



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2008

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) read prayers and took the chair.

Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

### ASSENT TO BILLS

#### Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

##### Appropriation Bill

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that on Monday, 8 September 2008 I presented to Her Excellency the Governor the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill for royal assent and that Her Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe her assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

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

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

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

Date of Assent: 8 September 2008

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Summary Offences Act 2005 to provide for the removal of graffiti from particular places"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Explosives Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Fisheries Act 1994 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2008 and 1 July 2009"

"A Bill for An Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2008 and 1 July 2009"

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Governor

8 September 2008

*Tabled paper:* Letter from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker, dated 8 September 2008, advising of bills assented to.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Private Members' Bills

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (9.32 am): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege and also foreshadow an issue of procedure for your consideration. The rights and privileges of minority members of this House are being infringed by the government. The standing and sessional orders provide the opportunity to private members to introduce bills. In pursuance of these rights, non-government members introduce many bills into this House only to see the government oppose and defeat these bills at the second reading stage. Of the 23 bills introduced into this House, 16 have been defeated at the second reading stage. Only one private member's bill, introduced by the member for Nicklin, has been passed. One bill was withdrawn and another five remain on the *Notice Paper*.

It is a matter of privilege because despite the government voting against non-government bills it now sees fit to introduce the same matters in government bills. I refer to the private member's bill titled Criminal Code (Assault Causing Death) Amendment Bill and the government bill on the *Notice Paper* titled Criminal Code and Other Acts Amendment Bill.

I also refer to the private member's bill titled Liquor (Restriction to Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill and the government bill on the *Notice Paper* titled Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. By opposing and defeating bills put forward by private members then introducing government bills with almost identical provisions, the government is simply abusing the rights of the minority of this House. The government is simply plagiarising and misusing its control of the House.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This is a matter of privilege.

**Mr Fraser** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Treasurer! I have taken this as a matter of privilege. I am allowing the member for Cunningham to raise it. I will make some comments after the member for Cunningham's statement.

**Mr COPELAND:** I appreciate that. In terms of procedure, I foreshadow, at an appropriate time, a challenge to these bills or the particular clauses of the bills that are identical or almost identical to the clauses in the private members' bills that the government defeated. I refer to the application of the same question rule detailed in Erskine May's 22nd edition of *Parliamentary Practice* at pages 499 and 560. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Fraser** interjected.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide and the Treasurer. Can I ask the member for Cunningham to—

**Mr Lucas:** You guys didn't allow private members' bills to be debated when you were in government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, I am actually saying something at the moment. I do not find that respectful in any way, shape or form. If I am saying something you do not interject. Can the member for Cunningham put that to me in writing as a matter of privilege and that will then be examined.

**Mr COPELAND:** I will, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

### Conduct in the Chamber

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, standing order 244 deals with conduct in the chamber. In particular, I draw all members' attention to paragraph 7 which states, 'A member shall only refer to another member by their parliamentary title or electoral district.' Further, standing order 247 requires all members wishing to speak to address the Speaker. These rules are aimed at ensuring civilised debate and questioning on issues rather than personal attacks across the chamber. I remind all members that addressing each other directly across the chamber contravenes the standing orders. I say that to both sides of the parliament.

### Rules Relating to Questions

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have previously spoken about the rules relating to questions. In November last year I spoke at length on this matter and a copy of the relevant standing order, standing order 115, was distributed to each member in the chamber. I again draw members' attention to the provisions of that standing order and ask that they ensure they frame their questions, both without notice and on notice, more carefully, having regard to the rules—namely, that questions shall be brief and relate to one issue and not contain arguments, inferences, imputations, hypothetical matters nor ask for opinions.

All members should take note that in respect of questions without notice I will sit down a member who recites an overly lengthy preamble and move directly to the next member's question. I have stated previously that questions are a vital part of the parliamentary proceedings, especially to its scrutiny and accountability functions. It is important that members ask questions in accordance with the rules. Members need to ask questions and not make speeches.

## Less Paper Parliament

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the establishment of the parliament's tabled papers database and associated web site has been a significant e-democracy initiative with the majority of papers now available for viewing online. Electronic access to these papers is a significant step towards reducing the demand for hard copies of papers. As Speaker, I am committed to moving towards a less paper parliament and believe this can be achieved through better utilisation of information technology. Members now enjoy a good standard of information communication technology, including the provision of individual laptop computers, and this technology can be used to reduce our reliance on paper copies of documents. This, in turn, will reduce the parliament's carbon footprint.

As part of the less paper parliament initiative the notifications and tablings by the Clerk document will be emailed to members as well as circulated in the chamber. The email advice will contain individual links to electronic versions of most tabled papers and subordinate legislation. I would encourage members to consider the environment and utilise the electronic links to access tabled documents, rather than requesting paper copies.

Similarly, I remind members that the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel through its web site provides electronic access to the most up-to-date versions of legislation. While members will continue to be provided with copies of acts of parliament upon request in accordance with the *Members' Office Support Handbook*, I would encourage members and their electorate staff to consider utilising the electronic versions on the Parliamentary Counsel's web site whenever practicable.

Finally, I advise that I will also be looking into how transcripts of the proceedings of parliament can be more efficiently delivered to members in the future. Currently, members are provided with multiple hard copy transcripts of proceedings in various forms. These include one copy of the proof *Record of Proceedings*; one copy of all speeches made by the member in the House, known as greens; one copy of the final *Record of Proceedings*; and one copy of the annual bound volumes. In addition, members also nominate up to 36 people to receive the final *Record of Proceedings*. As Speaker of the parliament, I believe we should all be working towards being a less paper parliament in order to enhance our efficiency and reduce our waste.

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

### Eerwah Vale, Powerlink

**Mr Gibson**, from 326 petitioners, requesting the House to consider broader climate change issues when developing significant infrastructure developments, particularly in the current project planned by Powerlink for Eerwah Vale and its locale.

### Eerwah Vale, Powerlink

**Mr Gibson**, from 216 petitioners, requesting the House to consider a more sustainable option than the imposed high voltage transmission lines and sub-station that Powerlink propose to run dangerously close to family homes, through a significant wild life corridor and prime productive agricultural land close to Eumundi, from Eerwah Vale through Ridgewood.

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

### Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, Upgrade

**Mr English**, from 40 petitioners, requesting the House to bring forward the four laning of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road from Boundary Road through to German Church Road.  
Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—  
29 August 2008—

- Report under section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 by the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries
- Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee: Issues Paper—August 2008—Inquiry into certain contemporary electoral matters

1 September 2008—

- Broadcast of Parliament Select Committee: Government Response to Report No. 1—Inquiry into the Queensland Parliament Video Broadcast System, May 2008

5 September 2008—

- Document titled 'Annual Report to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008—Compliance requirements under Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 for assumed identities
- Administration of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988—Annual Report 2007-08

8 September 2008—

- Electoral Amendment Bill 2008: Erratum to Explanatory Notes

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Parliament of Queensland Act 2001—

- Parliament of Queensland Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008, No. 275

Statutory Instruments Act 1992—

- Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2008, No. 276

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

- State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2008, No. 277

State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983—

- State Buildings Protective Security Regulation 2008, No. 278

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

- Government Owned Corporations (QR Limited Restructure) Regulation 2008, No. 279

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000—

- Vocational Education, Training and Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2008, No. 280

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006—

- Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008, No. 281 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 281

Electrical Safety Act 2002, Geothermal Exploration Act 2004, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Travel Agents Act 1988—

- Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008, No. 282

Building Act 1975, Child Employment Act 2006, Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Explosives Act 1999, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008, No. 283 and Explanatory Notes and two Regulatory Impact Statements for No. 283

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, Local Government Act 1993—

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Regulation 2008, No. 284

British Probates Act 1898—

- British Probates Regulation 2008, No. 285

Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980—

- Building Units and Group Titles Regulation 2008, No. 286

Collections Act 1966, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- Collections Regulation 2008, No. 287

Supreme Court Act 1995—

- Supreme Court Regulation 2008, No. 288

Public Trustee Act 1978—

- Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2008, No. 289

Disposal of Unexecuted Warrants Act 1985—

- Disposal of Unexecuted Warrants Regulation 2008, No. 290

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2008, No. 291

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 2008, No. 292

Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Act 1985—

- Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Regulation 2008, No. 293

Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Act 1985—

- Superannuation (Public Employees Portability) Notice 2008, No. 294

Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2008—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 295

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Fatigue Management) Regulation 2008, No. 296

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

- Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2008, No. 297

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

- Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2008, No. 298

Land Sales Act 1984—

- Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2008, No. 299

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection (Vegetable Leafminer—Pest Declaration) Notice 2008, No. 300

Plant Protection Act 1989—

- Plant Protection (Vegetable Leafminer—Movement Prohibition) Notice 2008, No. 301

## EXEMPT STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

University of Queensland Act 1988—

- University of Queensland (Making and Notifying University Rules) Statute 2008

James Cook University Act 1997—

- James Cook University (Membership of Convocation) Statute 2008

James Cook University Act 1997—

- James Cook University (Conduct of Council Elections) Statute 2008

## MEMBER'S PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following member's papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Whitsunday (Mrs Jarratt)—

- Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Member for Whitsunday (Ms Jarratt) to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 2 to 10 August 2008—Report on 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
- Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Member for Whitsunday (Ms Jarratt) to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 2 to 10 August 2008—Report on 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (attachments) [NB: Attachments in hard copy only]

## MINISTERIAL PAPERS

**Hon. AI McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (9.41 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation of the proposal and a proposal under section 32 and 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

*Tabled paper:* A proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

*Tabled paper:* A proposal under sections 32 and 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

## Revocation of State Forest Areas

**Hon. AI McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (9.41 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 14 days as provided in the Forestry Act 1959, I shall move—

1. That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation the setting apart and declaration of state forest under the Forestry Act 1959 of the area as set out in the proposal tabled by me in the House today; viz

## Description of area to be revoked

Domville State Forest (SF229)	Area described as Lot 1 on plan SP154312 and containing an area of about 10.8 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "A".
Mount Maurice State Forest (SF281)	Area described as Lot 203 on plan SP178621 and containing an area of about 0.3253 of a hectare as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "B".
Wonbah State Forest 2 (SF381)	Area described as Lot 65 on plan SP172064 and containing an area of about 14.49 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "C".

2. That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation for submission to the Governor in Council.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

*Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.42 am): Yesterday I launched *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, a document that outlines my government's plans and priorities for the future. It has five big ambitions. We want Queensland to be strong, green, smart, healthy and fair. The blueprint outlines 10 specific targets to achieve each of these ambitions. We want a Queensland that is strong where we will build Australia's strongest economy with infrastructure that anticipates growth. We target an increase of 50 per cent in the proportion of Queensland businesses undertaking research and development and innovation. We want a green Queensland where Queenslanders cut their carbon footprint by one-third with reduced car and electricity use and where we protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation.

We want a smart Queensland where we ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood education so they are ready for school. We want to ensure that three out of four Queenslanders hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications, and that is a 50 per cent increase. We want a healthy Queensland where we can cut obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure by one-third and we want to reduce our public hospital waiting lists, both in elective and emergency departments, to the shortest in Australia. Importantly, we want a fair Queensland where we work to halve the proportion of Queensland children living in households without a working parent and where we increase the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities by 50 per cent.

I am the first to acknowledge that they are ambitious targets that will challenge us and they will drive my government's program of action over the next 12 months and beyond. There is no doubt that they will be tough to achieve, and both government and everyone in the community will have to play their part. I have been very heartened over the last 24 hours by the positive response. Only the Leader of the Opposition believes that Queensland does not need a plan. The AMA has said that the government is to be commended for the ambitious initiatives, with the targets indicative of my commitment to improving the health of all Queenslanders, and says that it looks forward to working with the government to achieve these targets. But the Leader of the Opposition of course does not believe that Queensland needs a plan.

The Queensland Council of Social Service welcomed the inclusion of making Queensland a fair state in our Q2 vision, saying it was a good start to addressing disadvantage here. But of course the Leader of the Opposition believes that Queensland does not need a plan. The Australian Industry Group welcomed Q2 and is committed to playing a major role in our state's bid to become the strongest economy in Australia by 2020. The Australian Industry Group endorsed the targets as ambitious but essential in the critical areas of skills and innovation. But of course the Leader of the Opposition does not believe that Queensland needs a plan. The Wilderness Society, however, has said that climate change and population growth will continue to place Queensland's natural environment under stress and our targets recognise the action that is needed. But of course the Leader of the Opposition does not believe in Queensland's future and does not believe that we need a plan to get there.

The University of Queensland has indicated that it is ready to be a very willing partner in achieving Q2 goals regarding health, the environment and community cohesion. But the Leader of the Opposition does not believe that we need a plan. Unlike Volunteering Queensland, which has welcomed the commitment by my government to boost the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities by 50 per cent, of course the Leader of the Opposition does not believe we need a plan. I lead a government with its eye firmly fixed on the future, a government that unashamedly has big ambitions for Queensland's future and a government that is not afraid to plan and shape that future. We stand in stark contrast to the alternative where their eyes are fixed on the rear-view mirror and where they imagine the past, not the future—no direction, no plan and no idea.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (9.48 am): I move—

That the Premier's statement be noted.

**Mr SPEAKER:** If you want to take up the time of the parliament with that. However, I will seek some advice. That motion by the Leader of Opposition Business under standing order 62 is out of order. I call the Premier.

**Mr Springborg:** Maybe the Premier can move that it be noted.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Just before you go on, Premier, that is as per standing order 62. So I remind both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of Opposition Business that these are the current standing orders of the House. Many of them have been there for decades. If you have some quibble with them, you need to raise it with either myself or the Standing Orders Committee. These are the standing orders that we operate under now. I call the Premier.

**Ms BLIGH:** I note the opposition's interest in this issue and I challenge them to move it as the 5.30 debate for tomorrow afternoon. We would be happy to talk about it. In fact, I am happy to spend question time talking about it.

### Beijing Paralympic Games

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.50 am): As Queenslanders continue to celebrate the success of our Olympic champions, we now turn to the incredible efforts of our Paralympic athletes. Queensland has 28 Paralympians competing in Beijing—21 of them from the Queensland Academy of Sport. They are competing in a range of fields, including athletics, cycling, para-equestrian, power lifting, sailing, shooting, swimming, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby. These athletes are an inspiration to all of us. They have overcome great adversity to represent our state and our nation on the world stage.

Just three days in, Queensland's athletes are already making us proud, racking up six medals so far. I was very pleased that veteran Paralympic cyclist Chris Scott won Australia's first gold medal on Sunday night in the cycling individual pursuit. This is Chris Scott's sixth Paralympic Games, and his

eighth gold medal for Australia. As well as being one of the world's greatest Paralympic athletes, Chris also works in the Queensland government's department of transport, where he does a great job. I am sure his colleagues were touched to be acknowledged during Chris's emotional track-side interview after he won gold. Chris has triumphed over the challenges of his cerebral palsy to achieve what many of us could only dream of. He is a great role model to other athletes—and, indeed, all Queenslanders.

Other medal winners so far include shot-putter Paul Raison, who won silver overnight, and cyclists Greg Ball and Bryce Lindores, swimmer Annabelle Williams and equestrian competitor Georgia Bruce, who have all achieved bronze medals. At the 2004 Athens Paralympics, Queenslanders brought home 25 medals, including seven gold. If their results in Beijing so far are any indication, we can expect our athletes to bring home even more this year. I encourage all Queenslanders to get behind these remarkable athletes, to support them in their quest for glory, to show them how proud we are of their achievements, and to be inspired by their determination and courage.

### **Sustainable Resource Communities Partnership Agreement**

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.52 am): On Sunday, 31 August, I was very pleased to join the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Queensland Resources Council at the opening of the Blackwater International Coal Centre to sign the Sustainable Resource Communities Partnership Agreement. In short, this agreement means stronger communities and better services for our mining towns.

The agreement's key pillars are, firstly, a \$100 million three-year program for economic and social infrastructure; secondly, legislative amendments empowering the Minister for Mines and Energy to legally require the development of social impact plans to apply for all new mines and major expansions—anything requiring an EIS; and, thirdly, the establishment of partnership groups with councils and the QRC in local communities to share strategic information and to develop solutions to social issues.

The agreement, which takes in mines in the Bowen and Surat basins and the north-west minerals province, has been warmly welcomed. That was the common thread when I spoke last week with mayors and community leaders from mining regions and the coastal cities supporting those mining communities. Projects to be considered for the \$100 million worth of funds in consultation may include new and/or upgraded roads, schools, health facilities or housing. The agreement will be implemented by partnership groups, which will include representatives from the state, councils, the LGAQ and the QRC. The first meeting will be held in Moranbah on Thursday this week.

I want to acknowledge here today in the House that this agreement and its subsequent outcomes are largely driven as a result of the efforts of the member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce. We are in the midst of a mining boom that is offering a huge boost for regional economies, providing jobs, boosting local business development and increasing populations. That boom has also created challenges, such as increased demand on health and education services, housing availability, rental costs, labour availability and increased traffic on our roads. This is an example of my government working with local councils and industry to look over the horizon and address the issues being faced in those communities.

### **South Bank, Arts and Cultural Events**

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.53 am): Our ongoing investment in South Bank's world-class cultural precinct is paying off as we continue to attract a range of world-class events. In the latest cultural coup for Queensland, the world famous Paris ballet will be making its only Australian performances in Brisbane next year. This is an internationally acclaimed ballet company that has only ever visited Australia once before—performing in Sydney in 2007. I think Queenslanders will be mesmerised by the talent and grace of the dancers when the show opens at Brisbane's Lyric Theatre next June. The theatre itself will be in fine form, following our \$34 million redevelopment of QPAC, which we announced in this year's state budget and which is now beginning to take shape. It is our ongoing investment in our cultural domains that ensures we continue to attract these global events.

This Sunday will see the conclusion of one of the greatest art exhibitions we have ever seen in Queensland, *Picasso and His Collection*, at the new Gallery of Modern Art. The exclusive exhibition has attracted more than 185,000 visitors from around Queensland, interstate and overseas—an average of 2,000 people a day. Two thousand people a day have flocked to view the works and the collection of one of the greatest artists in history and those who inspired him.

These exclusive arts and cultural events are truly destination events and they are giving back to Queensland—feeding our economy by way of the extra business they generate for our accommodation, food, wine, travel and tourism industries as well as feeding our thirst for cultural events. Their success is a testament to our government's \$191 million investment in South Bank's new cultural precinct, ensuring that we will continue to attract great acts from around the globe while also supporting and celebrating greatness within our own arts community.

I am also pleased to be advised that from next August through to November the Gallery of Modern Art will play host to a very exciting local exhibition. For the first time the gallery will showcase and celebrate the work of a Queensland fashion label that is widely known to at least some members of the House, and that is the couture house of Easton Pearson. These are two Brisbane women who have had extraordinary success on the international stage. Easton Pearson's creations are already delighting fashionistas overseas. This exhibition will give Queenslanders a chance to revel in the unprecedented success of one of Queensland's leading fashion houses. The show will highlight how Queensland's fashion industry has truly come of age. Our fashion industry now employs more than 23,700 people and generates more than \$143 million in exports in fashion products.

Last month's Brisbane Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival attracted more than 15,000 fashion lovers, buyers and media. Many local fashion designers and retailers say that they are already reaping the benefits of the event, with some experiencing increases in sales of up to 300 per cent. There is no doubt that Queensland is being transformed into a modern, progressive community, and by supporting major events like this we are ensuring that we continue to grow into the nation's new cultural heart, delivering major benefits for both our lifestyle and our economy.

### **Weyba Downs and Wide Bay-Burnett, Development Applications**

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.57 am): The Bligh government has a plan for the future while the opposition is stuck in the past. As the Premier announced yesterday, one key focus of the Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland initiative is preserving the livability of our great state. Protecting green space through the South East Queensland Regional Plan will play an important role in ensuring that generations to come enjoy the same wonderful lifestyle that we enjoy today.

That is why I have called in a development application to decide whether a proposed 1,200-lot housing development outside the urban footprint at Weyba Downs on the Sunshine Coast should go ahead. State agencies and the council have all submitted that this proposed development is contrary to the South East Queensland Regional Plan, which protects 80 per cent of the region from urban development. The development application for 1,200 residential lots was refused by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, but the developer has now lodged an appeal with the Planning and Environment Court. Sunshine Coast mayor Bob Abbot has written to me expressing his support for my decision to call in this development. I will now undertake a thorough and impartial reassessment of this application and make a final binding decision.

On another matter, I wish to advise the House that, using my powers after call-ins under the Integrated Planning Act, I have stopped the developer from building two new estates on rural land in the Wide Bay-Burnett region. The former Isis and Burnett shire councils approved these developments in their last few meetings before amalgamation, and against the expert advice that they received from their own planners. Both developments are contrary to both the planning schemes of the former councils and the Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Plan and would place large, new communities in rural areas without the appropriate infrastructure.

For example, one of the developments would increase the size of The Hummock, a tiny coastal community, by 50 per cent. The other would put a new town nearly 40 kilometres away from Bundaberg and around 20 kilometres from Woodgate and Childers. My decision to reject these applications included an independent assessment by nationally recognised planning experts Buckley Vann. They found there is no need for these developments because there is already enough land available—in the case of Goodwood, potentially more than 80 years supply. At The Hummock there are already 100 lots sitting vacant with an estimated supply of up to 16 years worth of land in the Bundaberg Regional Council area.

The wonderful lifestyle we enjoy here in Queensland continues to drive population growth and development. The Bligh government is committed to ensuring that it is managed so that the necessary infrastructure is in place, our green space is protected and the Queensland of tomorrow is still the place to live.

Another focus of Toward Q2 is creating a diverse economy, and the Premier spoke yesterday at the CEDA lunch about the strength of the potential LNG industry. It certainly has the full attention of US oil and gas giant ConocoPhillips, who yesterday pledged to pay as much as \$9.6 billion for half a share in a massive new LNG project with Origin Energy. Origin and Conoco predict that their project could rival the north-west shelf in Western Australia. I look forward to seeing their detailed proposals.

Seventeen billion dollars worth of potential LNG projects are already on the table for Gladstone. This is why the Bligh government has carefully planned the state development area extension on Curtis Island. It safeguards the land most suitable for LNG activities, protects prime parts of the island for conservation and provides natural buffers from industry for South End residents. Seventy-five per cent of the land has been set aside as an environment precinct. An area double the size of Gladstone urban areas is now locked away and protected for good. The Bligh government is committed to doing the planning for tomorrow's Queensland now so that we can all enjoy the benefits of a booming economy, the wonderful environment and the lifestyle that makes this state a great place in which to live.

## Education and Training

**Hon. RJ WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 am): Queenslanders are better educated and more skilled than they have ever been. The initiatives of our government over a number of years have contributed to this outcome, including the many initiatives that have been introduced since our government came to office. The prep year will give our children the best start in their education. Our earning and learning reforms will help students to succeed in life beyond school. We have instituted an overhaul of teacher registration to lift professional standards of teachers and established an institute for leadership and professional development to improve their skills. There has been a major investment in school infrastructure and technology; the establishment of our new academies of science, maths and technology, health sciences and creative industries for our brightest students; and the implementation of the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan to improve the outcomes of training to ensure training matches industry needs. We have achieved much, but we still have more to do to meet new challenges.

Yesterday the Premier unveiled the government's new vision for Queensland, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, which will shape the state's future. Evidence shows that the early years of a child's life are when we can make the biggest difference to their future life chances, particularly for children living in our most disadvantaged communities and families. That is why our first target in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* is to provide all Queensland children with access to quality early childhood education that gets them ready for school. For the past 50 years Queensland children have had one fewer year of school than their counterparts in other states. This was fixed with the introduction of prep, and we now have 97 per cent of eligible aged Queensland children enrolled in the prep year.

However, we have the nation's poorest level of participation in early childhood programs prior to school such as kindergarten. Only 29 per cent of Queensland children participate in a quality early education program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. This compares with rates of between 85 per cent and 96 per cent across the rest of the nation. In order to boost participation, our government will create an extra 240 kindergartens by 2014. This is the single largest expansion of kindergarten services ever seen in Queensland. The scheme, costing up to \$300 million, will be delivered in partnership with the federal government over the next six years. These kindergartens will cater for the 12,000 children not currently accessing any early education or care services in our state.

A new Office of Early Childhood Education and Care will be established in my department, bringing together responsibility for early education and child-care services under one agency. Another important target set by our government is to increase the number of Queenslanders who hold a job-securing qualification, that is a trade, training or tertiary qualification. Currently about 50 per cent of Queenslanders aged 25 to 64 hold a certificate III level qualification or higher. This places us about the middle of the pack in the state and territory rankings. It is our government's ambition to increase this number to 75 per cent. We have already got the runs on the board having increased the percentage of Queenslanders with these qualifications from 41 per cent in 2001 to 50 per cent by the end of 2007.

The demand for skilled workers is not going to ease. The Queensland Skills Plan 2008, which I launched throughout the state last week, will help to increase this proportion by providing more training opportunities for Queenslanders to increase their participation in training and further education. The Blich government has a plan for the future. The opposition is stuck in the past.

## Queensland Economy

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (10.05 am): Queensland's economy continues to grow ahead of the broader national economy, itself a benchmark performer on the global stage. Our unemployment rate is at 30-year lows. We maintain our AAA credit rating. Record private investment in infrastructure is forecast at \$36 billion for the coming year, growing at 9.25 per cent and represents a doubling in real terms over the last six years.

While it would be tempting to put our prosperity down to the mining boom alone, this misunderstands our greatest modern-day strength, and that is our economy's diversity. The truth is that resources account for just eight per cent of our economic output. We are no longer merely the old, traditional rocks and crops economy. While our economy is growing, we face significant challenges into the future as the world traverses—as the IMF has said—the most difficult global financial conditions since the Great Depression.

The landmark future policy blueprint *Toward Q2* released by the Premier yesterday outlines the challenges and sets a course for Queensland to sustain our economic growth in the face of global adversity. It sets a course for positioning this great state to capitalise on our strengths and protect our economic prosperity. It sets the benchmarks for achievement and for our government to be held to account. It sets the goals we need to work to in order to remain strong for the benefit of future generations.

Labor's policy is to invest heavily in diversifying and modernising the Queensland economy. We are taking our economic base from those traditional strengths into future industries such as aviation, health and educational services, science, medical research and technology. Our strength is in our smarts. On this solid foundation, we will drive innovation because innovation in turn drives economic growth. It drives jobs growth, giving us a competitive edge over other economies, keeping us at the cutting edge of innovation on the global stage.

No-one can ever rely on past performance alone, and we cannot be left behind. We cannot just sit back and expect to remain one of Australia's strongest economies. We have to work hard. That is why *Toward Q2* sets a specific target: to ensure Queensland is Australia's strongest economy by 2020, with infrastructure that anticipates growth. Our commitment to a strong future is the reason we have set an additional goal of increasing by 50 per cent the proportion of businesses undertaking research and development or innovation. This requires policy settings to encourage this investment and it requires Queensland business to look to the future and lift their R&D effort.

We continue to outpace both the major states of Victoria and New South Wales, and internationally our economic growth has exceeded that of the G7 nations. Our population continues—and will continue—to boom, as will our strong productivity growth and the world demand for Queensland's resources. The key to keeping pace is to get the right infrastructure in place, a determined focus for our government as we look over the horizon. In the last 12 months this government has overseen infrastructure delivered on time and on budget from the Tugun bypass to the Inner Northern Busway. The state budget funds a \$17 billion capital program as we seek to lift the infrastructure platform and lift the productive capacity of our economy.

As we look to the future we will maintain our strong budget position and our policy of ensuring a nationally competitive taxation regime. We must continue our long-term commitment to infrastructure planning and delivery. We must encourage and drive the diversification of industry and we must invest in skills. To keep Queensland strong, we need to sustain our policy of investing in education and innovation at all levels. We need to be green; we need to invest in our ability to maintain our lifestyle, to improve our sustainability against the march of climate change. We need to meet the challenges of health service delivery with an effort that recognises that we cannot just focus on curing sickness; we must also focus on promoting healthiness. We need to do all of this to deliver a fair future, one in which we can reside with the support of a caring community.

We see the links between our ambitions for a Queensland that is strong, smart, green, healthy and fair as the links that chart our course for the future. Our task is clear, our course is set, our benchmarks are in place and our ambitions for tomorrow's Queensland are those of a government with its eyes firmly on the future.

### **Government Owned Corporations**

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (10.10 am): Our government owned corporations must strike the right balance between doing business and the valid expectations of the Queensland taxpayer. This Saturday Energex will hold a family day at Seaworld to thank staff for their efforts throughout the year. Around 5,500 staff and family members will attend the event at a cost of around \$33 a person, held annually instead of a staff Christmas party. This is appropriate; indeed, it is good HR practice.

Our GOCs work in the real world where corporate hospitality is part of doing business. Like private companies, on occasion GOCs need to entertain corporate customers and other key stakeholders. We demand the same high standards of accountability for our corporations as we do for all other government agencies.

Today, I table new official Corporate Entertainment and Hospitality Guidelines which will require board approved compliant policies to be lodged with the Office of Government Owned Corporations by the end of next month. This document expresses the government's clear expectations, creating a clear minimum standard for all of our corporations. These documents must clearly define what forms of hospitality are considered essential to the operation of their business.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Queensland Government, Treasury, Government Owned Corporations, Corporate Entertainment and Hospitality Guidelines, Version 1.0, September 2008'.

We demand clear transparency and accountability, with all hospitality accounts to be made available to both internal and external auditors. Annual expenditure for corporate entertainment is required to be published by the GOC within its statement of corporate intent, tabled annually in the parliament. These documents will include total expenditure and all individual commitments over \$5,000. In addition, expenditure limits will be established for each GOC, along with a written criteria outlining who should be invited to these events. Our GOCs must walk a fine line in this area, but this is what the taxpayer is perfectly entitled to expect. These Corporate Entertainment and Hospitality Guidelines will help our GOCs find the balance that Queensland people expect.

### Chronic Disease Prevention

**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.12 am): Queenslanders have a large health challenge ahead of them. The burden of type 2 preventable diabetes is predicted to increase by a massive 55 per cent over the next 10 years. Adult Queenslanders are among the most overweight and obese in the country and childhood obesity is on the rise. Nearly 20 per cent of men and 15 per cent of women are daily smokers, and just over 10 per cent of Queenslanders are classed as heavy drinkers. It is shameful that Queensland has the highest rate of death from skin cancer in the country and we continue to ignore the 'slip, slop, slap' message to avoid sun damage.

The tsunami of chronic disease coming our way is the biggest health issue of our time and a threat not only to our health system but also to the whole economy of our state. As a responsible, forward-thinking government we will not sit idly by and do nothing to address this challenge. That is why the Premier and I have unveiled our plan to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. It is a plan for the future as the opposition remains stuck in the past.

Yesterday the Premier expanded on that further by announcing another ambitious target to cut by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure rates in Queensland by 2020. These are achievable targets if we receive the help and commitment of Queenslanders to make it happen. Contrast this approach with the attitude of the opposition, which has not released one policy to deal with the future health challenges of this state. The Bligh government has taken important first steps by announcing the Healthy Communities Awards.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Guilty as charged. We are also asking for Queensland's feedback about junk food advertising during children's viewing times, with a view to regulating those types of ads. Our unhealthy lifestyles do not just impact on our own health; they also pose a significant threat to the sustainability of our public and private health systems. It is obvious that as a result of ever-increasing demand for services, at rates many times population growth, our hospitals are feeling the pressure.

As a government we know we can do better, but we need the help of the community to achieve a target that will make our health system the best in Australia. That is why we have set a target of achieving the shortest public hospital waiting times in Australia in respect to emergency treatment and elective surgery by 2020. In 2006-07 almost 85 per cent of patients awaiting elective surgery were seen within the clinically recommended time frame. Even though this was better than the national average and the median wait time was the best in Australia, Queensland was still placed third behind New South Wales and Victoria.

Our emergency departments have not performed as well as we would like. The median waiting time for emergency treatment in 2006-07 was 29 minutes, placing us ahead of only the ACT and the Northern Territory. The national average median time is 24 minutes. To achieve this goal the Queensland government will continue to increase funding, and build and rebuild hospitals throughout the state. We will continue to contract the private sector to help cut waiting lists and we will expand health services in the community and encourage Queenslanders to live healthier lifestyles. To achieve these targets, it is imperative that the government and the community work together to ensure Queenslanders become Australia's healthiest people.

### Absence of Leader of the House

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport) (10.15 am): I would like to inform the House that I will be acting as Leader of the House this week. The Hon. Robert Swarten has returned to Rockhampton this morning, owing to the passing of his father, Mr Evan Swarten, peacefully in hospital last night. Those of us who knew Mr Evan Swarten know what a wonderful family man and great stalwart of the Labor Party he was. I am sure members will want to pass on their condolences to the family.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

### Police Academy

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport) (10.15 am): The Smart State is not just about providing great schools and great scientists; it is also about making sure that every section of our workforce is operating at the cutting edge of innovation. That is why we are building a new police academy at Wacol at a cost of \$450 million. We are securing Queensland's law and order future with this state-of-the-art complex. We are building the best police academy in the Southern Hemisphere. With this academy we are looking over the horizon and anticipating future challenges.

The site is 146 hectares with room to grow to cater for police requirements well into the next century. The academy will train more than 1,200 recruits a year. Key facilities based at the academy will include: a driver training facility; counter-terrorism and specialist services including SERT, PSRT, the Bomb Squad and the Dog Squad; forensics including DNA analysis and digital imagery; living quarters and an educational precinct.

In addition to four distinct hubs—operational, forensic science, academic and logistics—the academy will include a centre for excellence. We will partner with agencies nationally and internationally to solve policing problems that we know will continue into the future such as internet crime, identity fraud, terrorism and organised crime. The new academy will build on our reputation for quality training. We anticipate training police from across Asia on a fee-for-service basis.

Early works are already underway to prepare the site for construction of the main academy, forensic services and special operations group. In the next month we will be going to tender for construction of the driver training track and refurbishment of several heritage listed buildings for the driver training offices. By June next year the driver training facility will be operational. In 2010 the special operations and counter-terrorism facility and the new scientific building will be completed. By late 2011 construction of the academy itself will be complete and it will be fully operational by early 2012.

The Bligh government is tackling climate change and that is reflected in our plans for the academy. It will be a green facility featuring water harvesting and recycling, habitat protection and sustainable building design. The area is also heritage listed and our master plan has been approved by the Queensland Heritage Council. The police academy project is anticipating future challenges and problems to build the Queensland of tomorrow today.

### Public Transport Infrastructure

**Hon. RJ MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.18 am): Queensland's natural environment and lifestyle are the best in the world, but there are challenges for the future. What we love about Queensland is under increasing pressure from our growing population and climate change. However, we are planning and building the infrastructure today to meet the growth of tomorrow.

The tunnelling on the \$226 million Boggo Road Busway is close to completion. When construction is complete, this project will carry up to 600 buses and 20,000 passengers each and every day. Busways are not only an effective way to reduce congestion; they can also reduce pollution. There are 40 fewer cars on the road for every full bus of commuters.

Public transport is a 10 times more efficient way to use road space and fuel and it creates 10 times fewer emissions than single-occupancy private cars. By 2016 on the Gold Coast, each day over 40,000 cars have the potential to be taken off the roads and congestion levels managed in a sustainable manner thanks to public transport. This includes the \$1.67 billion Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, which will reduce the number of private vehicle trips by up to 10 per cent.

This new transport infrastructure is leading us down the road to a cleaner, greener Queensland. Buses are already carrying passengers through the \$333 million Inner Northern Busway, which in peak hour shaves up to 20 minutes off a journey through the city. Every day thousands of bus passengers avoid traffic snarls and are guaranteed a reliable travel time because their service uses a busway that is outside the traffic lanes. We have achieved close to 40 per cent growth in public transport use over the last four years because of projects such as these. They not only put public transport first; they also put the environment and a cleaner, greener future first.

### Local Government Reform

**Hon. FW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads and Local Government) (10.19 am): The Bligh government is a government that looks ahead, anticipates challenges and solves problems. This is the key to positive, strategic leadership. This is why we are continuing our reform program within the local government sector—designed to create a stronger local government sector which will contribute to the Bligh government's plans for a strong Queensland.

As we are all aware, the past 12 months have been a very dynamic time for local government in Queensland. We have undertaken the most comprehensive structural reform to local government in Queensland in 150 years. I am certain that these changes will bring long-term benefits to communities by ensuring local governments are strong and capable of meeting the challenges of the future.

But structural reform of local government was only the first step on a longer journey to make our councils stronger and more sustainable. A key part of the next stage is the legislative reform that is currently underway. This review of the existing Local Government Act is the most strategic aspect of local government reform in Queensland. The new act will define the way local government provides services to ratepayers across Queensland into the future. It will give councils much greater flexibility to manage growth and deliver creative solutions to local issues.

We will also provide more accountability and transparency for ratepayers. This will involve a new reporting and evaluation framework model for councils which is being developed with the LGAQ, the LGMA and councils. We will also finalise the regionalisation of the department of local government to better support councils in the future. This new organisational structure will foster greater cooperation between local councils and the department's regional offices.

The government's future focus is in stark contrast to the opposition's policy for local government which is firmly planted in the past. While we look ahead, the opposition insists on gazing in the rear-view mirror by offering deamalgamation as the solution to the challenges our councils face. This is last century's solution to last year's issue, coming from a party that purports to offer 'a new Queensland' but trots out the same tired old policies. It is not surprising that no-one is interested. Even Bob Abbot has said, 'Thanks, but no thanks.' This dodgy policy perfectly reflects the LNP—no substance, no leadership and no support.

### Queensland Tourism Industry

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry) (10.22 am): There is no doubt Queensland's tourism operators are facing challenging times and have been doing it tough this year. In July we saw major airlines cut services, both domestic and international, all over Australia. This came off the back of a horrendous weather affected summer season, a high Australian dollar and record oil prices.

Many of these events were unforeseen and, while we cannot control the weather, what we can do is make sure that we have the ability to respond to events as they happen. As a result of our strong economic management, the Premier was able to immediately step in and provide \$4 million to support the industry, and our strong relationship with the federal government allowed us to secure another \$4 million from them.

As part of the \$4 million state government funding package, we have launched a series of high-impact campaigns including a \$1 million 'Too Easy' campaign, a \$500,000 'Home Grown' campaign, and a \$1.9 million cooperative US campaign. And with no sign of the global credit crunch easing, I am pleased to be able to report a little bit of good news about results from the first campaign.

The 'Too Easy' interstate campaign encouraged travel agents all over Australia to promote Queensland as the place to go and holiday. The results have been overwhelming, with one of Australia's biggest travel wholesalers reporting some of their busiest booking days in recent history. In fact, total sales from the campaign were around \$3.5 million, with more still coming in. A total of 16,000 room nights were sold primarily in tropical north Queensland, the Gold Coast, the Whitsundays and the Sunshine Coast.

More recently, we launched a \$1.9 million cooperative campaign targeting high-end and young American travellers—the first in a series of international marketing initiatives. This initiative includes five cooperative marketing campaigns with major players in the US travel industry focusing on tropical north Queensland, which has been hard hit by flight cuts and a downturn in visitor numbers. And yesterday we heard very good news from the federal government. It will kick in \$750,000 to encourage Japanese travel agents to promote available charter flights to Cairns from Nagoya, Fukuoka and Tokyo.

So while we are seeing economies as large as the US and UK fall apart, Australia's is still robust. Our dollar is coming down and interest rates are starting to fall. This will mean we will all have a little more money to spend, so we may see more of our southern friends from Sydney and Melbourne come back to Noosa and those places that were popular in the mid-nineties. There is no doubt the tourism industry has been doing it really tough, but the Bligh government is getting on with the job of building tomorrow's Queensland tourism industry today.

### Carbon Capture

**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.25 am): The Bligh government is taking Queenslanders into the future with Q2 and strong, smart, green solutions to meet one of the greatest challenges facing Queensland and the world—climate change. While we push ahead with renewable energy solutions and gas-fired power, coal will continue to play an important role in providing our power.

In just 12 months, the Premier's high-powered Clean Coal Council has helped spearhead the drive to develop clean coal technologies. It is like Sir Nicholas Stern said: clean coal could be our gift to the world. But we must all work together—governments, industry, scientists and the community. If it is left to governments alone, it will never work.

Climate change is the responsibility of all of us. That is why I am delighted to announce today a Queensland first. CSIRO and our government owned corporation Tarong Energy have joined forces in a \$5 million pilot project to capture greenhouse gases. A postcombustion pilot plant will be built at Tarong Power Station—the state's biggest power station. The trial is expected to demonstrate how to capture rather than store carbon dioxide at a large plant like Tarong. It is part of a broader research program to

find ways to reduce dangerous greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector. The pilot plant is expected to be up and running in the first half of next year. This is about combining our intellectual and policy firepower, and working with industry towards a cleaner, greener energy future. It is Q2 at its very smartest.

Postcombustion carbon capture offers real potential for coal-fired power stations everywhere to reduce their carbon footprint. We all know that coal will continue to play a role in the global electricity mix well into the future. That is simply because we have over 32 billion tonnes of high-quality, low-cost, easily accessible black coal, sufficient to last more than 300 years. Our key challenge is to use it in a responsible, smarter and environmentally sustainable way. The Bligh government is showing real leadership in tackling climate change. We are leading Queenslanders toward Q2 and a better, brighter future.

## SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.27 am): I table the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 9 of 2008*.

*Tabled paper:* Scrutiny of Legislation Committee Alert Digest No. 9 of 2008.

## REPORT

### Office of the Leader of the Opposition

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.27 am): I table the public report of office expenses for the office of the Leader of the Opposition for the 2007-08 financial year.

*Tabled paper:* Public Report of Office Expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for 2007-08 and Independent Auditor's Report.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### School Retention Rates

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.28 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, after 10 years of the Beattie-Bligh government you want to be judged on setting targets and not achieving outcomes. As education minister in 2001, you set a target to improve government school retention rates for years 10 to 12 from 73.9 per cent to 88 per cent by 2010, and I table your press release and the accompanying report card.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'In 2001 Bligh sets 2005 target for School Retention rates and FAILS'.

Given that you have failed, with retention rates in 2007 actually falling to 72 per cent—lower than they were six years ago—are you seriously asking the people of Queensland to once again believe a Bligh election-driven promise?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Just before I ask the Premier to answer that question, another question of that length and containing preliminary statements will be ruled out of order. I clearly mentioned that today. So I would like to ask everyone on both sides of parliament to be aware that these very lengthy preambles are not allowed under standing order 115. I have given that reminder today.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. What the opposition fails to understand is that the future is a constantly changing landscape. What we have done in education here in Queensland during the time I was education minister and subsequently under the leadership of my colleague the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, Rod Welford, is nothing short of a revolution. What we have put in place in the upper years of schooling—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I again remind members that the Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence, without any interjections. I expect there to be some respect for the minister who is answering the question as well. I have been a Speaker who has allowed a fair bit of robustness. If you want me to go back to a tighter line in that regard, keep on interjecting.

**Ms BLIGH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said earlier this morning, the Leader of the Opposition has his eyes firmly fixed on the rear-view mirror. He looks at 2001 as if 2002, 2003 and 2004 simply did not happen. What happened during that time was that our high school system underwent one of the most significant reforms not only here in Queensland but across the country—reforms that other states are now copying and reforms that other countries around the world have sought advice on.

That reform is that we want young Queenslanders aged 16 and over to be either learning or earning. That means we recognise that for some young people having a trade, getting an apprenticeship and getting a skill is just as important and just as valuable as finishing high school. The benchmark on which we set our sights is making sure that the number of young Queenslanders either in high school or getting an apprenticeship increases every single year.

What we are seeing in a number of high schools across Queensland is innovative partnerships with industry. Schools like Gladstone State High School are working with industry and the local area to make sure they find the best skill and the best educational opportunity for every young person. This government makes no apologies for believing that trades matter, that skills matter and that apprenticeships are valuable. Where young people are better suited to a trade or an apprenticeship, we will give them that opportunity. That is about looking to the future. It is about being innovative. It is about recognising that the world changes and we have to change with it. We need to create the future, not hark back to the past. The Leader of the Opposition believes that the future is something that happened in 1958. We do not agree.

### Education, Performance Targets

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My second question without notice is also directed to the Premier. I refer to the Beattie-Bligh government's 2002 election blueprint which the Premier implemented as education minister six years ago and in which she set a target of 85 per cent of students achieving national year 5 reading benchmarks by 2005. I again table the Premier's press release and report card on her performance.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'In 2002 Bligh sets 2005 target for School Reading Benchmarks and FAILS'.

This year's budget papers reveal that in 2007-08 the Premier has failed, with only 76.8 per cent of year 5s in Queensland achieving the benchmark. Is the Premier now seriously asking the people of Queensland to once again believe a Bligh election-driven promise?

**Ms BLIGH:** Again, I thank the member for the question. I do not know what it is that the Leader of the Opposition has against setting goals and targets. On this side of the House—

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Warrego! If members in an orchestrated way want to interject at the same time and disrupt the Premier, who is on her feet, I will deal with those members accordingly.

**Ms BLIGH:** I do not know what it is that the Leader of the Opposition has against setting ambitious goals, about setting an optimistic but challenging goal for the future and working hard to achieve it. I am very pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has drawn the parliament's attention to my record in this regard. I believe in setting goals. I accept that not every goal will be reached. Not every goal will be achieved in the time that is specified, but that is not a reason not to set them.

This government believes that government should be challenging itself, should be working hard for the community and should be setting a target and working to achieve it. I want every Queensland child to have the best possible opportunities. I want every Queensland child to be achieving the best that they can in all of the basics—in literacy and in numeracy—and in every area and opportunity that schooling provides for them.

What are the biggest hurdles that our children have faced? The biggest hurdles that Queensland children face when compared on national benchmarks is that, until last year, they were one year younger and had one year less of schooling every time they sat a national test. We are yet to see the children who this year are in our prep classes sit and do a year 3 test, but I have every confidence that when our children who have had the benefit of our prep year sit and do a year 3 test in two years time they will be right up there with the best in the country, because I believe in Queensland's children. I think they are as talented and as smart as anyone else in the country. I have confidence in them, their parents and their prep year teachers. But prep is not enough. We need to take the next big leap forward. That is why yesterday I committed to 240 new kindergartens being built right across the state to fill in the gaps.

The underperformance of Queensland in early education is a legacy of the last century brought to you by the Queensland National Party. Who fixed it? Labor fixed it. It was Labor that introduced prep. It was a Labor government that gave the children and families of Queensland prep, and it is Labor that will deliver early education in kindergartens.

### Education, Early Childhood

**Ms CROFT:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. I note that the Leader of the Opposition does not believe in having a plan, but can the Premier please outline—

**Mr Langbroek** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Surfers Paradise, a member is on her feet asking a question and it is not the time to interject.

**Ms CROFT:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Clearly those opposite do not believe in having a plan, but can the Premier please provide a further response to the early childhood initiatives of the government's Q2 plan for the future?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for her question. I am not surprised that the member for Broadwater is interested in the announcements yesterday in relation to kindergarten, because, like young mothers and young parents right across Queensland who want the best for their children, she wants the best for her son and she wants a government working to put in place new services to give her son and her children those opportunities. That is what this government will do. We will build an extra 240 kindergartens across Queensland by 2014. This will cater for 12,000 Queensland children who are currently not accessing or able to access services in any early childhood education or care settings. It will cost up to \$300 million, but that is an investment in our children, in their future and, frankly, in our future. It builds on the successful introduction of prep. Half of the age cohort entered prep last year. This year is the first year when the entire age cohort will be in prep in every primary school across the state.

I was very pleased to see the comments made yesterday by the Creche and Kindergarten Association, which, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, has a strong and deep commitment to young children. Barry Elvish, from the Creche and Kindergarten Association, commented, 'I think it is absolutely fantastic news for the children of Queensland and for the kindergarten sector in this state.' He went on to say that he had no doubt it would be enthusiastically received by thousands of families. Barry Elvish believes in having a plan, as do we.

In terms of the long underperformance that Queensland had in this area I think Queenslanders understand that it will not be fixed overnight. We have to put in place the building blocks. Prep was the first big down payment, the important building block. Putting in place these kindergartens is the most logical next step.

There is no secret about this. Five months ago I invited all of the people who were delegates to the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit, including the Leader of the Opposition, to a meeting in this chamber where I outlined to them some of the challenges facing Queensland. I showed this graph. The circled bar on this graph shows that Queensland is a long way behind the other states in terms of services for children of kindergarten age.

I think that most people would think that was a pretty courageous thing for a Premier to do—that is, to stand in front of the Leader of the Opposition and say, 'Here is the gap. This is what has to be filled.' The most obvious thing for a leader of the opposition to do would be to have a policy about it and think, 'That is an area that needs a bit of work so I had better do something about that. That would be a good place for me to do a policy.' Five months later and he has not mentioned children or said 'early education'. The Leader of the Opposition has not talked about kindergartens. I gave him the biggest hint five months ago. I stood here in front of more than 100 people and told the Leader of the Opposition where we needed to do work and he has done nothing.

### Queensland Health, Performance Targets

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Premier. The government's performance targets in health for emergency, urgent and semi-urgent patients were set at 80 per cent, 75 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. Can the Premier explain why she has failed to meet these targets with the Queensland performance at 68 per cent, 57 per cent and 62 per cent respectively and how her failure to meet these targets has impacted on Queenslanders lying on trolleys in Townsville Hospital corridors for two to three days before being admitted? Is the Premier seriously asking the people of Queensland—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the Premier.

**Mr McARDLE:**—to once again—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Caloundra, you have asked two questions so far. You are about to ask a third one. I call the Premier to answer the first couple of questions. You are allowed to ask one question. I am allowing you to ask two. I call the Premier.

**Ms BLIGH:** There is no doubt that in a fast-growing state providing services in any of the human service delivery areas, including health, is a big challenge. We recognise that challenge. That is why we have the Health Action Plan. That is why we recently updated it. Most importantly, that is why we are investing \$10 billion in it.

It is not only a question of having a bed. What we need with a bed is the staff to provide the services. No-one has recruited more medical, clinical and health staff into our health system than the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson. It is those staff who are helping us to lift our game in relation to waiting lists.

Queensland now has the lowest elective surgery waiting times in Australia. We do not want to rest at that. We are not complacent about that. We are giving ourselves the next target and the next goal. What is the next goal? To make sure that our emergency department waiting times are the best in the country. Will that be easy? Of course it will not be. But we would be letting Queenslanders down if we aspired to anything less.

When I sat down to set the goals for my health system, of what I believed it should be doing and where I wanted it to be, I unashamedly picked a big, challenging target. Will we meet it in one year or will we meet it in six months? No. But will we ever get there if we do not start now? No. If those opposite want to implement—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms BLIGH:** Have we been standing still on this issue? Absolutely not. Those opposite would like everyone to forget that the current elective surgery waiting lists in Queensland have 1,100 fewer people on them than when they last ran government and we have had 700,000 people move here since. Queensland now has the best elective surgery waiting times in the country, but we are not going to rest at that. We set ourselves the next goal and that is to improve the waiting times in our emergency departments.

We believe that the future is an exciting place. We embrace it with enthusiasm, optimism and confidence. We stretch ourselves by setting goals. That is what business does. That is what individuals do. That is what this government will do. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying this morning and what the Liberal National Party is telling the people of Queensland is that it will not set goals, it will not challenge itself, it will not do anything tough and it will not have a plan.

### ***Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland***

**Ms JARRATT:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier announced a plan with bold ambitions and targets for the future of our state—Toward Q2. Is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches being offered to the people of Queensland?

**Ms BLIGH:** It does seem that the Leader of the Opposition does have one plan; that is a plan to take over the Liberal Party in which he has been spectacularly successful. Those people who have been looking for a reinvigorated or renewed conservative force in Queensland politics must be scratching their heads. We have seen little or nothing by way of new ideas or new policy. What I can tell the House is that on the very limited occasions that the opposition has come close to what might be vaguely described as policy development its efforts have gone down like very sad lead balloons, especially when it makes policies on things that it believes are designed to impress particular stakeholder groups.

Let us have a look at a couple of examples. The Leader of the Opposition has been banging the drum about borrowing programs and debt. Did that go down well with the business community that he was trying to impress? No. In fact it went down so badly that at a recent Property Council lunch he had to back-pedal and admit that the Liberal National Party would not cut back Labor's borrowing program if it won office. In fact, it is such a good program he is going to keep it.

Let us look at last week's performance at the Local Government Association of Queensland meeting where he promised that once in government he would move to deamalgamate amalgamated councils. This was a cheap political stunt designed to get a populist response from a narrow market. But who was impressed by it? Even the most vocal critic of amalgamation, the mayor of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Bob Abbot, said no thank you to deamalgamation.

Those opposite tried to impress on tree clearing. Party President Bruce McIver announced plans for a major windback of their tree-clearing laws. But, of course, the person he failed to impress was the Leader of the Opposition, who had to come out and cancel it. The opposition cannot even impress themselves. Even when they pop their heads up for a minute it takes less than 24 hours for the stakeholders to sink their silly ideas. When the stakeholders are not sinking them they are sinking themselves.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition! I call the member for Surfers Paradise.

### **Education, Performance Targets**

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the honourable the Premier. I refer to literacy and numeracy benchmarks for our year 5 students. Six years ago she set a target for improvement in these areas—

**Mr SPEAKER:** You have said 'she'. I am just wondering—

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Through you, Mr Speaker, I am saying 'she'.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am saying that you should be naming the member of parliament. I have indicated that to you this morning.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Will the Premier explain why our benchmark pass rates for students in provincial and remote areas and for Indigenous students in those areas are the lowest in the country? Is the Premier seriously asking the people of Queensland to again believe a Bligh election-driven target?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. I am very pleased this morning to have an opportunity to talk about why I believe targets and goals are important. When we sit down to set targets and set goals and think about where we want to be at a point in the future we really have a couple of options. One is that we can set a soft goal that will be easy to reach. I have never done that. I have never done that in my personal life. I have never done that in my working life. I have never done that while I have been in government. When I was the minister for education I set the bar very high and I worked every minute to make sure that we got as close to that bar as possible. That is what members will see in yesterday's announcement and what people can expect from a Bligh government each and every day.

The Leader of the Opposition is one of the longest-serving members of this parliament and he has never stood up for anything. Every time something gets tough and whenever he has an opportunity to take a leap forward on an issue like the amalgamation of councils, he hides under the bed. Whenever there is an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up for an initiative—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I indicate that the Leader of the Opposition did refer to a member across the other side by their first name. I am trying to tighten this up as per the standing orders. I know that the Deputy Premier might not be too fussed with it, but I would ask that members generally accord the name of the person who is being referred to rather than Christian names and other derogatory terms that are mentioned from time to time. I call the Premier.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I seek your clarification about standing order 244(7), which indicates that if we speak through the chair you may refer to someone in the third person but you are not supposed to say 'you' across the chamber and you do not necessarily have to refer to them by their title or their electoral district. It is just that you do not refer to them as 'you'.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will take that on board and examine that.

**Ms BLIGH:** I think it is fair to say that I have answered this question already once today, but I am very happy to answer it again. We on this side of the House believe that an investment in education is one of the most important investments any government can make, because when we invest in the knowledge and skills and abilities of our children those children's lives are dramatically enhanced by it and the lives and the prosperity and the opportunities of our entire community are also enhanced by that investment. So what we have done every single year that we have been in government is do just that, and yesterday's announcement built on a longstanding reputation.

### Queensland, Green State

**Ms STONE:** My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. I refer to the Premier's ambition for Queenslanders to work together alongside the Bligh government to make Queensland the green state, and I ask: can the Deputy Premier please inform the House of any steps being taken to deliver on this commitment for Queenslanders?

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for her question. The Bligh government has an ambition for a green Queensland to protect our lifestyle and environment. That is why this government has brought forward the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan—to ensure that we can continue to properly manage growth and protect our open and green spaces. That regional plan protects 80 per cent of south-east Queensland from urban development, and under the plan in far-north Queensland 99.4 per cent is proposed to be protected from urban development. The Premier has also provided a commitment by setting a target of protecting 50 per cent more land for conservation and recreation across the state.

The Bligh government has a plan for the future; the opposition is stuck in the past. We protect green space; the Leader of the Opposition protects the National Party. He wants the heydays of the past when the Nationals ran the show, and that is why he orchestrated a takeover of the Liberal Party. Let us have a look at the record. In 1986 the National Party vote was 39.6 per cent in Queensland; at the last election it was 17.8 per cent. It copped a 29 per cent swing against it in the Lyne by-election on the weekend. What has the National Party in Western Australia said? What was its advertising campaign? 'Support the Nationals. We're independent!' Senior Liberal and National members at a federal level have now panicked. No sooner did they sign up with the Liberal Party, no sooner did they walk through—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LUCAS:** No sooner, Mr Speaker—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask for a little less interjection across the chamber, thanks. I call the Deputy Premier.

**Mr LUCAS:** No sooner did they walk into the convention room together than Warren Truss and Barnaby Joyce walked straight out the other side having purloined the Liberal Party votes and then said, 'We just have to go down the path which would be most likely to succeed which at this point in time looks like the WA model.' Joyce said that the WA model offers the best opportunity for the party. As the Treasurer said, it is the KFC model. The National Party can eat what it likes when it feels like it. Want a coalition? Have a burger with fries. Want the WA stand-alone party that takes the Libs? Grab a Quad Burger or a family meal deal. If you give all of the burgers to the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego and the member for Callide all the Liberal Party gets is the soft-serve that is left over. It is a takeover. The only green space the Leader of the Opposition wants to preserve is green space on the green carpet of this parliament taking on Liberal seats.

### Education, Performance Targets

**Miss SIMPSON:** My question is to the Premier. As then education minister the now Premier set a target that 88 per cent of parents should be satisfied that their child's state school is a good school but in the five years since this target has never been reached and her government is only expected to achieve a 79 per cent rating this financial year, and I ask: is the Premier seriously asking the people of Queensland to once again believe a Bligh election-driven target with no real outcomes?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. I am very pleased to have another opportunity to explain to those opposite just how important it is to set a goal and how important it is to make sure that that goal is a very high bar. Queenslanders deserve the bar set high, and we make no apology for doing it—not one. People can expect to see us working every single day to make sure that we have a better education system as a result of investment in new services like our 240 new kindergartens. As I said earlier, if we want to maintain the status quo—if we are content to go nowhere, if we just want to stand still and see no change—then by all means we should set a target that does not challenge anyone. We should set a goal that does not stretch us. I set stretch targets. I set tough goals. I lift the bar high, and I expect every one of my ministers to rise to that challenge. I expect every government department to rise to that challenge, and people will see these targets and goals and these ambitions for Queensland drive everything that my government does.

Queensland is facing some of the biggest challenges it has ever faced and what we have before us are two choices: either we embrace the challenge and turn it into an opportunity where we shape the future, where we embrace the opportunities that it gives us, where we look to the future with enthusiasm and confidence and optimism; or we do what those opposite would want us to do—cover ourselves with doom and gloom and say, 'It's all hopeless. We'll all be ruined,' with no plan, no ideas and no opportunities. I know which side of that debate I want to be on. I drew to the attention of the parliament earlier that, even on the very few days when the Leader of the Opposition does get up with an idea, those ideas have been driven by wanting to appeal to a small sectional interest only on what he believes to be a populist issue. Even when he does that, what does that interest group do? It says, 'Sorry. No thanks. Got it wrong. No.'

**Mr Springborg:** What did the Clean Energy Council say, Anna?

**Ms BLIGH:** I am very pleased that the member raises the Clean Energy Council, because he seems to have forgotten what happened when he issued a policy on this and put the Clean Energy Council's logo in his document. What happened? The Clean Energy Council demanded that its logo be taken off the Liberal National Party document. That is what happened. It liked it so much it demanded that its logo be removed.

**Mr Springborg:** Oh, Anna!

**Ms BLIGH:** That is how successful it was.

**Mr Springborg:** Anna, Anna, Anna!

**Ms BLIGH:** And did you ring and apologise?

**Mr Springborg:** You told them to take it off their web site.

**Ms BLIGH:** Did you ring?

**Mr Springborg:** You said you will not be endorsing the coalition. That's what you said.

**Ms BLIGH:** He is now in total fantasy land. What he did was verbal the Clean Energy Council. It demanded a retraction, and now he is blaming someone else!

**Mr SPEAKER:** I take this opportunity to welcome to the parliament today teachers and students from the Northpine Christian College in the electorate of Kallangur, which is represented in this House by the Hon. Ken Hayward.

### Gold Coast Health Service

**Mr LAWLOR:** My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to media coverage of the seasonal pressures on our public hospitals in the past few weeks. Can the minister please advise the House as to how the Gold Coast Health Service has coped with this demand?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I thank the member for the question, because the Gold Coast Health Service District has made some significant inroads into managing winter demand in just the last 12 months. These strong results have demonstrated that in just over a year the Bligh government's investment in health services on the Gold Coast is paying real dividends.

A number of Bligh government initiatives to manage and plan for growth on the Gold Coast have seen a significant reduction in the number of surgical cancellations, hospital bypass occurrences and capacity alerts, despite a significant increase in the number of patients admitted. The total number of admissions to Gold Coast hospitals has increased by 17 per cent over the last 12 months, but the number of episodes of cancellation of surgery due to beds being unavailable has decreased by 71 per cent.

In the past 12 months, the Bligh government has implemented a number of strategies to meet the rapidly growing demands for health services on the Gold Coast. These include the opening of the new \$40 million emergency department at Robina Hospital; the creation of a new 20-bed medical ward at the Gold Coast Hospital; the leasing of 25 palliative care beds at Pacific Private Hospital; the opening of 26 interim care beds at the Carrara Health Centre, with an additional 37 beds to open by October; and, of course, the opening of the new Gold Coast surgicentre at Allamanda, just across the road from Southport Hospital.

This new facility is another example of the Bligh government's commitment to investing in new ways to provide quality health care in order to reduce waiting times for elective surgery in Queensland. Over 68 patients have already received their elective surgery treatment at the new surgicentre and, as it ramps up to be fully operational by the end of this year, we will be on track to deliver over 6,000 elective surgery operations at that new centre over the course of a year. The recruitment of staff continues. As I said, we are on track to open that centre by the end of this year.

Health services at the Gold Coast will be further strengthened when we deliver on our election promises of opening the new Gold Coast University Hospital in 2012 and further expanding the Robina Hospital. I am pleased to advise the House that last week contractors were engaged to begin the second stage of the Robina Hospital expansion, meaning that we are on track to deliver the additional 179 beds for the Gold Coast coming out of Robina Hospital by 2012.

### **Water Prices, Pensioner Rebates**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question is to the Minister for Communities. From 1 July eligible pensioners in the south-east Queensland water grid area will receive a \$40 rebate on their water bills, rising to \$70 and then \$100 in subsequent years, as announced by the minister's department. Pensioners in my area face higher water bills because the Queensland government had the QCA review water pricing and increased the cost of water to all consumers. Will the minister recognise that this government is for all Queenslanders and extend the water rebate to all eligible pensioners in Queensland who are struggling to cover these fixed costs?

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** I thank the member for her question. The member would be aware that we own the water supply in the south-east corner. Elsewhere the council operates the water supply. So I would think that the member's question would probably be better directed to local government or to councils in general.

I can say in a general way that the Department of Communities has provided emergency assistance of over \$3.6 million to more than 9,400 people who are affected by things such as floods. In particular, that assistance was provided earlier this year. So we arrange for money to be supplied to people who are going through tough times, whatever that might be.

The Department of Communities also sends out a number of staff throughout any kind of emerging problem that occurs as a result of some sort of natural disaster. In the south-east corner, where we own the water supply, the rebates apply. But we also provide a number of rebates right across-the-board throughout Queensland. Indeed, just recently I had the opportunity to address many seniors and pensioners throughout Queensland about the rebates that we offer. In fact, I was able to compare what we offer with what is offered in the rest of Australia and I have to say that Queensland offers far above the rebates offered by our state counterparts. That is probably the reason so many people are moving to Queensland at the extraordinary rate at which they do. We also have concession cards for seniors and pensioners to provide a range of services, including business discounts. In fact, we have over 8,000 businesses now registered.

When it comes to water, I think the member's question really needs to be directed to local governments, particularly in the member's area, in terms of the rebates that might be available through them, but in the south-east corner it is very different.

Interruption.

## PRIVILEGE

### Comments by Premier

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.04 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. In answer to a previous question in this place the Premier implied that I had verbalised the Clean Energy Council of Queensland with regard to our plans for a gross feed-in tariff. I table a press statement from the Clean Energy Council, dated 5 June 2008, in which it states—

The Clean Energy Council today endorsed the Queensland Opposition's plan for a gross metering feed-in tariff for all solar photovoltaic ... generators in the state.

It was not until the Premier told them to take it down that they ran away.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Clean Energy Council Media Release 5 June 2008 Solar industry supports Queensland plan for gross feed-in tariffs'.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition has risen on a matter of privilege. I would like him to raise a matter of privilege rather than argue across the chamber.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed from p. 2510.

### *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*

**Mrs REILLY:** My question is to the Treasurer. Could the Treasurer outline the government's policy commitment to future economic growth as set out in the Q2 policy blueprint announced by the Premier yesterday?

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for her question. The member is a strong advocate for the prosperity, the wealth and the aspirations of the people within her electorate. This government remains utterly committed to providing a future course for the modern Queensland economy. Yesterday's Q2 document, *Tomorrow's Queensland*, sets an ambitious target to increase by 50 per cent the number of businesses that are undertaking research and development and innovation in Queensland. At the moment, 36 per cent of Queensland businesses undertake this, which is above what is occurring in the rest of the country. But on an economy-wide basis, we see that effort at 0.7 per cent of the economy compared to one per cent nationally and, indeed, around 1½ per cent in the developed world, according to OECD data.

We remain utterly committed to research and development and innovation being at the forefront of our economic future. Of course, we know that on the other side of the House there is an aversion to research and development and innovation, especially when it comes to a policy program. As everyone well knows—and, in fact, as the Clean Energy Council well knows—when it comes to the LNP it is more logos, not policies. If we look at where they have been in the last little while we see that they had a PPP policy which saw them vote against it in here and run outside and say something completely different as soon as the Leader of the Opposition had 'go No. 3' at becoming the leader of the Liberal and National parties.

While we have looked firmly to the future and over the horizon, the Leader of the Opposition is putting on the cardigan and slippers and looking in the rear-vision mirror for what he believes to be the future of Queensland. If you want a better example of the *Kingswood Country* approach to the future of Queensland, you can look no further than their proposal about deamalgamation—one of the most important structural reforms not only for Queensland communities to deal with the growth of the future but also in terms of the capacity of the government to provide services and infrastructure and important economic reform. It was welcomed by those people who understand the importance of strong policy and strong leadership. These people propose to deamalgamate.

Ultimately, what we know of the Leader of the Opposition's 20 years in parliament is that the shadow is not very long. He has had 20 years here and he does not stand for anything except going back to the past, looking in the rear-vision mirror—in the Kingswood HQ, bench seat in the front, the three on the tree, driving full throttle in reverse down the highway, romantically thinking about a time that did not exist. The Leader of the Opposition wants the Queensland of the past. We want the Queensland of the future. When it comes to the future, it is this government that has the policy plan and it is the Liberal and National parties that have a plan to deamalgamate. But it is a policy that is going to be welcomed by only Warren Truss and Barnaby Joyce and not by the communities of Queensland.

### Government Advertising, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is to the Premier. Today and yesterday the Premier talked about targets for the next 12 years. Before the Premier's latest budget she and the Treasurer claimed that they would target the \$22 million annual taxpayer funded, government-promoting advertising budget. Here is a target we all want to know: what is the total taxpayer funded advertising budget for this financial year for advertising the Premier's Q2 program, her election makeover?

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Warrego.

**Ms BLIGH:** Members opposite are so razor sharp that on a parliamentary sitting day they cannot manage to read the national newspaper. In today's *Australian* it is accurately reported that advertising around Q2 and the public forums associated with it will be allocated \$1.5 million. I would recommend to the strategy group for the Liberal National Party that on a parliamentary sitting day—the *Goondiwindi Argus* may not be here by 8.30 in the morning, but the *Australian* and the *Australian Financial Review* should be. There it is in black and white—in the national newspaper.

If honourable members opposite look at the ads they will see that they talk about the need to get up early and get out there early to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. The 'finger on the pulse' over there cannot even read the national newspaper on a parliamentary sitting day. We commit ourselves to 30 public forums. We will have 30 public forums across Queensland because we want to talk to Queenslanders about things that matter to them and their future, unlike members of the Liberal National Party, who want to get together with a few people in a hall and talk about themselves and their party.

I think it is important that people know where I stand on setting targets and goals. It is out there for everyone to see. Where do our opponents stand? In 2003 Lawrence Springborg was asked, 'What targets have you set for yourself?' 'Well,' he said, 'You see, there is certainly no falling on the sword. We are looking at an election probably later this year. Setting benchmarks and high bars is something that I don't do because what you do is end up bumping your head trying to get over them.' We know that when Lawrence Springborg, the Leader of the Opposition, sets the bar he sets it as low as he can—

**Mr Lucas:** He trips over it.

**Ms BLIGH:**—and then trips over it because he is so worried about bumping his head.

**Mr Springborg:** Did I actually achieve it, Anna, which would be alien to you?

**Ms BLIGH:** No.

**Mr Springborg:** Which was coalition and then merger, Anna. Did we achieve it, Anna?

**Ms BLIGH:** This was about whether the Leader of the Opposition would win that election and I do not recall that he did. We believe in setting the bar high because that is what Queenslanders want. They have high aspirations and we are up there with them. We are not worried about hitting our heads because we are not afraid of the future.

### Industrial Relations

**Ms GRACE:** My question is for the Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations. As minister for industrial relations he knows only too well the importance of negotiation and arbitration. Could he please outline these principles for the House?

**Mr MICKEL:** I thank the member for Brisbane Central, who has come from a life where she understands industrial negotiations. It is true—and I say this to the House—that there is a period of enterprise bargaining negotiations that is underway that I expect will be fully robust. There will be a log of claims put on the table. There will be discussions obviously about efficiencies. There will be formal meetings. What I understand and know as the minister for industrial relations is that all of these things, whilst conducted in a robust way, will at the end of it all have to be conducted in a manner of goodwill, of coming together. Where these issues cannot be resolved, then what I encourage the parties to do is to take it—as I encourage the electricity unions to do—to the relevant arbitration commission. That would be the advice that I would offer.

Honourable members could imagine my surprise when I picked up the *Australian* and noticed 'LNP locked out of Libs' headquarters'. It said that the LNP moved quickly to change the locks on a \$2 million building. The article said that the Liberals said that the LNP had no authority to change the locks. What sort of a marriage is it where after a month they are changing the locks? Have you ever seen anything like it? What sort of a longevity arrangement is it when after a month they are out there changing the locks? They are changing the locks at the state level and heading for a divorce at the federal level.

**A government member:** And two-timing.

**Mr MICKEL:** And two-timing, of course, in Western Australia. As honourable members know, over many years I have been determined to help the Queensland Liberal Party. What we have is 55 members of the Liberal Party in Rankin, which overlaps my seat, who will not join and 100 people in Forde, which overlaps my seat, who will not join either. I am the only person here who is going to stand up for these people.

I have gone to great lengths and done great research to try to come to some arrangement about the changing of the locks, but the best I could come up with is page 1634 of the *Yellow Pages* where it recommends a whole series of locksmiths. That is what I urge upon the Liberal Party. I have checked with the QIRC. They have no authority to intervene in this rocky marriage.

If honourable members want to see where the great investment money is they need go no further than the member for Moggill. The member for Moggill has half an eye to great investments—and so he should—and not even he wants to join this motley outfit. What I say to the great investors of Queensland is: follow the member for Moggill, the only person with any integrity by staying out and staying a true Liberal.

Interruption.

### DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it with a great deal of pleasure today that I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr Juraj Chmiel, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Australia. On behalf of the House I extend a very warm welcome to the ambassador and I look forward to a meeting with His Excellency tomorrow.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

#### Police Service, Workplace Bullying

**Mr JOHNSON:** My question is directed to the Hon. Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport. Will the minister explain why a police officer who has been identified by WorkCover on four separate occasions over a four-year period as a workplace bully and has been described as not a fit and proper person to be in charge is still in charge of the Drug Detection Unit of the Brisbane Dog Squad?

**Ms SPENCE:** It is inappropriate for me to talk about the circumstances of individual police officers in this House, and I am sure the member for Gregory would know that. If he wants to have a private briefing, I am happy to do that. I can say that the Police Service has a very extensive antibullying policy. It has trained hundreds of officers statewide under this policy as antibullying counsellors. When these complaints are made they go to the Ethical Standards Command. They are investigated independently. As well, officers can go to the CMC to make sure that their complaints are heard. I understand that there have been a number of officers in the Dog Squad recently who have put cases of bullying. They are being investigated. I understand the investigation has been completed but a decision has not been made by the Ethical Standards Command.

As police minister, I do not get involved in the operational decisions of the Police Service in this fashion. However, I do see it as my responsibility to keep abreast of the complaints against police, and I get briefed on a weekly basis on what Ethical Standards Command is investigating. I certainly would not discuss individual cases in the chamber.

#### Gatton Correctional Precinct

**Mr WENDT:** My question is also to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport. Can the minister update the House on the new \$485 million south-east Queensland correctional precinct in Gatton?

**Ms SPENCE:** I thank the member for Ipswich West for the question. Future generations of Queenslanders will be very grateful that the Bligh government has a vision and is planning for the future prisons in this state. As members may be aware, we have recently purchased 660 hectares of land at Spring Creek outside Gatton. On our current planning predictions we expect that future governments will want to build up to 3,500 beds on this precinct. They may want to build up to five prisons on this land in the future, but even five prisons on this land will take up only 15 per cent of the footprint.

Therefore, we are buying land—which is so scarce in the south-east corner of the state—so that in the years 2020, 2030 and 2040 governments can build more prisons. That shows how this government is looking over the horizon. As I said, future generations of Queenslanders will look back on the Bligh government and be very pleased that we invested in this land and made this plan for the future. During the land purchase and planning processes, we have had good cooperation from the Gatton regional council, and particularly Mayor Steve Jones, who has been very cooperative.

**Mr Rickuss:** What are you going to call it?

**Ms SPENCE:** That reminds me: what is the Liberal National Party's position on the purchase of this land to build prisons in the Gatton precinct? At best, the local member for Lockyer has sat on the fence on this very issue.

**Mr Rickuss:** You were going to give us a name two years ago. You can't even do that.

**Ms SPENCE:** We have not actually built the prison yet and I have to say that naming it is not my highest priority. We are in the process of planning and building the first prison, which will be a 300-bed women's prison. We will build it and then we will think about its name. Let us not rush into that. What is the Liberal National Party's policy on prisons? I looked at its web site and it does not have one.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** All they're worried about is what they call things.

**Ms SPENCE:** Exactly. Following negotiations with the Gatton shire council it was decided that we would provide \$1 million to help relocate the showgrounds. That has not been enough money so today I am pleased to announce that I have approved an additional \$250,000 for the relocation of the showgrounds. That brings the total allocation up to \$1.25 million. That will help the future of the Gatton town.

### Intercountry Adoptions

**Mrs STUCKEY:** My question without notice is to the honourable the Premier. On 4 March 1999, the Adoption of Children Amendment Bill 1998 was passed. At that time, in her capacity as families minister, the Premier stated that the passing of the bill would ensure that Queensland played its part in securing the safety and wellbeing of children adopted from one country to another. Given we now know that only a year later, whilst she was still families minister, her government allowed the intercountry adoption of an alleged stolen Indian child, are these the sorts of outcomes we can expect from her government under Q2?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the Premier, member for Currumbin, that is far too long a preamble. I would like you to note that for further questions.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. As I have indicated in this House before, what is unfolding in this case is nothing short of a human tragedy and I think it is shameful to be playing politics with it. However, I am able to advise two things. Firstly, in Queensland adoptions are not signed off by ministers. Under the act they are authorised by the director-general.

I am also able to advise that the interim audit has found that there were three adoptions from the particular agency. One happened in October 1996 when the member for Beaudesert was the minister. Not for one minute do I blame the member for Beaudesert for any of the decisions that were made in this regard, either. As far as I understand the case of October 1996, like others it was signed off by Indian courts.

The legislation that the member referred to was national legislation that, frankly, Queensland is very pleased to be a part of. It is about regulating our intercountry adoptions. If we can learn from what is happening with the federal investigation into these matters, of course we will take whatever action is necessary. I would expect and hope that we would have bipartisan support in doing so.

Because I did not get the chance to fully explain the context of the quote I gave earlier, I am pleased to have the opportunity to do so now. The member for Southern Downs was asked on radio what targets he had set for himself and at what point he would fall on his sword in relation to his new leadership in February 2003. He said—

Well, you see, there is certainly no falling on the sword. We are looking at an election, probably later this year. So I'll definitely be leading the party into the next state election and I would be hoping that our position is going to improve from there. Setting benchmarks and high bars is something that I don't do because what you do is you end up bumping your head trying to get over it.

As we have been saying all morning, it reminds me of looking in the rear-vision mirror. When my mum was a teenager, she and her friends would get together in the garage and play a song called *Limbo Rock*. They would put on their bobbysocks and play *Limbo Rock*. Using a broomstick, they would set the bar as low as possible and the winner was the one who could get under the lowest bar. We have a new theme song for the Liberal National Party in Queensland. It is *Limbo Rock* and the chorus is—

Limbo lower now  
Limbo lower now  
How low can you go?

The theme for the Liberal National Party is, 'How low can you go?'

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is with pleasure that I welcome a further group of teachers and students from the Northpine Christian College in the electorate of Kallangur, represented in the House by the Hon. Ken Hayward.

### Queensland Skills Plan 2008

**Mr FINN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. Last week the minister travelled across Queensland to launch the Queensland Skills Plan 2008. I ask him to inform the House about the directions of the new Queensland Skills Plan and how it differs from the original plan launched in 2006?

**Mr WELFORD:** I thank the honourable member for his question. One of the biggest future challenges our state faces is the skills shortage. It is certainly the single most significant limiting factor on the future economic potential of our state. It is not only a shortage in the trades; it is a shortage in the professions as well, such as in nursing, engineering and ICT. Recently I was pleased to launch the new 2008 Queensland Skills Plan to tackle this.

On Friday, 29 August at the new Salisbury Workforce Solutions Centre for the building and construction industry, a specialist centre to drive training opportunities in the building and construction industries, I unveiled the new plan. The plan is a blueprint to address our skills shortage across the state. Following the community cabinet last Monday in Mackay, I embarked on a tour of regional Queensland to present the plan to stakeholders in all of our major regional centres.

The plan builds on the considerable progress we have already made in the last two years since the original Queensland Skills Plan, a \$1 billion plan to address the skills shortage that was launched by the Bligh government. It recognises the fundamental need to boost participation across the workforce in order to address the skills shortages that are affecting our state's economy. Representatives from training groups, industry, business and the wider community attended presentations at Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton and Hervey Bay. In particular, I thank the member for Hervey Bay and minister for sustainability for conducting the Hervey Bay presentation.

Discussion around the necessity of partnerships to address skills shortages was a common theme in all of those communities. It is imperative that we work collectively with schools, the VET sector, higher education, and industry and unions to achieve both our short- and long-term objectives under this plan. To continue to grow we must work with industry to attract, engage and retain people. The big part of this plan, as with its previous version, is the involvement of industry and industry taking responsibility for the direction and identification of the training opportunities that are required in regions and sectors where the shortages are greatest.

As part of the plan, in Cairns I also launched the Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures initiative. It is an employment and training strategy specifically for Indigenous Queenslanders and will provide a forward path to engage more Indigenous Queenslanders in training for particular jobs. It is not about training for any employment but training for specific jobs in which Indigenous Queenslanders can thrive.

The Bligh government has a plan for the future. In just 12 months we have established an agenda in education and training that will set our state on the path to future prosperity and ensure that every Queenslanders has the opportunity for economic success.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That concludes question time.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Premier Bligh

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 am): I note that the Premier is again running away from her record. The Premier cannot wait to get up in this place and to run away from her record. Earlier today she said that she wanted to have a debate in this place about her government's propositions for the future and what the LNP is promising for the people of Queensland. But what did we see? At the first available opportunity to engage in a debate and to hear the other side she gets up and walks away. She is not prepared to stand here and listen to a proper critique of her government's performance. That just goes to show the absolute derision and contempt that this government has for the parliamentary process—the fact that this government is totally unprepared and this Premier will not stand in this place and sustain any critical analysis of her past performance. We have seen it in this place this morning in the most arrogant and condescending way. I know why the Premier has walked out of here without listening to the critique. It is because she would be absolutely and justifiably embarrassed not only by her government's past but also by her past.

Let us look at the Premier's past with regard to educational performance in Queensland, because she came in here today and said that what she wanted to do was to set very bold targets for the future, without once mentioning that she was not able to meet any of the targets that she set in the past as education minister in Queensland. Not only that but, in the time she held the ministry for education in Queensland, under Anna Bligh's stewardship most of the benchmarks deteriorated. In crucial areas of literacy and numeracy, she was not able to meet the goals and aspirations that she put forward. In fact, we saw a significant reduction in what people were achieving in the time that she was education minister.

Let us look at school retention rates. They fell despite the minister saying that she would improve them. In 2001 the apparent retention rate of years 10 to 12 was 73.9 per cent in Queensland. Then education minister Bligh said that she would raise the retention rate to 88 per cent by 2010. In 2007-08 it had dropped to 72 per cent. So it had actually dropped to be lower than what it was in 2001. That is the record of the person who now calls herself the Premier of Queensland.

When Premier Bligh became the minister for education in 2001, 73.8 per cent of five-year-olds were attending state preschools. When then Premier Beattie finally worked out that she was a bit of a dud and deserved the boot from that portfolio in 2005, the percentage of five-year-olds attending state preschools had dropped to 67 per cent. So we saw a reduction from 74 per cent to 67 per cent, and the Treasurer of Queensland is proud of that fact! He is saying that it is totally justifiable that there was a seven per cent reduction in five-year-olds attending state preschools between 2001 and 2005. The Treasurer of Queensland says, 'That is not only good; it is great. It should be worshipped. That is the benchmark for the future.'

When Anna Bligh became education minister in 2001, 78 per cent of primary school students were attending state schools. When then Premier Beattie decided to say to Anna Bligh in 2005, 'It's time to go; you're an embarrassment as education minister,' the percentage of primary school children attending state schools had fallen to 74 per cent. So there was a reduction of four per cent.

Let us start adding that up against what the Premier is saying today. Let us look at the parents who voted with their feet. When Premier Bligh became education minister in 2001, 65 per cent of secondary school students were attending state schools. When Premier Beattie could not stand the embarrassment any longer and said that it was time to go and get somebody who could actually do the job—the member for Everton, who they are running away from—and kicked her out as education minister in 2005, the percentage of students attending high schools had fallen to 64 per cent. Again, that is a reduction over the five years of Anna Bligh's stewardship.

Let us look at what happened to special schools in Queensland under Anna Bligh, who is now Premier of Queensland. When she became the education minister in 2001, there were 49 state special schools. After then Premier Beattie could no longer stand the embarrassment and said, 'We'll have to put you somewhere else,' that number had reduced to 47. That is the real indication of the stewardship of Anna Bligh in her time as education minister in Queensland.

We also know what happened when Anna Bligh was the minister for child safety in this state. The thing emolliated around itself, and again she was parachuted out of that portfolio in time for Judy Spence to come in to try to clean up the mess in Queensland—the embarrassment that was uncovered by the CMC in its inquiry, particularly relating to the administration of Anna Bligh and her time as the minister for child safety in Queensland. Again, what have we seen of Anna Bligh in her stewardship as Premier? She is building up an extraordinary debt burden for the people of Queensland.

The point I am making this morning to the parliament is very, very clear: the only way that you can really judge the performance of a government, the only way that you are in a position to try to pre-guess and presuppose what is likely to happen with any of the targets that the government sets, is to look at its past record of performance. The past record of performance of Anna Bligh in her stewardship of various portfolios in Queensland has been one of failure. It has been the typical Labor Party modus operandi in Queensland of 'develop the slogan before you develop the solution'. It is all about spin; it is not about solutions and outcomes. That is what we have seen under this government. It is like the government's congestion-busting slogan. It sounds as though it is something you would get from a chemist.

So you develop the slogan before you develop the solution. Again, we are hearing it with regard to education. I say to the people of Queensland: judge this Premier on what she has actually achieved or failed to achieve in her time as education minister in Queensland. What Premier Bligh is telling us here today and told the people of Queensland yesterday is: 'Don't look at the past; look at the future. Forget about the past.' She said, 'Let's go forward without looking backwards.' Well, Mr Speaker, you cannot run away from your past. The people of Queensland would be very wise not to judge this government in 2020. It would be extremely wise to judge this government on what it is saying that it is going to do now and what it has actually done in the past. That is very, very clear.

The other thing is that Anna Bligh has admitted today that the taxpayers of Queensland are going to be paying for her re-election. The taxpayers of Queensland are going to be paying for this expensive extreme political makeover. The taxpayers of Queensland are going to be paying for the rebadging, the taxpayers of Queensland have paid for the research, and the taxpayers of Queensland are going to be paying for the expensive advertising campaign. So that is what we are seeing.

What was Anna Bligh's excuse yesterday about how her government is falling apart around the edges? She said, 'We might have done some things in the past 12 months or so but people did not really know. You know the thing that is really missing is a narrative.' So when somebody wants a hospital bed in Queensland, under Anna Bligh you get a narrative. So when you are sitting dying on your chair, which is now counted as a bed, the Premier is going to give you a narrative. So when you want a police officer because somebody is breaking into your house or you are feeling some public safety risk, it is okay because Anna Bligh is saying that she will offer you a narrative. So when you need an

ambulance—and probably cannot get one because they are circling around on bypass—Anna Bligh says, ‘It’s okay. Stay at home in your bed or sit on your couch because we are going to count that as an official Queensland Health bed as well and then you can have a narrative.’ So it is all about a narrative. So when you want to get on a train to go home after Riverfire but you cannot get a seat and the train has gone straight past, it is okay because Anna Bligh says, ‘You don’t understand. All you need is a narrative.’

Under this government we have a process of narratives. Slogans which were spin have now become narrative. That is the only thing we have seen from this expensive makeover.

**Mr Fraser:** What do you believe in?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I believe in telling the truth. When you went to Goondiwindi last year and you said that there would not be regional councils, you misled those people. You cannot even tell the truth.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, do not carry on a conversation across the chamber. Direct your comments to the chair.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I will table the five points that I elucidated when I became Leader of the Opposition which are far more extensive.

*Tabled paper:* Document containing five points outlining opposition policy.

**Mr Fraser:** Is that it?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** You have tabled five words. The Clean Energy Council supported our idea of a gross feed-in tariff. Do you know what happened as soon as it did that? The Premier, her cohorts and probably the Treasurer got on the phone and said, ‘Pull that down,’ because we’re acting—

Time expired.

## State Budget

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (11.40 am): The 2008 state budget delivered by the Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, demonstrated this government’s economic management skills, our acknowledgement of critical areas of need, and our vision for a safer, smarter, fairer and healthier Queensland. The Bligh government’s commitment to addressing the health challenges facing our growing and ageing state is demonstrated through the record of \$8.352 billion allocated to Queensland Health. This funding is unprecedented. It represents a 16.8 per cent increase on last year’s budget and will provide for further progress on the Bligh government’s \$10 billion five-year Health Action Plan.

Funding of \$103.7 million has been allocated in this year’s state budget to further progress the Gold Coast University Hospital to be opened in 2012 at a cost of \$1.55 billion. The new 750-bed hospital to be built at Parklands, Southport will be an attractive workplace with Griffith University’s partnership offering research and teaching opportunities. Robina Hospital on the Gold Coast, purchased by the Labor state government in June 2002, has certainly assisted Queensland Health in meeting the demands of a fast-growing region such as the Gold Coast. The sum of \$240 million has been allocated from this year’s budget to ensure further capital works programs for Robina Hospital are progressed. Another important commitment in this year’s health budget is the allocation of \$35.8 million over four years to increase the number of nursing positions, particularly in the areas of neonatal intensive care and specialist care nurseries.

The Queensland Ambulance Service and its staff are held in high regard by the community. In areas such as those within the Broadwater electorate, residents are well serviced by this emergency services department. The QAS of today is far different from the service that was the old QATB. These days, ambulance officers are qualified advanced care paramedics, and the vehicles in the fleet are fitted with the best and latest equipment required to support the most critical needs.

This year the QAS will have a record operating budget of \$455.7 million that includes a commitment to employ an additional 250 ambulance officers, a commitment to purchase 145 new ambulances and a commitment to build new stations or refurbish existing stations. Of the stations earmarked in this year’s budget to be replaced and redeveloped, I am pleased that the Runaway Bay Ambulance Station has been included.

Earlier this year at my request the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Neil Roberts, visited the Runaway Bay Ambulance Station to present long service awards to three ambulance officers based at Runaway Bay. It was during this visit that I took the opportunity to highlight to the minister how small the current building is and how critical it was for the station to be refurbished to make room for the now 22 staff. The minister could see from his visit how much the northern Gold Coast had grown. The current station was built in 1985 to accommodate just 11 staff to service Runaway Bay and surrounding areas. Now there are 20 officers working from the station, which does not provide for a comfortable work environment for our wonderful, hardworking ambulance officers. I am just so pleased that the effort I made to talk to the minister and the Treasurer regarding this issue has paid off, with the Treasurer announcing the station will not be refurbished but a brand-new ambulance station will be built at a cost of \$2 million, with construction beginning early next year.

Another indicator of the Gold Coast's growth and the pressures associated with further urban development is the congestion road users face each day. The Broadwater electorate has seen some roadworks in the past seven years, but this government's commitment to improving safety and efficiency on our road networks does not stop there. In this year's state budget, \$8 million under the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program has been allocated to continue duplication of Hope Island Road from two to four lanes between Santa Barbara Road and Columbus Drive, Hollywell; \$3 million has been allocated to complete duplication works from Oxenford and Santa Barbara Road on Hope Island Road; \$20 million will see the continuation of the Gold Coast Highway duplication between Government Road and Robert Street, Labrador; and \$5.3 million has been allocated for the concept planning of this road between Government Road and Robert Street.

The condition of this road attracted much media attention in the lead-up to the 2004 state election. However, when Peter Lawlor and I officially commissioned the first stage, there was no media in sight. Hopefully, this announcement of funding will be of some interest to them, as I know the residents and commuters who use Frank Street will see that it is good news. Equally as important is a demonstrated commitment to ensuring the increasing problem of hopelessness and the issue of diminishing affordable housing stock is addressed. This budget delivers statewide initiatives to assist people in obtaining suitable accommodation including \$20.2 million in grants for affordable housing on the Gold Coast and Whitsunday.

### Trail Bike Riding

**Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.45 am): I want to advise the House today of a recent Queensland government initiative which will mean that trail bike riders in south-east Queensland will benefit from this government's latest program to encourage safe riding and at the same time provide a greater number of legitimate sites for riders to use. A couple of weeks ago at Griffith University I had the pleasure of assisting the sports minister, Judy Spence, launch a \$250,000 funding program to support the development of additional legal riding sites in the south-east corner.

This program is designed to recognise the growing popularity of trail bike riding in Queensland. As a trail bike rider myself—and I know that the Deputy Speaker is also encouraged in that way—I am pleased to support this initiative. This type of action is necessary because recently released research on outdoor recreation participation has proven that trail bike riding and four-wheel driving are increasing. As such, these are activities that will require careful management in the future to ensure that they are conducted in the most appropriate environments.

As a member of this House I am regularly contacted, as I am sure are most other members, by residents in local areas requesting us to act on trail bikes. Sometimes these queries centre on the fact that trail bikes are creating a nuisance. Equally, sometimes the issue is that people who have spent a lot of money complain that insufficient areas have been put aside for their activity. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would be aware, the activity of trail bike riding is not cheap. For example, a good trail bike can cost over \$10,000. When you add on the need for a rider to also include a great deal of safety equipment, another \$1,000 is easily spent. I suppose this shows that people who ride trail bikes are happy to spend money on their bikes and as such, in my experience, are happy to spend time and money travelling great distances to attend legal parks.

It is for this reason that the Queensland government has invested in planning for the future to ensure competing demands between riders and residents are managed and a balance is reached. The \$250,000 put up by the government aims to reduce the illegal riding of trail bikes in urban bushland and other areas such as national parks and state forests. In this way, we hope to appease those residents who are adversely affected by trail bikes and at the same time make it easier for responsible riders to find a safe place to go.

The program I helped the minister launch was the South East Queensland Trail Bikes and Off-Road Vehicles Program. The program has been specifically designed to provide funding of up to \$25,000 to successful individual applicants to provide toilets, lighting, fencing and camping facilities on their properties. What is even better about this is that it is part of a broader strategy to encourage private landholders to develop their properties for trail bike use. I believe that these guidelines developed by the Queensland government will provide valuable information to interested parties about establishing and managing safe trail bike facilities.

I think it is also relevant to announce that the government is also looking at parcels of state owned land to identify other possible legal sites across Queensland. As you can imagine, the state has large tracts of land, and unfortunately some of these are currently attracting increasing numbers of illegal trail bike activity. I am particularly keen on investigating this proposal more closely. I hope that in the not-too-distant future the government can unlock some of these sites for this type of recreational activity.

Finding places that are safe, legal, enjoyable and far enough away from residents is a priority, as we do not want to put any more pressure on our urban areas and national parks. Therefore, it is great to see that this grant program is supported by an educational strategy to familiarise trail bike riders and particularly their families with safer riding practices.

This government's education strategy will have the theme of 'Ride smart, ride safe, ride in the right place'. It is these few simple phrases which mean a lot to someone like me who is involved in trail bike riding, as is my son. As such, it is heartening to hear that this theme will be distributed through trail bike outlets, motorcycling magazines and club newsletters.

This issue of trail bike riding is one that this government is committed to addressing. I can guarantee members that creating awareness is a key part of the process. I am hopeful that by finding appropriate areas in which to ride and through an education campaign more trail bike riders will act responsibly and adopt safer riding practices and ride in appropriate places.

Finally, I want to alert the House to the fact that as part of the release of this program a number of publications have been designed to assist private citizens in terms of how to go about setting up private trail bike parks. Should anyone want copies of these documents, I encourage them to contact me or go on to the web site.

An example of how successful this has been is that last week I was contacted by four individuals who are looking at the value of creating trail bike parks in their areas. One that members might be interested in is in Kilcoy. This would service the northern Brisbane area and the Sunshine Coast. Another one is in the Lake Manchester area which is in the western suburbs of Brisbane. People in Ipswich and Brisbane would find that one very close. The Lake Manchester park will be available for use by horses and four-wheel drives but, of course, not together.

This program proves once again that the Queensland government has a vision and a plan for the future. This links perfectly with the Premier's Q2 strategy announced yesterday.

### Public Hospitals

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.50 am): The LNP is concerned that there has been a decline in the number of public hospital beds in the last decade. This is now a threat to the immediate health and welfare of sick Queenslanders and their families. The crisis in public hospitals is further compounded by a systemic failure of the Beattie-Bligh government to provide a timely clinical, often emergency, response to very sick and injured Queenslanders. Warnings about dangerous, unsustainable emergency departments and in-patient demands within the state's public hospital system from front-line doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, allied health professionals, paramedics and patients have been ignored.

Two weeks ago the Queensland chair of the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine raised her concerns about patients dying in Queensland public hospital corridors because of bed shortages. This resulted in a disgraceful personal attack by this government. Last week a man died in a Townsville Hospital corridor while he waited for more than eight hours as no beds were available. Like most people, I feel a sense of sadness and outrage for the man and his family for having to suffer the indignity of being left on a trolley to die in a hospital corridor. Again, we hear the Townsville Hospital is on code yellow this week. This is a crisis 10 years in the making.

The American College of Emergency Physicians argues that only when all stakeholders agree that the problem is systemic and hospital-wide can solutions be implemented that will protect everyone's access to emergency care. It is simply not good enough for the minister to wash his hands of the latest Townsville tragedy by referring the matter to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission.

Queensland's public hospitals, like our courts and roads, are very badly congested. The medical profession now recommends suspending elective surgery waiting lists so people do not die in emergency department corridors. This is an unequivocal statement of no confidence in the Beattie-Bligh government's handling of the current public hospital crisis.

The current crisis needs an emergency crisis management response—a response that puts the clinical treatment of sick people first but also reduces the ongoing demand on public hospital beds at least in the short term. We need to investigate ways that the private health sector can take some of the clinical and in-patient load to decongest dangerous bottlenecks in public hospitals, especially in and around accident and emergency departments.

Overcrowding in public hospital emergency departments is a by-product of systemic operational stresses, poor planning and bad management. This results in appropriate clinical responses to urgent medical problems being delayed. Flow-on effects from hospital overcrowding can result in access block for postsurgical in-patient care as well as further delays to elective surgery for people on waiting lists. Access block also means ambulances are used as mobile waiting rooms, resulting in a shortage of paramedics and ambulances responding to other sick and injured Queenslanders. The LNP is also concerned that while an ambulance diversion strategy is evidence of a crisis condition it is not best practice emergency medicine.

There is growing evidence supporting claims that hospital emergency delay strategies heighten the risk of permanent disability and/or death as well as an increased hospital length of stay. Importantly, it is not the emergency department or the paramedics that are causing hospital crowding but rather the hospital's incapacity to deal with and accommodate sick and injured people.

For example, the Beattie-Bligh government has been in power now for more than 10 years and there has been a net loss of 455 hospital beds over that period. We have heard the Beattie-Bligh government blaming the most recent public crisis on just about everything—from the flu to too many people getting sick to population growth to the previous federal government and also to a prior state government. It is shameful that in 10 years the Beattie-Bligh government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on self-promotion but it has not added one extra bed to the state's public hospital bed count.

The new federal health minister, Nicola Roxon, was right last month when she said—

... the capacity of our hospitals has not kept up with this demand. This is reflected in overflowing emergency departments.

The ongoing and increasing demand on hospitals already at capacity or on bypass is symptomatic of a public hospital system in crisis. Like population growth, this did not happen overnight. Public hospitals functioning at capacity or at greater than capacity creates significant additional pressures on the demand for in-patient services, access block, elective surgery cancellations, ambulance ramping and ambulance diversion strategies.

The LNP is concerned that sick and injured Queenslanders are forced to lie on trolleys before a hospital bed becomes available and about the time it takes to be admitted. Further, the LNP is concerned that chronic shortages of available hospital beds in the state's public hospital system will further compromise the health of sick and injured Queenslanders if something is not done to relieve the pressure on public hospitals already operating at capacity or worse.

### Veterans Affairs

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.55 am): As part of my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier with special responsibility for veterans affairs I have in the past few weeks represented the Premier at two very important commemorative events in Brisbane. The first was the commemorative service in Anzac Square on Monday, 18 August to mark Vietnam Veterans Day. Vietnam Veterans Day was originally set aside to commemorate the Battle of Long Tan in South Vietnam in 1966, but it has now been adopted by all veterans of the Vietnam War. For Australia, the Vietnam War lasted 10 years. As such, it was Australia's longest war and saw almost 60,000 Australians deployed, of whom more than 500 died.

We have all heard the horrific stories of the emotional trauma that our Vietnam veterans went through. We have heard about the flack they believe they received when they returned from Vietnam. I think it is great that as a grown-up nation and a grown-up state we use these days to thank our Vietnam veterans for the contribution they made in a war that our political leaders of the time chose to become involved in.

**Mr Johnson:** And they were never recognised for it, either.

**Mr REEVES:** Yes. I think that days like Vietnam Veterans Day are important days for us as community members to put our hand out and support veterans. Many of them are still struggling today.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr REEVES:** I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. Over the last five or six months I have learnt more about the victims of war. The veterans will never forget what they went through and they are trying to recover. Days like this are also important to recognise the memory of their fallen comrades. It was a great pleasure to join the new Governor of Queensland at this ceremony.

I would like to make special mention of the organisers of the Vietnam Veterans Day service: Mr Brett Bullians, the president, and Mr Phil Wallis, the secretary of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

The other occasion on which I represented the Premier was the first annual Battle for Australia Day commemorative service held on Wednesday, 3 September. The date is doubly important this year as it also marks the 69th anniversary of the beginning of World War II. The Battle for Australia Day was proclaimed by the Governor-General on 19 June this year, delivering on a Labor election promise to declare a national day for the commemoration of the many battles, great and small, which were fought during 1942-43 by both the members of the armed forces and the civilian population in the defence of Australia.

The first Wednesday in September was chosen by the veteran community as it represents the first land defeat of the Japanese forces in World War II at the Battle of Milne Bay in 1942. We have celebrated this day on a number of occasions, but it will now be celebrated in the first week of September every year. It is important to realise that in 1942 Australia only had a population of just over seven million, yet during the war nearly one million men and women served in the armed forces and millions of civilians were mobilised for essential war work. The Battle for Australia was not some distant event. Darwin was bombed, sea mines were laid off the coast and many ships, including the hospital ship *Centaur* that the member for Cleveland often speaks about in this House, were sunk by enemy submarines. Japanese aircraft flew over several Queensland towns and Japanese midget submarines were active in Sydney Harbour.

The Battle for Australia Commemorative Committee can be very proud of the service held in Brisbane last Wednesday, and Mr Deputy Speaker English would be interested to know that Sheldon College musicians played at that service, and a great job they did. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate committee president and master of ceremonies, Pat O'Keeffe, Mr John O'Neill and Mr Noel Beutel. Since taking on the veteran affairs role in April I have had the opportunity to attend conferences, commemorative services, meetings and seminars. In doing so, I have met a large number of veterans from all across the state. The one thing they have in common is that they have continued the service they performed during wartime—that is, to serve the community today. I congratulate them on that and look forward to meeting a number of them in the future.

### Child Protection

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—Lib) (12.00 pm): This parliamentary sitting is being held during National Child Protection Week, a most appropriate time to bring to the attention of this House and indeed the people of Queensland the urgent need to honour our children. Every single one of us must commit to undertake this responsibility seriously if we are to protect our great country's children from becoming victims of abuse and neglect. I urge all Australians to get behind NAPCAN's campaign called Children See, Children Do: Make Your Influence Positive. The ad campaign accompanying this NAPCAN initiative is hard hitting and a wake-up call similar to the Grim Reaper campaign to raise AIDS awareness some 20 years ago. In his enlightening book *Idolising Children*, Daniel Donahoo asks us to respect children and allow them to experience childhood fully. This often simply requires a degree of patience and reinforcement of values combined with appropriate behaviours.

We hear much about providing children with suitable role models, and none could be more important than their primary caregivers—in most cases, parents. Daniel's book says that it is time for us to find new ways of parenting and a new kind of childhood—that is, we need to honour childhood and respect children. This must come from the heart, he says, because it is at that level that we are equal with children and young people. They cannot compete with our level of education or years of lived experience, but they can love like we can. Mr Donahoo argues—and I am inclined to agree—that what is required is to realign our current culture and to instill a philosophy where the inheritance of the future is placed firmly in the reverence of our children.

Attachment theory is the term used to describe how children's early relationships affect their development and their capacity to form later relationships. Attachments are mutually reinforcing patterns of behaviour between a primary caregiver and a child, enabling the child to explore the world around them and learn new skills. A child who feels safe and protected is free from the anxiety and fear that accompanies a sense of abandonment or being alone. The effects of detachment have a profound impact on a child's healthy early years of development and emotional stability. Children denied this contact suffer from a range of disorders, confusion and uncertainty from inconsistent parenting. A family needs to provide not only the basics of food and shelter for a child but also needs to be a family that instills values, provides a loving environment and offers continuous support as offspring grow. This government has underplayed its role here with inadequate service provision.

In the Australian Childhood Foundation's *Out of sight—out of mind* 2006 report on community attitudes about child abuse and child protection in Australia, it was identified that the problem of child abuse remains literally out of sight and mind to many in the community. Rated a disgraceful 13th on a list of community issues in a survey, child abuse is rated of less concern than the price of petrol and public transport. Some elements of society find it difficult to look, to listen and to believe the extent to which our precious children are being violated. To the greater public it is an incomprehensible issue, yet many feel powerless to address it. History recorded the horror stories of children working as chimney sweeps, down mine shafts and in the workhouses of London in bygone eras. Here we are in 2008 in prosperous Australia where we are blessed with open spaces, blue skies and sunshine, where food is plentiful and our children go to school and have abundant opportunities. We are indeed the land of plenty, so what is going wrong? Why are we losing our way and not honouring our children? John Smith in his 1988 book *Advance Australia Where, A Lack of Meaning in a Land of Plenty* warned us back then as a society that we were headed down this path.

Why has a culture of abuse seeped into our communities, a culture which we must do our all to repel? Children need nurturing and should be allowed to grow and experience life free from violence and abuse, be it verbal or physical. Some cultures such as European, Scandinavian and Asian cultures hold children in high regard, viewing them as the leaders of the future. Parents in these cultures, as do some in ours, sacrifice many luxuries and necessities to provide their children with decent educations so that their children may lead educated and balanced lives. I agree wholeheartedly with Gail Slocombe from PeakCare that an endless blame game will not protect our kids, but neither will a Labor government that refuses to address the root causes of child abuse.

Whilst it would be incorrect and unfair to make claims that all children suffer under this Labor government—and I make it clear that I am not suggesting that—neglect and maltreatment of children has become rampant in our community, and this government could have done much more. The 2007-08 Child Safety statistics are disturbing. Countless professionals have written papers highlighting the

critical importance of early intervention programs and support services. Last week speaking at a conference for grandparents who care for their grandchildren, I listened to social workers and psychologists stress the need for governments to change the way they operate. They must invest heavily in the first five years, but still there is virtually no money for early intervention. They must also reach out to parents afraid to ask for help. Many young people grow up without the basic skills to care for themselves because their parents simply do not have them either. Child protection is everyone's responsibility. Both the community and the government have an obligation to reduce the incidence of child abuse in our state.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Before calling the honourable member for Kurwongbah, I acknowledge in the public gallery students and staff from the Forest Lake State School in the electorate of Algester, which is represented in the chamber by Karen Struthers.

### **Pine Rivers Court House**

**Mrs LD LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.06 pm): This Saturday, 13 September, is a calendar red-letter day. It is the day Premier Anna Bligh marks the first anniversary of her position as Premier of Queensland. It is also the day that the new state-of-the-art Pine Rivers Court House is officially opened. Therefore, it is fitting that it will be the Premier who will officially open this magnificent building and fine addition to Queensland's justice infrastructure. This weekend is also significant but in a different and somewhat sadder way, for it marks the end of the five-year term of the Chief Magistrate, Judge Marshall Irwin. Judge Marshall Irwin will be attending the official opening of the Pine Rivers Court House as well. His term ends and he will be taking up his position as a District Court judge. Judge Irwin's leadership of the state's 114 magistrates courts and magistracy, by all accounts, has been outstanding. I take this opportunity to put on record my appreciation for the tremendous job he has done and if time permits this morning to outline some of his achievements and aspirations for the Queensland Magistrates Court jurisdiction.

Before I do that, I want to tell members of the House and the public generally why this Saturday's opening of the courthouse, coupled with a community open day—that is, open house at the courthouse—is an exciting event for the Pine Rivers community. It is also an exciting event for me and the local legal fraternity. I can well recall my first day as duty lawyer at the Petrie Court House early in 1987. It was a particularly nerve-racking day. After all of those years of training, now was the telling time whether I could put into practice all that was learnt. And what about those poor souls who were about to get someone as green as me fighting for their liberty? Luckily there were no great matters of life and liberty on the list that morning. Mostly the matters were for mention only and adjourned to a later date. But what struck me as well as relief that I survived my first day was the court environment itself—lino floors, no air conditioning, an old-fashioned bar heater above the window, a room bereft of atmosphere. There was no sense that this was an institution of justice with all its solemnness and no sense that this was a serious place that deserved respect and dignity.

After years of taking instructions under the overhanging tree out the front or down in the holding cells, I vowed that our local court should be more than a brick box with a bench, table and some brown chairs. It has taken a little while, but then Attorney-General Rod Welford began the planning process in 2003 and the new courthouse has now been constructed. The courthouse and attached police watch-house commenced construction in January 2007 and has been completed at a cost of \$18.3 million.

It is a far cry from the current courthouse and an even further cry from the original North Pine Court House, which commenced in January 1881. An unflattering description of this original building appeared in the *Queenslander* in June 1881. It stated—

The species of barn which the people of North Pine are pleased to call their courthouse is pretty light and particularly airy and no doubt not unsuited for law purposes. Viewed internally its appearance is not imposing and from the road has a look of an old washed-up shed which the river at one time has heaved from its rather happy breast.

There is absolutely no risk that any part of that description could be applied to the 2008 version of the Pine Rivers Magistrates Court. The new building is of a distinctive and commanding design and houses the latest technology, such as CCTV facilities, to enable child witnesses and sexual assault victims to give evidence away from the courtroom. It has two courtrooms—with an ability to build a third should the need arise—chambers, interview rooms, registry and victim support facilities. Incorporated into the design is local distinctive art.

All in all, this is a public building that everyone can be very proud of. That is why the Attorney-General, Kerry Shine, has initiated a community open day, urging all local residents to come and have a look at how justice operates in the 21st century. Chief Magistrate Judge Irwin will preside over mock trials conducted by QUT law students. There will be displays and the local Crime Stoppers committee will be fundraising via a sausage sizzle. I know there is much local interest in court—to have a look, not attend it, of course—so I urge all to come and have a look and join in the community open day this Saturday. I know people will agree with me that we finally have a courthouse fitting of the role that the Magistrates Court plays in our society and that is, borrowing from the words of the Chief Justice, the Hon. Paul de Jersey, the reality is that the Magistrates Court is a massively important court and is also the court where most people of Queensland from day to day see the judiciary at work.

## Police Service, Workplace Bullying

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (12.11 pm): Today I rise to speak in the House about a matter that has thoroughly shocked and disgusted me. On 7 August 2008, I received a letter from the psychiatrist responsible for interviewing a number of officers from the drug detection unit of the Brisbane Dog Squad, Dr Warwick Middleton, detailing the conditions officers in that squad have been subjected to. They include unorthodox work practices, such as harassment, discrimination, false accusations, grossly inconsistent applications of operating policies, poor communication, the withholding of information, workplace favouritism, public derogatory comments, lying by senior officers, public threats, intimidation, very poor self-control and extremely profane language by senior officers as well as examples of extremely poor role modelling by senior officers, including theft and chronic noncompliance with widely disseminated policies.

These allegations are incredibly serious in any workplace. However, they are more serious—much more serious—in an organisation such as the Queensland Police Service. I have spoken personally to members of the drug detection unit of the Brisbane Dog Squad. They are dedicated, upstanding, competent and experienced officers who just want to do the job. In my view, they would be a huge loss to this great service if they departed.

The behaviour that they have disclosed, which is also outlined in their successful WorkCover claims, disgusts me and would offend not only every Queensland police officer but also every person throughout this great state. These allegations include that officer Sergeant Nicole Bignel, who had a successful WorkCover claim laid against her in 2004 for bullying officers, was allowed to keep working in the same role until now due to protection from senior officers, including Senior Sergeant Terry Cantwell, and, more concerning, Inspector Steven Underwood who has now, I believe, departed.

Statements received during the 2004 WorkCover investigation described Sergeant Bignel as not the right and proper person to be in charge and that management of the squad was loath to support anyone who voices their displeasure at such a culture. After these reports, this officer remained in charge of the Brisbane Dog Squad drug detection unit. In her position she intimidated and harassed a number of officers and on several occasions threatened to take their dogs away from them, which would see them lose their bond with the dogs and their handler's allowance.

These officers were subject to verbal assaults so vicious that another officer was forced to intervene. These verbal assaults were witnessed by senior officers, including Senior Sergeant Cantwell. She also publicly ridiculed a number of other officers in front of others and on one occasion publicly threatened officers that she would have Senior Sergeant Cantwell transfer them out of the Dog Squad.

Officers were also threatened that they would be transferred to the Railway Squad and that they would not be given shift changes. On 16 November 2007, the officers attended a meeting at the request of Sergeant Bignel, where Senior Sergeant Cantwell demanded that officers were not to tell anyone what had transpired in the office, threatening that they would be transferred out of the squad. There were also allegations that Sergeant Bignel attempted to thwart the re-entry into the workforce of someone who had previously complained about her. Allegations have also been made that a senior officer received oral sex in the workplace.

These allegations and many more are documented in a number of successful recent WorkCover claims dating back to May this year. These allegations add to other serious allegations that were found to be proved by WorkCover in 2004 and still all the persons concerned retain their positions.

These serious allegations must have come to the attention of the commissioner, the minister and the Premier on a number of occasions. The allegations were mentioned in the *Sunday Mail*. The Premier and the minister for police were sent Dr Middleton's letter. The commissioner and the minister for police must have known Sergeant Bignel had a successful bullying claim laid against her in 2004 and three more in 2008, yet they did nothing and she remains in that position today even after some of these allegations were aired in the *Sunday Mail*. It becomes a question as to why this situation has been let go for so long and why these senior officers still hold these positions. That is why I am calling for a full independent investigation by the CMC into the conduct of this matter and for these individuals to be stood down until the internal investigation is complete.

The Dog Squad has a long history of service to the community. We cannot afford to lose good, exemplary officers to this type of behaviour and tarnish the Dog Squad's respected name because of evil leadership. I will not leave this issue lie. I call on the minister and the commissioner to immediately have these decent, upstanding officers returned to the workplace under new leadership immediately. This parliament needs to send a clear message that workplace bullies will not be tolerated in any workplace and, most of all, will not be tolerated in the prestigious service called the Queensland Police Service.

### Rural Women's Symposium

**Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (12.16 pm): Recently, it was my great pleasure to attend the Rural Women's Symposium in Roma on 4 September, which was attended by people from right across remote, rural and regional Queensland—from Weipa to Normanton, from the Burdekin to Quilpie and seemingly all points in between. More than 80 women nominated to attend this symposium. Many had participated in lead-up forums prior to the September forum. Our government funded 40 of the participants to attend. Many women who were unable to attend the forum took the opportunity to also participate via an e-forum.

The dinner on the evening prior was attend by the Premier. The theme of the conference was set with thought-provoking and challenging thinking. Believe me, everyone stepped up to the plate over the course of the next day. A key message for me that evening to set the scene was that the present is our future.

I personally have been involved in many opportunities over the years to gather with bush people. However, this symposium, with its lead-up forums, found women from every walk of life embracing the issues in an open, honest and forthright way. It was interesting that on the morning of the symposium local people had formed a picket line, voicing their concerns about any change in the emergency obstetric and gynaecology service. The Premier stopped at the gate and spoke with all of the people concerned. She used her time, when opening the day's format, which was an open-space workshop, to challenge us all to have the difficult discussions with respect to this matter and other challenges facing us in the bush. I live in a city. I have lived in small and medium-sized communities in the north-west. One striking realisation for me was that the issues are oh so similar, irrespective of where we live.

Some of the topics of the symposium included the provision of health services such as emergency obstetric and gynaecology services; mental health and the strong support for establishing new models to deliver health services; and also strong support for the use of telemedicine. There was strong support for practical rural models for service delivery, similar to the midwifery model introduced by our government.

One of the great outcomes of holding this type of gathering is the wealth of sharing of information in this area and on reading a number of the issues and possible solutions, I look forward to seeing how we can continue to work with communities through Toward Q2. The targets are not things the government can achieve on its own, and the community needs to be on board. After this symposium, the bush was ready to sign up. One of the recommendations from the policy affecting Indigenous Australians was clearly focused on education—for a strong campaign around education and the arts to give a creative approach to messages about Indigenous issues. In my area, the Normanton Stingers football club has an award-winning advertising campaign delivering such a message in respect of domestic violence.

Many issues are of interest to women and, indeed, men in rural and remote Queensland such as mining impacts on livability, public housing, incentives for the bush, development of government policies, fitness and wellbeing, better roads and transport, improving education in small communities, strengthening the provision of disability services and access to justice in key areas of family law, family violence—specifically domestic violence—sustainability of family farms, the retention of young people in rural areas and the support and resourcing of volunteers.

The women of the bush are asking for a better understanding of the rural environment by both state and federal governments. As a proud and staunch supporter of the bush and as the proud member for Mount Isa, I can say that under the continued long leadership of our Premier, Anna Bligh, Minister for Child Safety, Margaret Keech, and the Minister for Main Roads and Local Government, Warren Pitt, the bush is in good hands. Under Anna Bligh, our government is honest in saying that we do not have all the answers but we are committed to working with our communities to tackle the challenges. I hope the women who attended the 2008 Women's Symposium went away knowing that not only did they have a voice but indeed a voice of influence.

### Student Discipline

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (12.21 pm): For nearly two decades the ALP has been controlling how parents and teachers discipline our children both in the home and at school. The government has intervened in the way parents can discipline their children—not the state's children, or do they now belong to the state? At school principals and teachers are severely prescribed in the way they, too, are able to discipline students while in their care. Most children are well behaved, but there is always a minority who cause problems. It is this small percentage of children who need to know their boundaries, and when they cross them they should be dealt with swiftly and firmly to nip the problem in the bud. The long, drawn-out processes now in place simply allow problems to drag on for too long.

Under this government bullying has become a much more frequent headline in our newspapers and other media. It is making life a misery for too many of our students who are at school because they want to learn. Our high school students have so many other things going on in their lives that they do not need these additional stresses, especially when they are trying to build educational foundations for their futures. I am aware of a number of schools where bullying continued for years and years to the extent that many students left those schools to attend other schools. Principal after principal tried everything they were allowed to try under government policy to rectify the problem, but the bullies have long since learnt that they can get away with it and are simply laughing at authority. In many cases the bullying, both physical and verbal, not only occurs in the school grounds but also outside. These cases are often reported to the police, but parents and students then find that the hands of police are tied. It appears they are unable to aid our youth unless and until a life-threatening act has occurred.

I am advised that a recent bullying incident to come to my notice has been occurring since the start of the 2008 school year and involves 13-year-olds in grade 8 in their first year of high school. As I have said previously, 13-year-olds have so much going on in their lives anyway: becoming teenagers, growing up and just entering high school. They do not need to put up with physical and verbal threats or even attacks against their safety and wellbeing either inside the school grounds or outside. This, I am advised, has been occurring all year, yet it has only been in the last few weeks after some nine months that two of the offenders have been suspended for any significant period. The school principal, whom I might say generally runs a very tight ship, and her staff have followed government policies and done everything possible by way of mediation, meetings with students and their parents, agreements, handshakes and so on. But on each occasion not long after they have walked away from the table something has happened and they have gone back to square one again.

The past nine months have taken their toll on one of the 13-year-olds. This student who, I am advised, excelled in primary school no longer wanted to go to school and was depressed. Her grades had dropped so significantly that last week her mother felt compelled to transfer her child to another school. This will now cost her mother, a single mum, a lot more financially. She already works two jobs to maintain her family. While the school did all that it was able to do under current ALP policy, it took too long to sort out the situation.

While the threats and bullying are coming from inside the school grounds, they are also coming from outside the school grounds with threats of gang bashings and so on. When the parents and students went to police for protection they were told to go back to the school for help. Indigenous liaison officers were asked to intervene, but neither the school liaison officer nor the police liaison officer was able to resolve the matter.

Incidents such as these occur all too frequently and it is high time the Bligh government takes another look at where its experiment with discipline is going. Suspending students or sending them to another room is not the answer because while they are absent from class they are missing out on vital education. It is often these troubled students who are also frequently truant. In some ways suspension is simply allowing them to play truant with permission.

The current code of school behaviour sounds all very nice and warm and fuzzy on paper. It talks about the rights of all students to learn, the rights of teachers to teach and the rights of all to be safe. However, in reality and in practice it is too slow to work if it works at all. It is those students who are trying to learn who are paying the price, who are enduring school environments that are less than safe. It is past time for real discipline to return to our schools.

### ***Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland***

**Ms DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (12.26 pm): The Bligh Labor government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* is a broad based strategic plan which will guide many of the conversations we need to have with the people of this state to ensure that Queensland continues to be the best place in the world to live. We have already achieved much, but we will not stand still. In just 12 months the Bligh government has made homeownership more affordable for first homebuyers by abolishing stamp duty and mortgage duty on homes valued at \$500,000 or less. We also have the toughest antismoking laws in the nation; we have committed to a new \$60 million ClimateSmart home service to install energy saving devices in Queensland homes; we have launched a new skills plan to modernise TAFE facilities across the state and launched an \$18 million strategy to participate in prosperity to help disadvantaged Queenslanders join the workforce.

Q2 gives us the opportunity to discuss how this state will venture forth and how the government will support Queenslanders to lead the way by setting goals for our future prosperity. The Bligh government's Housing Affordability Strategy provides an innovative approach to reducing the cost of housing by cutting the red tape to get property to market quickly. The Urban Land Development

Authority has now released an interim land use plan for land at Fitzgibbon in my electorate. I believe that the community of Fitzgibbon can set a benchmark for Queensland communities of 2020. I believe the Q2 vision of a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair state can be embodied at Fitzgibbon.

I took the opportunity to write to all residents in Fitzgibbon earlier in the year seeking their feedback on the future use of this land. I received some great ideas to improve infrastructure in the area whilst retaining its special relaxed suburban and bushland style. Housing plans and styles are currently being designed. Community input will be sought on all aspects of the project starting with a community information day on Saturday, 11 October at the Carseldine QUT site. I will be encouraging all local residents in and around Fitzgibbon to attend, ask questions and give suggestions.

I would like to dispel some myths about the proposed development area. There will be no high-density public housing. This benefits neither the tenants nor the neighbourhood. The Department of Housing may choose to purchase homes within the development area as they do in all suburbs of Brisbane, and I would welcome some extra social housing stock.

Q2 describes a green Queensland where our lifestyle and environment are protected. Q2 describes a healthy Queensland where Queenslanders are Australia's healthiest people and Q2 describes a fair Queensland of safe and caring communities. There is a beautiful paperbark wetland habitat within the Fitzgibbon development area which must be protected for future generations. Even within the sites earmarked for housing, the impact on the environment will be at the fore of the design plans. Houses must be energy and water efficient. Streetscapes must accommodate as many existing trees as possible. Public transport must be accessible. Well designed bike paths, footpaths, parks, public spaces and community facilities can encourage healthy lifestyles and community participation in a safe environment. I will be calling for a practical social plan to accompany commercial and environmental evaluations. Fitzgibbon can be the best example of a green, healthy and fair community.

While I encourage a focus on ways to reduce reliance on cars, I acknowledge that road transport is still needed and must be safe. I am concerned about the safety of the open level crossing at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge and I am pleased to see that the Brisbane City Council has allocated funds to address this. I am very keen to collaborate with the council to see the flyover become a reality in the near future. I am also keen to see community feedback on council's design plan for a Telegraph Road flyover once the plans are released and I encourage council to liaise with the Urban Land Development Authority so that a master planned road and rail system can be designed to best support the community around Fitzgibbon and Bracken Ridge.

Finally, I thank the residents of Fitzgibbon and acknowledge the work of the Fitzgibbon residents action group for the thorough and professional way in which they have engaged the residents in their suburb and presented me with their issues. I thank Premier Anna Bligh and Deputy Premier Paul Lucas for listening to the needs of north side residents and I pledge to continue to represent the needs and ideas of my constituents.

## **JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **First Reading**

**Hon. KG SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (12.32 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, Associations Incorporation Act 1981, Bail Act 1980, Childrens Court Act 1992, Children Services Tribunal Act 2000, Civil Liability Act 2003, Classification of Films Act 1991, Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, Criminal Code, Dispute Resolution Centres Act 1990, District Court of Queensland Act 1967, Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989, Evidence Act 1977, Financial Transaction Reports Act 1992, Industrial Relations Act 1999, Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act 1957, Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007, Justices Act 1886, Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991, Juvenile Justice Act 1992, Land Court Act 2000, Magistrates Act 1991, Oaths Act 1867, Ombudsman Act 2001, Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, Professional Standards Act 2004, Public Trustee Act 1978, Recording of Evidence Act 1962, Small Claims Tribunals Act 1973, Solicitor-General Act 1985, Supreme Court Act 1995 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

## Second Reading

**Hon. KG SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (12.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The objective of the bill is to provide for a number of minor or technical amendments to a range of statutes within my portfolio as well as two statutes within the portfolio of the Honourable Minister for Communities and one statute within the portfolio of the Honourable Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations. I seek leave to incorporate the balance of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I am responsible for the administration of approximately 190 statutes. For the most part, the amendments contained in this bill are of a technical, discrete or minor nature and do not modify the philosophy or underlying policy intent of the statute. The amendments of this nature generally fall into three broad categories:

- Those which will deliver operational efficiencies to different areas of the justice system including the courts, the Queensland Police Service, the Ombudsman, the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Children Services Tribunal;
- Those which will clarify the existing law, in some cases to overcome the unintended consequences of court decisions;
- And those which will remove obsolete or redundant provisions in statutes.

So that I can deliver a timely response to emerging issues, it has also been necessary to include a number of more substantial reforms in the bill. Before elaborating on these amendments, I would like to briefly mention a number of the minor and technical amendments.

In relation to the first category of amendments which will deliver operational efficiencies to different areas of the justice system, I would like to mention the amendments to the Classification of Films Act 1991. This amendment will bring Queensland into line with other states and territories by allowing the director of the Commonwealth Classification Board, in addition to the Queensland Films Classification Officer, to approve the screening of an unclassified film in Queensland. To ensure that Queensland can, if required, offer adequate consumer protection in relation to high-impact unclassified films which have been approved for screening in Queensland by the director of the Commonwealth Classification Board, the amendments will allow the Queensland Classifications Officer to impose conditions (such as age or advertising restrictions) on such screenings.

The amendment to the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 will widen the pool of persons eligible to be appointed as a part-time Commissioner of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The bill also provides for two amendments to the Ombudsman Act 2001. Under the first amendment, the Ombudsman will be permitted to use information obtained in a preliminary inquiry or an investigation, which has been de-identified, to assist other agencies to improve their administrative practices and procedures. Under the second amendment, the Ombudsman will be permitted to share information with an agency if the disclosure is necessary to protect the health, safety or security of a person or property.

In relation to delivering operational efficiencies to the Courts, the bill includes provisions which will: allow a Supreme Court, Federal Court or District Court Judge from another State or Territory to be appointed as an acting judge of the District Court; streamline long leave approvals for persons under the Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act 1957 (including members of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission) and for other court staff/officers; allow acting magistrates to be engaged on a needs basis within the period of their appointments; allow the proper officer of the court to sign a minute of a decision; provide protection and immunity to members of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal; and limit the term of appointment of a magistrate to the Childrens Court to five years.

In relation to the second category of amendments, which will clarify existing law, I would like to mention: the amendment to the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991 which will make the qualification and disqualification provisions easier to locate; the amendment to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 which will clarify that the requirement in section 22(b) applies only if there is a named person in the domestic violence order; the amendment to the Public Trustee Act 1979 which will clarify that an application for settlement or compromise of an action by or on behalf of a person with a disability can be by originating application; and the other various amendments to the Justices Act 1886.

Turning to the more substantial amendments in this bill, the amendments to the Financial Transaction Reports Act 1992 will ensure that Queensland's law enforcement agencies can request further information and documents about financial transactions reported to AUSTRAC under the Commonwealth's Anti-Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006.

The amendments to the Professional Standards Act 2004 represent a further step towards a more seamless national system of professional standards legislation. The amendments will allow recognition in Queensland of a scheme approved by a Professional Standards Council in another state or territory to limit the occupational liability of members. Through supporting the mutual recognition of schemes, this Government is helping to reduce the duplication and inefficiency which currently exists where a professional wishes to have capped liability outside their home jurisdiction.

The bill also includes amendments to the Civil Liability Act 2003 in relation to the protection from liability provided to food donors. These amendments will ensure that intermediary organisations that collect food from donors and re-distribute it to charitable organisations will be protected under the act. It is hoped that this amendment will lead to an increase in the amount of food available to charitable organisations, refuges and other community organisations for distribution to disadvantaged people in the community.

Finally, the amendments to the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 provide an example of where legislative reform is required in order to keep pace with changes in technology. These amendments, which address concerns raised by members of the legal profession, will specifically authorise continuous court recording but prohibit access to records and transcripts of recordings taken while the court is not in session.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Copeland, adjourned.

## ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 26 August (see p. 2248), on motion of Ms Bligh—

That the bill be now read a second time.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.33 pm): In rising to speak to the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008, at the outset I say that the LNP will be supporting this bill despite the fact that it is a major dog's breakfast. We will be seeking to move some amendments during the course of the debate on the clauses. It is very interesting that only a little while ago my office had a briefing on further amendments to the bill that are being proposed by the government. Earlier on I indicated that I thought that this was just a dog's breakfast, that it was rushed and that the motivation for the government doing this is a matter of great conjecture. Apparently, only now has there been any serious consultation with the Electoral Commission of Queensland, which pointed out a number of practical problems with the bill.

The original bill contained some 30 clauses and now the government will move amendments to those clauses. That gives a clear indication that there was no proper consultation on the bill and it had not been properly worked through before its introduction into the parliament. The government should have done its homework a little better. The government claims that the main objective of the bill is to increase transparency with respect to political donations. To make sure of this in a more holistic way, the LNP will put forward a number of amendments that I will address in more detail shortly. The explanatory notes state—

In Queensland, the law governing elections is contained in the *Electoral Act 1992* (the Act). The law pertaining to electoral funding and financial disclosure is contained in the Schedule to the Act based on Part XX of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

However, the notes then point out that—

The schedule is not a mere adoption or application of the Commonwealth Electoral Act and changes to the text of the Commonwealth Electoral Act are noted in italics in the Schedule.

On 15 May 2008, the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donation and Other Measures) Bill 2008 ... was introduced into the Senate. The purpose of the Commonwealth bill is to amend the funding and disclosure provisions contained in the Commonwealth Electoral Act in order to implement certain commitments made in the lead up to the 2007 Federal Election.

The federal amendments were anticipated to commence on 1 July 2008. However, on 18 June 2008 the Senate referred the Commonwealth bill to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters—

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:**—for inquiry and report by 30 June 2009 in conjunction with the inquiry into the 2007 election. Now that there is a different Senate, maybe the member who inanely interjected could go back to the Senate and see if it will deal with it differently and more expeditiously. The intent was for Queensland to reflect a nationally consistent approach—

**Mr Lawlor:** I did not say a word. I hope you were not referring to me. You know my interjections are never inane.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** When we have the quality of interjections that sometimes come from the honourable member for Southport, I wonder why his mates have put him so far back that he is almost in the toilet. I think he should come forward as he usually adds some quality to the interjections in the House. The notes continue—

The original intent was for Queensland to reflect a nationally consistent approach in relation to the receipt of political donations.

I do note that two of the major amendments being proposed here today—that is, the lowering of the threshold to \$1,000 and \$100,000 respectively—were not part of the federal bill. It is very interesting that the government talks about consistency and the great symbiosis that pervades its relationship with Kevin '07, but when it suits it, it is prepared to jettison Kevin '07 and what he is looking at.

That leads us to ask why we have these particular amendments before the parliament. Certainly there should not be any argument about those that seek to ensure consistency with Commonwealth legislation. However, when we are looking at the reduction of thresholds to \$1,000 and \$100,000 and the additional reporting provisions, it makes one wonder. Methinks this government is running very, very scared. It is probably scared of the bogeymen that it thinks will sneak up and get it in the middle of the night if people donate to the other side of the parliament—shock, horror! It goes to show what happens when a government sits in power for so long that it starts to treat government as its own personal chattel, not to be questioned in any way and if anyone should seek to support the other side of politics it needs a process of retribution and disclosure to flush out all sorts of things.

As far as members opposite are concerned, all of the resources of government should sit with the Labor Party. The government wants all the resources to sit with the Labor Party when it comes to their developer mates. They have found a good way of consolidating planning in Queensland under one minister, so that all their mates with development applications can pay money to sit with the minister who will adjudicate that particular matter.

**Mr Dickson:** A few greenfield sites.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Yes, a few greenfield sites. And one famous dinner a little while ago and lo and behold! Thousands of dollars flow into the coffers. This is an art form perfected by the New South Wales right, which controls the Labor Party in New South Wales even though it cannot find anyone good enough to be Premier.

**Mr Dickson:** Morris lemma.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Morris lemma. They cannot find anyone in New South Wales from the Right who is good enough to be Premier, so they have had to put the Lefties in control and that must really irk them. But they mastered the art down there of actually bringing the developers in and siphoning \$150,000 a week out of them. This government has found different ways of dealing with these sorts of issues.

It is unreal. We have a government that has the advantage that comes from being in government and the fact that it is able to offer certain things to developers and people who want to curry favour with the government. Then it is going to use the taxpayers' purse in Queensland as well to be able to fund its rebadging, Q2 and all of those sorts of things. We know what happens when it comes to the issue of intimidation. Earlier on today I spoke in this place about one of the credible bodies in Queensland—the Clean Coal Council. It put out a press release in support of the LNP in Queensland on 5 June saying that our gross feed-in tariff policy was very good and worthy of support. What actually happened? And this proves the way this government seeks to intimidate those people who support our side of politics. The Clean Coal Council puts out a press release of support and it is on its web site. Lo and behold, the phone calls are made from the government and it just disappears because government entities are on the Clean Coal Council. Now we have an extension of that.

So if anyone is actually thinking of providing third-party endorsement to the opposition or practical endorsement in Queensland by way of their commitment to our cause by donating, the government wants to flush them out and flush them out early. If it wants to do that, that is fine by us. We do not have any great issue. But it just goes to show the lengths and the depths that this government will go to to ensure that in comparison to itself, where it has a numerical and resources advantage, it will do everything it possibly can to ensure that the opposition is not in a position to be able to challenge the government competently at the next state election. Not only is it a battle of ideas; it is also its capacity to have those resources on hand to be able to do that.

So if you want to introduce these provisions, that is fine. We will support them, but we are putting forward some amendments as well, and we will see that the government's commitment to transparency, openness and honesty only goes as far as we are concerned but not as far as itself. Some of the amendments being proposed here today are a break from the federal bill and would mean that Queensland's donation laws are inconsistent with federal laws. The LNP will support the amendments.

The LNP supports reducing the electoral donation disclosure threshold from the current \$1,500 to \$1,000. The LNP supports the increased public scrutiny of donations by reducing disclosure time frames for donations from 12 months to six months. The LNP sees no reason not to support the move to reduce donor lodgement time frames for a return from 20 weeks to eight weeks and registered political parties and associated entities lodgement time frames for returns from 16 weeks to eight weeks. We also support tying election funding to reported and verified electoral expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or a party, with evidence of that expenditure for an election—that is, election funding will only be paid for expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or a party in an election and for which evidence is provided to the Electoral Commission.

The LNP supports the move to ban donations from overseas or non-Australian companies, ensuring that donations come from a jurisdiction where Queensland laws will apply and can be enforced. The LNP will support the move to require that donations of \$100,000 or more within the six-month reporting period be reported by both the donor and the recipient political party within 14 days of the making of the donation, which brings the total from a single donor to \$100,000. Whilst the LNP does not believe laws should be made retrospectively, we will support the move to deem the amendments to have commenced on 1 July 2008 in line with the financial reporting time frames.

There are also, as I indicated, a number of proposed amendments which the LNP will be putting forward. The LNP believes that the amendments here today do not go far enough in ensuring transparency in the political donation process and as such will propose several amendments to ensure that transparency is further achieved and enhanced. The LNP amendments will include that a person can mean an entity which would include a registered industrial organisation. A donor who is a registered industrial organisation must declare under clause 19 and clause 20 if the donation they are making has been put to a secret ballot vote of its membership and has majority support from its membership. These amendments would apply to both gifts and donations that fall within the \$1,000 or \$100,000 threshold. Another amendment proposed by the LNP will make it illegal for political parties to accept donations from registered industrial organisations that have not been voted on by the organisation's membership by way of secret ballot.

As I said earlier on, this government cannot have its cake and eat it too. It is more than happy to come in here and have all the laws of this place targeted firmly at those on this side. We will accept the law of the land, but when it comes to the union movement in Queensland, which is the sugar daddy of the Labor Party—and it has been for a long time when it comes to the millions and millions of dollars that it siphons from good, hardworking members of the union movement, the blue-collar workers of the union movement in Queensland and the white-collar workers of Queensland—particular industrial organisations should have the consent of their membership.

It is quite interesting that a lot of those long-suffering members of those unions, whilst they support generally the principle of being involved in a union, are somewhat disturbed by the political partisanship and the connection of their union movement and the fact that there are hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars paid to the Labor Party and they actually do express surprise when it is raised with them. That is not considering anything that might be a part of a political objects fund.

My challenge today to the Labor Party is: be fair dinkum about it. If you want to be fair dinkum, then make sure the rules are equally applied in Queensland and people know where their union membership fees in this state are going. In many cases it is not about improving and enhancing the advocacy for those workers by that industrial organisation. Some of them do quite well but for a lot of them that money is siphoned straight into the Labor Party.

The bill proposes to remove the definition of 'eligible vote'. This definition is redundant as the new entitlement provisions in clause 12 refer eligibility to formal first preference votes of at least four per cent as the basis for part of the calculation of any entitlement to receive election funding. A definition of 'electoral expenditure' based on the definition of 'electoral expenditure' contained in the Commonwealth bill is inserted. This definition sets out the categories of electoral expenditure relating to an election that may be the subject of a claim for election funding.

The bill further provides for claims for election funding. The act already provides for the election funding reimbursement amount. It must not exceed the electoral expenditure for the election. However, to maintain consistency with the Commonwealth Electoral Act, the bill amends the act in line with the Commonwealth bill. This clause replaces the existing sections 295 to 298 with certain provisions of the Commonwealth bill. Provisions 295 and 296 are omitted as they relate to entitlements to funding by groups in Senate elections whilst provisions 297(2), 297(4) and 297(5) are omitted as they relate to the making of interim claims for electoral funding. The bill provides only for the making of single claims.

The bill seeks to insert new sections into the act to provide for treatment under division 4—that is, disclosure of donations—of gifts that are returned within six weeks after their receipt. Gifts that are returned in this period do not have to be disclosed for the purposes of the division unless that gift was a gift of foreign property. The bill makes major changes to section 305B—that is, donations to political parties—to allow for rules about related parties, reflect the changes to the reporting period for when returns must be made, and the information that must be included in those returns.

This means that a person is required to furnish a return to the Electoral Commission disclosing all gifts if, in a reporting period, being six months, the person makes gifts totalling \$1,000 or more to the same registered political party. The 'reporting period' is defined in clause 9 to be the first six months of a financial year or a full financial year. The lodgement period of 20 weeks after the reporting period has also been amended to eight weeks. If a person makes a gift to a number of related parties, one of which is a registered political party, the gifts are deemed to be made to the single registered political party. The intention of this subsection is to prevent a person giving multiple gifts under the new \$1,000 threshold to various divisions or branches of the same political party which are then not required to be disclosed by the donor.

If a person makes a gift to any person or body with the intention of benefiting a political party, the gift is deemed to have been made directly to that political party for the purposes of the section. The intent of the provision is to ensure that donors cannot avoid disclosure obligations by using intermediaries. To reduce any unnecessary duplication of reporting by donors, if a person has furnished a return disclosing gifts to a registered political party in the first six months of a financial year, and makes no further gifts to that registered political party during the remainder of the financial year, the person does not have to furnish a return in respect of the second reporting period that finishes at the end of the full financial year.

The bill also inserts a new section 305C, which introduces a requirement for special reporting of large gifts. Donations which total \$100,000 or more from any single donor to a registered political party or associated entity of that party within the six-month reporting period must be reported to the Electoral Commission by both the donor and the recipient political party. The return must be furnished to the Electoral Commission within 14 days of the making of the donation which brings the total from that single donor to \$100,000 or more.

These returns are in addition to, and not instead of, the twice yearly reporting returns and must be made each time subsequent donations amounting to \$100,000 or more are made by that donor in the reporting period. This will mean that any person, party or entity required to disclose gifts under the section is not required to disclose gifts that have previously been disclosed by the person, party or entity in a return furnished to the Electoral Commission within a particular special reporting period.

A similar provision to that introduced by clause 19 in relation to related parties applies. If a person makes a gift to any person or body with the intention of benefiting a political party, the gift is deemed to have been made directly to that political party for the purposes of the section. The provision details the required content of the return, exempts gifts made by a registered political party, an associated entity or a candidate in an election and requires recipients of gifts to which this section applies to inform the person who gave the gift of the donor's requirement to lodge a return.

The bill will also insert a new 'Division 4A—Rules about certain gifts and loans' and a new 'Subdivision A—Gifts of foreign property', which generally prohibits gifts of foreign property. The subdivision does not apply to a gift that is returned within six weeks of its receipt. The provision establishes what is Australian property and what is foreign property for the purposes of the subdivision.

The bill also inserts a new section 319B, which imposes a mandatory requirement on the Electoral Commission to publish on its web site returns relating to donations to political parties, returns by registered political parties and associated entities within six weeks after the return is furnished to the Electoral Commission, and returns relating to large gifts to political parties within 10 business days after the return is furnished to the Electoral Commission. Why can they do this but not support our FOI government contracts proposal, which would have seen government contracts go onto a similar style web site? It all seems a little hypocritical now.

To conclude, the LNP supports the amendments but feels that they do not go far enough. We call on those members opposite to support the further amendments to this bill to give voters absolute transparency in the way persons and entities, including industrial organisations, make donations.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (12.54 pm): As the Leader of the Opposition has outlined, the LNP will be supporting the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008. We have no problem at all in doing that. In fact, as the opposition leader said, we believe that the bill should go even further to open up everyone's donations to political parties, including some of the areas that the Labor Party relies on so heavily for its survival. The Leader of the Opposition has outlined—and we have seen it today in the parliament and increasingly in past months—the arrogance with which this government treats the parliament and the political process in Queensland. There is a growing cynicism in the electorate toward this government. That cynicism was displayed when the Premier made the announcement that she was introducing these changes into the parliament. The electorate saw it for what it was, and that is a government that is scared of anyone making donations to anyone other than the Labor Party. In a democracy, people are allowed to do that, particularly in a democracy where the government is becoming more and more on the nose.

This morning the member for Clayfield asked the Premier a question about the advertising budget for the rebranded, refreshed, renewed Labor Party government that has been in power for only 10 consecutive years and that for almost two decades has been trying to run away from its record. The member for Clayfield asked the Premier how much the government was spending on advertising in this financial year for the new Q2 branding exercise. The Premier stood up and said that it was in the paper today. It is \$1½ million for the 30 community forums around Queensland. She did not answer how much they are going to be spending on the Q2 program for the financial year. There has been a figure of \$20 million bandied about that I think is more realistic. This government knows that it is going to have to spend and spend, and it is taxpayers' money that it will be spending on advertising to try to save its bacon in the lead-up to the next election.

The Leader of the Opposition also placed on record the amendments that we will be proposing in the consideration in detail stage. As soon as the issue of union funding of the Labor Party came up, we heard squeals from the Labor Party backbench because they know what it is about. They know how much money comes in from the union movement. They know how much they depend on it and they do not want anyone in this state to be in a position of competitiveness against them. They want to be the only ones who are allowed to run in this state, and they are treating the whole political process with arrogance.

It is interesting that the only person we know about who has received a substantial amount of money is the former member for Sandgate. He is the one who did not disclose it. He is the one who did not reveal how much money he was being given. There is an enormous amount of hypocrisy on the part of the Labor Party when it comes to this issue. The LNP is happy to support this. The way that democracy works, people are allowed to donate to political parties of any persuasion as they see fit. It is quite right that those donations should be opened up, scrutinised and made public. This is purely and utterly a stunt by a desperate Premier and a desperate government, and the public of Queensland can certainly see through it.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.30 pm.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the member for Southport, I recognise in the public gallery staff and students from the Farnborough State School in the electorate of Keppel, represented in this parliament by Paul Hoolihan.

**Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (2.30 pm): The Electoral Amendment Bill 2008, introduced into this parliament by the Premier, shows the commitment of the Bligh government to openness and transparency and the democratic process. The bill largely reflects the provisions relating to disclosure that were contained in the Rudd government's bill that so frightened the Liberal and National parties in the federal parliament that they sent the bill to a Senate committee to ensure it will not be considered before June 2009.

On the other hand, the Bligh government is so committed to ensuring the new provisions apply as soon as possible that this bill has been moved up the *Notice Paper* to facilitate early passage. The commencement date of the bill is 1 July 2008. The new reporting requirements and disclosure provisions will apply from that date. The transitional provisions in clause 8 of the bill provide that where the act requires a person to disclose a donation within 13 days of commencement they will not contravene the act provided they do what is required within 28 days of commencement.

The first substantial amendment to the act is a requirement for six-monthly reporting. Previously the act provided for financial disclosure for elections and annually by political parties and candidates. By requiring six-monthly disclosure this will allow more ongoing and comprehensive scrutiny of political parties, particularly between elections.

The bill also provides a definition of election funding based on the definition contained in the Commonwealth bill. The new definition is an exhaustive list of the categories of electoral expenditure that can be the subject of a claim for electoral funding. It includes the cost of publishing or displaying an advertisement in a wide variety of media and also the costs of production and distribution of the advertising. This is the main category covered. Opinion polls carried out during the election period are also covered. The new definition of reporting period in this section refers to the current annual reporting period but also imposes a requirement for six-monthly reporting in addition to this.

Clause 12 of the bill is one of the major improvements in relation to the public funding of election expenditure. It directly links the public funding of elections with verified election expenditure claimed and accepted by the Electoral Commissioner. As the Premier said when she announced these proposed changes to the disclosure regime on 30 April in this House, the intention is to—

... tie the election funding to reported and verified electoral expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or a party, with evidence of that expenditure for an election to stop any candidate making a financial gain from the electoral funding system. That is to stop the accusations that we are now seeing in the public arena against One Nation and the Pauline Hanson party.

These amendments mean that once the threshold is reached, and that threshold is at least four per cent of the vote, then a registered political party can only claim funding for the lesser amount of either the amount that they could receive based on the formula for first preference votes received or the actual expenditure that has been claimed and accepted by the Electoral Commissioner. Similar provisions apply to candidates not endorsed by a political party, limiting their ability to claim public funding to the lesser amount of either that calculated based on the formula for first preference votes or the actual expenditure claimed and accepted by the Electoral Commissioner. Again they must first reach the threshold of at least four per cent of the vote.

Political parties and candidates who make a claim for electoral funding will have to show how they are entitled to make the claim. They will have to provide sufficient information on the type of expenditure, how it was incurred and, in some cases, provide supporting documentation to ensure that the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied of the eligibility of their claim and that it fits within the definition of electoral expenditure under the act. The Electoral Commissioner is charged with deciding whether a claim satisfies the requirements for receiving public funding. If the commissioner decides that all or part of a claim is not eligible, the person or party who makes the claim has 28 days to ask the commissioner to reconsider the claim and must put in writing the reasons for asking for the reconsideration.

Clause 16 of the bill provides that a claim for funding can be paid even if the candidate dies—as opposed to voting. The same requirements operate, however, in relation to receiving at least four per cent of the vote and the need for proof of actual expenditure. The claim can, if necessary, be made by the candidate's legal personal representative. It also allows the Electoral Commissioner to recover any amount of overpayment if a claim is accepted but the commissioner later becomes aware that the claim or some part of the claim should not have been accepted.

The threshold for the disclosure of gifts by a person to a political party is reduced from \$1,500 to \$1,000 to bring the Queensland act into line with what is proposed by the Commonwealth bill. The threshold applies to one or more related parties to prevent a person giving an amount less than \$1,000 to a number of branches or other entities of a political party thereby not falling within that provision. All donations to related parties are treated as donations to the single political party. It also makes it clear that the intention of a gift is to benefit a political party. Even if given to another person the gift must be disclosed. This prevents a donor using intermediaries to avoid the requirement for disclosure.

Clause 20 is exclusive to Queensland and is not contained in the Commonwealth bill. It provides for reporting of large gifts—that is, gifts of over \$100,000—within a six-month reporting period. Once gifts to a particular party total \$100,000 within a six-month period the person making the gift and the party receiving it are required to report this to the Electoral Commissioner within 14 days. This requirement will lead to improved transparency and accountability of donors to political parties. Large donations of over \$100,000 should be subject to public scrutiny because people are entitled to know whether there is any political party indebted to any particular donor to that extent. It is an important part of the democratic process that people are able to make informed decisions about who they want to govern them. It may determine who may influence the party or, as with the Liberal National Party, who may own the party, as is the case with Clive Palmer.

We might well ask what influence we can expect Clive Palmer to wield over the new Liberal National Party. There are probably several correct answers to this question. The most obvious one is: one hell of a lot of influence—much more influence than most people would realise and much more influence than anyone in the Liberal National Party will ever be prepared to admit. There is one thing we can reasonably be sure of: Clive Palmer will have a hands-on relationship with the new Liberal National Party. He will not be afraid to exert the influence that he believes his financial support for the party has entitled him to. He actually set out to buy the National Party but he has actually got the Liberals as well. He has a two-for-one deal.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** It sounds like a deal at KFC.

**Mr LAWLOR:** It is something similar actually. We could reasonable expect a Liberal National Party government to bend over backwards to please and satisfy Clive Palmer—to make sure, for example, that mining oil developments will take precedence over any other environmental considerations. We could expect, for example, that the Liberal National Party in government, perish the thought, would immediately reverse the Bligh government's decision last month to place a 20-year moratorium on development of the McFarlane shale oil deposit near Proserpine in the Whitsunday region.

Will Clive Palmer require the ditching of the new mining industry health and safety levy? Our new levy will boost the safety services in the state's mine safety watchdog, the Mines Inspectorate. We are asking for \$26 million from an industry worth \$26 billion to Queensland. Taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for these vital safety services. The member for Callide has already queried this levy. If Clive Palmer was to get his way and exert his influence, as I am sure he would, it would be struck out and Queensland's reputation as one of the safest places for mining in the world could suffer a serious setback.

Will Clive Palmer reverse our decision to ship coal out of the Mackay port through growing residential areas—that is, open up a port that was not built to ship coal? Will he declare open slather on uranium mining and will he support building nuclear power plants here in Queensland? Is this what the people of Queensland can look forward to if ever the Liberal National Party was elected to office and Clive Palmer was influencing its policies and decisions? With the advent of people like Mr Palmer we more than ever need transparency with reporting processes, and that will be provided by this bill, which I commend to the House.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (2.39 pm): In April this year the Premier advised the House that the government would be introducing a number of changes to the Electoral Act to fit in with changes proposed by the federal government to increase accountability of candidates in elections and political parties throughout the year. The major changes that the Premier foreshadowed in April have been incorporated into this amendment bill before the House. These include the tying of public funding to actual verified electoral expenditure claimed and approved by the Electoral Commissioner. This brings Queensland's act into line with the proposed Commonwealth bill, and we have heard from the member for Southport about the reasons why that bill will be a little bit delayed. We have had a similar provision in Queensland before, but this strengthens the obligation to provide documentary proof to the actual expenditure and allows the Electoral Commissioner to refuse claims that do not provide adequate verification.

In federal elections in the past there have been allegations that candidates have made money out of public funding. Particularly for Senate candidates, they have in the past received funding based on the formula for a certain amount per vote. This was paid whether they spent the money on their campaign or not. Pauline Hanson was criticised for this and it is wrong that taxpayers' money should be diverted to line the pockets of failed political candidates who do not even particularly try, especially those who might try to use a brand name that has been established in the past and hang it around their neck on reality television shows to continue that brand's life and then turn it into making an extra quick buck when it comes around to election time. This provision therefore ensures that there is a correct degree of accountability attached to public funding for elections.

Under this new provision a candidate or political party first must reach the threshold of at least four per cent of the vote. This is the vote required for the return of the deposit paid by candidates and reflects a reasonable vote for an Independent or minority party candidate. The strength of our

democracy depends on the greatest level of participation possible in the election process and candidates should not be discouraged from standing by setting the threshold way too high. Once this is attained, then the amount to be received is calculated as the lesser of the two prescribed amounts. These are the amounts arrived at by applying the formula to the number of votes cast for the candidate and the actual verified expenditure claimed and accepted by the Electoral Commission.

But as a fundamental democratic principle it is important to know who is donating what to which political party. This allows us to make informed decisions about what type of government we want to see in this state. We can decide whether large donations from a particular person will have a tendency to influence the policy decisions of the particular party. This makes me wonder: what do you do when you are Australia's second richest person—a multibillionaire—and it comes to acquisitions?

**Mrs Pratt** interjected.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Houses and cars can seem like mere trinkets in that situation. In the case of Clive Palmer, whose personal wealth is estimated at a staggering \$6.5 billion—

**Mr Wendt:** How much?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The figure is \$6.5 billion. It is quite staggering. I understand the amazement in the reaction from the member for Ipswich West. But in that context in the case of Clive Palmer and that staggering wealth, it seems you look for some more ostentatious accoutrements. In Clive Palmer's case, you start looking for things like football teams and political parties. But in Clive Palmer's case you do not just start looking; you do something about it. So far Clive Palmer can tick both of those boxes. He has bought himself a football team in the form of the new Gold Coast franchise in the A-League—so there is a tick there—and now he has bought himself a political party in the form of the new Liberal National Party here in Queensland—tick.

**Mr Copeland:** How much did he donate to the ALP?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** We will all know under the arrangements set out by the amendments to the act. This positions Mr Palmer for his ultimate acquisition, the ultimate bit of billionaire bling—a government! In his case he will be wanting to acquire the Queensland government. Now, we have known that some big miners have owned different Queensland governments in days gone by, but this is going to be the ultimate bit of bling for Mr Palmer. It is very clear that if the Liberal National Party was elected to the government benches in this place Clive Palmer would be able to tick that box. In the meantime, to use a horseracing analogy that I am sure the member for Southport would appreciate, it is a sure bet that as the owner of the Liberal National Party he will be issuing the riding instructions.

That is why these amendments to the Electoral Act are so important—to get information in a timely way about the extent of donations being provided. It will be interesting to see just how much money it is revealed that Mr Palmer is kicking in. Mr Palmer has made it clear that he is ready, willing and able to turn on the money tap and that money is no object when it comes to the support of his new party. Mr Palmer admitted as much himself the day the new Liberal National Party was formed when he stated—

All of my personal assets, my jets, everything are all available for the party any time.

This was the very same day that Liberal Party life member and former member of this House Mr Bill Hewitt commented—or perhaps more precisely lamented—

We've been seduced by a billionaire with a couple of million dollars to spare.

This all reminds me of newspaper reports from the mid-1980s when planning minister Russ Hinze overruled the Landsborough council decision to knock back a town house development. Hinze overruled the council decision just eight days after it was made. According to newspaper reports at the time, a company associated with Clive Palmer was undertaking the development. His day job at the time was as the National Party media director. Media at the time put to Mr Palmer why he did not appeal the decision in the Local Government and Planning Court. His response was that this was way cheaper. Liberals at the time criticised the decision, with then Liberal Landsborough shire councillor and candidate for the local seat Councillor John McCaw saying—

In your wildest dreams State Government departments don't move that quickly.

No surprise then that, in that two-for-one deal that the member for Southport referred to, Mr Palmer now wants to buy out the Liberals, as it was also reported at the time that Mr Palmer had been expelled by the Liberal Party in 1975. So he is buying his way back in now. At the time that Russ Hinze did approve that development, Mr Palmer was reported as saying—

All this just highlights that the Liberal Party has got nothing. We don't care what they throw at us.

So he will just be getting it all back now with his wallet.

**Mr Lawlor:** With interest.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Indeed; with interest. He will be coming back to take it all over. With this attitude and form in relation to accountable and transparent operation of government, what can we expect from a Clive Palmer owned and operated Liberal National Party government? The member for Southport has addressed these questions to some extent for the House, particularly in relation to questions around mining policy. I think he made some very salient points that we should all give regard to.

But this government is committed to ensuring that the people of Queensland should make informed decisions about whether this is the type of influence they want exerted over government and over government decisions. We will ensure that any donation over \$1,000 is reported. These reports will be required to be lodged every six months so that Queenslanders can keep a watching eye over the donations being made to candidates and political parties. The special reporting requirement for gifts of \$100,000 or more is a special provision which is unique to Queensland and shows our absolute commitment to transparency. Large gifts are more likely to be the subject of community curiosity because large gifts could be seen as an attempt to influence policy if not accompanied by the most stringent of disclosure provisions possible, and that is where the amendments to the act are so important and that is why we introduced this bill. We are also providing for returns to be lodged within eight weeks. This applies to donors and political parties and will apply to the regular reporting requirement as well as to the reporting required after elections.

This bill provides Queenslanders with the sort of accountability that they deserve from their potential politicians. We want people in this parliament who are prepared to open their financial affairs as they relate to the election process to the scrutiny of all the people of Queensland. We want people in this parliament who have nothing to hide and this bill delivers that in spades. The bill enhances the democratic process for us all and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.49 pm): I rise to speak to the Electoral Amendment Bill and put on record my appreciation for the amendments as they stand. I wish to comment on a couple of points and then I would like to make some comments on the amendments that I intend to move during the consideration in detail stage.

It has been interesting to listen to the debate so far, particularly in relation to the proof of expenditure claims and the requirement that this bill places on political parties to validate expenditure before they are reimbursed for the costs of their election campaign. It has been my experience as an Independent that that is what Independents have had to do after every election. Independents have to provide information on their expenditure for print and electronic advertising and all other expenditure that is related to the electoral process. It is either accepted or rejected by the Electoral Commission and we are reimbursed for those costs only—so much per vote if you receive more than four per cent. That is an interesting discrepancy between the funding that has been available to candidates in the past.

Much has been said in the debate about the requirement to report political donations from a single donor to a registered political party of over \$100,000. I have no problems with any amount of reporting. I think it is important for the community to know about those who fund political campaigns, be they for Independents or party candidates, and that if there is a chain of effect from those donations on the legislative process subsequent to a party being elected, that that also is transparent.

When the Premier first spoke about these amendments, she also singled out Mr Clive Palmer. I do not know how Clive Palmer is feeling. I do not know him, but he has certainly had his name raised in this place quite a significant number of times since this issue arose. Indeed, the member for Stafford laboured on at great lengths about Mr Clive Palmer. If Clive Palmer was a benefactor to the Labor Party—and perhaps this is a bit mischievous—I wonder whether we would be going through this same process. But perhaps that is a hollow consideration.

The other question that I would like to have clarified—and this is not intended with any malice or forethought—is that the Premier said 'from any single donor'. I wonder whether a single donor will cover donations from organisations. I ask this question because, although the Labor members are singling out Mr Clive Palmer, there are people who have concerns about the level of financial donations made by the union movement to either the Labor Party or to other groups. I know there is a lot of concern about the extent of that financial support and the transparency of the allocation of that financial support. Certainly, as the member for Stafford said—and maybe the member for Stafford is attributing an attitude to Mr Palmer that may or may not exist—if Mr Palmer were to regard his donation, if indeed he is going to make any, to the National Party as a method of influencing the National Party, it is certainly on the record that the unions feel that their level of financial contribution to the Labor Party has an influence. This was indicated particularly at the federal level because the ads that are running at the moment reinforce to the current Prime Minister his obligation to address the issues of WorkChoices. So if we are going to have transparency in the reporting of political donations, as this bill purports to do, then I think it has to work both ways.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** They will.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** That will be good. I seek the minister's clarification that any single donor will include a union entity or other corporation as an entity.

As I said, I do not think there is any problem with that. Independents generally do not have problems with donations of that size. I do not know of any who do, more is the pity. But still, it goes somewhere else.

**Mr Lawlor:** I'll give you Clive Palmer's phone number.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** No, thank you very much. For anyone who donates to an Independent's campaign—or the ones I have spoken to—it is with no strings attached or there is no donation.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** He won't be donating then.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I know. The third issue I want to raise is one that will be addressed by my amendments, and that is the change to the donor threshold. This bill proposes to reduce the declaration threshold for a donation to a registered political party from \$1,500 to \$1,000. I reiterate that I do not have any difficulties with declarations or returns. When I sent in my last lot of returns I had to write to a small number of donors who gave \$200 or more to my campaign with a request that they also fill out some paperwork. It is onerous for them, but I am very grateful for those people who support my campaign and other campaigns.

However, that threshold for Independents is \$200, not \$1,500. I gave some consideration to moving an amendment that all donations over \$200 be declared by the parties, but I knew I was on a flogging to nothing if I introduced that. So being slightly pragmatic, I thought perhaps the Independents should be brought into line with the political parties for equity purposes. This equity could just as easily have been achieved by moving an amendment that all donations to political parties or Independents that exceeded \$200 be declared, but that probably was not going to see the light of day.

I have about four or five amendments that all pertain to the same issue, and that is to bring an Independent candidate in line with a party candidate in terms of the disclosure threshold. In other election campaigns where this matter has arisen—where donors who have given funds to parties have also given funds to my election campaign—they have been surprised that there was discrimination between an Independent candidate and a party-endorsed candidate. At times, that surprise has been expressed in the strongest terms to me. I have written to the Electoral Commission to get information on this differentiation, but I was advised that it is a matter for legislation. So I put this issue to the Attorney-General for his consideration to endorse these amendments. As I said, the amendments do nothing more than bring the Independents into line with the other party-endorsed candidates at an election.

I would like to put on the record my appreciation to the OPC and Steve Berg. For those of us who are not members of the government, it is always refreshing to work with government officers. Whilst they are guided by the wishes of members of parliament, I have always found the OPC to be very helpful and very cooperative and timely in their response. I would like to put on the record my appreciation for their efforts.

As I said, I support all of the elements of this bill that require greater transparency. I will be particularly pleased to know that the declaration by an individual or an entity is for all entities to ensure equity across-the-board. I look forward to the minister's response in terms of my amendments and also his response to these other matters raised.

**Mr DICKSON** (Kawana—Lib) (2.59 pm): I rise to speak to the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008. It came to my attention that on 18 June 2008 the Senate referred the Commonwealth bill to the joint standing committee. I am quite amazed that this information is going to be relayed to the Australian public on 30 June 2009 when that committee reports, yet the Queensland government wishes to move forward and expedite its plan. The LNP is going to support this bill here today 100 per cent; I make that point very clear. However, I would like to know why the state government is rushing ahead prior to the federal government putting its plans in place. I am sure the government has a reason for doing so.

The federal government has tried to push down a path of bringing in these sorts of laws. As I have been sitting here in parliament for the last few minutes, I have come to understand that this government is actually putting forward some sort of a Clive Palmer bill. I think that is what it is trying to enunciate to the people of this House. The bill that we could put forward is the Gordon Nuttall bill. How much in campaign donations did he receive on behalf of the Labor Party—or were they just personal donations? The LNP does not fear any of the implications from what is being put forward. We look forward to them. If this is a precursor to an election—and I personally hope it is because the sooner we bring on an election, the sooner it will benefit the people of Queensland—it will give the government an opportunity to have the health system fixed, to have better legislation, to have a water system that actually works and a better child-care system.

I think it is a great idea that this bill reduces the amount of money relating to individuals from \$1,500 down to \$1,000. There is no way in the world that we would oppose that. I agree with the provision that a person who is given a donation of \$100,000 has to report that within 14 days. I do not have a problem with that, either. I am sure that the Labor Party is going to accept the amendments that are being put forward by the Independents and also by the opposition in relation to the unions! I am sure that the government would want to be forthcoming and let the world know exactly how much money it gets, how it comes by that money and what sorts of resources are given to its party!

I have been amazed at all this talk about Mr Palmer. I think some members of our opposition—those opposite—must be playing with Mrs Palmer! It is quite an amazing situation. We are going to support this bill today. It is a reasonable bill. We do not see too many problems with it. I am sure the rest of my colleagues will support this bill.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DICKSON:** They are an interesting lot, aren't they?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Kawana, I ask you to withdraw that comment.

**Mr DICKSON:** I am happy to withdraw. I did not mean any disrespect whatsoever. I was just talking about a particular lady and I am sure they must be talking about her as well.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That will suffice.

**Mr DICKSON:** I endorse this plan. I think it is a good plan that has been put forward. I am sure the people of Queensland will endorse it as well, as long as we are all transparent, as long as we are all upfront with the community, as long as we all reveal where our campaign donations are coming from—particularly those from the unions. Those favours still have to be returned by the federal government—and \$30 million buys a lot of favours!

I am also a little concerned about greenfield sites that are being approved right across Queensland. I am wondering if any campaign donations were made to any particular party. I could not name any party in particular, but I know there could be some recipients in this chamber. We all have to be open and transparent and do the right thing by the people of Queensland. I believe that is the intent of this bill, but fair play should apply right across-the-board.

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.03 pm): The bill before the House today has as its aim an increase in transparency with regard to donations from political parties and contains provisions for a number of amendments to the Electoral Act 1992, including reducing the donation disclosure threshold from \$1,500 to \$1,000, increasing public scrutiny of donations by reducing the disclosure time frames for donations from 12 months to six months, reducing donor allotment time frames for returns from 20 weeks to eight weeks and also other initiatives including banning donations from overseas or non-Australian companies, ensuring that donations come from a jurisdiction where Queensland laws will apply.

The major thrust of the bill before the House is certainly the donation of \$100,000 or more within a period of six months having to be disclosed by both the donor and the recipient within 14 days of that amount being paid and received, which of course has been referred to here by the member for Southport as the Clive Palmer amendment. It amazes me to think what the effect will be when the disclosure requirements, which are retrospective, come into effect with regard to Mr Palmer's donations to the LNP. It is always wonderful to sit here and listen to speculation by the government as to what is going to be the case and then of course it is wide open, the jaw drops and the reality comes into play.

It amazes me that the ALP members can sit here and make a judgement call without knowing the true facts, but of course that is what the ALP does. We have a health minister who makes wonderful statements week after week about the improvements that he has brought about in the health system across the state of Queensland, yet when the reality is revealed, those predictions prove to be wildly inaccurate. I can certainly say that the ALP will be gobsmacked when it finally gets the disclosure from Mr Clive Palmer from 1 July 2008 to the current time.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** Now of course we have the jackals up the back mouthing the rhetoric of the government, mouthing the rhetoric of the ALP for their own personal gain.

**Mr Lawlor** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** Now we have the member for Southport, who has chimed in with a quick-witted comment. Reality and the ALP have no correlation with what takes place across the state.

Today in his contribution to the debate the member for Cunningham raised the issue of the Premier's reply to a question without notice that \$1.5 million had in fact been set aside with regard to the Q2 publication. Of course the Premier, as the member indicated, has only addressed the issue of the community consultation and has failed to disclose—which is what this bill is all about—the figure bandied about of around \$20 million that the taxpayer is going to have to pay for the glossy magazines, the TV advertisements and the other details. That is \$20 million that has not been disclosed to this House by the Premier in relation to what taxpayers will have to fund so that her campaign for the 2008-09 election can be well and truly underway. She does not mind using public taxpayers' funds for that, but when somebody comes in and says, 'By the way, we want the unions to have a secret ballot to ensure that those donations are actually endorsed by the membership,' then we have the ALP members running for the backblocks. They do not want a bar of that. They want democracy defined as they see democracy, that is, under the terms of the ALP dissertation on democracy, which is 'What we want, we get.' Democracy is a bit further and wider than that, old son.

Democracy in this place with regard to disclosure laws that we suggest should be put in place will not be borne by this government because that may really bring to the fore the issue of how the union membership feel. Let there be no doubt about this: the unions want their pound of flesh when they make donations to the ALP.

**Mr Copeland:** They don't do it for nothing.

**Mr McARDLE:** They do not do it for nothing. Ask Kevin Rudd about that. They were on his back like jackals as soon as he took power and looked as though he was going to turn away from what they wanted him to do. They made the donation and they wanted their pound of flesh and they did not let up. Let us not be under any misapprehension here: the unions control this mob in this House and they control Labor right across this country. This mob does not want the disclosure provisions to include a secret vote because it may well be that the membership of the union does not want to make the donation. I am certain we will see many ALP members cross the floor to support the amendment with regard to that matter when it comes before the House! I guess there may not even be one.

**Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.09 pm): I rise to support the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008 that was introduced into this chamber only last month. The opposition supports the legislation and, while I commend that, opposition members say that the bill does not go far enough. While I think that it is admirable that they support the bill, I do wonder why they have never bothered to put this matter on the table before. The federal Labor government has introduced a similar bill into the lower house, but it has been held up by the formerly coalition controlled Senate. Yes, they are opposition colleagues, not ours. They sent the bill to a Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for consideration, so it does not sound like the Liberals and the Nationals south of the Queensland border are embracing any quick changes, unlike this government which has brought forward this bill.

The bill amends the Electoral Act 1992. Its primary objective is to increase transparency and accountability with respect to political donations. This is something that has been most welcomed by people to whom I have spoken in my electorate and they have commented on it. When passed, the bill will require a number of things. First, the disclosure of electoral donations of \$1,000 or more; the current threshold is \$1,500. Second, it will require the disclosure of electoral donations at the end of each six-month period; the current time frame is 12 months. Third, it will reduce the time within which returns, that is, reports to the Electoral Commission disclosing all donations received, must be made to eight weeks for both donors—currently 20 weeks—and registered political parties and associated entities—currently 16 weeks. Fourth, it will reduce further time limits on returns for large gifts or those of over \$100,000 to 14 days for both donors and registered political parties. Fifth, it will ban overseas or non-Australian companies from making electoral donations to ensure that political donations come from a jurisdiction where this state's laws will apply and can be enforced. Sixth, it will limit entitlements to electoral funding to expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or party in an election and for which evidence verifying the expenditure is provided to the electoral commission.

This limit is most welcome and we all know of some of the things that have happened in the past. I am hoping that this will put a stop to people who do not intend to campaign or spend any money from putting their names on ballot papers in the hope that they will get back money from the Electoral Commission if they get a certain proportion of the vote. Hopefully, this change will make those people think twice about nominating. If they do not do the work and do not spend the money, they will no longer get a huge payout of taxpayer funded money. Maybe all future candidates will be genuine in putting their names forward for the right reasons, instead of the money. These amendments will enhance the financial reporting requirements under the act and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (3.11 pm): I rise to speak to the Electoral Amendment Bill and I must say that I do so with much pleasure. When dealing with politics, especially when money is involved, the most important thing is for everything to be open and accountable. Therefore, I have no trouble supporting the bill. The bill refers specifically to single donors, but I do not think they should be singled out because I would hope any donation—whether it be from a group, a union or anything else—should be accountable in the same way. Like the member for Gladstone, I seek clarification that the union movement is included in donation transparency.

As has already been mentioned, the threshold for Independents is \$200, which is a fairly low amount in current times. The dollar does not go too far nowadays. I have spoken with the member for Gladstone about this. I said, 'Why don't we bring everybody down to the same level?' She talked me out of that by saying that that was not in the least bit likely to get up, but that the government might support a threshold of \$1,000. We will soon see about that.

I have never accepted a big donation. I will say here and now that I was offered \$10,000 for my campaign, but I believe that there is a price for everything. Apparently, the \$10,000 I was offered did come with strings attached. When I said, 'No thanks as I have a particular view on that sort of thing,' the person concerned said, 'There's no point voting for you, then.' I thought, 'Well, there you go; obviously there was a motive behind the offer.' I learnt that lesson very early on, so I have always stood on my own two feet and funded my own campaigns, accepting very small donations here and there.

Independents have a different threshold, which is \$200, and apparently that is because we supposedly can be swayed more easily than a member of a party. However, if someone gave a party what is described as an open cheque, which could be \$100,000, or \$500,000, surely that person would want something in exchange for his money. When people offer trips overseas, perhaps to the Olympic Games or something like that, I would think there has to be a reason for that. Everything has a price. Nobody gives you something for nothing. No matter how people might like to view that, there will always be a fear that down the track the donor will want something in return.

I cannot speak for every Independent; I can only speak for myself. However, I do know that the member for Gladstone is extremely steadfast in her views. For the past 10 years I have sat in this chamber and listened to debates. I have watched people stand up and support things that in their hearts they knew were wrong. I know of members who have offered information to the Independents because they wanted certain arguments put forward. I have seen them go through the angst of that situation. Whether it be for financial inducement or a party inducement, I believe that party members are often put under a lot more pressure than Independents to vote a certain way.

Clive Palmer has been mentioned quite a lot today and it seems that his funding is the target of this particular bill. I first heard of Clive Palmer during the last election in the context of his sizeable donation to the campaign for John Bjelke-Petersen. I cannot say the exact amount, but I have a fair idea of how much it was. Believe me, it was an awful lot more than any donation to my campaign. My point is that it does not matter how much people donate to certain campaigns because, generally, Independents are receiving more and more votes, as can be seen recently in both the Lyne by-election and the Western Australia election. Money does not always speak volumes, but the people who stand up often do, which is why I think more Independents are being elected to parliament. People are getting a little tired of the party line. They are tired of the rhetoric that goes on and on. This morning as I listened to the government outlining its targets, I thought about how in this House we see targets set over and over again, but often we do not see them materialise.

I do not have a lot more to say. I will be supporting the amendment of the member for Gladstone. I ask that the government supports the amendment. It seems to be a tactic that it does not support anything that comes from the opposition side of the House, but anything good or reasonable needs to be supported and I think the amendment of the member for Gladstone is reasonable.

I support this legislation. I support the fact that there has to be accountability in all things. However, I do question why the legislation has been introduced when next year the federal government intends to introduce amendments that we are all supposed to come to some understanding on so that we are all under the same umbrella. Therefore, I wonder why the bill is being brought in this early.

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (3.18 pm): In rising to speak to the Electoral Amendment Bill I question one thing about what we have heard today about Mr Palmer. I, as was also mentioned by the member for Gladstone and the member for Nanango, do not know Mr Palmer but one would have thought that the National Party would have learnt its lesson when a gentleman named Sir Edward Lyons owned a fair percentage of the original National Party.

This bill is about giving transparency to those people who want to take possession of a political party. We heard some ridiculous comment from the member for Caloundra about the union movement, but it may well have escaped his gaze that the Labor Party was in fact set up by the union movement. In most cases that does not directly impact upon a candidate, but certainly the use of a jet to get around does not come cheaply and that is made available to a specific candidate or a specific party.

The Liberal Party when it was in power raised the individual contribution amounts. This is an attempt to bring those amounts back to a reasonable level to allow the Electoral Commissioner to tell the people of Queensland how much is being contributed. At present the requirement is to report to the Electoral Commissioner within 17 weeks after an election and very often the amount of money that is donated or is spent on behalf of an individual candidate is not known for a considerable period of time after an election. This legislation will force an ongoing disclosure of an amount, and the Electoral Commissioner is required to disclose the amount by advertising on the web site within six weeks of the notification. So the people of Queensland will know who is making contributions and then they will be able to judge what that person may well expect to get out of making those contributions.

Sadly, we have to have that sort of legislation because people do try to buy substantial influence or power without ever putting their name up at the ballot box. I think that is reprehensible. If you want to be part of the government or to go into parliament then, as the member for Nanango said, put your name up at the ballot box, although I do not agree with her reasoning of more and more Independents being elected because I have a personal view about Independents as a group in a parliament.

**Mr Foley:** Why don't you like Independents?

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** I will take that interjection. I have nothing against the Independents. It is just that it would be pretty hard to run a parliament if you had 89 people with 89 points of view.

**Mr Foley:** Bring it on.

**Mrs Pratt** interjected.

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** I think Joh Bjelke-Petersen used to refer to journalists as 'feeding the chooks'. I think from the cackle behind me on my right I should throw out some feed for the chooks.

In any event, the bill was presented on the basis that the federal government was to introduce similar legislation. As we heard, that legislation has been shifted sideways, which I think will become more and more the norm as the unrepresentative swill in the Senate have their operations refined by those who will try to derail the Rudd government. I would like to congratulate the Attorney on proceeding with this bill, despite the fact that the federal bill has been moved sideways and is not to be debated—we will not know about that until 1 July next year, which is rather sad. I suppose that is the way the cookie crumbles. In any event, I support the bill and I believe that it will give the people of Queensland the transparency and honesty that they require.

**Mr FOLEY** (Maryborough—Ind) (3.24 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Electoral Amendment Bill today. After some of the shenanigans that have gone on in Western Australia at the weekend, to coin a good AC/DC phrase, I think it is dirty deeds done dirt cheap. It is interesting that nobody particularly wants to ascribe any relevance to Independents until they are actually needed and then all of a sudden the whole thing changes.

The Independents had a briefing on this bill today. It was interesting because of course there are certain alignments being sought with the federal regime compared to the state regime. We heard today that some of those things have been moved—different dates have had to be assumed because of the unintended consequences of some of those changes. At the end of the day, for us as members of parliament, regardless of where we sit on the political spectrum, what this should be all about is transparency. We have an obligation to the people of Queensland to be transparent in our financial dealings, and nothing less than that is even remotely acceptable.

I particularly wanted to focus on the very sensible amendment moved by my parliamentary colleague the member for Gladstone pointing out the disparity between reporting regimes. We have a reporting regime as Independents of \$200 worth of gifts compared to currently \$1,500 for party representatives, which I understand is moving to \$1,000. This is counterintuitive on a good day. Most Independents laugh at the thought of getting that sort of donation. We would be delighted to get some larger donations. Our funding is more akin to chook raffles and bits and pieces like that compared to some of the very large corporate donations—

**Mr Springborg:** A lot of ours is, too.

**Mr FOLEY:** Yours, too, are they? I take that interjection from the opposition.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** I'm not averse to a raffle.

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Hinchliffe can come and run a few chook raffles to do some fundraising for us. Obviously this disparity is ridiculous. It is against all principles of democracy and fairness. I would believe and certainly hope that the government would support this amendment. There is no basis for not supporting it. To be seen to be not supporting it would be seen to be sponsoring unfairness on a grand scale. That is basically all I wanted to say.

Other than that, we do need much more alignment between the state and federal regimes because there are a number of different rules. And sometimes what happens in cases of people like Pauline Hanson, for instance, and the furore that surrounded the electoral reimbursements is that, unfortunately, even though we have a totally different system in Queensland, we end up being tarred with the same brush. I want to see transparency. I want to see uniformity. Once the amendment from the member for Gladstone is recognised, I think that will go a long way to achieving that.

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.27 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to support the Electoral Amendment Bill. We have just all gone through a process of redistribution of the 89 seats of the Queensland parliament. The reason for the redistribution is to ensure that we have fair electoral boundaries throughout Queensland. Eighty-four of them are based on one vote, one value and the other five are based on the reality of Queensland's geography. I am sure that there are some members on both sides of the House who would rather have not gone through that redistribution process. But the reason we have gone through that process is that come the next election this time next year people who are coming up to the ballot box to vote will know that they are voting with fair electoral boundaries.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** And they know their vote counts.

**Mr REEVES:** I will take that interjection from the member for Stafford: they know their vote counts.

**Mr Springborg:** The Labor Party sometimes counts twice, even if you are dead. Peter Beattie wrote that in his book.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I would remind members that the member for Mansfield has the call.

**Mr REEVES:** I appreciate your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I said, the redistribution is about fair and equitable boundaries. The changes proposed in the Electoral Amendment Bill are fair and equitable changes to the Electoral Act so that everything will be quite clear and above board. We cannot forget that it was the Liberal-National coalition government in the federal parliament that changed the laws for declarable donations to \$10,000. No-one could say that it was fair to not have to declare donations under \$10,000. We could have taken the easy way out. We could have said, 'Wait until the federal government report and federal legislation,' which would be well after our election this time next year. We were not prepared to do that. We want to make sure that the next election in Queensland is conducted according to fair electoral boundaries and fair disclosure laws. I do not think anyone can deny that these are fair disclosure laws. We would have to question the ethics of anyone who does have a problem with that.

I note the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. We heard his rhetoric about fairness. He said, 'If those opposite are principled people they will support it.' He should change the amendment to include all shareholders being consulted. I bet that will not occur. Quite clearly, the opposition is tackling the union movement. I am a member of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union and am proud of it. I have been supported by that union in the past and I will continue to get its moral support. The ALP is quite proud of its union affiliates and quite proud of its roots in the union movement. Just like companies have to declare the contribution, we have to declare the contribution the union movement makes to the ALP. That is fair, reasonable and equitable. We will continue to do that. We are not frightened. We are not running away saying, 'We don't want to show what the union movement has given to the Australian Labor Party.' We will continue to do that, no doubt. If the Leader of the Opposition were genuine, his amendment would have said that shareholders would have to agree with donations made to certain political parties or political individuals.

There is a growing concern amongst the learned people of our society regarding individuals controlling a political party. Not too long ago John Elliott controlled the Liberal Party, the Carlton Football Club and a brewery. We now have another individual who will control a football club next year—and we do wish the club success—and who is now controlling a political party. Who knows? Next he might invest in Bundaberg Rum and I would have to change my drink! This has a lot of similarities to the John Elliott situation, and more will be seen in the future regarding that.

I commend the bill to the House. It is fair and equitable. Importantly, it puts time frames on the ECQ to report. I think the ECQ in the main does a terrific job, but I think it is important to set the boundaries as to when it has to report. There is no use having disclosure laws in place if we do not have a requirement about when donations have to be reported.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** And made public.

**Mr REEVES:** And made public; that is exactly right. I look forward to the state election at about this time next year for two reasons: one, we will have fair and equitable boundaries and, two, we will have fair and equitable disclosure laws.

**Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (3.34 pm): I rise to support the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008 and commend the Premier for bringing this bill before the House. This bill is evidence of a government that is prepared to make tough decisions to provide greater scrutiny of political parties and political donations. This bill will ensure that the people of Queensland can continue to have faith in our electoral system by opening donations to political parties up to the public spotlight. It is fundamental to our system of government that the people of Queensland can have faith in free, fair and democratic elections to this parliament. In our system of Westminster responsible government, democratic elections do not only mean that all of the people of Queensland can be represented fairly but that there is strong accountability for the decisions we make as legislators.

In Queensland there are few restraints on the legislative power of the Legislative Assembly. There are no human rights protected and few procedural rights that are protected from the reach of our parliament. The protection for Queenslanders lies at the ballot box. Queensland's history has many sad tales of interference in the electoral system. Prior to EARC and the Goss government's reforms in the early 1990s, electoral boundaries were decided by this House and often by those members who had the majority—the government. While the latest redistribution has brought some significant change to the electoral boundaries of Queensland, there is no longer any question about the fairness of these boundaries. While people might argue about who should get their vote, no-one is arguing about how their vote should be counted.

With the mounting expenses of political campaigning in our modern world, this bill will ensure that the public's faith in our democratic institutions cannot be eroded by political donations. Most importantly, the bill will see donations to political parties reported in a timely manner. Disclosure time frames for donations of more than \$1,000 will be cut from 12 months to six months, while donations of more than \$100,000 will need to be declared within 14 days of the donation. As well, the Electoral Commission of Queensland will be required to publish donations of more than \$100,000 on its web site within 10 business days of the return and for all other declarations within six months of the return being provided. Declaring political donations to the ECQ is not enough of itself. This reform will see the information made available to Queensland voters so that they can make an informed decision.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition's speech and I heard him talk about intimidation. What that is really code for is 'Clive Palmer'. I think there should not be any doubt in this place that, when the Liberal National Party is talking about intimidation, it is worried about the people of Queensland finding out just how much influence this man has. When he pays his money to the Liberal National Party, he wants a return on his investment. What return is he looking for? Mr Palmer is a self-confessed fan of the former National Party government of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Robert Sparkes. He makes no secret of the fact that he liked and admired their government and their style of government. It is quite ironic in a bill about promoting fair and democratic institutions that Mr Palmer would like to see us return to the bad old days of Sir Joh and Robert Sparkes running the show.

Let me also address the Leader of the Opposition's point about the declaration of donations from unions. I think the first point is that, if the Leader of the Opposition were serious about this democratic reform, as he calls it, he would be asking that companies which make donations have a referendum of their shareholders. I doubt that that is going to be the case. I did not see it in the amendment, and I doubt that the Leader of the Opposition will support that.

Union leaders are democratically elected. A lot of union leaders have more constituents than some of the members in this House. I think they undergo a ballot every four years. They have to justify their actions to their members who, unlike constituents, have to choose to be part of that union. They pay their fees to be part of the union, whereas the people we represent have no choice about whether they have to vote and whether they have to pay taxes. The other thing is that, unlike companies, unions are already subject to a regime of disclosure of their donations to their members. Unions do have to declare their donations. I know that unions publish their accounts to their members every year, and that includes a specific line about donations.

The union that I am a member of and a former official for, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, does not hide the fact that it has a political fund. When I was an official we held a referendum about establishing a political fund. We decided how much per member per year would be put into the political fund and what it would be spent on. That was vastly supported by the membership of our union.

Public funding for election expenditure has been a crucial step in reducing the reliance of the political process on political donations. For most political parties public funding of election expenditure does not come anywhere near the amount they spend on putting their arguments to the voters of Queensland. However, there have been some examples where candidates have obtained public funding above and beyond what they have spent on prosecuting their case for election to parliament. Unfortunately, this has led some to call into question our system of electoral funding.

Electoral funding was never meant to cover all of the expenses of political campaigning, let alone provide a profit or a windfall to a high-profile candidate. This bill ensures the integrity of our funding process by requiring that electoral funding must be linked to reported and verified electoral expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or party. Those who claim electoral funding will have to provide evidence of their expenditure to the ECQ. Public electoral funding is an important method of reducing the reliance on political donations. The people of Queensland should be able to have faith that their moneys are being spent on promoting democracy.

I will conclude by saying that our parliamentary system of democracy relies on a free, fair and democratic electoral system. This parliament has the responsibility both to protect rights and to limit those rights as required. That is why it is so crucial that the parliament be subject to the democratic rule of the people of Queensland and that they know who is paying for political campaigns. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (3.41 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Electoral Amendment Bill 2008. The main objectives of this bill are aimed at increasing transparency with respect to political donations, and I have no objection to that. The original intent was for this bill to come in as a reflection of Commonwealth legislation. That bill, the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations and Other Measures) Bill, has been delayed to 30 June 2009 as it undergoes a joint standing committee inquiry.

However, for reasons of its own, the Bligh government has decided to go ahead and bring these Queensland amendments in ahead of the Commonwealth bill which it is supposed to mirror and despite the fact that the Commonwealth bill might not get passed or otherwise might have significant changes made to it. These amendments may soon have to be changed again, so why the rush? Even before the bill has been debated there are quite a number of amendments that will be introduced by the Bligh government. Why not wait and get the bill right in the first place?

The amendments to the amendments which will be brought in by the Bligh government today are necessary because the bill has already been identified by the Electoral Commissioner as being poorly drafted. However, the main amendments today include a reduction in the donation disclosure threshold from \$1,500 to \$1,000. One would think that, with the ever-rising rate of inflation and the falling buying power of the dollar, that \$1,000 will pay for very little, especially in an election campaign. Additionally,

the time frames for disclosures have been halved from 12 months to just six months. Donor lodgement time frames for returns will be reduced from 20 weeks to just eight weeks and political parties and associated entities will go from 16 weeks to eight weeks.

Another proposed amendment will require that donations of \$100,000 or more within the six-month reporting period must be reported by both the donor and the recipient political party within 14 days of making the donation, which brings the total from that single donor to \$100,000. Election funding will only be paid for expenditure directly incurred by a candidate or party for which evidence is provided to the Electoral Commission. Overseas or non-government donations will be banned.

Perhaps worst of all is that once again the Bligh government is making retrospective legislation with these amendments. The legislation will date back to 1 July 2008. I note that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee stated with regard to whether this bill has sufficient regard to the institution of parliament that—

This bill was to have formed part of a nationally consistent approach to electoral funding and financial disclosure. However, the relevant Commonwealth bill has been introduced but not passed. It (the Commonwealth bill) was to be the template for a nationally consistent approach to reforms regarding receipt of political donations.

Once again, I ask: why the rush? A state election is not due for another 12 months. Let us get it right. With regard to the rights and obligations of individuals, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee says that it definitely will affect the rights, liberties and obligations of anyone who has made a donation from 1 July to now. Acts of parliament should operate prospectively, not retrospectively. Again, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee noted that this legislation will impact upon rights, such as the right to information privacy of individuals who donate more than \$1,000 but less than \$1,500 to candidates or registered political parties, and will impose additional statutory duties on candidates for election and registered political parties. A failure to comply could result in an offence under the Electoral Act. Clearly, between the many amendments before us today and the retrospectivity of this bill, it is yet another sign of the very poor law-making of the Bligh Labor government.

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Electoral Amendment Bill brought to the House by the Premier. The bill makes a number of substantive changes to the regulation of donations to political parties. Specifically, the bill reduces the threshold at which donations must be disclosed from \$1,500 to \$1,000, introduces twice yearly rather than annual reporting of donations to the Electoral Commission, improves the timeliness of public disclosure of donations by reducing the time period for donors and parties to prepare and lodge returns with the commission from 20 to eight weeks, requires the commission to publish those returns within six weeks and, importantly, requires donations of more than \$100,000 to be declared within 14 days.

The bill also closes the loophole which has infamously allowed Pauline Hanson to personally profit from public election funding by legislating to ensure that public election funding received by a candidate cannot exceed the actual amount spent by the candidate on the campaign.

**Ms Lee Long** interjected.

**Ms NOLAN:** I will take the interjection from the last remaining One Nation member of this House who asked, 'What about everyone else?' The point here is quite clear. I am surprised to find that she is the only person in this place who does not appear to understand it. No-one else is taking more in public election funding than they are spending on their campaigns. Only Pauline Hanson in Australian politics is doing that. It is a disgraceful attempt to profit from public election funding which is established in the interests of democracy and the integrity of the system.

Only Pauline Hanson has been deliberately running losing political campaigns in order to live off the proceeds. Only Pauline Hanson has been profiting from this loophole by spending very little on campaigns but collecting a substantial amount of money in public election funding—sometimes in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Only one person in Australian politics has been doing it. It is an utter disgrace and it is appropriate that this system, which was never set up for personal financial gain, should now be ended. I am very disappointed that the last One Nation member in this place cannot seem to get it. I look around the House and I see that on this side and indeed on the other everyone else gets it. It is not rocket science.

In broad terms, the bill reflects the intent of the legislation introduced by the federal Labor government into the Senate in May this year. In one of its last disgraceful acts of Senate control—not quite as bad, I guess, as WorkChoices—the federal Liberals have tied that legislation up for 12 months by shunting it off to a Senate committee. It has therefore been necessary for Queensland to act ahead of the federal timetable.

Electoral donations remain a difficult issue in Australian politics. In my discussions with ordinary members of the community it is clear to me that members of the public are generally not overly comfortable with political donations at all; nor, however, is the average person particularly supportive of full public funding of political campaigns. That fundamental juxtaposition along with the fact that a straight ban on donations would most likely send them underground means it is clearly the case that political donations are best dealt with by a mechanism that regulates to ensure clear public accountability and transparency.

That should be a matter on which there is bipartisan support, but sadly it is not. At a federal level, the Howard Liberal government did more than anyone to prevent disclosure—increasing the disclosure threshold from \$1,500 to \$10,000 and disguising the federal Liberal Party's own private sector donations through the murky Greenfield Foundation. Now the federal Liberal opposition, as I said earlier, has shunted the Labor government's efforts at reform off to a committee. In Queensland the discrepancy between the two sides of politics is just as polar. The Queensland Nationals, as we all know, made the political donation delivered in a brown paper bag a part of this state's folklore. Today they are embarrassed into supporting this bill, but anyone who listened to the Leader of the Opposition's contribution would acknowledge that their support is grudging. So why is that? Why is it that today's Nationals are uncomfortable with substantial improvements in public disclosure of political donations? The answer to that is simple: Clive Palmer.

The Liberal National Party is not a movement with a healthy community membership base, particularly since half of the old Liberals failed to sign up to the new merged party. It is not, as the Premier so clearly pointed out this morning, a group with ties across stakeholder groups. Rather, the Liberal National Party is a political outfit with a very rich sugar daddy. Clive Palmer is Australia's second richest man—an old-style property developer-cum-mining magnate and a self-confessed fan of the corrupt Bjelke-Petersen style of government. Now he is the chequebook behind the Liberal National Party. On the day that the new LNP was formed, Mr Palmer made his position very clear when he said—

All of my personal assets, my jets—

not jet but jets—

everything are available for the party any time.

The Liberals saw this old National approach coming. Respected former Liberal MP Bill Hewitt lamented the change, saying—

We've been seduced by a billionaire with a couple of million dollars to spare.

And already that backing is in action, with party leader Mr Springborg having sought permission of the Clerk to prevent the disclosure of the free helicopter rides he receives from home in Yelarbon to the big city lights. This kind of influence where a party is bankrolled by a single businessman with clear personal gain to be made from a friendly—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and untrue and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

**Ms NOLAN:** I am happy to withdraw. This kind of influence where a party is bankrolled by a single businessman with clear personal gain to be made from a friendly, or indeed beholden, government is a new and unwelcome development in Australian politics. It is more reminiscent of the Russian oligarchs than the great tradition of Australian participatory democracy. No-one in the community will be surprised that it is the old Queensland Nationals who today are taking us down this path. All in the community should be clear, however, that once again it is Labor, both in the federal parliament and in this state, that is standing up for openness, for accountability and for the public interest while our conservative colleagues do their best to return us to the bad old days of the brown paper bag.

**Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (3.53 pm):** I rise to support the Electoral Amendment Bill. This bill builds on existing political disclosure laws and develops a disclosure regime with greater accountability and transparency. It does this through amending the current laws by reducing the disclosure threshold from \$1,500 to \$1,000; reducing disclosure time frames from 12 months to six months; requiring returns to be prepared within eight weeks rather than 20 weeks; and requiring the Electoral Commission to publish returns within six weeks of receipt. The bill also introduces new disclosure provisions, including banning donations from overseas or non-Australian companies which ensures that Queensland laws can be applied and enforced in the state's disclosure regime and introduces strict disclosure requirements on single donors once their donation amount totals \$100,000, which requires disclosure within 14 days. Every time a single donor reaches a donation amount of \$100,000, the donation must be disclosed in addition to the twice yearly reporting period disclosures.

The provisions of this bill will be welcomed by the Queensland community. In recent times there has been significant debate about disclosure of funding to political parties and frequently in this place we hear allegations made about fundraising and donations. There is a community expectation that donations to political parties are disclosed and that information about who provides funds to political parties is readily accessible. Queenslanders and indeed all Australians do not want their political process up for sale and they do not want their parties or their politicians able to be bought. They also do not want politicians to be able to profiteer from donations. The member for Caloundra made some comments that I was also going to speak about today in terms of the debate in the community about public funding and the balance between private funding and public funding. I am sure that none of us want to go down the American system of funding of individual candidates.

I remember an example that I came across when I visited the States a few years ago of an American politician who had spent \$60 million of his own money to win his primary followed by \$40 million to win the election—\$100 million in total of his own money to succeed by 1.5 per cent. One has to wonder whether that \$100 million got him over the line or not, but he got over by 1.5 per cent. I remember talking to people about why someone would invest so much of their own money and was told that, given the particular disclosure and taxation laws he was faced with, he would probably receive more than three times that in donations over the course of his term of office so that it was actually quite a wise investment for him. But obviously Australians understand that political parties receive donations and that various political parties have traditional support bases that provide funds to assist administrative and campaigning functions.

It is no secret that unions donate to political parties. It is no secret that businesses and companies donate, and Australians have long known that these entities make political donations. But what they want to be sure about is that these donations are made public and that we—parties and politicians—are not for sale. The opposition today has tried to run a stunt about unions—a typical stunt that tries to single out unions for special donation requirements, and it is just a stunt.

**Mr Springborg:** You're singling out Mr Palmer by the sounds of it.

**Mr FINN:** Unions make political donations to parties that best advance the interests of working people and their members, and everyone else knows it. In this country we have freedom of association and political disclosure laws that apply to unions as they apply to any other organisation, just as the provisions of this bill will apply equally to unions as they will to anyone else including, Leader of the Opposition, Mr Palmer. The Leader of the Opposition interjected and said that the bill is trying to single out Mr Palmer, and that is simply not true. This bill provides equal application to all political donors.

The member for Waterford outlined the nature of unions, and I refer members to the comments that he made about their constituency size and the freedom of association laws. However, this is about the fact that the community does not want one side of politics treated differently when it comes to the application of the state or federal laws, and that is what the whole rejection of WorkChoices was about. The whole rejection of the Howard government was about legislation that was applying unfairly. Everyone knows that Liberal National governments are anti union, but when they legislated so strongly in their own favour they were soundly rejected.

The amendments of the opposition today and its focus on trying to treat unions differently are just tired old rhetoric from an opposition focused on the past. It is tired old Cold War language from the best resourced and most backward focused opposition we have ever had. The future in Queensland is about fairness, not about looking backwards. It is about having vision and laws that treat people equally and it is about being accountable.

That is why the provisions of this bill apply equally to all. The concepts of fairness and transparency are the basis of community expectations regarding political disclosure. Any perception that donations are secret or intended to buy an outcome create community suspicion. They also create community outrage, and I remember well the outrage in 1989 at the attempts by Edmund Rouse, a Tasmanian businessman, to buy a political outcome to benefit the Tasmanian Liberal Party. That was a brown paper bag deal that offered to pay a Labor member to cross the floor to avoid a Labor alliance with the Greens and so deliver a return of a Liberal government. Quite rightly, Edmund Rouse was sentenced to three years jail for his attempt to buy a political outcome.

This bill's provision that ensures large donations are rapidly disclosed is about bringing about accountability. Large donations create perceptions that donors are buying something and that parties will be indebted to their donors. Secret donation deals create the perception of corruption. That is what caused community outrage at Edmund Rouse's bribery attempt almost 20 years ago. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will remember that community outrage as it occurred in the year he was elected—the pre-EARC year of 1989.

The member for Southport and others mentioned speculation in Queensland about funding of the Queensland Liberal National Party by Clive Palmer. The media has reported widely on the provision of massive funding support by Mr Palmer and particularly the provision of his jet to enable the Leader of the Opposition to fly around the state shoring up support for the merging of the National and Liberal parties. The community has a right to know whether Mr Palmer is trying to buy a political outcome. Why would Mr Palmer fund the alliance of two political parties? Just how much is Mr Palmer spending on political donations? When can we find out how much he is giving the Liberal National Party? Rightly or wrongly, it is questions such as those that raise suspicion or perceptions of impropriety in the community.

That the Liberal Party in the federal parliament used its numbers to frustrate the passage of the Commonwealth bill and today in here the members opposite criticise the rapid implementation of the bill and attempt to cloud the debate in anti-union rhetoric only adds to the suspicion. They say they support the bill, but then they protesteth a bit too much.

I note that in this debate there has been some interjection across the floor in relation to the Nuttall case. I note that the Nuttall case is before the courts, but I think I need to make a couple of things clear.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Order! Again, I note your observance. Please be very careful at this point.

**Mr FINN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I shall be very careful. The Nuttall case relates to donations to an individual, not to a party. In the Nuttall case, we saw a Premier who immediately referred the matter to the CMC, a Premier who forced the person out of the party and a Premier who provided documentation to the CMC. That is what happened in that case.

These rules increase disclosure requirements. This bill brings in increased disclosure requirements. It would, in fact, create a situation such that every time a donation amount reached \$100,000, a new disclosure requirement would be enacted. So these disclosure requirements for people receiving large donations require increased reporting.

The intent of this bill is about delivering accountability and transparency to the Queensland community whilst applying equally to donors and political parties. I welcome the amendments that will be moved by the member for Gladstone, which improve the bill. Those amendments are about fairness and, in contrast to the opposition's amendment, are about ensuring that some candidates and their donors do not face more onerous disclosure provisions than others.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** It is not an amendment about hackneyed old political ideology.

**Mr FINN:** I take that interjection. The amendments to be moved by the member for Gladstone are not about hackneyed old political ideology; they are about fairness and ensuring equal application in disclosure requirements.

The Bligh government is not standing still or looking in the rear-view mirror. This bill is about moving forward with fairness. It is about improving accountability and delivering progressive legislative change. I commend the bill to the House.

**Hon. KG SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (4.04 pm), in reply: At the outset, I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate today. As the Premier indicated when she introduced this bill, the changes to the legislation reflect some of the changes contained in the Commonwealth bill that is currently before the Senate and subject to consideration by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, whose report is not due until 30 June 2009. The state government is committed to maintaining a high level of scrutiny of donations to political parties. For that reason it has decided not to wait for the passage of the Commonwealth legislation. That will ensure that the amendments are in place well before the next state election.

A number of members from the other side have raised this issue during the debate, including the member for Caloundra and the member for Nanango. I can advise them that if the federal opposition had not tried to delay the passage of the bill in the Senate by referring it to the joint standing committee, it would have been passed by now. Those opposition members may be able to hold up federal legislation but that does not mean we have to follow suit. We announced that we would be making these amendments and we have done so in an expeditious manner.

Because the Queensland electoral laws relating to electoral funding and financial disclosure are based on part 20 of the Commonwealth act, once the Commonwealth bill is passed in whatever form the Queensland act will be examined again to see if further changes are needed to better align the Queensland laws with the Commonwealth act as amended.

I confirm that the bill seeks to achieve greater scrutiny of political donations by reducing the electoral donation threshold from the current \$1,500 to \$1,000, increasing public scrutiny of donations by reducing disclosure reporting periods from annually to six monthly, reducing donor lodgement time frames from 20 weeks to eight weeks and political parties' or associated entities' time frames for lodgement of returns from 16 weeks to eight weeks, introducing an additional special reporting requirement for donations which total \$100,000 or more during any six-month period, banning gifts of foreign property, requiring the Electoral Commission to publish on its web site within six weeks of receipt of the returns relating to donations to political parties returns by registered political parties and associated entities, and returns related to donations totalling \$100,000 or more in any six-month period to be lodged within 10 days of receipt of the return.

I turn now to specific issues that were raised in the debate. The Leader of the Opposition has made a number of statements to which I wish to respond. Initially, he stated that the bill is a dog's breakfast. Clearly, that is not the case. But I accept that it is a complex and technical bill.

The Leader of the Opposition also stated that only now has there been some consultation with the Electoral Commission. That is just not true. There was initial consultation with the ECQ before the bill was introduced and further consultation subsequently. The amendments that will be moving during the consideration in detail stage arose out of matters that were raised by the commissioner during the consultation and were incorporated into the bill.

This bill largely adopts the amendments that are contained in the Commonwealth bill. The Commonwealth consulted extensively on the bill. As most of the matters contained in that bill were incorporated into this bill, a more limited consultation process was considered necessary.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that the lowering of the threshold for disclosure to \$1,000 and the provisions relating to large gifts of \$100,000 are not contained in the Commonwealth bill. The Leader of the Opposition appears to be confused about the changes made by the Howard government raising the threshold to \$10,000 indexed to CPI. The bill introduced by the Rudd government sets the \$1,000 threshold. We have adopted that in this bill.

The Leader of the Opposition described the government as having been in power so long it treats government as its own personal chattel. This is a statement that could be made of the Howard government or the Bjelke-Petersen government but not the Bligh government. We have been the government committed to openness and transparency. Our review of FOI laws is a key example of this. Of course, there were no laws of an FOI nature under the Bjelke-Petersen government.

The Leader of the Opposition criticised our opposition to the private member's bill on FOI disclosure. In opposing it, the government was able to point to enhancements to the disclosure regime for contracts relating to the procurement of goods and services under changes to the State Procurement Policy as from 1 January 2008 where agencies are required to publish details of all contracts and standing offer arrangements with a value of \$100,000 or more. We also indicated at the time that we would await the results of the FOI review in response to the Solomon report, and the government will evaluate contractual arrangements with relevant non-government organisations to determine whether sufficient access to documents can be or already is provided under existing reporting arrangements. In addition, documents provided to the government in support of the contracted function will be subject to the proposed right to information act as a document of the agency. This will include agencies that receive funding assistance, including in-kind support from government. This type of disclosure makes the amendments that the opposition proposed in its private member's bill unnecessary.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated that the Liberal National Party will support the bill. In this part of his speech he indicated support for a ban on donations from overseas or non-Australian companies. The bill actually provides a ban on gifts of foreign property in line with the Commonwealth bill and I draw that to his attention for the purpose of completeness.

The Leader of the Opposition also mentioned that the New South Wales government had mastered the art of bringing in the developers. The Howard government, with its intimate dinners at Kirribilli House and with the well-known \$10,000 a seat fundraisers, really does make everyone else look like rank amateurs. This is absolute hypocrisy from the opposition. Of course, the member for Cunningham complained about the modest expenditure on advertising in relation to the Q2 proposals and he, of course, seems to be oblivious to the \$1 billion spent by the Howard government on advertising. Where the opposition really takes the cake with its hypocrisy is in relation to the proposed amendment to the bill.

It was the member for Gladstone who raised the issue of whether a donor includes an organisation such as a trade union. I will clarify for her that there is little doubt that trade unions must disclose their gifts and donations to political parties under the current legislation, and there has never been any objection to that. Where it becomes hypocritical is the opposition's proposal to require disclosure of whether trade unions decided on the donation with a vote of members by secret ballot. Then donations from registered industrial organisations would be banned if not authorised by a secret ballot of members.

I note that there is no corresponding amendment which would ban someone like Mr Palmer making donations to a political party without a secret ballot of his shareholders, if he has any. The major difference between donations by registered industrial organisations—

**Mr Stevens:** That is personal money, not a company.

**Mr SHINE:** Do you know that for a fact?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Order! Mr Attorney-General, please direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr SHINE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The major difference between donations made by registered industrial organisations and donations made by corporations is that, when a person joins a trade union, that person is aware of the similar philosophy to political parties and is aware that the union is likely to support political parties in a variety of ways. In relation to shareholders of a corporation, the shareholders would not be aware when they purchase shares that some of their profits would be going to a political party. I think that is a fair proposition. I think it would come as no surprise that I will not be accepting the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

I should at this stage indicate that I will be accepting a proposal by the member for Gladstone. The Commonwealth bill has removed the distinction between individual candidates and those who are endorsed by a political party, as has the New South Wales government. We would just be bringing state legislation into line with the Commonwealth in this respect.

An erratum to the explanatory notes to this bill has been tabled. The explanatory notes state that the bill's objectives will be met by, among other things, banning donations from overseas or non-Australian companies, thus ensuring that donations come from the jurisdiction where Queensland laws will apply and can be enforced. The explanatory notes should refer to a ban on gifts of foreign property to ensure that donations come from a jurisdiction where Queensland laws will apply and can be in force. The erratum corrects the error.

I also foreshadowed that I will be moving a number of amendments during the consideration in detail of this bill. These amendments seek to remedy some of the unintended consequences of adopting certain of the Commonwealth bill provisions and also to make it clear that the schedule to the state act is being amended by the various provisions in this bill. At this point I table the explanatory notes for these proposed amendments, which have been circulated in my name.

*Tabled paper:* Explanatory notes to Attorney-General's amendments to the Electoral Amendment Bill.

Let me conclude by again saying that this bill demonstrates this government's ongoing commitment to higher-level scrutiny of political donations. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2 (Commencement)—

**Mr SHINE** (4.16 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 2 (Commencement)—**

At page 6, line 5, after 'Act'—

*insert—*

' , other than sections 4, 10, 11, 17, 21, 22, 27 and 33 to 35, '.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr SHINE** (4.17 pm): I move the following amendment—

**2 After clause 4—**

At page 6, after line 10—

*insert—*

**'4A Amendment of s 85 (Deposit to accompany nomination)—**

'Section 85(4)(c), 'more than 4%'—

*omit, insert—*

'at least 4%'. '.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9 (Amendment of schedule, s 287 (Interpretation))—

**Mr SHINE** (4.18 pm): I move the following amendment—

**3 Clause 9 (Amendment of schedule, s 287 (Interpretation))—**

At page 9, lines 18 to 33 and page 10, lines 1 to 21—

*omit, insert—*

'(2) Schedule, section 287(1), after the definition *registered*'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule, s 287 A (Campaign committee to be treated as part of (words omitted) party))—

**Mr SHINE** (4.18 pm): I move the following amendment—

- 4 **Clause 10 (Amendment of schedule, s 287A (Campaign committee to be treated as part of (words omitted) party))—**

At page 11, line 3, 'Section'—

*omit, insert—*

'Schedule, section'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11 (Amendment of schedule, s 292B (Responsibility for action when agent of party (words omitted) dead or appointment vacant))—

**Mr SHINE** (4.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

- 5 **Clause 11 (Amendment of schedule, s 292B (Responsibility for action when agent of party (words omitted) dead or appointment vacant))—**

At page 11, line 9, 'Section'—

*omit, insert—*

'Schedule, section'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12 (Amendment of schedule, replacement of ss 293 and 294)—

**Mr SHINE** (4.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

- 6 **Clause 12 (Amendment of schedule, replacement of ss 293 and 294)—**

At page 11, after line 14—

*insert—*

**'Subdivision AA Preliminary**

**'292E Interpretation**

'(1) A reference in this division to electoral expenditure for an election is to be read as a reference to any expenditure incurred for the election campaign (whether or not incurred during the election period).

'(2) For the purposes of this division, electoral expenditure for an election incurred by or for a candidate who is endorsed by a registered political party is taken to be electoral expenditure for the election incurred by the party.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13 (Amendment of s 294A (Election funding reimbursement amount))—

**Mr SHINE** (4.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

- 7 **Clause 13 (Amendment of s 294A (Election funding reimbursement amount))—**

At page 13, lines 1 to 5—

*omit, insert—*

'13 **Amendment of schedule, s 294A (Election funding reimbursement amount)—**

'(1) Schedule, section 294A, 'reimbursement'—

*omit.*

'(2) Schedule, section 294A(1), '294(1)'—'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 14 (Replacement of ss 295-298)—

**Mr SHINE** (4.20 pm): I move the following amendments—

- 8 **Clause 14 (Replacement of ss 295-298)—**

At page 13, lines 8 and 9—

*omit, insert—*

'14 **Replacement of schedule, ss 295-298**

'Schedule, sections 295 to 298—'.

- 9 **Clause 14 (Replacement of ss 295-298)—**

At page 14, lines 28 and 29, and page 15, lines 1 to 20—

*omit, insert—*

'(1) A claim in relation to an election or elections must be lodged with the electoral commission—

(a) during the period of 20 weeks after the polling day in the election or elections to which the claim relates; or

(b) *within a longer period the electoral commission, before the end of the period specified in paragraph (a), fixes.*

'(2) *The electoral commission must not fix a longer period for the purpose of subsection (1)(b) unless it is satisfied that the circumstances of the case justify the fixing of a longer period.*'

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18 (Amendment of schedule, s 304 (Disclosure of gifts))—

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (4.21 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 18 (Amendment of schedule, s 304 (Disclosure of gifts))—**

At page 21, after line 15—

*insert—*

'(1) Schedule, section 304(5)(b)(ii) and (6)(b), *'the prescribed amount (\$200)'*—

*omit, insert—*

*'\$1000.'*

This commences the amendments. I will not speak to the others other than to move them, except for what was amendment No. 3 which in the documents circulated in my name has been changed. However, these amendments increase the threshold for the declaration for Independent members from \$200 to \$1,000 in line with all other candidates endorsed by parties. I thank the minister for his indication that he will support these amendments and I thank other members in the House who have spoken in support of the amendments. I seek leave to table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Leave granted.

*Tabled paper:* Explanatory notes to Mrs Cunningham's amendments to the Electoral Amendment Bill.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The LNP will support the amendments put forward by the member for Gladstone. It was not until today when I listened to the member for Gladstone and some of the other members' contributions that I considered this issue. Many people assume that the rules and laws governing disclosure are basically the same and apply equally to all candidates. I do not think that individual candidates should be disadvantaged when it comes to donations insofar as the minimum disclosure requirements are concerned. There should be a level playing field that applies to all people seeking to be elected to this parliament. Therefore, we support the amendment because it appears to be fair and equitable. It appears to be righting something that probably should not have been a part of the statute anyway.

**Mr SHINE:** The government accepts the amendments of the member for Gladstone.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Today having listened to the Attorney and other members, one could mistakenly believe that this bill replicates absolutely what the Commonwealth government has put forward, which is now held up in the federal Senate so that this government has had to rush the bill through the House. I ask the Attorney-General: why was this not included in the legislation that came before the parliament? As I understand it, the legislation that was before the federal parliament and that is now being considered by the federal Senate contained a recommendation that the threshold be lifted and standardised for candidates in elections across the Commonwealth. Therefore, that threshold would apply in Queensland simply by replicating the federal legislation.

It appears to me that this is just another example of how this legislation was rushed, how its motivation relates to one Queensland individual, and how there was no proper consultation or consideration. Given that a moment ago the Attorney-General spoke about the wonderful consultation leading up to the introduction of this bill, including consultation with the Electoral Commission and others, can he explain why there was such a major oversight in this legislation if, in fact, it is all about the standardisation of the laws of the Commonwealth and of Queensland?

**Mr SHINE:** The honourable member for Gladstone made some very sensible representations to the government. As a result of a consideration of those representations, as I have indicated to the House, the government has accepted her suggestions in this regard. They seem eminently fair and equitable. That is the end of the matter.

**Mr COPELAND:** I seek some clarification from the Attorney-General, and I may have misunderstood the answer that he gave in his summing-up relating to this issue. My understanding was that the Attorney-General said that the proposal put forward by the member for Gladstone, which we will support because it is a sensible amendment, was one of the changes to the federal laws proposed by the Rudd government and which are now the subject of a Senate inquiry. If it was part of the proposed changes by the Rudd government that the Attorney-General has said this legislation replicates, although not entirely, why was the change not picked up and put into the proposal that he brought before the House?

**Mr SHINE:** The honourable gentleman might recall that the federal Howard government proposed or introduced a change raising the amount of the threshold to \$10,000. Clearly this government was not supportive of that threshold, even though it might have applied equally to Independents and political parties at that time. We opposed it because we did not agree with that threshold. The matter has come up again and a timely submission has been made to us, as I said, by the member for Gladstone and the government supports the submission.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** So far the honourable Attorney-General has not answered the question—and maybe he does not understand it—that the honourable Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cunningham have asked. If the amendment proposed by the member for Gladstone, which increases the threshold from \$200 to \$1,000 for Independents, was part of the legislation proposed by the federal government and which has now gone to a Senate committee, why didn't the legislation that the Attorney-General brought into this place contain that increase in the threshold from \$200 to \$1,000 for Independents? That is the question that we are looking for an answer to. That is what we would like the Attorney-General to answer.

**Mr SHINE:** I think the question raised by the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is identical to the question raised by previous speakers, and of course my answer would be the same.

Non-government amendment (Mrs Cunningham) agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM (4.30 pm):** I thank the minister. I move the following amendment—

**2 After clause 18—**

At page 21, after line 28—

*insert—*

**'18A Amendment of schedule, section 304A (Loans to candidates)—**

'Schedule, section 304A(3), '\$200'—

*omit, insert—*

'\$1000'.

**'18B Amendment of schedule, section 305A (Donations to candidates etc.)—**

'Schedule, section 305A(2), 'the amount prescribed for the purpose of this subsection or, if no amount is prescribed, \$200'—

*omit, insert—*

'\$1000'.

It is consequential to the first amendment to increase that threshold.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Similarly, I support this amendment. It is consequential on the earlier amendment and therefore it is sensible that it follows on to ensure consistency through the act.

I want to come back to the point that was raised earlier with regard to the issue of increasing the threshold from \$200 to \$1,000. Similarly, the member for Cunningham, the shadow Attorney-General and the member for Surfers Paradise have asked a similar question and the Attorney-General has not answered it. The Attorney-General has said that for the most part this legislation before the parliament today—and its amendments—seeks to replicate what the Commonwealth parliament had before it for consideration until the matter was referred to a Senate committee to report back at the end of June next year. What we have heard today from the Attorney-General is a whole lot of evasive answers. He may have been trained to do that at legal school—I would not like to be paying him \$300 an hour for that advice. He has not been able to answer this question.

There are a number of people with legal training on the other side who are listening. The Attorney said in his summing-up of the second reading debate that this legislation reflected the Commonwealth legislation and it sought to ensure consistency. If it actually sought to ensure consistency and was based upon the Commonwealth legislation, how then was it not picked up and why was the threshold not increased from \$200 to \$1,000 in this legislation? That is the fundamental question. It raises our suspicion that this legislation was very ad hoc. As I said this morning, it was a complete dog's breakfast that was bundled together in order to get at one person—Mr Clive Palmer. It was not aimed at any sort of proper modernisation of the electoral disclosure laws in Queensland to ensure openness and transparency. I do not think we should be basing any legislation on fixing up one particular person in Queensland.

We think this is an essential amendment from the honourable member for Gladstone. However, if a whole range of people were properly consulted and if it were based on the Commonwealth legislation, it would have been fixed from the start. So will the Attorney, now that he has had time to take advice, indicate to this parliament why his legislation, which is based on the Commonwealth legislation—they sought to pre-empt it because they could not wait to get out of the blocks—did not have this provision that extended the disclosure ceiling from \$200 to \$1,000 for those candidates who were outside of the registered political parties?

**Mr SHINE:** As I understand it, the existing Commonwealth legislation is relative to an amount of \$10,000 and the change proposed is to bring it down to \$1,000. There is no mention of dealing with Independents and \$200 or any other amounts relevant to Independents. So this is an area where it is not a question of being consistent with the Commonwealth bill. The Commonwealth bill did not deal with Independents because, as I understand it, that matter was dealt with in the 1980s and the Queensland legislation has never really caught up. That is as I understand the position.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** So we can understand from that that this amount was in the Queensland law and the government did not pick it up. So it was not a comprehensive overview and forensic analysis of the law in Queensland because as it stands now prior to the passage of these amendments it is antiquated and therefore what the government is seeking to do is genuine. Really, all the Attorney wanted to do was to amend in part certain bits of the legislation in order to serve a political end. Therefore, I take from that that if it were a genuine overview the Attorney would have had a proper look at the law and where it stood in Queensland to ensure real consistency. Is the Attorney prepared to admit then that in his rush to bring these amendments into parliament he overlooked this issue, so it was not a proper review and update of the political donation disclosure laws in Queensland?

**Mr SHINE:** I have explained at some length the reasons why the government has brought in this bill. I do not intend to recanvass those reasons. What I can say is that, as I said before, the matter of the treatment of Independents got out of kilter in the 1980s. There has been plenty of time for successive Queensland governments, including the Borbidge government, to address this issue if they wanted to. We must also remember that this exercise today was never intended to be an exhaustive review of the Electoral Act. We intended to implement the changes announced by the Premier earlier in the year.

Non-government amendment (Mrs Cunningham) agreed to.

Clause 19 (Amendment of schedule, s 305B (Donations to political parties))—

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (4.36 pm): As I have already flagged in my earlier contribution in this place during the second reading debate, this is about ensuring not only that there is a form of disclosure but also that members of unions in Queensland have to have a secret ballot and need to disclose that particular fact before a donation above the minimum threshold is triggered. So if the donation is over \$1,000, which is the minimum amount for disclosure, and up to \$100,000 then they are going to have to clearly demonstrate that the members of the union have had a secret ballot and by secret ballot have consented to their industrial organisation donating to the political party of their choice. In this case it is the political party of choice of their union leaders, because not all union members actually support the political party that the union movement in Queensland seeks to donate to. We have had members of the AWU and the railway union on our side in the parliament in the past as well. So any donation over \$100,000 will be caught up in exactly the same provisions as relate to the so-called multimillionaires whom the people on the other side are so scared of.

When we talk about touching the union movement in Queensland, it is sacrosanct. We cannot do something like that. We know in Queensland that that particular movement has favoured the Labor Party over a long period of time. By collecting numbers and probably usurping its authority, and in many ways subjugating what is a considerable view within their organisation amongst their members, they have been able to be a siphon for union membership dollars in Queensland which have gone straight through their head organisation to the Labor Party.

If the government is going to start talking about disadvantage in this parliament, it is seeking deliberately today on its own admission to scare people away from donating to this side of the House—because that is its only motivation. This legislation is not about transparency, because the laws in Queensland already make it quite clear that there is a transparent process—donations over \$1,500 need to be publicly disclosed and they have to be disclosed within a particular period. The government is seeking to curtail that and create a disadvantage for one side of politics in this place. Whether that will come to pass, I do not know. But one thing that irks a lot of rank and file members of the union movement out there whom I have spoken to over a long time, including members of my own family, is the fact that money is being made available to the Labor Party and they do not know because they enjoin an industrial organisation for the advocacy and the legal protection of that particular organisation.

I have stood in this place over a long period of time and said that I respect the rights of industrial organisations—unions of employees—to operate because they have done a lot of good work. But one should never forget that they take that for granted in many ways and they have become a siphon from their membership into the Labor Party in Queensland. There are a lot of people out there who are really marked by the fact that they hardly ever see an organiser from their organisation, they never have disclosed to them that a big donation has been made to the Labor Party, and they are seeing their hard-earned wages by way of union fees going into the Labor Party.

This amendment simply says that there must be a secret ballot of unions before they make donations. It does not prescribe a period of time in which they have to do it—for example, next week, again in the next month and even the year after—but they have to satisfy the Electoral Commission that

there has been reasonable consent by way of secret ballot and that it was the direction of the members that that money should be going to the Labor Party. Or maybe we might be lucky and it might go to the other side of politics. I doubt that that is going to be the case.

Whilst I am on that issue, we have heard a fair bit of attacking of one individual in this parliament today. I think we could say that this legislation could be called the 'Electoral Amendment (Get Square with Clive Palmer) Bill 2008'. That is what it is all about. The other side of politics might be very surprised when they see the disclosures that come out. I will say that this person is an extremely generous person and far more politically tolerant than what I would be. Last year he was the largest single donor to the Western Australian Labor Party. At the last federal election I think he donated more to 'Kevin 07' than he donated to the National Party. I would challenge each and every member over there to send it back. Ring up Alan Carpenter and send it back.

I would say that wherever Clive is, whether in Australia or around the world, he would be wondering about the wisdom of his investment in the Carpenter government, certainly after what we have seen over the last few days in Western Australia. Let us forget the nonsense that we have heard in this place about a correlation with major public companies. Some of them have rules where they need their shareholders to consent. I was looking at Colonial First State. Probably most companies which donate in Queensland donate more to the Labor Party than to this side, because that is how it operates. But the union movement is totally different. It is a multimillion-dollar siphon from the workers of Queensland to the Labor Party. It is a multimillion-dollar siphon from the pockets of blue- and white-collar workers in Queensland to the Labor Party.

Is it any wonder that the Attorney-General and members opposite are seeking to not have their collective sugar daddy cut off when it comes to this amendment? If they are deadset serious about evening things up then they will vote for this amendment. Give the rank and file members of the union movement in Queensland—a lot of whom are not their particular ilk—the opportunity to decide whether their hard-earned money should be going into Labor Party coffers. Members of my own family who actually vote Labor, who have been members of unions for years—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I can tell you that they have changed in recent times! The good, decent blue-collar workers who look across and see all the shiny backsides of the pretenders over there are wondering about their wisdom in supporting the Labor Party. Those people who have done so for years and years did not know about this. They do not know the Labor Party gets their hard-earned money. They are members of a union for its industrial advocacy and its legal protection. Give those people a chance to have a say. Do not run away from it. You cannot have it all your own way. You have Labor holdings in Queensland. You have the union movement that gives you millions of dollars in any particular electoral cycle.

It just reinforces to us what this is about. This is about the politics of desperation and envy of those who support this side of politics. We know the modus operandi of retribution that operates under this government. We saw it with the Clean Energy Council, and we see it with regard to business. If business ever gives to us, it generally gives to the other side even more. They do not get to sit around the lunch table, talk to the government and curry favours with the Labor Party. This is about evening the ledger and getting a bit of transparency in Queensland. It is giving rank and file blue- and white-collar workers in Queensland the chance to have a say in what you are going to do with their money and what the union movement is going to do with their money.

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. With regard to the rant by the Leader of the Opposition, I would ask for your ruling in relation to standing order 142.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to move his amendment before I call the member for Gladstone.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 19 (Amendment of schedule, s 305B (Donations to political parties))—**

At page 23, line 28—

*omit, insert—*

*'the gift;*

*(d) if the person making the gift is a registered industrial organisation—whether a vote, by secret ballot, of all the organisation's membership was taken about the making of the gift and, if it was, whether a majority of the membership voting was in favour of making the gift.'*

I table the explanatory notes for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Explanatory notes to Mr Springborg's amendments to the Electoral Amendment Bill.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I rise to speak to this amendment to clause 19 that is proposed to obligate registered industrial organisations to a secret ballot. I have certainly had people in my electorate express concern about their union membership fees being allocated to a party not of their choice, and so to that extent I can support the amendment. However, I would like the mover of the amendment to explain if he can, or if he will, why other organisations were not included in the obligation.

I said in my speech in the second reading stage that these amendments, and the second reading debate on the amendments moved by the minister and spoken to by members of the Labor Party, clearly indicate that Mr Palmer was the target of the majority of the bill's amendments. Be that as it may, there has to be equity in that situation as well because there are organisations and individuals that give significantly to the Labor Party and so they also must be accountable.

I wonder why amendment No. 1 to clause 19 did not include an obligation to hold a ballot by employer organisations as well as publicly listed companies—those organisations that have a number of shareholders. As I said, some people in my electorate have expressed concern about their union dues being allocated to the Labor Party where they do not hold those politics. I just wonder why that obligation was not across-the-board.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I thank the member for Gladstone for her question. As I indicated, there are some public companies like Colonial First State which has within its province a full indication from its shareholders with regard to that. If the member heard what was said here earlier in the day, some people said their union leadership is elected every four years. As I understand it, the boards of most of our companies are elected every year. There are also regular meetings of those particular boards and significant shareholder and board meetings that happen throughout the course of the year.

**Mr Lawlor** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** There certainly are some proxy votes as well. If you look at a lot of those major companies, donations are very much disclosed and very much flow across the political spectrum but they have a more annualised way of coming before their shareholders. In fact, some of them already have a process where they go before their shareholders and seek their consent. It is something that I am not necessarily averse to if someone wants to put those propositions forward at some time in the future. It was aimed at addressing what I see to be a major concern which has been reflected to me over a long period of time by rank and file union members across Queensland. I must admit it has not been something that I have necessarily heard from shareholders of any of the publicly listed companies. Others may have heard that, but I have never, ever heard it.

**Mr SHINE:** The government will of course oppose the opposition's amendment. The position of the opposition is one of total hypocrisy. The opposition leader says today that he would entertain a move to include a secret ballot by shareholders, if I understood his just concluded remarks. He wants to impose that on trade unions. He had every opportunity to put an amendment which would require shareholders of private companies to do likewise. He has not done so. He is not fair dinkum. The government will oppose the amendment.

Division: Question put—That the Leader of the Opposition's amendment be agreed to.

**AYES, 30**—Copeland, Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Dickson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Elmes

**NOES, 53**—Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulhern, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Jones

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (4.58 pm): I move the following amendment—

**2 Clause 19 (Amendment of schedule, s 305B (Donations to political parties))—**

At page 24, after line 20—

*insert—*

'(4A) Schedule, section 305B—

*insert—*

'(7) *In this section—*

**person** *includes entity.*

*Example of an entity—*

a registered industrial organisation'.

This amendment simply seeks to make it clear that the definition of 'person' or 'entity' includes a registered industrial organisation whether it be a registered industrial organisation of employers or employees. I note that in his summing-up the Attorney indicated that that is the way it has been applied by convention in Queensland. This simply seeks to remove any doubt. This amendment is consequential on the other amendment that I moved a moment ago and the other amendments that I will be moving subsequent to this one.

**Mr SHINE:** I am advised that amendment No. 2—and this will apply to amendments Nos 4 and 7 as well—is not necessary as it adds nothing to the current law. The act under which industrial enterprises or unions are registered in Queensland, the Industrial Relations Act, at section 423 deems them to be corporations upon registration. Section 32D of the Acts Interpretation Act says that any reference to 'a person' in the Electoral Act includes those registered organisations. Section 32D of the Acts Interpretation Act provides that 'a person' in the Electoral Act includes a corporation so the amendment is unnecessary.

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new s 305C)—

**Mr SHINE** (5.01 pm): I move the following amendment—

**10 Clause 20 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new s 305C)—**

At page 27, line 8, after 'return'—

insert—

'required under subsection (2)'.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question is not specifically about the amendment moved by the Attorney-General but relates to clause 20 as it stands and the provisions which are not going to be impugned by the amendment which the Attorney moved just a moment ago. We already heard from the Attorney-General during the course of today's debate about how this legislation seeks to reflect the Commonwealth legislation which was introduced by the Rudd government and then was diverted by the Senate to a Senate committee and will report back at the end of the next financial year.

The Attorney has already indicated today by admission or by concession that there are a number of provisions in this bill which are certainly different to what was presented to the federal parliament and what has been diverted away to the Senate committee. With regard to the minimal disclosure amount going from \$1,500 to \$1,000, the Attorney said that that is consistent with the Commonwealth legislation which is now being considered by the Senate committee. But what the Attorney-General did not give us an insight into was the figure of \$100,000. I want the Attorney-General to give us an idea of how he and his government came up with the figure of \$100,000 to be considered as a special other amount which would trigger these expedited disclosure processes within 14 days by the donor and the recipient. What science was actually used?

**Mr Dickson** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** We cannot mention that former member. I want to know the science that the government actually used. What consultation has there been with the federal government that this is the amount that it might ultimately consider? Has there been some inference from the Prime Minister that \$100,000 is the magical figure? Did members opposite sit around the cabinet table and work this out? Did they have consultation with the Electoral Commission? Obviously they did not have consultation with the Electoral Commission because there are 37 clauses in the bill and today the government has amendments to 14 of those clauses. That is just another indication of this government pulling it out of thin air and using hocus-pocus for the 'get square with Clive Palmer bill'. What was the science? What is the methodology? Why is it \$100,000? Why is it not \$50,000? Why is it not \$200,000? What discussion has this government actually had with the Commonwealth government, or is this just an indication that those opposite needed to hurriedly rush this through the parliament in order to preserve their political stocks by scaring away anyone that they might be concerned donates to the LNP in Queensland?

**Mr SHINE:** The reason for the introduction of these amendments that we are proposing, including the amendment relating to the \$100,000, is that we are keen to see that the political processes in Queensland are in fact more open than anywhere else in Australia, and I am disappointed that the honourable gentleman by inference opposes that proposition. The passage of this amendment can but send a very strong and clear signal that Queensland's political process is not for sale.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** If I am not mistaken from what I have heard today from the Attorney and many members opposite, they have been talking about consistency and generally ensuring that the law of the Commonwealth when it comes to disclosure should be reflected by the law of Queensland when it comes to the public disclosure of donations. If that is the fundamental tenet by which those opposite have considered and introduced this legislation, then I do not have too much trouble with that particular proposition and that can be believed in its purest form. But it seems to me that, when it suits the Attorney-General and those members opposite, they are very happy to talk about consistency. They are

very happy to talk about their brothers in blood in Canberra—the federal Labor government—in making sure that they have a consistent process and ensuring that there is some need for disclosure and that there should be this consistency. However, when it appears to suit their own political ends, they are more interested in actually introducing a partisan piece of legislation which is about getting even with an individual or individuals or a collective of people which they are concerned might support the other side of politics and therefore undermine the tenet that they have in government which they think is fundamentally theirs. It is the same sort of thing that we are seeing with the New South Wales Right where if anyone looks like they might threaten you then you threaten them.

What the Attorney did not answer is the issue of how the government actually came up with it. He indicated that he felt that it might be an okay amount. There has been consultation. Today many government members were weeping political tears in this place about how this legislation has been held up by this dreadful Senate committee and therefore the government has had to rush the gate and put this legislation through in its own unison way today working in isolation—not in conjunction—with the Commonwealth and lamenting the fact that the state government would have liked to have worked with the Commonwealth government.

Given that it is fundamentally based on consistency—if one reads all of the speeches that are now a record of this parliament and listened to what members have actually said—what further discussions is the state government going to have with the Commonwealth government over the course of the next six to 12 months before it might introduce its own legislation after the Senate actually has a chance to consider this? What actually happens if the Senate comes back and says that that amount is too onerous? If the Senate comes back and says that that amount should be reduced, I suppose the Queensland government would automatically rush in here and change it if it is going to be reduced.

**Mr Dickson:** Before the next federal election.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Yes, before the next federal election. What happens if the Senate comes back and says that it is too onerous and that it should be lifted or it should be reduced or otherwise? What is this government going to do? What sorts of discussions is it going to have?

I would like to actually hear a real justification from the Attorney as to how the government has come up with this and what happens if the federal government comes up with a methodology that lifts the \$100,000 threshold to \$150,000 or reduces it. Is the Attorney going to come in here and amend the legislation further? Or is the Attorney going to be happy to sit in isolation? That is my question to the Attorney-General.

**Mr SHINE:** There is no doubt this government has no problem with the concept of adherence to consistency wherever that is possible. The harmonisation of laws among the states and with the Commonwealth is an entirely desirable ideal to aim for. However, this legislation is not template legislation. All the states and the Commonwealth have their own legislation to implement their own particular practices from time to time.

I can say to the honourable gentleman that we have no idea at this stage what the final form of the Commonwealth bill will be. It has been referred to a Senate committee. The government does not have a majority in the Senate. Who knows what the end of that negotiation and political process will be. We are doing the best we can, having regard to the circumstances faced by Queensland at the present time.

As I said before, we are very keen to see that Queensland has the most transparent and appropriate laws dealing with electoral matters. We want to send very clear messages to the Australian public and to the Queensland public what our intentions are, and I would urge the honourable gentleman and his colleagues to support the government in that worthy aim.

Amendment agreed to.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I move the following amendment—

**3 Clause 20 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new s 305C)—**

At page 27, line 12—

*omit, insert—*

*'the gift;*

*(d) if the person making the gift is a registered industrial organisation—whether a vote, by secret ballot, of all the organisation's membership was taken about the making of the gift and, if it was, whether a majority of the membership voting was in favour of making the gift.'*

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negated.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I move the following amendment—

**4 Clause 20 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new s 305C)—**

At page 27, after line 31—

*insert—*

*'person includes entity.*

*Example of an entity—*

*a registered industrial organisation'.*

The reason I am not going to give a broad explanation of these amendments is that they are largely consequential to the previous amendment or the subsequent amendment.

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21 (Renumbering and relocation of s 306 (Certain gifts not to be received))—

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (5.12 pm): I move the following amendment—

**5 Clause 21 (Renumbering and relocation of s 306 (Certain gifts not to be received))—**

At page 28, lines 5 to 7—

*omit, insert—*

**'21 Amendment, renumbering and relocation of schedule, s 306 (Certain gifts not to be received)**

'(1) Section 306—

*insert—*

'(1A) *It is unlawful for a political party or a person acting for a political party to receive a gift made to or for the benefit of the party by a registered industrial organisation, being a gift the amount or value of which is equal to or more than the prescribed amount (\$1000), unless—*

(a) *the organisation has first taken a vote, by secret ballot, of all the organisation's membership about the making of the gift; and*

(b) *a majority of the membership voting was in favour of making the gift.'*

'(2) Section 306(3), after 'same person'—

*insert—*

*'or registered industrial organisation'.*

'(3) Section 306, as amended—'.

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

**Mr SHINE:** I move the following amendment—

**11 Clause 21 (Renumbering and relocation of s 306 (Certain gifts not to be received))—**

At page 28, lines 5 to 9—

*omit, insert—*

**'21 Renumbering and relocation of schedule, s 306 (Certain gifts not to be received)**

'Schedule, section 306—

*renumber as schedule, section 306AG and relocate to schedule, division 4A, subdivision B.'*

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I move the following amendment to the minister's amendment—

Omit the words 'Schedule, section 306—'

And insert the words

'(1) Schedule, section 306(2)(a), '\$200'—

*omit, insert—*

*'\$1000'*

'(2) Schedule, section 306, as amended—'.'

Just for clarity, I advise that it is the amendment circulated on a separate sheet of paper, not amendment No. 3 as circulated in the first round of amendments. There is nothing untoward about that. The singular sheet of paper with the amendment merely recognises that the minister moved an amendment to the bill and my amendment amends his amendment.

Non-government amendment (Mrs Cunningham) agreed to.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new div 4A)—

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (5.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

**6 Clause 22 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new div 4A), proposed section 306AB—**

At page 31, line 10, 'or entity'—

*omit.*

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I move the following amendment—

**7 Clause 22 (Amendment of schedule, insertion of new div 4A), proposed section 306AB—**

At page 32, after line 6—

*insert—*

'(5) *In this section—*

**person** *includes entity.*

*Example of an entity—*

*a registered industrial organisation'.*

Non-government amendment (Mr Springborg) negatived.

Clause 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23 (Amendment of schedule, s 306A (Certain loans not to be received))—

**Mr SHINE** (5.14 pm): I move the following amendment—

**12 Clause 23 (Amendment of schedule, s 306A (Certain loans not to be received))—**

At page 34, line 5, 'Section'—

*omit, insert—*

'Schedule, section'.

Amendment agreed to.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I move the following amendment—

**4 Clause 23 (Amendment of schedule, s 306A (Certain loans not to be received))—**

At page 34, after line 7—

*insert—*

'(2) Schedule, section 306A(2), '\$200'—

*omit, insert—*

'\$1000'.

Non-government amendment (Mrs Cunningham) agreed to.

Clause 23, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25, as read, negatived.

Clauses 26 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33 (Amendment of schedule, s 314A (Interpretation))—

**Mr SHINE** (5.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

**14 Clause 33 (Amendment of schedule, s 314A (Interpretation))—**

At page 37, line 19, 'Section'—

*omit, insert—*

'Schedule, section'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 33, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 37, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. KG SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (5.17 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

**Hon. KG SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (5.18 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Privilege, Private Members' Bills

**Mr SPEAKER:** With reference to the member for Cunningham's matter of privilege raised in the House on 9 September 2008—that is, today—can I say first of all that there is no matter of privilege, but there does appear to be merit in some procedural matters. To be a breach of privilege or contempt, a matter must be a breach or disobedience of the powers, rights or immunities, or a contempt of the Assembly or its members or committees. Further, conduct, including words, is not contempt of the Assembly unless it amounts, or is intended or likely to amount, to an improper interference with (a) the free exercise by the Assembly or a committee of its authority or functions; or (b) the free performance by a member of the member's duties as a member.

Non-government members may feel aggrieved that private members' bills are rejected by the government and then the government later introduces its own legislation on the matter that is substantially the same. But such conduct does not appear to amount to an improper interference with the free exercise of any member's duty. The private members' bills have been properly considered by the House. The issue, if any, is procedural rather than privilege. In short, there is no matter of privilege.

In terms of the procedural questions arising, standing order 87(1) provides that unless the standing orders otherwise provide, a question or amendment shall not be proposed which is the same as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or the negative. In the Queensland parliament there have been a number of rulings in relation to standing order 87(1) in recent years applying this rule to bills. On 15 March 2000, Speaker Hollis, after a point of order taken by the then Leader of the House, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, ruled that the introduction of the Liquor (Trading Limitations on Anzac Day) Amendment Bill 2000 was out of order as it was substantially the same as the Liquor Amendment Bill 1999, which had been previously defeated.

On 15 November 2007, I ruled that a number of amendments to be moved by the member for Warrego, Mr Hobbs, in relation to the Local Government Amendment Bill were out of order as the amendments were substantially the same as amendments and a bill which had been considered earlier in the session—that is, amendments to the Local Government Reform Implementation Bill and the Local Government (Candidates for State Elections) Amendment Bill 2007. In making this ruling, I made a number of important points, namely that the matters do not have to be identical, merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form. There is no rule preventing the presentation of two bills on the same subject or indeed opposite intent. However, if a decision of the House has already been taken on one bill, the other is not to be proceeded with. An amendment cannot be moved to a bill that has already been moved to another bill and defeated or is substantially the same as a bill that has been defeated.

Clause 103 of the Criminal Code and Other Acts Amendment Bill, whilst drafted differently, is substantially the same as clause 4 of the Criminal Code (Assault Causing Death) Amendment Bill, the latter bill being defeated on its second reading. Clause 8 and part of clause 29—that part inserting new 156A—of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill are substantially the same as clauses 4, 6 and 7 of the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill, the latter bill being defeated on its second reading.

If it is accepted that the same question rule applies to the clauses I have referred to, the next question is whether the bills can proceed to the second reading question. *House of Representatives Practice* and New South Wales practice are all helpful on this particular issue, although I do note that House of Commons practice reflected in Erskine May quoted by Speaker Hollis states—

If a decision of the House has already been taken on one such bill, for example, if the bill has been given or refused a second reading, the other is not proceeded with if it contains substantially the same provisions.

In deciding this question I note that the amount of each bill affected by the application of standing order 87(1) is in each case a relatively small part of each bill. In respect of the Criminal Code and Other Acts Amendment Bill it only touches one clause. In respect of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill it affects four clauses. I am not convinced that in the circumstances in respect of the second reading question the rule is therefore enlivened. However, on consideration in detail, when these clauses are considered, the same question rule is enlivened. So the offending clauses could only survive consideration in detail if standing order 87 is suspended for the passage of those clauses.

## MOTION

### Suspension of Standing Orders

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (5.23 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That standing order 87 be suspended to enable both the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill and the Criminal Code and Other Acts Amendment Bill with all existing clauses to pass all stages.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (5.23 pm): Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Copeland:** I can debate that motion?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes, you can. I thought we had interjections. I call the seconder first. Is there a seconder for the motion?

**Mr Fraser:** Is the motion about seeking leave or just a motion of substance?

**Mr SPEAKER:** This is only the motion to seek leave. It is a substantive motion.

**Mr Fraser:** So this is the formal debate?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes, it is.

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (5.24 pm): I second the motion. Mr Speaker, firstly, I make the point that we accept the ruling that you have made and the ability of you as Speaker to make such a ruling in the circumstances. Obviously the clauses that you have drawn into question under standing order 87 will, in fact, be dealt with in substance during the second reading debate. With regard to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill that we are debating this evening the differences between the clauses that Mr Speaker enumerated in his ruling will form part of the debate in substance.

However, in the context of the point of privilege that the Leader of Opposition Business put forward earlier this morning, it is useful to make a couple of key points. The first point, as Mr Speaker correctly pointed out, is that this is not a matter of privilege. Secondly, to the extent that the Leader of Opposition Business has sought to make a point about the procedures involved in determining whether the clauses are the same, which as Mr Speaker pointed out are not the same but substantially deal with, albeit in different ways, the same subject matter, it is relevant to point out that should the Leader of Opposition Business in authoring this tactic in the parliament this morning be successful, the effect in substance would be that the relevant clause of the liquor bill which will provide for a secondary supply provision so that at schoolies on the Gold Coast at the end of this year the police will have the ability to enforce responsible service of alcohol secondary supply provisions and prevent a great deal of the harm that has been visited, would not be debated—not tonight and indeed not until after this parliament is prorogued.

In terms of looking at the issue in substance, one has to question, therefore, the rationale and the strategy behind the Leader of Opposition Business's tactic because the opposition's point in substance is this. They believe that the matter of the supply of alcohol to under-age people, particularly at schoolies, should be addressed. However, the effect of what they are seeking to do would be that such a law would not apply this year and indeed would not be able to apply until after the parliament is prorogued. I think that point needs to be emphasised.

In reality what we are dealing with here is an issue which, as Mr Speaker has correctly pointed out, was contained in a private member's bill which was defeated in this parliament and in the context of the debate in substance because of its deficiencies in the way in which it was proposed to operate. Having therefore picked up the idea of addressing this issue and having undertaken the work to deal with this issue in a way that deals with it in substance and does not have the sorts of unintended consequences that were part of the previous drafting, we seek bipartisan support to pass the provision. That is unlike the sort of tricky tactic which would in fact see the ability for someone's 19-year-old brother, sister or friend out there in the community at schoolies this year to supply an unspecified amount of alcohol to an under-age person and there being the consequences that follow from that.

While acknowledging that there is no point of privilege, while acknowledging the point of procedure that the opposition is seeking to pursue and while pointing out that in the debate proper that will follow on the bill later tonight, this point will be debated in substance at length and is in substance different in the view of the government, the reality of the tactic employed by the opposition here today is about trying to deny addressing the issue in substance in the community. In that regard, the tactics and the aim therefore of what it was that the opposition is trying to seek needs to be drawn into question. In that regard, as Mr Speaker pointed out, he does not propose that the bills in substance should be withdrawn from the *Notice Paper* in totality. In fact, as he pointed out, the provisions which are not identical but cover the same territory, albeit in different ways, should therefore be allowed to proceed and be subject to a substantive vote of the parliament.

Let there be no mistake about what would be the case if we were not employing the procedure of suspending the relevant standing order. It would have the effect that at schoolies in a couple of months time there would be no provision covering this field, and thereupon lies the substance of the debate. I support the motion.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.29 pm): The Treasurer has displayed the greatest case of hypocrisy that I have ever seen proffered in this parliament in recent years. This morning in this place the member for Mount Coot-tha scoffed, snivelled at and derided the Leader of Opposition Business when he put this matter forward for your consideration, Mr Speaker. Now the Treasurer comes into this place to try to concoct an argument to justify his absolute arrogance and hypocrisy earlier today. We see that time after time, day after day, from this government.

The proposition put forward by the Leader of Opposition Business this morning addressed the issue of whether this matter involved potential contempt or an interference with the minority rights of members of the House who are not in government. Now, the member for Mount Coot-tha, who is too smart for his own boots, has come in here to construct an argument. Last year in Goondiwindi I was present when this minister was asked a question about whether the government was going to inflict regional councils on Queensland. At that public meeting—his own ministerial council meeting—he said, 'No, we will not do it', even though he knew full well that they would. That shows the quality of the person who stood in this place wheedling an argument seeking to justify the unjustifiable.

This issue needed to be resolved by the parliament. For a number of years I have been introducing private members' bills into the parliament, as have my colleagues. However, this government has only ever wanted a bipartisan expression when it goes its way. It has never wanted a bipartisan expression if we put forward a good idea that requires the support of the government. That is the hallmark of a government that is very arrogant and stale as a consequence of being in power for the last 10 years and believing that it owns government in the state of Queensland. If the community at large had seen the look and the smile on the face of the Treasurer, if they could have seen the arrogant expression on his face this morning, they would see a practical expression—

**Mr FRASER:** I rise to a point of order. I think that the Leader of the Opposition has achieved his aim in seeking to have me put on the record that I find his description and his words offensive, and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I withdraw. If the community had seen the look on his face this morning when we sought to have this issue clarified, it would understand the motivation not only of the Treasurer but also of the government. The parliament can only operate properly if it operates in a fair environment. It can only operate properly if it operates in a consistent environment. Mr Speaker, I acknowledge your ruling because it is consistent with our understanding of the way standing order 87 operates.

Over a number of years I have introduced into the parliament legislation to ensure the criminal confiscation of the proceeds of crime. The government voted down my bills, but then introduced almost identical legislation so that it could seek the popular accolades of the people of Queensland. That also happened with the introduction of drug courts. For a number of years the then coalition pushed and prodded the government to introduce drug courts into Queensland, but the government voted against them. Then it introduced its own legislation to introduce drug courts. We saw that happen again with telephone interception powers. Whilst the legislation was not strictly the same, it was similar in broad conceptual terms.

We saw it happen with legislation dealing with the responsible service of alcohol. Do members know the real effects of the government playing politics on 7 August last year? On 7 August 2007 this government, of which this Treasurer was and is a member, voted down the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill 2007. Do members know what the practical effect of that was? Tens of thousands of kids who were attending schoolies functions throughout Queensland were not protected because the Treasurer did not care about them. This Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, felt that kids who were attending schoolies in 2007 were not worth protecting. However, now in 2008 he is prepared to come into the parliament and say, 'We will introduce protections for kids who are attending schoolies in 2008.' That goes to show how this government is bereft of principles, ideas and morality. This government is prepared to play politics with the lives of Queensland kids by voting down legislation just because it does not suit its political end and because it was introduced by the opposition. In actual fact, our legislation contained greater punitive provisions than the government's legislation, so the kids would have been even more protected. Therefore, let us hear no more bunkum from honourable members opposite about how they believe in protecting kids. I simply ask the question: why was it not worth protecting the kids over 12 months ago when the government defeated our legislation?

The lesson for this government to learn is that this parliament is not its property. The premiership of Queensland is not meant to be passed from one person to another as some sort of monarchical chattel. The government believes that it has the right to stay in power as long as it wants and treat the government as its own chattel. It believes that anyone else who has a good idea deserves repudiation and subjugation. While it refuses to acknowledge that anyone else can have an idea that is worth putting forward, it will take someone else's good idea, bring it into this place and proffer it as its own. This morning the Premier talked about ideas, giving a practical example of an idea that her government has stolen. This government is out of ideas. It has voted against our proposed amendments to the Criminal Code and then brought similar legislation into this place. I cite issues such as the drug court, TI and a whole range of others. This government is bereft of ideas.

We will not vote against the suspension of standing orders. This is simply a statement of principle regarding the condition of this parliament. We must ensure that there is a consistency under which the parliament can operate in the future. Mr Speaker, hopefully your ruling today will establish a platform that will ensure that there is a level playing field in this place so that the government can no longer play politics with the good ideas of the opposition, hoping to steal them and put them forward in this place as its own. This is particularly important when we are dealing with the lives of kids. The kids who attended schoolies last year could have been protected by our legislation. At least now the government says that the kids of 2008 are worthy of the parliament's protection.

Mr Speaker, your ruling on the assessment of that particular standing order hopefully will ensure consistency. I say with some degree of forlorn pessimism that it is unlikely that the government will change, because it has been in power for so long and no longer cares. However, I would ask the government to learn from this and avoid repeating past mistakes, because it could again deny the kids and the community of Queensland the protection they deserve.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (5.38 pm): Mr Speaker, at the outset I thank you for your ruling on both the matter of privilege and the procedural point that I raised. I respect your ruling that the point was not a matter of privilege. I respect the decision that you have made in that case, and your upholding of the procedural point that was the basis for the matter that I raised this morning.

In the time that I have been in this chamber, only once have I seen the government support a non-government private member's bill. I believe that was in the case of the member for Nicklin some time ago. In no other case has this government supported a private member's bill. Not only has the government refused to support those bills but also it has actively spoken against them and ridiculed them. Now we see the government bringing in, as you have ruled Mr Speaker, bills that contain provisions that do exactly what our private members' bills intended.

Mr Speaker, quite rightly, you have interpreted standing order 87(1) as the question having already been put. Mr Speaker, that is something that this government needs to learn—that there are procedures in this parliament, that this parliament is not simply here to serve the Labor Party and its members, that this parliament is not their little private play thing that they believe they are born to rule and run however they like. This parliament does recognise that minority members have rights, that we can introduce private members' bills and that they should be debated in good faith.

Mr Speaker, when the member for Surfers Paradise introduced his bill and it was debated, we had member after member after member of this Labor government actively speak against it and ridicule it. They ridiculed the provisions in that bill—

**Ms Barry:** It was flawed.

**Mr COPELAND:** And the member for Aspley was one of them. All of those members opposite voted against it and now, as you have ruled, Mr Speaker, the intent of the bill currently before the House implements the provisions largely as proposed by the member for Surfers Paradise. Not only did they not support it; they voted against it and spoke against it. The intent of that bill was spoken against by members of the Labor government.

The government has to learn the lessons from this ruling, and I hope it does. It is about procedure. It is not about trying to stop debate on the bill, because we support it. We were the ones who introduced the original bill. It has nothing to do with the spurious argument put forward by the Treasurer, trying to defend the position that he found himself in today with the interjections that he was throwing across the chamber when I raised the matter of privilege this morning. He was found out to be too smart by half. 'The will of the parliament,' he said, 'The will of the parliament. That is what it is called.' Mr Speaker, what you have correctly done is rule that there are procedures in this parliament that should be followed and they should be followed by all members, including members of the government.

This government has been in power for a very long time. It is clear that government members are arrogant. It is clear that they are treating this parliament as their own little play thing, that they believe that they are the only ones allowed to be in power. But, Mr Speaker, that is not correct. Thank you for your ruling. I believe it is the right ruling, and I hope that the government learns from it.

**Hon. AM BGLISH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (5.41 pm): Mr Speaker, I accept the ruling that you have made. I also accept that you or indeed any other Speaker can only ever rule as you interpret the rule that is before you. I respect that. In relation to the interpretation of the standing orders before us this evening though, I would offer an alternate view of standing order 87, the same question not to be again proposed.

The standing orders in my view have to be interpreted with an application of precision about the meaning of the rule but they also have to work in a common-sense way. I look at this rule and think: could the architects of this rule reasonably have ever expected that its intention was to deny the parliament the ability to debate an issue and ways of dealing with it merely because it had been debated before?

It is my view that it is the business of this place, the business of the government, the business of the opposition and the business of Independent members—it is right at the heart of what we do here every sitting week—to debate alternative ways of dealing with the same problem. That is in fact the role of a member of parliament. Unsurprisingly, there are issues of substance on which members of parliament will differ. We will frequently differ in our views about whether or not the solutions proposed by the opposition are the right ones. At other times we will actually have bipartisan support for an issue but we will differ on the way of achieving it and we will disagree on whether or not the proposal put forward is effective.

In fact, we regularly debate alternate ways of dealing with the same problem. Not only is that not wrong; that is our responsibility. When I look at this rule, what is required in the interpretation of this rule is consideration of the word 'same'. The Speaker has interpreted it to mean 'substantially same' in this case, and I understand from his ruling tonight that he has applied the same definition in relation to other bills. I can understand that if opposition members want to resubmit a bill on the same issue but propose to deal with it in a different way they would feel some legitimate frustration if that subsequent bill had been ruled out of order under the same standing order.

Can I suggest that this standing order probably needs some consideration outside of the heat of this debate at some other time. We will deal with the issue here tonight in the way that is being proposed, and people will make their own decision about how they vote on it. But I actually do not believe that opposition members should be denied the opportunity to put forward a private member's bill on the same issue, including some parts of it that they have previously considered but might have a different or alternate component to it. If that is the way the rule is being applied, not only from the Speaker's ruling tonight but from what he has told us tonight from previous Speakers—and he has used those precedents—then I would respectfully suggest to everybody in the parliament that that is something that is worth us looking at out of the context of a particular bill, and I would be very happy to have that matter considered by the Standing Orders Committee.

Frankly, as the Treasurer said, when we actually look at the practical effect of a technical application of this rule, what we would be doing if we did not support the motion moved by the Acting Leader of the House is that we would have the procedures of the parliament overcome and inhibit what I think there is bipartisan support for and that is a good practical effect of law reform. That is a patent absurdity. When procedure gets in the way of something we actually all substantively agree on, then I think we do need to have a think about how that procedure is being applied.

I would suggest that the Speaker clearly agrees that the substantive matter should be properly dealt with by the parliament. I note that he has in fact invited the motion that has been put forward by the Acting Leader of the House when in his summing-up he said, 'So the offending clauses could only survive consideration in detail if standing order 87 is suspended for the passage of those clauses,' and that is indeed the motion that the Acting Leader of the House has moved.

On the substantive issue—that is, how should secondary supply of alcohol be dealt with not only at schoolies but at any other time—I believe that is an issue on which there is actually bipartisan support. I do not think there is any person in this chamber from any political party or any Independent who believes that the reckless supply of alcohol by adults to young people should be supported—

**Mr Rickuss:** Why didn't you vote for it last time?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer!

**Ms BLIGH:** I am happy to answer the question being put by the member for Lockyer. It was the view of the government that the proposal as it was put was impractical. It was not that it was the wrong issue but the way that the opposition proposed to deal with it was practically ineffective, and that was on the advice of the Queensland Police Service. There was not a substantive disagreement between anybody in this parliament about the actual issue.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for inviting the motion that was put by the Acting Leader of the House. I would just say again that I think there is a better way of dealing with these sorts of circumstances not only for the government but also, as I understand it, for the opposition. The Leader of Opposition Business put this forward because of what I believe is a genuine frustration by the opposition. In my view the opposition ought to be entitled to bring forward a second or third bill on a matter in relation to which it has previously brought forward a bill even if it does contain—

**Mr Horan:** It was the first bill we put before the House, not the second or third.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms BLIGH:** If a private member's bill has been rejected on a particular issue and the mover of that private member's bill, whether it is an Independent or a member of the opposition, seeks to have the issue considered again with new and different components to it but with some parts that are the same as the last time, then that is not an unreasonable request from a private member of the House, Mr Speaker. If the current precedents in relation to the application of this rule prohibit that, then it is my view that that issue should be revisited in a general sense in the standing orders. I encourage members

to put it forward to the Speaker for the Standing Orders Committee so that it can be sensibly addressed. I encourage members to support the motion as put forward by the Acting Leader of the House and invited by yourself, Mr Speaker.

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (5.48 pm): Like the Premier, I think it has been useful for all members of parliament tonight to give more consideration to standing order 87 and how it has been applied in this chamber. I think most Queenslanders would be shocked that just because a government votes down a piece of flawed legislation about a good idea we cannot consider that good idea in a different context under different legislation, and that is what we are doing tonight.

The Leader of the Opposition is absolutely desperate to tag this government as arrogant, but what we are doing tonight is acknowledging that the opposition has had some good ideas and has debated some good ideas in this House but they were put into flawed legislation. In both of these cases the legislation that the opposition put forward was substantially flawed. We have done a better job in drafting better legislation in both of these cases and we have incorporated them in bigger parts of legislation, so they are substantially different from what the opposition has put forward. As the Premier said, I think most people would be shocked that we cannot revisit some of these ideas in the parliament. This standing order does need to be considered in that context in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 26 August (see p. 2287), on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bill be now read a second time.

**Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—Lib) (5.50 pm): At the outset I advise the House that the opposition will be supporting the majority of the bill before us. We do have some concerns in relation to one or two clauses which I will outline on the way through. But the majority of the changes—although we have some concerns, which I will highlight during the debate—we will be supporting.

I note the speed with which this bill has been moved through the parliament to reach today's debate—just barely over the minimum period of 13 days. Considering the seriousness of the legislation, the impact it has on our community, on members of our community, on volunteers and on business and enterprise, and the length of time that it has taken to finally get into the House, it is understandable that the community and those who have to deal with this legislation are somewhat cynical about the government's motives and its desire to achieve a decent outcome.

Consultation on the bill with some of the peak industry groups has been pretty lightweight. They have had the opportunity to make comments and submissions in relation to the RIS and the consultation papers, but a couple of peak organisations received a full briefing on the bill only last Thursday, and here we are on Tuesday evening debating the bill. Some smaller organisations are having difficulty getting information in relation to it and are still formulating their position on the actual document that has been prepared and put in front of them. I am not referring to the RIS or to the statement of intent but to the actual bill itself. I make the comment that, given the nature of the topics covered, I think it is very poor form by this government to rush the bill through, particularly as it has taken over three years to get the legislation into this House.

The bill has had a long and controversial history. It is somewhat sad to note the genesis for the legislation. While the irresponsible consumption of alcohol has always been an issue, over the past few years the effect it has had on our community has been alarming. Where once it was a few beers to relax, today it is a highly volatile cocktail of spirits if you aim at getting drunk on a Friday or Saturday night and going out and getting into a fight. This binge-drinking culture has become a serious issue with alcohol related violence including a very concerning increase in the number of glassings—that is, people smashing the tops off glasses and attacking people inside and outside licensed venues, and other elements of violence continuing to hit our pubs and clubs and out into the street including incidences of violence against women, violence against innocent bystanders and violence against those people charged with enforcing the law and maintaining peace and order.

According to *Statistics on drug use in Australia*, a report which was released in April last year, in 2004 nine per cent of Australians drank on a daily basis while a further 41 per cent drank weekly. I would have to put myself in the 41 per cent category. The report found that 35 per cent of Australians drank alcohol at levels considered risky or high risk for short-term harm and 10 per cent at levels

considered risky or high risk for long-term harm. Of all the drugs covered by the survey, alcohol was the most common drug of concern in treatment episodes, at 37 per cent—higher than cannabis, heroin and methamphetamines.

Curiously enough, ABS figures for the 20-year period 1982-83 to 2002-03, which are the most recent figures available, indicate that Australians today consume 20.8 per cent less alcohol per capita. It seems that we are drinking more in a much shorter time frame. Equally, more than 70 per cent of liquor consumption in Australia is undertaken away from licensed venues, in domestic, recreational or sporting environments. The ABS 'Alcohol Consumption in Australia: A Snapshot 2004-05' found that the number of Australians drinking at risk or high-risk levels had increased five per cent in a 10-year period from 1995 through to 2004-05.

Those are just some of the facts and statistics. The reality is that in 2005 the seriousness of this problem of binge drinking and alcohol fuelled violence came to a shocking head when in a matter of weeks two men were killed on the streets of Brisbane. On 7 January 2005, 31-year-old Nigel Lee died after he was attacked by a group of men he had confronted for jumping to the front of a taxi queue in Petrie Terrace. Less than five weeks later, on 13 February, 23-year-old Paul Markham suffered fatal head injuries after he was bashed and robbed of his shoes after passing out on a bench outside the Embassy Hotel. This is what we have come down to—killing someone because they want to get in a taxi first and bashing someone to death for their sneakers after they have passed out. I think most people would agree that the culture of drinking in Australia has gone a long way down the wrong path.

Both of these stories shocked Brisbane residents and the wider community, bringing home the issue of alcohol fuelled violence in our state. Over the subsequent weeks, numerous stories about the misuse of alcohol graced the pages of our papers. The then Premier and his wife, the police minister, the police commissioner and their hordes of security guards walked the streets of Brisbane with police officers and reporters in tow to get good vision for the TV nightly news, amid calls for more police and the reinstatement of the Brisbane mall's 24-hour police station.

After prompting by the then new Lord Mayor of Brisbane, who came up with a four-point action plan, in March 2005 Peter Beattie finally responded to the escalating issue, releasing the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. That 17-point plan included changes to licensing legislation, an increase in police numbers, new policing strategies, improving late-night transport options, addressing the safety of streets through increased lighting and CCTV, and improving the management of alcohol.

Probably the most controversial of the reforms moved forward with under that plan was a ban on the advertising of drink specials and the controversial 3 am lockout. Both measures were debated and passed as part of the liquor amendment bill that year. Having already been successfully employed in Surfers Paradise in a bid to stem alcohol related violence, Brisbane clubs, pubs and their patrons were soon introduced to the idea that, come 3 am, they were either in or out.

At the time the industry held concerns that this was a bandaid solution that would simply see violence increase as angry revellers were locked out and left to roam the streets on their own. There were also concerns that, with already strained taxi ranks, the taxi service would not cope with the increase in people left out on the streets after 3 am. Amidst controversy and conflicting reports and views of its successfulness, the lockout was eventually rolled out statewide. That was the first step of the plan.

In April 2006, a full year after the announcement of those plans, a discussion paper on liquor reform was released. This is a paper that is most difficult to get a hold of. The 2006 April discussion paper is not a document that you would want to get in a hurry. We asked the Parliamentary Library for it, and it did not have a copy. We asked it to chase up Treasury for a copy, because we wanted to see what the initial issues were. Fortunately for us, Treasury contacted the Parliamentary Library today and advised that it had put it in the mail. That was most helpful, and I commend it for its rapid action in finding the document of April 2006, which set out the preliminary reform agenda of the government.

Fortunately, I was not solely relying on Treasury or the Queensland Parliamentary Library to provide me with a copy, and I managed to get a copy in my hands so we could see where the initial course of action for review was taking us. A number of points have been raised in relation to changes of direction in the review of the Liquor Act since April 2006, which is 2½ years ago since that discussion paper was initially released. The paper covered issues of the responsible service, supply and promotion of liquor, control of patrons, mention of fees, trading hours and the management of licensed premises.

It was then another 18 months before a position paper was finally released in December of last year. Included amongst the media releases and announcements made by the Premier and Treasurer was the news that alcohol and pokies were to be taken off the breakfast menu of Queensland pubs and clubs. There was also a hint of the fees that would be introduced later under this bill. In February this year the regulatory impact statement, the RIS, was finally released and received 8½ thousand submissions in response.

I have since spoken to a number of associations about the concerns that they hold, some of which are still valid with the final bill that has been introduced before us and we are debating tonight. Many operators are concerned over the introduction of new and substantial fees associated with the new licensing and early morning openings and the impact of mandatory responsible service of alcohol requirements on small clubs that rely largely on volunteers.

All of this and more has been raised over the past months with some interesting headlines which have included: 'Feud brews over liquor law changes'; 'Weekends will get a cultural overhaul—venues call for a level playing field'; 'Licensing laws will devastate clubs'; and 'It's her round: Bligh recycles booze plan'. This one in particular struck me as interesting and we have just had a very lengthy debate about it. As members of this parliament may remember—at least the *Courier-Mail* certainly did—it was only just last year that the members opposite vetoed the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill, a bill introduced in February 2007 by the member for Surfers Paradise arising out of his concern at that time in relation to the irresponsible supply of liquor by adults and parents to minors, particularly during schoolies week, but an issue of concern for all of us. At the time the then minister for wine industry development, the member for Albert, said—

The honourable member seeks to make it illegal for anyone other than a 'responsible adult' to supply alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years in private residences. The bill seeks to intrude in family relationships by dictating to parents what decisions they may make about their teenagers and alcohol. The government in opposing this bill respects the right of parents to make informed, responsible decisions about their children and alcohol.

The member for Aspley, who was a little vocal earlier this afternoon, even went so far as to say—

I want to put on the record, with an excuse for my cynicism, that I fear that this bill is more about headline grabbing rather than a practical goal of achievable solutions to the under-age drinking problems.

I was heartened to hear the Premier today say she thought it was a good idea but it could have been done in a different way. She obviously did not share the member for Aspley's views in relation to the cynicism about it. I am glad that the member did put her thoughts down on the record because they will be coming back to haunt her, I am sure.

The hypocrisy of the statements from a government which plays political games by continually opposing opposition bills only to months later regurgitate the same ideas as their own is astounding. For a government which says that it is serious about targeting the problems of binge drinking and alcohol related violence within our communities, the members have been quick to condemn and extraordinarily slow to act. Rather than making amendments when similar legislation was before the House, the government has instead resorted to playing games to later grab headlines of its own. I am sure that Queenslanders would find it concerning that rather than making the most of the time available and making good policy, the government instead insists on wasting taxpayers' time and money playing poor politics.

I will turn now to some of the issues in relation to the bill and some of the provisions that I think are worthy of raising for the consideration of members here today. The first one of those is licence fees. Amongst some of the issues that I raised earlier is the increase in fees across-the-board for pubs and clubs under this bill. First there is a base fee for a commercial licence. For a commercial hotel—that is most pubs that operate in Queensland—the annual fee is \$2,700. A specialty facility can expect to pay between \$7,500 and \$10,000. For community clubs the annual fee will range from \$250 to \$2,200 depending on their size and the number of members. The licence fees for the new bar licence proposed in this legislation are initially \$1,000 and then \$500 per annum. Then there are the fees for a detached bottle shop: \$3,000 per detached bottle shop. Then if they want extended trading hours they also have to pay more, whether it is an early morning start or a late finish. There are fees for noise, for not supplying food and also depending on your previous compliance history. All in all, according to the budget measures in Budget Paper No. 4, the government in its revenue measures expects to raise, for 2007-08, \$13 million with fees commencing on 1 January 2009 rising to an eye-watering \$30 million a year by 2011-12—a new tax on business, a new tax on patrons in clubs and pubs throughout the state of Queensland.

The explanatory notes that came out with the bill, with all the sanctimonious style that we have come to expect from this government, claim that these funds will be used to both administer the legislation and promote harm minimisation campaigns. Indeed, this was the rationale for fees set out in the regulatory impact statement. What do we get for our money—this \$30 million a year in three years of a new tax—\$13 million a year by the end of the current financial year? We do not get a lot. Page 59 of Budget Paper No. 4 shows that the expenditure for 2007-08 is \$951,000 and the expenditure for 2008-09 is \$3.8 million. So by the end of this year the expenditure associated with the liquor reforms and harm minimisation will be, according to the budget papers, just \$4.8 million.

**Mr Fraser:** It is not actually true and I will address it in my reply.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Based on the budget figures, this is a tidy little earner for an increasingly cash-strapped and debt-ridden government. I heard the Treasurer say that he is going to explain where that money is going to go so I will take that information when he responds to these issues. Nonetheless, what we will see here is another \$30 million in three years time recovered by this government from the

businesses and operators of hotels and clubs and from their patrons, because it gets passed on in the price of a pot of beer. One cannot blame the cynics in the industry who have labelled this just another tax grab.

There is also an interesting provision in clause 40 of the bill. This clause requires all the licence fees that are collected by the executive director to be paid into one of this government's special funds, the Community Investment Fund. That is clause 40 which inserts new section 219. That fund is an administered fund under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. New section 220(3) says that the minister may cause moneys to be paid out of that fund for alcohol consumption research and dealing with social issues arising from alcohol misuse and abuse and funding that part of the department through which the act is administered.

New section 220(4) says that amounts may be paid without any further appropriation being required. In other words, there is no need for the Treasurer to come back to this House to determine how the funds are to be disbursed provided that they are disbursed in accordance with section 220(3)—that is, the moneys are used for alcohol consumption research and dealing with social issues or funding that part of the department through which the act is administered. My understanding is that the Financial Administration and Audit Act requires an accounting to be made of those funds and for that accounting to be placed before the parliament for review each year, but I would appreciate it if the Treasurer could confirm that that will be the case and that that is how that fund is dealt with and that it will be clear how that is done.

Nonetheless, I think in effect this does give the Treasurer a bit of a blank cheque when it comes to funding government sponsored campaigns in relation to alcohol and harm minimisation. In terms of advertising, I think most people would consider, as it has been relayed to me, that the advertising campaigns are unlikely to work and that there is little empirical evidence that advertising campaigns on their own do anything to address the binge-drinking culture, in much the same way that there are question marks over the drink-driving safety campaigns that have been undertaken. Whereas they may be effective with people who sit at home and actually do not drink-drive anyway, they are unlikely to have an impact on people who are likely to engage in that behaviour. I know that the government itself is wary of those advertising campaigns and has commissioned research to work out whether those campaigns are, in fact, effective and whether that is effective use of taxpayer funds.

Subject to what the Treasurer might have to say in relation to the control of those funds in the new investment fund that is being established, we would probably prefer to see those funds paid into consolidated revenue and specific line item appropriations made in the normal budgetary process together with appropriate measures and KPIs as is the norm in our budget documents so that we can measure the effectiveness of the expenditure of taxpayers' money. That is not necessarily going to be the case under the establishment of a special purpose fund in the ways contemplated by new sections 219 and 220.

For many venues, the cost involved will more than double and in some cases will increase by even more than their online application fee. In an online blog—just one that we have picked up—the comment is made—

I can't help but think that these strategies are more about politics and dare I say it, the added bonus of raising some revenue to offset the impact of reduced state government revenues from the reduction in taxes derived from licensed venues gaming income caused by the recent smoking bans.

I think I recall the Treasurer saying that the cost of the smoking ban to the state, if not this financial year at least last financial year, was something in the order of \$50 million as a result of a reduction in income as a result of the introduction of smoking bans. So this is another tax grab whether we like it or not. Whether it is being used for harm reduction measures or funding the operations of the Liquor Licensing branch in Treasury, members of the community know that this is another tax grab and they are concerned that this money is not going to be used in the way that it ought to be used in terms of minimising harm. We believe that the government needs to make a commitment today that it will increase its expenditure on front-line activity—more police, more security, more compliance inspectors and more transport. The government needs to make a commitment that it will target things such as excessive noise, unruly behaviour and the orderly dispersal of patrons from venues after they leave.

There are a number of issues that need to be dealt with in relation to compliance issues. I think the Treasurer has made an announcement about some additional staff being employed. We know that compliance officers of the Liquor Licensing Division in 2006-07 were upset enough about the conditions of their employment that they actually sent correspondence to the executive director outlining their concerns. Those documents were tabled in Estimates Committee F in 2007. They outlined the stress and strain that those officers were being put under and also outlined the failure of the government at that stage to employ the promised additional four officers to supplement the Brisbane compliance unit. In fact, four officers were put on but they were immediately transferred to a flying squad to move around the state, again leaving Brisbane understaffed in terms of compliance officer requirements.

The other concern we have with the steep increase in fees is the impact it will have on regional and rural pubs that do not have the high patronage of inner-city clubs and many of which are already struggling with the effects of the drought and rising fuel prices. In my discussions with industry associations, the effect that these licence fees will have on the viability of rural and regional hotels is of great concern. The city/country divide is being worsened by the actions of this government by introducing the current iniquitous and 'one size fits all' fee regime. Industry estimates are that up to 400 hotels operating in Queensland are barely making wages for their operators. The introduction of the \$2,700 flat fee for a commercial licence may well serve to tip some of those struggling operators into bankruptcy.

While some may say that this may be an inevitable part of business, there needs to be a recognition of the role played in remote and regional communities of their local hotel. These are not just great swill palaces where people turn up and pump the money through on a Friday or a Saturday night; these are places that are essential parts of their community. The publican is a part of the community. They support community events. People go there for their sense of community. They are small places servicing small communities. They do not have any of the great bulk of patronage numbers or market out there to be able to call on or to run programs to get more people to come along. They are very limited in what they can do, and the imposition of this fee will be of some concern and is of some concern to people in those remote and regional communities in terms of the viability of their hotels.

I would urge the government to carefully consider options for providing some fee relief to those hotels where the imposition of a new licence fee will involve demonstrable financial hardship. For a small rural pub that has a steady regular trade that causes very few issues for the local community, the price of the annual licence fee of \$2,700 can seem incredibly unfair. Being able to cover the cost of the licence alone may well be impossible as there is no larger market to tap into. Sales are not elastic and growth opportunities are limited.

There is also a price hike for bottle shops, which will see their fees more than double from the current application fee of \$1,361 to \$3,000. While for the chain store bottle shops—the Coles and the Woolies that own the big operations such as Dan Murphy's and 1st Choice—such an increase may be able to be absorbed, for the small, independent and locally owned bottle-shops, the hike will most certainly be felt and I am concerned that this increase will only further encourage the monopolisation of a market already dominated by the big players in this industry. It is interesting to note the absolute dominance in the market of bottle shops by both Coles and Woolworths through the ALH Group. Every BWS you pass by is actually Woolworths on the way through and every Dan Murphy's you pass by is actually a Woolworths on the way through. Every 1st Choice liquor barn you go past is actually Coles. Increasingly, the smaller players are being squeezed out of a market by retailers with the buying power of a Coles and a Woolworths.

I also want to note the costs associated with the extended trading hours outside of 10 am to 12 midnight which is included in the base fee. That is, from 10 am to midnight it costs the base fee and then clubs have to pay further if they want to trade after midnight. While we can understand the logic behind the increase in the restricting of hours and the increase in fees for trading later into the night, there seems to be no good reason offered by this government to restrict early morning trading and in particular trading by services and sporting clubs. The restrictions seem to be driven more by a cynical desire for good publicity than by any empirical evidence that restricting trading before 10 am will reduce harm. In fact, all industry participants indicate that more harm occurs at sites particularly after midnight. There is no evidence to show that this occurs before 10 am.

Research carried out by Freeman, Palk and Davey from the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety here at QUT in Queensland titled *Reducing alcohol related injury and harm: the impact of a licensed premises lockout policy* which reviewed the lockout at the Gold Coast in 2004 showed that the percentage of alcohol related incidents between 6 am and 9 am was no worse than that before 3 pm and 6 pm, and between 9 am and 10 am it was virtually negligible. It also showed that the number of incidents between 9 pm and midnight was three times that between 6 am and 9 am. So it is 300 per cent worse between nine o'clock and midnight than it is between 3 pm and 6 pm and there is no noticeable difference between 6 am and 9 am incidents and 3 pm and 6 pm incidents.

Yet despite it being obvious that morning trading is amongst the lowest risk, this government insists on restricting hours and charging more for those people who do so. The impact is of great concern to clubs and associations that have traditionally been able to serve liquor prior to 10 am. Evidence from all sources is that the amount of alcohol related harm occurring prior to 10 am is minimal and that the clubs and community associations which do serve alcohol before 10 am are extremely safe and secure licensed premises. They are operated by clubs and organisations that maintain high standards, comply with the responsible service of alcohol voluntary requirements and in the main cause little or no problem to either police or to other organisations.

The early-morning trading fees will have a large impact on a number of small clubs. The government has during the consultation process and after the RIS was issued watered down some of these fees. They are nonetheless still a substantial concern for the operators of many small clubs. Clubs

that would require this early-morning permit—for example, golf clubs—do not experience problems with the responsible service of alcohol to patrons and yet they will still be made to pay up. At a golf club the main use of the bar is by members who may have a drink or two following an early morning game. Occasionally it may also be used during a morning function in which something like a light wine or champagne may be supplied. The clubs do not sell much in the way of alcohol; it is not their primary business. They are mainly there for the benefit of providing another and primary purpose for their members under the objects of their articles of association, and for many the fees that are to be imposed under this legislation make selling alcohol an unviable option, therefore reducing the opportunity for their members to enjoy the facilities that they would otherwise have if this early-morning prohibition was not in place.

Clubs do not have a large number of members. Of the 250 golf clubs in Queensland, 109 have less than 100 members while 67 have fewer than 50 members. So it is only a very small number of clubs indeed that actually have over 100 members. In my own electorate the Royal Queensland Golf Club is one of those organisations that is very concerned by the operation of this legislation which is imposing additional costs on it and its members. The legislation will see many of those sorts of clubs—bowls clubs as well—forced to forgo their morning trade. Golf Queensland has recommended to the Treasurer that the early-morning function fees for those small clubs be further reduced or that for those clubs that only hold four or less functions a year they be waived. The Queensland Bowls Association, which has only recently been consulted, is equally concerned with the impact that this will have on its member clubs' ongoing viability, and we spoke to the members from the Bowls Association today. Bowls clubs in Queensland are already doing it tough, as many of us know. Clubs are already struggling for viability, and this limitation on their ability to trade and earn an income while at the same time imposing new annual fees can only be considered regressive and unnecessary.

Most people consulted about the proposal are mystified as to where the restriction on pre-10 am trading came from as it was not contained anywhere in the elusive discussion paper that was issued by the then minister in April 2006. It seems, as I have pointed out previously, that this is just a politically motivated, cynical attempt to garner some good news for short-term political gain rather than to actively work to minimise harm.

That is quite apparent from a comparison between the restrictions on early trade and the requirements for late-night trade. For example, an application for an extended trading hours approval under new subsection 86(1), that is for trading between 12 am and 5 am, does not need to demonstrate a community need. There is a higher fee payable and there is a risk plan that goes with it, but there is no demonstration of community need required. Yet new subsection 86(5) says that a community club that wants to trade between 7 am and 9 am must satisfy the chief executive that there is a demonstrated community need for the application or it must be a prescribed sporting club prescribed under regulation.

You pay your money, you fill in the forms and you can trade from 12 am to 5 am. That is the period when most harm occurs. That is when the evidence shows that the fights—the blues, the assaults and the property damage—occur the most. But if you pay your money and fill in the form, you can get your licence to trade until 5 am. However, if you want to trade between 7 am and 9 am and you are the local golf club, you have to be prescribed by the Treasurer. He has to put you in there. But if you are another community association, or another community club that wants to trade in those early times, you have to go through the hoops of demonstrating community need, and there is no definition of what community need is. There are some examples given in the explanatory notes, but demonstrating community need is something that has been left out of the definitions in this legislation.

So we have a fundamental disconnect, and nothing shows the shallowness and lack of rigour of this government's response to the serious issue of harm minimisation than that contrast. If you want to come into town and operate one of the big nightclubs where they have 10,000 or 12,000 patrons a day coming through their doors, you pay your money and fill in your risk assessed management plan and comply with those requirements. You can go and operate and trade until 5 am. But if you are a small community organisation and you want to open between 7 am and 9 am and then to 10 am, you have to go out and demonstrate community need and pay an additional fee. It is that fundamental disconnect between being able to pay to go out and do harm and yet if you want to trade early in the morning, if you are a small community organisation, you have to go through these hoops.

Many small clubs and associations are asking whether this government is really about making their life easier and supporting them or whether it is about making their life harder and driving them to the wall. We believe that if this government is intent, as it seems to be, on pushing forward with these requirements then the process for making an application for early-morning trading by community clubs and associations needs to be made as straightforward and as simple as possible with minimal red tape. We have already put the prohibition in place. It is now the case that, if people comply with the legislation and want to comply with the legislation, they should be afforded every opportunity to do so at a reasonable cost without an overly burdensome paper compliance.

I would also like to comment on parts of division 6 in relation to the new 'community other licence'. This legislation streamlines the number of licences. It reduces them to five licences, which are outlined back in new division 3 and division 4. There is the commercial hotel licence, which is the normal pub

licence; a commercial special facilities licence, which has a separate set of terms as well; a commercial other licence for nightclubs and those sorts of things; a community club licence; and a community other licence. I would like to deal with the community other licence. In particular, I would like to refer to new section 83 and comment on the unworkability of that new section in the legislation.

I know that new section 83 is really a repeat of legislation that is already in place. New section 83 applies to small community groups that have a licence to trade not more than 25 hours a week in a limited licence area. To use an example, a club that I am involved with in my own area is my local junior rugby club. My kids play footy down there. Our family is a member of that club. The club operates out of a small clubhouse down at Crosby Park. I can guarantee that the club premises do not contain the register required under new subsection 83(1)(c), simply because it would be unsafe to maintain those documents in the clubhouse down at Crosby Park. The people who run the club are volunteers and they do a lot of the work for the club at home after work and the records are kept on their computers at home. That is not to say that those people do not keep them. That is not to say they are not valid. That is not to say that those people do not work hard to maintain those records and ensure they are accurate and up to date. I know they are. We get the fee notices every year. We get the emails telling us what is on at the club. We communicate that way. But just the sheer unworkability of small clubs keeping their records on small premises that are often in vulnerable locations and not secure is, I think, something that should have been and could have been resolved by this legislation.

Similarly, new subsection 83(1)(d) refers to a register of guests of members. So the relevant club secretary must keep on the premises a register of the name and current address of each guest of a member and the name of each member of a reciprocal club and the name and address of each guest of a member of a reciprocal club mentioned in new subparagraph 2. So if you go down to the fields on a Wednesday afternoon to watch the kids train and then you go to the club, buy a beer, have a steak burger and then go home again, you have to go through all of that paraphernalia of signing in and keeping records and all of those sorts of things. For a small community club, it is just an absurdity. It just does not make sense to keep something which we all know is unworkable. It is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. My dad comes down to watch his grandsons play footy. He does not sign in. He would not even know where the piece of paper is by which to do so.

I think the replication of those provisions in this bill and just saying, 'It was in the old act and we are just repeating it in the new act' does not make any sense. In my view, it is just laziness. It is something that could have been resolved with a bit of forethought and application, because it makes criminals out of people who are simply volunteers—people trying to do their best for their local organisations.

The next item of concern is clause 27 of the bill, which inserts new section 155AB. This is a watered-down version of the government's original proposal, which sought mandatory responsible service of alcohol training for all volunteers working for small community clubs and for the holders of community other licences. Talk about bureaucracy gone mad! Every volunteer who wanted to work behind the bar of a local community association had to undergo an RSA course—and I think the Southbank TAFE course costs \$95. The original proposal was abhorrent. This new section is simply unnecessary.

Again, it means that small community clubs must now take on the added burden of organising for a volunteer to have undertaken the RSA training course in order to supervise those other volunteers, and are paid a fee of approximately \$100 for doing so. Again, in my own example, the mums and dads of certain teams are rostered on to man the barbecue and bar on certain nights and on certain game days. Now, such a simple and effective process where the team manager rings up and asks, 'Can you be there on Wednesday night between 5.30 and 7.30 to cook the burgers and to work on the bar?' will no longer be available. At least one of the parents from those teams working at the bar will need to hold an RSA certificate when in the past there has never been any indication of a need for that type of regulatory supervision. That is just an unworkable and unnecessary bureaucratic burden on mums and dads who are trying to do the right thing by their kids in small community clubs.

That is just one example, and I am sure other members will tonight be able to point out other instances where Rotary clubs, Lions clubs, school community clubs, P&Cs and other associations where there has never been a problem are now going to be forced to undertake and run RSA courses so that their volunteers can serve two or three beers over the space of an hour or two to a group of fairly innocuous people who are just trying to do the right thing in their communities. There are myriad examples of where this unreasonable and unnecessary clause will have a negative impact on the operations of voluntary organisations and community activities that are supported by volunteers. We will not be supporting this clause of the bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.29 pm to 7.30 pm.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Before the dinner adjournment I was about to move on to the new category of bar licence which has been introduced by this legislation. I would like to commend the government for introducing a new category of bar licence. That will be a significant benefit for people in urban areas who want an alternative form of entertainment but do not necessarily want to go off to a big club. They may

want to go somewhere a little quieter, although there is a provision for music to be played, or somewhere that is a bit smaller and perhaps more cosmopolitan, for want of a better word. I hesitate to use the word 'European' because I think it is actually wider than Europe. We have seen that type of bar licence being introduced in New South Wales recently and it has been in Victoria for many years.

I do not think there needs to be too much justification for introducing a new type of licence for a new type of premises for a new type of business enterprise. But to the extent that there is some justification provided in the accompanying notes to this legislation, the hope is that such a licence and the provision of more familiar, local, small bistro bars or wine bars will lead to a more mature drinking culture in Queensland so that the idea of going out and getting tanked is replaced by the idea of going out and enjoying the company of your friends. Nonetheless that is probably how most people who drink would expect people to behave. It is hoped that it will lead to a more mature drinking culture in Queensland.

It is a little difficult—and it is a problem that I am happy to say is the government's problem—to rationalise how granting more licences to venues to sell alcohol will minimise harm. That seems to fly directly in the face of the arguments used to prohibit the pre-10 am trading. On the one hand we want to prohibit pre-10 am trading or at least make it more difficult to occur by charging additional fees and instituting that requirement of need, but we also want to facilitate the granting of bar licences for trading at the times of day when harm is more likely to occur than otherwise, which is in that period up to midnight.

We do not object per se to the granting of bar licences. I personally think that they will be a good idea. I hope to see them flourishing around urban and suburban areas. However, I do think that the clause does demonstrate the difficulty that the government has in reconciling the competing aims of harm minimisation together with promotion, if you like, of a vibrant, viable and thriving industry.

If the proliferation of bar licences in Victoria is any indication of the success of these bars, we can expect to see quite a few opening in the next little while. A report commissioned by Westfield in 2007 claimed that the number of liquor licences issued in Victoria had increased from about 3,500 prior to the introduction of the Liquor Control Reform Act in 1998 to about 17,000 in 2007. So it increased from 3,200 to 17,000 in a fairly short period of time. Perhaps, Mr Deputy Speaker, they will be introducing wine bars and bistros up in Keppel before you know it. If you are invited to an opening I am sure you would appreciate attending it.

Interestingly enough, despite the proliferation of bars, the per capita consumption of alcohol has remained the same. It does not seem to have led to a widespread increase in drinking or alcohol consumption. There are some mixed reports about the effectiveness of small bars and maintaining a culture of control and harm minimisation. There are reports of senior police from Victoria believing that it has led to an increase in violence being experienced in Melbourne—and just yesterday we heard that they are introducing Hummers to patrol the streets of Melbourne to deal with violence. Some commentators have claimed that it has led to an increase in alcohol related violence. Other commentators have stated that it is because of the particular type of bar licence issued in Victoria and particularly big clubs which operate under those bar licences. Irrespective of that, I think it is important to regularly monitor the operation of the small bars to ensure that the outcomes that we seek in terms of diversity of operations and suburban operations as well as harm minimisation are actually achieved and that their operation does not contribute to an increasing incidence of violence.

I want to touch on the secondary supply of alcohol to minors. That has been an issue of debate based on the ruling of Mr Speaker earlier this evening. Quite plainly, the government got it wrong in relation to its attempts to bring this clause in this part of the bill back into the House. I want to make it abundantly clear that the opposition had no intention whatsoever of opposing the provisions in the legislation in relation to the secondary supply of alcohol to minors. In fact, it was the opposition through the member for Surfers Paradise who introduced provisions based on our concerns about the secondary supply of alcohol. Nonetheless, it is still important that the government observes the rules of this place.

I heard the Premier's very dulcet tones across the chamber not displaying a hint of frustration or anger but carefully and constructively moving her way around standing order 87 in relation to the rules of the House. On that point it is important to understand that the rules are designed to protect the integrity of this House. They are not designed to be a play thing of the government of the day. As much as the government may not like the fact that those rules do exist and that they may occasionally frustrate its will, this place is not a rubber stamp for the government or for the executive, nor is it a toy for political games that the government may choose to play. Quite clearly, the new section 156A is part of the political game playing that this government undertakes from time to time.

The rules are designed for fair play in this House. They are subject to the appropriate respect for the government's majority in this House, but those rules are there for a very important purpose. I noticed tonight a number of members on the government side said, 'It's a place for debate.' The Premier also said, 'This is a debate for alternative ways to resolve a problem,' but there was no debate back in August 2007 when the private member's bill introduced by the member for Surfers Paradise was

defeated. There was a blank brick wall put up by the government. There was a standard no. There was no suggestion of debate. There was no suggestion of, 'How can we improve this?' There was no suggestion that the government had concerns about it.

Saying no is not a debate. Saying no and refusing to engage in the proper processes of this parliament shows as much disrespect for the standing orders as the attempts made in the new section 156A of this bill and in respect of the Criminal Code (Assault Causing Death) Amendment Bill attempts by this government to thwart the rules of this place. It is really disappointing that the government chooses to use its arguments in such a one-sided way.

Nevertheless, proposed new section 156A contains two offences in relation to the supply of liquor to a minor. Subsection (1) provides that an adult shall not supply liquor to a minor at a private place unless the adult is a responsible adult for that minor. The definition of 'responsible adult' has changed as well. Unless a person is a responsible adult, which is a parent or a guardian of that person, the adult must not supply liquor to that person and the offence set out there provides for penalty units. Subsection (2) provides that a responsible adult—that is someone in the position of parent or guardian—must not supply alcohol unless the supply is consistent with the responsible supervision of the minor. That goes to the relationship between the parent and the child, the very relationship in which the government said last year it was reluctant to interfere. However, this year it is more than happy to step into the shoes and be the guardian, if you like, of the relationship between the responsible adult and the child in terms of what constitutes responsible supply. Then subsection (3) sets out a number of factors which can be considered in terms of whether the supply is responsible or not by that responsible adult.

We do not oppose this provision. We were never going to oppose this provision. The clauses are substantially the same as those contained in the private member's bill introduced by the member for Surfers Paradise, the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill 2007. Last year the member for Surfers Paradise correctly identified the problems with the supply of liquor to minors by adults, and so introduced that legislation. Schoolies week is a prime example of that. I suspect to a large extent we are rushing this legislation through the House so that, after assent, it can be in operation for schoolies week, which is rapidly approaching. At the time that the private member's bill was debated, the then minister responsible for liquor licensing, after two years of inaction, had the cheek and the hide to deride the member for Surfers Paradise for his initiative in bringing the legislation to the House. Indeed, it is ironic that at the end of the debate we will be approving legislation that contains substantially similar provisions to those introduced by the member for Surfers Paradise.

We have no difficulty with the prohibition of the sale of undesirable liquor products, nor with the interim prohibition on the sale of undesirable liquor products. In our view, there is no place in the market for alcoholic aerosols, iceblocks or the like. There might be a misconception that those products are available for sale in Queensland. I have done some research and have been unable to find any. Most manufacturers and suppliers of alcoholic products in Queensland are responsible enough to understand where their obligations lie in terms of serving the community and making sure that their products meet the community's needs and expectations. Nonetheless, there will always be instances where someone will try it on. Someone will import a product from somewhere. I think it is important that the Treasurer, as the minister administering the act, has the power to ban and dispose of those products.

The other provision that I want to comment on relates to the changes to the police powers legislation contained in the bill. Clause 56, page 109, provides for the seizure of liquor from a minor in particular circumstances, entry into private places for the seizure of liquor and other provisions in relation to that. What comes to mind is last year's TV pictures showing a ute full of grog on the ferry from Cleveland to Stradbroke Island. That ute was intercepted by police. From memory, I think the driver of the vehicle was over 18 but his mates were under 18. Questions were raised about the ownership and supply of the alcohol, and who would be responsible for it subsequently. There were plenty of times when I made that trip to Stradbroke Island, but those times have changed. There was a time when you could get on that barge and, as soon as the ramp went up—

**Mr Elmes** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Absolutely. As soon as the ramp of the barge went up at Toondah Harbour, people would start knocking the tops of beers. They would have a few drinks and enjoy themselves on the journey over. Those times have well and truly gone. You cannot do that, much to some people's regret, but that is the case. I know the camping grounds are pretty familiar places for people who want to get away from it all. We do not have any problem with the responsible exercise of power by police officers using their judgement in relation to those areas.

This legislation has been a long time coming. It was first mooted in March 2005 as part of the statewide action to address alcohol fuelled violence. There were a lot of media releases, but a consultation document was not issued until April 2006 and today it is virtually unattainable. An initial round of consultation occurred in May 2006 and then for over a year nothing was done by the Beattie-Bligh government. The process was kick-started late in 2007 with the issue of another discussion paper which led to the RIS in March this year and then the formulation of the legislation before us today. During the lengthy gestation the aims and objectives changed, so much so that the QHA submission,

which is available on its web site, highlighted its concerns and made the comment that the division had already made up its mind about the future direction of its policy measure, particularly in relation to the 3 am lockout. This implies that the industry consultation process was simply a case of going through the motions. Other representative associations also commented and reflected on the lack of proper consultation afforded them by the government. As I mentioned earlier, peak groups were only briefed on the bill last Thursday—eight days after it was introduced into this place.

The bill is significant evidence of policy on the run by a government that wants to convince people it knows what it is doing and wants to take action, irrespective of the consequential harm it causes. The LNP will support the general thrust of the bill, not because it is a good bill but because it shows a modicum of responsibility when it comes to the secondary supply of alcohol to minors, the power of police to seize and the innovation of the bar licence, but we remain very concerned about a number of other issues that I have highlighted in the debate this evening.

It is interesting to note that the 2005 *Australian secondary school students' use of alcohol report*, which contains feedback from the kids themselves, shows that minors obtained 88 per cent of their alcohol from parents, siblings, friends and home. In fact, the amount that they obtained from licensed premise is incredibly small; one or two per cent. That indicates the very real need for the legislation first proposed by the member for Surfers Paradise, rejected by this government and subsequently adopted by them through this legislation.

The introduction of the annual licence fees can be quite clearly seen as the tax grab that it is. Whilst multinationals and major players in the industry may be able to absorb and pass on those costs, there is a very real prospect of the additional fees reducing the economic viability of many voluntary associations as well as small rural and regional pubs. This will have a significant impact on community life in our regions. I have called on the Treasurer to undertake to ensure that the fees are set at a reasonable level and that those who would suffer substantial financial hardship are afforded a measure of relief. The lack of accountability for the expenditure of the funds and the power of the Treasurer to make decisions about how they are spent should also cause concern given the Beattie-Bligh government's record on using taxpayer funds to promote itself. This is an element that I think should be properly addressed in the legislation to ensure that those funds are properly used and a proper accounting for those funds is provided to this parliament and to the public.

While an element of cost recovery for administration is, of course, acceptable and responsible, there is no evidence that the amount being recovered in this case will be used on front-line enforcement activities. The Treasurer has made some announcements about additional liquor licensing officers, but given the workload experienced by those officers already employed by the liquor licensing office it is difficult to see that those positions announced will have a significant impact in terms of managing the issues surrounding our increasing population of licensees. As I indicated before, it was only last year in estimates that the failure of the government to properly and fully resource the Brisbane office was raised and a copy of that memo was tabled.

The restrictions on early trading hours seem to be kneejerk at best and, from any of the material published, are not supported by scientific analysis. While the time of trading when there is least harm is strictly prohibited, primarily to the detriment of community clubs and associations, the time when most harm occurs is still open for trade provided you have the money to pay for it. For the big urban operators with substantial markets, the imposition of the higher fees is unlikely to work as a deterrent.

Alcohol fuelled violence and binge drinking are matters that concern all members of the community. All patrons of licensed venues are entitled to feel safe while relaxing and enjoying themselves in the company of friends or even if they want to have a drink by themselves. The culture we now see of predominantly young men heading out for a night in the town to get full and to get into a fight needs to be addressed urgently. It is a new development and although its symptoms are easily recognised its causes are not easily redressed.

While simple responses like restricting trading hours may seem politically popular, the LNP believes we must delve deeper into the problem if we are to find a solution. The inclusion of school based education about the harmful effects of excessive alcohol at the very least would be a good start. Surely an ounce of prevention at that stage is worth the pounds and pounds of cure we are faced with in legislation that comes into this place day in and day out. In attempting to be politically popular by restricting trading hours, the government is in real danger of destroying the viability of the small community associations sector and making life unnecessarily hard for small sporting clubs.

I have already indicated the LNP's opposition to the supervisory requirements for volunteer community clubs on the basis that they are rarely if ever implicated in harmful activities and that the amendment in new section 155AB is an unnecessary bureaucratic burden for small clubs and community organisations. There is more likelihood of a fight occurring between parents at a football game because of a dispute over a refereeing decision than one occurring over alcohol being served in those sorts of organisations. That is where the harm occurs rather than with responsible service by small clubs with children around.

The LNP supports the introduction of small bars and bistros but again will want to see that they are monitored to ensure that there are no harmful effects from their operation. Again, we support the prohibition of the secondary supply of alcohol to minors but question why it took so long for this government to get with the program.

There is a guy called Brad Paisley, who is a country and western singer. He put out a song called *Alcohol*. I am sure members can go and listen to it on the internet if they want to.

**Mrs Reilly:** Is that what you're listening to?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Unlike the previous member for Clayfield, I am not going to sing. It was the Brisbane Lions song.

**Mrs Reilly:** You didn't listen to country music a month ago.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I did too and I have boots. Here are a few lines—

I can make anybody pretty  
I can make you believe any lie  
I can make you pick a fight  
With somebody twice your size  
Well I've been known to cause a few breakups  
And I've been known to cause a few births  
I can make you new friends  
Or get you fired from work.

...

Been making the bars  
With lots of big money  
And helping white people dance  
I got you in trouble in high school  
And college now that was a ball  
You had some of the best times  
You'll never remember with me  
Alcohol, Alcohol

While many of us have had positive experiences of a few drinks, there are those in the community who suffer from the iniquitous effects of alcohol.

Unfortunately, this legislation in our view is a hodgepodge of responses and ideas, some of them worthwhile and others which simply demonstrate a cynical political response from this government. Most people I have spoken to in this industry regard it as an opportunity wasted. That is a pity, for so much time has been taken doing so little for so many.

**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—Lib) (7.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. As we have just heard from the shadow minister, the member for Clayfield, the LNP agrees with many aspects of this bill. But in my short presentation tonight I would like to concentrate on some of the areas that we have concerns with and, also from the point of view of a local member, some of the concerns that I have and some suggestions that perhaps the Treasurer, as the responsible minister, may like to take on board. But we need to understand what the problem is so far as drinking is concerned. I would like to quote a couple of statistics before I begin in earnest.

The ABS statistics from the *Alcohol consumption in Australia: a snapshot 2004-05* reported that 78 per cent of all people who consumed alcohol did so at a low health risk level, while one in eight drank at a risky or high-risk level. Proportionately, the number of people drinking at a risky or high-risk level has increased from 8.2 per cent in 1995 to 10.8 per cent in 2001 and to 13.4 per cent in 2004-05. Risky drinking is five to six standard drinks per day on average. High-risk drinking is seven drinks plus per day on average.

What this means is that between 1998-99 and 2004-05 the overall number of hospital separations with the principal diagnosis of mental or behavioural disorders arising from alcohol increased from 23,490 to 35,152. It is estimated that, between 1992 and 2001, 31,132 Australians died from alcohol related diseases and injury, and in the same period almost half a million hospitalisations occurred due to risky drinking in Australia. The only figures I could find in terms of the cost of this risky drinking goes back to 1998-99, and the cost to the Australian community was \$7.8 million.

This week's *Sunday Mail* reported that it had obtained some unpublished figures from the government showing that every two months a Queenslanders died—and here is the article from the *Sunday Mail*—'Every two months one person never makes it home'. That is a terrible figure. Young people are dying—and we had an incident in Caloundra not so long ago—because of the fights and so forth that occur outside licensed premises. The follow on from that is the glassing and the assaults that happen both inside and outside some of our licensed venues.

The government's plan with this particular bill is to enhance the role of harm minimisation. The bill looks at risky alcohol consumption. It wants to achieve a shift in society's attitudes. As a starting point, it looked at the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan, which recommended a review of the Liquor Act 1992. It was rolled out to the rest of the state via the Statewide Safety Action Plan. What we now have is the result of that public consultation.

If members have a look at the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan, it contains five points. They include managing alcohol, strengthening policing, improving transport, creating a safer environment and working together. Under 'Strengthening Policing', the first point was to allocate additional police officers. I know there was a plan to do that through the Tactical Crime Squad so far as Brisbane was concerned. But, in the case of my seat of Noosa, as of 20 August we had one officer in charge and 20 operational police available at the Noosa Heads police division. To expect them to run a 24-hour police station and two police beats and then to get around and police patrons coming out of hotels and nightclubs and so forth at three o'clock in the morning is just unreasonable.

When I was looking for speaking points for this particular presentation, I came across a media release put out by the Treasurer. 'More Liquor Licensing officers announced as new—

**Mr Nicholls:** Which one?

**Mr ELMES:** This one here.

**Mr Nicholls:** Just one?

**Mr ELMES:** Just one—that is all I could find. 'More Liquor Licensing officers announced as new liquor laws introduced: Fraser'. It was about the fact that 10 new Liquor Licensing officers have been appointed in various parts of Queensland. There are 10 of them all together—eight places get one each and two places get two each at a cost of \$1.1 million. None of those come anywhere near the Sunshine Coast. As I understand it, Liquor Licensing officers on the Sunshine Coast number three. They have a responsibility for an area that stretches from Landsborough and Beerwah all the way through to Noosa. It is also interesting to look at how the money will be spent. In this press release, the Treasurer states—

It's estimated that a maximum of \$22 million will be generated by these fees in the first year of operation ...

According to the budget papers that the member for Clayfield read from a few minutes ago, we find out that a couple of years down the road the revenue derived from this measure will be in the order of \$30 million. I also understand that half of the amount—whether it is \$22 million or \$30 million—is going to be allocated to the administration of this legislation. So it is good old Labor economics: raise \$30 million and spend \$15 million to administer it. But then what are we going to do? We have another \$15 million or thereabouts—\$11 million this year and \$15 million a few years down the track—that we are going to spend on harm minimisation. What we will do—and this is another good Labor trick—is have a wonderful television campaign, put out some radio commercials and put a couple of posters up in the nearest pub and we make heroes of ourselves.

The community expects these licensed venues to be policed by both Liquor Licensing and the local Police Service to make sure that hotels and nightclubs adhere to whatever conditions they have on their licence and to make sure that people are able to get home safely, be it at midnight or three o'clock or five o'clock in the morning, and not cause any disturbance to, in the case of some of the venues that I have in my seat, some hundreds of people who live in and around those licensed venues. So far as I can see, the only promising thing that has come out of the money that is to be raised by this measure is the 10 Liquor Licensing officers at a cost of about \$1.1 million.

I decided to have a look at some of the hotels, nightclubs, clubs and larger restaurants in Noosa and at the licence conditions that some of these particular facilities have placed upon them. With the exception of a couple which have some provisions relating to sound barriers, noise pollution and so forth, there are only two that have any sort of condition imposed upon them regarding crowd control, moving patrons away at the end of the night and so forth. One of them is the Noosa Heads Surf Club. The condition on its licence is that someone has to be there an hour before it closes and an hour after it finishes. The other one—and I found this quite amusing—was Irish Murphies. Irish Murphies is a place that decided to go for a nightclub licence right beside a radio station I happened to manage five or six years ago. I was very interested in some conditions attached to its licence.

**Mr Rickuss:** And the ambience.

**Mr ELMES:** And the ambience of the whole place, as breakfast announcers go to work at four o'clock in the morning. One of the things I found by looking into that is that the radio station is no longer there. The conditions that Irish Murphies now have to trade under in some instances should be repealed. I suppose what I am saying is that we have Liquor Licensing officers around the place. Overwhelmingly, and at least in Noosa—and I suggest anyone who would like to look up some of the nightclubs, hotels and so forth that exist in their respective seats will find the same thing—we need to put some teeth into this. The venues that I get complaint after complaint about have no conditions applied to their licence at all. I would like to see hotel and nightclub licences reviewed as a matter of course, and that should be set every couple of years. So, as circumstances change, conditions can either be added on or, in the case of Irish Murphies in Noosa, some of the conditions can be removed.

In the case of Liquor Licensing officers on the Sunshine Coast, one of the amusing things that happens when I ring up and make some inquiries is the response, 'I'm terribly sorry, Glen, we're not allowed to talk to you.' That is another example of open and transparent government, I suppose.

One of the things that licensees should be looking at, and it should be built into licence conditions, in my view, is the question of how patrons, when leaving a licensed premises at three o'clock or five o'clock in the morning—in my seat they close at three o'clock in the morning—are going to be dispersed quickly to their place of living. In regional areas where there is little or no public transport, I am here to tell members that from talking to taxidrivers I know they are not too keen on turning up and taking half a dozen drunks home at three o'clock in the morning—and who can blame them? If the situation is such that there is no public transport available, once again, some of the conditions we should be looking at from the point of view of hotels, nightclubs and so forth is the provision of courtesy buses that get people away from the venue and disperse them to where they live so that we do not have gangs of drunk people roaming the streets. It is at that particular point where there are fights, vandalism and antisocial behaviour occurring which then spins out of control. There are people living in their homes, particularly older people, who are feeling very conscious about their own personal safety.

The member for Clayfield touched in a very substantive way on the issue of community clubs. As I understand it, the cost for a licence at a small community club is \$500. The member for Clayfield went through the experience that he has with his children who play in Brisbane. It seems to me completely fanciful to expect that there will be a person available at any time working behind the bar who has done a responsible service of alcohol course—I think it was a \$90-odd cost—to allow that particular club to operate.

In my view, the people who hold office in some of these smaller clubs tend to hang around for much longer than some of the players, or, if they are junior players, the parents. They tend to move and come and go. But some of the officials tend to hang around. It is something that they put a long-term commitment into. It is not possible for one of them to be in the bar the whole time, but we are talking about clubs that may have only a hundred people who are on the grounds—not in the bar but on the grounds in total. I would suggest that having one of the officials who has done a RSA course keep a watching brief on two or three, or half a dozen people who might be in a bar at any one time does not seem to me to be such a bad idea. If we are really concerned about how our smaller sporting clubs and community organisations are able to continue to operate, we should bear that in mind.

I know that the member for Gregory is speaking to this bill later tonight, but another issue that I want to draw attention to is that of the hotels that trade from 10 am till midnight and have a fee imposed on them of \$2,700 or \$2,750. In many of these really small country towns there is a hotel and that is about all that is there. There are a couple of farms and houses in outlying areas. It is the only place that people have to socialise together and to interact, and to impose another cost on people is really penny pinching. It might not seem that much, but \$2,700 is \$2,700. There are much easier ways of the government finding a dollar than to be taking it off small country hotels and small country communities.

As I said, the opposition certainly supports the bill. In many instances we have some concerns. I would like to see a lot of work done on the licences that are issued and on the conditions under which licences continue to exist. If we can do that, then there will be some meaning to people paying a licensing fee to operate. If we just sign people up, have people pass over their money and they are then allowed to continue uninterrupted forever, it smacks of a cash grab and not of something which is terribly responsible.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (8.07 pm): A friend of mine was awoken a couple of Friday nights ago by one of those calls that all parents dread when the phone rings at one in the morning. It was the police letting her know that her 20-year-old son was in hospital in Brisbane. He had been smashed up by a couple of guys at an inner-city hotel and was needing surgery. She had that usual kind of panic as mothers and parents do, and rushed to the hospital to find that he was badly smashed up. Apparently the circumstances of that incident were an unprovoked attack by a couple of guys on this fellow at that inner-city hotel.

Allegedly, the group of guys who caused the attack had been drinking at the hotel for a long time—since the early afternoon—and probably should not have been served any more alcohol. In her mind there was a situation of irresponsible service of alcohol by that hotel, and I think it is going to get the full wrath of her anger and probably some legal action as well.

That incident highlighted to me, and was close to home for me, how important it is that we have this legislation. It highlighted how important it is that we continue to be determined in our efforts to tackle things like youth violence and activities occurring in some of the metropolitan venues in particular where these incidents are all too common.

I commend the Treasurer, the staff in his department in the Liquor Licensing Division and also the staff that I work with in Queensland Health who are doing so much, particularly through alcohol management programs for young women and the Feeling Good campaign, which is proving to have some good results. I will come to that shortly.

I fully support these initiatives. It is so important that we have a strong harm minimisation regime whereby hoteliers and club managers are required to be as responsible as possible in the service of alcohol to all their patrons. It is also important that we have the opportunity, as much as possible, to have the accords and the local action planning around these issues so that we get all stakeholders and

interested parties involved and working together. As other members have said tonight, there is no point having strong police action without strong action from hotel and club owners. We have to have all parties working together in a cooperative way around geographical areas to make sure that we get a concerted effort to deal with these sorts of issues.

It is also important that we have a very strong licensing regime where we acknowledge that some venues that want to open until the wee hours of the morning pay additional fees and have additional requirements on their licence. I commend the initiatives to that effect in this bill.

I mentioned earlier that in Queensland Health there has been a very good campaign targeting young women aged 18 to 22. I will read to the House some of the results of that campaign over the last few years. The Young Women and Alcohol Campaign has resulted in young women aged 18 to 22 reducing their risky drinking behaviour. Positive changes included reducing both the amount of alcohol consumed and also the number of times they are drinking. Since the campaign launch in December 2004 there has been a significant increase in low-risk drinking behaviour—that is, up to four drinks in one session—amongst the target group from 45 per cent pre the campaign to 58 per cent in 2007. Conversely, the proportion of young women drinking at high-risk levels in the short-term—that is seven-plus drinks in one session—has decreased significantly since the campaign launch from 36 per cent pre the campaign to 22 per cent in 2007. There are certainly some very positive results through that Young Women and Alcohol Campaign.

I have been pleased to be associated with the sponsorship that Queensland Health has of the Queensland netball team, the Firebirds. They were fourth or fifth on the ladder this season after not having won a game in the national league for six years—they are now powering. We have given them \$300,000 over the next few years to promote the Feeling Good message. Their reach is far reaching. They have 36,000 members, young women of all ages, across the state. We are hoping to expand and build on these sorts of positive results.

I have been representing the minister at the national ministerial council dealing with alcohol strategies and it is very encouraging to see that all the states and territories and the federal government—all Labor governments working together—have been very determined in their efforts and that has included the liquor licensing regimes right through to community awareness activities. We all know that this takes a multifaceted response. As I said earlier, we cannot just have policing responses, we have to have a whole range of activities to change the drinking culture in Australia which has been a very solid one of binge drinking amongst young Australians in particular. We really need to break that drinking culture.

What struck me when I was at a meeting recently in Canberra was the fact that different states are trying some really innovative campaigns. One of the issues that was raised was that many of the late-night venues are actually denying access to water. I thought that had been dealt with and we were not allowing that to happen any more. That was a common message coming through. We all understand that it is important to rehydrate while out drinking. One of the ideas that I raised in the group I was involved in was that we really need some sort of message to young people to water down their drinking. I do not mean put water in their beer or rum, but actually drink water while they are drinking. It is amazing how a simple thing like that can make a significant difference.

It is disturbing that owners of venues are making water not very accessible. In fact, at one point I think nightclubs in Brisbane were actually turning off the cold taps and leaving only the hot taps on in their bathrooms. We certainly need to make bottles of water readily accessible to people buying drinks, in particular to young people. We need to get the message across that they need to rehydrate through their night of drinking and we need a whole lot of activities, both legislative, policing and liquor licensing activities, as well as programs in schools. These strategies will go a long way to reducing binge drinking behaviour and reducing the sort of violent outbursts that have caused a lot of harm to a family that is very close to me.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (8.15 pm): I agree wholeheartedly with what the member for Algester said about the availability of water at licensed venues for young people, the need to be constantly hydrated and the need for a multifaceted approach to try to deal with binge drinking.

In 2005 the minister for police, the Hon. Judy Spence, asked me to set up a task force to look at gatecrashing of youth parties. The report that was tabled in parliament in early 2006 identified that excessive alcohol consumption, drunken behaviour and gatecrashers were the primary factors that contributed to parties getting out of control. Lack of parental responsibility for their children's behaviour emerged from the submissions and community forums. It is not currently an offence for parents to supply their children with alcohol on private property or for young people to consume alcohol on private property. However, it is of great community concern that parents are providing their children with sometimes large quantities of alcohol. A lack of parental supervision was also raised. The perception is that many parties are unsupervised and that this lack of appropriate supervision facilitates parties becoming out of control. Young people themselves noted the need for increased supervision by parents at parties and of teenagers in general.

Back in 2007 the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill, the Langbroek private member's bill, was introduced to the Queensland parliament. The bill requested amendments to the Liquor Act to restrict the supply of alcohol to minors in private residences. This bill was not passed as it was seen as impractical and onerous. This government's proposal for an irresponsible supply offence in tandem with its extension of current police seizure powers is a much more practical and workable approach to dealing with the problem of underage drinking in private residences than that put forward by the Langbroek bill.

The purpose of the irresponsible supply offence is to address the problems associated with minors and liquor at private premises, including the family home, rented accommodation and premises such as community halls hired for the purpose of a private function. Introducing legislation to address the secondary supply of alcohol by adults to minors was one of the recommendations of the government's Youth Violence Task Force which followed upon the safe Youth Parties Task Force. The offence provision for irresponsible supply is to be applied to adults as they will be considered responsible for minors.

The proposed amendments are not intended to restrict the practice within Australian society where some parents choose to educate their children in the responsible consumption of liquor through supervised and limited consumption within the family environment. Under the new law an adult must provide consistent and responsible supervision to a minor when supplying alcohol. Therefore, parents who provide their children with alcohol at schoolies and do not intend to supervise the consumption of this alcohol will be in breach of the new law.

The new offence provision is to be supported through the extension of the seizure power as per section 53 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. Police will be able to seize alcohol in the possession of minors in public and alcohol in the possession of minors in private places where the consumption of alcohol is not being responsibly supervised. Not only will the offence be enforceable and minimise harm; it will be accompanied by a social marketing campaign aimed at changing cultural attitudes towards alcohol consumption and will accomplish real change.

The government is committed to changing the way we drink. A total of \$3.8 million will initially be allocated to conduct a social marketing campaign aimed at improving community attitudes towards alcohol consumption. The Langbroek bill also contained an expectation that licensees should know whether adults who purchase liquor intended to provide that liquor to a minor.

The government's irresponsible supply offence focuses on the responsibilities of parents in raising their own children and does not place an unrealistic burden on licensees or staff in licensed premises. The irresponsible supply offence does not prescribe how parents should supervise children in their home, nor will the bill prevent irresponsible parenting. However, the bill does allow police to step in when the supply of liquor to minors goes wrong such as in out-of-control youth parties or when drinking is unsupervised and noise disturbances result. The government's irresponsible supply offence will also carry a maximum penalty of \$6,000 and will double the current penalties for supply to a minor in public or a licensed premises to \$6,000. With increasing reports about young people and binge drinking, I believe that these reforms will go a long way towards tackling this difficult social issue. I commend the Treasurer and the department for the hard work they did in leading the way with this very important amendment bill.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (8.20 pm): The opposition is supporting the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. The bill is a mix of matters relating to social issues such as responsible drinking and so forth and also covers a number of issues relating to money, fees and costs of major imposition particularly on small business and small clubs. That does cause us some concern, particularly when those smaller organisations are suffering because of the perception and, at times, the reality of the violence that occurs outside major venues and clubs which then filters right down and has a very real and serious financial effect upon smaller hotels and smaller sports clubs.

The measures in this bill will bring in somewhere around \$30 million a year. If people believe the second reading speech notes, that money will be used for a handful of additional inspectors to manage this process and some will go towards a campaign. I have no doubt that the bulk of that \$30 million will be used by the government to pay the \$12 million a day interest costs that it has as it drowns under \$65 billion of debt that it got from its GOCs and government debt. It is worth noting in this House that much of the government debt is repaid on the basis of interest only and the government is leaving a major burden for the children of the future from these massive debts that it has racked up through its mismanagement of the economy, its mismanagement of government departments and buying its way out of trouble every time there is a major disaster through its own mismanagement and inefficiency. As a result, it has used a fine toothcomb to go through every possible department you can imagine. For example, it is trying to get people to pay extra registration on certain vehicles. There was a recent case of a special vehicle—a 1956 Kaiser Jeep—used for drilling artesian bores. The government jacked up its registration from concessional registration after many years of being used mainly in the paddocks for artesian bore drilling to normal registration which costs over \$5,000. It is the same with these licence fees and the extra money that it is going to rake in, and much of the extra money will be at the cost of people who can least afford it.

Small hotels used to pay a one-off application fee and it will now cost them \$2,700 a year. If they have a bottle shop attached to their premises—that is, in the adjacent shopping centre or nearby within the catchment area or as a detached shop—it will cost another \$3,000. The \$2,700 amounts to somewhere around about \$55 a week extra they have to find. We cannot keep passing on these costs to people. People are already struggling to meet the cost of having a beer, a meal or an afternoon or an evening out with their family at the hotel. So we cannot keep passing on these costs. Likewise, a detached bottle shop will face extra fees of \$3,000 a year. It is going to cost small clubs about \$500 a year extra. So the little footy clubs and other sports clubs have to find that \$500-plus and they have to ensure that at the very minimum there is one person who can be there at all times supervising when the bar is operating, and then those clubs have to pay another \$80 or so for that supervisor to do the responsible serving accreditation course.

All of this means that under a Labor government we continue to see the continual raking in of more money. The running of small businesses and small clubs gets more complex and gets more costly and people have to find more and more money. I am particularly concerned about sports clubs. I am particularly concerned because they provide a good, healthy outlet for children and young people to play sport. Volunteers can be on the committee of the club or act as managers, coaches or assistants. Parents can come along and help mark out the field, put out the gear and help with the time keeping—all the myriad things that volunteers do. All of a sudden they have to find a bit more and a bit more on top of the massive insurance costs and all of the other massive compliance costs they have. Parents are finding it harder and harder and harder to pay the small fees that they have to pay at their club for their kids to be able to play netball, cricket, Little Athletics, footy, swimming or whatever it is. It is all falling back on the parents. They have to pay more now anyway to drive the kids to training or to drop them off at sport because of the higher petrol costs, and now their clubs will be burdened with these extra costs as this government continues to increase and grow and grow and grow the financial imposts it puts upon clubs which are the absolute fabric of our society and one of the most important things in our whole community. That is one of the real concerns with this bill.

I am also concerned for smaller hotels. We are seeing a gradual trend in our community which is not good and not healthy where it is harder and harder for people to get into small business and make a go of it. We are seeing fewer and fewer small hotels run by families as Woolworths and Coles gradually get a bigger slice of the cake, and it is interesting to look at the figures relating to hotels in Queensland. Coles has 63, Woolworths has 86 and others have 1,186.

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Mr HORAN:** I am talking about the plight of small business, because it is not hard for Woolworths or Coles or some big conglomerate to meet these costs, but that is not the case when we put these costs on a little pub run by a husband and wife in a little one-pub town. The member opposite might laugh at it, but it is \$125 extra a week if they have a detached bottle shop. That is difficult for them to find, but it is not hard for one of the big corporates to find. Let us look at the bottle shop figures. Coles has 180 bottle shops, Woolworths has 307 and others have 294. So obviously Woolworths and Coles are in a far better position to be able to use the three bottle shops per pub rule—that is, a total of 487 combined bottle shops for Coles and Woolworths compared to just under 300 that are owned by private hotel owners. These amounts of money are chickenfeed to some of the big corporates, but it is not chickenfeed to the smaller business owner or the smaller sports clubs because they can be the difference between existence and nonexistence.

There are aspects of this bill, particularly the secondary supply of alcohol to minors, that we have put before this House before. We put it before this House 12 months ago. It was the subject of debate prior to this bill being debated tonight. Because of a technicality, the government thumbed its nose at the standing orders of the parliament because it had been debated in this session of parliament in a private member's bill—that is, the issue of the secondary supply of alcohol. The Speaker correctly ruled that what is in this bill regarding the secondary supply of alcohol is substantially the same as the private member's bill that the government refused to pass in this House some 12 months ago.

How many young people could have been saved from situations in which they drank too much, or got into violent confrontations, or got into all sorts of relationship difficulties and problems simply because for 12 months this government refused to pass the private member's bill that we put before this House and now, cynically, it is introducing into this parliament? Tonight during the debate that took place on this part of the bill, we saw the cynical disregard and arrogance of government members. They just cast aside a genuine, decent and good private member's bill and then brought it in 12 months later with a grin on their faces saying, 'There were a couple of slight differences we had'—which they cannot really identify—'and we put them in this bill.'

That decision by the government and the debate we had earlier tonight really finished off one of the most disgraceful days I have seen in this parliament in which members of the government vilified in the most cowardly way Mr Clive Palmer, who is a decent Australian family man and who has suffered some real tragedy and loss within his family. He is a man who has done a great deal for the economy of

Australia and the mining industry of Australia. He is a man who has done a great deal for harness racing in this state. He has developed a major complex in the electorate of a Labor member. The cowardly vilification—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Can the member return to the context of the bill currently before the House.

**Mr HORAN:** It was disgraceful, considering that Clive Palmer has also donated to the Labor Party.

The secondary supply of alcohol to minors is a very important matter in terms of responsibility. A provision in this bill states that police are able to take away the alcohol of minors if it is not being supervised properly within private premises. I think that is a good thing. Over the past decades we have seen dramatically changing trends. We have come from the post-war time where in the hotels of Queensland people could buy only heavy beer. There were pubs and wine bars. Those of us who were schoolchildren in those years can well remember many times seeing grown men staggering out of pubs and onto trams or buses. I have often wondered whether it was a post-war trend or whether there was a lack of employment. No doubt the supply of only heavy beer was a factor. In later years we saw the introduction of low-alcohol beer and medium-alcohol beer, which has certainly brought about a real improvement in the drinking habits of Queenslanders. The introduction of the breathalyser system, which was originally .08 and is now .05, has also changed people's habits.

Generally speaking, when it comes to drinking and driving I have always felt that young people have been more responsible because they grew up in an era where it has been restricted. Those of us who lived through eras when there were no restrictions on alcohol consumption in their younger days lost close friends because of the resultant car smashes. Certainly I compliment young people, because I have seen it with my own children and all of their friends when they were growing up in that they always had a designated driver. That is the sort of social trend that has to be encouraged. It is part of responsible drinking arrangements that we would all like to see with young people in particular, but older people and everybody else as well.

Over the past couple of decades the alarming trend has probably been towards late-night drinking—late-night starting and late licences to 3 am and 5 am. When I ran the Toowoomba Showgrounds and held the speedway, rock'n'roll, greyhounds and all the other events, I always found that the later the bar went, the more the trouble. I always resisted seeking extensions to licences because if you could finish off an event at 10 pm, you had the minimum of trouble. If your licence went after that, that was when the trouble occurred.

Although I recognise that it is the way young people like to socialise now, it concerns me that they go out so late. My own daughter used to come home from university in Brisbane. I do not know whether she sent up smoke signals or whatever, but all of a sudden her mates would turn up at home and they would socialise at home and then at 10 pm or 10.30 pm, off they would go downtown. It is always a concern to parents. But that is the way it is and it is very difficult to pour water back into the tap. Therefore, in this bill we see set out various arrangements for the granting of licences to midnight, to 3 am and to 5 am, various additional costs for those late licences, various additional costs for the provision of food at certain times and at certain hours, and various additional costs for those hotels or clubs that have had a particular problem or are considered to be a low, medium or high risk.

I do not think that any of us want to be a killjoy of the enjoyment of young people, but it is the late hours that are causing many of the problems, such as problems at cab ranks. Members should ask police officers when they have the most trouble. They will tell them that the later the hour, the more the trouble. I think it is a real problem in our society and I hope that any marketing or the spending of funds on campaigns focuses on that issue. Young people have so many opportunities to do so much on the weekends. If they stay out all night Friday night until Saturday morning and then sleep all day Saturday, there is not much chance to progress themselves in sport or recreation, to undertake additional work, or to just socialise with their families or do the sorts of things that we hope they would be able to do on their weekends off.

I also want to make some comment about the stunt by Kevin Rudd to put an extra tax on alcopops. Once again, it is another one of his perception stunts—and Australians are waking up to what a government of perception and no substance it is. I have seen figures that show that since the extra tax has been imposed, young people have moved away from drinking alcopops because of the increased cost. They have simply moved to buying bottles of spirits. They do not know how much alcohol they are pouring into the glass. It is probably not as safe as an alcopop. Young people could manage alcopops so much better because they knew how much alcohol was in a bottle and they did not have their drinks spiked. Instead, at parties they have the bottle of rum, the bottle of scotch, the bottle of vodka, or whatever. They do not measure the amount of alcohol that is tipped into the glass. Therefore, they do not know how much alcohol they are drinking. As a result, their actual consumption of alcohol has increased, which is the exact opposite to what the increased tax on alcopops was meant to achieve. Of course, Kevin Rudd, in his rush to get a quick headline, did not even look into the issue and research it properly. He was just after the perception.

I think that the small businesses and the small clubs of Queensland should be very concerned about the extra cost that this bill will burden them with. For some organisations, this bill will tip the balance. People cannot keep absorbing more and more costs. The state government has increased dramatically the stamp duty on the purchase of cars. The price of electricity has gone up by about 18 per cent. The price of gas has gone up. So the increase in costs that this bill will impose should not be taken in isolation; all the other increases in costs should also be considered. Woolies and Coles have opened hundreds of cheap liquor outlets. It is getting harder and harder for the average Aussie to run a small hotel and to aspire to be able to run that for the benefit of their customers and the benefit of their families. When I played footy, many of the blokes I played with aspired to that. When they finished playing footy, they would buy a little pub and they would build it up from there and do something for their families. Those opportunities are now disappearing.

As the shadow minister for sport, I am extremely concerned about the effects of this on sports clubs. I heard of a combined sports club at Palm Beach—a number of sports clubs are involved and they use a number of sports fields. They have a little four-wheel trolley thing—a can bar. The volunteers work on that and sell a can of beer or whatever to some of the parents and those who are watching the different games. It is going to get more complex for clubs like that.

On a Friday night when there is training on the parents at many of these little clubs get together and hold a sausage sizzle. The wives might have a glass of white wine and the blokes might have a can of beer while they stand on the sidelines watching their sons and daughters train. All of that is going to become more difficult. Currently they are able to just hop behind the bar and lend a hand one night a month or whatever. All of that now depends on the club having a supervisor actually there who has gone through one of these four-hour courses in order to supervise them at all times.

**Mr Bombolas** interjected.

**Mr HORAN:** It is not always possible to have a supervisor there at all times. It might be the night that the supervisor is actually not working or he might have to take his child to training at some other venue. All of this is making it harder and harder for volunteers and sports clubs, which we should be encouraging. On top of that is the extra money they are going to have to find to be able to run the clubs let alone finding the money for the licence fee in the first place.

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—NPA) (8.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Firstly, I wish to commend the minister. I had Mike Sarquis and Lachlan Smith from the minister's department at a meeting today and I would like to thank the minister for supplying those staff. I also have a note here for Brock Avis, who apparently works in the department, too. Narelle West from the Fassifern Bombers has asked me to mention Brock. He is assisting her get a licence for the weekend for the Fassifern football club presentation night. He has been very helpful apparently. I would like to mention those people.

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** They went quite well this season. They imported some players from Fiji. They probably should have beaten Brothers except for some dodgy decisions.

**Mr Wendt** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** Dodgy referees. On a more serious matter, this is an important bill. With interest I read the annual fees that will attach to this bill. I would like to congratulate the shadow minister on the excellent job he did in analysing this bill and the process he has gone through here in the parliament. I think he has done an excellent job.

In relation to fees, I point out that detached bottle shops will be charged \$3,000. I realise that the big chains actually own a lot of the detached bottle shops. However, I do not know whether there is a high risk of disturbance or whatever else at these detached bottle shops. That seems like a straight-out tax to me. I look at the trading hours. They go 7 pm to 9 pm, low; 9 to 10 pm, low; 10 pm to 12 am, no trading; 12 am to 3 am, high; and 3 am to 5 am, elevated. I am just wondering whether 'elevated' is higher than 'high' or lower than 'low'. I know the fee is more—\$10,000. It sounds like double politician speak or Public Service speak for no reason. Surely it is high, very high or whatever.

We actually support the majority of the bill, and particularly that part of the bill relating to the prohibition of the secondary supply of alcohol to minors, which was originally introduced in a private member's bill by the member for Surfers Paradise. That was an intelligent piece of legislation brought into the House by the member for Southport. I am glad to see the government has realised that and finally also introduced the bill to the House.

**Mr Reeves:** Southport?

**Mr RICKUSS:** I meant Surfers Paradise. I apologise to Mr Lawlor. I know he would not have had such brilliant foresight. I know who Peter is.

There is going to be \$600,000 a week raised in licensing fees. I hope it is not just another form of tax. I hope the government is actually going to use that licensing fee to do something about harm minimisation. Let us do it appropriately, let us have some measurable results and let us see where the

money is actually spent. That is what has to be done with that sort of money from licensing fees or else it will seem like another tax. As Mike Horan said, the small clubs and pubs are being overregulated out of the industry.

I heard his comment relating to small clubs and RSA. I actually had an issue a couple of years back with one of the local Rugby League clubs, UQ Gatton. I am patron of the club and there were a couple of 22- and 23-year-olds running the club. They were having trouble getting a licence because they put down that the people who would be serving the alcohol would be responsible. They were all RSA as far as they were concerned because they were in the local Lions Club. Little did they realise that they did not actually have RSA tickets; they were just in the local Lions Club. As far as these 21-year-olds were concerned, they were responsible. So they ticked the box for responsible and then the licensing section said, 'But these blokes haven't got RSA. Why haven't you got it?' Thankfully, the licensing people could see the way and some of the Lions members now are RSA approved. Quite simply it is awkward for small clubs to get around these types of regulations. It is just a continuation of more regulations.

I remember back in the old days when it was trading 10 am to 10 pm and on Sundays you could be a bona fide traveller. Hotels in my area such as the Plainland Hotel actually survived on the bona fide car travellers. Then we got the sessions of 11 am to 1 pm and 4 pm to 6 pm. Some of the regulations limiting the serving of alcohol in the mornings do not seem to be in the high-risk times, as mentioned by the shadow minister and also the member for Toowoomba South. After midnight till four o'clock or six o'clock seems to be the high-risk time.

At the local Laidley Golf Club or the Gatton Jubilee Golf Club patrons might have an early hit of golf and then go back to the clubhouse for a bit of a barbecue and a few drinks. It seems rather onerous that these clubs are going to be charged for this sort of thing when they are there for the benefit of the community. Unfortunately, because the pubs are aware that these clubs have early morning licences, the pubs in my area would then apply for the licences. Quite a number of people would write to me asking to oppose them. I would then oppose them, but quite often they would still be approved. The minister said that he would be tightening up the system. However, I could not fathom how the issuing of licences was worked out.

There are some good parts of the bill. As I say, the prohibition of the secondary supply of alcohol to minors makes a lot of sense as long as this money—this \$600,000 a week in tax that is going to be ripped out of the system—does not go into the system as yet another tax but is instead used for harm minimisation.

I would ask the minister to explain why it costs \$3,000 for a bottle shop. I just cannot see that detached bottle shops are a high-risk area. I understand that Woolworths and Coles own a lot of them, but surely there is some reason that fee of \$3,000 is so high. With those few words, I support the bill.

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (8.48 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I begin my contribution by reflecting on a number of meetings I have had with representatives from the Nambour Golf Club. It was very concerned there was a move to make it harder for it to sell liquor to its patrons who have had an early game of golf in the morning when in actual fact they have had no problems. There has been no history of problems with drinkers after a morning game of golf. If anything, all the problems on the Sunshine Coast overwhelmingly have been from people drinking late at night or very early in the morning.

I echo the sentiments from backbenchers both the government and the opposition sides as well as Independents, that we really need to focus on where the real problem is. To me the real problem certainly is in excessive drinking late at night or early in the morning.

**Mr Rickuss:** Not at the detached bottle shops?

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I will get on to the issue of the detached bottle shops shortly. I note that page 3 of the explanatory notes states—

Submissions on public interest required for obtaining a licence will be replaced by community impact statements that focus on harm minimisation. On this basis a licensing application would only be granted if the Chief Executive was satisfied that the approved manager and premises would operate or be operated in a manner that would not adversely impact on the surrounding locality.

I would love to see a report to this House after six months and 12 months, indeed even at monthly intervals, outlining how many applications are refused on the grounds that they would adversely impact on the surrounding locality. I make that comment because of my involvement a number of years ago in an application for a bottle shop in Nambour. That process showed how farcical the situation can be. According to the legislative requirements, you have to go through the due process and demonstrate the need for the outlet in the community. You have to consider issues of impact and concern in the community. In this case, there was a community centre within walking distance and a preschool right next door to the site. No matter what grounds were put forward, the consultants for the hotelier were able to show apparently overwhelming reasons for having another liquor outlet in an area that had a lot of social problems. Therefore, I would be very interested to see reports to this parliament and future parliaments on how many applications are actually rejected on the grounds that the applicant has not

been able to demonstrate the overwhelming community benefit of the proposed new liquor outlet. I think we will simply find that the experts and the consultants used by the liquor hoteliers will choose the right words to guarantee that the legislation will enable them to get a continual run of approvals.

It staggers me that Coles and Woolworths have such a monopoly over so many products in Australia and Queensland, yet we do not seem to be worried about that. We just say, 'Oh, we will just pass more legislation', and they will continue to have that monopoly. In my area many people say that it is just a sham. I take this opportunity to call on the government and the responsible minister, when he meets with his ministerial colleagues from interstate and federal parliament, to please talk about the issue of the overwhelming power that Coles and Woolworths have. I think it is jolly well unhealthy that Coles and Woolworths have such a control on our way of life and such a monopoly over so many facets of our ordinary living.

I am concerned that sometimes we do not take responsibility for our own actions. We want to blame everyone else. We want to blame the person who sold us the alcohol. We want to blame the friends who we were with. We want to blame everyone apart from ourselves. We do not want to take responsibility. As a result of this legislation, I hope that people in Queensland start to take some responsibility for their actions and stop blaming everyone else.

I note that other members have spoken about the amazing amount of revenue that will be generated as a result of the new taxes. I hope that in the future we will see regular reports tabled to this and to future parliaments on the benefits resulting from this new taxation source. I do not want to see—and I certainly believe that Queenslanders do not want to see—this money spent on building more little power kingdoms for bureaucrats. We need to have results. We need to make sure that the people responsible for ensuring that this money is spent in the right way get results. It concerns me that we say, 'Yes, governments are elected to make the hard decisions', while the reality is that the public servants are often able to sit in cushy jobs getting paid very handsomely, knowing that they will be okay no matter who is in government. Effectively, it is up to them to follow through on many of the legislative initiatives of different governments. I hope that the minister and the government can keep the public servants accountable and make sure that they do what this legislation intends them to do.

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (8.53 pm): It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill knowing that this bill has come before the House following wide consultation across stakeholder groups and the community over a period. The discussion paper was first released in April 2006 under former Minister Keech. As part of her caucus committee at that time, I had some involvement with that process.

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Ms JARRATT:** That is right. We undertook a little bit of work on the accords that were established in various states of Australia. In December 2007 the position paper was released, followed by the RIS and draft public benefit test in February 2008. This document drew more than 8,400 submissions, which is testament to the effort undertaken to consult with stakeholders and the community on what is and can be quite a contentious subject.

Alcohol has long played a prominent role in the way we as Australians celebrate special occasions, socialise and relax. I put my hand up to enjoying a great Queensland wine from time to time, but I also acknowledge that too many people, particularly young people, have not heeded the drink in moderation message. Therefore, I support this effort to prioritise a safe drinking culture in this state.

Generally speaking, the amendments in this bill aim to encourage the responsible sale and consumption of alcohol. It is about harm minimisation. Nobody wants to establish a nanny state where freedom of choice is totally removed in relation to decisions about alcohol consumption, but we need to set guidelines for those who have demonstrated an inability to act responsibly, whether that be in the manner in which alcohol is sold or the environment in which it is consumed.

In relation to our desire to keep our young people safe, this bill contains new provisions that will see the creation of an irresponsible supply offence targeting parents, older friends and siblings. This is a contentious but necessary step in making all of us think about the harm that alcohol can do to developing brains and bodies. The current act prohibits the sale and supply of liquor to minors. It also prohibits minors consuming liquor in licensed premises and public places, but it does not address the issue of minors being supplied with alcohol in private places such as the home. The bill addresses this issue by formalising a widely accepted belief that alcohol is detrimental to the health of young people, regardless of where it is consumed.

The bill includes a new provision providing ministerial power to ban those alcohol products that target minors. This banning power, which is based on the same principle as section 85 of the Fair Trading Act, will enable urgent action to be taken to prevent the sale of undesirable liquor products that target youth markets. It is perhaps a sad reflection on our society that we should need to introduce such measures to protect young people, but it is nevertheless a reality that in some instances the urge to find new ways to make money overrides the obligation to abide by moral standards. In other cases, the quest for novelty appeal clashes with the need for moderation in the way that alcohol is taken or absorbed. I hope that the minister never has to use this new power, but I am pleased that it now exists.

Another important change imposed by the bill is an expansion of the responsible service of alcohol provisions. RSA is considered industry standard and a best practice tool used to minimise risk on licensed premises. With the passage of the legislation, mandatory training becomes required for employees of licensed premises and responsible management of licensed premises training and RSA will be required for managers of licensed premises. Importantly, an exemption will exist for small community clubs run by volunteers, although they must have an RSA credited supervisor present. This is a common sense exemption that was raised earlier this year with the Premier by members of the Whitsunday Sailing Club. They were concerned that the supply of volunteers for community events would dry up should they be required to undergo RSA training for a one-off event. The unintended consequences of such a requirement would have seen the end of community events and functions that build community spirit and draw visitors and tourists to towns all over Queensland.

Acknowledgement of the liquor accords in this bill gives recognition to the important role that these bodies can play in the maintenance of safety and good order in local communities. In the past in this House I have spoken about the public safety task force that exists in Airlie Beach. This group is guided by the local police with input from a variety of stakeholders including security providers, licensees, the taxi industry, liquor licensing and the local council. When accords such as this work well, they can pre-empt problems and address issues before they become serious or even criminal incidents. In Airlie Beach where tourists, locals and building contractors mix in licensed premises, the risk of alcohol fuelled violence is an undesirable but ever-present potential consequence. Unfortunately, the use of drugs does a great deal to heighten this risk, so the oversight of the task force is important to public safety.

I take this opportunity to put on record my sincere thanks to the local police whose job regularly puts them in personal danger or at the very least exposes them to pretty unsavoury acts and behaviours. I also say thank you to members of the task force and encourage them to continue to work together in good faith for the betterment of our community.

In a related amendment, the bill also addresses the thorny issue of trading hours. The legislation will impose a regime of ordinary trading hours, which will be from 10 am to midnight. Approval for extended hours will be available but under stricter conditions and requirements based on the underlying theme of harm minimisation. I fully support these amendments because it sends a clear message that extended licences are a privilege, not a right. Maybe it is my age, but there is no occasion that I could think of that would induce me to dance and drink until 5 am.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms JARRATT:** I respect the right of others to do this as long as it does not impinge on the rights of others to be safe and does not result in self-harm.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms JARRATT:** Protect me, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Order! The member for Whitsunday has the call.

**Ms JARRATT:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I might be old but I am on my feet. Allowances are included in the bill to support opening prior to 10 am for community clubs but only where a demonstrated need exists—for example, where there are shiftworkers or sporting activities. Again, I consider this to be a common-sense exemption that should be seen as a privilege, not a right.

Together with a streamlined system of licences and permits, which allow greater flexibility matched with an increased level of responsibility and annual payment of licence fees based on risk to the community, the measures contained in this bill represent the actions of a government determined to establish a safe drinking culture in the state. Therefore, this bill has my support and I commend it to the House.

**Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (9.01 pm): I am pleased to offer my support to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. With the large number of licensed venues established in my electorate and, indeed, in Queensland, legislative reform is undoubtedly necessary in order to reduce long-term alcohol related harm. Young people aged between 14 and 29 are identified as most likely to consume alcohol in a way that puts them at risk of long-term harm. Choosing whether or not to drink and how much to drink is not an easy decision for many, and sometimes a dream night out can quickly turn into a nightmare.

Excessive consumption of alcohol causes drunkenness and changes in moods and emotions. It is these intoxicating effects that lead to so many accidents, injuries, diseases and disruptions in the family life of everyday Australians. I believe these reforms will encourage responsible supply and responsible consumption of alcohol while at the same time ensuring the industry can continue to develop. Underage and youth drinking is prevalent in our society. Police will now have the ability to seize liquor from minors in private places if the consumption of liquor is not being responsibly supervised. This is the first time such an offence will be recognised in Queensland law.

This bill has the potential to bring some relief to residents who are living in buildings that also house licensed premises. The Gold Coast, as a tourist destination, has a reputation for partying and having fun, but the inclusion of taverns in residential buildings is a disaster. With the operation of these facilities, the rights of residents to safe and peaceful enjoyment of their homes are sometimes trampled.

Since 2006 when the Swell Tavern opened in a residential building in Burleigh Heads, there has been a stream of complaints about noise, language, damage to property and other unacceptable behaviour. This tavern has a licence to operate until 2 am. At closing time residents are subjected to the noise and disruption associated with patrons leaving the premises. Numerous complaints made to management and the Liquor Licensing Division have failed to achieve a compromise between residents and patrons. Residents have petitioned me to have the licence revoked, or at least the hours restricted. I understand that the publican needs to make a living, but residents have some rights too.

It has been put to me that purchasers in the residential part of the property knew that a tavern had been approved. However, the advertising material referred to a 'family tavern'—something quite different from the nightclub style tavern that we have. As the manager told me, if it had ever been planned to provide a family tavern, the fit-out would not have included a half a million dollar sound system but rather a children's play area.

This venue is well known to police and ambulance officers. On Friday nights there are 25 security officers employed to manage the crowd. I have written to the Treasurer about this tavern, and I appeal to him to look specifically at the Swell Tavern in relation to licensing hours. I would suggest that midnight is a much more acceptable closing time. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (9.04 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008, and I have to say that this is another bill tonight that I feel I can support. One of the things I have noticed over the last few years is the tendency for young people to drink. It would appear that they cannot go anywhere without alcohol. They also appear to be becoming more spectators rather than competitors. I constantly hear from young people that they cannot have a good time unless they get off their face. I do not know if that is the right terminology to use nowadays, to be 'off your face', but I know it is similar to what I can remember my own children saying quite some years ago.

There are positives in this bill, such as the additional inspectors and the education campaign, and I can only support them. Alcohol and education should go hand in hand because people do not seem to understand the consequences of drinking large amounts of alcohol.

I can only assume that schoolies was the motivation for this bill. We can all remember the inappropriate actions of parents, sending kids to schoolies with a ute load, not a boot load, of alcohol. I, for one, cannot believe that any parent would actually do that. I have enough trouble buying one carton of stubbies, let alone more than that. Believe me, I do not drink beer or mixes or anything like that. An occasional wine is not too bad, but I still could not even drink a whole bottle. I would be totally off my face after two glasses. That is how unaccustomed to alcohol I am.

One of the saddest things about this is that young people sell alcohol on to even younger children. You can walk around the streets in most places with the Salvation Army or anyone else on their night patrols and you can find under any bridge, in culverts or anywhere else, a lot of young people—often 13, 14 or 15—totally out of their tree, almost incomprehensible but apparently believing that they are having a good time. It is one of the saddest things I have seen. They have no respect for themselves, they have no respect for others and they have no respect for property.

I also want to comment at this particular point on the federal government's alcopops tax. Anybody with half a brain would know that young people with limited resources would make do with something else if they could not afford a particular drink. We see it all the time. They go to the bottle shops and get the specials. They do not really care what it is—it could be vodka, gin or anything. They then duck into Woolworths or Coles and grab a bottle of whatever their favourite mix is and make their own. They do not know what a measure is. They do not know exactly how much they are consuming and the effects are, as always, negative. The alcopops tax was doomed to fail from the start because I believe a 10-year-old child would know that there would be a way around that.

I have great concerns with the trend of late-night drinking. I note the extended licences from midnight through to 5 am or whatever it might be. It is always after the pubs shut very late at night or early in the morning that people run into trouble. There are always fights. That is when the police catch most of the kids causing trouble. They are called to pubs to break up fights and those types of things. It is a very dangerous time of the night.

On Saturday night I travelled home from the Mount Mee ball, which took me through Woodford. The pub at Woodford was having a big do and there were a lot of people out on the streets, and they carried it on. When I came through Woodford at about half past 12, or a quarter to one, they were yelling, skylarking and having a great time. But they did not care that they were running out onto the road or dodging traffic. Then when I arrived back in Kingaroy at close to two o'clock in the morning there were young kids aged maybe 14 or 15 running around the streets. Again, they were being mug lairs basically. But they were quite happy to come out and run at the car and kick at the doors. Thankfully

they missed, but the chances were that they could have totally missed and gone under my wheels. It is not a very nice experience to be the driver of a vehicle in those situations, and it was all due to alcohol. Where those young kids got that alcohol I do not know. I can only assume an older kid bought it and handed it over.

One of the things that concerns me with regard to fees is the fee of \$3,000 charged for detached bottle shops. We have a few of those in my area. Because they are small businesses, those costs impact very negatively on them. I can see a few of them struggling with that. I would have to say overall that the publicans and people who run those bottle shops are reasonably conscientious people and do not endeavour to be a blight on the landscape by selling alcohol to under-age persons. What these fees do is lower their profit margins. It also lowers the profit margins of small clubs in rural areas. I know that the member for Toowoomba South mentioned sporting clubs, and it is true that they do do it tough. Whilst everyone should be treated the same way and it should be a level playing field, for small country clubs it is not a level playing field. In the cities the clubs charge for their tickets and they get fees from the bar. Country clubs very rarely charge for tickets. All they do is make money from the bar and barbecues. The added fees will be a big cost on them.

With regard to bottle shops, chain store bottle shops such as Woolworths are able to recoup their losses. If they lose money at one particular shop, they can make it up from other parts of the chain. They can pick up any loss anywhere. Individual retailers cannot, and so the impact will be a lot greater on them. Many of them will question whether or not it is worth their while to be there at all. They will quite happily sell out to the majors in due course. Single family businesses and small clubs will slowly fade away if there is not some consideration given to them.

There is a constant taxing of businesses, and we have seen it a lot in the last few years. It can only be assumed that the government's black hole is getting bigger and bigger. They are literally crippling people by taxing them. As the member for Nicklin said, in due course we will end up with only the majors. Family businesses will go. The majors do not really see communities as anything other than a source of income. Small businesses put money back into the towns. They always give very generously, while the money that comes to majors just leaves the town.

I would like to ask the minister how much is expected to be generated by these new taxes and exactly where it will go. If it simply disappears into that big black hole, I think there will be a major rebellion out there. People are getting very sick of it. Every time they put their hand in their pocket there is not only the Treasurer's hand but also every other minister as of late. It does not matter whether it be the minister for education, because there is no such thing as free education anymore, or whether it be the local government minister, as taxes keep increasing there; it is a constant biting of the people. I would seriously ask the minister to think about the impact of this bill on small business in particular.

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (9.15 pm): The Liquor Act is always a complex piece of legislation. As a state we are a very diverse region. We have small outback pubs and we have very active nightclub precincts along the coast. One size does not fit all. That is why it makes it very difficult in regard to consultation when there is such a variety of circumstances where people enjoy a drink and enjoy going out with their mates.

Living on the Sunshine Coast and representing a tourism area, we face a number of complex issues, with a high influx of tourists and also with locals and their interaction with the entertainment precincts. I have noted some of the comments of other colleagues. This is something that is in common across the political divide. There are abuses by people who drink too much. Unfortunately, at the worst end of the spectrum there is violence. As we have seen in my area and in other areas around the state, people have died. Outside nightclubs and licensed premises we have seen people who have gone too far, who have often been intoxicated, who have abused their power over somebody and tragically young lives have been lost. That is abhorrent.

It is never acceptable, and the cries of our community are still ringing as it appears to be becoming more and more common. This is particularly so with incidents of glassing. Once again, this is something that is being experienced in a number of communities. It is unacceptable that this violence is breaking out and it deserves a greater deal of attention rather than knee-jerk reactions as to why there has been such an upsurge. People have always enjoyed a drink but in recent times we have seen levels of violence which defy imagination. It has shattered many lives.

With regard to entertainment precincts—although this is not just true of entertainment precincts—one of the concerns that often arises when communities face a proposal for a new licence is that often the steps of council and Liquor Licensing do not seem to be in alignment. There seems to be a disconnect between the processes involved in taking an application for approval of a premise for entertainment of some type that is going to end up being a licensed premise and the former licensing process through Liquor Licensing. In fact, many times it seems to be a rubber stamp. If they get council approval, they go through this process and further down the track, albeit with quite a bit of red tape, they will end up with a liquor licence. There is a concern in some communities where there are negative impacts whether that is really taken into consideration. I believe it is time that some consideration be given to aligning those processes up-front, considering the potential impacts and looking at ways of mitigating them.

Earlier I addressed the issue of violence, but the greatest number of complaints, as opposed to severity of complaints, are nuisance complaints, with people leaving premises and making a lot of noise. While this may seem trivial to some, for those who live in these areas it is in no way trivial. When people's sleep is constantly impacted, when people who holiday in the area also cannot get a good night sleep because of poor planning and poor consideration of licensed premises being located next to residential areas and people's passage back home after having a drink, this issue should not be treated lightly. Ultimately it means that there is a constant aggravation in the local community. In turn, there is an impact upon policing authorities and Liquor Licensing, which are being asked to address these issues. Quite frankly, there needs to be better planning up-front with councils and Liquor Licensing rather than finding that the licence is put in place later without these issues being addressed.

I want to also address the issue of the irresponsible supply of alcohol to minors. Tonight we seem to have bipartisan support across the parliament for this issue. What a shame that was not the case last year when the Labor Party arrogantly abused its numbers in this parliament to vote down a private member's bill put forward by the state opposition. In recent times we have heard government members complain about wanting to see our ideas and policies, yet when we actually put them before this parliament by way of private members' bills they vote them down. Do they vote them down 20 per cent of the time, 50 per cent of the time, 80 per cent of the time? No, 100 per cent of the time. Is it because of their spurious claims that it is because of some technicality that they could not support these bills? No. It is just pure, blatant, unmitigated politics.

This Labor government does not adopt the bipartisan approach that we are taking tonight with regard to the issue of the irresponsible supply of alcohol to minors; it takes a purely political approach. It is a disgrace that we saw the Treasurer here this morning joking that it was the will of the parliament to vote it down. It was the will of the Labor Party that played politics. Member after member on the Labor side stood and spoke against addressing this issue with the responsible legislation that the state opposition put up last year. This issue could have been addressed last year. This issue could have been put in place in time for schoolies and the Christmas-New Year period last year so that a clear message could be sent that it is unacceptable for adults to be supplying alcohol irresponsibly to young people.

It is good to see that there is a culture shift underway in this respect. People are starting to question the merit of supplying alcohol to young people, and it is about time. Like other members in this place, I enjoy having a glass of wine. I am not opposed to people having a glass of alcohol. But I do support responsible use of alcohol. There has been a culture in Australia that has been two-faced: on the one hand they say young people cannot go binge drinking while on the other hand adults will boast about how they got off their face as young people. There is a culture shift occurring where people are starting to realise that that double-faced approach is killing young people because it is modelling the very behaviour that has said to young people that it is okay to get smashed, that it is part of the rite of passage of youth and tough luck about the bodies that are broken by the sides of roads or around those very nightclubs that I mentioned before.

The culture shift is underway where adults realise that they have to model good behaviour to young people. They need to acknowledge that responsible use of alcohol—not irresponsibly supplying alcohol to juveniles—is the way to go. There is increasing research showing that the supply of alcohol to young people does have a negative impact and is more likely to result in binge drinking later on in life. As adults I think that we have to lead the way and stop pointing the finger at young people and saying they have to grow up and behave themselves. All they are doing is modelling the bad behaviour of those who have gone before them.

There has been a trend towards people going out and having a drink later at night. In fact, the trend in entertainment areas, and I assume in other areas, is that people start drinking before they go out. This is something that is not addressed by this paper but the reality is that these days, with access to bottle shops, a lot of people do in fact start drinking before they go out, which does make it more complex when it comes to the issue of policing on the streets later at night. That is something we have to understand. It is not just licensed premises that are responsible for people allegedly undertaking binge drinking; people are actually indulging before they go out. That is something we have certainly experienced in my area.

Once again I come back to the point that it is not just young people. We have also seen a trend towards people of older age groups engaging in antisocial behaviour and becoming intoxicated in public places. I know that there is great and genuine concern about binge drinking among young people, but the age at which it is occurring is actually increasing, I believe, with regard to some of the antisocial behaviour. It is something that we cannot ignore. We cannot continue to point the finger at young people.

An issue that has also been raised by a number of my colleagues is the impact that this legislation could inadvertently have on small clubs and volunteers. There is concern about the practicalities of some of the new responsible service of alcohol measures with regard to volunteers. We do note that there have been exemptions that have been put into the legislation. I would ask the minister to look at reviewing these sooner rather than later to ensure that unintended consequences and impracticalities

that will lead to noncompliance can be addressed. There is a lot to be said for good training of people and acknowledging that we all have a responsibility, regardless of the law, to be well trained, whether it is in alcohol or another means of service, even as volunteers. However, there have been some very reasonable concerns raised about some of the implications for small volunteer organisations that are not really dealing in very large amounts of alcohol and the need to be able to reasonably comply with this legislation.

There is a concern that some of the smaller hotels that do not have the size of turnover of the massive venues might have difficulty affording some of the new licensing regimes. That is a valid concern that has been foreshadowed tonight and the government needs to take that on board. As I said at the outset, we are a vast state. Not all areas are the same. The turnover in some places is vastly different from others. The turnover that is seen in an area such as Mooloolaba, which I represent, is vastly different from that seen in an outback, very small town pub. That needs to be recognised in the licensing regime and the licensing fees.

Turning to the issue of fees, there is a concern that there is a substantial increase in the expected revenue take proposed under this legislation. In the first six months there will be about \$30 million in licensing fees and in the full 12 months for the 2009-10 financial year it will be \$27 million. I would like to see a breakdown of how the government is intending to spend that. We want to see outcomes. We do not want to see just more advertising campaigns for the government or something that has no real outcomes.

The issue of lack of compliance officers has been raised. We have seen a huge increase in the number of licensed premises in the last five to 10 years but there has not been a commensurate increase in compliance officers. Forgive me if I am a little sceptical that this surge in licensing fees will suddenly result in commensurate increases in services to the industry or services to the public who are seeking access to the liquor licensing industry. It is up to the government to outline what the breakdown will be in those fees. We need better than the simple statement that it is to pay for the administration. We do not want more bottoms on seats in offices. We want to know exactly what the on-the-ground support would be and how that relates to compliance officers.

One of the most successful ways to deal with complex issues, particularly around entertainment districts, is by way of a cooperative approach. It is a balance between performance and compliance. It is definitely about the ability to empower local communities. I have heard members talk about liquor licensing accords. Going back a number of years, we had a previous version with the Mooloolaba Safe Committee, which was one of the most successful committees I have seen that has operated at a local level. Police, Liquor Licensing, taxi operators and other community representatives were involved at that level, along with security representatives from council and the local licensed premises. It was an outstanding model when it was really functioning at its peak and I know there are people trying to emulate that now.

At the end of the day, it does need to be a flexible and cooperative arrangement to deal quickly with emerging issues, to allow local communities to identify the issues and, with those local officers across those jurisdictions, to be able to put localised plans in place and to quickly nip problems in the bud. I commend those who served in those capacities in the past, but I also commend to the government and to other members that as a model localised groups that have the right people at the table and the goodwill to act and do not feel that a severe approach to compliance is going to stop that cooperation are the best way to go. I do believe in compliance, but it must be done in cooperation with the direct implementation of localised action plans. It is the only way to go.

I also want to ask the Treasurer a question with regard to an example that has not been touched on by others, so I will raise it—that is, what sort of a licence, for example, would a small operator or small business, say a tour operator, need who has a champagne and chicken lunch on a tour up the river? They are not a one-off licence in the respect that they are working for a charitable group, but they are a small business. I know that I have made representations previously to the government, and I will acknowledge that when we ran into problems with Liquor Licensing wanting to charge a very onerous general licence fee there was cooperation from the government and an exemption was given and we appreciated that. I raise this example today because I hope that provision is available under this bill, but I also think it is a reasonable cost because we are talking about people perhaps having only one glass of champagne. If the fee is going to be several thousand dollars, that would actually be an unfair burden on a small business that already has quite a degree of regulation operating across the rest of their business given that it is a mobile marine business and delivering a great service. That is one example, but there might be many others that members might wish to raise.

In bringing my comments to a close, there have been a number of other issues that my colleagues have ably canvassed. We have raised these in good faith and seek answers from the government. We do seek understanding that some of the smaller businesses might have greater issue with the way that this is implemented, but we certainly support the responsible supply of alcohol regardless of location but with a risk based approach that is reasonable and allows people to continue to enjoy their lives but to do it safely.

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (9.31 pm): As I did when we debated these similar measures on 7 August last year, I remind members of the House of the problems associated particularly with youth drinking and of under-age drinking, because these are well documented. They are some of the most serious social and health related problems that we face as a community and they do not necessarily have easy solutions. The effects of under-age drinking on human brains that are still developing and that are much more vulnerable to damage and to the adverse effects of alcohol is a very serious reflection on us as a community and clearly on us as members of a legislature. The use of alcohol, particularly the binge drinking of alcohol and the under-age drinking of alcohol, is obviously a major factor in assaults, in youth suicide, in trauma of various types including road trauma, in drownings and also in some of the less obvious or less headline-grabbing areas such as evolving mental health issues, particularly in young people, and in the use and abuse of other substances that are often available and to which a young person's resistance can be reduced when it is associated with the use of alcohol, particularly when binge drinking.

It is a bit like *deja vu* here tonight because these measures in relation to under-age drinking have been debated in this place before. I addressed a number of these matters on 7 August 2007 and I reminded members then of the challenge of changing social attitudes and that if we are to have any success in changing social attitudes then that begins here. Creating cultural change is a very difficult process, and it was disappointing to hear some of the speeches that were given here on that previous occasion. Whilst it is a difficult process to change social attitudes, it can be done and I think we have a very good record in changing social attitudes towards tobacco abuse and tobacco addiction. Queensland and Australia have changed, in part by legislation, the attitudes that we have, and we have seen that in areas such as drink driving where the social tolerance for that behaviour is very low. This low tolerance exists even with such things as not using seatbelts.

That is why I find it so bitterly disappointing that when this House was given the opportunity to take measures virtually identical to those being discussed here over a year ago the government chose to play politics with this issue. In so doing, it did significant damage to this big challenge of changing social attitudes. When the government itself could not bring itself to get together with the opposition and cooperatively legislate to change our attitudes towards under-age drinking, binge drinking and the supply of alcohol to young people, it was the wrong message and it was a significant blow to the big task of changing those social attitudes. So this is challenge No. 1—changing the culture and the attitudes that have grown up over time. It will be a step-by-step challenge and it will not be a challenge that is achieved in the short term. It is a challenge that received a major setback when the government chose to reject much the same measures over a year ago.

This afternoon I went back and had a read of that debate and it is a shameful experience to have read the things that were said. I read the speech by the police minister at the time and I noted comments from the member for Aspley, the member for Gaven, the member for Cleveland and the member for Springwood, attacking in many cases the very same measures that now the government tries to parade as its own measures. In fact, I picked up this from the speech from the member for Springwood, who possibly did not do us a service in opposing the measures but did do us a service by giving us some of the sobering figures that relate to youth alcohol which she had obtained from the Liquor Licensing web site. She said that 42 per cent of males and 39 per cent of females aged 18 to 24 were drinking at risky levels. Some 14 per cent of males and 10 per cent of females aged 14 to 17 years were drinking at high-risk levels, with a further 27 per cent of males and 34 per cent of females in that group drinking at risky levels.

These were extraordinary figures, but not as extraordinary as the circumstances under which one would get up and read them into the *Hansard* of this parliament and then vote down the very measures that were designed to address the issues—measures which then the government turns around and tries to trot out and parade as its own measures. There was a considerable social outcry in the wake of that appalling performance by the government in opposing reasonable measures to try to change attitudes to under-age drinking and binge drinking. On one occasion here I presented a large petition with principal petitioner, Robyn Emerson, being one of hundreds, if not thousands, of Queenslanders who were outraged by the inactivity of this government in dealing with what is an epidemic and a blight on our community.

It took courageous people such as Robyn Emerson to make this government so embarrassed about its performance that it backed down and brought into this place the very same measures that it found so disgusting and unpalatable just over 12 months ago. On reading some of the explanatory notes to this bill and having a look over some of the speeches that were made at the time the opposition's bill was debated, I find it quite extraordinary that Labor member after Labor member got up in this place and asked how could we dare make liquor store owners responsible for not selling liquor to people who they knew were giving it to minors. Now in this bill we see new section 155A which also introduces the new offence of selling or supplying liquor to a person whom the seller knows or ought to reasonably know intends to supply the liquor to a minor. This is to cover the situation where licensees or their employees sell liquor to a parent who is purchasing that liquor on behalf of their child—the very measure that was so thoroughly condemned in this place. I would like to think that those opposite are on

the road to Damascus—that those members opposite who did not care about this issue but simply cared only about politics the last time have suddenly developed a conscience and suddenly care about the issue. But, sadly, I am pretty convinced that it was simply the community reaction that forced its hand on this matter.

I mentioned before that the No. 1 challenge is to change social attitudes and social norms, which will take more than this government simply introducing a piece of legislation into the parliament. Sadly, challenge No. 2 is the need to enforce this legislation once it is introduced and the need to see that convictions are recorded in the process of enforcing it. I have an uncomfortable feeling that this government was moved and embarrassed into introducing the opposition's measures on under-age drinking, but it does not really have its heart in it. It does not really have the courage of its conviction to enforce these provisions. I will be taking a keen interest, as I know will others, in watching how well these laws are enforced and it will not be hard to make a judgement.

Last year I was privileged to visit the schoolies activities on the Gold Coast. I visited with a group known as the Red Frogs. That group is comprised of hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who try to keep our young people safe. I was privileged to go through some of the accommodation, to see some of the alcohol-free events and to talk to quite a few of the young people who were at last year's schoolies activities. These events do not occur just on the Gold Coast. Obviously, the Gold Coast has a mortgage on schoolies but areas such as the north coast or even now in the September school holidays on North Stradbroke Island and elsewhere the problems of under-age drinking are all too apparent.

The other area where I think we will be looking to see that this legislation works, that it is enforced and that it changes a culture is in regard to youth parties. I represent an area where there are many homes situated on a couple of acres—or even more sometimes. Those houses provide popular venues for students from private schools in particular to hold post-formal parties and other types of parties. We have seen those parties get out of hand. This culture grew because we enforced the laws relating to licensed premises, but we turned a blind eye to under-age drinking, binge drinking and the supply of alcohol to young people. So those young people simply conducted their drinking practices on private premises that were made available to them. It was a way of getting around the liquor laws. As that culture developed, the proportion of young people drinking at an earlier age, drinking more and getting into trouble while drinking increased because it became easier for them to get access to alcohol and to get intoxicated. This culture needs to be contained. It has caused an enormous amount of harm in every sense.

In terms of these provisions, which I will support very enthusiastically today, one of the measures of gauging whether this government is serious about them or whether it is just embarrassed will be their enforcement at these functions so that the people who supply alcohol at them are charged. But my support will be meaningless unless the enforcement accompanies it and unless there is a change to this culture. That will be the test.

All too often we have seen from this government its preparedness to oppose anything just because the opposition introduced it. One of the things I did when I was first elected was to introduce a bill to ban the sale of soft drinks in schools. I was ridiculed and opposed for doing that. The government used its numbers to vote down that bill. Yet it had to bring in a code of conduct that in many cases had a very similar effect. When I tried to advocate that we take asbestos out of school roofs, the government members screamed, decried and even at times abused, and then turned around and tried to claim it as their own initiative. This time, the test will not be plagiarising the opposition's measures; it will be whether this government has the conviction to get out and enforce this provision and make sure that it contributes to a change of culture that we have to have.

A lot of smaller groups will find that they will have to make some adjustments as a result of the changes that are contained in this bill. In general, I think those smaller groups will make those adjustments. Certainly, they will be paying higher licence fees. No doubt to a significant extent those higher licence fees are simply a new tax and a tax grab. These groups will be required to go through a lot more difficulty and expense in relation to the responsible service of alcohol, but I think they will take that on the chin, because they understand the seriousness of ensuring that they are not part of the problem.

One of the organisations in my electorate that will be affected is the Karana Downs Golf Club. That club does a wonderful job in an area that is very remote from other urban areas either in Ipswich or in Brisbane. There is no public transport in that area. There is not much chance of getting a cab, even if you could afford it. This club provides a very vital service. The club has fewer than 500 members. It is a small club. There are no poker machines—certainly not at this point, anyway. I am sure that club will adapt to these measures, but I am not sure how happily it will adapt to some of the bureaucratic measures. That club provides a vital service, and I know many other members of this House will refer to other clubs in their own electorates.

Another organisation out in Moggill that I think typifies what some of these other provisions in the bill will mean is the Brookfield Show Society. To a large extent the Brookfield Show Society is the community of Brookfield. It conducts a whole range of activities. Its Friday night bar activities will

obviously require some adjustment under the legislation. It conducts a huge bush Christmas activity every year. It conducts the Brookfield Show, which is coming up to its centenary in 2010, and the Brookfield Show Ball, which is three weeks before that. All of these activities require the service of alcohol. There is the Teddy Bears Picnic, the Bush Poets Breakfast and the Opera at Brookfield, which over 2,000 people attended. I think they consumed their alcohol pretty responsibly. It does an Australia Day street party and a whole bunch—

**Mr Rickuss:** They did not have any punch-ups at the bar?

**Dr FLEGG:** No, we did not have any punch-ups at Brookfield this year. Out in my area we are not immune to it just as people anywhere are not immune to it. That is why I do think measures aimed at the responsible use of alcohol—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** We have our share of problems, but I think they are going to work very constructively with the measures that are involved.

There are other provisions there such as the ban on trading before 10 am, the measures for trading after midnight and trading after three o'clock which are going to be pretty expensive for venues. Time will not permit me to go into those to a great extent. I do not think this bill is going to address in any meaningful way some of the problems that we see in inner Brisbane with late-night or early morning alcohol-fuelled incidents which are still too common.

Time expired.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (9.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to support this bill tonight. Recently in my electorate there have been a few decisions of the CCT about which my community is quite rightly outraged. In discussions with the honourable the Treasurer we looked at why these decisions came about. Some of it was linked to weaknesses in the old Liquor Act. Some of it was in relation to the legislation surrounding the CCT.

I am pleased to see that in the redrafting of the Liquor Act or these amendments, the Treasurer has sent a very strong message to both the industry and the community. The bill's objectives list harm minimisation front and centre as the first objective of the bill. That sends a message to the community and those lawyers who will be juggling with this down the track that it is the intent of the government and the intent of this House tonight when the bill is passed that harm minimisation should be the central theme when making decisions about liquor licensing. That sends a very strong message.

I would like to pick up on one comment made by the member for Moggill. He said that this legislation is a good piece of legislation—and I certainly endorse those comments—but he said we need to change our culture. This bill is not the end of the journey. It is only the beginning. We do need to take active steps to change the drinking culture in Australia.

I am not trying to have a go at members opposite, but I would like to point out that I had great difficulty with one of the comments made by the honourable member for Maroochydore. She made the point that a lot of people are drinking more in their house before they go out. She said that is a real problem that is not addressed by this bill. I understand why she said that, but I think she should try to change the attitude, which is what the member for Moggill was saying; we have to move forward. If the operators of these licensed premises out there are observing responsible service of alcohol, when people get drunk in their house and then they present to the pub or the club to get more alcohol they will be refused service. So the problem will not escalate; the problem will not develop. Most bar staff out there and operators of licensed venues do operate responsibly. However, I have had issues at times with their definition of 'intoxicated'. I have been at nightclubs and pubs and have seen people who can hardly stand and who are still being served. The problem that the member for Maroochydore spoke about, which is a genuine problem, would be fixed if the operators complied with the responsible service of alcohol code, although that is not directly part of this bill.

I would like to also comment on a theme that members of the opposition have been highlighting tonight. I would like to make these comments and observations. There is really only one side who is playing politics with the debate tonight about addressing the challenges of underage binge drinking, and that is the opposition. Its stunt today was to seek to not have these matters debated tonight—in fact, not debated for another year.

The procedural issue dealt with earlier tonight was about whether or not the same question in substance was being asked. Let me be clear: there is a world of difference between the stunt bill put forward by the opposition last year and our proposal before the House tonight. The opposition proposed that any supply to any underage person would be illegal except if it was supplied by a parent, step-parent, guardian or another person with parental rights. The effect of that half-way proposal would have been that if Uncle Jim had provided a sip of champagne at Grandma's 90th birthday party to a 17-year-old he would be guilty of an offence. Yet a parent providing two litres of rum to 14- and 16-year-old brothers would be doing so lawfully. The approach is significantly different. It recognises that the world is not as simplistic as the opposition imagined when it put forward its proposal. These are not the same proposals. They are entirely different.

If we look at the factors to consider when serving alcohol to an underage person we should look at the issues that the police have to address in our proposal. Is that adult who is serving or supplying the alcohol intoxicated? Is the minor already unduly intoxicated? Consider the age of the minor. There is a big difference between a 15-year-old and a two-year-old. Consider whether the minor is consuming the liquor supplied with food, whether the adult is responsibly supervising the minor's consumption of the liquor supplied, the quantity of liquor supplied and the period over which it was supplied.

The opposition bill was defeated last year because it was far too simplistic in nature. This is a vastly different proposal because it deals with the complexity of the real world. For that reason, I can completely endorse and support this bill.

**Ms van LITSENBURG** (Redcliffe—ALP) (9.57 pm): I rise to support the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. This bill is a response to the growing concern throughout society of the abuse of alcohol: young people binge drinking with the result of violence, harassment of the public, vandalism and crime resulting from this drinking. In my electorate many people have complained to me that within a radius of three to four kilometres of a local hotel with late closing hours rowdy groups of young people yelling, throwing beer cans and bottles and doing minor damage to property on their way home around three o'clock on a Saturday or a Sunday morning have been a regular hallmark of late-night closing hours. It has affected the health of many elderly people who are woken and cannot go back to sleep and live in fear of these people breaking into their homes. Although the vandalism is mostly minor, many pensioners are living on tight budgets and extra money to replace windows, buy paint and replace stolen or ruined pot plants is a burden to them.

This bill aims to address these issues and deliver safer streets for all citizens on Friday and Saturday nights and in our public places in all our home towns. Misuse and abuse of alcohol can devastate the lives of individuals and their families in ways that can affect families for generations. It is important for our community that the ability of young people to achieve the skills and education levels they need to gain jobs and get their adult life on track is supported by government in taking action to assist them in drinking responsibly.

This bill regulates the sale and supply of alcohol through liquor reforms and promotes the responsible consumption of alcohol. This bill was many years in the making. The process has included extensive consultation with all stakeholders and consultation is the area on which I propose to focus. Consultation is the hallmark of the Bligh government's modus operandi because good policy is policy that the community has some ownership of because they have had some say in shaping it.

As a consequence of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan, in March 2005 a recommendation was made to review the Liquor Act 1992. In April 2006 a public discussion paper was released and attracted 110 written submissions. Public and targeted consultation workshops with community groups and industry stakeholders were conducted across the state to inform the review. In February 2007 the former minister for liquor licensing addressed a meeting of key stakeholders on the progress of the review and reiterated the government's determination to promote harm minimisation as the critical objective of the liquor policy and legislation.

On 13 December 2006 and 10 August 2007 on the Gold Coast, forums on the issue of secondary supply were held by the former minister for liquor licensing, which included industry stakeholder and non-government organisations. On 2 December 2007 the government's policy direction was released in the *Report on Liquor Reform in Queensland* document following analysis of public submissions and industry consultation forums.

On 14 February 2008 the government released a regulatory impact statement and draft public benefit test, RISPBT, document for public consultation in response to the Queensland liquor reforms. The RISPBT was advertised in the *Courier-Mail*, *Quest* newspapers, regional newspapers and the *Government Gazette*. Industry and the community were invited to provide feedback on the government's policy direction. The consultation period officially went for 28 days and closed on 13 March 2008. Many submissions were received after this date but were still considered by the government.

Approximately 8,410 submissions were received in response to the RISPBT and amendments were made to the government's policy direction where appropriate. Key industry and government stakeholders and the community have been kept informed since the consultation proposals were first released in April 2006 to the tabling of the bill in parliament on 26 August 2008 through liquor industry consultation forums, specific stakeholder meetings and the regular publication of updates on consultation outcomes. I would like to thank both ministers for their dedication to the democratic consultative processes in putting together the substance of this bill. This bill is a good outcome for harm minimisation in drinking and I believe it will have a positive outcome in the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs van Litsenburg, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.04 pm): I move—  
That the House do now adjourn.

### **Mackay, Community Cabinet; Emergency Services Workers**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (10.04 pm): Last weekend the cabinet and the government came to Mackay. There were 18 cabinet ministers, 11 parliamentary secretaries, departmental staff and directors-general. I guess I could say that the circus came to town. However, a big opportunity was missed as emergency services and SES workers and rural firefighters who supported this government during the clean-up of Mackay following the historic floods in February of this year were not properly recognised.

**Mr Roberts:** We had a special event for them.

**Mr MALONE:** It would have been a great opportunity for the Premier to host a special function to recognise all of the emergency service workers who, in some cases, took two weeks off work to help out in the floods—

**Mr Roberts:** We held a special event for them on the Sunday; you know that.

**Mr MALONE:**—by cleaning people's houses and making sure that the people of Mackay were well looked after. More than 4,000 homes were inundated with floods. I understand that a small function was held to present long-service medals to some of the rural firefighters and SES people of Mackay.

**Mr Roberts:** It was very well received as well.

**Mr MALONE:** I recognise that the minister handed out some medals, but unfortunately the Premier was not to be seen. Indeed, it was not a function worthy of the occasion, which should have been a special moment for the Premier and the government to recognise all of those emergency service workers who did so much during that time of need.

**Mr Roberts:** The people who were there appreciated it.

**Mr MALONE:** Many workers risked their own lives and put their own houses second to those of others. Many of the emergency service workers suffered damage to their own homes, but they still went out to help wherever they could. It was a huge snub to the emergency service people, the SES and rural firefighters who made such a great effort in providing that service at that time. It really is incumbent on the government to recognise properly all of those people who helped out. I have to say that it was amazing to see the work that they did.

In terms of the function that was held, it was interesting that even though most of the people recognised come from my electorate and I am shadow minister for emergency services, I was not invited. I recognise the commentary from the minister, but it would have been nice to have been invited on the Sunday.

### **Capalaba, Community Cabinet; Whites Hill State College Trivia Night; San Sisto College; Friends of Tingalpa Cemetery Heritage Group**

**Mr BOMBOLAS** (Chatsworth—ALP) (10.07 pm): Along with a handful of electorate neighbours, I am looking forward to this weekend's community cabinet to be held at Belmont State School on Sunday and at the Sleeman complex on Monday. Many local community groups and constituents have accepted invites to attend, while others have signalled their intention to seek deputations.

On Saturday, 30 August I had the pleasure of attending and hosting the Whites Hill State College trivia night which combined fun and fundraising as well as brain-teasing questions. Based around a movie theme there were celebrity look-alikes and even a red carpet. Congratulations must go to the P&C for putting on the event, whilst organisers Jody and Deidre deserve special mention.

The day before, I was invited to attend the blessing and opening of the Siena Centre at San Sisto College. The Siena Centre is a state-of-the-art sports and performance auditorium to complement the fantastic facilities students and staff enjoy at San Sisto. I am proud to say that the Bligh government provided a slice of the funds through our Gambling Community Benefit Fund. After supporting the school's application for the \$30,000 grant, I was delighted when the bid was approved. The money went towards funding a scoreboard and sound and lighting equipment. I would like to congratulate the hardworking Parents and Friends Association headed by Alex King and principal Margaret Lee. Their drive and focus, and not just for this project, are inspirational. At the official opening students provided a demonstration of hospitality skills, sport and performing arts in another show of the high standards that exist at San Sisto College.

On 24 August I had the honour of being master of ceremonies for the annual Pioneers Dinner for the Friends of Tingalpa Cemetery Heritage Group. The 2008 featured pioneer family were the Longlands, with lots of descendants of their 13 children rallying for the dinner and the annual Decoration Day on Saturday, 25 October. Sir David Longland was a grandson of Jonathon and Mary Longland, and Bob Longland, a former electoral commissioner and nephew of Sir David, delivered a snippet of an intriguing family history at the dinner.

Whilst speaking about the Friends of Tingalpa Cemetery Heritage Group Inc., I again congratulate President Jackie Butler for her enthusiasm and commitment. Recently the group won the prestigious National Trust 2008 Heritage Gold Award for the outstanding efforts of the volunteers in saving, conserving and restoring the chapel, plots and church grounds. The band of merry men and women were also commended for their ongoing research of the site and making it accessible for the benefit of the community. The Friends of Tingalpa Cemetery have also been successful in their application for Q150 funding.

### Bruce Highway

**Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—NPA) (10.09 pm): I was planning to use this opportunity tonight to speak about the great success of the climate change torch relay that passed through Gympie last Saturday. However, my view changed this afternoon when I received a phone call from a journalist seeking a comment about another accident on the Bruce Highway. You cannot imagine how that made me feel sick in my stomach knowing that my wife was driving down from Gympie for a medical appointment in Brisbane. Thankfully, she had passed through the area before the accident occurred. It immediately makes me wonder who was involved. Do I know them? In the last two weeks we have seen two near misses and one fatal accident where four lives were lost on the Bruce Highway. It is not good enough.

We have seen the courage of a truck driver who deliberately rolled his rig to avoid an accident with a ute 10 days ago. It was a near miss that could have been fatal for either the truck driver or the occupants of the ute. Tragically last Thursday we saw four lives lost—a mother who was seven-months pregnant with an unborn child, her partner and the driver of a truck. Again, today three people were involved in an accident. They were injured but thankfully no lives were lost.

I know that all members in this parliament would join with me in passing on our condolences to the families of those who have passed away on this section of the Bruce Highway. It is not good enough that this road continues to take lives. It is not good enough that we have not moved forward. State governments and federal governments of all persuasions have failed the people of Queensland. We must do more on the Bruce Highway. I understand that Main Roads will investigate this accident and, like the other 16 deaths in this region, it will most likely be found to be caused by driver error. But this is the problem: unfortunately drivers will always make mistakes but this stretch of highway gives you no margin for error. If you make a mistake, it could cost you your life.

I understand the pressures of funding and the limited resources we have to fix our roads. But the mistake that we have seen in withdrawing funding from the Bruce Highway bypass to put into solving congestion-busting issues in Brisbane is fundamentally flawed. When you spend money on the congested roads in Brisbane, people get to work on time. But when you spend money on the Bruce Highway, people get home alive. This is an issue that we must address before another life is lost.

### Hills in Hollywood

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (10.12 pm): As we work towards our vision for the future of Queensland, one of the Premier's ambitious benchmarks is that Queensland's economy will continue to be strong—and we will do this by creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas. One of those businesses with sights set firmly on the future is our very own Bald Hills based Hills in Hollywood fashion house. Hills in Hollywood is synonymous with evening and bridal gowns in Queensland. In fact, many a young grade 12 woman who I know have a Hills in Hollywood gown in their cupboard eagerly awaiting the end of the year school formal events.

The story of Hills in Hollywood began 4½ years ago when Marlene Millers was searching for a wedding dress and quite simply could not find anything different. Seeing an opportunity within the market, Marlene and her twin sister, Gayle Clark, decided to establish Hills in Hollywood. The sisters from Bald Hills started with 25 dresses that they sold from under their house, selling to local and interstate buyers. They found a huge gap in the market for evening and bridal gowns and searched overseas to find the right designers and designs to sell.

Bari Jay—New York designers—and Allure Bridals from Memphis were two of those designers. They took some time to be convinced that these two former banking sector and debt collector girls would become their best retailers in Australia. But chose well they did for now Hills in Hollywood has grown to 11 stores nationally, with the latest store about to open in Chermside on 23 September. It will be a star-studded event, with stars from Channel 7 and Olympians Jessicah Schipper, Natalie Cooke and Melissa Gorman attending the store's premier.

Marlene and husband Tom have a 12-year-old and Gayle and Rick have three daughters aged 17, 11 and 7. It is a family affair, with both husbands being directors and the girls themselves being models at the fashion parades. They have won the national retailer awards 2008 for the category 'Best Speciality Store' in Australia and were small business fashion finalists for 2008 for Queensland, which puts them into the November 2008 National Retail Association design awards category 'Fashions on the Field'.

Hills in Hollywood is a true Queensland success story, started by two hardworking and ambitious Queensland women who were not afraid to set their sights high. My congratulations to Marlene and Gayle and their team for being part of tomorrow's Queensland. Long may they continue to bring a touch of Hollywood to Queensland and Australian women's wardrobes.

### **Powerlink; Bruce Highway**

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (10.15 pm): Powerlink, a Queensland government owned corporation, is investigating building a new high-voltage powerline from Woolooga to a new substation site west of Eumundi on the Sunshine Coast. As a result of the investigation of this proposed corridor, a number of legal questions have arisen involving the legal right of Powerlink and its agents to have unrestricted access to the existing Powerlink easement on private land, unrestricted access to enter adjoining private land to the existing Powerlink easement and unrestricted access to enter private land to undertake investigations pursuant to the Acquisition of Land Act 1967.

I understand that a property owner affected by the proposed new high-voltage powerline in good faith and after first believing he had exhausted over six months of direct correspondence with Powerlink whereby each issue he raised still remained unresolved was left with no alternative other than to seek a court hearing for clarification of his issues of concern. I understand that Mr Cooney, out of sheer frustration with Powerlink's response to his concerns, brought an action in the Maroochy District Court which in part sought a number of declarations on the interpretations of state laws and the applicable powers that Powerlink and its agents have relied upon. I understand that Powerlink's legal team did not file an answer or defence to the application but instead were successful in convincing the judge that the application should be dismissed and that Mr Cooney should pay their legal costs. I understand the costs could be as high as \$20,000.

I am appalled at Powerlink's bullyboy tactics in pursuing an ordinary member of the community, pursuing Mr Cooney, and lobbying that he should pay Powerlink's legal team costs. I believe that this is a simple strategy used by Powerlink to intimidate landowners so that Powerlink always gets its way without question. Most people cannot afford District Court or Supreme Court hearings. I believe this case demonstrates that Powerlink is not genuine in its publicised claims that it will respect landowners' rights.

Powerlink is a Queensland government owned corporation and I believe should only claim the recovery of its legal costs against a person where there are overwhelming grounds like when someone is a vexatious litigant, which clearly Mr Cooney is not. I again use this opportunity to call on the Minister for Mines and Energy to take this matter up with Powerlink management to see that Mr Cooney does not have to pay Powerlink's legal team costs.

I also take this opportunity to call on the Premier to bring her community cabinet meeting to the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast and the Gympie region to visit the Imbil and Federal area and see firsthand the problems with the Bruce Highway and the need for that Bruce Highway section to have the speed limit reduced. We have a problem there: many people have been killed. All we are asking for is the speed limit to be reduced. We do not need more investigations; we need the speed limit to be reduced. Surely if the Premier is going to take her cabinet ministers around the state, why can't she come to the proposed Traveston Dam area? Come to Imbil and come to Federal.

### **Youth Violence**

**Mr WEIGHTMAN** (Cleveland—ALP) (10.18 pm): I rise to inform the House that the 24th of this month marks the second anniversary of the death of young Redland teenager Matthew Stanley. Matthew was killed at a party at Alexandra Hills. He was bashed to death by people he did not even know. He was 15. The boy charged with his manslaughter was 16. When news of Matty's death spread, it affected everyone. Even those who did not know him felt saddened that something like this could occur in our society.

At Matty's funeral two years ago, Paul Stanley made the following vow: 'I am not going to let this continue. We as parents, we as citizens, we as children, we have got to stop this rubbish from happening.' And we, the Queensland government, felt the same. Shortly after Matthew's death the government created the Youth Violence Task Force, which Paul and I were both a part of. After a series of meetings and forums, the task force produced a detailed report which focused on violence reduction strategies incorporating legislative reform, long-term education and social policy.

Major highlights include the One Punch Can Kill media campaign and drastic changes to Queensland's liquor laws including fines for the secondary supply of alcohol to minors. In my maiden speech in 2006, I made only two commitments. One was to improve the lifestyle of those with special needs and one was to make our communities safer for families, so no-one will have to suffer, as I have seen the Stanley family suffer.

Two years on and Paul Stanley is a regular in my office. In fact, it would be safe to say that he is in there a couple of times every week, on the phone a couple of times a week, and emailing just about every other day. Together, the Matthew Stanley Foundation and my dedicated staff have organised three youth violence forums in the Redlands area. Our most recent report on youth violence in Redland city was tabled at the recent Youth Violence Task Force meeting.

Cleveland is proud to be a forerunner in understanding and dissecting the social phenomenon of youth violence, as our community has been so affected by this trend. However, with schoolies just around the corner, and the party season about to begin, I would like to remind the House of the mandate impressed upon us by our Premier, Anna Bligh, when she said, 'Youth violence is an issue that affects every Queenslanders and is one this government is committed to addressing.'

The police presence will be strong at the Gold Coast this year. This is the year Matthew Stanley would have been celebrating his schoolies. While he will not be there, he has certainly ensured that we will be there to watch over and protect those who are.

### **Father John O'Conner**

**Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (10.20 pm): I rise tonight to pay tribute to Father John O'Conner, who on 30 June celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest in the Catholic Church. I was pleased to attend a celebratory mass at St Clare's Catholic Church on Wednesday, 6 August where the local community acknowledged his lifetime of service to God, the church and the local communities he has cared for.

Born on 6 March 1925 in Toowoomba, John O'Conner was educated at the Helidon Convent, the Coorparoo Convent, Boondall State School and Nudgee College. John was first employed as a clerk in the Queensland department of mines. On his 18th birthday he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force and trained as a wireless air gunner in both Australia and England. He was posted to 460 Squadron RAAF Bomber Command at Binbrook in Lincolnshire from 2 April 1945. John was discharged from the RAAF on 3 December 1945.

John O'Conner became a cadet forester with the Queensland forestry department in 1947, and in 1948 he graduated from the University of Queensland with a degree in Forestry Science. He resigned from the forestry department in 1951 upon realising that he had a vocation to the priesthood. After studying Latin for six months, John entered the Banyo seminary in 1952 and was, as I mentioned earlier, ordained as a priest on 30 June 1958.

Father John O'Conner volunteered to serve as a priest in far-north Queensland and commenced his service with the diocese of Cairns on 30 January 1959. Father John served as curate at St Clare's Catholic Church in Tully between 1959 and 1962 before being appointed as parish priest in Dimbulah from 24 March 1963. Father John was appointed parish priest at St John's Catholic Church in Silkwood from 1 July 1979.

After 32 years serving as a Catholic priest, Father John officially retired and settled in the Tully district in 1990 where he has for the last 18 years actively supported and assisted the local parish priests. Residing at Tully Heads, Father John is famous for his love of fishing and the sea. He has also been a committed athletics coach for many young people in the Tully district who have achieved considerable success in their chosen events.

At his celebratory mass, Father John spoke about the nature of the priesthood in the Catholic Church and the more unfashionable aspects of it, defending these as the teachings of the Bible. He justified their ongoing practice in the Catholic Church as matters of faith, stressing that faith ought not be subject to the transitory priorities of modern society. Father John has a deep understanding of the teachings of the Old Testament and has always been able to make them relevant to the circumstances of modern society.

Since his retirement, Father John has made a particular effort to extend pastoral care to the elderly residents of the Tully district and indeed has been a valued friend to many families, including my own, at very difficult times following the death of a loved one. Father John O'Conner is a very well respected and valued member of the Tully community, and I congratulate him in the 50th year of his ordination.

### **Robina Town Centre Greenheart City**

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (10.23 pm): Tonight I want to highlight an exciting new concept in my electorate, in the section of Robina that will be incorporated into the seat of Mudgeeraba. The Robina Town Centre Greenheart City is a bold vision for a large-scale, low-emissions mixed use and commercial precinct. As a carbon-minimising environment, Greenheart City, or GC2, would act as a substantial catalyst for the economic growth, vitality, lifestyle and environment of the Gold Coast and Queensland.

Robina Town Centre is forging ahead to become the premier location to live, work and shop. With a modern residential development, a shopping centre currently undergoing a major redevelopment, a rail and public transport hub which connects people from suburbs across the Gold Coast, to a growing hospital and health hub, a world-class stadium, top-notch state and private schools, several public sector offices and a growing corporate sector, it has it all. And it is just across the highway from the quaint Mudgeeraba village environment and gateway to the beautiful hinterland.

The vision of an administrative, retail and corporate hub, which is also a pedestrian and public transport based city, marries well with the state government's own vision outlined in the Toward Q2 blueprint released by Premier Anna Bligh just yesterday. The Bligh government's plan for the future sets long-term goals under five ambitions to make Queensland strong, green, smart, healthy and fair.

Under our green target we aim to cut the state's carbon footprint by one-third with reduced car and electricity use. The development of GC2 would provide immediate, measurable and significant impetus to achieving the targets established in the Gold Coast's own carbon neutral 2020 strategy. It also marries beautifully with our own green objective under the Toward Q2 blueprint.

The proposed construction of new generation sustainable office buildings offering environmental efficiency through design, with five-star green ratings such as the Cornerstone Building, is another vital aspect of the total vision. Efficient workspaces with abundant natural light, a high fresh air component and easy access to public transport will set the path for others to follow and set Robina apart from other centres. All of this will be located adjacent to parklands, wetlands and green open space in Robina and Mudgeeraba.

I commend the designers and developers of the concept at the Queensland Investment Corporation as well as the Robina Town Centre managers and their partners who will carry it through. I encourage all levels of government and business in the community to support the concept. It is in this context that I want to comment on the Gold Coast City Council's recent decision not to locate the combined new council administration centre at Robina. It is a very perplexing decision to stay at Evandale, where there is little public transport and no rail link. It means that all the workers—3½ thousand staff—will have to continue to drive to the Gold Coast City Council administration centre, as will all their clients. I think it is unfortunate that the Gold Coast City Council has missed the opportunity to be part of something as visionary as Greenheart City and part of climate change.

### **Moggill Electorate, School Pedestrian Crossing**

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (10.26 pm): Recently I stood in this place and described how we have 10 kilometres of high-speed state controlled road from Kenmore to Moggill State School without a single pedestrian crossing of any sort. There is no safe crossing for 10 kilometres. At the Kenmore end of that stretch we have two large schools—Kenmore State School and Our Lady of the Rosary School, which is a Catholic school. Between them they have almost 1,000 students in primary school, and yet repeatedly requests from this community and the school community to have Moggill Road in that area signalled as a school zone have been rejected by this government.

There is not any more important function when it comes to road design than keeping 1,000 primary school students safe. Anyone who has driven along Moggill Road at Kenmore would understand why the community is so disturbed about this decision. Frustrated and sometimes angry motorists who queue to get onto the inadequate Kenmore roundabout a few metres later come to a school crossing at Kenmore State School, a few metres later to a bizarre and low-standard intersection of Moggill Road and Kenmore Road and a few metres later to another crossing to Our Lady of the Rosary School. The footpaths are narrow, drivers are distracted and road conditions are poor. Drivers often see the lights that are further away rather than the ones that are near them and roll their cars through.

It is a very simple exercise to see that a school speed zone encompassing both these schools on Moggill Road would make our children safer. These are exceptional road conditions. It is an incredibly dangerous road. The community is now taking up a petition to yet again—year after year it has been doing it—call on this government to keep our children safe. It is not going to cost anything more than the cost of those signs.

I do not stand here raising these issues of safety for the good of my own health. Those schools are not making up their concerns, which are widespread among the parents, teachers and headmasters. The government continually rejects them on the basis that it does not meet the technical standards. Let us not have a technical formula but let us listen to overwhelming community concern, because the members of the community know; they are there every day with their children.

### Illegal Trail Bike Riding

**Mr GRAY** (Gaven—ALP) (10.29 pm): I rise tonight to speak about an issue which impinges on the lives of many people in the electorate of Gaven. This is the illegal riding of trail bikes by irresponsible youth and adults in a number of areas in the electorate. The electorate of Gaven is fortunate to contain within it the entirety of the Nerang State Forest. As well, it has a large amount of undeveloped land in the Maudsland, Pacific Pines and Mount Nathan area. These areas are ideal for the illegal use of trail bikes, as are other areas in the riverside lands throughout Nerang and Carrara.

I have witnessed on many occasions illegal trail bike use which has the effect of condemning all trail bike riders to the realms of criminals when this is not the case, with the majority of responsible parents and riders doing the right thing and confining their enjoyment of trail bike riding to legal sites and motocross tracks. Three of these exist in the Gold Coast City area and local police encourage parents to take their children to these clubs to be taught to ride correctly, safely and in supervised circumstances. I applaud the efforts of the Reedy Creek, Mike Hatcher and Stapleton clubs for their efforts. These clubs, though, are under threat of being encroached upon by expanding urban growth and I applaud the efforts of the Gold Coast City Council in searching for a single location in the city for all of the noisy and dirty motor sports. I have long advocated for this in public and in this House. I am aware of the interdepartmental working party on trail bikes and other motor sports.

I have worked with the traffic branch at Coomera, in particular with Sergeant Terry Parker, and other traffic and police officers in the Coomera and Nerang stations to lessen the incidence of illegal trail bike use in the electorate. I am pleased to report that through their efforts the incidence of illegal use has certainly fallen. There appears to be three definable elements in containing illegal trail bike activities: education, enforcement and provision. These are the keys in winning this battle. As I have already spoken about provision, my further comments are directed to education and enforcement.

People often ring my office with trail bike complaints. I ask the complainants to identify the house where the bikes are housed. These locations are passed on to local police who take the time to visit such houses and talk with the offenders and their parents about the penalties involved and the alternatives to illegal use. My office is working to complete a small pamphlet detailing such information.

In order to enforce the law in respect of illegal trail bike use, police find the availability of trail bikes for their own use invaluable. I worked with Stockland to purchase two additional trail bikes for the Coomera police. The use of these by the Coomera traffic police in operations with officers from the National Parks and Wildlife has resulted in a great number of offenders being caught in the past year. My congratulations go to the Coomera police for their outstanding efforts during this time. We are winning the battle against illegal trail bike use in Gaven but the work is ongoing.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.33 pm.

### ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson