



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2009

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. John Mickel, Logan) read prayers and took the chair.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### Visitors to Parliament

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, during this morning's session there will be visitors in the public gallery who I understand are attending a public health forum at Queensland University of Technology. They will be from Arthritis Queensland, the Cancer Council, the Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia Queensland and representatives from Nutrition Australia.

In addition, during this morning's session there will be students from the Warrigal Road State School in the electorate of Sunnybank, which is held by the Leader of the House, the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School of Inala, held by the member for Inala, and St Agatha's primary school at Clayfield, represented in this place by the member for Clayfield.

### PETITIONS

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

#### Nambour Connection Road

**Mr Wellington**, from 330 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the intersection of Blackall Street and Nambour Connection Road, Woombye remains open; reduce the speed limit; install traffic lights and fixed speed cameras [302].

#### Laidley, Gas Fired Power Station

**Mr Rickuss**, from 28 petitioners, requesting the House to find a more appropriate site for the proposed gas fired power station than the corner of Boland Land and Mulgowie Road, Laidley South [303].

Petitions received.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Incitec Pivot Ltd

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am): Our government is determined to build a strong Queensland and create new jobs. So today I am very pleased to announce that Incitec Pivot Ltd has chosen Brisbane as headquarters for its Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific operations. Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific is Incitec Pivot's explosives manufacturing and distribution subsidiary, which provides services to mining operations throughout the region—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms BLIGH:** I note that those opposite do not support new head offices in Brisbane, but on our side of politics we do. Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific is Incitec Pivot's explosives manufacturing and distribution subsidiary, which provides services to mining operations throughout the region, including Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The new Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific head office is to be located at Incitec Pivot Ltd's operations at Gibson Island. I am told it will house some 60 people, including about 40 positions that will be relocated from Sydney and some 20 people who will move from the current Brisbane regional office located in the CBD. The move is planned to be completed by the end of 2009.

Apart from Brisbane, the other options looked at for these headquarters were to retain them in Sydney, to relocate to Perth or to merge with the Incitec Pivot's corporate office in Melbourne. I believe that Incitec Pivot has made the right decision to come to Queensland. It is not only a great state in which to do business but it is close to their customers, with major operations in northern Australia, including BHP Billiton, Anglo Coal, Rio Tinto, Thiess and Xstrata.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Ms BLIGH:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition likes to talk Queensland down. I unashamedly talk it up and businesses are voting with their feet as they come here for headquarters, bringing new jobs.

Also, there is the Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific explosives manufacturing operation at Helidon. Incitec Pivot Ltd has a \$1 billion ammonium nitrate plant for construction at Moranbah and the company has a half-interest in the Moura ammonium nitrate plant. This is an organisation that is adapting to meet the times and to be in closer contact with their customers.

For us as a state to begin our return to economic prosperity we need confidence boosting news like this to remind us that the good times will return and that companies such as this one are planning for a much brighter medium-term outlook. As I have said, our 100,000 jobs target will be achieved over the next three years and they will come job by job, industry by industry and region by region, with projects just like this one.

### 2018 Commonwealth Games Bid

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): The 1982 Commonwealth Games is a fond memory for many Queenslanders—and, indeed, many Australians. The event marked a turning point in the development of Brisbane as an international city and, as members of this House are aware, I would love to see the games return to our state.

Last year I formed a reference committee, chaired by Mr Bob Gordon, editor-in-chief of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, to provide me with preliminary advice on the viability of a bid by the Gold Coast for the 2018 games. Since then, the Prime Minister's office has confirmed that the federal government would endorse a bid by the Australian Commonwealth Games Association for the 2018 games. Should a bid proceed, the Gold Coast will have the exclusive Australian rights to bid as host city for 2018.

I know that there will be the detractors who will question why we are looking at hosting a Commonwealth Games when the world is facing such challenging economic times. But we cannot use the current situation as an excuse to not plan for the future. In nine years time, I want to see the Gold Coast on the international radar as the host city of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The games will be a catalyst for major infrastructure development for both the Gold Coast and the south-east corner of the state not only in terms of sports venues but also in the building of a games village, transport and communications infrastructure. This is not just about a sporting event; this is about developing a focal point for the future development of the Gold Coast, Brisbane and South-East Queensland. It is also about the development of the future capability of regional centres to host international sporting teams and training camps and all of this, of course, means jobs—jobs in the construction of the infrastructure that is needed to host these games and jobs in growing the Gold Coast as a tourism destination. It is about developing our volunteer basis and our sporting officials and having long-term goals for our athletes.

Recently, I met with the president and CEO of the Australian Commonwealth Games Association and we agreed to commission a full and comprehensive feasibility study into the potential for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Under the stewardship of Queensland Events' new chair, Mr Geoff Dixon, that study is now well advanced.

**Mr Messenger:** Bread and circuses.

**Ms BLIGH:** I note that the member interjecting does not believe that the Gold Coast should host the Commonwealth Games and that it should not be looking to invest in infrastructure. I will be making sure that I tell the tourism industry on the Gold Coast the member's failure to support it.

Subject to the outcomes of this study and to advice from the Australian Commonwealth Games Federation, I will consider leading a delegation of representatives from the Gold Coast, including Mayor Ron Clarke, to meet with the Commonwealth Games Federation in Delhi, India at the annual general assembly in mid-October this year. The Australian Commonwealth Games Association will then meet in early 2010 to decide whether an Australian bid for the 2018 games will proceed. In coming weeks I will also be announcing the expansion of the reference committee to include a number of sporting and corporate identities, as well as representatives from Brisbane.

The Commonwealth Games hold a very special place in the hearts of all Queenslanders and Australians, and indeed members of the Commonwealth of nations. Should we be given the honour of hosting another Commonwealth Games, I have no doubt it will be another defining moment in Queensland's history and that the Gold Coast will be remembered as one of the great host cities of this great international event.

### Bates, Ms N

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Today's *Fraser Coast Chronicle* carries the story of the retirement of an Australian newspaper legend. Today the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* reports that Nancy Bates will exit the stage of journalism after 21 years as editor of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*. Locals know that Nancy has been with the *Chronicle* for nearly 40 years and 21 of those years has been as its editor. I understand that in that time she has written more than 5,500 editorials. I can personally attest to the fact that not all of them have supported my side of politics. Nancy is known for her colourful turn of phrase and she never pulls a punch. In her time she has certainly written some very fiery words about all politicians, and many times they have been about those on my side.

I understand that Nancy is the longest-serving female editor in the country. I am not sure that she was the first female editor of a newspaper, but 21 years ago she must have been one of the early pioneers. In many ways she has been a trailblazer and a key player and character in her community. I am sure that the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Maryborough would join me in attesting to the fact that she has been a passionate champion of the Fraser Coast. Under her stewardship the *Chronicle* has flourished, just like the region and community that it serves has grown and flourished. Along with all members of the House, I wish Nancy and Tony all the best as they move into the next phase of their lives.

### Sporting Events

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): The centre of the rugby league world is Queensland. I am sure that every member of this House and every Queenslanders will be hoping that Mal Meninga and Darren Lockyer's Maroons will begin the 2009 State of Origin series with a win in Melbourne tonight. If there is any doubt about our being the centre of rugby league, I take this opportunity to banish it.

Queensland footy followers are voting with their feet. Our job-creating stadiums are up to twice as popular as those south of the border. In this year's NRL Telstra Premiership, Suncorp Stadium has attracted an average of around 37,600 patrons to each Brisbane Broncos game, which is the highest in the national competition. That was another piece of public infrastructure opposed by those opposite.

**Mr Schwarten:** And built by Public Works.

**Ms BLIGH:** Yes, and built by Public Works. The Cowboys and Titans have also attracted strong attendances with average crowds of over 17,000 and 18,000 respectively for home games so far this year. In fact, after the latest round of NRL matches, Queensland's three NRL stadiums are sitting in the top five places in terms of home crowd attendance.

When the NRL and rival code the AFL play their games here at our top-class venues, it is not just about entertainment. They are serious, job-generating events. For an attendance of around 35,000 at either the Gabba or Suncorp stadiums, around 1,200 event staff are employed. This includes ushers, security, ticketing, cleaning and food and beverage. At Skilled Park, the number of event day staff for an 18,000 crowd is around 720. This year there will be at least 25 major events at Suncorp Stadium, 16 at the Gabba and about 16 at Skilled Park. This all means literally thousands of jobs for Queenslanders over the course of a season. This does not include the employment statistics when events are held at the Dairy Farmers Stadium, the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, the Sleeman Sports Complex, QSAC or the Queensland Tennis Centre. There are obvious flow-on benefits to hotels, cafes and restaurants as those establishments also employ extra staff. And let us not forget what those events do for newspaper sales and TV ratings.

Sport in Queensland is a significant contributor to our economic performance. The economic benefits of each of our major sports teams are huge. For example, it is anticipated the new AFL team on the Gold Coast—opposed by those opposite—will inject around \$340 million into the Gold Coast's economy over the next 10 years. It is beyond doubt that our sports facilities are world-class and they are attracting attendances that reflect that. The government will continue to make sure they are affordable and accessible to all, so we can continue attracting fans from all over the world, because our jobs and the economy are the ultimate winners.

### Healthy Queensland Awards

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.44 am): The entries for the 2009 Healthy Queensland Awards closed in March and judging is now underway as communities across the state compete for a share of the \$1.6 million prize money. The Healthy Queensland Awards were developed as part of the Bligh government's 2020 target to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. This month twelve regional award winners will be revealed ahead of the announcement of state-wide winners in the next couple of months.

The Bligh government, in partnership with Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland, invited entries to find Queensland's healthiest community, healthiest school and healthiest workplace. These awards are about rewarding communities that make an effort to promote healthy living. Each year over 4,300 Queenslanders die prematurely from preventable chronic diseases and every year we are seeing more and more people admitted to our hospitals and attending our EDs for heart conditions, diabetes, kidney failure or respiratory diseases.

That is why a key ambition of the Bligh government's Toward Q2 plan is to create a healthier Queensland. This is about working at a grassroots level to get communities to address health locally and, in doing so, reduce the incidence of chronic disease in Queensland. Winners will share in a prize pool totalling \$1 million for communities, \$500,000 for schools and \$100,000 for workplaces to be used towards healthy infrastructure such as walking and cycling paths, basketball courts, shade structures, sport and recreation equipment, policies that make healthy choices the easy choices and programs that promote health and wellbeing.

I look forward to the announcement of state-wide winners and the major prize presentation that is to be held in mid-August. The Bligh government is firmly committed to making Queenslanders our healthiest people and this competition, along with other initiatives, brings us that much closer.

### **Laidley State High School**

**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.46 am): I was shocked and appalled to hear of a serious incident at Laidley State High School in which a year 9 student had to be cut free from a rope. It absolutely beggars belief that something like this was able to occur. Two separate investigations are now underway, one by my department and the other by Queensland Workplace Health and Safety, a division of the Department of Industrial Relations. We must get to the bottom of this incident and quickly, so that everything possible can be done to ensure it never happens again.

As a parent, the last thing I would want is to see any child with a rope around their neck, for any reason, in school or anywhere. I am astonished at what appears to have taken place here and we must leave no stone unturned in these investigations. They must be thorough and extensive to ensure we get to all of the facts, so such an incident can never happen again. The details of exactly what occurred will be determined by these investigations, but clearly this is something which should never have happened.

I expect my department to act immediately on any recommendations arising as a result of these investigations. This is clearly a very serious incident. The safety and wellbeing of students must be the first priority at all times. Of course this incident must have been extremely distressing to the student, their parents and all those involved. I am advised that counselling and support is being provided for students and staff and this will continue to be available. This is a stark and sobering reminder of the need for vigilance by everyone when it comes to student safety.

### **Tugun Bypass**

**Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (9.48 am): Today marks the first anniversary of the \$543 million Tugun bypass officially opening to traffic. This project is another demonstration of the Bligh government delivering congestion-busting infrastructure in South-East Queensland. Delivered six months ahead of schedule, more than 14 million motorists have enjoyed the benefits of this state and federally funded project since its opening. This equates to about 40,000 vehicles a day, and this is expected to continue to rise to 60,000 by 2017. It is yet another example of how we are meeting our Toward Q2 target of delivering infrastructure that anticipates growth. From the day it opened, motorists switched routes quickly, with the one millionth vehicle passing through the seven-kilometre link road within a month of opening. The bypass has reduced traffic congestion and slashed travel times for interstate travellers.

The people of Tugun have also benefited from this major infrastructure investment, with a huge reduction in traffic on the Gold Coast Highway through the heart of their community. In 2007, more than 72,000 vehicles a day travelled along the Gold Coast Highway in both directions, of which 5.7 per cent were heavy vehicles. Following the opening of the Tugun bypass, traffic volumes on the Gold Coast Highway decreased by about 50 per cent to 35,000 vehicles a day, of which 3.6 per cent were heavy vehicles. For heavy vehicles, the drop of almost 70 per cent has been even more dramatic, with the daily average travelling through Tugun now down to 1,263.

The sophisticated electronic monitoring system along the bypass and in the tunnel has also improved safety for road users. Since the project was completed a year ago my department has maintained the entire length of the bypass, including the New South Wales section. This \$7 million annual maintenance contract supports almost 100 direct and indirect jobs.

The Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in tough times, as we showed yesterday. Our government took the tough decision to build this road without any funding from the New South Wales government, despite more than half of that road being in New South Wales. It is a decision that has paid off for the thousands of motorists who use it every day. And just like we will show them how to play football tonight, we have shown New South Wales how to build a road.

### **Animal Welfare**

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.51 am): In the May sitting of parliament I provided an update about some of the initiatives underway to help reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanased each year in Queensland. Councils are exploring different solutions in their communities as part of a two-year pilot funded by the Bligh government. Taking part are Townsville, Moreton Bay, Logan and Gold Coast councils.

In Moreton Bay, I am pleased to advise that more than 295 cats have been desexed, 1,100 cats and dogs have been microchipped and, most remarkably, some 7,000 schoolchildren have now taken part in the council and RSPCA run education program. I am told that the council had identified that up to 90 per cent of cats that ended up in its pound network were euthanased—quite frankly, cat ownership was not valued in the community—and council's multipronged awareness program is aimed at turning that around.

Valued pets—those that are microchipped and wanted—come home. I am told by the council that in one day alone 197 local residents brought their animals along to be microchipped at a special \$10 council run and subsidised community event. That is just one day. By ensuring pets are microchipped they have every chance of being reunited with their owners if they stray or get lost. I congratulate Moreton Bay Regional Council on its commitment to reducing euthanasia rates and the number of unwanted cats and dogs in our state.

I am pleased to advise that Logan City Council is also making sure it is part of the solution. It has purchased two demountable buildings and is creating a community vet desexing clinic in the shire. The roof went on this week and tenders for the service providers are being called.

Both the Gold Coast and Townsville city councils are in the process of approving local laws to support their initiatives. Gold Coast City Council plans to implement a breeder permit scheme and a cat enclosure education program. Townsville City Council is reinstating a Catscan program on Magnetic Island.

I look forward to sharing the successes of these initiatives as they come to hand. The Bligh government and indeed these local councils are taking action and making the tough decisions to better serve our communities.

### **Coal Seam Gas Water**

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.53 am): I am pleased to advise the House that the Bligh government has recently completed consultation on the management of coal seam gas water in Queensland. CSG production is booming in the state and is expected to increase significantly if a liquefied natural gas, LNG, industry is established.

Groundwater unavoidably brought to the surface during CSG production is considered a waste by-product from industrial activity. It may be approved, however, as a 'resource' where a beneficial use can be identified. Given the generally salty nature and poor quality of CSG water, only limited quantities can be used beneficially without requiring treatment. CSG water has the potential to cause environmental harm if released to land or waters through inappropriate management. So in October last year the government moved to better manage the potential environmental risks associated with current CSG water management practices and encourage beneficial use of this water for industrial, agricultural or residential use.

Key decisions outlined in the government's CSG water management policy included discontinuing large-scale use of evaporation ponds for CSG water disposal and making producers responsible for treatment and disposal of this water. The policy also requires water which cannot be directly injected underground or beneficially used to be collected for disposal.

While a number of key policy decisions were made last year, the government was also keen to hear the views of the broader Queensland community. At the beginning of last month, the government released a discussion paper which explained in greater detail the policy decisions made and canvassed issues confronting the industry as it grows to support a potential LNG industry. Consultation was facilitated through the government's 'have your say' website and will provide the government with a better understanding of what beneficial use applications are acceptable to the community.



After taking public comments for a month, the discussion paper closed on Monday. This consultation process reaffirms the government's commitment to ensuring environmentally sustainable development of the CSG industry in Queensland and creating economic development opportunities through the beneficial use of CSG water. The submissions are currently being reviewed by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, and the views put forward will be taken into consideration when finalising the CSG water policy later in the year.

### **Q150 Festival of Sport**

**Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (9.56 am): During the month of July, Queensland is hosting a month-long sports bonanza—the Q150 Festival of Sport. Across the state, we have 12 blockbusting games of rugby league, AFL and A-League football. We will also see the inaugural Dunlop Townsville Supercar race rev into action and more than 21,000 runners line up for the Gold Coast Marathon. This sports extravaganza is a huge win for sports fans, great for jobs, great for the economy and great for Queensland.

On Tuesday morning, tickets went on sale for the highly anticipated football clash between the Brisbane Roar and the Scottish Premier League superpower Celtic Football Club, which will be held at Suncorp Stadium on Sunday, 12 July. Just three days later, the mighty Maroons and New South Wales will meet in the third and final State of Origin match at Suncorp. Hopefully it will be a clean sweep—3-0 after tonight's victory.

On the Friday night following the Origin game, just two days later, Queensland teams the Brisbane Broncos and the Gold Coast Titans play the southern teams of the Rabbitohs and the Bulldogs in the first ever NRL premiership double-header at 'the cauldron'.

In AFL action, the Brisbane Lions will be up against competition benchmark the Geelong Cats. In more international football, English Premier League heavyweights Fulham play newcomers Gold Coast United at Skilled Park at Robina on 8 July. The list goes on and on.

The Q150 Festival of Sport will bring hundreds of thousands of local, interstate and international fans through the gates, creating thousands of jobs and injecting millions into the economy. By way of comparison, in 2006 the Brisbane Ashes test generated \$71.95 million for the economy, bringing more than 21,000 visitors to Queensland. Research has indicated that the 2006 Bledisloe Cup match at Suncorp Stadium generated an estimated \$17 million to the Queensland economy. On average, a crowd of 40,000 patrons at Suncorp Stadium equates to approximately 1,700 people employed directly at the stadium, not to mention those employed at the hotels and restaurants close by.

The Q150 Festival of Sport will be like the Bledisloe Cup many times over. The festival is evidence that an investment in Queensland stadiums is an investment in the economy and the community. Without these first-class facilities we would not be able to attract these high-calibre football codes and motor racing meets such as that in Townsville.

On top of these major events, we will be hosting a Q150 community symposium to look at ways of maximising community participation in sport, particularly junior sport. Without doubt, July's Q150 Festival of Sport is a huge win for sports fans, great for jobs, great for the economy and, just like tonight, great for Queensland.

### **Kirra Beach**

**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (9.59 am): The Bligh government is making progress on an election commitment to restore Kirra Beach to its former glory. Yesterday I met with Gold Coast Mayor, Ron Clarke, to progress a council partnership to remove much of the sand that has caused a great deal of frustration for residents and visitors. Councillor Clarke and I were of the same view, that action should be taken as soon as possible. We agreed that the first sand excavation works must commence next month.

The excess sand will initially be used to rebuild other beaches on the Gold Coast that have experienced severe erosion from the recent wild weather and king tides. It will also be used to fill in the water-ponding at Kirra. This is the first step in delivering on our government's \$1.5 million project to reduce the width of the famous Kirra Beach and have its famous surf break return much sooner. Once we have agreed on a project plan and stakeholder consultations have taken place on this plan, further work will begin on Kirra to move sand from the shoreline to the back of the beach to effectively narrow Kirra Beach.

While many Gold Coast beaches have suffered from severe erosion following the recent storms, Kirra Beach has held up very well against the intense power of the huge surf and king tides. The overall impact of the recent storm conditions on southern Gold Coast beaches will become clearer after the results of post storm event survey monitoring and a webcam beach width analysis are completed. Initial advice by the Department of Environment and Resource Management indicates that there has been

some improvement at Kirra Beach. Pressure has recently been taken off Kirra with sand pumped by the Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project to Duranbah Beach on the border to restore that eroded beach. We have also begun negotiating with the New South Wales government, our partner in the sand bypassing project, to develop longer term solutions to the problem of excessive sand build-up on the southern beaches.

Our government remains committed to a Kirra Beach that has been restored to its former glory and stays that way. I will ensure we deliver on that commitment by working closely with the Gold Coast City Council.

### Queensland Economy

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (10.01 am): Yesterday the Premier laid out a comprehensive and bold plan to renew Queensland and restructure the state's finances in a way that focuses on the long-term horizon. Some of the critics of our far-sighted plan continue to deny the one inescapable truth in this debate: we are in the midst of the worst global recession since the Great Depression which has left Queensland with a \$14 billion hole in our revenues. We have had to make some tough choices, and we have chosen to support jobs and continue our building program.

Our five-year plan will deliver a benefit to the state's finances in the order of \$30 billion in net proceeds and avoided future expenditure. Our approach will ensure that Queensland emerges from this global recession stronger, not weaker. It recognises that governments must continually reassess the best way to invest finite resources, and the Bligh government is determined to invest in projects that create jobs for the future and provide the services that a growing population in this community requires.

Yesterday's plan is a continuation of our quest to modernise the Queensland economy. That commitment has seen us invest more than \$3 billion in growing our innovation capabilities including our research and skills base. These funds are aimed at generating the jobs of tomorrow—jobs for future generations. The number of researchers in this state has increased by more than 50 per cent in the last 10 years, and knowledge based exports have more than doubled since the start of the decade. This is the practical application of the commitment we took to this year's election—to protect jobs, to generate new jobs and to cushion Queensland from the effects of the global recession.

Our efforts have recently been recognised by the World Economic Forum, which has named Brisbane as one of the world's most exciting innovation hubs of the future. The forum has developed a global Innovation Heat Map, which is used to identify and profile innovation centres around the world. This process involves identifying the factors common to successful innovation hubs such as government support, quality human capital, streamlined regulation, cutting-edge innovation infrastructure and a business environment that supports innovation. Through this process, Brisbane was rated as one of the world's so-called 'hot spots', along with Ottawa in Canada and Bristol in the UK. This international recognition underlines this government's enduring investment in building up and strengthening the state's innovation and research capacity.

As we look to the future, we are charting a course for future prosperity, for future growth, for future job generation, for future governments to provide the services that our state needs. We are renewing Queensland. It has been the hallmark of Labor in government and it remains the hallmark of this Labor government.

### Government Buildings, Energy Efficiency

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.04 am): The Department of Public Works is leading by example when it comes to increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. In April 2007, the government committed to the ambitious target of cutting national greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 through its ClimateSmart 2050 initiative. Public Works is administering a Strategic Energy Efficiency Policy for government buildings which establishes minimum energy consumption reduction targets for all departments of five per cent by 2010 and 20 per cent by 2015 compared to energy consumption in 2005-06. I am pleased to inform the House that we are well on track to meeting that five per cent reduction by 2010.

An annual energy saving of 24 per cent has been achieved at 61 Mary Street, 14 per cent at the Land Centre and 27 per cent at the Gabba Towers. At the comparatively newer buildings at 33 Charlotte Street and the State Archives in Runcorn, eight per cent and three per cent have been saved respectively. Three more retrofitting projects—111 George Street, the CITEC Building and 62 Ann Street—are due for completion by the end of the month. Another five—the Neville Bonner Building, 30 Mary Street and government buildings in Townsville, Maryborough and Cairns—will be completed by December.

The reductions are being achieved through the use of more energy-efficient lighting and improved air-conditioning and building management systems. We are also utilising the latest technology to achieve our goals. Motion-detecting lighting has been installed in Gabba Towers so lights are on only when needed—I am thinking of getting that in my house—while 30 Mary Street will adopt a range of technological innovations, including card activated lighting.

The use of energy performance contracts will see the department's energy consumption reduced by 15 per cent by the end of 2009-10, which is a drop of 18 million kilowatts each year that will deliver annual savings of around \$2 million. Solar energy is being trialled as an alternative source of power for government owned office buildings. The Department of Public Works building at 80 George Street is generating some seven kilowatts of electricity from solar photovoltaic panels installed on the roof. In Rockhampton, the James Larcombe government office building in Bolsover Street has installed solar photovoltaic panels capable of generating up to five kilowatts of electricity. These are just some of the ways in which Public Works is playing its part in achieving our Toward Q2 target of creating a greener Queensland.

### Fire Safety

**Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.07 am): It is a disturbing fact that seven of the 17 house fire fatalities last year were lives lost during the winter months of June, July and August. Over the same three-month period, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service attended more than 470 house fires. That is why with temperatures starting to fall the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has launched its annual Winter Fire Safety campaign.

Queenslanders need to take the fire safety message to heart. It is all too easy to adopt an 'it won't happen to me' approach; however, the fact is that the use of heaters and electric blankets during winter dramatically increases the risk of fire. Lives can be saved if people act now to take the simple but necessary steps to protect themselves, their families and their properties. All households should ensure smoke alarms are installed and in good working order. Queenslanders should check all electrical equipment that has been stored over summer for obvious damage and faults. A simple test by an electrician is the safest option.

On the topic of smoke alarms, I am pleased to inform the House that currently around 97.3 per cent of Queensland households have smoke alarms installed—the highest rate of any state in Australia. In October 2006, the figure was 87.1 per cent. This figure has increased thanks to the introduction by the Labor government of smoke alarm legislation on 1 July 2007 and a comprehensive education and communication campaign. However, only 90 per cent of households have working smoke alarms, which is a figure that needs to be increased by residents regularly checking and changing their smoke alarm batteries.

Other simple, common-sense risk management measures include keeping heating devices away from curtains and clothing, making sure that no heating device is ever left unattended and developing an evacuation plan in case a fire does break out. These simple, common-sense measures can reduce the risk of house fire and prevent the needless loss of life.

As part of its vision for tomorrow's Queensland, the Bligh government is committed to supporting safe communities. Our Winter Fire Safety campaign and efforts to increase the number of properties with working smoke alarms demonstrate our commitment.

### Vehicles, Energy Efficiency

**Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.09 am): The Bligh government is committed to protecting our lifestyle and environment to achieve a green Queensland as we head towards Q2. I am pleased to advise that on 22 May the Australian Transport Council endorsed the vehicle fuel efficiency report, a collaboration between Australia's transport and environment agencies. On the same day the Hon. Kate Jones, Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, and her colleagues at the national Environment Protection and Heritage Council also endorsed the report.

Transport produces 10.8 per cent of Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions, with road transport contributing nine per cent. Recommendations of the report relate to vehicle standards such as carbon dioxide emission levels for new light vehicles, fiscal measures, differing duties and charges, and improved consumer information. Practical approaches that influence the whole vehicle fleet like carbon dioxide emission standards will send a positive message to the public. The central proposal in the report is for Australia to consider carbon dioxide emission standards, and this aligns with moves internationally including the recent announcement from the United States of America, which is considering pursuing a national fuel economy and greenhouse gas standard.

By 2016 car companies in the US will be expected to achieve 30 per cent better fuel efficiency, the equivalent of 6.63 litres per hundred kilometres in Australian terms. The US estimates that this will save 1.8 billion barrels of oil a day and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 900 million tonnes. Australia's vehicle industry has set itself a voluntary target of 6.8 litres per 100 kilometres by 2010, notably sooner than the American target. The Bligh government's Q2 green target is to reduce fuel consumption from 4.23 tonnes of greenhouse gasses per household for private travel.

Since January 2008, the rate of motor vehicle registration duty for light vehicles has depended on the number of cylinders, with the rate of duty increasing from a base of two per cent for hybrid and electric vehicles through to four per cent for vehicles with seven or more cylinders. This scheme values vehicles that produce much lower greenhouse gas emissions.

I am pleased that the Bligh government is working with the Rudd government and other states by endorsing the vehicle fuel efficiency report. This will go a long way towards assisting us to reach our green targets.

### Primary Industries

**Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.12 am): Queensland's billion-dollar primary industries continue to be a success story despite the global financial crisis and uncertainty about jobs. The March 2009 *Prospects update* shows that the state's primary industry commodities are forecast at a net worth of \$13.04 billion. This is a five per cent increase in the total value of Queensland's agricultural sector since last December and includes a gross value of production at the farm gate and first-stage processing.

There have been increases in live cattle exports. The value of wheat and fruit such as watermelons, pineapples and grapes has also increased, while sugarcane, chickpeas and soya beans also recorded an increase. Sunflowers are a more attractive crop than sorghum for producers right now, with sunflowers valued at \$17.5 million, a 17 per cent increase on the December forecast. The gross value of the sugarcane crop has increased by 23 per cent to \$920 million thanks to an expected increase in sugar prices.

Wheat continues to increase in value with an estimated worth of \$520 million, 24 per cent higher than the December forecast. In 2007-08 Queensland farms produced 1.5 million tonnes of wheat, a figure that is expected to rise to 1.82 million tonnes this year. Queensland's beef industry remains the state's largest primary industry and is forecast to increase in value from \$3.39 billion to \$3.46 billion. More beef is reaching the abattoirs because of better than expected conditions after significant rain in the Gulf country and the state's north.

The good news is not limited to cane, grain or beef. There has been an overall increase of six per cent in the value of Queensland's horticultural industry. Mangoes are forecast at \$65 million, table grapes have a value of \$50 million and turf is worth \$81 million. The macadamia industry has recorded three successive years of growth and is now worth \$30 million, an increase of 20 per cent on last year. Combined, the state's egg and poultry industries jumped in value to \$550 million, an overall increase of about 10 per cent. In these tough economic times, our diverse agricultural industries continue to drive our economy and provide jobs for thousands of Queenslanders.

### Youth Crime

**Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.14 am): The Bligh government is taking tough action to combat youth crime including tough action to combat the causes of crime. We must not forget, though, that the vast majority of young people do the right thing. That is reflected in the latest youth crime trends. In 2001 the rate of juvenile crime was around nine offences per hundred young people. That has now dropped to around eight. That is significant bearing in mind the population of young people rose by almost 50,000 in that same period. Those figures show that the police, courts and youth justice workers are striking the right balance between helping young people in trouble and protecting the community.

I was in Townsville last week inspecting a multimillion-dollar expansion of Townsville's youth detention centre. It is a big jobs generator, creating more than 1,400 jobs for building workers. The expanded centre, when fully operational, will employ an extra 95 staff. The centre delivers a range of rehab and education services to help young people get their lives back on track. I was really impressed with the work the staff were doing, and I commend them for their committed efforts.

The drop in youth crime is due in no small part to Bligh government initiatives such as youth justice conferences. This is where young people who have done the wrong thing face the people they have wronged and take responsibility for their actions. Youth justice workers tell me this is a very powerful process. In fact, some young people opt for detention rather than facing their victims. Our youth justice initiatives are also helping young people reach their usual adolescent milestones. They are

given access to flexible education and training. We are building their self-esteem and are giving them a helping hand to turn their lives around. We have brought in sweeping reforms to tackle youth crime. We have listened to the community and have taken their concerns on board, because we all want Queensland to be a safer place.

### **Medium Sized Businesses, Workplace Safety**

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.16 am): Medium sized businesses keep this state's economy strong and generate thousands of jobs for Queenslanders. Unfortunately, though, medium sized workplaces have a relatively high incidence of workplace injury. While employees in medium sized businesses make up 20 per cent of the Queensland workforce, they account for more than 30 per cent of all workers' compensation claims. We want to turn these figures around so workers at the state's 7,000 medium sized businesses can make it home safe and injury free.

That is why the Bligh government is launching a new safety campaign to be run through Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. The initiative will be piloted in Caboolture and Brisbane's north from this month before being rolled out state-wide in the future. This proactive campaign aims to educate employers about practices they can implement to help make Queensland workplaces among the safest in the country.

Businesses will be invited to register for a free voluntary consultation with a workplace health and safety expert. Officers will be visiting businesses throughout the area between July and October, with up to 200 free consultations set to be offered as part of the trial. These consultations will provide an opportunity for businesses to identify and address health and safety issues before accidents occur.

Each year around 100 Queenslanders die at work and nearly 30,000 workers are so seriously injured that they require more than five days leave. This government is committed to turning these figures around by setting ambitious and challenging targets of reducing workplace injuries by 40 per cent and fatalities by 20 per cent by 2012.

Working with medium sized businesses to improve their health and safety performance will contribute to achieving these ambitious targets. In these tough economic times, it has never been more vital to make workplace health and safety a priority. We know a safe worker is a productive worker and productive workers help to build our Queensland economy. What is more, safe workers come home safely to their family each night, and that is the most important reason to make workplace health and safety an absolute priority.

### **Responsible Gambling**

**Hon. PJ LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.19 am): Last year the Premier announced a range of responsible gambling initiatives, one of which was an investigation into precommitment card based machine gaming. The trials undertaken at Sandgate and Redcliffe RSLs have now concluded and the two systems trialled have been approved for a voluntary rollout.

With the member for Sandgate, Vicky Darling, last week I attended a demonstration at the Sandgate RSL, which is in her electorate. The new cashless gaming technology allows patrons to set limits on the money or time spent using electronic gaming machines, providing greater control to players. The trials showed promising results, with some patrons reporting a spend reduction of up to \$25 a day. The gaming machine spend for players, regardless of whether or not they set a limit, decreased by 5.2 per cent. The evaluation of the card based trials indicates overall success as a harm minimisation measure for industry, players and the government.

The Queensland government is leading the way in the prevention of problem gambling in Queensland. Whilst less than half a per cent of the Queensland population can be identified as a problem gambler, one problem gambler is one problem gambler too many for the Bligh government. The impact problem gambling has on families and communities makes it an important area for the government to address, even more so in tough economic times such as these.

As part of Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland, the Bligh government is committed to building a safe and caring community. The wider investigation into card based gaming is one of many harm minimisation initiatives announced by Premier Anna Bligh last year which forms part of the Queensland government's Responsible Gambling Strategy. Others include the introduction of mandatory responsible service of gambling training, a moratorium on electronic gaming machine increases, a review of ATM withdrawal limits in licensed gaming venues, a ban on pre-10 am gaming operating hours and wider investigations into precommitment card based machine gaming.

I am happy to report that the evaluation of the card based gaming trials demonstrated an overall support from both players and industry alike. The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing has approved both systems for implementation in gaming venues on a voluntary basis. The Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in these tough times.

### **Vegetation Management**

**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.21 am): The commencement of the Vegetation Management Act 2009 in April was the Bligh government's first step in delivering on our commitment to protect critical native vegetation in reef catchments and endangered regrowth vegetation. The act put in place a moratorium that ensures high-value regrowth vegetation cannot be cleared pre-emptively while the government consults with industry, agricultural and conservation groups on ways to make our tree-clearing laws more effective.

Public submissions on the moratorium have now closed. As of late last month, 264 submissions had been received and more than 32,000 moratorium and regional ecosystem maps have been requested. The Bligh government will continue to consult on these reforms and I will meet with peak agricultural and conservation groups later this week to discuss the submissions.

This meeting will look at the long-term framework for vegetation management and develop a balanced approach that manages the interests of landholders and the need to protect our endangered vegetation bioregions and waterways. The long-term solution needs to (1) allow for the continuation of business on land currently managed for production; (2) allow landholders to participate in incentive schemes like carbon and environmental services; and (3) align with the requirements in reef protection measures, land and water management planning and the Australian government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. These will be practical and simple requirements that can be understood and implemented by landholders at a property level. I am committed to working with stakeholders to deliver workable solutions to these issues.

I am also aware that there have been some concerns expressed regarding the moratorium maps. These maps were developed as a temporary measure and form only part of the overall moratorium process. Due to the satellite technology used, suburbs and towns which have plenty of trees and shrubs may appear as areas affected by the moratorium because that region was originally covered by native vegetation that is now endangered. This means the maps may identify some areas in urban centres as endangered regrowth vegetation which are not affected by the moratorium. If landholders or local authorities have any concerns with the maps, the best thing they can do is contact their local Department of Environment and Resource Management office.

### **Volunteer Carers**

**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.24 am): On 4 May the Carers (Recognition) Act 2009 came into effect. The act recognises the support and care more than 530,000 Queenslanders give on a daily basis to family members, loved ones, friends and neighbours who may have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or are aged and frail. Of these carers, approximately 110,000 are primary carers who voluntarily take on the major caring role and responsibilities for their loved ones.

The Bligh government recognises the remarkable and selfless support as well as the immense benefits their volunteering efforts bring to the wonderful social fabric of our communities. Life's twists and turns naturally mean that anyone at any time could be called upon to care for a loved one.

Our government also recognises the stresses and challenges carers often face in their caring role such as increased risk of social isolation, health problems, increased financial pressure and limited opportunities to pursue social, educational and economic opportunities. That is why the government will continue to work with carers to assist them in the significant role they play in our community.

For example, more than 4,700 Queensland carers have signed up for the government Carer Business Discount Card since its launch in July last year. The Carer Business Discount Card, which is a key plank in the Queensland government's Carer Recognition Policy and Carer Action Plan, allows eligible carers to access great discounts, ranging from five to 10 per cent on average, for a range of goods and services across the state. An estimated 90,000 carers benefit from the scheme, which has the backing of 2,600 businesses across the state.

The act also provides for the establishment of the Carers Advisory Council to build the partnership between Queensland carers, the people they care for and the government. The Carers (Recognition) Act 2009 recognises the remarkable support carers provide to family members, loved ones, friends and neighbours on a daily basis as well as the immense benefits their unpaid efforts bring to our communities.

### Indigenous Round Table

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.26 am): Last week in Cairns I hosted the ministerial Indigenous round table with mayors of remote Indigenous communities. I was joined by my parliamentary colleague the Hon. Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services, Housing and Women, who led the session on housing matters, which are of such importance to these communities. I also want to thank the member for Cook and the member for Mulgrave for their vigorous participation on behalf of their communities.

The round table was very successful, with three levels of government coming together to develop solutions to key issues including developing social housing and sustainable infrastructure. Co-chaired by Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey, the discussions were honest, robust and productive. Attending the meeting were mayors of 14 discrete Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities, the northern peninsula communities and representatives from Mossman Gorge and Coen.

I can attest that the mayors are strong, experienced and committed men determined to take action. I made a commitment to work with the mayors to help them identify opportunities to diversify their revenue streams and maximise potential economic opportunities for their communities. The mayors also proposed options for the future management of community retail stores which aim to provide maximum benefit to their communities. Most importantly, we have agreed to jointly focus on breaking through red tape to improve coordination of land and house planning, implementation, upgrades and maintenance in discrete communities to roll out the state and federal governments' large and important housing program.

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

### Order of Appointment

**Ms SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.28 am), by leave: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order 167(3), the order of appointment for 2009 Estimates Committees circulated in my name be agreed to.

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#### 2009 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES—ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

- (1) The following estimates committees are appointed—
  - Estimates Committee A
  - Estimates Committee B
  - Estimates Committee C
  - Estimates Committee D
  - Estimates Committee E
  - Estimates Committee F
  - Estimates Committee G
- (2) The proposed expenditures stated in the Appropriation Bill 2009 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2009 are referred to the estimates committees immediately after each of the Bills has been read a second time.
- (3) Members are appointed to estimates committees as follows—
  - Estimates Committee A—Mr Finn (Chair), Mrs Attwood, Mrs Kiernan, Mr Langbroek, Mr Nicholls, Mr Shine and Mrs Stuckey
  - Estimates Committee B—Mr Wendt (Chair), Mr Hoolihan, Mr Johnson, Ms Male, Mr Malone, Mr McArdle and Mrs Smith
  - Estimates Committee C—Mr Moorhead (Chair), Ms Croft, Mr Gibson, Mr Kilburn, Mrs Menkens, Mr Seeney and Ms van Litsenburg
  - Estimates Committee D—Ms Grace (Chair), Mr Cripps, Mr Choi, Mr Foley, Ms Jarratt, Ms Simpson and Hon Wells
  - Estimates Committee E—Mrs Miller (Chair), Mr Elmes, Mr Hopper, Ms Johnstone, Ms O'Neill, Mr Springborg and Mrs Sullivan
  - Estimates Committee F—Mr O'Brien (Chair), Ms Farmer, Mr Hobbs, Mr Messenger, Ms O'Neill, Mr Pitt, and Mr Stevens
  - Estimates Committee G—Mr Wettenhall (Chair), Mrs Cunningham, Mr Dempsey, Dr Flegg, Mr Ryan, Mrs Scott and Mr Watt
- (4) Organisational units and portfolios are allocated to committees for examination as follows—
 

Estimates Committee A—

  - Office of the Governor
  - Legislative Assembly

Organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers are also allocated to Estimates Committee A—

  - Premier and Minister for the Arts
  - Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development
  - Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology

Estimates Committee B—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Deputy Premier and Minister for Health
- Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services

Estimates Committee C—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade
- Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women
- Minister for Infrastructure and Planning

Estimates Committee D—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Minister for Main Roads
- Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

Estimates Committee E—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland
- Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations
- Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability

Estimates Committee F—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading
- Minister for Transport

Estimates Committee G—

Organisational units within the portfolios of—

- Minister for Education and Training
- Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport

(5) The estimates committees are to meet to hear evidence in accordance with the following schedule—

- Estimates Committee A—Tuesday 14 July 2009
- Estimates Committee B—Wednesday 15 July 2009
- Estimates Committee C—Thursday 16 July 2009
- Estimates Committee D—Friday 17 July 2009
- Estimates Committee E—Tuesday 21 July 2009
- Estimates Committee F—Wednesday 22 July 2009
- Estimates Committee G—Thursday 23 July 2009

(6) Estimates committees to report

- (a) Estimates Committees A to G are to examine and report by no later than Monday 3 August 2009 on the proposed expenditures for the organisational units allocated to them.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Queensland Economy

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this parliament notes the gross financial mismanagement of the Bligh government and the \$64 billion in debt the Premier and Treasurer accumulated before the global financial crisis and calls upon the Premier to stop misleading Queenslanders about the reasons for the fire sale of Queenslanders' assets.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Sale of Public Assets; Fuel Subsidy

**Mr LANGBROEK** (10.29 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I table the 57 official media releases and policy statements distributed by the Premier during the recent election campaign and I ask: where in any of these election statements did the Premier mention selling Queensland assets or imposing a new fuel tax?

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of documents titled 'Labor Policy Announcements 2009 election' [304].



**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. From some of the comments we have heard from those opposite in the last 24 hours—

**Mr Johnson:** And some of your own. Don't leave them out.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable member for Gregory, I thought we were going to get on better today.

**Mr JOHNSON:** You and I probably will, Mr Speaker, but I don't know about the rest of them.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will wait for the House to come to order.

**Ms BLIGH:** It would seem from some of the comments from those opposite in the last 24 hours that they have entirely wiped the last election from their memories. I can understand that so let me take them back. What were the circumstances in which the last election was called? It was called in circumstances where the government had laid out on the Friday before the election the full extent of the effects of the global financial crisis on the state budget. Why did I call the election? I called the election because of the emerging evidence from Treasury and from the documents that we made public of the devastating effects of the global financial crisis on Queensland's revenue. That was the very reason that motivated my decision to call the election. On day one—and I refer the honourable member to the press conference I held to announce the election—I said that this election was being called because Queensland's finances were in trouble and Queenslanders had the right to decide who would lead them through it and who would have to make some of the tough decisions to get us out the other side of it stronger not weaker. I was very clear. Our priority when we went into a tough budget—

**Mr Gibson:** You couldn't be truthful, could you? When did you say you were going to sell everything off?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Ms BLIGH:** I was very clear that when it came to making the tough budget decisions my number one priority would be the building program and jobs. That was it: jobs and the building program. That is what our decision yesterday does. It secures the building program and it protects and creates services and jobs. That is what I promised and that is what we will deliver.

### **Sale of Public Assets; Fuel Subsidy**

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My second question without notice is also to the Premier. Will the Premier tell the House what has happened in the past 75 days since the election to require a \$600 million annual fuel tax and \$15 billion of asset sales? Why did the Premier not tell Queenslanders about these plans just 75 days ago?

**Ms BLIGH:** Again if the Leader of the Opposition aspires to be someone who can make a difference in this state he needs to pay attention to what is happening around him. Let me tell members what has changed. The federal budget brought down by the federal government identified a further decline of \$2.5 billion in GST revenue.

**Mr Springborg:** It's Kevin Rudd's fault.

**Ms BLIGH:** I take the inane interjection from the thinker in residence over there. The GST drop has nothing to do with the federal government. In fact, it would have been worse if they had not put their stimulus package in.

**Mr Springborg:** You're as shifty as a bag of marbles.

**Mr Horan:** You don't get GST on money people put in the bank.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms BLIGH:** There was a decline of GST revenue of \$2.5 billion announced in the federal budget. How much is that? It is \$2.5 billion. How much will the fuel subsidy cost Queenslanders over the next four years? It will cost \$2.4 billion. That is one of the things that has changed. Let me tell those opposite another thing that has changed. Two and a half weeks ago the Industrial Relations Commission ruled that those workers who work in community services in welfare agencies right across Queensland should have a pay rise in some classifications of between 20 to 30 per cent. That will be a cost to the budget of \$500 million to \$600 million over the next four years. One option the government had was not to fund those disability groups and respite centres. Do those opposite know what they would have had to do? They are required by law to pay these wages and if we did not fund them they would have to cut hours and services. They do not want to face those realities.

I am very pleased that the Leader of the Opposition asked me the question. They are two very significant changes. I have to take account of changed circumstances; that is what leadership means. When the world changes, one has to change with it. When circumstances change leaders have a responsibility to change with it. They are the changes that we have encountered and that we are responding to.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr KILBURN:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what the consequences for road users would have been had the government not decided to end the Fuel Subsidy Scheme?

**Ms BLIGH:** What we hear from those opposite is a continual denial that there is a world economic recession. They are laughing at it. We still have major companies like General Motors in collapse. Did Kevin Rudd cause that? Did the Queensland government cause that? Those opposite still have their heads in the sand.

**Mr Horan:** We have had floods, droughts and recessions and we have never had to have a fuel tax.

**Mr Hobbs:** You caused your debt.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. He serves an electorate that understands the need for improved roads and improved public transport. I note the continued inane interjections from those opposite. Have we borrowed to build the roads that Queensland needs? Yes, we have. I note the comments from the LGAQ executive director, Greg Hallam, this morning indicating that the position of the LGAQ, as outlined in 2002, is that it has advocated that the fuel subsidy should be abolished and that it should be spent on roads.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, resume your seat. We will wait until we get order.

**Ms BLIGH:** In 2002 the LGAQ called on the then government to abolish the road subsidy and to double road spending. As the LGAQ acknowledged in its public statements yesterday, what has happened since then? What have we done with road funding? We have trebled it. We are spending three times as much on roads as we were in 2002.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Not in the regions.

**Ms BLIGH:** Not in the regions? What about the Townsville Port Access Road? What about the Forgan Bridge in Mackay? The member opposite should get out to the regions and then he would see things like the Bundaberg ring-road. What about the Houghton Highway duplication? What about the Gold Coast Highway upgrade, the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway, the upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway?

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr Johnson:** Come on, stand up and have a go. You've never done a bloody thing.

**Ms BLIGH:** The member for Gregory has just engaged in some of the worst unparliamentary language I have heard and I ask that you ask him to withdraw the comments. He has been swearing across the chamber.

**Mr Johnson:** Swearing? What did I say?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I did not hear the language. If the Premier finds it offensive I would ask the member for Gregory to withdraw it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I used the word 'bloody' and I do not think that is swearing, but I do withdraw. I do apologise to the Premier if she finds it offensive, but some of the things that she has been saying are more offensive than that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You will withdraw it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I do withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Let me make it quite plain to the House that that language is unparliamentary. I did not hear it. I understand there is a lot of tension on both sides of the House with this issue.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the Rudd government's \$900 stimulus payment. Will the Treasurer inform the House how much each Queensland family should set aside to pay for Labor's new fuel tax?

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his question. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has failed to understand—and the people of Queensland recognise that he fails to understand—and continues to fail to understand the extraordinary circumstances the globe finds itself in at this point. As we put together the budget 12 months ago, the dominant debate in this state, the dominant debate in this nation and, indeed, the dominant debate around the world was how to control rampant growth and inflation that was moving at a higher pace.

Twelve months later, the debate is entirely different. That is why we see a government making an extraordinary decision, as the Rudd government has, to step in early to provide leadership, to put in place an economic stimulus package to ward off the worst effects of a global recession—a circumstance that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition continues to deny. He continues to deny it, just as the Liberals and Nationals deny the reality—

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** I take that interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He believes that the casinos of this state should continue to enjoy a discount to the tax rate on their poker machines. I point out to the new members of the parliament, including some of the newer members on the backbench of the LNP who have a stated view on these matters, recorded in the past couple of weeks, the previous comments of the former leader of the opposition—the returning leader of the opposition—on this matter, who is now indicating that he in fact supports having a discount rate continue for the gaming machines and the casinos of the state.

There it is. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants everybody to continue to have everything: to spend more, to build more, to provide more services, to maintain a subsidy and to not raise any taxes. The reality of this circumstance has escaped the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the past year. It continues to escape him.

Why did the government make this decision? It is because we are looking to the long-term future of this state. We take responsibility for the decisions that we have taken. We take responsibility for making the hard decisions, for making the tough decisions, for charting a course for the future and for focusing on the long term, not the short term. What this government did yesterday and what this government will continue to do is look to the horizon, not to the next five minutes.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mrs KIERNAN:** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what the consequences for payroll tax would have been had the government not decided to end the Fuel Subsidy Scheme?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question because she understands that the challenge facing whoever the architects of this year's budget were was a series of unpalatable decisions. When you have to choose between different options, you have to make careful decisions and you have to understand the consequences—that if you do not make one decision then another one becomes more inevitable.

As I outlined in my answer to the question by the member for Chatsworth, one of the consequences of not taking some of these decisions would have been a massive cutback on roads spending over the next five to 15 years—no doubt about it. I welcome the endorsement this morning from AIG's spokesperson, Chris Rodwell. AIG has endorsed the government's view in relation to these decisions to improve the state's economic prosperity.

Chris Rodwell also, however, called on the government to consider using the funds from the fuel subsidy for further cuts in payroll tax. I think it is important for me to outline to the business community that the purpose of making these tough decisions was to preserve the payroll tax arrangements we have in Queensland, where Queensland businesses pay the lowest rate in Australia—

**An opposition member:** Look where Morris went. Look where lemma went.

**Ms BLIGH:** Look where you went. The consequence of us taking the tough decisions that I announced yesterday is that we will be able to preserve for Queensland businesses a payroll tax arrangement which sees them paying the lowest rate of payroll tax in Australia, with the highest cut in threshold, which means that fewer businesses pay it here than in any other state in this country.

If we were to meet the funding gap over the next four years that the fuel subsidy will meet with payroll tax, we would have to increase payroll tax—or any government would—to 5.8 per cent and it would be the highest in mainland Australia. We chose not to do that, because we care about jobs and we care about employment. We are taking the monkey off the back of business so that they can employ more people and create more jobs.

That is what this decision is about—protecting businesses further from the economic recession that is sweeping the globe so that they can hang on to the people they currently employ, so that they can keep their apprentices and so that they can grow employment as they come out of this crisis. If those opposite think we should lift payroll tax instead of cutting the fuel subsidy, they should stand up and say it. They should tell us that in their budget reply speech. If they think we should lift payroll tax instead of cutting fuel subsidy then they should get up and tell us.

*(Time expired)*

### Credit Rating

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to page 12 of the Premier's Q2 document, which I table. It states—

Our AAA credit rating and competitive tax regime brand us as the place to do business.

Will the Treasurer inform the House how Queensland now stands with our credit rating downgraded to AA1 and Labor increasing taxes?

*Tabled paper:* Extract from *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* titled 'Strong: Creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas' [305].

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the shadow Treasurer for his question. As I outlined yesterday, and as the Premier outlined yesterday, the steps that we have taken—the steps that the Premier outlined yesterday—are about restoring our AAA credit rating in the medium term. We have taken those tough decisions precisely with that goal, precisely with that policy task before us. We do that because we recognise that the obligation of this government is in the longer term.

As members of the parliament are aware, the decision by the ratings agencies was taken because of our government's commitment to hold our nerve, to keep the building program going, to support the economy, to keep the jobs going, to make sure that demand was in the economy at a time when the economy needed it the most. We recognised and we explicitly pointed to the risk that that would engage, and the people of Queensland, knowing that deliberate strategy on the part of government, endorsed the return of the government at the state election, because they recognised that now is the time to preserve a capital works building program, now is the time to keep the economy supported with a building program and now is the time to support those jobs in the economy.

As the Premier outlined this morning, what we have seen since then are businesses continuing to come to Queensland. We chose to support the economy. We put the economy first and the budget bottom line second because, ultimately, making sure that the economy gets through the worst of the global financial crisis is the first calling of this government.

Every lost job or case of unemployment avoided will be a virtue for this government. That is why we chose to pursue that economic strategy. We put it before the people of Queensland and since then we have seen continued investment. The Premier and I inspected such investment at Ipswich with new maintenance facilities for TAE systems. We have seen it with Qantas choosing to continue with its maintenance operations here. This morning the Premier mentioned Incitec. Those businesses see the investment opportunities that exist in Queensland. We are committed to developing the LNG industry and a solar industry through the policies that we took to the election campaign.

We will continue to focus, first and foremost, on job creation, new industries, generating jobs and making sure that we maintain a competitive tax system to encourage private sector investment. Those are the commitments of this government, they remain the commitments of this government and they will be the commitments of the government well into the future.

### Queensland Health, Staff

**Mr CHOI:** My question without notice is for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House how our Queensland Health workforce has changed in recent years?

**Mr LUCAS:** Right across the state we are employing the health workforce that Queenslanders need. Since 2005 this workforce has grown by a massive 36 per cent, that is, more than 12,000 additional doctors, nurses and allied health professionals working in our hospitals. That is in my department alone. That might put some of the announcements of yesterday into perspective. This investment in our health workforce will not stop, nor can it afford to. Despite the fact that GST receipts, royalties and stamp duty are down, and despite the fact of the world economic recession, each week 1,500 people move to Queensland. The demands on this state are still there. The demands are still there and the businesses that the Premier spoke about are still coming here. If 1,500 people move to Queensland each week, four of those need to be doctors, 16 need to be allied health professionals and 12 need to be nurses. The demands on our hospitals, schools and police go on inexorably, regardless of the economic situation that the state or, indeed, the nation and the world is in. In the next three years we will employ more than 3,500 clinicians to continue to meet the demand and grow our health system.

What does that mean? It means that state governments must respond responsibly to changing circumstances. In terms of health services, what was good enough 100 years ago when governments owed butcher shops, hotels and very large rail systems no longer meets the core demands on states. We will respond to those core demands. We know that when Qantas was privatised it grew. We know that when the Brisbane Airport Corporation was privatised it grew. We know that when QR's coal business is privatised it will expand, and the Port of Brisbane Corporation will continue to do that as well.

Coal companies have every right—and the government should expect them—to finance the expansion that they need. Coal companies do not employ doctors or nurses. Coal companies do not build hospitals. Coal companies do not build police stations and coal companies do not build schools. In a growing state in the 21st century this government will ensure that it concentrates on key priorities, such as firefighters. In the meantime, you can all live in the past. The very fact that you cannot renew a front bench and you have no renewal is typical of why you think in policy terms like you do. You rolled the member for Clayfield, the only one who knew what had to happen. You rolled him and the National Party took over.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Mermaid Beach, I ask the honourable Deputy Premier to address his comments through the chair, please.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr STEVENS:** My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. I refer to the minister's immediate predecessor's response to question on notice 1325, which I table.

*Tabled paper:* Answer to question on notice No. 1325, asked on 11 September 2008 [306].

I quote from that response, which states—

The Bligh government's fuel subsidy is helping define our state's competitive advantage by cushioning the impact of rising fuel prices for most tourists who choose to holiday in Queensland.

Does the minister agree with his predecessor's assessment?

**Mr LAWLOR:** Drive tourism is front and centre for the Bligh government. Through the levy, petrol savings will go straight into Queensland roads. The \$2.4 billion that we expect to save will support the \$6.5 billion road and transport infrastructure plan. That plan equals better roads, better bridges, better roadside facilities and 39,000 jobs. You cannot take a holiday if you do not have a job; also, you cannot take a drive holiday without road infrastructure. When last in government those opposite froze jobs and froze capital works. This time around they wanted to cut capital works and cut 12,000 jobs. Members should just think what 12,000 job cuts would have meant for our economy. In my particular portfolio, for instance, Liquor Licensing inspectors, gone; Fair Trading officers responsible for ensuring the safety of children's toys, gone; investigating illegal activity, gone. Public safety generally would be put at risk. With the advent of the global financial crisis—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation. Minister, please resume your seat. I call the honourable minister.

**Mr Springborg:** If you keep this up, you will be gone.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, please resume your seat. I call the minister.

**Mr LAWLOR:** With the advent of the global financial crisis, the Bligh government has not sat idle. Whilst states such as Western Australia have cut spending, the Bligh government is boosting spending. Tourism Queensland already markets three international journeys: the Great Sunshine Way, the Reef to Outback and the Great Tropical drives. At the last election we committed \$36 million of new money to tourism promotion. In the first instance that will be directed to the domestic market. That is \$12 million to promote mainly domestic tourism. Even at 80c, the dollar is still low. With the world experiencing the global financial crisis and swine flu, there is no better time for Australians to holiday in Queensland. The Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in these tough times. The opposition might be owned by a multibillionaire, but it is still politically bankrupt.

### Renewing Queensland Plan

**Ms CROFT:** My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Can the Treasurer offer to the House further details on the government's Renewing Queensland future investment plan?

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the member for Broadwater for her question. Since yesterday's announcement by the Premier, the business community has shown strong interest in and support for the restructure of the state's finances that we are seeking to chart as a long-term proposition for the prosperity of the state. With the Premier, I welcome the support from the Australian Industry Group and others such as the Queensland Resources Council, the Tourism and Transport Forum and business groups that recognise the far-sighted approach that the Premier outlined to the people of Queensland yesterday. No doubt they are the same people who have been contacting members opposite asking them why it is that the Liberal National Party is choosing to oppose this plan.

The reality is that what we saw yesterday straight after the Premier's announcement was the Leader of the Opposition getting on his feet and failing to put a position. He spoke for 10 minutes and did not put a position. Why? Because no-one had told him what to say yet. All he could do was read out the Labor Party policy platform. Well I have a hold of the LNP platform from the last election, and what does it say on page 86? Let us take a few excerpts. It says—

Government involvement in the economy should be limited to those activities that are necessary to enable the competitive market system to operate efficiently ...

It says—

Flexibility should be retained to service genuine social needs via one-off revenue sources, such as capital restructuring and asset sales.

...

Government should focus on providing those services that are not or cannot be efficiently and equitably provided by the private sector.

It goes on and on and on.

What we saw yesterday was the most humiliating capitulation of the Leader of the Opposition—a man who has consistently come into this parliament and stated the proposition that he supports private sector investment. He has been a consistent speaker in favour of private sector investment. He could not say anything after question time yesterday because the person he had to go and ask was sitting next to him. Every morning he sits on his lap and asks and is told what to do. Yesterday the deputy sat on him and told him not to pursue every inclination that he had.

He has revealed himself as the Dicky Knee of Queensland politics. He is a bit player, mouthing lines someone else has written. The only difference is that Dicky Knee has a backbone—someone gave him a broomstick—and someone needs to give the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield and the rest of the bankrupt Liberals that got sold off a bit of backbone, a bit of courage to stand up for what they believe in and to not take the short-term view. Where did they go?

### Fuel Subsidy

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport. I refer to the Premier's QP document, which states that Queensland is the most decentralised state in the nation, with Queenslanders travelling more kilometres by passenger vehicle than any other state or territory. Does the minister admit that a new fuel tax will hurt Queensland families and the transport industry at a time when they can least afford it?

**Ms NOLAN:** Queensland is Australia's most decentralised state and that is why we are rolling out a first-class public transport system for every part of it. We are right now making some very tough—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister for Transport.

**Ms NOLAN:** This government is right now making some very tough economic decisions, but we know where we stand on these tough economic decisions. Unlike the other side of the House, which has a series of views on these matters, we have a position and that is to make the tough economic decisions in order to fund better public transport for Queensland for the future.

For instance, in the regional cities we run a first-class qconnect bus service entirely subsidised by the state government. Just recently I announced 54 new buses for the Transit Australia group to roll out in Cairns, in Townsville and in Rockhampton—better public transport for regional Queensland. Similarly, the state government is making huge improvements to the public transport network in the south-east just as we are in regional Queensland. Until the Labor government was elected, the last thing that had happened in public transport in the south-east was that the National Party government had ripped up the rail line to the Gold Coast.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. The honourable Minister for Transport.

**Ms NOLAN:** This government has rebuilt that railway line. We have for the first time extended the public transport network by building it to the Gold Coast and right now we have a \$324 million project underway to further extend that network to Varsity Lakes. Similarly, having commenced that work and delivered, we are now embarking on what will be the next major expansion of the rail network, with a project currently underway to Richlands and which will ultimately go on to Springfield and to Ripley. That work right now is underway.

When this Labor government was elected, there were no busways in Queensland. We built the South East Busway. We built the Inner Northern Busway. We are now building the Northern Busway and the Boggo Road Busway. We are rolling out one new train every month and we are rolling out new buses. In government you would have cut back on public transport services, just as you would have cut back on public servants. We are building a better, sustainable public transport network throughout Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I would advise the minister to address her comments through the chair.

### Jobs

**Mr WATT:** As a member representing an electorate with a large number of tradespeople and apprentices, I ask: could the Minister for Education outline for the House how the Bligh government's building program is helping keep Queensland apprentices and trainees in jobs?

**Mr WILSON:** The Bligh government is committed to delivering the core responsibilities of government. We are committed to delivering a world class education system. That is a core responsibility of government. We are committed to delivering a world class training system. That is a core responsibility of government. We have underway right now a \$750 million State Schools of Tomorrow capital investment program in our schools. That is supporting our core responsibility to education. We have underway the commencement of a \$300 million investment in 240 new kindergartens to create universal access for 3½- to 4½-year-olds in Queensland. That is a core responsibility of government.

We have underway a \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan, building the training network for jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships. That is a core responsibility of government. We are underway in focusing sharply on the fundamentals in our education system around literacy, numeracy and science, and we have the support of Professor Geoff Masters to drive that reform program ahead. That is a core responsibility of government.

We are committed to core functions, core services and core responsibilities of government because that is what the Queensland taxpayers expect us to discharge as our ultimate responsibility. You can only do that if you have the intestinal fortitude to make the tough economic decisions, to make the tough choices, that others will run away from but which have been dictated to us by the global financial crisis.

Over the last 70 years the world has learnt a lot. North America has learnt a lot, Europe has learnt a lot and Australia has learnt a lot. And what have they learnt? When you have a global economic crisis of unprecedented proportions, what you do not do—which is what the LNP would do—is cut public expenditure that generates jobs and builds families. The only people who have not understood this lesson that the world has learnt over 70 years are members of the Liberal National Party who sit on the other side of this chamber, and the Queensland people rejected their 70-year-old failed strategy at the last election.

### Cost of Living

**Mrs MENKENS:** My question is to the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. How much extra per year will a single age pensioner be out of pocket because of the new fuel tax, the higher grocery prices as a result and the increasing power bills?

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I thank the member for the question and welcome questioning about these sorts of issues. As other members have said in the House today, good governments, responsible governments, make tough decisions. Good governments and good leaders make responsible decisions. These are tough economic times. I am not sure how many times that phrase has to be said in this House: these are tough economic times. There is no doubt that people are doing it tough. Many people around our communities are doing it tough. But when times are tough, which are the best governments to lead the way? Labor governments. Which are the best governments to look after people? Labor governments. Which are the governments that spend billions of dollars on social housing? Labor governments.

**Ms Jones:** Seniors units.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** Which are the governments that build seniors units? When people walk into these units—those seniors whom the member referred to—what do they say to us? They say, 'I feel like I've won lotto.' Those people on low incomes walk into those units, they look around and they say to us, 'I feel like I've won lotto.' How proud should we feel about that? As a Labor member of this government and as a Labor minister in this government, I fill up with pride. I am very proud to know that this government is building how many social housing units over the next couple of years? How many, members? Have you heard me say it in the House before? Let me stand here proudly and tell you again.

Seniors around this state will benefit from 4,000 social housing units, and many of them will walk into them, they will look around and they will tell me and they will tell you as their local members—because they are going to be built all around the state—‘I feel like I’ve won lotto.’ That is what Labor governments are about. Labor governments are about caring for people. Labor governments are about—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The House will come to order.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** There is not much more for me to say on this. I have already said that these are tough economic times. When there are tough economic times, who do you want in government? Labor governments.

### Renewing Queensland Plan

**Ms FARMER:** My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Can the minister outline how the tough choices being made by the Bligh government in these tough economic times will benefit front-line emergency services?

**Mr ROBERTS:** I thank the member for the question. As the Premier, the Treasurer and other speakers have outlined, the measures which were announced yesterday are tough measures for tough economic times. I think we need to keep repeating the fact that the Queensland budget over the next four years will lose in revenue around \$14,000 million. That equates to around \$3,500 million a year. Included in that is about \$2 billion in GST.

We went to the election with a commitment to maintain a \$17 billion Capital Works Program which was going to support around 119,000 jobs. So our choice was to support jobs, not cut jobs—unlike the opposition, which went to the election with a policy to cut 12,000 Public Service jobs a year, to cut 36,000 jobs over the term of this government and also to cut a billion dollars in expenditure out of government departments.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ROBERTS:** The reason why these tough decisions are being made—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ROBERTS:** Mr Speaker, I might just make a comment on the behaviour of the opposition. The Liberal Party, to some extent, has been reasonably well behaved today, apart from a couple of interjections. The rabble in the National Party, as usual, are up to their old tricks.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr ROBERTS:** It is obvious from the behaviour that the continued divisions will occur between the Liberal Party and the National Party. It is a little bit like trying to mix oil with water: the greasy stuff always floats to the top.

I just want to reaffirm that the decisions we have taken will enable the government to continue to provide services and capital works, and I want to make a few comments about my own portfolio. We will be able to keep our election commitment to roll out a minimum of an additional 600 police officers over the next three years. In fact, since 1998, which was the last time the National Party—this lot over there—were in power, we have increased sworn police numbers from 6,833 to more than 10,000 officers, an increase of more than 47 per cent.

The decisions we have taken will enable us to continue with our expansive Capital Works Program. If we just look at the Police Service, that will mean new stations in the key growth areas of Burpengary, Crestmead, Sippy Downs, North Lakes and Robina. In terms of Corrective Services, it will mean a massive Capital Works Program, including a \$445 million expansion of the Lotus Glen facility near Mareeba and a \$485 million correctional centre at Gatton.

*(Time expired)*

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries. Will the minister outline to the House the effect of the new fuel tax on farmers and regional communities and the flow-on effect to the cost of food for all Queensland families?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The House will come to order. There are too many interjections from both sides of the House after a question has been asked.



**Mr MULHERIN:** One thing that is pretty consistent about that side of politics is that even prior to the election they were in denial. They were in denial about the global financial crisis right through the election, and they are still in denial. When we went to the election, we were the only party that said we were committed to the \$17 billion Capital Works Program which would deliver real benefits to rural and regional Queensland. We were the only party that committed to ensuring that front-line service delivery would continue. But we also said that whoever won government would have to make some tough economic decisions in relation to the budget.

What did those opposite offer during the election campaign? They said they would have a three per cent productivity dividend across all government departments. What would that have meant for people living in rural and regional Queensland? They would have seen a reduction in service delivery, particularly in the area of agriculture. Where would those opposite have cut? Would they have cut it in extension? Would they have cut it in the research area? They would not come clean.

The other tricky bit which those opposite put out on the Thursday before the election campaign was that they advised the Queensland Council of Unions that they would only commit to the Capital Works Program that was in place, that was coming out of the ground, or that contracts had already been let for. What did that mean for rural and regional Queensland? It could have meant that the Mackay Base Hospital would have been gone, as too the Cairns Hospital and the Townsville Hospital—all of those things could have been gone. But they would not come clean. We were upfront and honest—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr MULHERIN:** We were upfront and honest and said that we would commit to—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr MULHERIN:** We were upfront and honest with the people of Queensland. We said that we would commit to the \$17 billion Capital Works Program that would drive jobs and we would commit to front-line service delivery, whereas the opposition would cut. But we also said that there were tough economic decisions to be made.

In relation to agriculture, fuel is just one of many inputs. It is anticipated that the total fuel bill in agriculture varies from five to 20 per cent of the total inputs. Farm operating costs are expected to rise by about one or two per cent. The qualifying businesses will continue to be eligible for the Commonwealth government incentive, most notably the fuel tax credits for both petrol and diesel. These are worth 38.143c per litre for off-road use and 17.143c per litre for on-road use. Eligible specified activities include aquaculture, fishing, forestry, mining, marine transport, rail transport, nursing and medical. Other machinery and plant equipment, fuel usage related to activities—

*(Time expired)*

### Child Safety

**Mr WETTENHALL:** My question is to the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. Will the minister please inform the House of the importance of maintaining funding to vital services such as child safety?

**Mr REEVES:** I thank the honourable member for the question. There can be no doubting the Bligh government's dedication to the protection of children and young people. To continue the service, the Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in these tough economic times. This government will not let the state's most vulnerable children slip through the cracks. We will continue to provide support to foster and kinship carers who look after our children and young people at risk. Should the Bligh government be in the forestry plantation business, or should we continue to build safe houses for children at risk in Indigenous communities? We are committed to improving early intervention and prevention services. We understand the importance of helping families as early as possible to avoid problems further down the track.

Child safety staff deal with more than 77,000 calls each year, providing a vital service that often saves lives. That is what this Labor government does. What would the opposition do? What proportion of the \$586 million Child Safety budget would the opposition cut? What Child Safety services would they cut? Its planned three per cent across-the-board cut would have meant as many as 170 fewer child protection workers in Queensland. That is 170 fewer child protection workers in Queensland.

**Mr Dempsey** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bundaberg will cease interjecting.

**Mr REEVES:** It is the height of hypocrisy to criticise the Bligh government's budget decisions. We are prepared to make the tough decisions now. Is it our job to financially support the expansion of the BHPs and Rio Tintos of the world, or do we make sure that foster carers can look after our most

vulnerable children? Should the government be operating toll booths, instead of helping families with their problems before they slip through the cracks? Is it our job to subsidise petrol for motorists across the border at the expense of the community sector workers who are often at the coalface looking after our vulnerable children every hour of every day of every year? The Bligh government will take care of the most vulnerable children every time.

Over recent years the annual staffing level of child safety officers has increased by approximately 200 a year—an indication of the government's strong commitment to child protection. The Bligh government will make the tough choices in these tough economic times so we can continue to provide these vital services now and in the future for the children most at risk in our community.

### Jackway, Mr D

**Mr WELLINGTON:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General advise the House why Douglas Jackway was released from prison in 2003 when the Supreme Court of Queensland had presented to it prior to his release clear evidence of Mr Jackway's apparent inability or unwillingness to control his criminal instincts?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the honourable member for his question, and I recognise his integrity as a member of this place. I have worked with the member in a number of capacities in the past and I look forward to working with him now as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

There has been significant public comment about the individual who is the subject of the member's question. I intend to limit my comments to the individual's release in 2003. I am advised that the prisoner's custodial release date was in April 2003. That was the final date which at law he was sentenced to serve in prison. The Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act commenced in June 2003. Under that act, the Attorney-General can make an application for a continuing detention order prior to an offender's release if it is believed there is an unacceptable risk the offender would reoffend if released.

The prisoner's April 2003 release date was prior to the commencement of the act, and therefore the then Attorney-General could not make an order or seek for an order to be made in respect of the prisoner under that act at that time. Given the lawful custodial end date, the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act did not and had never applied to the prisoner, I am advised, and an application could therefore not be made.

Queensland was the first state to introduce this kind of legislation. It was introduced by a Labor government and our laws remain the toughest in Australia. The prisoner in question is currently incarcerated for a range of offences. He is not due for release until 2012. An application for an order under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act can be made within the last six months of the prisoner's term of imprisonment. I can assure the honourable member and all honourable members of this place that such an application will be given the fullest possible consideration at that time.

### Public Transport

**Mrs ATTWOOD:** Happy Mabo Day, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Transport. Could the minister reconfirm to the House the public transport improvements this government has delivered and what will flow from the tough decisions currently being made by the Bligh government?

**Ms NOLAN:** This Labor government believes in public transport as a provider of services to people which are affordable—that is, people from all backgrounds can afford to access public transport. We believe that public transport is sustainable and contributes to a better carbon environment and better greenhouse outcomes in our urban centres, and we believe in it as a driver of more modern and sophisticated urban areas. It is disappointing to find that this view may not be shared by all in this House. When I was on my feet just a moment ago the member for Clayfield, who I note has subsequently scurried away, interjected to suggest—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Can I say to the honourable minister that it is not in the civility of parliament to refer to someone's absence. There may be a legitimate reason for that person to be absent. That applies to both sides of the House. I know that has crept in over the years, but Westminster tradition says that we do not refer to people for any reason as to why they are absent.

**Ms NOLAN:** Fair enough, Mr Speaker, and as such I withdraw that comment. The member interjected that public transport subsidies were middle-class welfare.

**Mr Horan:** No, he didn't.

**Ms NOLAN:** I am frankly astonished to find that support of public transport is not something which is universally supported in this House, and I would have to say to the member for Clayfield that this may not be—

**Mr RICKUSS:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I actually interjected and said that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am not sure there is a point of order in that, but I call the minister.

**Ms NOLAN:** I thank the member for fessing up—

**Mr Hobbs:** Apologise to Tim.

**Ms NOLAN:** And I therefore apologise to the member for Clayfield. I suggest that the people of Logan, for instance, might not agree with the notion that public transport is middle-class welfare. The people of Logan who just last month got 151 new bus services, nine new buses funded by the state government and seating for an extra thousand people may not think that this is just middle-class welfare. The people of Ipswich, who live on a railway line that goes from Ipswich through Goodna and through Darra, may not think that the extra four services that they have received over the last 12 months, improving capacity for an extra 3,000 people, an improvement in public transport, is just middle-class welfare. The people of Cairns, the people of Rockhampton and the people of Townsville—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection. I call the minister.

**Ms NOLAN:** People are benefiting from this Labor government's one new train every month, from the 610 new buses we have paid for over the last four years and from extensions to rail to places like Richlands. The people of the Gold Coast in the seat of Mudgeeraba may not think that better public transport is simply middle-class welfare. They may think that it is crucial to accessibility, affordability and sustainability in modern urban environments.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr CRIPPS:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer table Treasury's modelling of the financial impact, both direct and indirect, on North Queenslanders as a result of the new fuel tax given the tyranny of distance that they already face?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Treasurer, you have one minute.

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Make no mistake about the fact that this government grappled with the decisions that we had to take in order to chart a course for the future of the state to ensure the ongoing sustainability and prosperity of the state. The reality is that we would have liked to have kept the fuel subsidy but in these circumstances we need to make hard choices. We need to make hard choices about what it is we do into the future.

The reality is that each and every person in Queensland has been a beneficiary of the fuel subsidy. Each and every person in Queensland right now, apart from those opposite, recognises the need to do everything we can to support the economy, to keep a building program going to ward off unemployment. That is the policy priority that this government has adopted. The reality continues to escape those opposite. The member for Hinchinbrook, it continues to escape—

*(Time expired)*

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. The time for question time is over.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): This morning we have been hearing all sorts of words about the fuel tax and what it is supposed to pay for and be used for—things like carers' wages. Let us look at what the Premier said on 1 June 2008 when Bill Pincus QC brought down his report that said that the fuel subsidy should be abolished. The Premier said on 1 June 2008—

But I am not prepared to do that when Queensland households are under real financial pressure ...

I will not kick them when they are down.

That is what the Premier said a year ago. What was not coming then was an election. So the Premier, a year ago last Sunday, ruled out putting in a fuel tax. Clearly, Labor has been trying to implement this tax for a decade. To see this we only have to look at its record on this. The Premier is now trying to use the financial crisis as an excuse for it.

A fuel tax has always been part of Labor's plan for Queensland. It tried it in 2000. Then Premier Beattie backed down in a week. Not always was it so. In 1997, when Rob Borbidge was Premier, he negotiated with the federal government to make sure the rebate did get paid back to Queensland and that Queensland, which was the only state that did not have a fuel tax, would not have one.

I note that on 7 October 1997 the Labor Party moved a motion condemning the state government at the time for what it called the mismanagement of the tax arrangements. They called it an ultimate betrayal and a shonky failure. They said then that Queenslanders would have to find another \$400.

We had the Treasurer saying days before the last election, 'We'll be delivering a fuel subsidy scheme. It will stay in place.' Clearly, 10 weeks after the election that promise is in tatters. Queenslanders face a fuel tax for the first time in history. This is the ultimate betrayal from the Labor government. They are a shonky failure, as Labor members said in October 1997. That is the Premier. She is a liar. The Treasurer is a liar. This is something that Queenslanders will not forget.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw.

**Mr FRASER:** I rise to a point of order. I was seeking withdrawal of the unparliamentary language.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Thank you, member for Surfers Paradise.

### Kennedy Highway

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (11.33 am): On Saturday I joined about 50 cyclists to ride part of the Kennedy Highway between Mareeba and Atherton. The ride roughly followed the route taken by Suzanne Daniel, who was killed while riding this section of the highway in late April. After the ride about 200 people, including her parents, rallied in support of Suzanne and expressed their desire for better cycling conditions.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Tanya Baker, who organised the ride, the rally and the ongoing campaign. Tanya was Suzanne's trainer and helped her to lose a lot of weight though she was always uncomfortable about her riding on the highway. Tanya has taken Suzanne's loss personally and deeply and is determined to see that the road is improved.

I am pleased to support this campaign and can report some positive progress to date. The department of main roads was intending to spend \$3.5 million on this section of the highway this year. It was for three sections of road widening, stabilisation and improvement. I am pleased to inform the House that the department has decided to rejig its program this year so that a longer section just south of Mareeba will be widened to include cycle paths for the commuting public.

This is a short-term response to a problem that is going to require a short-, medium- and long-term solution. In the medium term, Mareeba and Tablelands residents will be establishing a bicycle users group to help both local and state governments plan and design their investment strategy for road networks and bike paths. In the longer term, I hope that we can see a dedicated bike path off the highway linking Mareeba and Atherton. It has benefits not just for commuting to work in Mareeba but also for cycle tourism right through the Atherton Tablelands which has enormous potential.

*(Time expired)*

Interruption.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE (SENTENCING PRINCIPLES) AMENDMENT BILL

### First Reading

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 for a particular purpose. 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.

*Tabled paper:* Juvenile Justice (Sentencing Principles) Amendment Bill [307].

*Tabled paper:* Juvenile Justice (Sentencing Principles) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [308].

## Second Reading

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Violent and dangerous young offenders are a genuine threat to the social order of Queensland where, on a daily basis, serious crimes are committed by children. Responding to youth crime must be measured and based on evidence and research. Some might try to say that youth crime rates have dropped over the past few years, but the number of actual crimes continues to rise. We cannot ignore the importance that deterrence and sound rehabilitation play in tackling youth crime across Queensland.

This bill will reintroduce an amendment to the Juvenile Justice Act that will remove the reference to 'detention as a last resort' and replace it with 'detention where appropriate and for a length of time that is justified in the circumstances'. There can be no doubt that courts should not be held to this statement of 'detention as a last resort' when they are dealing with extremely violent or habitual juvenile offenders.

Recent figures indicate that detention as a last resort has meant most violent young rapists and armed robbers never see the inside of a detention centre. Not one of the 35 juveniles convicted of producing or supplying dangerous drugs went to detention in 2007-08, and 114 of the 147 convicted violent robbers also escaped detention in 2007-08. Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in late February this year indicate that only five per cent of all juvenile offenders were sent to detention in 2008. I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In mid 2008 Griffith University held a symposium on youth violence where it was noted that violence is concentrated among young people, generically 12 to 25, the early years of the age crime curve tends to show that there's a rapid increase of violence around 15 to 16 and starts to go down at 18 to 20. But that doesn't dispute the fact that young people are also likely to be victimised as well.

Queensland Professor Paul Mazerolle has analysed police crime statistics. In his findings it was found that youth violence is on the rise. In Queensland the number of assaults committed by males aged 15 to 19 grew by 15% between 1996 and 2005. And during the same period, the number of assaults committed by females rose dramatically.

These figures should be a wake up call to anyone who wants to take the path of apathy towards youth violence.

Detention should not be seen as a holiday or a break for young offenders, it should provide real rehabilitation and reform to break the cycle of violence and give the young person a chance at a better future. In a 2008 survey conducted by the Child Guardian it found that of the 60 young people surveyed in 2007 almost 75% of young detainees had been there previously, and on average most had been there 5 or more times.

Periods of detention need to be proportionate to the crime and for a period of time that ensures the offender is able to access and complete meaningful rehabilitation programs. The figures currently indicate a revolving door of juvenile detention.

In the same survey by the Child Guardian it was found that the average length of imprisonment for over half the juveniles in detention was less than 3 months. As we know from adult corrections, getting on to a rehabilitation program can take months and for them to be effective it needs an intensive approach.

This Bill seeks to restore balance and common sense and uphold community expectations to the way in which young people are sentenced to periods of detention and for the length of such sentences.

I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I mention to the member for Southern Downs that there is currently on the *Notice Paper* a bill amending the same act.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe, adjourned.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Resumed from p. 693.

### Skilling Queenslanders for Work

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.40 am): The Bligh government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has existed to support those with significant barriers to employment or who are at risk of long-term unemployment. While support for this cohort remains a central plank of the government's policy, we are also focusing on a new generation of job seekers who will be impacted by the global economic downturn. All predictions point to a period of growing unemployment that will particularly impact the young and the unskilled.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has assisted more than 21,000 job seekers during the first nine months of the 2008-09 financial year, but we believe that more needs to be done to counter the looming threat. That is why the Bligh government has stepped up its efforts to engage with those already unemployed and those at risk of being unemployed through programs like Get Set for Work in which early school leavers or those at risk of leaving school early are mentored and assisted to identify their particular strengths, build on these skills and access an entry point into either the workforce or further training.

I was pleased to attend the graduation of a group of young people in Caloundra last week where enormous benefits have flowed from engagement with the Get Set for Work program. The government's latest employment strategy, the Green Army, is shaping up to be extremely successful on two fronts. Firstly, placements of up to six months in employment projects will benefit young people, long-term unemployed and recently retrenched workers who will earn a wage while learning new skills or undertaking training. At the same time, this program will be working to conserve and restore the natural environment in communities across the state.

In a new era of state-Commonwealth partnership, the Bligh and Rudd governments have joined forces to deliver the Productivity Places Program which is already providing additional training places for job seekers. The Productivity Places Program has placed over 16,000 participants in Queensland in training already.

### Fuel Subsidy

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (11.42 am): After 12 years the Labor government in Queensland is finally going to get its way and have Queenslanders slugged with a fuel tax. For 12 years now Queensland has been the only state that has not had to pay a fuel tax. It has been one of the great legacies of the last conservative government in Queensland. In 1997 the coalition government recognised the impact that a fuel tax would have on Queenslanders and moved to ensure that the fuel tax that was levied by the Commonwealth government was returned to Queenslanders to compensate them for the distances that are involved in the geography of Queensland.

For 12 years the Labor government has sought every opportunity to erode that fuel tax, to erode the credibility of that legacy of the coalition government and has looked for any excuse to take that 9c out of the pockets of Queensland motorists. It appears that by 1 July it will have finally succeeded in eroding that great legacy of the coalition government and imposed a fuel tax on Queensland motorists.

A fuel tax will have a profound effect on every Queenslanders who owns and operates a motor car. It will have the greatest effect on those people who live in rural and regional Queensland where long distance travel on a weekly or daily basis is a fact of life. Those Queenslanders have no option but to use fuel in large quantities. For those people to be slugged by a Labor government is an outrage. It is an outrage for the Labor government to use the imposition of a fuel tax on those people as a source of funds to try to cover its economic mismanagement that has seen it go broke in a boom and rack up a record level of debt. It has now turned to a fuel tax to try to cover its own economic mismanagement.

### Logan Refugee Health Clinic

**Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (11.44 am): I am privileged to represent an area that welcomes and supports humanitarian refugees from diverse areas such as Africa, Burma and the Middle East. Many of these former refugees come to our country having faced the trauma of war, displacement and severe deprivation, and we have heard many stories of almost unbelievable hardship and suffering.

ACCES Services assists with accommodation, English language classes, school enrolment, skills training through the Community Jobs Plan, driver's licences and so much more. However, back in 2005 it became clear to a number of health professionals at the Logan Community Health Centre that a special unit should be set up to assess the health of our newly arrived refugees and offer immunisation and dental checks.

Following 12 months of wide consultation with partners such as local GPs, GPLAN, ACCES Services, the public health unit and multicultural groups, a clinic was set up by nurses in the post acute and aged care team at Logan Central Community Health. Soon after, child health nurses also joined the team. These nurses undertake health assessment and immunisation and then refer the client or family to a local GP. Referrals are also made to other services such as dental services and trauma counselling. The nurses who assist with this program have an obvious love of these people and carry out their tasks with great care and empathy. They are to be congratulated.

The success of this program is demonstrated by the fact that this service is now the accepted model for services in other areas of Queensland. An event was held recently to celebrate the milestone of reaching its 1,000th client, a delightful 12-year-old Burmese boy, who was presented with a soccer ball and a package of merchandise from the Queensland Roar. The first family, which was from Burundi, that accessed the services in February 2006 was also present and the mothers were presented with flowers.

### **Weller Review**

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (11.46 am): In March 2009 the report of the Weller review was handed down. It came as a shock to many of the health foundations named in the report that they were to become independent non-government charitable organisations. The report recommended that the Bundaberg, Far North Queensland, Gold Coast, Ipswich, PA, Redcliffe, Royal Brisbane and Women's, Royal Children's, Sunshine Coast, Prince Charles, Toowoomba and Townsville Foundations become independent non-government charitable organisations.

The review acknowledges the combined cost of running the 12 foundations is \$3.5 million annually, that they are self-funding and that in the 2006-07 financial year their total expenditure was \$16.92 million including grant distributions. At least four of these foundations have access to car parks for fundraising and many foundations have to a greater or lesser extent access to Queensland Health technology and information vital for them to undertake their work. The foundations also have a very strong bond to the community and have been able to utilise that connection to assist Queensland Health.

This government is taking away from these foundations the capacity to effectively fundraise. Over many years these foundations have been able to link what they do, their community and the local public hospital in the mind of the public and have been able to raise funds from the public that has helped thousands of people across the state. It is wrong for this government to now turn its back on a group of men and women who have worked very hard over many years to ensure their hospital obtains the best outcome for local residents.

It is absolutely ridiculous to close these foundations given the enormous benefit they bring to the community and the relief to parents and families of patients who use our public hospital system. It is inconceivable that any government would look at closing down entities that are a public relations positive for a department that is wracked by leadership linked to incompetence, inaction and inactivity. At the end of the day, these foundations are the only bright light in Queensland Health. The government must ensure that the foundations continue to run as they have and provide the effective service they have for many years to come.

### **Road Safety**

**Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.48 am): I wanted to alert the House this morning to another recent successful road safety initiative undertaken by the Queensland government. During the just completed month of May, a major road safety exercise was carried out by Queensland Transport inspectors which targeted truckies travelling through the Ipswich area with a view to combating fatigue related crashes.

I had the pleasure of visiting one of the inspection sites which, for those who know it, is located on the Cunningham Highway at Yamanto just east of the RAAF base. I think it should be recognised upfront that the exercise was in some cases inconvenient for some truck drivers because they were required to pull off the highway and undertake weighing and vehicle inspections. However, this government believes that this is a small price to pay because it is all about road safety for the drivers themselves and all other road users.

I do not have to tell members that truckies know the importance of road safety more than anyone. After all, the highway is their workplace. I can report that all responsible owners and drivers support this sort of essential activity to keep the roads safe. We all know that fatigue is a killer and everything we can do to prevent drivers from pushing themselves too far is helping to combat our unacceptable road toll.

To give members some idea of the scope of the exercise, it is worth noting that last year the Austrans nationwide operation conducted during May meant that Queensland Transport inspectors intercepted 3,857 drivers at 22 different locations across the state. In fact, in the two days of this year's particular exercise at Yamanto, around 250 trucks were stopped and inspected and approximately 50 infringement notices were issued ranging from anomalies in logbooks to overweight or overlength vehicles. When I got there I could not believe the hive of activity going on, with over 15 transport inspectors on site. They were doing things like checking logbook entries, checking and weighing vehicles, measuring the lengths of vehicles and basically making sure that vehicle defects were recognised.

In the short time I have left I want to put on record my thanks to the Queensland Transport officers responsible for this exercise, and particularly Trevor Edyvean and Peter Garland for briefing me on their activities on the day.

### **Burdekin Grower Race Day; Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing**

**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.49 am): The Burdekin community is very disturbed at what happened recently at the Grower Race Day. This family race day was targeted by officers from the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. Under-age people were not allowed into the racecourse unless

accompanied by an adult. Under-age drinking is an offence, and any young people who drink must bear the consequences, and I fully support that. But many under-age young people who were not drinking alcohol were most surprised when officers evicted them from the grounds and then issued them with fines of \$300.

There are two issues at stake here: the legality of the eviction process and the duty of care as to the safety of those young people who were left on their own outside the grounds. One 17-year-old said—

We didn't know what we did wrong. We were dragged all the way out by the officers.

She was with 18-year-olds but not her parent or guardian. Another mother said—

If my daughter was in the wrong place at the wrong time so be it—we will wear the fine. However officers were in gross breach of duty of care for my daughter's security ... the officer just left her there—by herself—in the dark—only metres from the highway. At no point were family notified she was being evicted from the premises.

There were some quite bizarre stories such as a mother being in line for the toilet when her 15-year-old daughter was evicted. The girl was then unable to contact her parents.

The permit issued to the Burdekin Race Club cites section 155(4)(e). The community is questioning whether that clause gave the right to these overzealous compliance officers to do what they did. I put to the minister, Treasurer Andrew Fraser, that these officers exercised powers totally outside their jurisdiction under that section of the act. It seemed a blatant attempt to wreck a country race meeting and to demean genuine young people who believed they were complying with the law and doing very much the right thing.

What has happened to our society when we cannot even take our children to a country race meeting? Country race meetings are the centrepiece of so many social events and economic benefits in our country communities.

### Feral Deer

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.51 am): I rise to commend the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland, the Hon. Tim Mulherin, for declaring the feral deer as a pest species because of their growing numbers and the increasing damage they are causing to agriculture, forestry and the environment. Over recent years residents have more and more frequently reported sightings of a number of large deer destroying vegetation and habitats near the Mount Ommaney walking trail. My local Centenary and District Environmental Action group believes that the first deer was spotted about nine years ago. These deer eat new plantings and natural vegetation areas which the Jindalee Bushcare Group work so hard to restore in the bushland along the Brisbane River. These extremely large deer also cause a safety hazard for local motorists as they wander across Westlake Drive towards the golf course. There have been collisions and many near misses as the deer suddenly appear.

The Centenary and District Environmental Action group—CDEA—and I have met previously with the minister and asked for action to be taken to prevent these environmental pests from crossing the river to this area where they run rampant in their destruction of the natural habitat. I recall that day in January last year, during a heavy downpour, when the minister inspected the erosion caused by the deer tracks. This erosion was made more evident by the rain that day. Consequently, this regulation has been well received by local environment groups and residents.

There are about 30,000 feral deer in at least 20 populations in the state and four deer species are established in Queensland: chital, rusa, red and fallow. Biosecurity Queensland has officially declared all four as pests in a move to support better management strategies.

To implement this new pest declaration, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation is in the process of developing a state-wide deer management plan in close consultation with stakeholders. The management plan will provide security and clarify responsibilities for both landholders and hunters in relation to the management of deer.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Rail

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (11.53 am): The Bligh state government has announced a sell-off of the coal component of Queensland Rail and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, bulk, and also to target Queensland Rail's bulk retail and regional freight, which includes the Townsville-Mount Isa line. This sell-off is one of the greatest acts of betrayal by the Labor Party in Queensland's history.

I had the privilege to work for Queensland Rail for 20 years. When I joined, a job in the railway was a job for life. We had a rail network that had a station at each town, a trucking yard every 30 kilometres, a freight service that reduced the traffic on our roads, small communities that thrived on the



back of the railways and which relied on a reliable freight service, and a Queensland Rail that would boast up to 26,000 employees. Many workers were Aboriginals, South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders. That was Queensland Rail before 19 years of Labor government under Goss, Beattie and now the public assets seller, Anna Bligh.

We never thought of seeing the day when a 144-year-old Queensland icon, built by the taxpayers of Queensland through their sweat and toil, would be sold. I have spoken with rail employees who fear for their jobs. They are dismayed and say they cannot believe that Labor has betrayed their core principles and grassroots. Our Citytrain and passenger services run at a loss of \$1 billion each year and rely on the coal network to prop them up. Who is going to pay for that when these profitable networks are gone?

These fire sales have nothing to do with the economic crisis. The \$75 million debt was racked up by Labor during the good years of the mining and housing boom and strong economic growth. The Bligh government promised 100,000 jobs during the election campaign and all we have is job losses, asset sales and a state that has lost its credit rating.

The sale of Queensland's assets will mean the state will have no income stream for future generations and no income coming in for our hospitals, our roads and our schools. That shows gross government mismanagement of a magnitude not seen before. I encourage government backbenchers to not support this sell-off and stick to their core principles.

### Emergency Services Vehicles

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (11.55 am): In my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, I have had the great pleasure of handing over to the Gold Coast ambulance and fire and rescue officers almost \$2.9 million worth of new vehicles and appliances. I presented the keys to two new fire appliances: a type 4 Scania equipped with \$45,000 worth of road crash equipment valued at \$600,000 to officers at Robina Fire Station; and a \$1.8 million Bronto turntable ladder platform appliance to the Surfers Paradise station. The Bronto appliance is only the second in Queensland and has the largest ladder platform used by any fire service in Australia, with a 44-metre vertical maximum height and a side reach of 27 metres. This is one impressive piece of machinery and it is only fitting that the Surfers Paradise station, which responds to many incidents involving high-rise buildings, be its new home. The appliance also has its own pump, which can deliver 40,000 litres of water per minute. I know the Bronto has already become the pride and joy of the Surfers Paradise Fire Station.

For the Queensland Ambulance Service, I was joined by the member for Burleigh, Christine Smith, to hand over four new ambulance vehicles at a ceremony at the Coral Gardens station. We presented the keys to three new \$180,000 Mercedes Sprinters for the Nerang, Southport and Coral Gardens stations, plus a \$135,000 troop carrier vehicle for the Coral Gardens station. The delivery of these vehicles and appliances is a massive boost for emergency services.

A record \$940.8 million has been invested in emergency services in 2008-09, of which \$16.9 million is being spent on 145 new ambulance vehicles and \$13.4 million is being spent on 30 new or replacement urban fire and rescue vehicles. The Bligh government is ensuring Queenslanders have access to the best emergency services available.

### Fraser Island, Dingoes

**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (11.57 am): One week ago I attended a series of meetings over two days with the member for Hervey Bay that were aimed at giving me a clear understanding of the plight of possibly the last pure strain of dingo in Australia and, importantly, the prevailing environmental conditions on Fraser Island. The Fraser Island I remembered from my last visit did not have hundreds of metres of fencing and electrified grids and gate systems that would be better suited to Stalag 13. I was also not prepared to see how the vegetation had been cleared by bulldozers for hundreds of metres around the various communities on the island and, in one case, not around or over but straight through an Aboriginal midden. I table some photographs as proof.

*Tabled paper:* Photographs in relation to dingo culling on Fraser Island [[309](#)].

Nothing prepared me for the degree of animosity which exists between locals, long-time visitors to the island and park rangers over the way our native dog, the dingo, is treated. It is in my view the height of cruelty for rangers as a matter of policy to be able to use slingshots and clay pellets the size of marbles to shoot at dingoes. If that was done in suburbia, the person would be charged. It is estimated from various sources that the dingo population on the island is between 50 and 100 animals. The sustainability of the species on the island must be seriously in doubt.

This government has a responsibility to protect Australia's native dog, it has a responsibility to protect the World Heritage listed Fraser Island and it has a responsibility to act now, not at the end of the current review, to stop the practice of hazing and any further culling of dingoes on Fraser Island. The

passion and commitment of locals for their island and the dingo is without question. During my two days I was fortunate to collect the views of many people I spoke to and I have almost an hour of comments and conversation recorded. They are available to the minister if she would like to hear them. The World Heritage listed Fraser Island today is a subject of state funded vandalism and it must stop.

### Palliative Care

**Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (11.59 am): Palliative care is a form of medical care that focuses on support for people facing serious and complex illnesses. Both hospice and non-hospice based palliative care provides care and support to those with life-limiting illnesses. Broadly, palliative care provides, among other things, relief from suffering, measures for dealing with physical and psychological distress, psychological and spiritual care, a support system to improve quality of life, and assistance for the individual's family and friends. Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and patron of Palliative Care Australia, describes palliative care as, '... an assurance to our society at the deepest level that we are honouring our value for the worth and dignity of every human being.'

I am pleased to say that the Queensland government, through a variety of programs, provides support to palliative care providers. One such provider is Karuna Hospice Services. Karuna provides free home hospice services for people with life-limiting illnesses in the Brisbane and Caboolture regions. Its services include 24-hour on-call nursing, counselling, spiritual care, family support, free loans of nursing equipment and a 12-month bereavement program. Also, Karuna operates a free Queensland-wide information telephone service that provides information, referral and support services to Queenslanders.

Interestingly, the word Karuna means 'compassion' in ancient Sanskrit. In my view, there is no better description than compassion for the services provided by Karuna and other palliative care providers. The valuable work of Karuna and other palliative care providers is important and I trust those providers will continue to receive financial support from the state government.

## REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### First Reading

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Consumer Credit Code, the Duties Act 2001, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957, the Land Tax Act 1915, the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 for particular purposes, and to make consequential and minor amendments of legislation as stated in schedules 1 and 2 for purposes related to those 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.

*Tabled paper:* Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[310\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[311\]](#).

### Second Reading

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (12.01 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill makes a number of important amendments to the state's revenue legislation. It is essential that administration of Queensland's revenue laws is as simple and efficient as possible. Key to this goal are a modern legislative framework and the utilisation of modern technologies such as e-business to reduce compliance and administration costs. Over recent years, the Office of State Revenue has been engaged in a major program focused on these two elements. Amendments in this bill represent the next important phase of this program. Chief among them are the extension of the standard provisions of the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to land tax administration and amendments to support the implementation of release 3 of the Office of State Revenue's revenue management system.

The Taxation Administration Act 2001 contains modern standard administrative provisions for revenue laws administered by the Office of State Revenue. It deals with such matters as assessment, collection and payment, refunds, objections and appeals, unpaid tax interest and penalty tax,

confidentiality and enforcement. Before its enactment, each of the state's major revenue statutes contained their own provisions about these matters which were not always consistent. These increased compliance costs gave rise to different treatment of taxpayers depending on the legislation being applied and was generally inefficient.

The Taxation Administration Act 2001 has applied to duties since 2002, the community ambulance cover levy since 2003 and payroll tax since 2005. This bill completes the final phase of its implementation by the Land Tax Act 1915 becoming a revenue law under the Taxation Administration Act 2001. Replacement of the existing land tax administrative provisions will simplify administration and improve efficiency. It will also facilitate use of the e-business functionality provided by the revenue management system, known as RMS.

RMS is being developed by the Office of State Revenue to deliver a single integrated system to replace existing systems for major revenue streams. The system provides a secure e-business interface to allow online access to information, e-lodgement, self assessment, e-payment, enhanced revenue reporting and estimation and revenue base management capability.

Release 1 was launched on 4 July 2005 and covered payroll tax and generic functionality. Release 2 for duties was launched by March 2008. The Office of State Revenue's clients have enthusiastically adopted the e-business opportunities offered by RMS as they have become available, with the vast majority of payroll tax and insurance duty clients and transfer duty self-assessors now transacting electronically. Release 3 is now scheduled to be implemented in July 2009 and will cover land tax and community ambulance cover, generic grants and subsidies administration capability and continuous improvement. The continuous improvement component is significant as it includes adoption of the latest off-the-shelf tax and revenue management and grants management solutions. This has minimised development costs and will reduce ongoing maintenance and upgrade costs.

As with releases 1 and 2, legislative amendments are required to support the developments in release 3. Two of these amendments in particular will reduce compliance costs by removing existing obligations on employers liable for payroll tax. The first involves removing the obligation of employers to make a payroll tax payment for the last periodic return period in each financial year. Most employers are required to pay payroll tax monthly by the seventh day of the month after the month in which the taxable wages were paid. Removal of this payment obligation for the periodic return period ending 30 June will mean that employers will no longer need to make a separate payment for that period by 7 July. Instead, the payroll tax for that period will be payable through the annual return process. The date for lodgement of annual returns will remain 21 July which will mean that employers effectively will have an extra 14 days to pay their payroll tax liability for June. This will also streamline the current system which requires a payment by 7 July and then a possible further annual adjustment payment on lodgement of the annual return by 21 July.

The bill also removes the obligation of some employers to lodge a notification of their fixed periodic deduction with the Commissioner of State Revenue each year. Instead, the commissioner will rely on the annual return process to make any necessary adjustments to the deduction which may be claimed during the year. This measure will reduce red tape and compliance costs for the relevant employers.

RMS is also ushering in a new process for self-assessment of duty by self-assessors who are parties to transactions and by self-assessors who are agents of parties to transactions. Agent self-assessors are mainly solicitors. Self-assessors currently lodge periodic returns of multiple transactions. Duty is payable on lodgement. For transfer duty, while there is a high take-up of electronic lodgement of returns, electronic payment of duty is only around one per cent of duty paid on return. Instead, agent self-assessors manually remit batches of cheques to the Office of State Revenue in payment of the duty on each transaction.

Under the changes in this bill, returns of multiple transactions will no longer be lodged. Instead, dutiable transactions will be lodged individually with the Office of State Revenue via a statement within 30 days of the transaction being entered into. Substantially the same information will be required to be provided in the statement as is now provided in the return. Payment of the duty will then be due within 14 days after lodgement. This change will also facilitate the national electronic conveyancing initiative being pursued by Commonwealth and state governments, the banking industry and the Law Council of Australia.

Separation of the payment obligation from lodgement will also allow time for the agent self-assessor's client to pay the Office of State Revenue directly and utilise electronic payment facilities. No change is proposed to insurance duty returns. As with the previous successful RMS releases, the Office of State Revenue is implementing a program to ensure that clients are informed of the changes and to assist a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

In developing amendments to apply the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to land tax, the provision of the Land Tax Act 1915 that prohibits a landlord from recovering land tax from the tenant was reviewed. Other Australian jurisdictions only restrict the passing on of land tax to tenants under

residential leases and retail shop leases. Consistent with that position, this bill removes the restriction in the Land Tax Act 1915 for new leases. Existing leases have been negotiated on the basis of the current law. Passing on land tax will still be prohibited for residential and retail shop leases under restrictions in the Residential Tenancies Act 1994 and the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994.

The bill also makes a number of other administrative amendments to revenue legislation. The bill also includes amendments to the Consumer Credit Code which is an appendix to the Consumer Credit (Queensland) Act 1994. Queensland holds the template Credit Code on behalf of all other states and territories. The Credit Code is being amended to remove the sunset date of 30 June 2009 in relation to the mandatory comparison rate scheme.

Mandatory comparison rates combine the interest, fees and charges of a loan into a single percentage figure. The purpose of disclosing comparison rates is to help consumers to understand the true cost of a fixed-term loan and compare various loan products in order to select a product that best suits their budget and borrowing needs. Last year, COAG agreed that responsibility for the regulation of credit will be referred by the states and territories to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth laws will commence on 1 November 2009 and will maintain comparison rates. If the comparison rate scheme is allowed to sunset on 30 June 2009, this will leave a gap of approximately four months where the scheme will cease to exist until the Commonwealth laws commence.

The amendment in this bill will ensure the requirement for lenders to provide mandatory comparison rates to consumers is retained until the Commonwealth laws commence. This will not have any new impact on industry as it maintains the status quo.

Finally, the bill includes amendments to the Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957 to address potential issues associated with cancellation of state housing and workers home perpetual town leases. These leases were originally issued in connection with housing loans to provide more affordable home ownership opportunities to Queenslanders. The act was amended in 2005 to provide lessees with the opportunity to freehold their leases on a concessional basis. The amendments have been highly beneficial with a number of lessees taking up the opportunity. The effect of the proposed changes to the Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957 is to ensure that the process for conversion of a residential lease to a freehold grant does not allow the relevant land to become unallocated state land at any stage. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

## **MINES AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from 2 June (see p. 662), on motion of Mr Wilson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (12.10 pm): The Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill is an important bill, as outlined by our shadow minister in his speech last night, particularly with regard to the importance of the mining industry to the economy of Queensland and to jobs with the decentralised nature of our state, and it has always been so. For many decades mining has contributed greatly to Queensland. In fact, when Queensland was formed as a state 150 years ago it almost went broke. The discovery of gold at Gympie actually saved the state and enabled the state to stay on its feet and survive the last 150 years, and in the last number of decades we have seen the ever-increasing development of the mining industry.

This bill amends a number of acts involving safety, market regulation in the Mount Isa area and a number of other issues. But, at the outset, I want to touch on the importance of mining because the long title does include the Mineral Resources Act and a number of other acts. I want to talk about the wealth or the boost to the economy that mining has brought, particularly in the Toowoomba area.

Toowoomba has been a city based mostly on agriculture, education services and health, and so mining has brought an enormous boost to the area. We have been fortunate that much of the mining on the Western Downs has been energy related which has enormous growth potential. There are unbelievably massive amounts of coal seam methane gas and other products in the area. It has been those energy resources as much as coal that have contributed to the economy of Toowoomba. In particular, our unemployment rate at the moment is about two per cent or less largely because of not only coal but also the fact that we have had two good summer crops and a good winter crop after many, many years of drought.

Along with the growth in mining comes particular problems. The inability of Queensland Rail to cart the bulk of the coal coming out of these areas, particularly Acland, means that there is a massive amount of road transport going through Toowoomba carting this coal. Much of it is going to either Swanbank or the Brisbane port. We have nearly 4,000 trucks a day, mostly B-doubles, going through

the main street of Toowoomba, through 16 sets of lights. So there is this virtual social blight of thousands of trucks going through the main street of Toowoomba every day because the infrastructure is not there to carry this important resource by rail to both Swanbank to generate power for South-East Queensland and the Brisbane port to be exported. Likewise, the rail infrastructure is not able to carry grain. So we have about 3,000 tonne of grain per day being carted on trucks through James Street because of the inability of the rail infrastructure to cope.

I bring up these points because, whilst the advantages of the mining growth and development are a great thing, it is a tragedy that we do not have the infrastructure to properly manage it. Grain growers are losing about \$30 a tonne, and that is a loss of export money. Likewise, there is the social problem of the trucks going through the city.

On the issue of safety, which is a part of this, I again refer to some of the developments in Toowoomba. Russell Mineral Equipment, which now has over 80 per cent of the mining robotics market in the world, has been able to develop in Toowoomba, a regional Queensland city, equipment that can go into underground mines and work on big machinery. This robotic equipment can replace broken parts in the case of machinery and in the case of underground mines it can line protection areas in a robotic style which provides for greater safety. Likewise, Easternwell, which is one of the major drilling companies in Queensland, if not in the world, has been one of the beneficiaries of the development of the mining industry. So it has been a wonderful industry for the state. It is a wonderful industry for regional areas such as Toowoomba, and the shadow minister spoke last night about the benefits to his area of Central Queensland. But it is important that we recognise some of the infrastructure needs that come with that.

One other issue that has arisen with the development of mining in our area is the issue of food security and the problem of mining encroachment on the wonderful blacksoil areas such as Felton and Haystack. That is probably an issue for another day, but it does actually come under the Mineral Resources Act because it covers the systems and processes for applying for licences and so forth and the deliberation and decision making that occurs as to whether that mining goes ahead.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the office of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health and to transfer some of the functions of gas market operators and the National Electricity Market Management Co., which is referred to as NEMMCO, to the new Australian Energy Market Operator, which is referred to as AEMO. It also introduces amendments to ensure consistency across legislation relating to safety and health. It implements about eight recommendations that came out of the Ombudsman's Mines Inspectorate review. It also transfers the economic regulation of the Mount Isa network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator.

I think we are all in this House very concerned about mine safety. We see different sorts of mines today. There are not so many underground mines but more of the large, open pit type arrangements. With these different types of mines now there is a lot of enormously big machinery and haul trucks going down very steep inclines. So I think we should be doing everything we can to ensure the safety of the workers. I have quite sad memories of a football colleague of mine. We played together for Eastern Suburbs in Brisbane. He came from Ipswich and was tragically killed in the Box Flat disaster.

I think mining tragedies, particularly underground mining tragedies, are always terrible events because they are underground, because of the uncertainty and because sometimes the deceased are not always recovered, and you feel so terribly for the families who wait for the news. So I think anything we can do to improve mine safety we should do and certainly support. We are hopeful that what comes out of this legislation will make mines safer for the workers. I am quite mindful of our former colleague Jim Pearce, the former member for Fitzroy, who was quite passionate as an ex-miner about mine safety and often spoke about it in this House. I am sure he would be pleased to see some of these things come to fruition.

Some of the background to this legislation is that at a COAG meeting it was agreed to establish a single energy market operator for gas and electricity as part of the Ministerial Council on Energy's market reform program. So that is where AEMO was mooted and it is put in place by this legislation. So AEMO will operate the wholesale electricity exchange and retail market and gas market functions in Queensland.

Under the Australian Energy Market Agreement, responsibility for regulating the Queensland distribution network will pass from the Queensland Competition Authority to the AER at the beginning of the next regulatory period commencing on 1 July 2010. Because the regulation and I presume pricing roles of the QCA are being taken over by a national body, the only note of concern we might have there is whether control of this sort of national regulation will slip further and further away from us as Queenslanders. Will this include issues to do with pricing, which are very sensitive to people? We have seen electricity prices go up by about 30 per cent in the last 18 months and there is another mooted increase of up to 14 per cent.

The shadow minister pointed out that the role the minister had, along with the Queensland Competition Authority, under the act of being able to make determinations with regard to price is being transferred, if you like, to a national body. So that is getting a great deal further away all the time from having oversight and control here in Queensland.

We know how sensitive people are to changes in their electricity prices. Electricity and gas are both very important in the household budgets of many people. In my electorate, the rise in gas prices has been unbelievable since the sell-off of the gas arm of Ergon by the Bligh government. That price rise has been in the order of 350 per cent, and much of it has occurred because, instead of there being an increase in gas prices alone, we have seen new charges for access to the service, access to the gas line and so on. So the poor old pensioners have tried to cut back on gas use in the winter months to save some money on their gas bill but it has hardly made a difference because the vast bulk of their bill is taken up with these access charges.

I will be asking the minister how much that will be taken into account in this newer, if you like, national oversight of the regulations, prices and so forth. Also, will we be able to overcome those massive price increases which have hurt and hit people so much? When this matter first arose, the government provided a subsidy for pensioners of, from memory, about \$55 a year, but compared to the massive increase that subsidy made relatively little difference. It was gratefully received, but a 350 per cent increase in a basic commodity like gas is quite crippling to people on low and fixed incomes.

The regulation of mine safety in this legislation comes from a review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate which was released in June last year by the Ombudsman. That review made about 44 recommendations. While the majority of the recommendations can be implemented through normal procedures, eight required changes to legislation and, as I said earlier, four of these are implemented in this bill. I would like to hear the minister speak about the other four.

The Mount Isa network is owned by Ergon and services the surrounding area, and it is not part of the national grid. It was previously regulated by the Queensland Competition Authority. Responsibility for the regulation will be transferred in 2010 to the Australian Energy Regulator for national consistency.

Amendments to mines and energy safety and health legislation are to ensure consistency of legislation within the Workplace Health and Safety Act and the Electrical Safety Act, which were previously amended in November 2008. There are also some machinery amendments in this bill to the petroleum regulatory framework. The four changes to mine safety will achieve the following: provide protection for persons who make complaints about safety matters; create the position of commissioner; empower the executive director of health and safety to report directly to the minister; and transfer the power to commence prosecutions from the chief executive to the commissioner. The new Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health will chair the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council, advise the minister on safety issues, report to parliament on the performance of the inspectorate and commence prosecutions.

The transfer in this bill of functions of the gas market operators and NEMMCO to the Australian Energy Market Operator, AEMO, as I said, is in accordance with the COAG agreement. Amendments to the legislation relating to safety and health will provide legal protection for officers and others raising safety concerns. Clause 76 in this bill will act to simplify procedures for leaseholders with multiple pipeline permits over contiguous assets so that only one permit will be required.

This bill brings forward a number of very important issues and one of those is the safety of our mine workers, which we are all very concerned about. We need to do everything we can to increase their safety so that when they go to work their family knows there is every chance they will come home at the end of the day, despite the fact they are working in some difficult areas with very big and dangerous machinery, unless they are well trained in all of the safety aspects.

There is also this whole issue of regulation. When the free, open market was brought forward by the Beattie government, electricity was supposed to cost less but all we have seen are massive price rises. As I said, we have seen 30 per cent in 18 months, and there is another 14 per cent mooted. It is time the minister understood the act as it has been pointed out by our shadow minister and took a more proactive role in the pricing arrangements so as to protect the incomes of people who face these horrendous increases in the cost of their electricity and gas.

It is time to reflect on not only the benefits from the mining industry but some of the social disruption that has occurred. The main street through Toowoomba, the city that I represent, is absolutely choked with 4,000 B-doubles going down it. The city is choked to the point of being dangerous to the mothers taking their kids to school. These 4,000 B-doubles go through the 16 sets of lights in the city mostly during daylight hours and at peak times, and it has made it dangerous to traverse the city from east to west. The member for Lockyer mentioned in a speech last night a little child who bounced off the wheels of a B-double which was going through the city. Sometimes there are eight or 10 B-doubles lined up at a traffic light, and they cannot get from that light through the next so they get hit with another red light. These are the infrastructure issues that come with the boost in mining to the area.

In conclusion, I want to remind the House about the intrusion of mining into some of the greatest food-growing areas in the world bar none, like the Felton Valley and the Haystack area. Every consideration has to be given to protect this very important food-growing area. I will conclude my remarks there.

**Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (12.28 pm): I thank the House for the opportunity to speak today on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill. Frankly, I am very surprised that this bill has been brought forward today considering the Premier has delivered such a major change in our state's financial direction. In short, she said she was proposing to do the following: sell our coal rail network and rail freight network, including infrastructure, and our bulk rail freight; increase the price of our fuel; and sell our ports, our limited forestry resources and Queensland Motorways. It was announced as being the 'Renewing Queensland Plan'. Journalist Christine Kellett used the famous words in that immortal movie *The Castle*, 'Tell 'em they're dreaming,' when speaking about the Queensland government's belief that it can raise \$15 billion from the proposed sale of state assets, let alone \$30 billion.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. With great respect to the honourable member, his presentation thus far has not touched on the bill before the House. I question the relevance—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): That is not a point of order, Minister. I would ask the member for Gaven to continue, bearing in mind the clauses of the bill.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The bill proposes to transfer the functions of the National Electricity Market Management Co., NEMMCO, and gas operators to the new energy market operator AEMO; to establish the office of the commission for mine safety; to transfer the economic regulation of the Mount Isa network from the QCA to the Australian Energy Regulator; and to make safety and health amendments and to implement recommendations from the Ombudsman's report on the Queensland Mines Inspectorate.

The member for Callide has outlined all the reasons that have led to this bill being proposed. I do not wish to cover any of those in greater detail. He went into them at great length last night. I intend to discuss the more critical issues raised in this bill that recent circumstances demand—firstly, the transfer of functions from NEMMCO to AEMO. The critical issues raised are the issues of energy generation, energy related businesses, national markets, where the energy comes from and the cost of energy.

Queensland is a net energy exporter. Overwhelmingly, it is via coal exports; two, via coal generation fired power stations generating steam to electric turbine; three, via gas, that is reticulation, exports of LNG and increasingly coal seam gas, which the Premier has championed as a much-needed emerging industry that will add to the prosperity of the state and nation; four, via oil production at Bulwer Island; and, five, by LPG production at Bulwer Island and increasingly LNG production.

Energy in general is a tough industry. It is conducted in tough environments. It has massive investment. It is highly competitive—that is, state to state; country to country. Whole towns are dependent on the mines and industry that come with it. It is a massive employer across our state. Every family in our state is directly affected by energy in every aspect of their lives, especially now that petrol will increase in price by 8c a litre as of 1 July this year. It is a critical part of this state's livelihood that our collective futures and our state's ability to compete in the world is dependent on our use and utilisation of our existing energy assets.

To give honourable members some idea of what is going on elsewhere in the world, France has a plan to be solely dependent on nuclear power. Do members know who supplies most of the uranium? South Australia does, and it wants to sell them more. Germany, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and now the United Kingdom all want to catch up to France and have implemented nuclear construction regimes. Energy is increasingly—and always has been—a currency that has an inherent value. It remains questionable whether traders believe that carbon has a value at all. That will come out in the ETS statements.

It has always been noted that aluminium per se as a finished product really is a function of an energy equivalent. It is a large user of massive quantities of electricity and it takes so much to get to the finished product. This is why QAL bought its own power station from the Goss government when it was seriously in a hurry to sell it.

What then happened was that successive Labor governments, having seen the change in energy trends throughout the world, did nothing with regard to selling future energy generators—that is, energy generators coming online or existing energy generators—because internally the politics within the party were too difficult and in other states it was even more difficult. That then led to increasing state debt as a result of not getting rid of the issue of the energy generators. What we are now left with is a situation where we are having to confront massive state debt as a result of that.



Labor procrastinated and today it is having to look at other ways of raising capital. I heard the Attorney-General last night criticising John Howard with regard to some perceived malfeasance towards the workers, particularly with regard to the industrial relations bills and how he perceived it should have been done. I guess their side may well have had an equal criticism of Jeff Kennett when he sold off the electricity generators to save his state of Victoria from a mountain of what was John Cain and Joan Kirner Labor debt.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Gaven, I have given you some latitude in relation to your speech so far. I would ask you to come back to the purpose of the bill.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** The point I am trying to make is that with respect to the transfer of electricity to the Australian Energy Market Operator, for us to compete, we have to compete one step at a time, market to market, country to country and we have to increasingly realise that it is an international market. We have to play along with that game. In Victoria they now do not have the ability to generate power as they have got rid of that asset.

**Mr Robertson:** So you are pro privatisation?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** No, I am just going to discuss it. In New South Wales the issue has become so difficult for the Labor Party that former Premier Morris Iemma fell on his sword on the issue of selling the power generators. What does this all mean for our states? It means many things. In adversity there is always opportunity. We are collectively going to have to look at some very powerful issues; namely, the issue of clean coal and whether carbon capture, as currently proposed, is working or whether it is a failure. Coal seam gas increasingly would become an energy generator.

With regard to explorers, they are going to increasingly want a fair go and that includes uranium explorers. Would it be cheaper to buy power across the state, particularly for people in the south-east corner? The national markets would tend to suggest that this may become a likelihood. Petrol prices will continue to rise and increase over and above CPI. Retail and commercial energy prices will rise because of national and international pricing benchmarks. Retail energy distributors under the proposed regulator will be in the ruling seat—both the business and retail areas.

What has already occurred is that Origin and AGL alone may well be the survivors in this local market. They are powerful duopolies, and this is by virtue of their captive energy assets and their ability to be both generators and retailers. This bill will not affect the duopolies; it may well entrench them. By transferring the functions of these operators—that is, currently the responsibility of Ergon and Energex—to AER in the future, the implication of these transfers from NEMMCO to AEMO is that the decisions made by these bodies will not be able to be scrutinised by the Queensland parliament. A simple explanation could mean that in times of future crisis—this state Labor government seems to lurch from crisis to crisis, and we have a federal one at the moment so read governing in crisis—we could face severe energy rationing centrally directed if the national interests superseded that of our own. This could mean that our cities could stop, our industries could stop, our roads could become gridlocked, our ports, rail and airports could stop—all because another state has a greater need. That is what you give over when you give over the national market.

Australia is now in the top four of LNG gas exporters—that is, LNG gas in the world. Queensland has the potential to become a bigger exporter of LNG above Qatar, which holds the biggest single gas reservoir in the world. I refer to the statements made on the front page of yesterday's *Australian* newspaper. LNG and coal seam gas, CSG, are true vapour capital products. They are vapourware, if you like, but they are energy and an energy hungry world is keen to buy, sell and consume this product. Our immediate competitor in the market is immediately to our north in Papua New Guinea. Members will remember that it is only in recent years there was a proposal to pipe this to our shores. Chevron has built a massive onshore facility to handle both the oil and gas project in Kinabalu in PNG.

The government must not vacillate as it stumbles along frantically trying to both flog off critical assets and save itself. It needs to invest capital in building infrastructure and assist local energy companies assemble the capacity to export. This is a valuable commodity that the world wants at this point as it exits recession. I know we have been going on and on today about the global financial crisis.

The recession has officially ended. The world is moving out of recession. People will consume this product increasingly and we have the capacity to sell it. The Bligh government needs to stop talking down the economy and stop blaming things on yet another crisis. Forget about the GFC. Great economies were built during times of adversity, not surplus. Readers of history will remember that the US went through its greatest industrial revolution post the Civil War and Germany after World War II. Life is tough. Get over it!

The other critical issue in this bill that I feel needs to be raised is the issue of mine safety. To leave it out would have been inappropriate. Mining is a dangerous industry. Miners need to work in as safe an environment as can be delivered. The balance between profit, safety and national prosperity must always be checked carefully and it must be in favour of safety.



The establishment of a commissioner for mine safety may be just making this position formal, as previously this function had been delivered but not designated as such. The safety and health amendments are appropriate, but they add nothing new or substantive to health and safety. This part of the bill is to be supported.

In my electorate I have many miners who fly in and fly out to many parts of the country and overseas. Many are working in the energy sector. Many currently are suffering because they have been retrenched, have had their contracts ended, have not had contracts offered or even had contracts broken. Every one of these has a family and a home, shops in our shops, pays rates and taxes—and that generates GST—and votes.

Every time parliaments become dismissive of the seriousness and critical importance of the mining and energy production industries to the Queensland state economy, they themselves become irrelevant. For years opposition members have been derided for supporting mining. Routinely, cheer squads of government members criticise anyone who digs for a living. Strangely, Australians soldiers are known universally as diggers. They take that word as a badge of honour.

We need to support our mining industry. We need to accept that we are a net energy producer and it is coal that we are selling. But increasingly it is gas that we are selling. It is based on future contracts. Steaming coal and coking coal have a future in our state and they generate income for the nation and the state. I would ask government members to remember: never cut off the hand that feeds you because occasionally it gets up and consumes you.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.42 pm): I do not quite know what that was about, member for Gaven. As someone who worked in the mining industry for four years and whose family comes from coalmining heritage, I am still trying to work it out.

It is my privilege to speak on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. This bill seeks to implement safety and health recommendations made by the Ombudsman, including establishing a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health; align mine safety and health legislation with other workplace health and safety legislation—I will come back to that in a minute; legislate Queensland's support for the establishment of the Australian Energy Market Operator; transfer economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator; and clarify and improve the administration and operation of petroleum regulatory frameworks to create efficiencies for industry.

I would just like to go back to the alignment of mine safety and health legislation with other workplace health and safety legislation. MPs in this chamber are well aware of my support for coalminers in Queensland and particularly my support of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division. The union embodies, and always has embodied, the principles of looking after its members from the cradle to the grave. It is particularly devoted to the health and safety of its members. I would congratulate them for their stance.

Whilst I understand that it supports the establishment of the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health, it is absolutely imperative, in my view, that coalmining industry-specific safety and health legislation remain in place. The coal industry, as everyone in this parliament knows, is a multibillion dollar industry because of the blood, sweat and tears of the coalminers and their families. It is these families who care for the miners when they get injured. It is not just another industry; it is the most important industry to Queensland's economy. As such, its workers expect and deserve industry-specific health and safety legislation. In my view, nothing less is good enough for our men of the deep.

Today I would like to call on the coal companies, through the Queensland Resources Council, to support industry-specific legislation for the coalmining industry. I want them to stop dillydallying and stop playing with our coalminers' lives and their health and safety. We need this industry-specific legislation.

I would like to follow up on what the member for Toowoomba South was saying about the Box Flat mine disaster and other equally tragic circumstances in the Ipswich coalmining fields. Some of the men in the Booval mine rescue squad still live in my electorate today. Recently we had a day at the Ipswich Historical Society, which was supported by the Haenke Foundation, the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division and the Ipswich Historical Society. It was amazing to see those men who were members of the Booval mine rescue squad with their equipment that goes back 80 years—it is still operational and in full working order. Those men of the deep, in their 70s and 80s, cry as they remember their mates who died in the Box Flat disaster. That is why we need industry-specific legislation. It was a great day, by the way. We had several hundred people at this particular function. I hope they put this on year in, year out for many generations to come.

I would also like to talk about the petroleum regulatory framework amendments. The bill includes amendments to streamline the petroleum regulatory framework. This includes amendments to remove a requirement for multiple pipeline licences where a petroleum leaseholder has contiguous petroleum leases or is a party to a coordination arrangement with the holder of these leases. This will mean that

only one pipeline permit is required in these circumstances. It will also remove the requirement for an application form and fee for petroleum tenure holders wishing to replace their tenure under the Petroleum Act 1923 with an tenure administered by the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004.

I would like to congratulate the minister for bringing this particular legislation into the House. I would also like to ask him to understand where I am coming from. I come from the coalmining industry and I am the daughter of a miner and the granddaughter of a miner. I saw my father injured on many, many occasions because he was an underground miner. He was also an open-cut inspector. From the families' viewpoint, we need this industry-specific legislation. It is something that is very, very dear to my heart. Some of my friends lost their fathers in the coalmines in Ipswich—not only Box Flat but also other tragedies. Coalmining is not like going to work every day and being in an office. It is not like being a shop assistant. It is not like being a truck driver. It is very, very special work and it is dangerous, as the member for Gaven said.

I would like to congratulate Andrew Vickers on his recent election as national secretary to the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division. Andrew still lives in Blackstone in our electorate. We are proud of his election and his continued contribution to the union movement nationally. I also congratulate Jim Valery and his officials from the Queensland division for their devotion to workplace health and safety. Together our goal is to have our coalmines operate to the world's best health and safety standards.

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill. The purpose of the bill is to establish the office of the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health, transfer the functions of gas market operators and the National Electricity Market Management Co. to the new Australian Energy Market Operator, introduce amendments to ensure consistency across legislation relating to safety and health, implement recommendations from the Ombudsman's Mines Inspectorate review and transfer the economic regulation of the Mount Isa network from the QCA to the Australian Energy Regulator.

The wealth and growth of our state is due largely to the strength and diversity of our resource industry. It contributes millions to the Queensland economy. It employs thousands of people, with estimates of the flow-on effects showing that the sector accounts for more than one in every eight Queensland jobs. It supports programs in Queensland, such as school based activities, sporting donations and sponsorships, welfare initiatives, improving access to education and training, and medical services. Exports of lead, copper, zinc, gold, silver, bauxite, tin, oil and gas provide the income and stimulate the investment that we rely on. The export of coking and high-quality thermal coal in particular is vital to the Queensland economy. We export to 31 countries, with Japan being one of the major customers, and forecasts show future demand of up to 235 million tonnes by 2010.

The contribution of the resource sector to employment, infrastructure and services in rural and regional areas cannot be overestimated. It is our responsibility to make sure that further development of this sector is not impeded. We must do everything we can to drive the viable and environmentally sustainable use of our resources to ensure that the benefits flow back to all Queenslanders.

I believe that it is very important that we do support our mining industry. Being a member of parliament with a number of coalmines in my electorate, I have found that governments have had a tendency to treat these communities as communities where they can engage in revenue raising and rake in bucketloads of cash and at the same time contribute peanuts in return. We have experienced this in the mining towns. I know that it can be very difficult, especially when there is a massive expansion to the mining industry and there is a lot of pressure put on services in that community.

In the Bowen Basin we are talking about \$2 billion in royalties and \$6 billion of gross revenue, but some of the roads leading into those areas are pathetic. The traffic flows we see in those mining towns is like the traffic in the heart of Brisbane. This is evident when one flies over the area. We have seen a massive expansion in the area of the Gregory-Kenny Developmental Road. A number of mines have kicked off there: the Pandanus Marble Mine, the copper strike at Einasleigh, Metallica Minerals and Kagara Zinc. There are about 65 triples pounding down that road day in, day out, along with livestock carriers, tourists and local road users, yet the road is no better than a billygoat track. It is a catastrophe. We must support the mining sector and related services but we need decent roads that lead into the communities surrounding them. We can spend bucketloads of cash in major metropolitan areas, which I believe is very important, but many of our bikkies come from those mining communities and we need good roads leading into them.

Since the introduction of full retail competition in the Queensland electricity and gas retail markets we have seen the price of electricity to the consumer increase by more than 30 per cent. We can blame this increase on the state government. There is a need for a baseload power station in North Queensland. Transmission and distribution of power over long distances is expensive because units of power diminish over distance. Power is cheaper the closer it is to the source. The proximity of the power generation source to the retail consumer will work to reduce the end cost to the consumer.

An electricity-generating capability such as the proposed coal fired baseload power station—I have to push my own barrow here because there is a desperate need for a baseload station in North Queensland, but I am talking about Pentland—would have significant positive effects on the retail price of electricity for the North Queensland consumer. Such a project has generated support from the Western Development Corporation, communities in North Queensland and mining companies that want to invest in these regions but will not because they are not guaranteed a reliable, affordable power source. This project will bring great benefits to the people of North Queensland through the creation of jobs, new industries and cheaper power.

Major stakeholders have already done extensive investigations into the feasibility of building a power station at Pentland, including a \$2 million drilling program completed by the owners of the Pentland coal reserves. Xstrata confirmed the ore body is good enough quality for an economically viable 600 to 800 megawatt station for the next 35 to 45 years. We have one of the biggest river systems in Queensland, a plentiful supply of water to drive the power, coupled with an already close rail facility. I believe that new initiatives such as the Pentland baseload power station must be given full and proper consideration by the government as a means of reducing supply costs to rural consumers.

In relation to mine safety, it is important that we provide support and funding to the Mines Inspectorate. I know that the LNP, or the coalition at the time, had pressed strongly the importance of mine safety and the need for funding incentives to train up mine safety inspectors. I believe that the government of the time listened to what we had to say. I was very disappointed during the last election campaign when there was a lot of scaremongering that the LNP would cut funding for the Mines Inspectorate. I put on record that that is a load of rubbish.

In relation to the role of the Energy Ombudsman, one of the main complaints that comes to our office is the cost of connection. When a customer receives a quote for the cost of connection the cost is mind-boggling. They are expecting around \$8,000 or \$10,000 and they get hit with a \$65,000 connection cost. That is a shock to the system. At the same time they are only given a short period of time to make the decision. They are told that if they do not sign up now the cost of power may be even more. When they agree to the quote and sign up to pay this bucketload of cash they are told that 12 months down the track they will get their connection. I believe that it should be the role of the Energy Ombudsman to investigate why there is such a massive cost.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): I think you are drawing a longbow. I ask you to return to the clause in the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I wanted to draw that to the attention of the House.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (12.58 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. I will not be speaking too long but I do want to make a few comments in relation to this very important legislation. The shadow minister, the member for Callide, has made a very in-depth contribution in relation to the opposition's stance on this legislation.

The purpose of the bill is to implement safety and health recommendations made by the Ombudsman, including establishing a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health; align mine safety and health legislation with other workplace health and safety legislation; legislate to ensure Queensland support for the establishment of the Australian Energy Market Operator; and transfer the economic regulator of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator.

Following on from the last state electoral redistribution, the electorate of Gregory inherited another 12 coalmines and, like the electorates of Callide and Dalrymple, is probably one of the wealth generators of Queensland. I have spoken to many people in the CFMEU in recent times in relation to mine safety and the important function that the miners themselves play in safety operations within the coalmines of Queensland. I pay tribute to the former member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce, who was the member for Fitzroy for the last 19 years and an underground coalminer himself for 11 years before he came into this place. He was always an advocate for mine safety. I hope that I can carry that mantle as the representative of the people in those coalmining areas since Jim's retirement from this place. I assure the people of this place that Jim is held in very high regard by the CFMEU and coalminers in general because of his stance in relation to some of these safety issues.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It being 1 pm I would ask the member and the House to resume at 2.30.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Before lunch I made mention of the role of our former colleague the former member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce. In doing so, it was remiss of me not to recognise three of my other colleagues who represent vast mining electorates: the member for Mirani, the member for Burdekin and the member for Mount Isa.

Mr Deputy Speaker, being a member who represents an area in Central Queensland, you would understand fully the dollars that are generated by the mining industry—not only the coal industry but also the hard rock industry based in the north-west minerals province. I would like to pick up on what Andrew Vickers, the General Vice-President of the Mining and Energy Division of the CFMEU, had to say the week before. Mr Vickers said that it is about time we saw the government start to recognise the revenue that is coming from the mining industry. He wants some of that revenue again injected into rural and regional Queensland, where some of this wealth is coming from. I hope those words fall on the ears of the government, because it is absolutely paramount that some of those dollars come back to those areas in question. I know that my colleague the member for Mount Isa and I, who represent those vast western electorates, would certainly like to see some of that wealth come back in the way of road funding. I see our friend the honourable Minister for Main Roads on the other side of the chamber. I think Mr Vickers is right on the money.

The minister made reference in his second reading speech to the Commissioner of Mine Safety and Health. There is no doubt in the world that the most important function of any mining operation is the miners themselves. These people put themselves right at the coalface, or the mineral face. They do the extraction of ore, coal or mineral for the purpose of wealth generation, for the purpose of export and for the purpose of the quality of life of not only Queenslanders but also Australians. When it comes to mining safety, we must not lose sight of the fact that those people should be the ones who are consulted first. I see here in this bill that the commissioner's role will include providing advice to the minister on mine safety and health issues. The minister also stated in his second reading speech—

... members of the public may also report safety concerns.

I am not absolutely sure what that really means. I would like the minister to make comment on that point in his summary. I think everybody is aware that the mining industry in Australia is very adamant that it wants to be the safest in the Western World. I think we have that record. I congratulate all the people in this industry. Governments of all persuasions are well aware that it is a dangerous industry.

Before lunch I heard the member for Bundamba make reference to other industries or other careers, but people just cannot take their eye off the ball for one half of one second in the mining industry. This morning I spoke to a representative of the mining industry from Blackwater. He made a very interesting comment to me in relation to mine safety. He said that in 1878 miners pushed for a special code of rules to get best safety practices. Miners produce the coal, so they should know best practice for a safe workplace environment. It is their workplace, and their know-how gives us the best level of productivity in a safe workplace—not the shareholders but the miners themselves. I think that is what this legislation is all about.

The issue today is about making absolutely certain that we do have best practice. I know that with our mine managers, mine safety and the mine rescue teams—the whole bit—we certainly have best practice in the world. I applaud all facets of the mining industry for adopting these practices because, at the end of the day, we certainly do not want to see fatalities or serious injuries like we have witnessed occur in years gone by. The minister stated in his second reading speech—

It is exceptionally important that where it is necessary for individuals to report unsafe or illegal practices they can do so without fear of retribution or victimisation.

That is very important, because there are probably a lot of people who feel that they may be one of the underlings in a mine operation and may think that their my job is on the line but they have to report something. But when it comes to getting the best outcome, the best safety practices, the best productivity, it is absolutely paramount that these individuals in question are recognised for the role they play in preventing injury or loss of life. I cannot commend this legislation enough for bringing that issue to the fore.

This legislation creates the position of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. I think this is going to be a very important role. That role is also going to be monitored from time to time. The minister will make statements in the parliament about mine safety and the role of the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. I think the creation of this role is the hallmark of this legislation.

This bill contains supporting amendments to allow the Australian Energy Market Operator to come under a national scheme. For some time now we have known that this transfer is going to become a reality. I do not think we have yet seen the true potential of the oil and gas industry in this state, especially in areas of my electorate, areas of the electorate of Warrego and even areas of the electorate of Callide, where there is coal seam gas. I think we are certainly on the eve of a boom in this state and in this country as another source of energy comes to the forefront of the economy of our great state.

The oil industry in the south-west corner of the state is another industry that I think has a lot of potential. A lot of people probably do not understand the magnitude of that industry, the wealth that is generated by that industry and also the gas that comes out of the south-west corner down in the Moomba area: the Bellara gas fields, the Eromanga and the Cadappan fields in the Cooper Basin. These are all very important parts of our industry.

In conclusion, I want to touch on the issue of iconic farming land. I hope the minister will recognise this issue. It has been a topic of debate for a long period. Members might ask what this has to do with this legislation. It has a lot to do with this legislation, because in the Bowen Basin and especially in the Darling Downs area, where we have huge seams of coal, there is iconic farming land. I am talking about that black alluvial volcanic soil. There are a couple of farms in question just to the north of Emerald, Theresa and Lucknow. That is magnificent country. I know the coal underneath them would be magnificent, too.

There is a wealth of coal resources in that area. I hope that sanity will prevail and that that land will be kept as a sacred entity so that future generations can grow the beautiful crops that we see grown there now. In the future we are going to have to make some pretty hard and defined determinations about where mining sites will be proclaimed. At the same time, we have to ensure that future generations are able to grow food in the areas in question. I compliment the people who work in all facets of the mining industry, including Queensland Rail for the great work it does in taking coal to the ports and the ports themselves. This is a great activity and I believe it is sacred to the economy of this state. I endorse and support this legislation.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Swine Flu

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (2.40 pm) by leave: I rise to inform the House about the latest development in the fight against swine flu. Last night there was a meeting of the Australian Health Protection Committee. The committee considered the large number of swine flu cases now confirmed in Victoria—over 395—and has recommended that there be a voluntary exclusion of all children returning from areas where there is a high prevalence of the infection in the community. Today the Commonwealth has asked all states to act on this advice, effectively immediately. Therefore, Queensland will now add Victoria to the list of jurisdictions—USA, Canada, Mexico, Panama and Japan—where there is sustained community transmission to which we currently apply a policy of voluntary exclusion from school for children returning from those areas. This means that any child returning from Victoria will be asked to remain at home for a period of seven days. We know this may cause inconvenience and it may mean that parents have to stay home from work. I ask employers to be understanding in this situation. In Queensland we particularly understand that there may be some children returning from State of Origin tonight who will be affected.

This strategy is based on the best evidence in Australia and internationally. The clinical evidence is that children contract this illness more easily and, once they have it, are more contagious. Combined with the fact that children at school and child-care centres are in constant contact with one another, this means that the best precaution to stop the spread of this illness is the voluntary exclusion of children who might be at risk of contracting and spreading the disease. Clinicians tell us that countries that have been successful in managing the spread of this illness have used this strategy of containment.

This afternoon advice will be provided to the principals of all schools about this policy to, in turn, provide advice to parents. This does not mean we will be discouraging Queenslanders from visiting Victoria or discouraging Victorians from coming here. This is another example of us taking all appropriate precautions to help protect the health of Queenslanders by acting to contain this disease until a vaccination is available. I have asked the Chief Health Officer to raise at the next AHPC meeting that information be provided to all passengers on domestic flights about appropriate precautions and where they can seek assistance if they are experiencing any flu-like symptoms. Further, I have asked that government officials meet with major tourism stakeholders to provide them with the most recent advice and assist them with any further infection control measures they may wish to implement.

## MINES AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed.

**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.43 pm): I am very happy to add a contribution to the debate on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 that is before the House this afternoon. I support the shadow minister's comments about this bill. The mines and energy sector is a very integral part of my electorate, because the Collinsville Coal Mine and the Newlands Coal Mine are both located within the Burdekin electorate, as is a major coal-loading facility. Therefore, the coal industry is a very major economic driver within the Burdekin electorate. Many of my constituents also travel to other mines.

I particularly support the amendments ensuring consistency across legislation relating to safety and health within the mining sector. It is imperative—it is terribly important—that miners can work in a safe environment. It is a tough job, it involves a lot of risks and often it can involve danger. We must ensure that the mining sector provides a safe environment so we can avoid a recurrence of the terrible tragedies of the past, such as the accident at Beaconsfield in Tasmania in 2007. In 1954 in my own electorate, an accident occurred at the Collinsville Coal Mine that is still remembered. The impact of that accident still reverberates across the mining industry. Seven men were killed. Although I was only a child at the time I can still remember the accident happening. Certainly, I know of families affected and of the effect that such accidents have on the community. At the time of the Collinsville accident there were about 40 miners working underground. Certainly it highlighted the need for better safety equipment. Anything that helps workers come off their shifts alive is well worth supporting.

The four mine safety changes include providing protection for people making complaints about safety matters, creating the position of commissioner, empowering the safety and health executive director to report directly to the minister, and transferring powers to commence prosecutions to the commissioner. These changes come as a result of *The regulation of mine safety in Queensland: a review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate*, which was released in June 2008 by the Ombudsman. The review made 44 recommendations, most of which can be put into practice through normal procedures but eight of those recommendations will require changes to legislation. Four of those changes are implemented in this bill.

The mines and energy sector in Queensland plays an essential part—in fact, an enormous part—in the state's economic wealth. Each year the Queensland Treasury coffers are probably filled with royalties from this sector. We must ensure that the sector is recognised for the significant contribution it makes and the area that much of that contribution comes from is the northern and western parts of the state. My electorate is on the northern tip of the Bowen Basin and certainly I am very well aware of the potential for future growth. There is a lot of potential for future growth, for example, through the Galilee project which is in the pipeline. Therefore, it certainly is essential that we get the safety issues right and the correct legislation in place.

The projects that could come online in the region will further line the coffers of the Treasury. In addition, they will put more pressure on the energy needs of the north. Mount Isa, which is certainly quite an isolated area, has its own power supply that supplies power to Mount Isa city, surrounding mines and Cloncurry. It supplies its own power purely because of its isolation. However, eventually the Mount Isa network, including that part supplying mining customers, will be connected to the national grid. That will give them access to the national electricity market, which will allow them to purchase power. It would also bring more baseload demand in North Queensland, which will facilitate economic and commercial conditions for private investment in power and also into further industry.

The majority of the Northern Economic Triangle, which encompasses Mackay, Mount Isa and Townsville, is currently supplied by the Stanwell Power Station near Rockhampton. That supply to North Queensland consists of two 275-kilovolt high voltage electricity transmission lines. Another two 275-kilovolt lines running to Townsville are currently under construction. The supply of energy to North Queensland is dependent on those lines. In January this year, 400,000 electrical consumers lost that supply. It was not a cyclone or even a lightning strike that took out the lines; it was a pair of nesting eagles. That is an indication of how vulnerable the power supply is, because it is reliant on travelling such great distances to supply North Queensland.

The two new lines will no doubt help, but a baseload power station situated in North Queensland is essential to meet the increasing demand for power. It is estimated that North Queensland will run out of capacity by 2013 to 2014, and either Powerlink will need to supply a further two 275-kilovolt lines or the government will need to support projects which will reduce the marginal loss factors for North Queensland users by up to six to 10 per cent. This would bring northern users closer to parity with South-East Queensland marginal loss factors and closer to that of Central Queensland.

There have been gradual increases in the load in North Queensland, but this has not been matched by generation development, and the marginal loss factors in the region continue to rise. Unfavourable marginal loss factors in the region inhibit the economic development which is dependent on sourcing inexpensive electricity in the region.

Linking the Mount Isa network to the state grid through a substantial transmission augmentation, either to Bowen or Townsville, will create appealing opportunities for extensive renewable energy development in North Queensland. No doubt this is the future. We will need to develop and refine renewable energy potential.

Many major energy users in North Queensland, such as the various refineries—we have zinc, copper and nickel—as well as the mining industry, can pay up to 20 per cent more than their counterparts in Central Queensland. That further adds fuel to the call for a baseload power station in North Queensland. North Queensland does have the other resources of water and so forth that are part of this. There is certainly a very strong need for a power station.

Mount Isa suffers the same problems as Townsville when it comes to energy costs. There is a perception that mining royalties could go towards a baseload station or to assist industry to develop baseload power. At the end of the day this would help the development of North Queensland with further industry.

This bill also moves to bring the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network under the auspices of the Australian Energy Regulator rather than the Queensland Competition Authority. So now it will be up to the AER, the Australian Energy Regulator, to provide pricing determination for the Mount Isa network instead of the Queensland Competition Authority. Indeed, responsibility for the Ergon and Energex networks will also devolve to the Australian Energy Regulator.

The Queensland Competition Authority is the body that, up until this legislation is passed, the minister delegated power to for price rises in Queensland. It is this delegation of power that has led Queenslanders to pay up to 30 per cent more for their power. This is a situation that will need to be closely monitored in North Queensland, where industry does pay more for its power. The government will need to ensure that, when that responsibility is delegated to the AER, that body will be able to ensure the power companies do not raise the costs beyond the reach of average Queenslanders.

Power generation of course is fraught with difficulties when looking at the concerns of climate change. Renewable energy potential is the future. Various scenarios that are available in North Queensland involve wind and bagasse, and wind, bagasse and solar thermal energy. The largest renewable energy generator is in my electorate, the CSR Pioneer co-generation mill. It generates renewable energy for the grid, which is of national significance.

**Mr Wettenhall:** How many megawatts?

**Mrs MENKENS:** Sixty. I only hope that North Queensland will sooner or later enjoy the cheaper baseload power that those in the south-east of the state already enjoy. It has aided the south in its development. Providing that sort of support to the mining industry, and indeed all industry, in North Queensland can only be of benefit to us all. I support this bill.

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (2.55 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill today and to support our shadow minister, who did such a wonderful job of outlining the detail within the bill. My speech will be mostly about issues in my electorate, but I will also touch on some of the issues concerning North Queensland in terms of generation of electricity supply.

Since redesigning the electorate boundaries, a number of mines have come into my electorate—namely in the Dysart and Middlemount area in Central Queensland. But they complement the mines that I have had in my electorate over a long period of time—the ex-MIM mine at Newlands and now Xstrata mine, the Coppabella and Macarthur Coal mines, the South Walker Creek mine, the Burton and Hail Creek mines and of course the new mines further down the Bowen Basin coal seam towards Rockhampton at Middlemount and Dysart.

It is interesting to understand the complexities of mine sites and the thousands of millions of dollars that go into developing mine sites, the environmental constraints and all the work that has to be done in preparation of a mine site. I have seen a number of mines develop over the years—South Walker Creek and, more recently, a number of mines at Moorvale and around that area. It was also interesting to watch the development of the Burton mine.

It is interesting to understand the way in which those mines operate. The coal seam slopes at an angle of somewhere between 19 and 23 degrees. So what actually happens in an open-cut mine is that they follow the coal seam down to a depth of 100 metres or more until it becomes uneconomic to strip the overburden off. A lot of that is rock which has to be extracted using explosives. That mining section is done in open cut. It is a shovel and truck operation mostly, with draglines taking off the overburden.

I have actually gone underground at the Xstrata mine at Newlands. They put drives into the high wall side of the mine, follow the coal seam down and put a long wall across behind the coal seam and work forward, bringing the coal forward. Going underground and watching the operation and the shear that works across the coalface behind the huge jacks that hold the roof up is quite interesting and quite dangerous. The excavation falls down behind the jacks as they move forward. I have to take my hat off to all of those guys who work underground. It is not for me but, as I said, detailed in this bill are some issues regarding the safety of mine sites.

It is a very dangerous environment. There are concerning situations with the build-up of gas et cetera. Obviously we have had some horrific cases, such as at Moura, where we have lost a lot of miners. So safety is a very big issue at the mine sites and is taken very seriously. But at any time of the day or night there is always the potential for something to go wrong. Over the last few years there have been some horrific deaths in the mines that possibly were caused by a lack of attention. But certainly the mining industry and the miners themselves are very aware of the dangers.

Included in my electorate is the magnesium mine at Kunwarara, just south of Marlborough. It is a very interesting operation, having been developed over a number of years. We also have the developing nickel mine at Marlborough. That is a huge deposit of nickel which has gone through a number of hands. More recently, Pacific Resources, through Clive Palmer, is looking at mining nickel at Marlborough and piping it down to Gladstone and putting a refinery there. That is a big operation and they are actually looking at funding it fairly shortly. Obviously, there is a bit of an impediment with a recession in the world market et cetera, so let us hope that gets underway.

One of the more interesting aspects of mining in my electorate is at Mount Morgan. Mount Morgan has come into the bottom part of my electorate and there is a proposal to actually go through the rest of the mullock heaps at Mount Morgan because it is possible that up to \$400 million worth of gold is still in the mullock heaps. Norton Gold Fields is the operation that is looking at doing that. I was there a week or so ago and I was told that they expect to start within the next couple of months, so I am hopeful that it goes ahead because it will make a huge difference to the economy of Mount Morgan and Rockhampton as well. It is certainly a great step forward.

The twin coal ports of Dalrymple and Hay Point, the biggest coal port in the world, are also included in my electorate. Hay Point is growing at an extravagant rate and it is unbelievable to see the huge amount of work that has been done there over the last 10 years. There has also been a great build-up of the QR operation at Jilalan. I understand that close on a billion dollars has been spent there over the last year or two since it got started, and that work is continuing and should be finished by the end of this year. It was a little hard to understand from the announcement the Premier made in this parliament yesterday in actual fact whether Jilalan would be part of the sell-off of our QR assets in Queensland. A lot of money has been spent there and hopefully, if it is sold, the government will get its money back.

In the House today, a number of people have referred to Andrew Vickers and Jim Valery from the CFMEU. I have had a number of conversations with Jim and I support a lot of the issues he has raised about the safety of miners. A lot of young people in my electorate, and not so young people, live on the coast but work in the mines in the hinterland. One of the big issues for them is fatigue. They drive to the mines and then drive home after 10- or 12-hour shifts, and we have seen a lot of major accidents on the roads. That safety issue is over and above the fatigue issues they face when actually working in the mines.

Fatigue management in the whole mining industry is of concern. I have to say that all of the mine owners I am aware of make extraordinary efforts to create a safe environment for the workers. I would like to compliment Hail Creek Mine as one which does a magnificent job of actually looking after its workers and making sure they get to work safely and then go home safely as well. But accidents do happen and a huge number of people who live in our region work in the mines, so when they travel on that very difficult and very busy Peak Downs Highway, accidents will occur from time to time.

A lot of the people I know who work in the mines either work for contractors or for the mining companies themselves. Unfortunately, as most members would understand, contracts come and go, and in the mining industry they can come and go fairly quickly. In the last six or seven months, a number of contractors have had their contracts terminated. That is pretty unfortunate for those people working for that contractor, but be assured that those people who are experienced, who are good workers and who have a good work ethic do not last too long on the unemployment lines. They get jobs pretty quickly and they get back into the industry.

Then we can look at the investment in the Mackay region by the mining industry in terms of the secondary industries—that is, the people who build the buildings or service the mines and the equipment. It is unbelievable to see the huge subdivisions that have taken place at Paget, just south of Mackay. They are still building sheds there. Work has not slowed up, and they are employing huge numbers of our young people. A lot of our young people are getting apprenticeships and it has been a terrific boost to employment in the region. Up until just recently, without doubt, any person who was willing to work and gain an education in the mining industry was able to get a job. That has been a huge boost to the confidence of the young people in the area—in fact to everybody in the area.

The coal industry in the region has created a huge cash cow for the state government—and the federal government, I suspect. The federal government would have gained through income tax, while the state government would have gained through stamp duty on all the buildings that have been built, the houses that the miners have bought and the subdivisions that have taken place, in terms of the new homes that have been created. Of course, when you have a home, you have got to have a boat, a motorbike, a couple of cars and all those sorts of things, and that has been a huge benefit for the region. The state has ridden on the coat-tails of the mining industry for quite some time.

In my own mind, I am concerned that the sale of the QR coal haulage assets could make us head in the wrong direction. I am certainly fearful that if we sell those assets now the government will not get the full benefit of the previous investments that it has made over a lot of years.



I have a power station in my electorate at Stanwell just to the south-west of Rockhampton. Others in this House today have talked about the need for a baseload generator in North Queensland. After Collinsville, Stanwell is the next major power producer in North Queensland and, as others have indicated, the development of North Queensland depends on reliable and economical power, and the sooner we recognise that the better. Every time I travel to Townsville or Cairns, that issue is raised with me. Until that happens, the decentralisation of Queensland will not be further progressed and I think that is an important issue for all of North Queensland.

The Queensland government sold the retail arms of Ergon and Energex to AGL and Origin some time ago. Since then, the cost of power has risen incrementally, particularly the price of gas. I want to read into the record a letter I received not too long ago from Mrs Gillian F Whitworth of 42 Glendale Road, Glendale, which is just north of Rockhampton. She wrote—

I am an Age Pensioner, and as such receive a discount on rates, electricity, and telephone. Yesterday I received an exchange LPG gas cylinder, and was disturbed to find that the cost has risen 17% since I last had a cylinder (17-10-07)

The annual cost of renting two cylinders has increased from \$39-60 Jan 08 to \$44-00 Jan 09 and the cost of one replacement full cylinder has risen from \$109-00 Aug 2007 to \$127-40 today. Obviously this would be a larger burden for those with gas hot water as well as cooking facilities.

I have made several telephone calls regarding receiving a Pensioner discount on my Gas expenditure, but it seems that while the Queensland Government offers a discount for users of reticulated gas there is no provision for the vast number of pensioners who live in Country Queensland.

That issue is highlighted right across regional Queensland. The cost of power is an issue in regional Queensland, as is the cost of gas.

Another issue in terms of the cost of power—and as an irrigator I know this situation well—is that the price of power to put a megalitre of water through a hard-hose irrigator five years ago was about \$60. That would be one shift which would happen overnight. In recent times—and fortunately we have not had to use irrigation very much recently—the cost has been well over \$100. So that gives you some idea of the increasing cost of power. A lot of people went to power for their irrigation pumps because it was cheaper than diesel. Now that we have had an increase in diesel costs, with the rebate being scrapped for diesel, and we have had an increase in power, the cost of producing any crop under irrigation is going to go through the roof.

There is another issue I would like to raise quickly. A continuing issue in my electorate has been the nonperformance of the powerline between Rockhampton and Clareview. It is about 150 kilometres north of Rockhampton. It is a single-access line. We have had situations of people losing power for well over a day—36 hours, in fact. A lot of the people who live at Clareview, which is the end of the line, are miners who are not at home most of the time. Because they are so far away from major centres, they have fridges full of frozen food et cetera. They get back from being away for a period of time and find that not only has the food deteriorated but also it is impossible for them to re-use their freezers. They have such a smell that it is almost impossible to clean them out. Very few people have received any compensation from Ergon. That is not a one-off event. It is happening on a fairly regular basis, and they are getting quite upset about it. With those few comments, I support the shadow minister.

**Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (3.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. This bill embodies recommendations arising from the independent review commissioned in 2007 by the former department of employment and industrial relations in relation to the workplace health and safety framework in Queensland. The purpose of this review was to examine workplace health and safety regulations, and the review focused on ensuring that the workplace health and safety enforcement framework remained relevant to modern workplaces.

One objective of this amendment bill is the enhancement of the workplace health and safety protection framework in Queensland. One way of ensuring the robustness of that framework is by continuing the strict deterrence measures in relation to breaches of workplace health and safety laws.

The bill seeks to achieve a number of those objectives. Those objectives include the implementation of health and safety recommendations made by the Ombudsman in the Ombudsman's review of 2008 including—and this is a critical amendment—the establishment of a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. In this respect, I support the member for Bundamba's comments in relation to industry-specific coalmining health and safety legislation.

Strong mine safety and health legislation—and, to that end, strong workplace health and safety legislation—is critical to protecting workers, especially workers in coalmining workplaces. This bill reinforces that principle. The bill effects amendments to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act, and the Explosives Act.

One other objective achieved through this amendment bill is the establishment of the Australian Energy Marketing Operator in addition to the transfer of economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator, and the clarification and improvement of the administration and operation of petroleum regulatory frameworks to create efficiencies for this industry.

I would like to address in more detail the safety and health aspects of the bill, because I think these are the key amendments arising from the bill. The safety of workers at work is paramount to our workplace and our workplace relations system and is a critical focus of the Bligh Labor government. This bill proposes to address the recommendations presented by the Ombudsman's review of June 2008 titled *The regulation of mine safety in Queensland: a review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate*.

One of the recommendations of that review is the creation of a new statutory position called the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. This new position will strengthen the operational independence of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate. The position of commissioner will be appointed by the Governor in Council, and the commissioner will be given particular statutory powers to, firstly, report directly to the minister responsible for the mines and energy portfolio regarding mine safety issues and the performance of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate; and, secondly, provide the minister with an annual report on mine safety and health issues which will be tabled in parliament. In addition, the commissioner will chair the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council and the Mine Safety and Health Advisory Council and will commence prosecutions under mining, petroleum and explosives safety and health legislation.

I understand that key mining industry stakeholders, including the CFMEU, support the creation of the position of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health, and I acknowledge the important role that the commissioner will play in keeping mineworkers safe at work. At this particular point, I would like to acknowledge the particular hard work and commitment of the CFMEU in relation to workplace health and safety, especially in regard to coalmines in Queensland.

Another amendment relates to the reporting of safety concerns. Again, I think this is one of the critical amendments in this bill. The bill makes it an offence if a person causes detriment to another person because they have provided information about a safety concern in the workplace in respect of coalmines and other targeted industry workplaces that are central to this bill. This is important because it means that individuals can report safety concerns without fear of retribution or victimisation. This is about protecting mineworkers and people.

People should be able to raise safety concerns without fear of retribution. This amendment means that a person who has suffered detriment for raising a safety concern will be able to take civil action to address that detriment. This is a core principle which will be protected by law if the bill is passed by the House. To further support this protection, the bill empowers authorised officers in relation to the initiation of prosecutions against those who cause any such detriment to a person who has made a report about a safety concern.

The amendments proposed by this bill reinforce consistency and promote key health and safety protections for workers throughout Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—LNP) (3.18 pm): The Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 is a bill which amends nine acts—the coalmining safety act, the Electricity Act, the Explosives Act, the gas act, the Mineral Resources Act, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act, the Petroleum Act, and the petroleum and gas act. It is a wide-ranging bill which affects my constituents greatly. Unlike the electorate of the member for Callide and of other members here, there are not too many mines in the Burnett electorate—the Burnett electorate being a thin coastal strip. However, there are many workers living in the Burnett who work in many mines. The many mines around the district have contributed greatly to the wealth of the Burnett area and to the families there. It puts a roof over their heads and food on the table, and a new ute in many of the garages.

One of the purposes of the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment 2009 is to establish the office of the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. In addition, it aims to transfer the functions of gas market operators and national electricity management companies to the new Australian Energy Market Operator. It introduces amendments to provide consistency across legislation relating to health and safety. Many members have touched on that issue. The health and safety aspects of any sort of mining, particularly coalmining, are vital.

Members of my family have worked in the coalmines; I have not. One of the things that they have talked about with me is the focus on occupational health and safety. I commend all mining companies for the stance they have taken. It is up to the many other companies that are involved in using heavy machinery to follow the example of the mining industry.

I know that people can be drug tested at any time once they go on to a mine site, and especially if they operate heavy machinery. I think that is a provision that should be introduced in the sugar industry. I know that leading up to the cane-crushing season the drivers of the locomotives at Bundaberg Sugar are not drug and alcohol tested as a matter of course. That practice should be copied from the mining industry.

The bill has come about after the Ombudsman's report entitled *The regulation of mine safety in Queensland: a review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate*, which was released in June 2008. The review made 44 recommendations, eight of which require changes to legislation. I note that four of those changes have been implemented in this bill. They include providing protection for persons making complaints about safety matters, creating the position of commissioner, empowering the executive director of safety and health to report directly to the minister, and transferring the powers to commence prosecutions from the chief executive to the commissioner. As the shadow minister, the member for Callide, said, the LNP support this legislation which will strengthen the legislative powers and help keep our mining workers safer while they are on the job.

I think it is timely to reflect on the mining industry and the wealth it creates for our community. Barnaby Joyce sums it up succinctly. I have said this before in this place. He says that there are really only four ways that a community can grow and prosper and create wealth. You either make it, mine it, grow it or show it. They are the only four ways possible to bring wealth into a community and have it prosper.

I was a small businessperson for about 10 years. I thought I was doing okay until it was pointed out to me that I was not making it, mining it, growing it or showing it. In fact, I was just recycling the wealth that had been brought into the area by those four primary services. Therefore, as a parliament and as political parties it is incumbent upon us to create the best possible conditions to help those primary wealth creators grow and prosper. If they grow and prosper then the rest of our community will grow and prosper.

I think it is timely to be reminded just how much wealth is created by the mining industry. The mining industry represents approximately 20 per cent of the Queensland economy and 12 per cent of the state's employment comes from the mining industry. The Queensland resources sector is forecast to be worth almost \$50 billion to Queensland this financial year—2008-09.

In relation to mining injuries, a report released on 28 December 2008 found that 413 workers in 2008 received a disabling injury which saw them unable to perform their regular job. According to the report, workers compensation in 2008 cost the coalmining and other mining industries a combined \$11.4 million.

Looking at further statistics from the government's website, the mining industry contributed approximately \$26.4 billion towards Queensland's gross state product in 2006-07 and has more than 37,000 employees. Mining provides more than 60 per cent of Queensland's total exports. I do not think there would be any person in this chamber who would contradict this statement. Queensland is a mining and resources hub. Queensland's resources sector is the powerhouse of the state's strong economy with a variety of mineral deposits and petroleum resources of economic significance, including coal reserves that make Queensland the largest seaborne exporter of coal in the world. We have 39.5 per cent of Australian copper production, 64.6 per cent of lead production, 61.2 per cent of zinc production, 27.1 per cent of bauxite production and 8.4 per cent of gold production.

Some of the gold is close to the Burnett electorate. I think there is a goldmine in the member for Callide's district. We have a goldmine at Mount Perry. I do not know how much gold that mine produces. I know that there is an armed security van that does the trip every now and again. I have often thought about having a look at the gold pouring that happens there.

We also have a rapidly growing coal seam gas industry. The total capital investment in the resources sector in 2006-07 was over \$3.68 billion. The total exploration expenditure was \$464.2 million two years ago. We were, and hopefully still are, a leader in research and development in the resources sector.

After considering just how much wealth and how many jobs are created in our state, how can this government even contemplate allowing a carbon tax or emissions trading scheme which, according to studies carried out by the mining industry, would see a loss of 20,000 jobs Australia-wide and 10,000 of those job losses in Queensland? That is 10,000 jobs in the mining sector in Queensland to go. If we take the government's figures of 37,000 jobs, that is a loss of 27 per cent of the state's mining jobs. Illiterate morons, alarmists, superstitious Luddites and those on the other side of the House believe that by putting a tax on CO<sub>2</sub> we can stop the climate from changing.

I think that there is a large amount of confusion within my community, especially among the miners, in relation to exactly what a carbon tax or an emissions trading scheme is. It is very simple. It would mean that every man, woman and child—every miner—in Australia and Queensland would be paying \$2,000 per year in extra taxes. That is about \$8 billion in extra taxes in Queensland on top of what we have now.

Will the primary purpose of that tax be achieved? Will we be able to stop climate change? Of course the answer is no. That money taken from the Queensland and Australian mining industry will create another unproductive trading scheme. It will become a paper-shuffling exercise for people who

wear suits. I have spoken to share traders. They are licking their lips and rubbing their hands with glee. They will take the money. It will not go into anything productive. It will not even go into preparing us for climate change.

I spoke to a very good source within Queensland Alumina which operates out of Gladstone. They said that if this tax goes ahead it will cost that enterprise an extra \$80 million. It has the potential to reduce Queensland Alumina in Gladstone to a swing shift company. They will go into idle, if you like, and only start operating when the prices are high. Once again, we will see a loss of jobs within the mining industry. Combine that with the increases in rail charges that they have experienced—that is, another \$8 million—and we have lots of problems if this tax is introduced.

Coal loading at the Bundaberg port is an issue that matters greatly to my constituents. We are still seeking a guarantee that Bundaberg port will not become a coal loading facility. There is a proposal to mine coal from a mine just north of Maryborough at Aldershot. I am led to believe that there is a rail line that goes within 800 metres to a kilometre of the mouth of that coalmine. The sensible option if that coalmine does go ahead—and it is only for a boutique amount of coal, about 500,000 tonne of coal at the most—is to put that coal on the railway line and send it to Gladstone which is the major coal loading port instead of, as the proposal is now, putting that coal into up to 37 B-doubles a day and transporting it down the main street of Childers along the highway to the port of Bundaberg while spilling coal dust everywhere, causing environmental damage and potential damage to people's health along the way for the sake of possibly one extra job at the Bundaberg port. The economics do not make sense. It threatens the tourism industry—the second biggest industry in the Burnett—and, of course, the health and safety of the people along that route. The proposal is to stack the coal in an open area which will be subject to the prevailing winds. Communities up to 10 to 15 kilometres away will feel the effects of that coal being stockpiled there.

What we are asking for today, and indeed have asked for since this proposal was leaked after I had a meeting with the Port of Brisbane executives who confirmed that there was at least a proposal to do that, is for the Premier to honour the promise made by the Deputy Premier that there will not be any coal loading at the Bundaberg port and to rule out that possibility. It has been said in the chamber that the ownership of the Bundaberg port will be transferred to Gladstone and the Gladstone Port Authority will have control. We only hope that common sense prevails and that we can have a win-win situation where the coal is mined—we are all for that—but then it is loaded on to the rail tracks in carriages and sent to Gladstone and shipped out from there. Gladstone has a coal loading facility of around 730 million tonnes. It is being upgraded to around 100 million tonnes. The amount of coal they are talking about taking out of the mine at north Maryborough equates to about two shiploads. It is a very small amount in the overall scheme of things.

The Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill also touches on the issue of electricity supply and the national scheme. It affects the 1997 and 1994 acts. As many members before have commented, there are concerns that their constituents and consumers will suffer increasing electricity prices. It was reported by Steven Wardill on 14 November 2008 that Queensland electricity bills may jump by as much as \$200 a year. I think that figure has gone up again. It could be by as much as \$300 a year. It is reported that the consultants hired by the Queensland Competition Authority are recommending a 10 per cent increase in power prices. A further price increase could also be imminent with suppliers AGL and Origin fighting in the courts against previous QCA increases that they claim were too small. The majority of the 136 comments posted at that stage were, of course, not in favour. There was one gentleman, Peter of Tin Can Bay, who I will quote. He said that Labor had sold too many government assets.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Are you sticking to the bill?

**Mr MESSENGER**: I believe I am.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Can you tell me how?

**Mr MESSENGER**: I am talking to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill. One of the objectives of that bill is to amend two electricity acts and I am talking about electricity prices.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: For what particular purposes?

**Mr MESSENGER**: Sorry?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: For what particular purposes?

**Mr MESSENGER**: For the purposes of making my constituents' voices heard in this chamber about rising electricity prices.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: That is not relevant.

**Mr MESSENGER**: Can I seek a ruling? Are you challenging me on standing order 236, relevance?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That's correct.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I note that 236 states that a member shall not refer to matters irrelevant to the subjects of the debate or engage in tedious repetition during debate.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The subject of the debate is determined by the long title of the bill. Any price increase has nothing to do with the long title of the bill; therefore, it is not relevant.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I take your direction on that. The energy minister, Mr Wilson, was reported in parliament as saying that the government would fight to keep prices of electricity as low as possible but tackling climate change came at a cost. The independent market regulator—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Relevance?

**Mr MESSENGER:** I believe I am being relevant.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** How does that relate to the long title of the bill?

**Mr MESSENGER:** Once again, I would draw the Deputy Speaker's attention to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill, part 4, 'Amendment of Electricity—National Scheme.' I hope that I would have the latitude to talk about electricity prices in a bill that has the long title of mines and energy legislation. I seek your ruling on that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It says 'for particular purposes', which means that you have to talk on the long title of the bill; you do not have the same broad base as you would at other times. So please stay with the long title of the bill.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Thank you. The minister said that they were trying to keep prices as low as possible but they were trying to tackle climate change. Once again we are looking at a carbon tax.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** This is not relevant to the bill. Please stay with the long title of the bill.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I believe I am. As I said, the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can you be specific about how you are being relevant?

**Mr MESSENGER:** I am speaking to part 4, 'Amendment of Electricity—National Scheme.' I am speaking to part 4 of the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill. I would have thought that in a Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill we would be able to speak about electricity prices and rising energy costs. I am sorry that I am standing here in the Queensland Parliament having to justify that and that it is so difficult for members opposite to understand that, especially when so many members before me—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Would the member please be seated while I confer with the Clerk. Would the member please return to the bill that is before the House.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. After listening to the contributions to date by many members, I believe that there has been significant allowance made for members to reflect on how the broad ambit of the mining industry has impacted on their respective electorates. I would ask you to perhaps allow that latitude to continue when there are only, I understand, two or three remaining speakers.

I believe that a reading of the *Hansard* will show that the track you are going down at the moment, or the intimation you are likely to make, would not be consistent. I do not mean to be critical, but it would not be consistent with the latitude that has been allowed by previous speakers.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. That is a reflection on the chair. Would the member for Nicklin please withdraw.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I withdraw.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the explanatory notes and simply say that the legislation fundamentally affects the independent regulator, which is, of course, a body that will have quite a degree of influence over the price of electricity. Once again, I would like to speak about the rising electricity costs within my electorate.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, the member is in contempt of ruling after ruling that you have made. He has been warned now on a number of occasions by you, quite correctly, in terms of the standing orders, yet he continues to be deliberately in breach of your rulings and holds you clearly in contempt.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Your comments are also a reflection of the chair. Please withdraw.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I apologise.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burnett, will you please resume your seat. I call the member for Nicklin.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr MESSENGER:** No, I rise to a point of order under standing order 236 on relevance. Madam Deputy Speaker, you have just sat me down. Therefore, I have been directed to cease speaking under standing order 236(3). I require that you put the question that I be further heard.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I call the member for Nicklin.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, I refer you to standing order 236. I will read out standing order 236. I move—

That the member for Burnett be further heard.

Division: Question put—That the member for Burnett be further heard.

**AYES, 32—**Bates, Bleijie, Cripps, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

**NOES, 49—**Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Kiernan

Resolved in the negative.

**Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind)** (3.51 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. In particular I would like to reflect on comments made by a number of speakers including the shadow minister, the member for Gregory, the member for Mirani and many others who spoke about the bill and how it has impacted not just on the finances of the state of Queensland and Australia but also on their respective electorates. I hope that tomorrow members will reflect on the *Hansard* report of the contributions that members have made during this lengthy debate. I note that the debate has continued for a number of hours and members have touched on a range of issues that have impacted on their respective electorates, Queensland and Australia. I certainly intend to do so as well.

I take members to an issue that this bill deals with, which is improving the health of many of our mining families and improving the safety of our mining activities, as well as further amendments that are proposed to clarify and improve the administration and the operation of the mining and petroleum regulatory frameworks to create efficiencies for the industry.

In relation to how this bill directly impacts on my electorate, a number of members have referred to the issue of goldmining in their respective electorates and I, too, would like to reflect on the impact of goldmining in my electorate, just as they were allowed to speak in great detail and great length about how it has impacted on their electorates. I refer to an issue that occurred some time ago relating to a goldmine application that involved a mine in my electorate. For the benefit of members and the current minister, I table the outcome of that application. The former minister made a very important decision for my electorate that directly impacted on mining and the safety of miners. In a letter to me dated 2008, the former minister said—

I write to advise that I have made the decision to refuse the application for renewal of ML50124 pursuant to section 286A(5) of the Mineral Resources Act 1989.

Further, I have also made the decision not to exercise the power to assign ML50124 to Golden Surprise Pty Ltd.

I table that for the benefit of the new minister, because we need to see consistency in the decisions made in this House and consistency in the decisions made by ministers of the government and of previous governments.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from Geoff Wilson MP, Minister for Mines and Energy, to Peter Wellington MP, regarding North Arm Watch [312].

For the benefit of the minister I also table a copy of a submission made to the previous government by the North Arm Watch committee. This letter is dated 22 January 2008. It relates to the then Golden Surprise Mine at North Arm, mining lease 50124. The connection is about the importance of making sure our mining activities are safe—

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 22 January 2008, from John Cole, North Arm Watch to Tracey Jackson regarding the Golden Surprise Mine—North Arm—Mining Lease 50124 [313].

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg):** Order! Will the member stay on the long title of the bill?

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Certainly I intend to. I hope that in my reflection on the long title of the bill I am able to look at the wider interpretation and not the narrower interpretation that some members of the government might intend to pursue. Goldmining activity is a very important issue. Issues involving mine safety are very important. Certainly it is important that Queenslanders are very much aware of those issues. We want to make sure that our mines are always as safe as possible. I understand that that is what this legislation is intended to do, that is, improve the safety of our mines whether they are goldmines, bauxite mines or coalmines. Does it really matter? It is about improving the safety of our mining activities.

For the benefit of the government, I seek to table a copy of the submission dated 22 January 2008, as it relates to a range of those matters and the Golden Surprise Mine at North Arm, mining lease 50124, as well as a brief history of mining at North Arm, including the then current activities. This is to ensure there is consistency in the decisions that are made in this House by this government and previous governments.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Brief History of Mining at North Arm (including current activity)' [314].

A number of members spoke about the safety of bauxite mining and the importance of the mining industry to the finances of the government. They have spoken about how mines generate a lot of income and wealth, and certainly help to improve the bottom line of budgets. Certainly there has been a very close relationship between the mining industry and governments in Queensland. Sometimes I wonder whether that relationship has been a little too close. For the benefit of members I will table information in relation to opposition to a proposed bauxite mine in Cape York, because after all we are talking about mine safety and issues that many other members have spoken about during this debate. Tomorrow, *Hansard* will reveal the length of those contributions.

I understand currently there is a proposal for Cape Alumina to be allowed to mine bauxite in part of western Cape York. I certainly do not support this proposal. Does the mere fact that we have a valuable resource mean we have to extract it? I say, 'No!' There are times when we should be able to stand up to the Mining Council and say, 'No, we will leave it in the ground for the future because there are other more important priorities for government.' I would hope that during the life of this parliament this government will show clearly that it will not simply bow to the wishes of the mining lobby of Queensland and that it will have the strength to stand up and say, 'No, this site will not be mined.'

For the benefit of the minister and the government, I table four pages from *Save Steve's Place*, which puts the case for no mining—no bauxite mining and no strip mining—in North Queensland.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Save Steve's Place' [315].

I hope we will see the government make a strong decision and say, 'It is not appropriate to mine this site.' In reference to the bill, there are other more appropriate places to mine—places that can be mined safely and without damaging the environment. I support the bill.

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2008. There are probably a thousand things I could talk about in relation to mines and energy. This bill amends nine existing acts and none of those amendments mention pricing. This bill supports the establishment of the Australian Energy Market Operator as the single energy market operator for both electricity and gas markets in eastern Australia. It also proposes to transfer responsibility for the economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator. It implements some of the recommendations from the Ombudsman 2008 report. It is on this aspect of workplace health and safety that I would like to make my contribution this afternoon.

The mining and quarrying industry has been the powerhouse behind Queensland's economic success. Despite the current downturn in the demand for some of our products, it still remains the engine driver of our economy, and it will be the mining and quarrying industry, I believe, that leads our inevitable economic recovery. The number of people employed in the industry remains at an all-time high. There are now nearly 42,000 people employed in the mining and quarrying industry, compared with only 18,000 in 2001-02. With this level of employment it is imperative that we do not lose focus on the safety and wellbeing of those hardworking men and women in this industry. It is pleasing to see that the performance of the industry has been steadily improving in terms of the lost time incident frequency rate—from 10.3 in 2000-01, when the current safety and health legislation came into force, to 3.9 in 2007-08. That is a 62 per cent reduction.

While we are seeing a gradual improvement in this indicator, it does not quite tell the full story. Tragically in this financial year alone there have been four fatal accidents—one at an exploration site, one at a quarry, one at a surface coalmine and one at the George Fisher Mine in Mount Isa just a couple of weeks ago. A gentleman with the name of Pekka Tuppurainen unfortunately died. I believe he had over 30 years of experience in the mining industry. That proves that it does not matter how many years you have been working in the industry—accidents do happen. I would like at this juncture to thank the



honourable member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, for being an extremely strong advocate for the mining industry and the safety of miners, not just in her electorate but right across the state of Queensland. Heavy mobile equipment played a vital role in three of these four incidents. These are traumatic incidents for all concerned. My deepest sympathies go to the families and friends of those who died.

In 2007-08 Queensland mines and quarries reported more than 1,600 high-potential incidents. That equates to roughly four high-potential incidents per day. This means that but for the luck of timing and location we could have had four fatalities every day, not just four fatalities for this financial year. Almost one-third of the high-potential incidents involve heavy vehicles, with vehicle collisions and loss of vehicle control being the main causes. Gravity also played a major part in approximately 10 per cent of the incidents, with workers falling from either fixed or mobile plant. Rockfalls are reported from surface mines and quarries at the rate of nearly three per month.

Demonstrating a commitment to the safety and health of mineworkers is the responsibility and obligation of this government. That is why we are responding to a key recommendation of the Ombudsman's 2008 review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate and creating the position of a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health. Although the Ombudsman did not find any evidence of regulatory capture where the regulator is unduly influenced by the mining industry to the detriment of safety and health in the industry, the Ombudsman believed that the creation of this position would avoid the perception of any regulatory capture and create transparency in the industry.

The bill proposes the position of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health to be appointed by the Governor in Council for the purpose of chairing the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council and the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council; advising the minister on mine safety issues; reporting to the parliament on the performance of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate; and commencing prosecution under mining safety and health legislation. The incumbent executive director of safety and health within the mines and energy portfolio of the department would take on the role of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health.

The bill provides that the commissioner be a Public Service officer employed under the Public Service Act 2008. This will allow the incumbent executive director of safety and health to be appointed as the commissioner. By investing the role of the commissioner with the executive director a new statutory position will not be necessary. This approach is consistent with the government's decision to reduce government boards, committees and statutory authorities following the release of the Weller review on *Brokering balance: a public interest map for Queensland government bodies*. The approach is also supported by the expectation that the proposed duties and functions of the commissioner will constitute approximately 10 per cent of a full-time position and do not warrant the creation of a full-time position. This is also consistent with the recent changes to reduce some level of hierarchy within QMI's organisational structure.

During these difficult economic times we must ensure that we do not put production before people. This morning I was pleased to represent the minister at a conference where industry representatives got together to discuss the importance of safety in the industry. This was the seventh annual quarrying safety and health seminar, sponsored by the Queensland government and industry representatives. I take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of the conference. It was organised by the Institute of Quarrying Australia, the Mines Inspectorate and the Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia and I thank them for their support. Judging by the number of attendees, almost 200 people, it is obvious that safety and health is a priority for the industry. It was also a demonstration of the commitment of the industry to improve safety and health in the mining industry. This is most commendable.

The government, the industry and the unions have also formed the Queensland Mining Health Improvement and Awareness Committee and it meets regularly. This committee assists industry to participate, identify, evaluate and control health hazards in the mining environment. Once again, I would like to pay tribute to the CFMEU for its contribution to the safety of mineworkers in our state.

This legislative change with the position of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health is expected to have a significant positive impact in the safety of the mining and quarrying industry. The Bligh Labor government is determined to keep our mines and our miners safe. We must all ensure that we never lose our safety focus, because nothing is more important than the safety of the men and women who work in our mining industry, which generates wealth for this state. I commend the bill to the House.

**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (4.07 pm), in reply: First of all, I thank members for their participation in this debate and I thank the opposition for its support for the legislation.

The Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 was introduced in the House on 19 May to, firstly, implement safety and health recommendations made by the Ombudsman, including establishing a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health; secondly, align mines safety and health



legislation with other workplace health and safety legislation; thirdly, legislate Queensland's support for the establishment of the Australian Energy Market Operator; fourthly, transfer economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator; and, fifthly, clarify and improve the administration and operation of the petroleum regulatory framework to create efficiencies for industry.

The bill proposes amendments to mining, petroleum, explosives, safety and health legislation in response to a report on the Queensland Mines Inspectorate by the Ombudsman in June 2008 and also as a result of recent amendments to the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995. The amendments include the creation of an independent statutory position for the position of Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health to strengthen the independence of the Mines Inspectorate. The commissioner's role will include providing advice to the minister on mine safety and health issues; chairing the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council and the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council; reporting to this House on the performance of the Mines Inspectorate by way of a written report tabled by the minister responsible for mines and energy; and acting as an advocate for mine safety in Queensland.

The bill also creates an offence for someone who causes detriment to a person providing information about a safety concern. Although the government conducts regular audits and inspections of sites to ensure safety standards are met, members of the public may also report safety concerns. It is especially important that where it is necessary for individuals to report unsafe or illegal practices they can do so without the fear of retribution or victimisation. Individuals should not be penalised for doing the right thing, especially when doing so can prevent serious injury or even the loss of a life. The amendments to mirror recent amendments to the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 include clarifying immunity for officials giving information or advice, and permitting commencement of a prosecution within two years following completion of a coroner's inquest where the inquest reveals new evidence.

The bill also includes amendments to complement changes to national laws to establish the Australian Energy Market Operator, or AEMO, which will commence operations on 1 July this year. The increasing trend of national energy markets and the growing integration of the electricity and gas sectors in Australia make establishing a single energy market operator a timely decision by the Council of Australian Governments. The commencement of AEMO will strengthen the national character of energy market governance. AEMO will assume the functions of the existing gas and electricity market operators. Although this is a significant step for energy market governance, in practical terms for Queenslanders the introduction of AEMO will mean business as usual, except for a change in the names of the market operators currently operating in Queensland—namely, the National Electricity Market Management Co., or NEMMCO, and for gas the Queensland Gas Retail Market Operator—to AEMO.

AEMO will also adopt a number of new functions, such as taking on the new role of the national transmission planner for electricity and the preparation of an annual gas statement of opportunities. These new functions will see AEMO produce new planning documents for the energy sector which will play an important role in supporting effective decision making in investment and planning in the energy sector.

Amendments to the national electricity law and national gas law have been introduced into the South Australian parliament following unanimous agreement by the Ministerial Council on Energy. The bill contains supporting amendments to allow AEMO to carry out its functions in Queensland. The bill will transfer the economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network from the Queensland Competition Authority to the Australian Energy Regulator. The amendments in the bill essentially continue the current regulatory arrangements applying to the Mount Isa-Cloncurry electricity distribution network and will maintain consistency with regulatory amendments for Ergon Energy's national grid connected networks. On 1 July next year, the Australian Energy Regulator will assume regulatory responsibility for the networks owned by Ergon Energy that form part of the national grid. The bill will transfer responsibility for the economic regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry network to the Australian Energy Regulator at the same time.

In response to the member for Callide's concerns, echoed by many on his side of the House, regarding the effect of these amendments on electricity prices, the amendments will only alter the regulator and not the rules under which prices are determined. All of the interconnected distribution networks in all of the eastern seaboard states will have their prices determined under the same rules and the same regulator, the Australian Energy Regulator.

**Mr Seeney:** I did say that.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Yes. I am confirming that.

**Mr Seeney:** Some of the other guys didn't, but I did.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** That is why you are sitting there and the other members are over there. In the absence of the proposed amendments, a separate regulatory process would need to be developed for the Mount Isa-Cloncurry network. This would introduce uncertainty and additional costs for Ergon Energy and the regulator that would likely be passed on to customers. This transfer of regulatory responsibilities to the Australian Energy Regulator makes good sense, as it will minimise the regulatory burden for Ergon Energy. It should be noted that Ergon is in strong support of the proposed transfer, and the Australian Energy Regulator is also fully supportive. The amendments will not affect any parties insofar as the Mount Isa-Cloncurry network is concerned, other than providing for the economic regulation of the network. The amendments will not affect the electricity supply or services provided by the Mount Isa-Cloncurry network to customers and businesses.

The member for Callide also spoke about the need for regulatory consistency and the benefits of a national energy market. That is exactly what these amendments provide, by ensuring Ergon's major networks are regulated consistently in accordance with national electricity rules. This transfer is consistent with the development of the electricity sector and the gradual transition to national regulatory oversight.

One issue that was mentioned towards the end of the debate—as many members took the opportunity to speak much broader than the provisions of the bill actually allowed for—and that I feel it important to respond to is the issue raised by the member for Nicklin. I must say that he usually makes a very considered contribution to debates in this place. At least that has been my experience over many years.

**Mr Seeney:** Not today.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Perhaps not today, because he raised the issue of the possibility of a bauxite mine on the western side of Cape York. I would like to place on record and assure him that, despite his comments, which I would view with grave concern, due process will be followed at all times in consideration of the application of a mining lease, as would be the case with any other mining lease in Queensland. I understand where he may be coming from in terms of his interest with respect to the particular property where this resource is located, but the whole purpose of having a process in place is to ensure that it is transparent at all times and that at the end of the day the decision that is made is based on a full appreciation of all of the facts, and that is what will occur on this occasion. So I assure the member of that.

That process is currently underway, so it would not be appropriate to make any further detailed comments in relation to the pros and cons or strengths and weaknesses of the various arguments put forward by landholders or leaseholders. But I assure this House, and therefore the people of Queensland, that due process will be followed in relation to this application and indeed any other application that is put before my department.

While Queensland has one of the safest mining industries in the world, this government will continue to strive to improve the safety of our mining sector. The amendments proposed by this bill demonstrate that the Bligh government is committed to and serious about the health and safety of workers in mining and related industries and protecting employees and the general public across the state. The commencement of AEMO and the transfer of regulation of the Mount Isa-Cloncurry network to the Australian Energy Regulator will strengthen national energy market governance. The benefits of a single market operator include providing ongoing improvements to efficiency and competitiveness in gas and electricity markets and ensuring Queenslanders retain secure, well-managed energy markets. 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

Clauses 1 to 86, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (4.18 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (4.18 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.

### MOTION

#### Order of Business

**Ms SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.18 pm): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 to 15 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### MOTIONS

#### Revocation of State Areas (Cognate Debate)

**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (4.19 pm): I move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 the setting apart and declaration as State Forest of the area as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz

##### Description of area to be revoked

Mt Stowe State Forest (SF365)	Area described as Lot 1 on plan SP223038 and containing an area of about 26.6 hectares as illustrated on the attached plan.
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- (2) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability for submission to the Governor in Council.

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- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under Section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of protected areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz

##### Description of area to be revoked

Parts of Calliope Conservation	Areas described as Lot 2 and Lot 3 on plan SP223038 and containing an area of about 23.81 hectares as illustrated on the attached plan.
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- (2) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability for submission to the Governor in Council.

I support the revocation of parts of the state forest and conservation park bill. These revocations will help to ensure that the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal project continues on schedule, with completion by the end of 2012. There is substantial support from the coal industry for the terminal project, as the inability to ship the increased volumes of coal from its yet undeveloped resources in the Bowen Basin would have significant financial implications for Queensland and Australia through the loss of export revenue.

While activity in the coal industry may be lower under the current financial circumstances, it is important to ensure that exporting capacity is developed now so that upturn in demand can be accommodated as it occurs. In addition, the Wiggins Island proposal has significant employment opportunities at the local, regional and state levels in both the construction and operational phases. While there will be a loss of about 51 hectares of conservation and forest land, more than 374 hectares of similar land is being made available at no cost for addition to the state forest. This supports the government's policy of a net gain for conservation through offsets for such actions.

The areas being revoked are the minimum necessary and are a logical and practical outcome when all aspects are taken into account. This shows that the government responds to infrastructure needs in a way that places high value on the environment but also acknowledges and encourages the social, economic and sustainable development of the state. I commend the motion to the House.

**Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (4.21 pm): I second the motion.

**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (4.21 pm): Let me say at the outset that the opposition supports the revocation as outlined by the minister. In the last sitting week I had the opportunity to have a briefing by the minister on the revocation, and I thank her and her departmental staff for that. I made sure that the member for Gladstone, in whose electorate this falls, was made aware of it, and I also ensured that she received copies of the maps that were made available to me.

As the minister has outlined, this is to allow for expansion of the Wiggins Island project. It excises land from the Mount Stowe State Forest and from the Calliope Conservation Park. In all, 51.4 hectares are involved. In return, 374 hectares, much of it fronting the Calliope River, is being put back into the land bank that the state can use for the future. It is a project of significance. It allows coal trains that are over a kilometre long to be able to loop and carry on with their business. It also allows for storage of coal on the land involved. The opposition supports the proposal.

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the revocation of these two areas in the two motions of which the minister has given notice and which are being considered together by the House this afternoon. The first motion of which the minister gave notice seeks to revoke an area of 26.6 hectares from an area of state forest. The second motion of which the minister gave notice, and presumably has moved here this afternoon, seeks to revoke an area of 23.81 hectares from a protected area under the Nature Conservation Act 1992.

As the minister indicated in her very brief contribution when she set out the need to revoke these areas, the areas are being revoked to allow the construction of a rail loop line associated with the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal in Gladstone. It is because of that that I felt the need to contribute to this debate, because the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal is a very important part of the additional infrastructure that, frankly, should have been built some time ago and would have been of great assistance to the coal industry to meet the incredible demand that it experienced over the last couple of years.

I am sure the government would have appreciated the extra income that would have been derived from those extra exports. No doubt as all members of the House know, the market for coal in recent times has eased somewhat, but I am particularly pleased that the process of establishing this sort of infrastructure is not being delayed. I think it is important that the state continues to ensure that developments such as the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal are constructed now when the demand is not quite so red hot so that when the world market for our resources returns to the levels of high demand that we have seen, as it inevitably will, then our infrastructure will be better able to cope than it has over the last couple of years.

The Wiggins Island Coal Terminal, which is the infrastructure proposal to which these two particular revocations apply, is but one piece of infrastructure that will need to be constructed in Central Queensland, as a number of resource projects seek to use that area around Gladstone as an export opportunity for their particular resource product.

The coal industry is well established in the Gladstone port and there is tremendous infrastructure there. The Barney Point Coal Terminal was the first to be built. I remember when it was first built I was very much younger than I am now, and I think the member for Rockhampton would probably remember when the Barney Point Coal Terminal was first built in Gladstone port. It was considered to be the latest and the greatest. All of us schoolkids at the time were trotted over there to duly ooh and ah at the magnificent coal terminal and the big trains—longer trains than we had ever seen—but it has been superseded now by some of the later developments. When we look at the developments such as the RG Tanna Coal Terminal, it makes the Barney Point terminal look like a plaything. It is quite intriguing how, as time and technology progress, new developments come along that are bigger and better.

Right throughout the Central Queensland area there will be a need for this sort of development. As the minister responsible for this sort of crown land, state forests and protected areas to a lesser extent, the minister needs to understand that there is going to be a need for the state to make that land available at different times to allow that infrastructure to be constructed. There are a number of proposals currently being developed for gas pipelines all leading towards the port of Gladstone. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, I know that the government has identified the gas superhighway, as it is being referred to, the 200-metre wide easement from Gladstone to the top of the Calliope range, but even west of there there are extensive areas of state forest that will come under the pathway that is being considered for things like the gas pipelines.

I believe that, just as private landowners are being asked to sacrifice some of their land to allow these types of infrastructure developments to proceed, the state, too, should be prepared to cooperate with the proponents of these developments to ensure that they can develop in the most economic way. There is, I think, almost a hesitation to use state forest land in Central Queensland at the moment. There appears to me to be not a deliberate directive but almost an assumed directive that proponents of this type of infrastructure have to look at every other alternative and try to stay away from state land. In this case what I am talking about is state forest—in just about every instance.

There are areas of state forests which are very precious. There is a process in place to move some of those state forests to national parks. That is the way the government is going. But not every area of state forest is a potential national park. Not every area of state forest is an area that is precious and worth preserving.

In some of the state forests in my area the old timers say that the bandicoots have to carry a cut lunch. They are areas of very poor land. Some of those western areas were set aside as state forests because they were seen as potential areas for the production of Cyprus pine and timbers such as spotted gum. Large areas were set aside for the production of spotted gum and Cyprus pine, both of which grow in very poor soil. They are not areas that I think the state should hesitate for a moment to make available for public infrastructure.

I do not want to have what I am saying misconstrued. I am not suggesting for a moment that areas that are national parks or that have the potential to be national parks or have scenic value or a high level of environmental value should be sacrificed for the sake of this infrastructure. I am wanting to make the point today that we cannot have a one size fits all situation here.

There are areas in those state forest estates in my electorate, through the Callide and Dawson valleys, that are within the area that is being looked at for the construction of this infrastructure. I believe it should be made available as the first option for the construction of state infrastructure. It is one of the unique characteristics of that area that we have prime agricultural land and areas of poor quality forestry land very close together. The land quality changes within a matter of 50 or 100 metres. We can walk out of prime agricultural land into bull oak, wattle and Cyprus pine in the distance from here to the door of the chamber. When pipeline companies, for example, are looking at options for locating their infrastructure they sometimes have the option of going on either piece of land and can make that choice equally.

The point I am making, Minister—and I will not labour the point—is that I believe that that type of state land should be made available for the sort of infrastructure that the state needs. The state needs to see those massive infrastructure projects in Central Queensland brought to completion sooner or later for the benefit of the whole state, for the benefit of all of us who sit here, for the benefit of all of the people we represent and, more particularly, for the benefit of the Treasurer who has to balance his budget.

The areas that are dealt with in the revocation motions before the House this afternoon are relatively small areas. They are located very close to the coast near the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal proposal at Gladstone. I note that there was an offset requirement for these particular revocations. I would not like to think that the government adopts that offset requirement as a matter of course and that every such revocation requires such an offset.

I think there was a good opportunity in this particular instance because of the location of these pieces of land and because of the availability of other areas in the immediate vicinity of the Gladstone waterfront around the low-lying mangrove area. The member for Gladstone would possibly be the only other member in the House who would have knowledge of that area. It is a low-lying area. There are lots of mangrove type communities there that are worth preserving. I think the state has done a good deal by seeking to have that offset for the revocation of the two areas that we are talking about.

I say to the minister: do not make that type of offset compulsory for every such revocation, especially when we get over the range into the more western areas where a lot of these issues are going to have to be considered. I do not think we want to see a situation where to revoke the forestry leases on some of that poorer bull oak and Cyprus pine country, areas of offset have to be found to make that happen.

We want to make those projects happen. Before too much longer we will be considering similar revocations for those areas further to the west. I trust that the minister will ensure that that process is as expedient as possible to allow those infrastructure projects to proceed.

In my role as shadow minister for mines and energy, I wanted to take the opportunity to support the revocations that are contained in the two motions before the House this afternoon and lend my support to the continuation of the construction of infrastructure such as the Wiggins Island Coal Terminal. I urge the minister to take a very sympathetic view of the revocation of areas of poor quality state forest further to the west to allow those infrastructure projects that I spoke about to proceed expeditiously.

Question put—That motion No. 1 moved by the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability under s 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Question put—That motion No. 2 moved by the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability under s 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## MOTION

### Order of Business

**Ms SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.35 pm): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 and 3 be further postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 21 May (see p. 565).

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.36 pm): It gives me great pleasure to again rise in this House as the representative of the constituents of Lockyer. It is an honour I take very seriously. May I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker Wendt, on your re-election. You are one of my neighbours. I think we border each other for about 100 kilometres. It is great to have you back in the House. I congratulate the new members in the House. I also congratulate the 11 new members on this side of the House.

**Mrs Miller** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** The member for Bundamba is one of my neighbours too. Congratulations on getting back in, Jo. I know that you are opposed to what is happening in this parliament at the moment, but at least you are sitting on the right side. That is very good to see. Congratulations, Jo; it is good to see you have come over.

It is great to have 11 new members on this side of the House. It is great to see the enthusiasm and vigour that has been shown by the new members. They really have expectations of governing the state at some stage. I am sure the member for Mermaid Beach is very excited about what is happening.

In the seat of Lockyer the LNP had a swing of a bit over six per cent. I must thank my hardworking team. I would firstly like to thank my lovely wife, Ann, and my family for all their support.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. They did give me a bit of a fright in the election before. I changed my campaigning strategy slightly, member for Toowoomba North. As I am sure he knows, it is a moving feast in our local areas.

I must congratulate my hardworking team including Linton and Melinda Brimblecombe, Tina and Alan Fry, Edwina and Gary Stark, Ray Hawley, Lance Pollock, Steve and Stephanie Heath, Dolores Stock, Trevor and Sue Arthur and many others. My staff do a great job in my electorate office. I am sure every member in this House realises how important it is to have good staff. Hope, Dana, Julie and Erika work extra hard for me all year but also during campaigns. The public in my area gets quite involved in the electoral process. The level of inquiry in the office becomes extremely high. Thank you for going the extra mile and thank you for all the work you do week in and week out.

I also mention Ken Schmidt, a good LNP member from the member for Ipswich West's electorate. Ken works extremely hard for the local area as well as for the LNP. He is very excited about having a 100 per cent allocation from the Brisbane River at the moment.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** He did let his dam out, actually, and he told me that he lost 100 megalitres of water. That just helped Brisbane out a bit; he gave it 100 megalitres of water.

As I said, I must thank my staff for going the extra mile and for all of the work that they do week in, week out. When Her Excellency the Governor addressed parliament on 21 April she highlighted things like the global recession. As the federal government was very keen to point out today, we are not actually in recession. That is what Lawrence Springborg was saying, too. However, we are definitely in a period of very flat economic times. Because of our mineral wealth, Queensland has been affected

probably a little more than some of the other states. Thankfully, the agricultural sector is picking up some of that slack, as are the feed and grain farmers who are trying to get grain off the Downs. In terms of my electorate, the vegetable farmers are doing the hard work of carrying the Australian economy. That is great to see and it is great to see that the drought is slowly being broken.

Let us face it: workers' jobs are very important to both sides of the House. Over its 10 years in office the Howard government reduced unemployment from seven per cent or eight per cent to four per cent nationally. We all understand how important workers' jobs are and how the conservatives are the ones who really do look after the workers' jobs, because there is nothing more important than having a job. As I said, it appears that the economy has flattened out a bit. The stock market has returned about 30 per cent of its growth over the last three to four months. While the US, China and Japan are still very flat—some of our major trading partners—we want to see a slight improvement in the economy and hopefully it will steadily improve from here on, and I am sure that members on both sides of the House are expecting that to happen. It really is a case of 'wait and see', but I think things will get better from here. The worst of the downturn seems to be over.

The government is going to return to prosperity. As was mentioned earlier by the member for Callide, we have to be ready when that time comes. What is scary is the amount of debt this government is accruing and the amount of debt the federal government is accruing. It is a real concern for any thinking person in Australia. If we asked nearly anyone in Australia at the moment we would hear that one of their main concerns is the amount of debt we are building up per head of population. It really is of concern. In her election campaign the Premier promised 100,000 jobs. Really, that was more political hype than anything else, simply because the economy is not at a stage where it can absorb 100,000 jobs just yet. However, the amount of debt that this government has accrued is a real problem.

With regard to the federal and state infrastructure programs, governments have not actually built the right infrastructure projects—projects like the Toowoomba second range crossing, a project which undoubtedly should have been built. I am sure that the member for Toowoomba South will support me all the way when I say that the Toowoomba second range crossing is something that should be built. It should have been started by now. I am disappointed that the Treasurer has not foreseen to negotiate with his federal counterparts to ensure the money is forthcoming for the second range crossing. It is a disgrace that thousands of trucks are pouring through Toowoomba every day. It really is a problem.

In her speech the Governor also highlighted the 10 major hospitals to be built or rebuilt. Let us get it right this time. We have to ensure that the hospitals are actually built to world standard and that there are enough beds and accommodation for the growth that Queensland is experiencing. This morning in this place I heard the Deputy Premier spruiking about the 1,500 people a day still coming to Queensland. If that is going to happen, surely the planners have to plan for that. It is not new; it has been happening for 30 years. Even 20 years ago the previous conservative governments were planning for this better than—

**Mr Stevens:** Wolffdene Dam.

**Mr RICKUSS:** The Wolffdene Dam; that is right. That is a perfect example in that the water shortage could have been avoided if the Wolffdene Dam had been built. Through political hype, the government reneged—

**Mr Stevens:** Lack of planning.

**Mr RICKUSS:** Lack of planning; that is right. The dams were full at the time because 1988 and 1989 were two wet years, so the dams were full. This government scrapped the Wolffdene Dam and it has been a disaster ever since.

I call on the government to reinvestigate the Greenbank railway line. It is always talking about public transport, an issue that was mentioned this morning in the parliament. There is access in that the Greenbank interstate line is already built. I am sure there is capability to put trains and rolling stock on that line as transport rolling stock as well. I know that the member for Logan, the honourable Speaker of this House, is not that overly excited about that issue. I spoke to him about it a number of times, but I still think it is something that is worth looking into.

With regard to the State Schools of Tomorrow program, unfortunately this government, pig-headedly, is still going to relocate the Amberley school to a Yamanto site. I am sure the member for Ipswich West is not very excited about taking a school out of his area and putting it into another area.

**Mr Wendt:** There's no kids where it is at the moment.

**Mr RICKUSS:** There are. Some 200 attend the school. I will table a letter from Mayor Pisasale saying how the site is totally inappropriate.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 7 April 2009, from Mayor Paul Pisasale and Carl Wulff, Ipswich City Council, to Mr Ian Rickuss MP, regarding the proposed relocation of Amberley State School—Yamanto Site [\[316\]](#).

I am sure everyone knows where Mayor Pisasale's political allegiances lie, but he says—

I appreciate the opportunity afforded by the Queensland Government to consult with Ipswich City Council on the preferred site at Yamanto.

He goes on to say that the drainage is terrible and the traffic is terrible. He goes on further to say that there are outstanding issues that need to be addressed for the council to favourably consider contributing funds towards infrastructure external to the school site. This is totally inappropriate because of the lack of planning that this government goes through time and time again. It cannot even get it right with a good, hardworking council like the Ipswich City Council.

**Mr Stevens:** A good Labor council.

**Mr RICKUSS:** As the member for Mermaid Beach says, it is a good Labor council.

**Mr Wendt:** It's an independent council.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I would say that it is an independent council with Labor leanings. There are quite a number of conservative members on the council but, as I am sure the Treasurer would acknowledge, it has Labor leanings. The council feels that the education department has got it wrong. We have been telling the education department that it has it wrong. The superbase at Amberley is going to be an enormous base and that is where people are going to go to work, and where do people want their children? They want them as close as they can to where they work. It makes sense to have a school close to the Amberley air base at Willowbank. That is really where the school should be going. I cannot believe that this pig-headed government will not listen to the people in the area. There is also the fact that it has said that it has consulted. It has consulted, but it just did not listen. It is one thing to consult and another thing to listen.

The \$9 billion water program was mentioned in the Governor's speech, and I must say that I am disappointed in the infrastructure, planning and water bodies that will not negotiate with the farmers of the Lockyer Valley to at least use some of that recycled water. We probably do not need it quite as drastically this year, but I am sure we will need it in the future. It is time for the government to come to its senses and not have an idle pipeline sitting there. There is a security guard standing on the end of the pipeline 24 hours a day just in case people might turn it on and run it into Wivenhoe Dam. As I say, there is a security guard there all of the time. It is just a total waste and it is not being used. I just cannot believe that this recycled water is not being used.

I am disappointed about the fuel tax that unfortunately this government is going to impose. It is going to disadvantage many people from my electorate simply because they have to travel every day. I know that many members in this chamber have much larger electorates than mine, but because my electorate is spread out I travel something like 50,000 or 60,000 kilometres a year in my car. The 8c a litre fuel tax will affect me, and it will affect many other hardworking tradesmen, labourers, farm workers—

**Mr Stevens:** The battlers.

**Mr RICKUSS:** The battlers; that is right. It will affect the blue-collar conservatives whom I represent, and I probably represent more labour type workers and hardworking manual type workers than most other members in this House.

So it is really disappointing that these sorts of people are going to be disadvantaged by the scrapping of this 8c a litre subsidy. The public transport in that area is virtually nonexistent. It takes something like three hours to get from the Lockyer to Brisbane on public transport. So that is almost out of the question.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is right. I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. You can fly to Noumea in that time. Although the government is involved with the Blueprint for the Bush and has been talking to the people from the bush for quite a while now, it is very disappointing when it comes out with things like bans on revegetation clearing. That really came out of left field. The government was just trying to shore up a few green votes and make sure that members such as the member for Mount Coot-tha were re-elected. He probably has one of the lowest primary votes in this House. He managed to scrape home. But it is a bit disappointing that that ban on revegetation came in.

During the election campaign it was interesting to hear how the government was going to assist families get solar hot-water systems and all of that sort of thing. I have spoken to a number of solar retailers in my area. It is just atrocious. The government has nearly killed the industry. I just hope the government realises what it is doing. That industry is going to end up the way of the water tank industry. The tank scheme was a classic example. You could probably buy a 10,000 litre tank now cheaper than you could when you were getting the government rebate. Once governments get involved in a lot of stuff, they create absolute chaos.

**Mr Fraser:** You don't believe in subsidies?

**Mr RICKUSS:** No, I believe in some subsidies, but once the government gets too involved in the market, it creates chaos. That is what the government will do with the solar hot-water system industry. It has done that with the tank industry. I think this scheme is going to be the Crazy Clark's scheme of solar hot-water systems. The government will be buying cheap and nasty solar hot-water systems.



**Mr Fraser** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I take that interjection from the member for Mount Coot-tha. All I can say is that this Crazy Clark's scheme that the government is implementing is going to be a disaster. At the moment there has been a drop-off in sales of 70 per cent. Salesmen have been laid off and the government has not delivered one system yet. This is the real problem. Once you get west of Ipswich, you are in a frost zone. So you have to have more expensive systems that have to be frost protected and all of that sort of thing. I just cannot see how the government can supply the quality systems for the sort of money it is talking about. There seems to be probably a \$2,500 gap. I think the government is going to drive the industry to the wall before it realises the mistakes it has made and the industry can pick itself up.

The Governor mentioned that the government is going to have a Green Army to fund and coordinate. That is going to be really interesting. How is the government going to fund and coordinate the Green Army when DNR, DPI and the EPA do not have enough officers on the ground to manage these types of schemes? So it will be interesting to see how the government is going to manage a Green Army type of scheme or whether it will just throw it to local government and expect local government to manage it. That is possibly what will happen, I would say.

The six-star home rating scheme will be really interesting. I do not think the government has thought this scheme through properly. We need some sort of star rating, but there are federal regulation implications for housing. We can see what is happening. In Victoria the spec builders are building Mediterranean style housing with no eaves. They are totally inappropriate for our climate. So I think how the government is going to implement that scheme has to be raised.

The government is also talking about putting in a 2,000-kilometre walk up to the cape. I do not know whether people realise how hot it is up in the cape for most of the year—how hot it is and how far 2,000 kilometres is. Yet the wild rivers legislation, which Noel Pearson and others have been screaming about, is being ignored. It is really important that the government listens and talks to Indigenous leaders such as Pearson in North Queensland.

We need more teacher aides and more support for prep. That is what we really need in education. We need more police in the Lockyer. It would be great to see a full 24-hour service. The police sergeants in the Lockyer do a great job, but it is only through their great management that they keep the place as safe as they do. If they had a few more staff up there, they would do better, but they are doing a great job. We need a Queensland Transport centre in Gatton. I am sure the police will agree with me on that. The police station in Gatton is flat out. The centre should be a stand-alone money-making thing. People have to pay for their licences. So surely Queensland Transport can have a stand-alone centre. All you need to do is rent a shopfront, put in a few desks and you have a Queensland Transport centre. How hard is that? I am sure there is one down at Lota or somewhere that should be closed because of a lack of use.

I must congratulate my SES and rural fire brigades in my area. They work extremely hard and do a great job. An interesting phrase that was used 150 years ago when the first Queensland parliament was opened was prudence and cautious practical wisdom, good judgement, provident care and management, economy and frugality. This government has none of those—not one.

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (4.56 pm): It is my great honour to rise to speak in this address-in-reply in this my fourth term as the member for Whitsunday. Following the redistribution of electoral boundaries, the seat of Whitsunday became a more compact electorate with the loss of Bowen and the inclusion of several new suburbs in Mackay, including Glenella and Mount Pleasant.

**Mr Fraser:** And had a more compact margin.

**Ms JARRATT:** My margin also became more compact—and I am reading the Treasurer's mind—being reduced to less than one per cent. So it is with a great deal of gratitude to my constituents and my ALP friends and supporters in Whitsunday that I stand here today as part of the Bligh government, tasked with a clear mandate to continue our record-making infrastructure program and to create 100,000 jobs in this term of government. I believe this clear and unequivocal message of the Bligh government's commitment to supporting Queenslanders through what we know will be very difficult times resonated with my constituents and was at least partly responsible for the positive outcome in my seat.

Whitsunday is home to many of the region's mineworkers who have faced the front-edge consequences of the global financial crisis as well as many people who work in the tourism and hospitality sector who will inevitably bear the brunt of any downturn in the economy. There is no doubt that the Mackay-Whitsunday region has reaped many benefits from the sound economic management of successive Labor governments during the boom years. The region bristles with cranes on the skyline, building both public and private infrastructure, and unemployment has remained at historically low levels, providing opportunity and financial security for those who have made the region home.

Government funded infrastructure programs such as the Hospital Bridge replacement, the duplication of Mackay-Bucasia Road and the redevelopment of the Mackay Base Hospital are examples of just how the Bligh government has rolled up its sleeves to ensure that the Mackay region has modern infrastructure befitting the important role that it plays in the continued growth of the state. In addition, these projects will continue to provide all-important employment, taking up some of the slack as the mining industry faces up to the consequences of falling coal prices and a global credit squeeze.

Times are changing quickly and it is understood that this is the time to step up public spending, to stimulate employment opportunity and to commit to the future of our region and our state by having a clear plan for job retention, job creation and support mechanisms such as the rapid response teams that provide much-needed practical support for those who face retrenchment or redundancy. In addition, the Bligh government went to the election with a funded commitment to support our critical tourism industry which, as a sector, is most vulnerable to the global economic vagaries.

While government funded promotional campaigns like The Best Job in the World have ensured that tourism businesses in my electorate, from the fabulous island resorts to the smallest souvenir shop, have hope for the future, there is no doubt that now is the time to work together to focus on our future. In that regard, the future of the Whitsunday coast airport is central to the ongoing viability of tourism on the mainland. With that in mind, I put on record my thanks to the Premier for her decisive action during the election campaign that put to bed the eight-year-old issue of the location of the airport. This issue represents a long and divisive thread that has haunted my three terms as local member. While I could devote the entire contents of this speech to the intrigue that has surrounded the issue over the years, I will spare members that pain. I would just say that we are now on track to delivering on our commitment to give the existing airport facility a \$4 million facelift. The real work of rebuilding airline confidence in the Whitsundays as a destination remains ahead, but it is the single most important issue facing the future of tourism in the Whitsundays. Therefore, I will join with the council and local stakeholders in being part of the solution to this issue.

Another issue that divides the Whitsunday community far too often is the value of development. Surely now, as work dries up and planned development fails to materialise due to the tightening access to credit, we must make our first priority the creation of jobs through support for reasonable development. I am relieved that the amazing Port of Airlie development in central Airlie Beach continues to take shape and, in doing so, promises to transform the heart of our tourism strip into a modern, vibrant hub that will add great value to the experience of locals and visitors alike. I will continue to work with both the Whitsunday Regional Council and the Mackay Regional Council and groups like Enterprise Whitsunday, Tourism Whitsundays and the REDC to leverage support for additional infrastructure projects that both provide much needed jobs and support the visitor experience. I feel very confident that programs like the Green Army will play an important role in ensuring that those goals are achieved.

Beyond spelling out my support for the Bligh government's infrastructure and employment policies during the campaign, I went to my constituency with strong commitments to value the unpaid work of volunteers and community workers in my electorate. After all, it is they who will be called upon to pick up the pieces and provide the social glue when the tough times threaten our vulnerable and at-risk community members. I have declared 2009 to be my 'year of the volunteer' in the Whitsunday electorate so that I can shine a light on those wonderful people, acknowledge the important role that they play in our communities and encourage more people to dedicate a little of their time to this honourable pursuit. It is dangerous to single out a volunteer group for special recognition, but I will mention my huge admiration for our wonderful surf-lifesavers. I was very pleased that the Premier and Treasurer were able to find a small amount of funding during the campaign to allow the Eimeo Surf Lifesaving Club to complete its much needed clubhouse.

Election campaigns are stressful periods in the lives of candidates, their families and the people who work with and support them. Winning an election campaign is an emotional and happy time, but today I want to spend just a moment acknowledging the plight of those who are not so fortunate in the end result. My opponent Paul Joice worked hard in the campaign, was courteous and respectful throughout and was courageous in defeat. I thank him for his courtesy and acknowledge the important contribution he has made to democracy by giving people a genuine choice when casting their ballot.

I also acknowledge the contribution of all those former members who, by choice or otherwise, have not returned to take a seat in the 53rd Parliament. In particular I pay tribute to my friend and colleague Bonny Barry, who was a fearless warrior for her constituents and for women everywhere. She showed enormous courage to continue working while undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Bonny is a survivor and a woman of great integrity. I pay tribute to the difference she made during her time as the member for Aspley.

Finally, I put on record my gratitude to the many wonderful people who joined me in the Whitsunday campaign. My campaign manager, Chris McJannett, and his offsider, Bronwyn Elliott, were magnificent under pressure. They were ably backed up by a troop of willing helpers including Michelle McJannett, Kathy Mahonoshon, Jared Cullen and Mary Crawford, who all made the trip from Brisbane

to be part of the action. As always, my dear friends Lil, Marilyn, Fran and Annemarie were front and centre during the campaign, being supported by a group of wonderful branch members and supporters, too many to name. To all these fabulous, positive and hardworking volunteers I simply say thank you.

The final person I want to acknowledge is my personal photographer, masseuse, chauffeur and best friend. Of course, it is my husband, Ziggy, whose love and support sustains me and was particularly necessary during the tougher moments of the campaign. He had great plans for our retirement and, let's face it, that was a real possibility prior to the election. But he is just as happy to postpone our plans to sail around the world while he concentrates on building the boat in which I am sure we will one day do that. I humbly thank the electors of Whitsunday for making possible the honour of representing them in this parliament. I will repay their trust with energy, integrity and great hope for the future.

**Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (5.04 pm): It is a great honour to rise in this address-in-reply debate. My particular situation is rather unusual in that I am a re-elected member, having returned to my previous occupation as a GP for three years prior to re-entering this place. I thank the electors of the Gold Coast electorate of Gaven for giving me the opportunity to represent them again after a three-year hiatus from parliament.

To those who supported me and worked in my campaign for re-election, I can only say that I am forever grateful. It is always difficult to choose the exact words to convey what should be said. For the time being, it has to be this: I thank you for the opportunity and I do most solemnly declare that I will do my utmost to represent the wishes of my constituency.

I thank my family, particularly my wife, Councillor Susie Douglas, and my children, Caroline, Alex, John and Helen. Politics can be a lonely and isolating road and it can be a long journey from an outer metropolitan, semirural general practitioner to an elected representative. To my long-serving staff, Robin and Therese, I thank you deeply. To the LNP, I appreciate your support of me in being re-elected.

What lessons were learned? One hundred and fifty years ago in the Governor's opening speech, Sir George Bowen said that the future decency of the colony will depend to a slight degree on the members. An arduous and responsible task but, more important, an interesting task awaits us. This great portion of the earth segments political hope with the noble principle of freedom, order and prosperity. At that stage, our Queensland population was 25,000, when the Great Depression hit in 1932 it was 970,855 and it is now 4.32 million.

I make mention of the Great Depression because in 1932 a well-known Labor stalwart politician, the longest serving politician in the Queensland parliament, James Larcombe, was re-elected to represent what is now the seat of Keppel, which he served for 41 years. I believe the current member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan, is here today and is effectively sitting in the same seat—although it does not cover exactly the same area—as did James Larcombe. After a three-year break, I was similarly re-elected to the seat of Gaven. I join the Hon. Rob Swarten, the member for Rockhampton, as the second re-elected member of the 53rd Queensland Parliament.

One of the great privileges of re-election is that it gives one a chance to have a different perspective. It is my intention to build on Larcombe's speech of 77 years ago to demonstrate that, although times may change, things remain the same. I have a copy of the original speech. While I will not go through it in intense detail, I would like to raise some issues that were referred to. In 1932 Larcombe was re-elected to parliament. The times were very difficult. Australia was in depression, people's confidence had been eroded and many people were starving, hungry and homeless. The state was in an abject state of hopelessness. Larcombe made reference to the confidence that had previously existed in the state but that had since been destroyed and said that alarm and panic had spread. He said—

The State became stricken with despair.

He further stated—

... factory output in Queensland decreased in value by £7,000,000. The aggregate deficits exceeded £3,500,000, and new taxation was imposed amounting to approximately £2,000,000. They were the destroyers of confidence ... They built up record deficits, and they increased taxation to an unprecedented extent.

He said that 8,000 factory employees were lost within two years.

We used to have a sinking fund. At that stage the state had a sinking fund of £2.074 million. The grand total of state loan expenditure at that stage was £206,000. I have the breakdown of expenses and I will submit that as a document.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of client information brief from Queensland Parliamentary Library, dated 7 May 2009, regarding cumulative debt of Queensland and Australia in 1932 and copy of associated email from Queensland Parliamentary Library to Dr Douglas dated 1 May 2009 [\[317\]](#).

The state loan expenditure at that stage in 1931-32 was £206,351, whereas previously in 1927-28 it was £3.19 million. Therefore, per head of population, the expenses had decreased in 1932 to effectively four shillings per person. There were loan agreements between all the states. The Commonwealth had guaranteed the loans by 1932. So the grand total loan expenditure after adjustment was £114 million. Effectively, state public debt at that stage was £111,911,785. Effectively, the total debt for everybody was about £115 per person. The state deemed this to be manageable.

Larcombe then in his opening speech talked about the promises made by the Premier's plan. The promises were that the budget should be balanced, that it would revive private trade and industry and that it would eliminate or greatly reduce the unemployed. What happened then was that the government did exactly as it intended to do. Budgetary equilibrium has not been affected and we have a deficit the size of which has never been known previously in the history of this state. We know that private trade and industry have not been revitalised and that unemployment is continuing to rise. In my electorate of Gaven, it has actually increased by 16 per cent in the month of April. The situation Larcombe faced in 1932 was that the unemployment rate was 28 per cent of workers in Australia and it was four percentage points higher in Queensland.

The current situation in our state is that the budget is in massive deficit and the Premier has come in and announced a fire sale auction of government owned assets. The state debt is \$74 billion. Taxation is at record levels and rising. State receipts have allegedly fallen by \$14 billion—GST receipts alone have fallen by \$2 billion. Unemployment has risen to six per cent over the last three years to near double the adjusted figure.

Getting back to what Larcombe said, Larcombe damned the previous government of Moore for ignoring those principles espoused by the eminent economist of the day—JM Keynes. Keynes indeed did advocate that in time of depression it is the duty of the government to extend public works and in time of prosperity to ease up on that branch of expenditure. Thus the duty of the government during times of depression is to expend as much money as possible aiding and stimulating private enterprise. I say here today to honourable members that those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them.

The total factory output in 1932 in Queensland was £36 million. The total Australian factory output was £281 million. How much revenue was collected in Queensland in 2007-08? The estimated actual amount of taxation raised was \$9,552 million. In the earlier days, the states raised the taxes and then gave money to the Commonwealth. Of course now the Commonwealth raises the taxes and gives money to the states. Effectively, in those days Queensland raised £4,761,880. When you do the comparison in dollars, the situation is not different at all.

This Labor administration has driven up a massive debt in good times and in times of crisis has chosen a path of public works spending rather than reducing our budget debt. It has sought to ignore our budget debt. Rather than attempting to revive private enterprise it has chosen to focus on a program of public expenditure—and it has spent as much money as possible. The program outlined in the speeches by the government may be unsustainable in these times. I say this from the basis of historical perspective. I say that the situation this administration finds itself in now is equivalent to that which Larcombe chastised the former state administration for. He said that the 'state has become stricken with dispute' and 'confidence in their ability to govern has been lost'. He did so on the basis of the circumstances in which they found themselves.

As this government charges towards a possible \$100 billion deficit in three more years, how bad does it have to get before honourable Labor members confront the fact that they themselves have totally abrogated the responsibilities to their own labour movement that Wallace described with the only philosophy, that being of Labor, to be able to prevent poverty and war? This current program of the Bligh Labor government needs urgent review. It is not supported by those principles Labor has consistently espoused. It has damned those principles that this opposition adheres to and that one of its own esteemed members and long-serving members ascribed to—that being James Larcombe. What led to this 180 degree change I suspect could be 11 years of prosperous times, the GST revolution and the benefits it has delivered, and maybe a belief that economics no longer apply.

Small business is the key driver to the economic prosperity of this state and nation. No amount of spending programs will ever deliver the results of providing private enterprise and industry with the cash they need to deliver the jobs that those members opposite so covet. I do not wish to condemn the Green Army initiative, but how near-sighted are members when there is an overwhelming need to save business and not burden the public with more fees and charges when they can least afford to pay those fees and charges?

It will be the ability of small business and other types of business to provide services and employment that will enable us to service our debt and recover. The Governor offered that the opening of parliament at a time of the worst global conditions since the Great Depression brings with it enormous responsibility. I say that we have to collectively as a parliament rise up to that responsibility, as Larcombe said when he entered parliament in similar circumstances to my own. He then served for a cumulative 41 years—37 years from that point.

One of the great failings of the Great Depression was to use deflation as an instrument and tool and, because of the inability to address and control monetary supply, that became an obstacle to wealth generation. Those that chose the path of punting money would destroy the economy and bring on a combination of inflation or war or both. In fact, by 1939 in our case we were at war.

The Governor has declared a significant expenditure on building programs against a backdrop of 100,000 new—maybe full-time—jobs. I will not go through the programs; they have been covered by many speakers. Interestingly enough, there was a bus program of \$42 billion conceived by the Brisbane City Council. It looked like a very large program. One wonders if at this time this is what we should be doing with the money that we need to sustain our government.

The centrepiece of the Bligh Labor government must be an ability to address the issues that were raised in Larcombe's speech of 1932. That was a time when we had to confront the issue that we could not go into further debt, we could not spend money that we could not pay back and we had to address our situation in terms of our ability to repay that debt. Governments must rapidly adapt to our changing needs. All efforts need to become small—in other words, all politics is local and this is one of the situations where we should go back to being local.

Much has been made of the issues of roads, schools, health, safety and the environment. These are all buzzwords that members opposite have been championing when we have been talking about budgetary difficulties. These are cornerstone needs of the public, but we need to understand that we cannot meet these needs and deliver government services unless small business is able to generate income and drive the economy. Other issues, including solar hotwater systems and expensive manufacturing awards, will have to wait for the future. I am not necessarily saying they are not needed, but what we need to do is focus as Larcombe did. Look at what has occurred in our past; it will build our future.

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (5.21 pm): I was intrigued to hear aspects of the honourable member for Gaven's speech, particularly as it related to a record that he apparently shares with the honourable member for Rockhampton. I am sure the honourable member for Rockhampton will be thrilled to learn that, and I look forward to relating it to him later in the night.

The honourable member referred to the Depression period and to the speech by Mr Larcombe, an esteemed Labor member of this House for many years. It is interesting that, despite being a conservative member of parliament, the honourable member for Gaven was unable to refer to any speech by a conservative member of parliament in the Moore government or subsequent to that government from which to draw lessons and to learn from that period of history. Mr Larcombe's words were no doubt wise.

The point, however, and the point that I think the Treasurer has made over and over in recent times, is that we should learn the economic lessons of history. Certainly the Prime Minister has been keen for us as a nation to learn those lessons—as are, of course, the leaders of America, Europe and the United States. Likewise, the leaders in Queensland should take note of the lessons of history in handling economic situations as they now exist differently from the way they were handled in the 1930s when, were it not for the occurrence of the Second World War, that Depression would no doubt have extended well beyond the 10-year period.

The lessons to be learned from the Depression period to which the honourable member referred are important, but it is important also to learn the right lessons and to draw the necessary deductions from those lessons so that we can implement them in terms of the policy that we are applying today. I will say a little bit more about that in the future.

I congratulate Her Excellency on the speech that she gave—certainly for its content, which is primarily a government speech. I congratulate her on her appointment as Governor of Queensland. We are very proud in Toowoomba to claim her as a Toowoomba-ite. It is a great honour for our city that we do have as Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley AC. I am sure that she will prove to be a very, very effective Governor for the future.

I also congratulate those MPs who have been re-elected and those who have been elected for the first time, offer my commiserations to those who have been defeated, particularly those who are good friends of ours, and regret the retirement of others. I congratulate all ministers who have been appointed, particularly new ministers. Eight new ministers have been appointed since the election. I particularly congratulate the Hon. Cameron Dick, the Attorney-General, on his appointment. Cameron and I go back a long time in terms of my involvement in the Labor Party. This weekend is the 10th anniversary of the first Labor conference that I attended at the Crest Hotel. I was a fairly new member in those days and Cameron looked after me. He sat with me most of that weekend during the conference. He has had a great deal of influence on my continued involvement in the Labor Party. Whatever one can say about that, it is attributable in part at least to his influence. I thank him for it. He is an outstanding intellect and a very reputable and highly regarded lawyer. I am sure that he will perform the high office of first law officer of this state with great esteem.

Bearing in mind that these speeches are read in one's local community, I place on record my regret that I did not accept a position in cabinet, but I did so because I felt that I needed to place my constituents first and foremost in terms of my responsibilities. The election resulted in a greatly reduced

margin in my electorate. I felt that that was a message being sent to me by my constituents that they required to see me more often on my home turf. I therefore took the very difficult decision not to accept a position in cabinet so that I could be more often present in my own electorate. I am pleased to have made that clear at this stage.

Debate, on motion of Mr Shine, adjourned.

## MOTION

### Queensland Economy

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.28 pm): I move—

That this parliament notes the gross financial mismanagement of the Bligh government and the \$64 billion in debt the Premier and Treasurer accumulated before the global financial crisis and calls upon the Premier to stop misleading Queenslanders about the reasons for the fire sale of Queenslanders' assets.

The only thing one can count on from this government, this Premier and this Treasurer is deceit and debt. It has been 75 days since the election. It is time to come clean with Queenslanders. It is very obvious that this Bligh government had racked up \$64 billion worth of debt before the global financial crisis that it loves to quote. Debt is in its DNA.

The Premier says that Queensland's dire financial outlook is not of their making, but the truth is the Bligh government left Queensland exposed with huge spending and borrowing. We know that the Premier and the Treasurer like to talk about \$14 billion being stripped from the Queensland budget over the next four years but, when we look at the facts, between 2000 and 2008 the government received \$34.4 billion extra in windfall income, and yet the Premier and the Treasurer blame the global financial crisis for the situation we are now in.

When the member for Mount Coot-tha became the Treasurer in September 2007, the debt of Queensland was \$23.7 billion prospectively and now it is \$74 billion. We know what has happened with the warnings from the credit rating agency Standard & Poor's. We heard how important it was for us to maintain a credit rating of AAA in the budget of last year, and yet this year when the Treasurer said that he was going to keep going with the infrastructure program Standard & Poor's downgraded our rating to AA+ and Moody's has done the same thing. Now we see there is a desperate need to try to get rid of some debt. We have now been forced into the equivalent of a high-interest, low-doc loan that we have to pay back at a higher interest rate—\$64 billion worth of debt that was racked up before the global financial crisis.

The reason that Moody's downgraded our credit rating is that Queensland does not have a plan to pay back debt. We have been talking about it on this side for some time. We have been saying, 'Where is the plan to pay back debt? If you have a small business and you have a mortgage you cannot go to your accountant and say, 'I'm planning to pay it back when times get better.' That does not work in business. Similarly, if you have some financial issues in your family, the bank manager does not normally accept that. Yet in this case the Treasurer was quite happy to say, 'We'll pay it back when times get better.' That is why they are being forced into a fire sale.

They are flogging off Queenslanders' assets because they are broke. We saw it yesterday—Queensland Motorways, the Port of Brisbane, the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, Forestry Plantations and Queensland Rail. These are assets that bring in more than \$280 million in revenue each year. They are for sale because there is no money left to pay the bills. There is no money to deliver vital services. The problem is this government cannot control its expenditure and it cannot control its revenue.

Spending has gone up 52 per cent in the last four years. If we just stop to think about that, when inflation has been running at between one and three per cent this government has increased its spending by 52 per cent over the last four years. This is because of the biggest boom decade that Queensland has had in our history. Between mining royalties and the GST revenue, there should be no reason that our financial outlook is this bad. It begs the question that we hear now. It is something we have mentioned in budget replies over the last three or four years. If you cannot manage the state in good times, what about the bad times?

The same government that has given us the worst credit rating of all mainland states now wants us to trust it to renew Queensland. It has a plan that it has come up with in the short term—over the last couple of days—to say that it wants to renew Queensland. It botched electricity deregulation. Let us look at what the Premier said about electricity deregulation. No wonder we do not support them on their privatisations. This is what the Premier said, and I quote from the *Courier-Mail* of 1 June—

Her comments came after *The Courier-Mail* revealed only six retailers were offering deals, down from the 19 promised by the Government.

'What you see in Queensland's electricity industry is the early stage of competition between retailers,' Ms Bligh said. 'One of the things that the potential retailers want is higher electricity prices and the Government is going to continue to work to make sure that electricity prices are kept as low as possible.'

What we hear from that is that we should be thankful we do not have more competition, because according to the Premier more competition means higher prices. This Premier must be the only person in the world in the only place in the world where the free market operates who thinks that competition means higher prices. That is why we do not support what they are doing. They should stop misleading Queenslanders about what they are doing, as they have with their jobs promise in the last election.

They want us to have confidence in their ability to privatise our roads and ports. The government has a duty to act in the best interests of its people. This deal does not represent good value for Queenslanders. The only winners here are bargain hunters. I have a number of quotes that I have heard from interested parties. It is not just us who are saying this. Labor's own people are saying this. They blame the GST. They blame everyone else but themselves. The reality is that they clocked up massive debt leaving Queensland vulnerable long before anyone had heard of the GFC.

Let us look at what their people from the unions have had to say. Rail, Tram and Bus Union spokesman Owen Doogan says that up to 10,000 workers will be affected, including many job losses. This is from a Premier who promised that we could count on her. We know we cannot count on her for anything but deceit and debt. Mr Doogan said, 'Selling QR coal is like selling the cow to buy milk.' This is from a Premier who thinks it is like selling an old car to buy a new car.

The Maritime Union Queensland branch spokesman Mick Carr says that it will appeal to the federal government to intervene to prevent the sale of the Port of Brisbane. Mr Carr stated—

Privatisation of ports such as the Port of Brisbane will do nothing but create a barrier to governments to be able to—for example—direct infrastructure spending into those areas.

The CQ Rail, Tram and Bus Union district organiser Craig Allen said that the government's announcement was clearly at odds with traditional Labor ideals. Mr Allen stated—

The reality is the government has shown its arrogance and ignorance by turning their back on those rail workers who have supported them for the past 100 years.

Their own unions are turning on the members opposite and saying that this is a 'tragic' sale, according to Andrew Dettmer. Mr Dettmer said, 'I don't think there's anybody who can pretend to be happy about this.' The Premier promises that every single dollar from these sales will go towards paying off debt and building infrastructure. It is completely at odds with the Labor way, as I quoted yesterday from the Labor state policy platform. Privatisation of public enterprises should not be used to solve revenue problems of governments, and yet clearly that is what we are seeing. The member for Bundamba and the member for Waterford clearly agree. I look forward to welcoming them on this side of the chamber shortly. Clearly, the Premier went to the election because she needed a mandate. She had a plan but she needed a mandate. Now we know the plan was really to sell assets and introduce a fuel tax. She wants to raise revenues by hitting families who are already doing it tough, and yet last year on 1 June in a release with the Treasurer she said that the fuel subsidy was here to stay. The Premier stated—

I am not prepared to scrap the fuel subsidy when Queensland households are under real financial pressure with rising interest rates and the increasing price of petrol and groceries. I will not kick them when they are down.

But today when families are struggling even more with the global financial crisis the Premier wants to kick them when they are down. She is using it as an excuse to introduce a fuel tax. I am proud of the fact that the coalition brought down petrol prices. This Premier is going to increase the price of fuel by 9c. They have been trying to implement this tax for a decade. It has always been part of their plan. We know former Premier Beattie attempted it and backed down. This Treasurer talked about a scheme in last year's budget involving driver's licences. It clearly was not going to work and had to be pulled again. It is something they want to do. Taxes and debt are in their DNA.

Under this government Queensland is no longer the low-tax state. We have electricity and water bills that have increased, and fuels, fees and charges are on the rise. When we look at the plan for the privatisation of the motorways, the Premier says that it is her intention, not her promise, to keep tolls below inflation.

**Mr Horan:** Like electricity.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Just like electricity prices, where the government promised no-one would be worse off. The government promised us it would not bring in a fuel tax. Once again, I say do not look at what the government says; look at what it has done. Queenslanders have a right to feel duped. The Premier was more interested in winning than being upfront. She says leadership is about making tough decisions. Leadership is also about honesty. On this issue, she has lost the trust of the people of Queensland. When you lose the trust of the people as a politician, you have nowhere left to go. This Premier has turned her back on her true beliefs. She should be condemned for it. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.37 pm): I second the motion. It is very important as we debate tonight's motion that we take a moment to reflect on the tale of two governments. One was elected in Canberra in the year of 1996—a government that inherited \$96 billion worth of Labor debt, a government which was able to reconstruct the Australian

economy, and after just over 10 years in government paid off \$96 billion worth of debt and left about \$60 billion in the coffers for the now Rudd government to be able to use. Look at the Queensland state Labor government which came to power just two years after that, went through the same boom times, and yet 10 years down the track has \$70-odd billion in debt, is heading towards a \$4 billion budget deficit, and is now looking at selling everything that is not bolted down in Queensland and is even going to sell anything that is bolted down in Queensland.

What is the fundamental difference? One was a Labor government; the other was a conservative government. Debt, taxes and dishonesty are in Labor's DNA—make absolutely no mistake about it.

We have heard the Premier and Treasurer wax lyrical about how external circumstances beyond their control have all conspired to haunt them and work against them—poor little souls. As they talk about \$14 billion worth of unforeseen revenue being stripped away in recent times and seek to blame the global financial crisis, what they do not tell us is that from the year 2000 to the end of the 2008 financial year they received a \$34 billion windfall in revenue.

Where did the last \$20 billion go? Where did that other \$20 billion go? It was sprayed away as the Labor Party does in Queensland, as the Labor Party does in Australia, as the Labor Party does worldwide because it is in its DNA. If those opposite have the money they believe they have to spend it. They never put it away for a rainy day, and they did not. They have had a \$34 billion windfall in revenue from the Commonwealth, from stamp duty, from payroll tax, from land tax, from royalties and from other sources. But where has the other \$20 billion gone? The Labor way; it has just dissipated into the ether. Let us have none of this nonsense about it being due to the global financial crisis or something else that went wrong somewhere else. It is Labor that is totally responsible for this and nobody else.

What we also see is the architect of this—one Mike Kaiser, the person who came up with the Q2 document based on his experience of working with Morris Iemma in New South Wales. Recently he turned up in Queensland and said to the Premier, 'Have I got an idea for you. It was a real hoot in New South Wales. I said to Morris that we should privatise everything. He thought it was a great hoot. We did it. It went a bit pear-shaped down there but let's try it up here.' The Premier said to him, 'Great idea, but let's leave it until after the election.'

What we see now in the preparation of this budget is the document that the Labor Party ran from at the state election—the document that contained its secret plan for privatisation, the document that contained its plan for a new fuel tax in Queensland, the document that contained the attack on wages and conditions of the Queensland Public Service and public sector employees. That is the extent of Labor's dishonesty.

The one thing that I will give the Labor Party in Queensland—because we give it minus 10 out of 10 when it comes to economic and fiscal management and responsibility—is the one thing that it does very well, and that is spin, sensationalism, hysteria, conditioning of the electorate at large and blaming someone else and external circumstances so it can do what it wants to do. We have this nonsense about a global financial crisis being responsible for the current problem. It is not responsible for the fundamental issue. This government clocked up \$64 billion worth of borrowings before the global financial crisis. Even Moody's confirmed recently that this government went broke in a boom. It is the government's responsibility fundamentally.

Even in February when I asked the Premier in this place whether we were in a recession in Queensland she said no. The Treasurer was asked whether we were in a recession. He said, 'No, but it could feel like a recession.' This Labor government has caused this problem—no-one else.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the House. The House will come to order.

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.43 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all the words after 'Parliament' are deleted and the following words are inserted:

1. Recognises the devastating effects the Global Financial Crisis has had on the revenue base of the Queensland State Budget;
2. Endorses the continuation of the State's building program and the protection and creation of jobs as the priorities of Queensland's economic response to the Global Financial Crisis; and
3. Recognises that measures taken to stabilise the State Budget must secure an immediate response to the decline in revenue and a long term structural adjustment to Queensland's economic and fiscal priorities.'

This amendment seeks to put on the record the devastating effects that the global economic recession is having not only in Queensland but around the world and for this parliament to recognise the reality of that. At the end of the parliamentary sittings last year I accused the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition of being beached on the issue of economic policy in the face of an escalating global financial



crisis. Here we are some six months later and the LNP is still floundering, like its colleagues at the federal level, when it comes to having a consistent economic response to the biggest financial crisis we have seen in three quarters of a century.

Let us talk about the GFC—the global financial crisis. On the one hand, and we have just heard it again, what the LNP will tell us is that the global financial crisis, one, does not exist—it is all nonsense—two, is not affecting Queensland and has had no effect on our revenues and, three, we should put our head in the sand on it, it does not exist, it is not having an effect, it is not the global financial crisis that is seeing royalties drop out—‘We do not know what it is, but it is not a global financial crisis’; somehow the Queensland government has stopped the Japanese steel mills from buying coal from Queensland coal companies.

On the one hand the members opposite deny it exists; on the other hand they saw it coming. They knew two, three, four years ago. They said they knew years ago that this was coming. They alone saw it. The United States did not see it coming. The United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, the Reserve Bank—none of those saw it coming. But the Queensland Liberal National Party knew all about it! On the one hand those opposite deny it and on the other they were the only people in the world who knew what was coming, and on that basis they say that we should never have borrowed for our building program.

Where do the members opposite stand on some of the economic solutions that are being put forward? We say that we should stimulate the economy with the building program. On the one hand they say that we should not borrow for infrastructure. They say that borrowing is bad, even though every one of them does it with their own assets and would recommend that their children do it. On the other hand they would not cut one single project. They tell us that we should not borrow but they will not say which project should be cut.

Even more hypocritically, when we do take a responsible attitude to rescheduling a project to accommodate our spending limits, like the Eastern Busway last year—we rescheduled it and said we will have to responsibly delay it by a couple of years to make sure it fits within our borrowing program and our spending capacity—they campaign against it. They went out and said that we should accelerate it. They sent young LNP goons—is that unparliamentary?—young Liberal members out to the Chatsworth community cabinet to campaign and call for an acceleration of the Eastern Busway project. ‘Do not borrow, but do not cut any projects!’

Where do those opposite stand on asset sales? Nowhere is their floundering on economic policy more clear than on asset sales. On the one hand they went to the election with a party platform that endorses asset sales. We had frontbencher after frontbencher on the record speaking glowingly about the ability of the private sector to undertake the commercial businesses of government. On the other hand, when the time comes to put their hand up for it, they have a fainting spell. They get an attack of the vapours. They are unable to consider it. They do not know whether they are Arthur or Martha.

On this side of the House we have what it takes to renew our agenda and challenge our own status quo. I have got what it takes to ask the Labor Party to change its platform. Those opposite do not have what it takes to ask the LNP to implement its platform. So we can change but they cannot even implement their own platform.

When it comes to political ticker, this mob are run by powder puffs. They cannot even implement their own party platform. I have to take to the Labor Party one of the toughest issues and ask members to change their minds on things that they believe in deeply. Those opposite do not even have what it takes to implement their own party platform. They are exposed for the economic flounders that they are.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the minister, I will wait for the House to come to order.

**Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (5.48 pm): I rise to second the amendment moved by the Premier. There was a clear distinction between the policies of the Bligh government and the opposition when the people of Queensland went to the polls in March. They could vote for a government with a commitment to delivering infrastructure, essential front-line services and jobs or they could vote for an opposition that wanted to rip \$1 billion a year out of our public services and put 12,000 people out of jobs, cut essential front-line services and put a stop to our Capital Works Program.

It galls me to hear these Tories come in here and criticise Labor’s DNA—Labor’s DNA that has stood by workers for over 100 years. Do members know why those opposite sit there and criticise it? Because they have no DNA. They were so ashamed of their previous DNA that they voted themselves out of existence. The people of Queensland spoke and they voted for a government that is committed to maintaining jobs and infrastructure projects so that we can weather this global financial storm. These are tough economic times, and one only has to talk to the people of Thuringowa and Townsville who have suffered job losses, who have suffered with job losses at Queensland Nickel, who have suffered because of the MacAir collapse, who have suffered because of the Storm Financial collapse. These are tough economic times and they demand tough decisions.

The best way that we can deal with this global financial crisis is to continue with our state's building program and ensure the protection and the creation of jobs—the protection and creation of jobs. This financial year we are delivering a record \$3.2 billion road construction program—a program that employs some 25,000 people a year. In the two months I have been Minister for Main Roads, I have visited projects being delivered as part of our building program right across our wonderful state and had the pleasure of opening some of these completed projects. This government has a clear record of delivering infrastructure for Queenslanders. Just look at our achievements: the \$543 million Tugun bypass, celebrating its first anniversary today; the expansion of the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, a real win; building the new Townsville Women's Correctional Centre; Suncorp Stadium and Skilled Stadium; the magnificent Gallery of Modern Art; and, proudly, new classrooms around the state for the introduction of the prep year.

Specifically in road construction, we have delivered, and we have delivered in spades: \$217.5 million for the Sunshine Motorway upgrade between Maroochydore Road and Pacific Paradise; in Townsville—proudly for the people of North Queensland—the \$119 million Townsville ring-road; \$91 million for the upgrade of 71 kilometres of the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Banana; \$89 million for the Caboolture bypass; \$80 million for the upgrade of Caloundra Road; \$75 million for the southern section of the future Caloundra-Mooloolaba Road; \$43 million for the Hospital Bridge replacement in Mackay; \$28 million for the upgrade of the Burke Developmental Road between Cloncurry and south of the Burke and Wills Junction; and \$19.8 million for the upgrade of Smith Street on the Gold Coast.

We have achieved a lot, but this is no time to take your foot off the accelerator. With the federal government, we are upgrading the Pacific Motorway at a cost of \$910 million and the \$190 million Townsville Port Access Road. We are also delivering the \$315 million Houghton bridge duplication, \$128 million for the Forgan Bridge replacement—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** Listen to them scream, Mr Speaker!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Gympie—

**Mr WALLACE:** Listen to them scream, Mr Speaker! They hate our building projects. They hate keeping Queenslanders working. Their opposition to Labor's DNA is an opposition to jobs across Queensland. We are proud of it. There is \$92 million for the Bundaberg ring-road and \$366 million for the Centenary Highway.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** Listen to them scream, Mr Speaker! They hate jobs. They hate jobs for Queenslanders. There is \$150 million for the Bowen/Callide safety works, \$10 million in flood mitigation and road resurfacing on the Flinders Highway and Gregory-Camooweal road—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Clayfield, I have tolerated pretty well all day the member for Gympie, the member for Buderim and the member for Burnett. There comes a time at which the interjections simply become noise. I am going to issue a general warning to the three members. I think you have had a pretty good go. I have understood today has been a moment of high tension. However, there is a point at which it is becoming complete disruption. I call the member for Clayfield.

**Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (5.54 pm): I just wonder whether the member for Thuringowa is offering a free set of steak knives with everything else he is going to be selling off. When you buy your port, when you buy your airport or when you buy your roadway, what will it come with? What will they try to do to get the sale right? What will they try to do to get the sale right in a depressed market where there is no credit available and the buyers are not out there?

It is a pleasure to rise today to support the motion moved by my friend the member for Surfers Paradise and the Leader of the Opposition. The motion today seeks to have the Premier come forward and tell the people of Queensland why she is engaging in a fire sale of state owned assets just 75 days after an election in which she made no mention of such a program; why I sat beside the Treasurer of this state in radio interviews when he was asked by people, 'Do you plan to sell off assets?' and he said, 'No, we have no plan to sell off assets'; just 75 days after being elected on a platform of keeping Queensland free of a fuel tax; just 105 days after revealing the state of Queensland finances and the downgrading of our AAA credit rating but providing no plans to recover that rating and taking to the electorate no plan to restore Queensland's finances; and just 43 days after Her Excellency the Governor delivered the opening speech to this parliament outlining the government's program for this term and again saying nothing about the fire sale of assets.

So the four-point plan read to the parliament, gathered on its opening day, mentioned nothing about the sale of government owned assets or the imposition of a fuel tax. So after being completely obscure about the government's intentions, the Premier yesterday comes into this place and announces the largest sale of state owned assets witnessed in Queensland—the fire sale giveaway orchestrated, organised and put to us by the ALP—and without any consultation with the people of Queensland about what should happen with their assets. It is not the sale of those assets that we are talking about here tonight, although that is a point for another day; it is the process by which it has been brought here and by which the announcements have been made. This government has form when it comes to deceiving the people of Queensland about the sale of their assets—the things that they are shareholders in that they reap the benefit from.

The government had form when it came to the sale of the Golden Casket. It had form when it came to the sale of the airports that it brought into this place, and it had not consulted. It did not even tell the authorities that ran those airports that it was going to be selling them, let alone the communities that are serviced by those airports. When the Premier and the Treasurer and this government come in here, what is her excuse? What is the excuse for this fire sale of assets? It is the Premier's old standby: the global financial crisis. In so doing, the Premier is again attempting to avoid all blame for the fact that Queensland went bust in a boom—went bust in a boom after rivers of gold were flowing into the coffers: the transfer duty, the stamp duty, the mining royalties, all the transactional duty.

And it went bust in a boom on the Premier's watch. She was the Treasurer and the then Premier. The Premier's fingerprints are all over the levers that led to Queensland's parlous state. She tries to explain it away. She tries to avoid the evidence that she was at the scene of the crime by blaming outside events. But Queenslanders know who was in charge when things were good and the money was being frittered away. They know it was this Premier when she was Treasurer and subsequently in her role as Premier, and so do the commentators. We need look no further than the article by the respected *Australian* journalist—I do not always agree with him—George Megalogenis in today's *Australian*. What does he say? He says—

But politics prevents the Premier from pinging the previous state Labor government of Peter Beattie for the structural hole in the state budget. Instead, she switches fiscal scapegoats to the global financial crisis and lower GST collections.

He goes on—

The Beattie and Bligh governments assumed that mining royalties and property taxes would continue to point north. They spent every windfall dollar ...

Now Bligh wants voters just to look the other way and pretend that the deficit had nothing to do with the handout excesses of the boom years.

In other words, Queensland went bust in a boom. So the Premier comes into this place bereft of any moral authority or legitimacy to criticise this side of politics or indeed to claim to be blameless for the destruction of our once great finances. This government was already in debt before the global financial crisis, and I table debt forecasts which show the amount of the debt that was being incurred before the global financial crisis and the debt and interest pre GFC.

*Tabled paper:* Chart titled 'Debt and interest pre-GFC' [318].

*Tabled paper:* Chart titled 'Debt forecasts before GFC' [319].

These figures show we went bust before the GFC.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr WATT** (Everton—ALP) (5.59 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in this debate. As I am sure is the case for many members of parliament over the past 24 hours, I have had calls to my electorate office seeking information about the basis for the government's decision. I have been more than happy to return those calls, because this is a decision that was a very hard decision to make but it is the right decision. I stand right behind it.

Some of the questions that my constituents have raised with me in the past 24 hours are similar to some of the questions that have been asked by the opposition here tonight and some of them are similar to questions that sections of the media have asked as well. They are questions such as, 'What did you do with the money from the boom?' We heard the former opposition leader—the next opposition leader—raise that question yet again tonight. He raised it throughout the election campaign and he did it again tonight. I have some news for the former Leader of the Opposition on his question as to what we did with the money from the boom. There was a boom. It did bring in a lot of money and it was used for very good purposes.

I had a look at the surplus in 2006-07. It was one of the good years for the Queensland economy. The coal industry was going very well. Other industries were going well. There was a boom. Do members know what happened that year? We delivered a \$2.3 billion surplus. It was not the only year that we delivered very big surpluses. The most amazing thing about that surplus was that it came after the introduction of the biggest reform to Queensland's education system in decades, which was the delivery of the prep year—something that the opposition did not want to do, but something that this government had the foresight to act on.

Can members imagine the hundreds of millions of dollars that were tied up in delivering new classrooms for the prep year, in delivering more teachers, more teacher aides and more resources into schools? My constituents, all of the opposition's constituents—people right throughout Queensland—are benefiting from the prep year this year, next year and for the next 50 years. The point is that not only were we able to deliver on those very expensive commitments but we also recorded massive surpluses in return. It happened year after year in the earlier part of this decade. Do members know what changed that? The global financial crisis. The other side has just not come to grips with that concept, but it is the absolute truth and I am happy to talk about it with my constituents whenever they would like.

The other issue that has been raised a lot is this accusation that the government lied during the election campaign—that it was only 74 days; what could possibly have changed? Again, I find it very surprising that the opposition makes that comment, because it is well informed, one would think. A couple of very big things have happened within Queensland since the last election. The first of them, as the Premier has mentioned, was that the federal government brought down its budget only about two or three weeks ago. I can understand that as the opposition has been out of power for so long it has forgotten the connection between the federal budget and the state budget, but having been involved in the development of budgets in the past I can say that there is a very big impact. This year the impact was even bigger than usual.

The GST distribution to Queensland dropped by \$2.5 billion in this year's federal budget. I do not know how the opposition could possibly have expected the government to foresee that decrease. I am sure that we were under no illusion that our GST receipts were going to drop but by nowhere near that amount. The Premier has also mentioned the pay rise that has been granted to people working in the community services sector—a very well-deserved pay rise. That is going to cost money. That had a big impact on our budget and we have to come up with the money to pay for that.

I am still waiting for some good evidence from the Liberal National Party of its solution to this problem. We still have not heard anything. Day after day we ask members opposite: what is your solution? They cannot come up with anything. So we have no choice but to look back at what the opposition said during the election campaign. What was the opposition saying? 'Cut, cut, cut.' There was to be a three per cent efficiency dividend right across the public sector. We have seen what its counterparts in Western Australia have done. That efficiency dividend means no bandages for hospitals, cutbacks in schools and cutbacks in road funding. Is that the kind of thing that the opposition really thinks is a good idea? We have no other information to go on. It must still be its policy. All the opposition wants to do is sit back and cut projects. During the state election the opposition never had the gumption to talk about what projects it would cut.

I can only assume what the cuts would mean in my own electorate of Everton. Some of the things that are planned for Everton include the upgrade of the Prince Charles Hospital. That would go under a Liberal National Party. There will be a new children's emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital, which is very close to my constituents and those on the north side. That would go under the Liberal National Party. Everyone complains about the intersection at the airport. Who is doing something about it? This government! It takes money.

During the election campaign we also committed to increase literacy and numeracy spending for schools. That would go. A new hall at Eatons Hill State School would go. A refurbishment of the performing arts block at Albany Creek High School would go under the Liberal National Party. Resurfacing of Samford Road, which I know the member for Ashgrove is also passionate about, would go. New train carriages for the Ferny Grove line, a new kindergarten at the Prince of Peace Lutheran College—all of these things would go under the Liberal National Party. There is only one government that has the guts to make the hard decisions to pay for those things and that is the Labor government.

**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.04 pm): We have just heard the blackmail that the Labor Party is going to use on the people of Queensland to try to justify whacking up taxes and selling Queenslanders' assets. This government has no mandate to sell off the assets of Queenslanders. It has no mandate to whack its pensioners with a higher fuel tax. It has no mandate to whack Queenslanders in the far parts of the state with higher costs of living. It has no mandate to come into this parliament to try to justify this weak excuse for selling off the assets of Queensland. It is an absolute disgrace that after 150 years of this state we should go back 150 years to being in a position of almost bankruptcy.

This government does not come true with the people of Queensland. But it even ambushed its own backbench. It even ambushed its own transport minister as to the true state of the books and what it intended to do. Just this week we have heard how the transport minister claimed that she did not know that large slabs of her portfolio were going to be flogged off in the marketplace.

Is it any wonder that Queenslanders feel betrayed? Obviously the backbenchers of the Labor Party—not the ones who have been yapping during the debate—feel betrayed, because they were not told the truth about the intentions of their Premier and their Treasurer. This is a secret plan that they intended to sneak out after the election. If the Premier truly wants to claim that this was a necessary plan, then why did she not tell the people of Queensland before the election? Does she not trust Queenslanders? Does she think they are a pack of fools who do not deserve to know the truth about the

future of Queensland? That is the way she is treating them. They had a right to know what the plans were before this ambush in parliament this week. Meanwhile, the backbench of the Labor Party and some of those members who have spoken are obviously willing to go along with this government's plan while they are selling their own pensioners down the river.

Let us look at not only today's financial situation but also the future for Queenslanders. Previous governments that held the reins of power understood that infrastructure could be delivered without having to have this massive sell-off of other infrastructure. But now we see a record proposal for the assets of Queensland to be ditched into the marketplace. We see a record number of assets to be sold at a time when they will give only a very small return to the government.

The government needs to take leadership in investing in economic infrastructure, not flogging it off. We have heard an excuse from the Premier that she does not believe that government has a role in investing in economic infrastructure. She clearly does not understand the history of Queensland. The reason we had the income streams from the economic-producing infrastructure was that government led the way. There are many projects that continue to need the involvement of the government, not a backtracking and a removal from the marketplace. I can think of many such projects within the infrastructure portfolio, particularly within Queensland Rail. Perhaps the Premier would like to explain whether there is going to be investment and the necessary upgrades of that infrastructure, particularly between Brisbane and North Queensland. Is there going to be investment to allow the trains to move into the future and carry the freight that we require? Or is the Premier saying that only the private sector can drive that process?

The truth is that government must take the lead. The government must make sure that this state has a plan not just for today but for the future. For the Premier to say that this Labor government is only going to invest in social infrastructure is a betrayal of the necessary economic basis for the jobs of young Queenslanders in the future.

We have seen a government that now claims it has a plan. When it had no plan to deal with issues in the good times, how on earth could it deal with issues in the bad times? The government racked up a \$64 billion debt with no repayment plan in the good times. Now, when things are looking tough, the government's idea is to sell off the ability to dig our way out of this hole into the future.

The \$800 million blow-out on the water pipeline and the \$1 billion blow-out on the Ipswich Motorway is just an indication that, when it comes to building the necessary infrastructure of the state, this government did not know how to do it in a cost effective way. Now it wants to sell off the economic infrastructure—the key and critical transport infrastructure that is necessary for the jobs and development of Queensland.

This Premier has no plan. She has no mandate. She has betrayed the people of Queensland. She has betrayed her own transport minister and the backbench in this place. But they seem willing to forgive what Queenslanders should never forgive.

*(Time expired)*

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (6.09 pm): As the Minister for Industrial Relations I am delighted to be able to support the Premier's amendment. There are a few things I want to put on the record straight up. As the Minister for Industrial Relations I would like to take this opportunity to reassure all Queensland families, particularly those who have members working in assets or business enterprises under consideration for sale. The Queensland government is committed to a fair process for dealing with employees of the enterprises under consideration for sale in the Renewing Queensland plan. The sale process will involve them and their representatives. All employees in affected government owned corporations will have the terms and conditions of their current enterprise bargain agreements honoured for the life of that agreement. This is similar to the arrangements that have been put in place in past asset sales. Also, employment guarantees will be in place for two years beyond the date of the sale. Employees transferring to the new businesses will experience no interruption to their continuity of service or accrued entitlements.

The government will establish an industrial relations working party to discuss the detail of transition arrangements with unions and their corporations. Through these and other measures, the government will ensure that we will protect workers' rights and provide for their families through both jobs and services. In terms of employment, the objective of the government is to protect jobs and create viable private enterprises with the prospect of long-term employment growth.

I now turn to the craven political opportunism of those opposite. We entered this government with a clear mandate from the people of Queensland. We went to the 2009 election promising jobs for the people of Queensland, securing Queensland jobs, stabilising Queensland jobs and supporting Queensland jobs.

**Mr Watt:** Not cutting them.

**Mr DICK:** As the member for Everton has said, not cutting jobs. That is the difference between Labor governments and whatever they want to call themselves on the other side—LNP governments, National Party governments, Liberal Party governments; it does not matter. We stand for jobs.

We are in unprecedented economic times. Members opposite would have us believe that the plummet in state revenue and the decline in GST revenue coming into this state is a fiction of their imagination that requires no action by government and no response. For those on this side of the House, these are pivotal times for our state. The fiscal lens for this state has changed and the way we look at our state through that fiscal lens has to change. That is why this government is acting. We will act with courage, we will act with boldness and, as some have said, Labor is at its best when it is bold. That is what we are doing. We will back schools, hospitals, public transport infrastructure, services for the vulnerable, community safety and safety for workers. That is the historic mission of Labor governments. That is what we will stand up for throughout this global financial and economic crisis.

What does that mean? What do capital works mean for the people of Queensland? For the people of Greenslopes it means a new world-class children's hospital. Since my election, people have said to me, 'Cam, I don't care, we just want the best for our kids.' That is what they want and that is what this government will deliver in building a new world-class children's hospital. We will back schools such as the Mount Gravatt West Special School in my electorate. When you go to that school you see children struggling with disabilities, but struggling happily and doing the best they can. We are there to support them and families. That is what Labor governments do. We will build the eastern busway. As the member for Chatsworth has said today, we will build the eastern busway through Chatsworth, South Brisbane and Greenslopes. Public transport infrastructure is what this government will build.

We are facing the tough choices for this state. We will protect jobs, we will grow jobs, we will get through this crisis and we will be all the better for it. We will support workers in the affected enterprises. We will ensure that they are protected as we move forward. We will give them guarantees as part of the sale process. As a Labor government we are pleased to do that. We will ensure that the economy grows the best it can through this crisis. I am pleased to support the amendment proposed by the Premier and I urge all members of the House to do so.

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and to reinforce our rejection of the amendment that has been moved by the Premier in this House tonight. Amongst the meaningless rhetoric and the downright twaddle that we have heard from members of the government, there has been one thing missing: nobody on the government side of the House has chosen to stand up and deny that this government was \$64 billion in debt before anyone had ever heard of the global financial crisis. Nobody has chosen to do that because they cannot. That is a fact that they cannot get away with. This government was \$64 billion in debt at the end of the biggest income boom that any Queensland government has ever experienced. After the rivers of gold had flowed for so many years, it was still \$64 billion in debt.

Tonight the debate should be about economic management or, more correctly, economic mismanagement. This has been the worst instance of economic mismanagement in Queensland's history. The billions of dollars this government received from the boom years when the rivers of gold flowed were wasted patching up the government's crises. Remember the crisis after crisis after crisis? The money was spent fixing up the water crisis. The money was spent fixing up the health crisis, the kids in care crisis and the electricity crisis. It was crisis after crisis after crisis. That is where the money went and that is why at the end of the boom time the Queensland state government was \$64 billion in debt. That is why this government will go down as the greatest economic mismanager in Queensland's history.

What do they do now? Yesterday and today they came in here and tried to rewrite history. They tried to grab hold of the global financial crisis and use it as a giant duster to wipe clean the blackboard of history. They tried to wipe away all of the crisis-driven mismanagement that caused them to be \$64 billion in debt at the end of the boom years and somehow give themselves the credibility to manage Queensland's economy through what is undoubtedly a difficult economic time. We do not know just how difficult times will be. We will find out in just under two weeks when the Treasurer stands in this place and delivers his budget.

The past couple of days have shown us that we can expect times to be very bad indeed, because it is bad enough to scare the Queensland Labor government into doing what for it is the unthinkable. It has caused the government to panic to such an extent that it has abandoned all of the principles and philosophical commitments that have formed the base of the Australian Labor Party for so long. The government has embarked on a panic asset sale at a time when the market for assets is frozen. The market is deprived of capital and everybody can see that any asset sale in such a situation is going to produce a less than favourable result. Across Queensland individual investors know that this is not the time to sell investment houses and share portfolios, unless they have to or are forced to. That is exactly the situation that the Queensland state Labor government is in: it has to. It is forced to sell because of five or six years of gross economic mismanagement. It is forced to sell these assets into a depressed

market because of the economic mismanagement that has been the hallmark of this government for the past six or seven years. The Premier has been in the middle of that economic mismanagement and the middle of every one of the crises that we have seen over the past five or six years. Her fingerprints have been all over them.

While we consider the motion tonight, the people of Queensland need to understand very clearly why the government has embarked on this course of action. It is not a road to Damascus situation where the Socialist Lefties have suddenly become economic rationalists. The Socialist Lefties have suddenly and desperately panicked about the state's economic situation and they have sought to bail themselves out by adopting a course of action that, to them, should be unthinkable. It is a measure of their desperation that they have to get to this point.

*(Time expired)*

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (6.19 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Premier in response to the motion advanced by the Liberal National Party for tonight's debate. The motion put forward by the Liberal National Party, as the contributions of member opposite have continued to do, denies the reality of the circumstances the globe is in. Mr Speaker, if you want to find further evidence of that you only have to go back about 40 minutes to when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition again said in this parliament—it will be in the *Hansard*; members can read it on the net later tonight—'this nonsense about a global financial crisis'.

He said 'this nonsense about a global financial crisis'. Why? Because when the poor person who had to write the motion for the opposition this morning wrote out the motion they included three words after 'before the global financial crisis' and before 'and calls upon the Premier' and those three words have been scratched out. Do you know what they were, Mr Speaker? We can see where they scratched them out. The words were 'before the global financial crisis hit our shores'. The Liberal National Party in moving its motion is denying the reality of the effect of the global financial crisis on the the Australian economy.

These people like to talk about deficits. They like to talk about debts. Where is the deficit here? It is the deficit of courage that exists on the other side. It is the great debt that exists in the bankruptcy of ideas from those members opposite. Is it any wonder that the pinch-hitters from the Liberal Party—the old Liberal Party—are all absent as this debate draws to a close? There used to be a time—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** Why doesn't the member for Mermaid Beach stand up and put on the record what he truly believes? Why doesn't the member for Currumbin stand up and put on the record what she truly believes? Because we know that inside the Liberal National Party right now they are tearing themselves asunder because there are a few people on the other side of the House who actually have the capacity to understand the issues we face and understand what the right thing to do is. What we have seen from the Liberal National Party is a complete lack of courage.

**Mr Seeney:** Why were you \$64 billion in debt?

**Mr FRASER:** The member for Callide needs to table a budget paper which says that at 30 June 2008 his claim is proved, and he will not be able to do that. The member for Callide actually has the intellectual capacity to comprehend this. But what we have seen today very clearly is the total capitulation and humiliation of the Leader of the Opposition—the interim Leader of the Opposition—who is meant to stand in front of a united Liberal National Party. He is a person who in this parliament moved to allow the private sector to profit from the provision of public education. Just a couple of years later, as the old National Party sit on top of him, he has to deny what he knows he would like to do and what he knows is the right thing to do—that we have to confront our destiny, that we have to accept the reality of circumstances, that we have to understand that state governments need to be able to make choices and decide priorities. But choices are something that is beyond the Liberal National Party. Those opposite want us to spend on everything. They do not want us to increase any taxes; they want us to abolish all taxes. They say that they want everything and do nothing.

The LNP is not the Liberal National Party because the Liberal Party left the building a long time ago. These days LNP stands for 'let's now pretend'—let's now pretend that there is no global crisis, let's now pretend that climate change does not exist, let's now pretend that we do not have to take any hard choices. These are the people who are bankrupt of ideas and bankrupt of courage. This is the most important debate that will be had in this parliament and in this state over the next three to five years, and these people have entered into the debate bankrupt of ideas and without a clue—gormless in their application and spineless in ever standing up for what they believe in. We recall the policy platform that they went to the election with. It stated—

Flexibility should be retained to service genuine social needs via one-off revenue sources, such as capital restructuring and asset sales.



I table that document for the benefit of the members of the Liberal National Party, who have forgotten what they went to the election with.

*Tabled paper:* Copy LNP 'Party Platform' dated December 2008 [320].

I table an article which goes directly to the issue of privatisation and where this government stood before the election—and where we stand is foursquare in front of the global financial crisis with the courage to take it on.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of *Australian Financial Review* article, dated 19 March 2009, titled 'Bligh faces a power sale' [321].

Division: Question put—That the Premier's amendment be agreed to.

**AYES, 49**—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Kiernan

**NOES, 36**—Bates, Bleijie, Cripps, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

**AYES, 49**—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Kiernan

**NOES, 36**—Bates, Bleijie, Cripps, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this Parliament—

1. Recognises the devastating effects the Global Financial Crisis has had on the revenue base of the Queensland State Budget;
2. Endorses the continuation of the State's building program and the protection and creation of jobs as the priorities of Queensland's economic response to the Global Financial Crisis; and
3. Recognises that measures taken to stabilise the State Budget must secure an immediate response to the decline in revenue and a long term structural adjustment to Queensland's economic and fiscal priorities.'

Sitting suspended from 6.39 pm to 7.40 pm.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 735.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): I call the honourable member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (7.41 pm), continuing: 'North' as well. The redistribution did enhance my electorate. I took in additional territory from Toowoomba South but not the title, as far as I am aware.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you for that clarification.

**Mr SHINE:** Before the dinner adjournment I made reference to the Governor's speech, how much I enjoyed it and how worthwhile a document it was in terms of what it provided by way of a blueprint for the future in relation to the plans of this government over the next three years. But more than that, it was a real vision for future decades. The government, through the Governor's speech, indicated Toward Q2 targets—a vision for Queensland being a stronger, smarter, healthier, greener and fairer state. In each of those descriptors the government is applying worthwhile policies that benefit my electorate, my city and my region, as they do each and every one of the 89 electorates in Queensland.

The Governor mentioned that when we became a colony 150 years ago this Saturday, Queensland had a population of just 25,000 people. At the latest count, up to 4.32 million people call Queensland home. That is a remarkable achievement in that space of time. It is worthwhile from time to time to reflect on that growth and to reflect on the type of people that we are, the different places from whence we have come and the harmonious nature in which we conduct our affairs, both in this place and, more importantly, in the community which is made up of different races, creeds and connections of all sorts. Queensland is a great place to live. I think that is sometimes taken for granted. It is worthwhile to reflect on the virtues that we do have, and Saturday, 6 June will be an appropriate time to do that.



I indicated that as a result of the campaign I took a certain course. I am grateful for the support of many people, first and foremost the Premier, who visited Toowoomba during the campaign. She had visited the city a short time prior to the campaign to attend a very successful morning tea that we held. I had around 800 acceptances and had to knock people back because we could not fit them in. That shows the popularity of this Premier which is justifiable.

The Treasurer also supported my campaign. He addressed the chamber of commerce—not the friendliest of audiences, I suppose. His sheer brilliance and his command of the situation impressed everyone there. The Treasurer is a man of huge talent. In these very tough times that we are facing, now and into the future, we are very fortunate to have a person of his calibre as the Treasurer of this state.

The campaign was fought by the Australian Labor Party as one would expect it to be fought. It was fought backing jobs and capital works programs worth \$17 billion in this year's budget. In our view, jobs were the most important thing to the average Queenslanders and their families. It is important, of course, to the economy as well and it is in line with the Rudd Labor government's stimulus package.

From those on the other side we saw a policy expounded similar to that of the Liberal Party government in Western Australia—one of cutting employment, cutting the Public Service, restricting economic activity and sacking people. That is not the Labor way. It is certainly not in Labor's DNA. I believe, bearing in mind the lessons of history that the honourable member for Gaven and others referred to before the dinner break, that history will bear out the course that this government and the federal Labor government are taking in terms of meeting the challenge that we face as part of the world economic community.

The campaign, as I said, resulted in a win for the Australian Labor Party in Toowoomba North. I am very grateful to the electors of Toowoomba North for giving me the great honour to represent them for a fourth time in this place. It is a huge honour to do so. As we recall our sesquicentenary on Saturday, I am particularly proud of the fact that I hold high the Labor Party banner in Toowoomba North, following in the footsteps of some great Queenslanders of the past. I follow in the footsteps of great Queenslanders like the Hon. Jack Duggan, who was leader of the Labor Party following the split. Prior to that he had been the Deputy Premier of Queensland. He held my seat of Toowoomba North. I have a great tradition to uphold in Toowoomba. I am conscious of that and I am very grateful to the Australian Labor Party for the opportunity it has given me to represent the people of Toowoomba North.

The challenges in Toowoomba, as they are in the rest of Queensland, are many. It is important, in my view and in the view of obviously a majority of people of Toowoomba North, that we do have a voice in government, a voice that can be heard when decisions affecting all of Queensland are made. It is important that this rich area of South-West Queensland, with Toowoomba as the regional capital, is heard. It is important also that a political balance is provided. Honourable members will be aware that my seat, Toowoomba North, is the only Labor Party seat south or west of Ipswich West and therefore it is critical in terms of representation for people of Labor leanings anywhere in Western Queensland other than those people very ably represented by the member for Mount Isa.

My campaign, as I said, was successful due to the support of people like the Premier and the Treasurer, but also many people on the ground, as members can imagine. Time does not permit me to go through the list, but can I thank my office staff: my electorate officer Gwen Leisch, my assistant electorate officer Rhianwen Whitney, my campaign manager Matthew Coleman and Daniel Gerrard. Their work with respect to the recent campaign was outstanding.

As I have said, Toowoomba is the regional capital of South-West Queensland. There are challenges but also opportunities present at the moment relating particularly to the expansion of the Surat Basin. On top of that, it is on the edge of the Great Dividing Range, next door to Lockyer, which is next door to your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker, of Ipswich West. Therefore, we are on the western fringe of the expansion of South-East Queensland. In a sense, we are the meat in a present sandwich of good economic activity on both sides of us and we look forward with optimism to the future.

One of the things that tempers that optimism is the lack of water that we have experienced over recent years because of the drought. Toowoomba, of course, is on a hill. There are no rivers other than a small creek that runs through it. We will always have a water shortage problem. Thank goodness, the government has come to our aid with the construction of the water pipeline from Wivenhoe Dam to Lake Cressbrook, which will be completed by January next year. In the meantime the government has been generous to the tune of in excess of \$10 million in providing money for bores to tide us over in the meantime. The cost of that pipeline will be met by both the government and the local authority, in a similar manner no doubt to the way in which the western corridor pipeline is being paid for by the people of Brisbane.

Toowoomba experiences similar problems of social housing shortages. Community groups such as the YWCA, TOMNet, of which I spoke about last night, disability service organisations and advocacy groups have similar wants and needs as other groups throughout the rest of Queensland. It is my privilege to represent those groups and their representations to ministers from time to time.

Transport is an immense issue in Toowoomba. Bearing in mind its location on the edge of the Great Dividing Range, the difficulty of ascending and descending that range has been a problem for Toowoomba since its founding almost 150 years ago, and it will remain a problem—as is the state of the roads between Toowoomba and the Surat Basin, which I spoke about before.

The need for the second range crossing has been spoken about often not just by me but by other members of this House, and it will continue to be spoken about often, I hope, until it is built. It will be a huge economic advantage not just for Toowoomba but also for South-East Queensland. It will also address safety and other issues within Toowoomba itself. A case has been made out for the need for an inland rail line from Melbourne to Darwin, intersecting at Toowoomba, as has the need for the Charlton-Wellcamp Estate.

I will just briefly mention education. We have had tonight in this place a celebration of Catholic Education Week. I pay tribute to the Toowoomba diocese of the Catholic Church with respect to the education facilities that it provides in Toowoomba. They have outstanding schools and provide a great deal for the welfare and benefit of many Toowoomba-ites in terms of the provision of first-class education. We are indeed blessed in having great educational institutions in terms of other private school providers as well as first rate state schools, a great TAFE in my electorate and a first class university in Toowoomba.

During the last term, the government provided a new ambulance station at Highfields, a new fire station at Highfields, an automobile section was provided at the TAFE college and four laning of the highway at Highfields was also effected. During the campaign promises were made for acquisition of a site for a secondary school at Highfields, a new kindergarten at Fairview Heights, a maternity centre at the Toowoomba Base Hospital and the expansion of emergency department facilities at the hospital as well.

We were very pleased to host a community cabinet shortly after the election. The Premier announced the provision of a new power facility at Cawdor Drive costing \$12 million. An amount of \$584,000 was provided to the Highfields State School for a new auditorium. These are great new initiatives that the government has recently announced, much needed in this expanding part of my electorate of Highfields. There is a sense of optimism in Toowoomba at the moment despite the gloom in the state of the economy, partly because of the Surat Basin. I look forward to a bright future for the area.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (7.55 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to participate in the address-in-reply debate on the Governor's speech to this House some weeks ago. First of all, I congratulate the Speaker on attaining the position of Speaker in the House. It is a very important role in our parliamentary democracy that we enjoy here in Queensland. I am sure that he will dispense his wisdom with great concern and understanding of all members of parliament. I would also like to congratulate all the members who were re-elected. We are a fairly exclusive group of 89 members of parliament. It is a pretty exclusive club. I also congratulate the new members we welcome into this parliament. Even though across the chamber we sometimes have little tiffs, in reality all of us are here for the right reason, I believe, to represent our electorates, as wide-ranging and as diverse as they are right across Queensland. I congratulate all members on attaining their seats in the parliament. I know many members strove very hard this election to win their seats, and I congratulate them again.

The seat of Mirani is no different from a lot of others. With the change of boundaries, it became a very marginal seat for the LNP. Notionally, it was a Labor seat. The area to the north of the Pioneer River in Mackay, which was always a fairly safe area for me, was placed into the seat of Whitsunday. That meant that the boundaries of Mirani had to extend further west around Middlemount and Dysart and then south of The Caves down to Port Alma, Raglan, around Mount Morgan and back up the old Fitzroy Development Road. It encompassed a fair section of the old Fitzroy electorate. It was certainly a challenge.

I would like to thank all of those who supported me during this time. Firstly, I would like to thank the electorate staff in my office. Karen Farrell has been my electorate staff member for all the time I have been in parliament. I congratulate her on keeping the office running while I was out campaigning and racing all over the electorate and also trying to do the shadow minister's job, representing the policy we are developing throughout Queensland. I thank my assistant electorate officer Roni for her support as well.

I would especially like to thank my financial donors and sponsors, because at the end of the day no campaign is run without a substantial amount of money. Because the Mirani seat now extends over the areas of Mackay and Rockhampton, as a base for the media basically whatever I had to pay for in Mackay had to be almost duplicated in Rockhampton. Any campaign I had run previously had to be almost doubled to cover the area. It is with great pleasure and great humility that I again thank those who supported me financially and those who supported me in manning the polling booths. In the seat of Mirani we had 40 polling booths. So it adds up to a very considerable number of people stretched over a pretty big chunk of country. Just organising all of that, as you can well imagine, is quite substantial.

I would like to thank Stein Watkin and Dawn Klibbe for their support. I also thank Peter and Pam Craig from near Rockhampton and Neil Fisher who helped out extensively. It will be impossible to name all those who helped man the booths and put out the corflutes that we all try to do during election campaigns.

It would be remiss of me if I did not mention my wife. Every member would understand the work that their wife or partner does not only during the election campaign but during our life in politics. That cannot be underestimated. I thank my wife, Mary, for the support she has given me over the years. She has answered phones and been at the end of the line when people have rung up about the numerous issues that come up during an election campaign. It is a very small, select group of people. My wife was with them.

A number of issues were highlighted during the campaign. One of those was the policy of moving paedophiles or sexual predators to Rockhampton's Etna Creek Correctional Centre. I, along with Vaughan Johnson, held a public meeting at The Caves which is a little way from the correctional centre. We had more than 100 people at that meeting. They expressed very grave concerns about having people of that nature housed at the correctional centre.

One of the big issues for the people at the meeting was that the only transport from the correctional centre into Rockhampton is the school bus. That is the only way they can get into Rockhampton to do their shopping et cetera. As members would be aware, paedophiles are not supposed to associate with each other. Yet there were to be three in this one correctional centre. There was grave concern about that. I am not sure whether, at the end of the day, that made any great difference to the result in the election.

I inherited into my electorate Mount Morgan. There were quite a number of issues going on up there. When I first went to Mount Morgan I could not believe some of the things I was hearing. It was almost as though the government had walked away from the place. There were a number of young people—people between the ages of 10 and 17 or 18—in Mount Morgan who were homeless. The parents of a couple of the young people had abandoned them in town.

The way the police shifts work, the police knock off at 11 o'clock at night. That is when these young people come out to play. There were numerous break-ins. There were attacks on the streets. A couple of older people were attacked. They had their wallets stolen. One 61-year-old male was attacked with a walking stick. He spent quite an amount of time in hospital. I thought this was quite abnormal for a community like that.

The unfortunate part about it is that if the police get involved, because the offenders are under age they beat the police back to Mount Morgan. It is a continual cycle of offending and getting back into the community. There are no real answers to this. What Mount Morgan needs is an extra couple of police to do a few more shifts and work during the night time and early morning. When the police leave Mount Morgan to take people down to the watch-house in Rockhampton there are no police left in Mount Morgan. The police station at Mount Morgan looks great. It has been brought back to its heritage glory. It looks terrific. It is a shame that the roof was not replaced at the time because it still leaks.

I have raised many times in this parliament the fact that the Fitzroy River is being used like a drain by the mining industry. The huge rains through the Emerald area early last year created a flood situation in a lot of the mines. The water was pumped into the Fitzroy River. Whether it can be proved or not, there were certainly contaminants in the water.

Many of the calls I received from people who were taking water from the Fitzroy and Mackenzie rivers indicated that the water was creating problems with the fish, the cattle would not drink it and nobody would use it for irrigation. There were scientific tests done on the water. Unfortunately, if we take a reading of the water from the top of the stream it will be different to the reading of the water lower down in the stream. I can assure members of this parliament that I saw plenty of crops that were destroyed because of the water.

The government went to the election promising 100,000 new jobs. When we looked into it a little closer we found that if a person worked for an hour a week that would create one job. When we look at what has happened since the election we find that a lot of the information during the election campaign was not necessarily a lie but misinformation. The fact that we are selling up major assets throughout Queensland and putting on a fuel tax is leaving people with a bad taste in their mouths.

The Premier's trip around 33 electorates in three days towards the end of the election campaign created an atmosphere in the community that the Premier was on top of the issues. I guess from an environmental perspective, the carbon footprint that the Premier left throughout the state over those three days certainly left a lot to be desired.

I turn to the Green vote. It is a contentious issue for me. A lot of the inland country west of the coastal plains was originally covered with brigalow. That land is probably now the best producing country in Queensland in terms of cropping. Huge grain crops and a huge cattle grazing area have been developed. Within a couple of days of us sitting back in parliament we had a piece of legislation in this House to prohibit the clearing of regrowth in Queensland.

I am not sure whether members of this parliament realise but if we allowed the regrowth on those plains the quality of the country would be damaged forever. The original brigalow country was basically dead country. There were no animals in it. There were very few birds. When walking in that country we would not hear a thing. There was no grass. It was a solid biomass of brigalow.

If we allow that country to go back to what it was before there will be no environmental achievements, there will be no environmental biodiversity et cetera. The whole issue of a moratorium on the clearing of regrowth is an absolute joke and it should be regarded as that. It was a grubby deal to pay back the Green movement for its support during the last election. That was so evident given that this was the first piece of legislation to come into this House. If we want to destroy Queensland then we should destroy the productive environment in which we work.

Those who read the financial news in Australia will know that agriculture is leading the way in bringing us out of the so-called recession. We cannot continue to attack the economic base of Queensland by selling off the assets that generate income for us and put more imposts on the people who generate that income. The income that comes from the agricultural land is new income. It is new money. It is money that is actually produced from planting something and growing it. It is not about sitting in an air-conditioned office and shuffling bits of papers around. It is about producing something that we sell overseas and get good money for.

Unless we get our heads around those sorts of issues and stop selling off income-producing assets, this state will be totally bankrupt. It was interesting to note the number of people who contacted my office with regard to their submissions to the government that were refused or cancelled out via email. I just hope that all of those submissions finally got to the government so that they can be considered. Obviously the moratorium was done very quickly and certainly not very scientifically, because the blue area that designates the moratorium area covered towns, roundabouts and areas that had grain on them but no brigalow or regrowth on them at all. It is just an absolute mess that I hope can be sorted out as we move forward.

An interesting part of the Governor's speech was that this government is indicating that it wants to increase its asset of national parks in Queensland. I live reasonably close to a number of national parks in my electorate and I can assure members that they are the worst managed country in my electorate. There are wild pigs and wild dogs, and every sort of woody weed that one can imagine grows in those national parks. Certainly there are not enough rangers to even look after the parks, let alone do any other work in the park. It is about time this government realised that if it wants to have a national estate it has to be looked after and it has to be kept in pristine condition and not be a refuge for wild dogs, pigs et cetera, because it certainly is a disgrace for people to visit those national parks to see what they are like.

Another interesting issue from my perspective is the creation of the Green Army. I certainly support our landcare groups and the people who work within those landcare groups, because they do a magnificent job. If the Green Army is managed properly, it can certainly help the landcare and the other volunteer groups in our communities. However, I certainly would be concerned that if it is not managed properly it could create problems for young people in the Green Army. In reality, we need to put as many young people as we can through an education system whereby they get an apprenticeship that can take them into the future and create a lifelong asset for them rather than spend their time on very low wages in a Green Army.

Turning quickly to my shadow portfolio of emergency services, over the last 12 months my office has received an escalating number of calls which indicate to me that emergency services and the QAS in particular are in meltdown. The ESCAD system—the emergency services computer aided dispatch system—is a joke. In regional areas in particular it creates more problems than it solves. It is about time the government looked carefully at the \$40-odd million it has spent on ESCAD and started working on ways of either fixing the system or getting out of it.

I note the member who was in the QFRS is sitting up the back of the chamber, and I congratulate him in attaining his seat. I have a very high regard for people who work in emergency services. They put their life on the line many times during their lifetime. I have some good friends within the service and I congratulate them whenever I see them, particularly the volunteers who work within emergency services.

With regard to the rural fire brigades and the SES, the government seems hell-bent on pushing the rural fire brigades into a situation where they are treated almost as full-time paid officers in the service. I assure members that they did not join rural fire brigades to be treated like full-time employees; they joined the emergency services and rural fire brigades to put fires out. There are some issues with rural fire brigades in that the funding for rural fire brigades is being handled in a very bureaucratic manner and a very bullying manner, and that has to be sorted out very quickly during the term of this government. With those few words, I congratulate the Governor on her speech and look forward to the rest of the three years in this parliament.

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (8.14 pm): I rise to participate in the debate in responding to the Governor's address. It is a real privilege to be able to stand in this parliament and continue to be the state representative for the people of Nicklin on the Sunshine Coast. I acknowledge the very important role my wife, Jenny, played not only in coordinating and managing the election campaign but also in always being there to assist me in my daily duties as a member of parliament. To Kelly, Katie and Josie: thank you for your help on election day, and I know that you certainly brought in a number of votes that I would not have been able to reach. To my staff Vicki, Wendy and John and all of the volunteers in the 'Wellington army': thank you for your continued loyalty and support. Together we are able to ensure the electorate is not ignored or taken for granted, as it certainly was prior to my election in 1998.

Today I reiterate my commitment to continue to do the best I can for the people I represent, and I look forward to getting to know the constituents in the new area that I have taken over as a result of the recent boundary changes. If that means I need to support some state government proposals or opposition proposals, I do not care one iota. I have the total freedom to say and do what I believe in my heart is right.

To my colleagues on the crossbenches: it is certainly great to be back. To the Premier, ministers and government backbenchers: congratulations on your win. While there will be occasions when I will not support your government, I look forward to continuing to work with your government on issues that affect my electorate. To the Leader of the Opposition and your team: congratulations also on your election win and I look forward to also working in partnership with you on issues of mutual benefit to my electorate.

I reflect on the Governor's speech at the opening of parliament in April this year when she said—

Honourable members, you have been called together to make decisions on matters relating to the welfare and governance of our State.

These words are always present in my mind when attending this House and I genuinely worry about how our communities in Queensland will cope with the continual increases of 1,800 people moving to Queensland each week—1,800 people every week moving to Queensland. I do not envy the Treasurer in the challenges he faces in trying to balance the budget and at the same time respond to the huge public expectations of available services.

Only last week I had a new resident to Queensland, a new resident to the Sunshine Coast and a new constituent of mine, come to see me and complain about the level of services available in the area. I was told in no uncertain terms that New South Wales had a much better level of support services available. I felt like saying, 'If New South Wales is so great, why don't you return?' The Sunshine Coast is certainly seeing the effects of rapid population growth. The Nambour Hospital is struggling under enormous pressure, and the sooner the new regional hospital is built the better. I believe it is unreasonable to expect the cramped Nambour Hospital site to continue to accommodate all of the major health services required for the region without providing additional car-parking opportunities for staff and visitors. Next week I will be attending another meeting to discuss parking issues for the hospital precinct.

Calls for assistance for public housing are almost a weekly occurrence in my electorate office, as many people tell me they can no longer afford private rentals. Staff working for the department of child safety and communities have an enormous responsibility in trying to manage irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour of many in our communities.

On the issue of the government's building program, I simply say that the government has my support. My electorate is directly benefiting from work currently underway on the Nambour Hospital expansion and the new Nambour Fire Station and the work about to commence at the many schools in my electorate as a result of the federal government building program. I know that if the federal government had not allocated these funds and the state government had not prioritised the work on some of these schools then these schools would never have seen the building programs happen.

I note in the Governor's address reference was made to the road and rail infrastructure plan, and on this matter I urge the government to bring forward the Landsborough-Nambour rail upgrade project and ensure that all train services to the Sunshine Coast have toilet facilities on them. I do not believe it is acceptable to require rail patrons when they leave Nambour to go to Brisbane to have to alight at Caboolture to use the toilet.

In relation to the government's proposed road building program, I again draw to the attention of the government the need to bring forward the upgrade of the Nambour-Mapleton Road, to finalise the Kenilworth to Conondale road widening and to install traffic lights on the Nambour Connection Road at that terrible intersection with Blackhall Street. On that matter, I thank the Minister for Main Roads for meeting with community representatives and me during the last sittings. There will be a further petition on this matter presented to parliament tomorrow signed by over 600 people. This committee looks forward to again meeting with the minister once he has received his department's report on the recent fatalities and he has also received the reports from the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services.

On the matter of water security and the government's plan to still build the Traveston Crossing Dam, I again reiterate and put on the public record that I cannot support and will never support the construction of this dam. On this matter, can I say how disappointed I am with one of my opponents in the recent election who said deliberately that I supported the dam. He was not prepared to say it in my presence but he certainly said it to many people when I was not present. For the record, I again say I have never supported the dam and, read my lips, never will. Hopefully, my opponent at the next state election will be more honest in their campaigning strategies.

I understand that one of the key planks of the government's job creation strategy is to try to create many new jobs in the solar industry. Although I have always, and always will, support any initiative that promotes the solar industry in Queensland, I must say that I have some real concerns about the effect the government's new solar hot-water scheme is having on this industry. To this end I table a letter from Diane Howard, joint owner of Home Power Specialists at Eumundi. Diane and her husband, Jock, have spent over 20 years working in the solar industry. They are solar specialists. They are struggling. I share the views of the member for Lockyer and the member for Noosa about the devastating effect the government's program is having on the solar industry. I table for the benefit of the minister the letter from Diane Howard and the effect it is having.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 20 April 2009, from Diane Howard to Mr Wellington, relating to the solar hot water scheme [322].

I also note that the government talks about maximising the economic potential of our primary industries in a sustainable manner. On this topic, I again put on the record my concern about the effects the recent moratorium on the clearing of regrowth may have on the future viability of many family farming businesses in Queensland and the effect that the mining industry is having on maintaining good agricultural land. If the government intends to remove landowners' existing legal rights, all I am asking, and all my constituents want—and all Queenslanders want—is fair and reasonable compensation to be paid. I note that many Queensland landowners received no compensation when they lost their existing lawful rights when the issue of tree clearing was last debated in the Queensland parliament. I also note in the Governor's address she stated—

My Government will continue to support the resources industry, which has suffered serious blows as a direct result of the global financial crisis.

I again draw to the attention of the House the current proposal by Cape Alumina. That company has requested to be allowed to mine bauxite over an area on western Cape York. I understand if Cape Alumina obtains approval for its proposed mining activities the company hopes to mine more than seven million tonnes of bauxite a year, starting at around 2011. Earlier today I tabled for the benefit of all members a four-page summary of the case to save the reserve from the proposed mining activities. I also use this opportunity to call on the government again to not cave in to the powerful Queensland mining industry.

When I raised this matter today, I heard the minister's response. He spoke about the need for fair and transparent processes. Can I say on this matter that I make no adverse reflections on the minister. All I am simply saying is that I believe the government has the capacity to stand up to the mining industry and say, 'This is a no go.' When I was first elected to this parliament almost 11 years ago, I supported Peter Beattie in standing up to the mining industry—and let us not underestimate the power of the Queensland mining industry—and not letting the mining industry dictate terms to the then government. To this day I still remember the substance of the conversations that were had between representatives of the Queensland mining industry and me. I remember the inspections I had with locals of the land that was the subject of potential mining. I sincerely hope this government will have the strength to again say 'no' to the proposal to mine bauxite over an area on western Cape York and to not be intimidated by the lure of easy money and cave in to the Mining Council. Simply because there is a resource under the ground, that does not mean it has to be mined.

I support the government's proposed Green Army working in our national parks. To that end, I flag the Mapleton forest in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast as a great site for priority consideration under the job creation scheme. On the topic of climate change and the creation of new residential developments, I hope the recent flooding will focus the government's attention on the problems that could be possibly experienced by building residential estates on flood plains.

On the issue of building the health system, I use this opportunity to flag that I believe Queensland Health can do more in supporting the not-for-profit community hospice sectors in our community. For the record, I am patron of the newly formed Sunshine Coast Community Hospice Centre on the Sunshine Coast. Only last month we officially opened our very first hospice, Katie Rose Cottage, at Doonan. I can see the possibility of one day a new, real partnership developing between the community and Queensland Health in making sure that people can always pass away with dignity and without pain in a place of their choice. When I look at the services that can be delivered through not-for-profit hospice services, I believe there are some real financial advantages for the government and the Treasurer. Where volunteers are involved, I think there are some real win-wins for our not-for-profit hospice sectors and Queensland Health and the government.

I congratulate the government on continuing to hold community cabinet meetings throughout Queensland. I believe there are real benefits to be gained by Queensland communities and the government—whoever is the government—through the continuation of our community cabinet meetings in their current form—and that is the important issue, in their current form—where members of the public have a chance to sit in a hall, hear the Premier of the day speak, meet the ministers and directors-general and then meet one-on-one with ministers and directors-general and try to resolve some of the issues that have never been resolved. It puts real pressure on our senior bureaucrats to have to advise the minister why the matter has not been resolved when he knows he is going to meet with a number of concerned constituents the next day or on the weekend. On the topic of taking parliament to regional Queensland every three years, I believe that in the current difficult economic times this is a luxury that we cannot afford and that the savings should go to improve services for Queenslanders.

On a lighter note, last Monday I attended the opening of the school parliament of St Joseph's Primary School. As I listened to the aspirations and plans of the various school committee members, I compared their plans with those contained in the Governor's address. Although there were certainly significant differences between what was contained in those speeches, I can say that the students were all driven by a desire to help others less fortunate than themselves and to try to improve facilities not just for the school but also for the community. Their fundraisers for those less fortunate than themselves were something that really touched my heart. I know that we can be very proud of the school parliament representatives. I hope that next year, if I have the opportunity to again attend the opening of St Joseph's school parliament, perhaps I will be able to come into this House and present a copy of their speeches outlining their plans and aspirations for the year.

Before I conclude, I wish to read into *Hansard* the names of the members of the St Joseph's Primary School parliament: Prime Minister Hannah McNaught and Opposition Leader Joseph Bunter; Speakers Jakarra Brady and Sarah Finley-Strong; Sergeant-at-Arms Mitchell Kelly; and Clerks Maddison O'Leary and Joshua Kajewski. The Service Committee ministers were Maria Savage and Abbey Pringle, and the 12 members were Josh Appleby, Matthew Curry, Patrick Sutton, Mitchell Kelly, Ruby Nix, Breeanna Schneider-McSweeney, Gage MacKenzie, Jacinta Halls, Maddie O'Leary and Jack Foley. The Health and Recreation Committee ministers were Addison Heppell and Sally-Anne Russell, and its 11 members were Hamish Horsey, Brittany Irvine, Jack McMillan, Karl Lorenz, Jacob Boyce, Jakarra Brady, Ayla Ansell, Nicholas Quinn and April Martin. While I was listening to the presentations of the Health and Recreation Committee, I was reflecting on the recently formed all-party Social Development Committee of this parliament and a couple of the matters that are now on its agenda. I have no doubt that there are similarities.

The Environment Committee ministers were Isabella Wight and Damon Barton, and the 11 members were Jayden Fitzsimon, Isaac Whittington, Joshua Newton, Joshua Kajewski, Zac Marsh, Lauren Magdalinski, Ellie Presnell, Cali Sansom and Emily Hutsby. The Welfare Committee ministers were Hayden Venz and Shanesia Heystraten and the 12 members were Ethan Ellacot, Kenny Stowe, Hannah McNaught, Sarah Finley-Strong, Matthew Bridge, Carter Ford, Ryan Schultz, Tom Jones, Ryan Rostirolla and Shanay Hutchings. In the Public Relations Committee—which we all know is very important for government, opposition and crossbench members—the ministers were Jacob Family and Lachlan Brown, and the 10 members were Brianna Thomas, Tom Lee, Lochlan Ammitzball, Wade Ensing, Maddi Zeller-Pridgeon, Sam Roff, Joseph Bunter, Seychelle Atkins, Ryan Morgan and Aaron Grant.

Again I congratulate all members on their election to this, the 53rd Parliament. It was a privilege and a pleasure to listen to many of the new members give their maiden speeches. It is great to hear about the inspiration they take from caring for their communities. I commend all members. I also put on the record how proud my constituents and I are of our Governor and the way she always presents herself with dignity.

**Ms Darling:** She is a good Governor.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** She is a good Governor. I commend the Governor's address.

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.32 pm): Today I rise with the utmost sense of pride and honour in being re-elected to this House as the member for Mermaid Beach. This is my first term as the member for Mermaid Beach, but it is my second term in this place as I was previously the member for Robina. I assure the electors of the old seat of Robina who remain in Mermaid Beach that my commitment is no less to them because of the name change.

Firstly, I congratulate Speaker John Mickel on his elevation to the role of Speaker in the Queensland parliament. I support him as he has the responsibility of carrying out the enormous task of delivering a fair and equitable parliamentary process for the people of Queensland. While the Westminster system is not without flaws, I believe it is the best democratic system in the world and the Speaker's politically neutral role is the key to the effective delivery of the parliamentary process. I am very impressed with what I have seen so far.

I also congratulate the Premier, Anna Bligh, and her team on retaining power in Queensland. I respect the fact that the people of Queensland have given her, the first female premier elected in Australia, the mandate to govern. I also congratulate our own John-Paul Langbroek on his elevation to the leadership of the Liberal National Party in Queensland. I genuinely believe he is the one who will deliver electoral success to the Liberal National Party at the next state election. The next Premier of Queensland will be John-Paul Langbroek.

I thank the electors of Mermaid Beach who have put their faith in me to lobby the state government on their behalf and who have entrusted me to bring their voices into this House. I acknowledge that there are Labor voters in my electorate who did not vote for me, but they can be assured that I acknowledge their democratic right and I will still represent them and everyone in my electorate to the best of my ability.

I take this opportunity to thank the 150 volunteers and members of the dedicated Mermaid Beach LNP Electorate Committee who helped me reach my goal of retaining my seat in parliament. Without their help this would not have been possible. I never take their help for granted. Another thankyou goes to the Liberal National Party for providing me with the opportunity to represent the party and stand as a candidate for the seat of Mermaid Beach.

I also thank, from the bottom of my heart, my wonderful electorate office staff, namely Fiona Ward and Jaqi Kair, who give around-the-clock friendly assistance to all the people who come to my office with all sorts of problems. I am sure that my increased popularity at the ballot box was indeed helped greatly by their unmitigated dedication to assisting the many constituents who contact my office. None of them are turned away without the best efforts possible being made to address their issues. Lastly, I send a big thankyou to my family, especially my beautiful wife, Ruth, and my children, Jessie and Louis, without whose support I would not be able to fulfil my commitment to this ever-challenging job.

I have the unique ability to come into a portfolio when it is in the midst of a crisis. As the former shadow minister for housing accessibility, I had to climb mountains just to convince the state Labor government that it had a crisis to deal with. In my current shadow portfolio of tourism, I will push hard to force the government to implement changes to the industry so that it can weather the tourism crisis that it is now experiencing. I thank our new Leader of the Liberal National Party, Mr John-Paul Langbroek, for recognising my portfolio strengths by giving me this opportunity to keep the state government accountable and make it deliver a way out of this tourism crisis.

Whilst I have a deep respect for and warm personal relationship with the member for Southport, forged during our 20 years together working in local government, racing and the Gold Coast community, I am determined to keep the minister on his toes. I am looking forward to a very productive estimates process in the coming months, during which I will convince him that Queensland is in a diabolical position and that he has to do everything in his power to help the industry emerge from this crisis in good condition when calmer waters prevail after the global financial crisis. In the words of UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, for those who in the House who are uninformed—

Considering the economic might of the tourist industry—now regarded as the biggest in the world ahead of automobiles and chemicals—careful attention should be paid to this many-sided phenomenon with its global repercussions. The impact of tourism is such that progressive strategies are vitally needed in order to prepare the ground for genuinely progressive international, regional and local strategies.

Again I would like to mention my commitment to the people of Mermaid Beach. I believe the following issues are very significant for them, and I will do everything in my power to lobby the government to ensure it delivers these vital services.

With regard to health, I recently sponsored a petition to retain the Gold Coast Hospital at Southport. The Gold Coast Hospital must remain to accommodate the growing population of the Gold Coast, along with the new Gold Coast University Hospital to be completed in 2012. I do not resile from my position of support for the hospital as I know that the Gold Coast will continue in terms of growth and popularity. It has an ageing population and the Gold Coast Hospital will be needed to augment the services of the new Gold Coast University Hospital at Parklands. I am sure that any move to take the current facility away from health services would be doing a great disservice to the Gold Coast region.

Our roads are choking. I will continue to lobby the government for the upgrade of the Gold Coast Highway, the M1 and, of particular concern to me, Bundall Road. I will continue to offer my support to the schools in my electorate, as education is one of the major priorities of the Liberal National Party.

The beach is a pastime that is dear to my heart—and being the member for Mermaid Beach it is very appropriate that it is dear to my heart. It reminds me how precious our environment is to us all. We need to find a balance between the environment, our beaches and green space in our beautiful city. I believe this can be achieved if the state government works with the Gold Coast City Council in this particular area.



Public transport, particularly our bus network throughout the suburbs—and a lot of suburbs in the Mermaid Beach electorate—is of concern to many. Whilst the Gold Coast rapid transit system is a priority, the state government and the Gold Coast City Council must make a bigger commitment to an effective bus service similar to that which exists in Brisbane city. The Gold Coast is now Australia's sixth largest city. It is Queensland's second biggest city and it deserves financial commitment to a better bus service throughout the area. The Gold Coast City needs to address its commitment in this area as well.

In regard to the economy and as we travel through uncharted territory on a global scale, retaining jobs and doing everything we can to support small business will be a key focus of mine. The Gold Coast economy has been based on two main areas for many years—those being tourism and population growth in itself. With the pressures on the tourism industry already evident and many development projects coming to a halt due to the tough financial situation, the Gold Coast will be facing challenging times ahead to maintain the steady growth patterns that have marked the city's spectacular growth over four decades. It will survive and thrive through any downturn that may temporarily besiege it because its two unparalleled features of unbeatable climate and unsurpassed geography together will always keep it at the forefront of the most desirable destinations to visit and live.

Queensland, and in particular the Gold Coast, is considered one of the best international destinations in Australia. As the shadow minister for tourism, I will support our many tourism operators with their events, festivals and attractions to help lure tourists to our great state. I note the Premier's commitment of \$38 million to lift the tourism industry out of this crisis. As much as I appreciate the fact that she has acknowledged the need to help the industry, \$38 million will not be enough. We need initiatives that have flow-on effects to all auxiliary businesses linked to the tourism dollar.

The A1, the Australian surf-lifesaving titles, the Broadbeach blues and jazz festival, the rodeo finals at the Gold Coast Convention Centre, the Quicksilver surfing pro at Kirra, the Gold Coast bid for the 2018 Commonwealth Games with federal government support—which the Premier mentioned in the House this morning—AFL, Rugby League, the fight for World Cup soccer and the Gold Coast United soccer team are all examples of what can lure the tourism dollar. I have mentioned in this House already in this parliamentary session the possibility of a Gold Coast Super 7s rugby competition to be held at Easter as part of an initiative that Queensland Events needs to embrace. Do not forget the vibrant tourism areas of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and one of the most magnificent holiday destinations of the world—the Whitsunday islands and the Great Barrier Reef.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the National Retailers Association Fashion Design Awards on the Gold Coast. I note the minister was not there. I believe that cultural tourism is a fantastic way to encourage visitors to our great state. In fact, echoing retiring chairman Des Power of Queensland Events, cultural tourism may well be the best avenue for pursuing event based tourism as the sport tourism market is just about chock-a-block. Cultural tourism has been defined as 'the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs'. It concerns itself with the culture of one area in particular—from the arts to history, to music festivals and events. This form of tourism is becoming more popular across the globe, and I believe when we truly get the word out about our weather, lifestyle and beach culture, along with our vibrant arts and sporting events, cultural tourists will come in droves.

We have a vibrant arts and cultural industry, and if we can focus on the development of this area of cultural tourism we will reap benefits for the overall industry. The Queensland Performing Arts Centre, the Gold Coast Arts Centre, the Brisbane Festival and the Queensland Music Festival are just some examples. I am honoured to work with Tourism Queensland and the Queensland Tourism Council to help them achieve the better results they need for longer term gains for the industry.

I am also exceedingly pleased to be made the shadow minister for racing as part of my portfolio responsibilities. My interest and devoted following of racing goes back to my early childhood when my mother's racing influence pervaded my Saturday afternoons. Athol George Mulley, our next door neighbour, was one of the top jockeys of the era. And I still remember cleaning up at school when Even Stevens won the cup in 1962.

**Mr Lawlor:** He never rode it.

**Mr STEVENS:** No, but I still won at the school. Long-term memberships of the Queensland Turf Club, the Gold Coast Turf Club and board memberships of the Richmond Diggers Race Club and the Gold Coast Turf Club have given me firm grounding and insight into a wonderful and important industry to Queensland. Ownership of several winning and losing horses and a list of jockeys' and trainers' excuses as long as my arm give me a firm grounding to a pastime in an industry that I love dearly and which I recognise is of incredible significance to the community fabric and economic wellbeing of our great state.

May I place on record my condolences, and I am sure the condolences of the House, to the McLachlan family on the very recent passing of a great ambassador for Queensland Racing—Bruce McLachlan. I was a close personal friend, as other members from both sides of the House were. He

provided us with wonderful memories of Queensland Racing. He was a great ambassador. He was the best fellow to go to lunch with and talk about racing that I have ever come across. My sincere sympathies go out to Lorraine and the family, the boys, for the passing of this great Queensland icon of racing.

I am looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead for the industry, and I am committed to working with all sections of the thoroughbred, trotting and greyhound industry to deliver a better outcome for the future than they currently enjoy.

In relation to the greyhound industry, it is one area where I believe the minister is dragging the chain—the dog chain. The greyhound board has been given \$10 million to replace the excellent Parklands facility that was expunged to enable the new Gold Coast Hospital to be built. Procrastination and indecision on replacing that facility have been the hallmarks of the progress thus far, and progress to shift to Logan City has come to nought. The imminent closing of important clubs to areas such as Cairns and Mackay does little to instil confidence in the board by industry participants. It is time the minister took responsibility for industry concerns by making the current board take immediate action or making it redundant.

The other important area of my shadow ministry is the area of fair trading. Having been involved in many businesses, I understand the need for a fair and equitable entity that ensures the highest standards and delivery of goods and services to the community. On top of these responsibilities, body corporate legislation is high on my list of priorities to see the many constituents of Mermaid Beach and other areas currently aggrieved by the existing legislation governing this mode of living satisfied by changes to outdated and ineffective legislation that guides 338,000 unit lot owners through a growing style of community living.

In conclusion, I am humbled to be re-elected to this House as the new Liberal National Party member for Mermaid Beach. I will endeavour to represent the people of Mermaid Beach to the best of my ability. I encourage any constituent of Mermaid Beach to come to see me with any issues that concern them. I look forward to the challenge ahead as the shadow minister for tourism, fair trading and racing.

**Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (8.50 pm): Firstly, I would like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to his most high office. I congratulate all members on their election success. I look forward to working with everyone over this coming term. I also congratulate the Premier. To be a member of a government with the Premier, the first woman in Australia to achieve this office, is indeed a great honour. I thank her sincerely for the work that she has done for my electorate in particular. I look forward to working with the Premier, the cabinet and the parliament over the coming term.

It is indeed with profound pride and sadness that I speak tonight in the address-in-reply as the member for Mount Isa. My sadness is because one of my greatest supporters, my husband's mother, Vi, sadly passed away last Friday just short of her 81st birthday. She attended parliament for my first swearing in and was overjoyed and extremely proud at our success in being elected for a second term. There is no doubt that to represent the electorate of Mount Isa is a great honour and privilege. Vi, along with my husband, Philip, our sons, Jeremy, Nathan, his wife, Kimmy, our grandson Cooper, who was born during my last term, and Carter, who was born a week after the election, provide me with the drive and dedication to do the best for all the people who live in our vast and beautiful part of this state.

I am forever grateful for the support, dedication and loyalty of my staff, Kim, Robyn, Judy and Robert, who served the electorate in my first term and who are with me now and who provide the constituents with the most outstanding service. I thank them sincerely. I thank branch members who assisted on election day and the vast number of volunteers and supporters who helped out during the course of the campaign. Many people came forward to assist right across the electorate. I did not meet many people in my new areas until after the election was over. I sincerely thank the people who kept the faith, particularly the people of Mount Isa, my home town, and my great friends in Winton and Doomadgee to name a few.

Following the redistribution, the electorate of Mount Isa has increased by some 200,000 square kilometres. Our council numbers have increased by four with the inclusion now of the councils of Etheridge, Flinders, Richmond and Diamantina, making the electorate some 570,502 square kilometres, which equals around a third of Queensland. My electorate now is literally the outback.

In these 14 local government areas I boast a city, an island, a port, 29 towns and a vast area of open space in between. The diversity and competing interests of this unique part of the world that I represent takes in the beauty of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Flinders plains, the richest mineral province in the world, the iconic city of Mount Isa, the vast Diamantina and the prehistoric Winton as well. It is a region of mining, fishing and pastoral holdings. Some of the pastoral holdings are bigger than some countries.

During my first term we lived through the greatest reform in the history of local government. While not one of my councils was amalgamated, it was important to me to work very closely with all of the councils, not only individually but regionally. I value the relationships that I have established and I will continue to work with them in the future through a whole raft of activities for the betterment of our residents.

The 2009 election backdrop consisted of the second highest flood in 30 years—many of my communities were isolated for up to two months; we are faced with the worst economic crisis in 70 years; and, indeed, I faced a strengthened opposition who, quite frankly, could make all the promises in the world with no responsibility or care for my electorate. In my first term we saw great achievements in health; we stabilised the senior management in our district; we saw our government make an investment of \$65 million for the redevelopment of the Mount Isa Hospital; we committed to an aged care unit in Cloncurry; and many and varying support programs and initiatives are being afforded to the people in my electorate. We have invested in the security of water for the future. We have drought proofed the community of Cloncurry. Never before has Cloncurry been able to say that they have water security well into the future so that they can grow and prosper. Our commitment was the \$42 million pipeline from Lake Julius. We commenced a 50-year north-west strategic water plan. These things are not only taking care of today but we well and truly have our sights set on tomorrow.

Earlier today in the House there was a great debate in relation to energy. The legislation was to do with power and energy in the north-west. From day one I made a commitment to work in this area with industry, government, government departments and cabinet so as to ensure the sustainability of my region into the future. Governments make tough decisions in tough times. No less can be said of many of the decisions that have been made in this past week.

One of the key issues in my electorate is the sustainability of my region for existing mines and new mines into the future. Areas such as rail are incredibly important to my community. The Mount Isa to Townsville rail line is an iconic line—the great northern line. We can get swept up in the debate and criticism of our government's decision to sell assets. When the measures are proposed the opposition is quick to rip into the backbenchers, of whom I am one. It is quick to condemn. However, let us talk about the alternatives. It is the responsibility of the state government to provide health, education, police and all the other services that government delivers right across this state. That means communities like Mornington Island, Burketown, Bedourie and the city of Mount Isa all deserve services and facilities as a right. I did not think for one minute that my job was going to be easy, but I can assure the people of my electorate that I will get in and fight.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mrs KIERNAN:** I take that interjection. While we have to endure some losses at times, I will be in there convincing our government that there are alternatives and solutions, because ultimately we will persevere and we will come out stronger.

Over the last couple of years, lead in my community has been at the forefront. I am on record in this House in support of the many initiatives that our community has taken to ensure the health and wellbeing of the residents in Mount Isa city.

**Mrs Keech:** You have done a great job.

**Mrs KIERNAN:** Thank you. We will continue to work not just today but tomorrow and into the future.

There is so much that is said about homelessness and the worst off in our community. Over the last couple of weeks we have been confronted very prominently by sections of the media who believe that putting our less fortunate on television is in some way going to improve their lot. As the member for Mount Isa, I can say that I despair at some of the choices and some of the conditions, and I despair for the children. I will continue to work to the best of my ability. There is no quick fix here, but the fix is about working with our Indigenous elders, our Indigenous leaders, and getting them to work with us. We support them in their efforts to make a better life for all people.

In preparing my address-in-reply speech, I pulled out a list. I keep a progress report for my electorate, I think because of the large number of issues that confront our community on any given day, and where we need to be in the future and the planning that needs to occur. As the member for Mount Isa, I remain committed to my communities, to my home, to my part of the world. I know that I can count on my colleagues—this government—to help me achieve all of the things that we need and that we deserve. We will keep contributing to this great state because we are part of Queensland. We are North Queenslanders, but nonetheless we are part of Queensland.

In conclusion, I say again that it is an honour and a privilege to represent the electorate of Mount Isa. I thank my community for allowing me the great privilege to be here as their representative.

**Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.03 pm): The big job interview is now over for all of us, and we are all very privileged to have the special opportunity to represent the constituents in whatever part of this great state we have chosen to live. We live in a magnificent part of the world, but we have come to

office at a very challenging time. I want to thank Premier Anna Bligh and her campaign team for what was a gruelling campaign but an effective one. It was one which was matched by our opponents. However, may I say that in the face of such an economic crisis Queenslanders voted for stability and for policies which were clearly enunciated by our Premier, who set an absolutely blistering pace back and forth across the state.

With a new parliamentary term comes new faces and regret at the loss suffered by some of our colleagues who had worked long and hard for their constituents, but that is the strength of our democracy. I always find it a special time listening to the first speeches of our new members, and I must say they did not disappoint. It is to be hoped that all members of this House are here to ensure our state goes forward and is able to recover from this economic downturn stronger and better equipped for further growth in the future.

There are many changes in the make-up of our cabinet, and I must congratulate our new ministers on the way they have quickly got up to speed in their portfolios and for the opportunities we have had to be briefed on issues of importance. I also wish to congratulate my colleague the Hon. John Mickel for his elevation to his high office of Speaker. He has stamped his unique style upon the role, as each Speaker will do, and I believe will continue to rule in a fair and equitable way.

I stand here as a proud member of the Australian Labor Party. I want to recognise the strong sense of social justice on which our party stands. Serving the people of Woodridge for 16 years in the office of the member and then over the past eight years in this capacity has given me an insight into the many ways we are able to improve the lives of our constituents, in particular those who for many reasons may not have been dealt a good hand in life.

The electorate of Woodridge is rich in superb services, be they NGOs, government departments, including our local council, or services which run very much on the goodwill of many volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to serve our community. No matter where you go in my electorate you will find workers and volunteers who have an absolute commitment to the area and its people. Many have worked there such as teachers and teacher aides for 20 or more years. We have seen huge improvements both in facilities and services. There have been times of great sorrow, such as the death of Richard Saunders last year, but the way our community has dealt with this issue has filled me with a great deal of pride. Our Samoan and Aboriginal communities, along with the support of our regional managers, have worked hard to mend the brokenness felt throughout the entire community. The day of healing, while very spiritual and significant, was but a first step.

Just today I received an email from Gail Ker, the manager of ACCES Services, which is our settlement agency for refugees. The president of an association, Mr John Pale, who was closely involved in the day of healing from our organisation, the Voice of Samoa, had just returned from the correctional centre visiting the boys who were charged with that horrendous crime. He discovered the Aboriginal elders had just been for a visit to see these boys. That is the strength of my community, reaching out with healing hands and hearts. It is a community where former refugees can find a safe home to raise their families. It is a community of very diverse nationalities and religions, and one in which you feel blessed to enjoy friendships with people from all over the world supporting each other, sharing their culture, music, food, humour and so much more.

I realise my time is short, and I will have many opportunities in this place to sing the praises of my community, so I will turn to some very important people in my life to whom I would like to say a big thankyou. Nothing would be accomplished by me without the support of my very forgiving and accepting husband, Lee. We are all absent from our families so much, and Lee keeps our home going as well as leading a busy life himself tutoring many bright students. My parents, who are still quite active and in reasonable health at the ages of 96 and 90, never see me as much as they would like to, but my mother will never stop being a mother, checking if I am eating breakfast and getting enough sleep.

Our three sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren keep us ever young and bring us a great deal of enjoyment. Political life is such that the calls on our time are far more than any 24-hour seven-day weeks can possibly accommodate. So our staff fill such an important role. Sandy Boyd has been with me since day 1. I rely on her so very much to calm the troubled souls that walk through our door, to refer people to our many services—those seeking housing, counselling and so on—and to keep me in the right place at the right time.

Sadly, Colleen Callaghan, who has also been with me since my first election, retired some months ago due to ill-health. I wish Colleen and Doug happy times ahead as they share retirement and travel, and I thank Colleen for those many years of loyal service. I have been very blessed to find another loyal staff member in Kerri Alexander to take over from Colleen. I must say that Kerri started with me just a couple of weeks before the election and she has performed admirably.

When it comes to the election period I am once again indebted to Stewart Dalley, who works two days per week on my staff but comes to the fore in a voluntary capacity at each election time. He is the ultimate campaigner and has every step of the campaign firmly under his control: cool, calm and always there to say, 'Breathe boss.' Thank you to Stewart and to all of our wonderful team, some of whom have been supporting the campaign in Woodridge for over 30 years—heroes like Michael Eborn who

organises the booth workers, those who man the prepoll, the booth captains and the huge number of workers who come out at every election—some of whom have been loyal branch members for many years but many who are community members who give up their time to help with distributing food and drink or to hand out at the booths. It is indeed a huge team effort. A sincere thankyou to all.

As I review the previous term I recall sadly that there are absent friends. We sadly lost Uncle Paddy Jerome during this term, a giant among his people. The first Aboriginal to join the Labor Party and a man who had a huge insight into the plight of his people, particularly young Aboriginal men, I was privilege to call him my friend.

I respect and care deeply for the people of Woodridge. Working in this area nurtures me. I am indebted to so many workers and volunteers who partner together to make a better life for so many. I am also indebted to this government for so much of the funding over the years for programs such as Community Renewal and Skilling Queenslanders for Work and to the many dedicated public servants in the area—the police who take a leadership role, our teachers, our emergency service workers, our health workers, our child safety and community workers, our housing workers and so on. It is an area where departments, organisations and individuals can really make a difference. I am grateful to be able to serve in this capacity for yet another term.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Scott, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.14 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### **Bald Hills State School, Landmark Trees Project**

**Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.14 pm): Last Wednesday, 27 May I was privileged to participate in the official launch of the Landmark Trees project hosted by the Bald Hills State School in the Aspley electorate. The Landmark Trees project involves 15 schools across Brisbane which were chosen to receive a forest grove of 10 landmark Brisbane trees—eight silky oaks and two hoop pines. The venture aims to create a living, growing memento for future students of 2009's sesquicentenary. As part of the Landmark Trees project, the school was also gifted the services of the artist Kate Collopy to work with students to create mosaic decorated seats which were installed amongst the tree grove to provide a celebration and reflective space.

Bald Hills State School was officially opened in 1866—the fourth primary school established in Queensland. Given its historic significance, it was an ideal choice for the launch of the project as it has a long history of vegetation planting and care for the environment. The first forestry club was formed at Bald Hills school in February 1935, and planting commenced that year with 36 hoop pines and 33 kauri pines. Hoop pines continued to be planted until 1951 when eucalypt planting took over.

In the 1990s a major school project took place in the forestry area of the school. Stairs, a deck, paths and bridges were built and two lagoons were also dredged and a bird island created. Much of this work was built by the groundsman, Mr Colin John, who is still on staff at the school today. This area is also used as an outdoor classroom. I was fortunate to be taken on a tour of this teaching area by the current school leaders, Jade Steel and Alister Wiseman.

It was also great to see the interaction between staff, current and past students and other community members, including members from the Bald Hills Bushies—a local bush care group that meets monthly to plant, weed, and beautify the local area. A highlight of the launch was the presence of Mr Tony Goddard who, as a student in 1935, was an inaugural member of the forestry club. Mr Goddard planted three of the original hoop pines that now tower over the school. Two other past students, Kath Clarke and Vern Carseldine, were also on hand to provide a significant and tangible link to the history of the school for current pupils.

The Bald Hills State School forestry legacy has engendered a spirit of environmental responsibility in the current students and it is worth noting that the school has been acknowledged for its forestry program with many awards. I thank the community of Bald Hills State School, in particular principal, Keith Warwick, Jinty Bush and Louise Brennan for their organisation of the launch and their kind invitation.

The school should be very proud of the efforts of its community and its forestry. It is certainly my hope that in 150 years time the eight silky oaks and two hoop pines planted last week will tower over Bald Hills State School and continue to be a living and growing reminder of the importance of caring for our environment.

*(Time expired)*

### Whitsunday Electorate, Debutante Balls

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (9.17 pm): If I look a little weary at the moment it could well be because of my nocturnal activities in my electorate. It is ball season in Mackay-Whitsunday and I have been donning the glad rags and joining in this great tradition with some gusto. Several weeks ago I attended the Mackay Catholic debutante ball in which 59 young debs were presented to Bishop Heenan and society. Deb balls, as they are colloquially known, are wonderful events in which young women, usually in year 11, choose a partner, choose a white gown and together with their partner undertake months of training in etiquette, deportment and dance.

The end result is a fabulous night in which family and community leaders come together to celebrate the young people's official emergence into the broader community. The tradition dates back a hundred years or more and has its origins in the custom in which young women were paraded before society, usually with a view to attracting a husband.

Modern deb balls do not seek to follow this tradition yet they retain a good deal of the formality and ceremony of the traditional event. Debs and their partners are formally presented to a church leader or senior community leader. They are escorted by flower girls and hostesses and at the conclusion of the presentations and speeches, debs and their partners display their newly developed skills by joining in an old time dance such as the twilight waltz or the foxtrot.

Each debutante ball has a colour theme that is replicated in the flowers and bouquets as well as the flower girls' and hostess's dresses and the room decorations. Like every good celebration, the formalities are followed by a wonderful feast. Then, as if to work off the ill-effects of the delicious food, the band strikes up a tune and the debs, their partners and families dance the night away.

Last Saturday night Ziggy and I had the great pleasure of attending the Proserpine Anglican debutante ball where 16 local girls undertook the rite of passage before Bishop Ray and his wife. This was a wonderful night full of family pride for the beautifully turned out debs and their equally handsome partners. It was a real community event and, despite confusing my Pride of Erin with the Gypsy Tap, Ziggy and I managed a circuit or two of the dance floor without totally disgracing ourselves. Next month we will again travel to Mackay for the Pioneer State High School Debutante Ball, where I am sure we will enjoy the company of the school community and welcome another group of young people into society. In the meantime, we will be keeping up our own dance training as we attend the Mackay and District Senior Citizens Club Q150 period ball this Saturday. I am only afraid that Ziggy and I will be outdanced and outdone by the energetic seniors of Mackay who will have the advantage of many more years of old-time dance practice. Oh well, there is always next year!

### Glass House Electorate

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.19 pm): It has been a busy week in Glass House. For starters, the 1,500-strong community of Peachester was thrown into disarray last Wednesday with the full closure of Peachester Road after a landslide. The road is the community's lifeline, linking it to schools, retail businesses, public transport and emergency services in Beerwah. Unfortunately, inconsistent advice from the Department of Main Roads was circulated within the community suggesting that this closure would persist for a minimum of three months. Sensing the frustration in the community and working with Sunshine Coast regional councillor Anna Grosskreutz, I asked Main Roads to participate in a community meeting last Thursday night.

Some 250 locals packed the Peachester Hall to hear firsthand the prognosis on the road repairs. Word was able to circulate throughout the community that the repairs were likely to take three weeks and that alternative arrangements had been made for school bus services, local and tourist traffic, and emergency services. I thank Dennis Tennant and Don Pitt from Main Roads and councillors Anna and Craig Young from the regional council for their participation in the meeting. I am pleased to inform the House that, largely through the round-the-clock work by Main Roads, Peachester Road will reopen to emergency services today and that the community will be once again using this vital link as soon as Friday—two weeks ahead of schedule. Once again, I thank all involved for their tireless efforts, especially the Peachester community for their patience in what has clearly been a major disruption to their daily activities.

Moving on to more pleasant events, I had the pleasure of attending the Governor's official opening of the Maleny Show last Friday. I commend the Governor for persisting with her address despite the unexpected downpour. I know the Maleny community appreciated her words and presence. I also want to thank Ivan Hankinson and the members of Maleny Show Society for a fantastic show. Other than that downpour, it was great to see the sun and so many locals enjoying one of Queensland's best shows. To Show Princesses—Jessica and Laura, Hayley and Felicity—and Rural Ambassador, Carl, my sincerest congratulations. May you continue to inspire others of your generation in their increased involvement in all things agricultural.

It does not stop there. On Friday night I was delighted to speak at the annual strawberry growers dinner. As I said yesterday, some 70 per cent of all of Queensland's strawberries are grown in my electorate. It was a real honour to be able to join with development officer Lourens Grobler and growers like Luigi Coco, the Twist brothers, Bill Sharpe and Ray Daniels in celebrating the industry's success and considering its future, and I wear their tie with pride. Given the industry is such an intrinsic part of the interurban green corridor between Caboolture and the Sunshine Coast, I am committed to assisting growers in overcoming any impediments that may prevent them from flourishing.

Finally, rain was not going to deter Palmwoods locals a second time from enjoying the annual state school fair. It was a fantastic afternoon and evening. Congratulations to Raina Carvell and the P&C for yet another successful carnival. I had a lot of fun assisting Malcolm Brown from the rural fire brigade and Blazer, their koala mascot, during the auction and my children, like many others, thrilled to the fireworks. Thank you to all who dug deep in support of the school. It is very much the heart of our community, and it is great to see locals getting involved and having fun.

### **Pride of Australia Medal; Charlton, Ms S**

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.22 pm): The Pride of Australia Medal acknowledges ordinary Australians who do extraordinary things throughout our communities. Medal recipients are the country's unsung heroes. Their contributions inspire all of us, as individuals and collectively, to help make our nation a better place to live. I rise tonight to put on record my congratulations to Sandra Charlton, who has been short-listed for a Pride of Australia environment medal for her efforts to eradicate the tilapia fish from the Mulgrave River. The noxious tilapia, introduced to Australia as an aquarium fish from southern Africa, has the potential to take over tropical river systems. The species has become a major pest in waterways throughout Queensland, as well as Western Australia and Victoria—so much so that the fish has been described as the cane toad of the waterways.

Balancing her environmental work with her day job as a school teacher, locally Sandra Charlton has become known as the 'Tilapia Terminator'. She first became aware of the extent of the problem fish in 2005. This led to the birth of the Tilapia Terminators Fishing Challenge, a way that students and the wider public could play an active role in reducing fish numbers. I have known Sandra Charlton since she was my physical education teacher many years ago at Gordonvale Primary School. She has always been a hard worker and has always been able to get students involved in activities. It is this ability to tap into the enthusiasm of students that will see the numbers of this pest fish in our local waterways substantially reduced while also improving the awareness of the environmental impact the tilapia has on our tropical river systems.

At the first half-day Tilapia Terminators Fishing Challenge in 2005, 250 entrants caught 212 fish. Through the leadership of Ms Charlton, the event has grown to include students from 35 schools, with 463 entrants catching a staggering 1,998 fish over a day and a half. Sandra's love for the environment and commitment has already been recognised when she was recently announced as 'Australia's Greenest Teacher' by Clean Up Australia Chairman, Ian Kiernan. Mr Kiernan said that Ms Charlton's commitment to teaching students about the environment is outstanding and that, through the introduction of the fishing challenge and changes to the school curriculum, she has helped to create awareness among those who can make the biggest difference in the future—our children. Sandra is to be congratulated for her nomination, for her personal commitment to having an idea and following it through and for the ingenious way she has been able to enlist the help of schoolchildren to become wildlife warriors, doing her part to stamp out a serious pest to our native fish populations. Finalists for the Pride of Australia Medal will be announced on 5 July and winners announced on 10 July. Regardless of the outcome, Sandra is already a winner and I wish her the very best of luck.

### **Gold Coast, Storms; Surf Life-Saving**

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (9.25 pm): Storms lashed the Gold Coast with winds up to 100 kilometres an hour and heavy rains during the second half of May, ravaging beaches in the Currumbin electorate. Causing over a million dollars worth of damage, not to mention sleepless nights for beachfront residents who feared they would lose their homes, storms left behind metres-high sand cliffs along several of our picturesque foreshores. Currumbin surf club car park looked like it was hit by an earthquake after being subjected to four metres of sand followed by king tides washing away the sand and ripping up the bitumen, such was the force of the natural elements.

A boat ramp that had not been sighted for 30 years appeared as dunes were taken back 20 metres and damage was done to the front and back of the club itself. Tugun surf club was counting its blessings that it had installed a rock wall only last year that protected it, but it lost most of its beach. I was at the Palm Beach surf club on Saturday, 23 May when waves and foam were whipped into a frenzy and onto the club's deck before tides also took the beach away. Remarkably, Kirra was by comparison unscathed, so great was the amount of sand already on the beach. Volunteer Marine Rescue President, Peter Saunders, warned residents of the dangers of debris in the Currumbin estuary and massive tides that could sweep even experienced swimmers out to sea.

Our city council is to be commended for its swift action to clean up the mess. Annual dredging campaigns in the mouths of Tallebudgera and Currumbin creeks may be rotated to attend to the urgent erosion issues in Palm Beach and sand will be pumped north of Palm Beach Avenue to nourish bare shores. Whilst no-one can predict the severity of Mother Nature or exactly when and where she will strike, having flexibility in the Tweed sand bypass contract to pump when and where you need it should be a matter of priority for the government.

I want to recognise the magnificent efforts of our surf-lifesaving movement as they celebrate their annual award ceremonies and a program that is enabling our youth to serve their communities. The Palm Beach surf club has a partnership with Elanora State High School to train students in surf rescue certificates and bronze medallion courses through joining the club. A majority of these young students have stayed on, with four of them topping patrol awards for this season. Tony Rapallo, head of sport at Elanora, and Sharon Kyme are to be congratulated on their commitment to train and encourage these students to volunteer as lifesavers. All too often the negative behaviour of a few of our youths makes headlines, and it was heartening, especially in times of turmoil, to see these teenagers attain impressive goals. I hope that more of our youth will get involved. In total this season, 20 bronze medallions and 14 surf rescue certificates were awarded at Palm Beach and I was thrilled to meet a number of these fine young people at the recent club awards. Further club awards will be happening throughout the Currumbin electorate as Point Danger celebrates yet another wonderful year of surf-lifesaving and saving lives.

### **Burleigh Knitting Group**

**Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (9.28 pm): Winter has arrived, and while we might have enough blankets to keep us warm, many in our community are not so lucky. For those who rough it, who sleep in bus shelters or under bridges, winter brings extra hardship. Trying to keep warm is an ongoing battle. Five years ago I saw an article in a newspaper encouraging capital cities to hold a knitting day. The idea was to make squares to be turned into blankets and given to the Salvation Army. I decided that the Gold Coast should be part of such a project and advertised for people to join me in a Miami park to knit squares. About 10 people took up the challenge and we had a very successful few hours in the park. I never dreamed that this one-off event would grow into what it is today.

Five years later, we have 50 women and one man in our knitting group. We meet twice a year in a hall in Burleigh Heads, having outgrown the park. Max Topping is our male participant and he has never missed a get-together. You will often find him demonstrating his crochet skills to the women in the group. He produces beautiful work and recently sent 18 blankets to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal for distribution. I am the proud owner of a blanket especially made for me by Max.

In between get-togethers the project does not stop. Our knitters work at home and every week someone will come into the office with another blanket that they have made. We have even taken our group to the Ozanam Villa nursing home in Burleigh Heads. The residents there all took up the challenge and the occupational therapist commented that she had not seen them so animated for a long time.

While I buy much of the wool, appeals in newsletters have meant that strangers arrive with wool that they may have had in the back of their cupboard and for which they have no further use. My storeroom looks like a haberdashery shop. There are shelves filled with wool in all colours and plys, linen waiting to be turned into cot sheets, knitting needles and patterns, and anything else that can be turned into much needed items. Gone are the days when we just knitted squares and turned them into blankets. We have now branched out into scarves, beanies, socks, cot blankets, knee rugs, baby clothes and small children's woollies.

We have donated goods to the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Blair Athol Hostel, Pregnancy & Family Support, the Gold Coast Youth Service and the department of child safety for children in foster care. While we have not kept count of the number of donations, I can say that they are in the hundreds.

Last Friday we held our 5th annual get-together. Thirty women and Max attended. For participants who might meet only twice a year, there is never a lull in the conversation. The camaraderie is palpable. They all tell me they feel useful and that doing something for someone else is very rewarding. Considering they will never know who the recipients are or how much the items are loved, I think their generosity is amazing. I thank all of those wonderful knitters and look forward to many more years of involvement with them.

### **Ridglands Show; Mount Morgan Hospital**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (9.31 pm): Last weekend my wife and I attended the Ridglands Show. Ridglands is a little community west of Rockhampton. Robert Bishop and his team of volunteers put on a great show last Saturday. Robert is the chair of the Ridglands Show Committee and, as I said, his team of volunteers put on a great show. Pupils from the Ridglands State School sang the national anthem and rendered a number of other songs. It was a tremendous effort by a small community to put on this show. The cattle and the horses all looked great. Certainly the children and the adults had a great time.



I was particularly taken with the exhibition by the schoolchildren with the CWA exhibition. I took particular notice of the cooking. I have to commend Pat Watts for the great cake that she cooked and for which she received first prize. It is a really good community effort to put on a major show like that in a small community. Everybody gets behind it. It was just a tremendous day out.

On the Sunday, my wife and I visited Mount Morgan. I think this is about the fourth visit I have made to Mount Morgan since the election. It really is an interesting community. There are some great people in Mount Morgan. But I have to say that I have some grave concerns about the future of the hospital up there. Dr Ko has been the resident doctor and has done both public and private patient consultations. As of late last week, Dr Ko was no longer available for public or private attendance. Obviously, a lot of patients who attended Dr Ko have their records with his service and they are no longer available.

I have emailed the Minister for Health to find out what is going on at the Mount Morgan Hospital. I have grave concerns about the future of the hospital. Maybe it is one of those hospitals that the government is looking at closing down. Mount Morgan Hospital is an integral part of the community of Mount Morgan. I look forward to a swift response from the health minister to indicate what is happening with the health services in Mount Morgan.

### **Amputee Awareness Day**

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (9.33 pm): As the patron for the Amputees and Family Support Group Queensland, I inform the House that next Thursday, 11 June is Amputee Awareness Day. I, like many in our communities, take my good health and my limbs for granted. I believe that able bodied people do not fully understand some of the difficulties that amputees face. How many of us most mornings will open a carton of milk with ease and without much thought of how easy it is? Imagine undertaking that same task if you had only one arm.

Any one of us can be a victim of an accident at any time. We can become a victim of a road accident, a sports accident or a work accident and face the possibility of having a limb removed as a result. What would we do? How would we cope waking up in hospital to the news that we have lost a limb or hearing doctors tell us they will need to do an amputation? It can happen to any of us at any point in time so easily.

If this happened to a loved one, how would they cope? How would we cope? Where would we go for assistance? Would we really know what to do? When I ask this question to people they say, 'I don't know.' It is not only accidents that can leave someone an amputee. There are, of course, a number of people who lose a limb through diseases such as diabetes. That does not change the question of where people go for support and help when they are faced with becoming an amputee.

I am very pleased to advise the House of the great work of the Amputees and Family Support Group Queensland, located in Springwood. They are a non-profit, self-help community organisation that is dedicated to promoting the needs of amputees and their families while providing quality service to members, working towards their maximum potential. Twenty-five years ago the group was formed by a few amputees who felt alone and isolated when they first lost their limbs. After an advertisement in the local newspaper, the group was formed. There are other support groups on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, but today the Amputees and Family Support Group Queensland has representatives in north Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Kingaroy, Mackay, Maryborough and Toowoomba. All of those support groups are doing the very important work of supporting amputees and their families throughout the state.

It does not matter what time of day or night, the members of the support group are on call to answer the calls of amputees or their family members, providing support, counselling and medical advice. That really makes this group a valued and important partner for government.

Next Thursday I would like to encourage all members to go out into their electorates and remember the amputees in their communities. I encourage members to join the Amputees and Family Support Group Queensland and promote Amputee Awareness Day next Thursday.

### **Grass Trees**

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (9.36 pm): I rise to ask a question: why is it that grass trees can be destroyed but cannot be salvaged if the purpose of salvage is for sale? On Wednesday, 22 April this year I sent an email to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability requesting a meeting to resolve the issue surrounding the possible destruction of many thousands of beautiful grass trees. It may be that the minister had not yet been given my letter of request for the meeting, but on 30 April in her reply to a previous request the minister stated—

On the 31st Dec 2005, the Management Program for Protected Plants in Qld 2006-2010 introduced a phase out of commercial harvest of whole protected plants in Qld. After this date, commercial harvesting of whole plants is permitted only for the harvest of stock plants, bio-prospecting purposes and salvage from clearing operations where the commercial sale of plants is not the purpose of the clearing. The phase out was introduced to reduce the impost on wild plant populations and to encourage the development of sustainable cultivated products.

In this case, the purpose of the clearing is the need to build access roads. The sale of the trees would occur because to destroy the trees would be, I believe, a crime. It is noted that a property owner may harvest trees after the IPA approval is issued, provided a commercial wildlife harvesting licence is in place. There appears to be a lot of possibly conflicting information being received; hence the request for a meeting, which I hope the minister is in the process of arranging.

Construction of the wind farm towers, which will be located on the South Burnett property and which will be part of the biggest wind farm in the Southern Hemisphere, is expected to start in early 2010. The property is not assessable under the Vegetation Management Act but there are many kilometres of roads and the grass trees are so dense on this property that it will be impossible for the property owner to harvest the trees appropriately in the short period between when construction starts, as is required, and the salvage permit is issued.

Advice from experienced people who deal with the harvesting and potting of grass trees simply states that it cannot be done and that the greater majority of these trees, if not all, will be bulldozed into windrows and destroyed. The destruction of these beautiful trees would be a disaster and goes against the very idea of conservation.

The situation is a unique one and deserves to be looked at in just that way, that is, as a unique situation. I look forward to an early meeting with the minister to resolve the situation. I do not want these trees destroyed, I do not believe the minister wants them destroyed and certainly the people of Queensland do not want them destroyed, especially when there is a ready-made market for these beautiful trees overseas. The destruction of hundreds of thousands of grass trees would, indeed, be a ludicrous situation in this particular instance. The trees can be harvested, but without being able to sell them why would anyone bother? No-one will spend the money to re-plant them and the trees will simply be bulldozed into windrows and destroyed. For the whole of Queensland that would be a terrible, terrible shame. Let us not see it happen. Let us get people talking to arrange it properly.

### **Huntington's Disease; Buckley, Ms E**

**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (9.39 pm): As local members, often we meet people in our community who leave a lasting impact upon us. Over the past year I have been working very closely with my constituents Colleen Woodcock and her daughter Ellen Buckley of Carole Park. Initially they approached me because Colleen wanted some assistance to modify her home so that Ellen, who had Huntington's disease, could remain living with her.

The first Colleen learned about Huntington's disease was when a doctor arrived on her doorstep from the Herston Medical Research Centre. It was there that she was informed that her two children, Ellen and her brother Andrew, were at risk of Huntington's disease because their father had the disease, which meant that there was a 50 per cent chance that they would both contract the disease between 30 and 45 years of age. Andrew, the younger of the two, was diagnosed in 2006 and passed away in January this year. Ellen was diagnosed with Huntington's disease approximately four years ago. Within 12 months she was wheelchair bound and two weeks ago Ellen passed away, five months after her brother.

I have chosen to share this story with the House because, firstly, it raises awareness about Huntington's disease, which was the wish of both Ellen and her mother. Huntington's disease is a genetic brain disorder that progressively affects the body, mind and emotions, inevitably leading to death. In Australia 1,200 people have Huntington's disease and another 6,000 are at risk. From when the symptoms first appear, day-to-day tasks begin to become increasingly more difficult. After time, involuntary jerking movements of the limbs, face and torso make walking impossible without an aid. Before long it is impossible to walk and it is difficult to chew and swallow. A person's brain behaviour, personality and reasoning are affected, making communication more difficult. The memory begins to fail, as does the capacity to learn and to think, and the emotional state becomes more erratic and unpredictable. Family members and carers can only try to help sufferers to maintain their lifestyle as the symptoms progressively take hold. The disease literally, bit by bit, takes away the person's life and there is no known cure.

In the face of this disease Ellen showed immeasurable courage. 'Don't live the disease, live life' was her and her mum's favourite saying. She continued living her life for as long as possible, socialising, painting and doing the things she loved most. I thank former minister Lindy Nelson-Carr, who provided \$34,000 for renovations to the bathroom and the widening of the deck of the family home, which enabled Ellen to live her final months at home. Her mum, Colleen, was there for her daughter every step of the way. Ellen was loved by her stepfather, Greg, her carers Jenny Pszezonska, Sharon Hughes and Tina Pederson, who often went beyond the call of duty, as well as her best friend Maree, who provided her with strong support. My life is richer for having known Ellen Buckley. God bless you.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.41 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson