact that it does have on the community when our heroes are caught out, particularly for our young people, I feel strongly that the penalties should be significant. With those comments on the record, I am pleased to support the bill.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (5.59 pm): The Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006 will bring Queensland into line with Commonwealth legislation which recognises international standards. One of the things that this House is aware of is that there is a passion in Queensland, and that passion is about our sport. We place a trust in athletes to represent the state to the best of their ability, not only in terms of achievement but in their conduct as well. This bill will continue to support the Bligh Labor government's ongoing commitment to fairness and to the health of athletes. Queensland's sporting identity has always focused on and valued the concept of fair play. Cheating has no place in Queensland sport and the use of prohibited drugs and doping methods to gain an unfair advantage is deplored by the vast majority of athletes and the public. We have heard a lot about Marion Jones, but it is fairly instructive when one sees what the International Olympic Committee has to do as a result of Marion Jones, because the second-placed runner in the 100 metres was a Greek athlete who was already under suspension because she did not turn up for a drug test. It appears that the records will show that the bronze medal for the 100 metres in Athens will be the only medal ever issued.

The use of performance-enhancing substances has been banned in Queensland for many years for ethical, health and legal reasons. Drug cheats not only rob sport of its integrity; they tarnish the reputation of athletes who rely on hard work and dedication to achieve their results, and aren't there some of them! The achievements of Queensland's champions, particularly the best known and most successful athletes, have the power to motivate Queenslanders, particularly children, to take part in healthier, active lifestyles. They inspire new generations to strive for excellence and they build Queensland's profile around the globe as a formidable centre for sporting success. It is fairly instructive when one looks at the medals achieved in Athens by central Queensland athletes, and none of them had to cheat—the Meares sisters, Anna and Kerry, and our two gold medal hockey players Ryan Knowles and Jamie Dwyer and Ben McEachran, a boxer from Gladstone. If one looks at the medal tally from the Athens Olympics in 2004, they will find that if central Queensland had competed as a separate country we would have been 26th on the medal tally. That is a little piece of history for this House to check on. They are the athletes who are the examples for our children.

The government's commitment to antidoping in sport instils in children the values that drugs are not okay in any form—recreational or in sport. The benefits for children and young people from witnessing their sporting heroes perform in a drug-free environment should encourage and inspire them to get active and to participate in sporting and recreational activities. We know that our community is suffering an alarming rise in obesity which occurs as a result of consuming more calories through diet than are expended through physical activity—and I would remind some others in this House besides myself that we probably need to have a look at that. The Bligh government has made a commitment to curbing this trend through its Eat Well, Be Active initiative which provides advice and information on healthy eating and physical activity. Children should be encouraged to eat well—this program is going through schools now—and keeping our sporting environment free from doping is vital if we want our community to continue to draw inspiration from the examples of great athletes in living healthy, active lifestyles. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (6.03 pm): I rise to add my support for the successful passage of this bill through the House as I feel that it is an important factor in ensuring that Queensland remains a leader in Australian sport. As Queenslanders we have a long, rich and successful sporting history, and this history has been underpinned by the concept of fair play and achievements that reflect an athlete's merits. As such, this Labor government has led the way in Australia in providing a level of support that has fostered and encouraged such sporting achievements. Through the funding of sporting organisations and the provision of educational programs, advisory services, expert support for high performance at the Queensland Academy of Sport and the funding for outstanding facilities such as Suncorp Stadium and the new State Tennis Centre at Tennyson, this government has established Queensland as the premier destination for sport in Australia.

This commitment to sport also extends to ensuring that sport is supported by an appropriate legislative framework. As such, over the past year Queensland has introduced legislation to protect the vital role of sponsorship for events at our major sporting facilities by protecting them from ambush marketing practices that use aerial advertising. As everyone would remember, this ambush marketing had the ability to undermine the revenue streams that keep our major events and venues viable, because without them our ability to attract and host world-class events would be at risk. In recent times this government has also introduced legislation to control ticket scalping for events at major facilities which has helped to make access to sporting matches fairer for the fans, including families who might otherwise have had to pay inflated prices to see their heroes play.

In conclusion, this bill is a further example of the government's commitment to support Queensland's athletes by ensuring that they are playing in fair competitions where excellence is based on effort and ability rather than on some dangerous or banned substance. As a father who played a lot of sport whose children are heavily involved in the current sporting environment, I think that drugs are an

absolute disgrace in today's world. As such, I want to ensure that my children do not get involved with them or any children I know. Without further ado, I want to ensure that this bill passes. As such, I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (6.06 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. This bill will advise parents of children in sport, the general community and sports lovers everywhere that our Labor government is serious about keeping drugs out of sport. Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending a fundraising sportsman's lunch at the Goodna Eagles Rugby League Club, a club with great character and great heart with strong working-class roots. It is where legends are made, including Labor legends. Unfortunately, they lost this year's premiership to arch rivals Brothers—although with several players at the Arthur Gorrie football training academy after last year's Mad Monday, it may be a good thing! This, however, has not diminished their love of the game and dedication to the sport.

This year Origin greats Martin Bella and Mark Murray joined the lunch and were impressed by the efforts of the volunteers putting on a great day and raising some funds in the process. Volunteers such as Ted Bradley, Keiron Butler, Jim Loyd, Bill Frost, Tony Caswell and John Lowry and his brothers put in so much effort for the reward of seeing our young people enjoy their chosen sport and live a healthy lifestyle. It was such a hot day last Friday and the amber fluid was flowing faster than 'Joey' Johns on a night out on London. Sadly however, World War II veteran and strong Labor man Billy Bowtel was not there with us as he had recently had heart surgery and is still recovering. The community wishes 'Bowie' a speedy and full recovery.

Goodna Rugby League also celebrated another player reaching the highest honour in Rugby League when Israel Folau put in a great game against the Kiwis. Former mayor John Nugent, Councillor Tully and I agreed last Friday at the lunch that the naming of a local street after Israel would be appropriate given the tradition started with Noel Kelly Drive. Noel was also a legendary Goodna prop and played in the Australian front row with fellow Ipswich players 'Dud' Beattie and Gary Parcell. These were hard men who did not need performance-enhancing drugs to run over the top of their opposition. Even when playing the French in France after a hard night of competitively downing Ouzo and oysters, as I am told, these blokes stood up when needed and played from the heart because they were proud to be representing their suburb of Goodna, their city, their state and their country. They put Ipswich Rugby League on the map and were followed by other footy players a couple of you may know—people like Allan Langer and his brothers, the Walters boys and many other NRL players. The pressures of modern sport can push players of all codes over the edge. The huge money involved in sponsorship, gambling and salaries is enormous. However, for sport to survive it needs to have the confidence of parents to allow their kids to play the sport and allow them to have their heroes and the players that they admire.

Drug cheats are cowards. They cannot hack hard work. Perseverance, hard work and dedication should be the mantra and that is what we teach them at the Goodna Rugby League Club—from the old boys right down to the toddlers. That is what we teach them at our eminent Rugby League schools in my electorate: Redbank Plains State High School, Woodcrest College, Kruger State School and Collingwood Park State School. I am very pleased to support this bill today. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (6.09 pm): It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Sports Drug Amendment Bill 2006. I have a lot of fond memories of great athletes and great sportsmen over my lifetime. I go back to the years of the great Rugby League players. I used to watch the great Reg Gasnier in Sydney. Probably no greater footballer ever pulled on the St George colours or the Australian colours than Reg Gasnier. The honourable member for Toowoomba South's own son, Timmy, played Rugby Union for Australia. Probably no greater player has ever pulled on the Souths jumper here in Brisbane, or the Queensland Reds jumper, or the green and gold for Australia than Tim Horan. Both of those gentlemen never, ever had to embark on a course of taking drugs to push their careers to the edge. They were firm competitors, they were born athletes and they were people who the rest of Australia used to follow and like to watch, like many other young Australians who go out there every day and play Rugby League or Rugby Union, tennis, cricket athletics, netball—the whole bit.

I heard everything that the member for Bundamba said a moment ago and I concur with most of it. I say to the minister that the Police, Corrective Services and Sport portfolio carries a lot of responsibility. The police do a great job. They are at the coalface in trying to apprehend criminals to keep them out of society, especially in the area of illicit drugs, which is a damning indictment on our society.

I think one of the biggest problems we have today is the amount of money that some of these athletes earn. I think a lot of problems are caused because these athletes are so idle when they are off the field. I know they train hard to try to stay at the top, but we should have them in our schools doing promotions. I also think it is very important that television stations, sponsors and those people who put up the money for sport remember that these sportspeople should lead by example.

We have heard mention today of people such as Andrew Johns and Ben Cousins. I feel sorry for those blokes. I will tell members why. It is not because they have embarked on a course of recreational drug use. I do not believe that any member in this House knows what goes on in some people's lives.

We do not know whether these people are suffering from depression or whatever. I look at those people as the great athletes that they are and for the great things that they have done. All I can hope for now is for somebody to help those people through their dilemmas and to not criticise them or expose them to unfair situations because of what has happened. Let us look at the good things in life rather than look at the bad and out of the negatives try to make positives. I thought that the interview that Andrew Johns held with Phil Gould on the *Footy Show* was one courageous, gutsy effort. I commend the man for it. I have a lot of happy memories of watching Andrew Johns play Rugby League for Newcastle, New South Wales and Australia. I just hope everything goes well for him, because he certainly needs help. Rather than criticising, I think we have to be out there to find solutions.

Unfortunately today, drugs seem to be everywhere and our young people are the most vulnerable to them. Young kids in our schools are exposed to opportunities to use recreational drugs. The police are out there trying to apprehend and bring to justice those grubs in our society who have a selfish attitude and who want more money all the time. All they are doing is giving our hospitals and our funeral parlours more business, because at the end of the day that is where these people are going—to an early grave because of this element of society. That is why I say to the minister that she has a responsibility. I congratulate her on the work that she is doing in trying to make a change with drugs in sport. We have to give our police the tools by which they can do something about this. We also have to bring the sports medicine people to the fore and make absolutely certain that they have the tools, too, to apprehend these drug cheats.

A couple of weeks ago I spoke to the minister privately about the emphasis today that is on male sport but that there is not a lot of emphasis on female sport. That is something that I hope we will see turn around in Queensland and that in a short while we will see the young girls in our state given an equal opportunity to excel in sport. I think of the great sportswomen of the past, such as Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong, Betty Cuthbert, Marlene Matthews, just to name a few. All of those women were little kids themselves once. It is great to see them standing up on the podium getting a gold or a silver medal or receiving some trophy for Australia, but a lot of young girls and a lot of young women in our communities are being disregarded because they cannot earn the money that their male counterparts can earn. We have to do something about reversing that psyche. The most important thing here is to make certain that we get sports training into the schools for the young girls as well as for the young blokes to give them those opportunities.

We do not want to see our great athletes and our kids go down the same path as the great Peter Jackson. I just hope that Peter Jackson's loss of life is going to be a reminder to us that we have to do something about this together. He was a great athlete. So I say here today that I have great pleasure in supporting this legislation and, please God, together we can do something about it.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (6.16 pm): Like the member for Gregory I am delighted to rise to speak in support of this bill which relates to a matter that is quite close to my own heart. The details of the bill have been well canvassed. Obviously, we are following through at a state level on an initiative from the federal government. I think that is good to see. I think it is good to see governments at different levels and of different political persuasions taking a serious and concerted approach together to this problem. In many respects Australia has been a leading country on the issue of drug testing in sport. It has probably taken a harder line than most other countries. That is in keeping with the fact that not just sport but fair play in sport is very important to Australians.

The issue of doping athletes in particular to improve their performance is one that we are rightly concerned about and one that we are rightly doing something about. The *British Medical Journal* reported that poor quality black market drugs often used in the sports industry have been linked with a number of cases of poisoning, infection and mental illness. The poor quality of the illegal drugs used to dope athletes is only the beginning of the problems that originate from drug taking in sport. Some years ago in the Tour de France we saw the death of Tommy Simpson, which was later attributed to amphetamine use. We have seen recent examples of athletes using drugs, such as Marion Jones.

This bill deals with five classes of drugs. It refers to stimulants such as amphetamines, speed and a number of the newer drugs; narcotics, such as morphine; anabolic steroids, which are probably the drugs that most members of the House would think about first because the physiological effects of anabolic steroids are so obvious if people have watched the sports in which these agents are not banned; diuretics because of their ability to hide the other drugs from detection; and peptide hormones, which have been very popular, particularly the growth hormone and erythropoietin, because up until more recent times those drugs were not tested for so vigorously.

I have had a stint as a sports doctor in Rugby League. I have also had a stint as a GP in which I have seen firsthand the effects of people using illicit drugs for performance enhancing measures. From my short experience in sports medicine, I gained a good understanding of the pressure that is applied to athletes. We should never forget the fact that these athletes are young people and they are prone to pressure. There is a lot of pressure on them to perform. If we are not strong on the taking of drugs in sport we will condemn young people to either be duped into taking performance-enhancing drugs—and there have been cases where young people have been duped and told they were taking some other sort

of substance or that the substance they were taking was harmless—or, as we have seen around the world quite prominently, be pressured to do so. There is a real feeling in sports where drug use has been prominent—and all of us are aware of some of those sports—that people cannot compete unless they take the drugs.

I well remember a young woman coming into my medical practice with a muscle bulk that would exceed that of any of the men in this room. She was covered in acne, with oedema, with her sugar level through the roof, with her blood pressure through the roof and her electrolytes were out to blazes. This was a very young woman—20 years old. After confronting her about her illicit steroid use, she simply said, 'Well, I cannot compete because the others use them.' That was a few years ago and I hope that sort of thing is a thing of the past.

Beyond the effects on athletes themselves, athletes are role models for us. We have seen a lot of comment about that. I have a very strong view that in relation to the role models that we have—particularly at this time when the media, with all its new facets, plays such a bigger role in the thinking of young people—we have distorted the image of a normal female body to be that of an overly thin female body. However, we have also distorted the image of a male body. The image that young males aspire to is a bulky image because they have watched World Championship Wrestling or body building and even people like Arnold Schwarzenegger who have admitted to using performance-enhancing drugs. This affects impressionable young people.

From time to time I was told by young male patients that they did not feel they could go to the beach and so forth and they would ask if I could help them improve their bulk. I referred them to a movie called *When We Were Kings*. I hope that some honourable members have seen it. It is worth seeing. It is the story of the fight between Cassius Clay and Joe Frazier in the Congo.

Mr Weightman: The 'rumble in the jungle'.

Dr FLEGG: The 'rumble in the jungle'. I take that interjection. It was held at 5 am in the morning because it was so hot in the Congo.

Mr Lawlor: Wasn't it 4?

Dr FLEGG: Yes, 4 am—early in the morning.

Mr Lawlor: It wasn't Frazier; it was Foreman.

Dr FLEGG: George Foreman, was it? It was, too.

Mr Horan: Blame me.

Dr FLEGG: I would not dare blame the member for Toowoomba South for correcting me on that. I would never do it.

These were two of the most powerful athletes on the planet and yet they had a normal male physique because that fight predated the use of these drugs. A lot has been said tonight and maybe we have rightly focused our comments tonight on the area of so-called recreational drugs. I reject the concept of a recreational drug. The suggestion that narcotics and amphetamines can be used recreationally is wrong. I also reject the idea that these drugs are not performance enhancing. I have heard it said by quite a number of commentators that these are recreational drugs; that they are not performance enhancing. Many performers, particularly in the music industry and other industries, have been users of these drugs because of the appearance of energy that they create. They can also create an aggression that is performance enhancing in many sports and obviously they can have a number of other effects in terms of keeping people awake for longer hours and so forth. I think we should take just as hard a line on these so-called recreational drugs—these narcotic and amphetamine drugs—as we do with steroids and human growth hormones. These sportspeople are role models whether we like it or not.

For years many of us have strongly opposed the use of cigarette smoking in movies. Why have we done that? Because the role models who stand up there on the silver screen are the role models whom young people and impressionable people copy. The same applies when role models, whether they be the footballer who has been in the news in the past few days or Queensland footballers who were revealed not that long ago, say to young people, 'These things are all right. It is cool because top sportspeople use them.' It is just plain wrong. I strongly support the hard line that is taken. I commend the government for the measures that it has put into this bill.

Sport is a wonderfully positive experience at every level. It will remain a wonderfully positive experience if we defend its integrity. If we say that drug cheating, abuse of drugs of one sort or another, is not acceptable and we want a high standard from our sportspeople, then sport will remain a wonderfully positive experience. I know many people in this House have played sport—probably not quite as well as the member for Toowoomba South, in the case of a few members. At whatever level members have played at it will have benefited them and have been a wonderfully positive experience. Let us keep it that way for future generations of young Queenslanders.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (6.26 pm): I rise to support this bill before the House. Australia is known as a great sporting nation. For a small nation of approximately 20 million people we bat well above and beyond any nation's expectations. We compete with the very best and we win world titles and Olympic gold, and all in the spirit of fair competition and sportsmanship.

Sport is an integral part of Australian life and is interwoven into the social fabric of Queensland. Sporting activities blanket the whole state of Queensland and those who play sport are represented from the youngest toddler to the oldest competitor in the Masters Games. When Billy Moore yelled out 'Queenslander' as he was entering the field for State of Origin, we could feel all Queenslanders lift their heads, look each other in the eye and unite as one against a common foe.

This state has a great climate and no other activity undertaken by Queenslanders is so widely supported as sport. Sport builds our community and absorbs much of family time. Sport creates passion; it creates commitment; and it creates winners and losers. Two of the many emotions it creates are memories and dreams: memories of past challenges and dreams for the future—dreams not just for our own future but the futures of our young people and the coming generations because we want them to have the same positive experiences and challenges.

This legislation will assist in the fight against drugs and will also assist in creating a level playing field for all competitors. Legislation is one means of protecting our beloved sport, but we also need administrators and sponsors to put community values ahead of monetary values. It is not only important that we do well in sports but also important that we keep our international reputation as an honest and fair competitor and that we continue to hold the confidence of the sporting community and the international community.

To match our sporting achievements, we also hold our own on the international field in antidoping technology and administration and we have one of the strongest commitments to removing drugs and illegal substances from sports and competition at all levels. Australia continually aims to meet world standards on antidoping and is a signatory to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Convention Against Doping in Sport. We also adopted the World Anti-Doping Code in March 2003.

Amphetamines are powerful stimulants. They elevate mood, prevent sleep, suppress appetite and stave off fatigue. During the Second World War the armed forces of many countries provided their soldiers and pilots with amphetamines—pep pills—to combat fatigue, elevate mood and increase endurance. In Japan at the same time, amphetamines were widely distributed to civilians working in factories, and at the war's end Japanese drug companies unloaded their massive stockpiles onto the demoralised populace as the ideal way to replenish the spirit. By the late 1940s five per cent of Japanese adults were dependent on amphetamines. Elsewhere, particularly in America, pep pills started appearing on the black market. Soon they were being used by students to help with their study, by truck drivers to stay awake on long hauls and by athletes to sharpen their performance.

In the 1950s American soldiers in Korea and Japan began mixing amphetamines with heroin to make speedballs that were taken intravenously. In the late 1960s amphetamines were prescribed by doctors for the treatment of depression and obesity. Widespread abuse of diet pills by housewives led to the re-examination of amphetamine use. The more it was studied, the more its dangerous similarity to cocaine use became apparent.

Drugs in sport must be stamped out, but in doing so we must help those affected by its usage and educate the whole of the community about its dangers. The question of drugs in sport constantly appears in the news. It is reasonable that those who seek to gain an advantage by taking performance-enhancing drugs be penalised. But what about recreational drugs? Should athletes be penalised by the sporting body for taking recreational drugs either in season or out of season? Clearly most of these drugs do not enhance performance and probably do the opposite. We should not put sporting bodies in the position that they are the sole resistance and promote them as the prohibition police.

Recreational drugs are an enormous social problem and should be approached in a collaborative way with the cooperation of all stakeholders. Sporting associations in Australia seem to be trying to promote a puritanical image. But players can still use one recreational drug to excess—alcohol. It is the largest killer in Australia, with over 3,000 related deaths last year. Many do not see the hypocrisy, but it is there nevertheless.

Role models do come in many forms and young people are not influenced by just one so-called role model. They are influenced by family, school and friends. They may also see pop singers or bands as idols. Others will admire artists or writers or important community leaders. A number of these latter groups have taken illegal drugs and vilifying them does not diminish the contribution they have made. One cannot, for example, take away the contribution that William Wilberforce made by outlawing the slave trade simply because he was addicted to an opium substance. The worth of the person should not be diminished because they have used an illicit drug. Individuals and governments need to take responsibility and government should not be simply using sport and athletes as a mask for the broader failings of drug policy in our society.

By working with an interdepartmental approach in partnership with the community we will reduce the effects of drugs, not only in sport but also in our communities. Sporting events are not only for our social benefit but also for our economic benefit, with events bringing millions of dollars into our community. We need to do whatever we can to protect our sporting assets, but most importantly we must support all people involved and that includes the perpetrator.

Speaking of people getting involved in sport, Bundaberg is a wonderful sporting town and we continue to churn out athletes who, through hard work and dedication, keep on conquering up to the highest level. Our newest star on the world stage is 21-year-old Kate Juillerat, who played an integral role as Australia defeated Russia in the women's basketball grand final at the Special Olympics in Shanghai last week. The result is a great credit to Kate who only took up intellectually disabled basketball four years ago. I had the privilege of presenting Kate's Australian team uniform to her in conjunction with the police torch relay early last month and she is certainly an outstanding young person and an inspiration to all who know her. Kate has continued a proud tradition of Bundaberg disabled athletes after Chantel Wolfenden's heroics in the pool at the 2004 Paralympics in Athens where she snared a swag of medals, including gold.

Tracey Oliver started the Bundaberg run of Paralympic success at Barcelona in 1992 and backed it up in Atlanta four years later. Troy Elder led the Bundaberg charge at the Sydney Olympics, bagging a hat-trick of goals as the Kookaburras clinched the men's hockey bronze medal. Troy also savoured glorious gold with the Kookaburras in the 2004 Olympics. While he has now retired from top level sport, Bundaberg has many rising hockey stars who could follow in his footsteps in the coming years, such as dual Australian schoolgirl representative Brittany Cramer and her brother Cale, who has achieved Australian country selection and has now moved to Brisbane to chase even higher honours in sport.

Three more Bundaberg young guns each returned from the recent Australian Schools Hockey Championships with gold medals—Emily Clark, Sarah Pohlmann and Zoe Jones. There were also some amazing stories of triumph against all odds in the Bundaberg hockey grand finals last month, including great role models, father and son, Andrew and Matthew Pearce, in the thick of things as Arrows/Athletics secured the division 1 men's premiership. Andrew, who is 45 and who has also given long, highly distinguished service to district lifesaving, packed his bags the following week to head south and make his Queensland representative debut at the Masters Nationals, together with team mates Keith Scherer and four times Bundaberg Golf Club open champion John Kirchner. Matthew is also part of a vintage crop of young district surf-lifesaving multitalents and the sky is the limit for him after a stunning gold medal performance in the under 19 men's beach sprint at the Australian Championships in Perth.

The district has also produced the past two Pelerman Queensland Nippers of the Year—Riley McGregor and Scott Boon. These are two truly outstanding young men. Bundaberg also boasts a long list of able-bodied swimming high achievers over the years, including Olympic medallists Michelle Pearson, Justin Lemberg and Rosemary Lassig. With highly skilled and dedicated coaches, the quality of Athens Paralympics Australian team coach Paul Simms and Tracey Oliver, Teenage National Championships gold medallists from earlier this year, Brooke Taylor, Emily Goddard and others look set for another bumper season. Still in the water, Sophie Jarvis stamped herself as a special talent in rowing with her success in the under 14 girls' single scull at the Queensland Schools Championship Regatta at Bucca.

Bundaberg has produced a number of volleyball Olympians, such as Anita Palm-Spring, Daniel Ronan and Stephen Keir, while Tom Edgar, who is doing big things at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, could match their feats in years to come and also become a household name. In touch football, Bundaberg duo Alyce McCloskey and Kirsty Beer also picked up gold medals at the recent under 18 nationals at Coffs Harbour. In football, or soccer as it was formerly known, Bundaberg's Australian Young Socceroos goalkeeper Mitchell Langerak has joined glamour club Melbourne Victory, putting him on track to emulate the feats of another of Bundaberg's favourite sons, NSL and A-League premiership winning custodian and occasional Socceroo, Clint Bolton.

Meanwhile, 11-year-old Julian Reynolds, whose father Colin is a former Queensland senior Rugby League representative star and state Colts cricketer, could be a name to watch in the future, albeit in a different sport: tennis. Julian is the only junior tennis player in the central Queensland region to be undefeated in any age group this year, and he has been rewarded with CQ age best and fairest honours and team selection.

All of these athletes contribute to their sport and their community in a positive manner without the use of performance-enhancing drugs. It would be unfair to allow anybody to make a mockery of the time and effort they put into training and competing, as well as the time and effort put in by their teachers, coaches and parents. From the group of people I have mentioned above, members can quite easily come to the conclusion that Bundaberg is a proud sporting city. In closing, we need to protect the youth of our community who are our greatest assets. I support the bill before the House.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.38 pm): I rise to support the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill, particularly in light of some of the previous speakers listing, as has the member for Bundaberg, a very envious and impressive list of people—

Ms Spence: You are not going to read out a list, are you?

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: No. It was a very impressive list of people who have excelled in sports because of their own hard work and effort.

Mr Lawlor: It had nothing to do with the bill, though.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Maybe not, but it is about sports drug testing. The Gladstone electorate, like other electorates, is a very sports orientated electorate, with people who have excelled in basketball, volleyball, surf-lifesaving, gymnastics, Rugby League, cricket and cycling and they have done it without any performance-enhancing drugs.

I listened to the member for Gregory's contribution. As always, it was well thought through and very passionate. It is disappointing that we have seen over the last couple of years a procession of professional sporting people who have been caught out as drug users in the past. The problem with that is that it taints so many good sportspeople who have attained their high achievements without anything other than hard work and perseverance. It makes me wonder, though, whether we need to have a look at the pressure we place on elite sportspeople.

The member for Gregory talked about the fact that it is so easy to criticise these elite sportspeople when they fall off their perch without knowing the circumstances that created the environment where they commenced their improper drug use. Yes, the rules are very clear and it is very plain. Drugs are not to be tolerated in sport, but we would have to walk a mile in their shoes to know how it started. In saying that, I do not for one second condone drug use in any form or in any way. However, if there is an increasing number of elite sportspeople who are taking illicit drugs for assistance, perhaps we need to have a look at our expectations of our high-achieving sportspeople to see if it has reached a plain that is no longer acceptable. Has the fun gone out of it and is it orientated towards the economy, making money, selling sport and selling TV programs so that the pressure on these usually young people is so great that they have little option but to crumble? The corollary of that is that there are many good sportspeople who do not crumble, but perhaps, as I said, it is time we re-examine our expectations of these young men and women who are in the prime of their lives. In many instances, the lives of those who capitulate and take the illicit drugs are ruined both in the present and in the future.

The only other comment I want to make is that we commend and congratulate all of those athletes, both non-professional and professional, who have achieved their status because of their hard work, perseverance, early morning training and all of those things. The Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill will go some way to ensuring that they will have to face fewer competitors who have been assisted by performance-enhancing drugs.

I would love to see the day when drugs in sport are completely annihilated. I was disappointed to hear the comment of a very prominent Australian coach on TV. I did not really see the context of his comment in the clip that I saw, but he said that perhaps we just have to relax the rules a little bit. I think that would be a travesty. These achievements need to be on the basis of the merit of each of these sportspeople and in an environment where they can still enjoy the sport that they are so competitively involved in. I support the bill.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (6.42 pm): I want to put on record my support for the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill. It brings Queensland into line with every other state in the Commonwealth on this matter. One of the speakers from the Liberal Party, I think, said that it should never be suggested that sportspeople are guilty because of who they associate with. I want to put on record something that the cycling community throughout the world is now doing to crack down on doping in that sport, and doping has been a significant problem for them. I understand they now have prescribed lists of doctors whom cyclists are not allowed to associate with. The winner of this year's Giro d'Italia has been banned for three months by the Italian cycling union for associating with a suspected doctor he should not have been associating with. That is something worth bearing in mind.

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport) (6.43 pm), in reply: I thank all those who participated in the debate on the bill. A number of members mentioned that it is timely that we are debating the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill on a day when the front page of our national newspaper talks about one of our most famous Aussie rules players, Ben Cousins, finally getting suspended from the West Coast Eagles because of his drug use. I have to agree with a number of my colleagues today who said that they disagree with the term 'recreational drugs'. I think personally we ought to be referring to these drugs as illegal drugs. It is finally great to see that Aussie Rules and this particular club is starting to take this problem very seriously.

I also want to take the opportunity on behalf of the Queensland government to congratulate John Fahey on his forthcoming appointment as the next president of the World Anti-Doping Agency. As a former New South Wales Premier and former federal government minister, I am sure he will bring a lot of experience to that role. It will be wonderful to have someone bring an Australian perspective to that role.

As far as I am concerned, there are only three issues that are of concern in this legislation and they are issues that have been identified by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. They are the issues of the testing of athletes aged under 18 years, the protection of privacy for young athletes and the physical intrusiveness of testing. Someone said to me today that no matter what portfolio I have been given I cannot get away from the issue of drugs, and this is true. These issues have been at the top of my list when it comes to our prisons or watch-houses and now when it comes to the testing of our athletes.

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority reported that there have been a minimal number of occasions when athletes under 18 years of age have been tested in Queensland. Only those athletes competing in open senior events at the state level or selected to be in a state team or squad have been considered for testing.

With regard to the privacy of young athletes, we are advised that the protocols used in Queensland offer protection so long as athletes do not choose to waive their rights. Prior to the passage of this new Commonwealth legislation—and let us face it, we are moving this legislation today because we are required to because of the Commonwealth legislation—section 11 of the state act protected young athletes by ensuring that athletes under 18 years were not tested unless written consent was first obtained from a parent or guardian. With this bill, we have been forced to alter this provision, making parental consent a discretionary consideration. This is because the lack of a similar provision in the Commonwealth legislation makes it impossible for the state to mandate parental consent without contradicting the Commonwealth law.

On 11 December 2006, my predecessor, Minister Andrew Fraser, wrote to the federal Minister for Arts and Sport requesting that he consider amending the Commonwealth legislation to require that parental consent is obtained before athletes younger than 18 years are tested. Subsequently, on 19 February the state government received a reply from the new federal minister, the Hon. George Brandis, who advised that the protocols for testing young athletes are consistent with the framework provided by the World Anti-Doping Code. He also said that the World Anti-Doping Agency is currently reviewing the code, however, and that, following this review, the Commonwealth will consider amendments to the National Anti-Doping Scheme. Senator Brandis suggested that Queensland may wish to make a submission directly to the World Anti-Doping Agency that the code be amended to require parental or guardian consent for the testing of minors.

It is disappointing that the Commonwealth has failed to provide leadership on this issue. Consequently, on 26 March, the previous state minister, Andrew Fraser, wrote directly to the World Anti-Doping Agency submitting Queensland's view that parental or guardian consent should be a mandatory child protection measure embedded in the World Anti-Doping Code. The World Anti-Doping Agency has confirmed receipt of the state government's submission and offered assurance that the matter will be considered during finalisation of the review of the code. Hence, Mr Fahey's appointment is very timely.

The review will be finalised with the presentation of the new code at the World Conference on Doping in Sport to be held in Madrid, Spain, during 15 to 17 November. Regardless of whether the state government's submission to the review of the code proves to be successful, the proposed amendment to the state act will retain an indication of the state's preference for parental consent to be obtained.

However, until such practices are mandatory, we may continue to hear of events such as those at the Head of the River Regatta in New South Wales during March this year where it was reported that drug-testing officials were refused access to school rowers because no parental consent had been obtained and the officials were unable to provide evidence that they had undergone screening for suitability to work with children. Nevertheless, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority justified its position of having children stripped naked between the waist and mid-thigh in order to provide an unobstructed view of a sample provision before a stranger without prior parental consent on the basis that this is the most effective method of doping control. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, however, states—

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

I believe this is an ideal that all of us here would support. I am advised that, after the controversy following from drug testing at schools, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, in collaboration with the Independent Schools Council of Australia, has agreed to new procedures for testing junior athletes at interschool or intraschool events which include a commitment by the authority that testing of junior athletes will not occur without prior parental consent being obtained by the authority. Furthermore, the authority now requires its officials to undergo working with children checks prior to being allowed to test junior athletes. So all ASADA officials here in Queensland have now gone through the process of obtaining a blue card.

With regard to the other issue about the physical intrusiveness of testing, under the Commonwealth legislation either or both urine or blood samples may be taken. The antidoping authority has advised that, where blood samples are taken, this is done by an accredited phlebotomist and only 12 millilitres of blood is collected.

I want to thank all members in the chamber for their passionate contribution. I think all members displayed an enthusiasm and an understanding of the importance of sport and physical exercise in our state and in our society. The bill will now create a consistent approach to catching those who have complete disregard for that which we all hold dear, our sportspeople.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr HORAN (6.52 pm): In this clause we are changing from providing for the testing of 'competitors' to the testing of 'athletes'. The testing of competitors meant that testing was done in competition. Now that it is testing of athletes, does that mean it will be opened up so that they can be tested in or out of competition—that is, in the season or out of the season?

Ms SPENCE: I am informed that this means they can be tested both in and out of season.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr HORAN (6.53 pm): In this clause the words 'drug testing' are omitted and 'anti-doping' is inserted in its place. Does this mean that only antidoping drugs—which I think are performance-enhancing drugs—are the ones that will be tested and illicit recreational drugs would not be tested? It seems to me to be more specific in saying 'anti-doping' compared with the previous term of 'drug testing', which was wider and more generic.

Ms SPENCE: We are really just reflecting the changes that the Commonwealth has chosen to make in the legislation. It is just semantics. The same range of drugs will still be tested for.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

Mr HORAN (6.54 pm): This bill talks about the objects being achieved by entering into an agreement with the Commonwealth under which antidoping testing services and educational services are provided for state athletes. How does the minister decide which sports are going to be tested, or is that decided by the sports themselves? What is the criteria for that? When a sport decides that it wants to be tested, is it the government or the federal government's drug policy that says that testing will occur inside of competition or outside of competition? We saw some problems recently in New South Wales where players were taking drugs mainly out of competition. If they played on Friday night and were not playing again until Sunday week, they were taking drugs then.

I believe there are 11 sports. How are those 11 sports decided? Are they decided by the sports themselves, or does the government decide? Or is it a negotiation with various sports? Is it voluntary, or does the minister say, 'You in this particular code have to be tested'? Or do they come up with that request themselves?

Ms SPENCE: I am told that there are 19 sports organisations which are covered in the Commonwealth and state agreement. Hopefully, I can table the 19 sports organisations before we conclude the debate on this bill. My assistants here are looking for a list of them. I think it is a fair point and people would like to know what those sports are. Besides those 19 sports organisations, other sports, if they can afford to, or want more testing than ASADA would normally do in its random testing, can pay for such testing themselves. I know that some more financial football clubs do that. What we are doing today is legislating for drug testing, including the minimalist 19 sports organisations and random testing.

Mr HORAN: The minister mentioned that some clubs could not afford testing. The minister might have meant they are the ones that are outside of the 19 sports or she might have meant they are within the 19 sports. We are trying to stamp out drugs and it would be a shame if it comes down to clubs not being able to afford testing. Most clubs are running pretty close to the margin, after equipment, insurance and all the other costs of running a sport are taken into account. They may have player payments and other costs and so forth. It would be a shame if it was a matter of them not having enough to cover the cost. Could the minister explain whether the cost is met by the clubs or whether it is a mixture of funding provided for testing by the Commonwealth, the state and the clubs or the code itself?

Ms SPENCE: I am told that it costs about \$690 for one test in competition, so we are talking about a very expensive process. That is jointly funded between the Commonwealth, the states and the State sporting bodies of most sporting organisations. Obviously the State sporting bodies of some sporting organisations that are more affluent will choose to buy more drug testing than the minimum that is going to be imposed on them by ASADA. That was simply the point that I was trying to make. I probably made it very poorly before.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 and 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr HORAN (6.59 pm): Clause 8 deals with the athletes under 18 years. I have two questions of the minister. The Commonwealth requires drug testing of athletes under 18 years but it does not require parental consent. In this bill we can ask for parental consent. I wonder whether we can actually do that. I agree fully that we should be able to do that. Is parental consent to drug testing going to be a criteria and determine whether or not an athlete under 18 years is picked for a particular team? It would seem that at the time an athlete becomes a member of a state sporting organisation or at the time the athlete registers with a sporting organisation to compete in open age sporting competitions it would be a requirement that they have parental consent for drug testing. If they do not have it, it may affect their selection or their ability to compete.

Ms SPENCE: As I said before, I think this is the most important part of the legislation we are debating tonight. Prior to us enacting this legislation, our Queensland legislation required parental consent before any drug testing of a juvenile under 18 years of age. The Commonwealth legislation makes no provision for parental consent so it is irrelevant whether parental consent is given or not.

What we are putting in this legislation is that our preference would be that parental consent be required. I have to be honest and say that the Commonwealth legislation is going to override this provision anyway. If ASADA wants to go in it is going to test minors without parental consent. That is the new regime. Up until my predecessor Andrew Fraser, Treasurer and the Independent Schools Council of Australia got understandably upset about this new regime, we had ASADA people going in who had not even had blue cards. That pressure on the Commonwealth has led to it acknowledging that the people who do this testing of minors should have, in the case of Queensland, something like a bluecard. We could not have confidence in the people doing this very intrusive testing.

While Queensland has taken a lead on the issue and together with the Independent Schools Council of Australia forced the Commonwealth to provide some more safeguards to our juveniles, the Commonwealth has disappointingly really failed to provide leadership. What it said to Queensland is that we could write to the World Anti-Doping Agency if we were so upset, which my colleague did. They did not take any leadership and do it.

The imminent appointment of John Fahey will give us an opportunity and hopefully the next federal government an opportunity to argue our case on the world stage that the rights of children in this very intrusive and invasive drug testing regime, which we all think is necessary, have to be a lot more carefully considered than what is contained in the legislation before us today.

Mr HORAN: I fully agree with what the minister is trying to do there. If she wants any assistance from the opposition we will cooperate fully to get that done. It is a good move to have that proper supervision, bluecard and parental consent.

Ms SPENCE: Thank you.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 and 10, 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. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.04 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 30 October 2007.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.04 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Aboriginal Liaison Officers

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (7.05 pm): I rise in this adjournment debate to deliver a speech on behalf of the member for Darling Downs, Ray Hopper, who, unfortunately, has been called away to Townsville on parliamentary business. I wish to draw to the attention of the House Ray's concern over the need to urgently appoint two police liaison officers in Dalby. I notice that Minister Judy Spence is leaving, but I am sure she understands what I am talking about.

Ray has continually called for this appointment from the time Ray was first elected. Back in May 2001 Ray raised this matter in the House and, unfortunately, the respective police ministers through this period have failed to provide this vital staffing of PLOs for Dalby. As far back as 1998 Dalby police have been seeking the appointment of two police liaison officers for the area.

Throughout this time there has been a significant impact on police resources in the Dalby area due to an increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. In terms of population, Ray points out that in 1998 there were 450 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing in Dalby; in 1999 there were 600; in 2000 there were 700; in 2001 there were 800; and in 2007 there are 1,000.

Support for the appointment of PLOs has come from the solicitor of the Wakka Wakka Legal Aboriginal Corporation, the CEO of Goolburri Regional Housing Co-op, the Dalby-Wambo Chamber of Commerce, the Dalby Town Council, the Wambo Shire Council and the Goondir Health Services. Local support agencies such as the Dalby Crisis Support Association have in the past provided figures that indicate that there has been an increase in service requests to the organisation by members of the local ATSI community. Organisations such as this are crying out for the appointment of PLOs, and the residents of Dalby desperately need them now more than ever before.

Back in 2001 Ray mentioned that the issue of domestic violence was of concern in that there was a perception in the ATSI community that violence is accepted as a normal part of their everyday lives. Previously events such as Domestic Violence Prevention Week within the ATSI community had raised the profile of the subject, subsequently increasing the number of applications for protection orders. However, support for the victims still needs to be improved. Ray believes the provision of PLOs would assist in this regard.

There is also evidence that violent behaviour in the home is being passed onto school-age children, with a number of incidents involving threats and actual violence between ATSI schoolchildren. In turn, this creates social disharmony. There is a feeling of lawlessness in the community and schools. This situation is causing great concern as the general public expect and demand that their children be free from threatening behaviour, whilst they are at school.

Now in 2007 we are confronted with a group of five to six young mostly Aboriginal males, within the age range of 14, 15 and 16, randomly attacking people on the streets of Dalby.

Time expired.

Kurwongbah Electorate, Public Transport

Mrs LD LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.08 pm): Around 6,000 passenger train trips are taken each week day from Pine Rivers to Brisbane city. Over the past financial year this represents a total of nearly 16 million trips on Citytrain services out of Petrie, Lawnton, Bray Park and Strathpine stations in the Kurwongbah electorate. In addition to these passenger trips we have the many hundreds of trips taken by residents using both bus and train travel on TransLink tickets. The vast majority of workers from Pine Rivers are employed outside the shire and a very large proportion travel into Brisbane city each day. For their convenience and to alleviate traffic congestion it is vital that we continue to improve our public transport system by expanding and increasing bus routes and train services.

That is why I applaud the recent announcement by the Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh, that a coordinated passenger transit authority is to be introduced to build on the work of TransLink by coordinating the myriad different bus, train and ferry services to deal with all customer needs. Since the election of the Beattie Labor government the provision of public transport has received high priority and I have at every opportunity put the case for our area. I want to give a brief overview of the large investment and improvement the state Labor government has put into public transport in Pine Rivers. Prior to 1996 the Labor federal government had committed to funding the laying of the third track from Northgate to Petrie. When the Howard government was elected in 1996, it scrapped this commitment completely. Upon our election in 1998, the state took up the initiative and funded this vital infrastructure at a cost of in excess of \$100 million.

With the completion of the third track in 2001, we have seen a real increase in the number of rail services. We now have 52 services from Petrie to Central each day and 43 services from Caboolture to Central and 46 services from Central to Caboolture. The improvement and increase in services now gives the choice of 11 services between 7.30 am and 8.30 am each weekday morning—that is, a train every five and three-quarter minutes. I can tell members that this is a far cry from my first experience catching trains 30 years ago. It must also be remembered that with the third track construction came improved station facilities and disability access. TransLink's introduction in 2004 revolutionised bus and train travel in our area and has certainly encouraged more people on to public transport. Train patronage has increased from 13 million trips per year to nearly 16 million in the past three years from our area. In addition, there has also been a huge injection of funds into our bus services. In March this year Thompson's buses through TransLink began a weekend and public holiday service.

Time expired.

Health Services, Cardwell

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (7.11 pm): I rise tonight to express my serious concerns about the delivery of health services and medical care in Cardwell following advice from the town's only general practitioner that he can no longer tolerate the circumstances in which he is forced to practise. Frustrated and concerned residents in Cardwell have written to the Premier pleading with her to intervene in an attempt to convince the only doctor at the Cardwell Family Practice to keep the surgery doors open. These concerned Cardwell residents have been agitating for enhanced healthcare facilities and resources for several years. I have been in regular contact with the Cardwell Community Health Support Group about the inadequacy of the Cardwell community medical centre to deliver necessary health services due to the lack of space in this poorly designed facility as well as the pressure on the local doctor, who has been carrying the practice alone for several years without any support or relief.

The Cardwell community and the local doctor, Dr Gabriel Roux, have had enough of the consistent failure of Queensland Health to address the ongoing health service delivery issues in Cardwell. A desperate letter from Dr Roux to the health minister, Stephen Robertson, in mid-July this year met with a disappointing response from the minister in early September which has prompted Dr Roux to consider his position at the Cardwell Family Practice. Indeed, Dr Roux has taken the step of giving four months notice that he will have to terminate his lease at the Cardwell Community Health Centre. Dr Roux has made a last-ditch attempt to secure support from Queensland Health by appealing to the local Queensland Health district operations manager. To date there has been nothing but very disappointing bureaucratic responses from Queensland Health, which is maintaining that because Dr Roux is not employed by it it is not its problem. It certainly will be its problem when he is forced to walk away from his position at Cardwell and the community of some 1,400 people is left without a GP.

The Cardwell community has a large number of older Queenslanders, many of whom are pensioners, an aged-care facility with 52 permanent residents who have demanding health and medical needs and a large Indigenous community, which has its own particular set of health issues. I have written to health minister, Minister Robertson, supporting Dr Roux and the Cardwell Community Health Support Group explaining that it is imperative that the community of Cardwell have a practising GP available to them in view of the fact that the nearest alternative medical facilities both north at Tully and south in Ingham are 50 kilometres away from Cardwell. I have urged the minister to consider this issue very carefully. This is not a GP making unreasonable claims; this is a GP that has demonstrated a strong commitment to his local community by delivering medical services there alone for seven years. I urge the minister to act swiftly to keep a practising GP in Cardwell. Queensland Health and the state government must not abandon the Cardwell community by hiding behind a bureaucratic excuse.

Glenala State School; Darra Street Party

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (7.14 pm): I am pleased to announce that the State Schools of Tomorrow consultation process is proceeding well in Inala and Durack. The \$50 million project will be a huge boost for our local schools. Today I was pleased that the school captains of Glenala State School visited Parliament House. Emiele, Rowena and Michael were accompanied by new principal Michael Knox, who is doing an excellent job in our local school community. They spoke to me about their vision for their school and what improvements they would like to see in the future. A few of the issues we discussed at lunch included the need to ensure that the new community hall is large enough to cater for students and their parents. Therefore, the hall will have to have a capacity to hold at least 1,000 people and not the current proposal for 300 people. We also talked about the need to concentrate on sport, in particular sport facilities at the school, because at the moment a lot of Rugby League players are being poached by other schools.

We discussed the need for a dance program to be looked at for the school as a number of students are extremely talented and participate in the annual Stylin' UP, one of the largest dancing festivals on the Brisbane calendar. But unfortunately the school cannot attract a dance teacher at present. The students met with the member for Ashgrove and discussed their needs to ensure that their

buildings in the future are environmentally friendly. They also met with you, Mr Deputy Speaker English, and the member for Glass House, and I thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to meet with these students. They were very impressed. From all accounts the consultations of the Tomorrow's Schools program are progressing well, but the main focus needs to be on the physical transformation of the buildings. We need to build modern schools in our area that have state-of-the-art equipment and meet the demands of the 21st century. Once the shell of these schools is completed, then other important considerations can be given to things such as parent rooms, the teaching of life skills and behavioural management support. In addition to the formal consultation process, I also ran a very successful community consultation night at the Inala PCYC and around 60 people attended this night. The Inala community is very excited about the prospect of having new schools in our area.

The other issue I want to address is the continual success of the Darra Street Party. This street party was held last Friday night and was well attended by over 1,000 locals. Based next to the Darra Train Station, there are a number of Vietnamese restaurants in the precinct, there were a lot of stalls and multicultural entertainment. The Cook Islands dancers from Richlands East and other local schools demonstrated their unique skills. I want to take this opportunity to thank event organisers, Stan and Ann Hambly, along with Cathy Easte and members of the Darra Street Party Committee. Sadly, Stan and Ann are moving away from the area to be closer to their family—

A government member: Are they moving to my electorate?

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are actually moving to the member for Yeerongpilly's electorate. I hope that we can encourage other local people to become involved. It would be sad to lose such a valuable festival and I wish Stan and Ann all the very best.

Sex Offenders

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (7.17 pm): I rise to put on the record the concerns of victims of violent and violating crimes. As an example of what they have to put up with, I want to refer to a vile creature called Trevor Lewis Toms. Toms spent 22 years in jail after violently raping three women. Each time he was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Prior to his release in October 2006, the former Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, sought an order under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act from the Supreme Court to have Toms detained past the finish of his sentence or to be supervised on his release. He was not detained past his sentence and he had supervision orders placed against him. Twice, however, he has breached those supervision orders—the first time two months after his release in October 2006.

The initial supervision orders did not contain a requirement that he not contact the victims, the victims' families, their children or anyone else. These people live in fear of being confronted by this oxygen thief. The recommendations were made that he not be placed in housing which would be shared with other sexual offenders. However, that is exactly where he is going back to. Mr Mumford also revealed that a lack of suitable alternatives meant that Toms would likely be returned to the Wacol accommodation, admitting that he would be free to mix with other sexual offenders on similar orders, and psychiatric reports indicated that that is a situation that should be avoided.

The orders that have just been confirmed against Toms at least state that he should not be able to contact in any way, shape or form the victim, the victim's families or any of their close relatives. But I do not think that that is any comfort to those families. I would seek the police minister's review of the court's conditions of release so that Toms can be banned from certain areas of the state—banned from towns in which those victims live or from areas where the victims visit regularly. Why should they be continually traumatised and worried because this mongrel has been allowed to get out of jail with insufficient constraints put on his activities? These victims are being traumatised again.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! I caution the member for Gladstone that, given those orders were made by a court, you are reflecting on the integrity of the court, which is not allowed under parliamentary practice. I will ask you to desist from that line.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Mr Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your warning. These victims deserve consideration. They deserve to be remembered as the victims, not the perpetrators.

Capricorn Coast Football Club

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (7.20 pm): If I read the names Dylan Kussrow, Adrian Jones, Brad Stevens, Ben Parker, Cameron Mackay, Craig Spalding, Doug Armstrong, Jeremy Duivenvoorden, Joel Simpson, Michael Chelepy, Jules Dann, Tim Parker, Matt Breningan, Jack Frahm, Tim English, Josh Ryan and Tom Coote, many members of this House would ask: 'Who are these people?' Then when I add Shaun Janes as coach and—wait for it, Mr Deputy Speaker—John English as manager—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Hear, hear!

Mr HOOLIHAN: I must assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you do not look alike. I have to inform this House that that is the Capricorn Coast Football Club's senior side, which won the Wesley Hall Cup in the Rockhampton and District Soccer Federation on 16 September.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr HOOLIHAN: It is not a football program; it is a very good publication, the *Spectator* news magazine. The Wesley Hall Cup has a very interesting history. It is the oldest amateur trophy for sport in Australia. It was first played as a Rugby Union trophy in the early 1890s. It is made from sterling silver and it is inlaid with gold that was taken from Mount Morgan. It was played for three years as a Rugby trophy. The first badge on the base of the cup for soccer is dated 1895. So the cup has been contested for 112 years.

The Capricorn Coast Football Club, of which I have the honour to be the patron, was formed in 1972. In 35 years it has not managed to get to, or win, a grand final. But at Apex Park in Yeppoon on that night they were grand.

There is also another piece of history, because the father of the coach, Shaun Janes—Neville—is a trustee of the Wesley Hall Cup. He last played for the cup in 1947 and won it as a 16-year-old. This trophy has been contested by many of the larger clubs in Rockhampton, but I think it was a fitting honour to the hard work and dedication of this club and these people that on that night they took the Wesley Hall Cup for the first time. I say to the Capricorn Coast Football Club: good on you.

Queensland Justices Association State Conference

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (7.23 pm): Recently I had the honour to speak at the 2007 Queensland Justices Association State Conference. One could only be impressed by the quality of personnel, their enthusiasm and commitment as the Bundaberg branch of the Queensland Justices Association hosted the annual QJA State Conference.

Justices of the Peace play an important role within the community. They are a special group of professionals who are prepared to go the extra mile to serve their communities. JPs are often the first point of contact to welcome new arrivals into our community and the first point of call in relation to legal matters. I have a great deal of respect for JPs as they set the bar high in relation to accountability and honesty.

The theme of the conference was Community in Focus, and it was the culmination of 12 months of planning and hard work by the Bundaberg branch, consisting of chairman David Read, his wife and assistant secretary Debra, deputy chairperson Sandy Fogarty, secretary Deirdre Choveaux, treasurer and assistant trainer Victor Dawson, trainer Matt Dunford, media and membership officer David Dempster, executive assistant Carolyn Beardmore and fundraiser Neville Rayfield. These people are extremely dedicated to not only serving the community but also the recruitment and training of new members and the ongoing professional development of existing and new members.

The conference was officially welcomed by elders from the Gurang Land Council—the traditional owners of the land—Christine Royan, Muriel Johnson and Aunty Lyn Martin. I would like to thank Michael Isdale from the Bundaberg Office of the Public Trustee of Queensland, Sergeant Ashley Stanke from the Queensland Police Service, Leanne Donaldson from the Department of Child Safety, Rory Jackson and Rebecca Irwin from the Australian Customs Service, QJA president Bob Pilkington, QJA vice-presidents Doug Hull, Bernice Lippiatt and Garry Franke, directors Mr Ray Young OAM, Valmai Macaulay, Marian Vierveyzer, Roger Kelly and Ray Burrows, and registrar Greg Cuthbert who attended and contributed to the outstanding success of the event.

There are many thousands of JPs and Commissioners for Declarations registered statewide. The conference drew attendees from Cairns in the north through to Tweed Heads in the south. The community support for this event was also wonderful, with no fewer than 38 official sponsors.

After serving as a police officer for almost 20 years prior to my election as the state member for Bundaberg, I know well the magnitude and importance of the work that JPs do as an integral part of our justice system. I sincerely thank all JPs for their time and commitment in serving their communities. JPs are certainly a special group of people and I regard them very much as unsung heroes and quiet achievers. I know JPs serve the community to the best of their abilities. Some are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, all voluntarily. On Christmas Day double time and a half rates apply but two and a half times nothing is still nothing. It is very important that we all recognise the vital role that JPs play within the community, thank them for it, and give them every support that we can.

Ipswich Hospital Midwifery Model of Care

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.26 pm): Ipswich is undergoing a baby boom with an increase of around 25 per cent in the number of births at the Ipswich Hospital over the past 18 or so months. From December, the city's expectant mothers are to have a new option for their maternal care. The Ipswich Hospital has recently called for expectant mothers hoping to give birth with minimal use of drugs and intervention to put up their hands to be the first participants in the new midwifery model of care.

The midwifery model of care is a tremendous innovation for which I have campaigned for a few years now. It draws on the best of this ancient and very important profession. Under the model, expectant mothers who enrol in the program will get to know a midwife in the months before their child's birth. That midwife will then deliver their child and go on to provide postnatal care for a couple of months until finally handing over to the child health nurse. By enrolling now with the first births expected in December, the expectant mother and her partner or support person can get to know the midwife well so that when they come to hospital they are not dealing with a room full of strangers. As I said, the midwife will then stay in touch with the mother and the new child for six to eight weeks afterwards.

The midwifery model of care will provide a more personal service but, with women still giving birth in the Ipswich Hospital's modern maternity unit, all the best of medical care will still be on hand. With the rate of caesarean births in Australia standing at nearly 30 per cent—that is twice the World Health Organisation's recommendation—and with Queensland Health quoting the average cost of a caesarean at \$7,000 compared to \$3,000 for a natural birth, there are clear advantages in offering women the midwifery model of care. Importantly, the model has been developed through partnership with midwives, mothers and the hospital's obstetricians and is supported by all.

At first, the pilot will be staffed by three full-time midwives but it is hoped that if the pilot is successful the number of staff will grow. I commend Teresa Walsh, a former Ipswich Hospital midwife and now professional officer at the College of Midwives, for her development of this model and ongoing championing of it, just as I commend the Director of Nursing, Colleen Glenn, and all staff involved. The introduction of the midwifery model of care is an exciting step for the women of Ipswich.

Gold Coast Rapid Transit System

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (7.29 pm): Tonight I want to raise an issue of concern to many people on the Gold Coast. I refer of course to the Gold Coast rapid transit system proposal. In particular, I want to raise the issue of the Southport to Broadbeach section of stage 1 of the project. The proposal that the government released last week has shown once again that it does not have in mind what is best for the people of the Gold Coast and Surfers Paradise but what best suits its own pockets. The route selected by the government for the Southport to Broadbeach section, whether it be for buses or light rail, was done without reference to local residents or businesses. This is in stark contrast to the process followed for the previous two sections when two alternatives were put up for community consultation and comment.

I travelled to the coast on Monday to discuss this issue with local businesses, residents and the members of the chamber of commerce. There are good people who are going to be seriously affected by the current route. They do not deserve the cold, heartless treatment dished out by this government. They do not deserve to be put on notice about their properties being resumed without a full process of consultation and a clear explanation of how the route was selected and why their properties are needed. They have had no such consultation. In fact, they have been virtually assured that their properties will be resumed.

But why are those properties needed? There has been no clear answer. Many suspect that this government, when given the choice between tearing up the livelihood of shop owners and people's homes or disrupting the Indy track, was blinded by the fast cars, bright colours and girls in their bikinis waving chequered flags. What does the minister do? He blames the lack of choices and consequential inconvenience on the Gold Coast City Council for overdeveloping Surfers Paradise. He ridicules suggestions for alternative routes and generally behaves in a take it or leave it manner that displays all the arrogance of the Beattie-Bligh Labor government. His department is reported in the *Gold Coast Sun* as refusing to refute claims that 'there is no opportunity to change the route whatsoever'.

The minister should clearly instruct his department to consider and prepare alternative routes for community consultation before any decision is made. He should not piously ask the community to suggest alternatives. His department has the expertise and, more importantly, the responsibility to undertake this task.

What does the *Gold Coast Bulletin* say today? It states—

Tunnel vision needed.

If Transport minister Mickel is in the mood to pee \$1 billion up against a wall there are better ways to do it other than to destroy Surfers Paradise. Mr Mickel is defending a visionless rapid transit system plan proposing to widen the Gold Coast Highway and knock down several buildings along the way. It is a waste of money. It won't work because it does not address the core problems. There is more to be said.

I commend that article to the minister. What has happened with the price? It has gone from \$550 million to estimates of now a billion dollars. Last week it was revealed that the original \$550 million is now going to be at least \$750 million. I am calling on the minister—and I know he is in the chamber—to release the reasons behind the selection of the route for section 3—Southport to Broadbeach—and commit to a proper consultation with the people of Surfers Paradise with clear possible alternatives to his preferred route.

National Week of Deaf People

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (7.32 pm): I rise this evening to speak about a wonderful event that was held here at Parliament this week. The Queensland parliament hosted the deaf community with the public gallery modified to include big television screens to enable better sight of the parliament floor and two interpreters who were signing the proceedings using Auslan. The event marks the beginning of a new era of communication between the parliament and those who have hearing impairments.

We live in a democracy and the parliament makes laws for all Queenslanders, not only those who have the ability to hear. So it was great to see the deaf community embrace the opportunity to become involved. This week is National Week of Deaf People, which is a week-long national celebration of deaf individuals and the Australian deaf community. It is an opportunity for deaf people to celebrate their community, their unique sign language, their culture and history. By bringing National Week of Deaf People to the Queensland parliament, we were able to work towards the goals of making the public more aware of the deaf community and start the process of parliamentarians building a strong relationship with deaf people and the organisations that support them.

As a hearing person who is learning Auslan, I was thrilled to be able to ask a question of the Premier using sign language—admittedly very slowly—and she provided an answer about the support the Queensland government is giving to deaf people. I was really thrilled to see that my Auslan teacher, Ms Rachel Haimes, was in the gallery. She told me afterwards that she was really proud of me. It was lovely to hear that from her. She has been a fabulous teacher.

At the morning tea I was able to thank the many people who came for making the event such a success. I believe this was a bold and exciting initiative and I would really like to thank Mr Speaker for his willingness to become involved. I would like to thank David Gibson, the member for Gympie, for initiating the idea and involving me in it; Heather Lawton and Brett Casey and their team from Deaf Services Queensland for coordinating the event; and, very importantly, Glenda Emmerson and Zac Dadic from the Queensland parliament for making it all come to fruition.

My aim for this day was to engage the deaf community in our democratic process and for them to feel more comfortable with government processes, as well as to provide the opportunity for members of parliament to get to know members of the deaf community a little bit better. Contact such as this can serve to strengthen our democratic society and may help members of parliament to learn more about deaf culture and customs. It is all about communication.

I asked everyone to take the chance to represent the rest of the deaf community who could not be with us to tell us about their lifestyles, their hopes and dreams and any issues that worry them. This is the start of a more open communication between us all and I look forward to much more contact with the deaf community and with Deaf Services Queensland.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.34 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson