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FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2009

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Questions on Notice

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

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace)—

[445] Response from the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace) to three paper petitions (1226-09, 1227-09 and 1236-09) presented by Mr Wellington from 822, 817 and 514 petitioners respectively regarding the intersection of Nambour Connection Road and Blackall Street, Woombye

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Hinchliffe)—

[446] Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031: State Planning Regulatory Provisions, February 2009

[447] Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031: State Planning Regulatory Provisions, February 2009—Regulatory maps and index

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Burnett (Mr Messenger)—

[448] Non-conforming petition from 988 petitioners regarding the preservation of agricultural land and the seaside village lifestyle at Elliott Heads

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Fitzgerald Inquiry, 20-Year Anniversary

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.31 am): In this, Queensland's 150th year, we reflect upon the events that have shaped our state, and few events have shaped the political landscape in Queensland like the Fitzgerald inquiry. The 3rd of July will mark 20 years since the Fitzgerald inquiry report was tabled in this parliament in 1989. After two years of inquiry, including 238 sitting days, 339 witnesses, 2,304 exhibits and 21,504 pages of transcript, Tony Fitzgerald delivered his report—a damning revelation of corruption at the highest levels of the Queensland police force and within the government of the day. The inquiry was a turning point in the public life of our state. It laid out the road map for a new era of accountability in Queensland. In many ways, the Fitzgerald inquiry was Queensland's Berlin Wall. It washed away an old regime and heralded in a new era. Nothing on Queensland's political landscape has been the same since.

Thanks to the courage and commitment of Tony Fitzgerald, Queensland now has the Crime and Misconduct Commission—a standing commission of inquiry to investigate official misconduct in the public sector and police misconduct. The Auditor-General, the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, the Integrity Commissioner and whistleblower protection have all increased public sector accountability and made the government more open to public scrutiny. We have published a Ministerial Code of Conduct and Ministerial Handbook to guide ministers in their duties and there is a Ministerial Services section within my department to closely monitor all ministerial expenditure and that of the opposition. Electoral reforms have been introduced to banish the rigged electoral gerrymanders of the past. Parliament has been reformed, with members being required to declare their pecuniary interests on a public register, while a code of ethical standards guides members of parliament in their duties.

I take my responsibility to ensure accountability seriously. 1 July will herald a new era of access to information held by government here in Queensland with the commencement of our new right to information regime. Further, my government has overhauled and modernised the parliamentary committee structure, brought in a lobbyist code of conduct and created a new criminal offence of misconduct in public office. All these years later, we must not forget the lessons learnt from the Fitzgerald inquiry. In the lead-up to the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald report, I pay tribute to Tony Fitzgerald and the critical part that he played in shaping Queensland into what it is today.

Queensland Week

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.34 am): Queensland Week celebrations from 6 to 13 June this year have been bigger than ever before. Queensland's 150th anniversary gave our communities an opportunity to connect with each other and celebrate the things they love about Queensland. I was privileged to celebrate with some exceptional Queenslanders such as 2009 Suncorp Queenslander of the Year, Police Sergeant Jim Bellos. I salute and thank all of our Queenslanders of the Year finalists and our Queensland Greats for 2009 for the invaluable contribution and service they provide to our communities. Also during Queensland Week I announced Queensland's top 150 icons. These icons were voted for by the people of our state, with almost 30,000 votes received. The icons represent those people, places and stories that have shaped our state today and shaped the people that we are. I was pleased to note that the Fitzgerald inquiry, which I just spoke about, was recognised as one of the state's shapers. Today I will present to you, Mr Speaker, a framed copy of the top 150 icons list and I trust that it will reside in the parliament for years to come.

Several major infrastructure projects have been opened recently, supported by grants under the Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program. These include the \$3.1 million Queens Park Environmental Education Centre in Ipswich, the \$4.25 million Mount Isa Family Fun Park and on 12 June I was pleased to officially open, along with the mayor, the Woody Point jetty at Redcliffe. The member for Redcliffe knows what an important part of our heritage this jetty is, and I was pleased to join her for the opening. On its first four tour sectors, the Q150 Steam Train has received an enthusiastic welcome in more than 50 communities from Brisbane to Ayr, Townsville to Mount Isa and Rockhampton to Winton, carrying more than 14,000 passengers. The Q150 Shed, Queensland's unique entertainment venue, has showcased local performers in Mount Isa and Cairns already on tour 1. I also want to thank Australia Post for recognising Queensland's 150th anniversary with the release last week of a set of commemorative stamps developed by Australia Post commemorating Queensland's 150th anniversary.

Health Infrastructure

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.37 am): From Cooktown to Coolangatta, construction work is underway to build and rebuild the hospitals that Queenslanders need for the 21st century. In Cairns today there are more than 50 construction workers on site completing the foundations for the new emergency department and finalising the installation of the new MRI. In Townsville more than 20 workers are completing refurbishment of ward space to deliver an additional 30 beds. In Mount Isa design work for the \$65 million hospital redevelopment is underway. In Rockhampton a large tower crane has been on site this week to hoist the new MRI machine into place. The crane has also been used in the construction of the five-storey extension to the main building, which will be roofed today. In Nambour piled foundations have already been completed for the new 96-bed ward block, and yesterday a 160 cubic metre concrete slab was poured. At the Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane over 30 workers have already demolished nine buildings to clear the site for construction to begin, and excavation of a services tunnel is well underway. On the Gold Coast 70 construction workers are carrying out massive excavation works.

This is all part of the Bligh government's \$6 billion Health capital works program, the biggest in Australia—a capital works program that is creating almost 40,000 jobs right across the state, a Capital Works Program that is only possible because of the tough decisions this government has made to shore up Queensland's future. This program will deliver jobs that Queenslanders need in these uncertain times—jobs that will deliver the hospitals and health services that will make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. This is what Queenslanders expected from their government when they voted for jobs, not cuts. It is our plan to protect Queensland jobs and build a state that is stronger—not weaker—when these tough times are over. It is our plan in action right across the state. This is because we have a plan, unlike the opposition, and our plan is a plan of action. Queenslanders can see this for themselves on every single one of these construction sites. The families of every one of these construction workers know that our plan is making a difference in these tough times.

The other side of the House has been given every opportunity to come up with a plan. They have been given every opportunity to tell Queenslanders how they would do it differently. But despite the other side having every opportunity, all we now know is what they oppose. We still do not know what they propose.

Water Commission

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): The Bligh government is willing to make the tough decisions. When there seemed little chance of rain, we invested \$9 billion drought proofing South-East Queensland. While we have come a long way in securing Queensland's future water supplies, it is vitally important that we not forget the lessons learned over the past decade and be well prepared in case dry times return.

Unlike those opposite, who are bereft of ideas and who have not been able to propose any new initiatives—as was so graphically demonstrated here yesterday—we have a plan for the future. The Bligh government is committed to water security and committed to maintaining an independent Water Commissioner to continue building upon our \$9 billion water grid. I am pleased to announce today the appointment of Ms Mary Boydell as Queensland's new Water Commissioner. As a director of SEQWater and chairperson of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, along with having experience in being part of numerous other government and corporate bodies, including the Gladstone Area Water Board, Ms Boydell has a broad range of expertise and I am confident she is the right person to drive this government's future water strategy.

In saying that, acknowledgement needs to be given to outgoing commissioner Ms Elizabeth Nosworthy, who has made a magnificent contribution in her time at the helm of the QWC. I thank Elizabeth and the other commissioners for their hard work and wish them the very best in their future endeavours. I would also like to take this opportunity today to release the annual water report 2008 by the QWC, which I table for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Report, undated, from the Queensland Water Commission titled 'The 2008 Water Report' [449].

The report found that South-East Queenslanders' residential consumption averaged 129 litres per person per day throughout 2008—down from over 300 litres per person per day in 2005, before water restrictions came into play. When we compare the 2008 water use levels with the 2006 water use levels, we see that South-East Queensland residents managed to save a total of 38.7 billion litres of water. The adoption of water efficiency management plans and retrofitting with water-efficient devices by the non-residential sector have made a significant contribution to water-saving efforts. By undertaking these measures, South-East Queensland businesses used 35 per cent less water compared to 2004-05—a saving of 73.5 megalitres per day.

The report also notes that average daily consumption in the residential sector fell by 15.9 litres per person between 2007 and 2008. This is a reflection of the community's commitment to water saving, along with South-East Queensland councils identifying major water inefficiencies such as leaks within their systems. The Bligh government is proud of the efforts of Queenslanders to change their water consumption habits. We will continue to work with the QWC to ensure a secure water future for the Sunshine State.

Coral Reef Fin Fish, Fishing Closures

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (9.42 am): I have good news for recreational and commercial fishers. We have overhauled the dates for fishing closures which allow coral reef fin fish to spawn. There will now be two five-day closures a year instead of three nine-day closures. Today I am releasing closure dates for the next five years to give everyone certainty and allow for long-term planning. Significantly, there are no more December closures, which means that there will be no bans over the Christmas holiday period. Fewer closures for shorter periods will also minimise the economic impacts on commercial fishers and charter boat operators.

Importantly, fishing under these changes will still be sustainable. Closures will now be in October and November, which have been found to be the months of high effectiveness for protecting coral reef fin fish. The closure dates are based on the phases of the new moon when coral trout and many other reef species aggregate to spawn. At this time they are more susceptible to fishing and need some protection. This new regime follows a comprehensive review, which included recommendations from the Reef Management Advisory Committee and an expert based risk assessment conducted in May 2009.

Eligible offshore charter operators will be able to apply for a general fisheries permit to operate during the closure periods. Another concession is that commercial operators will be allowed to possess coral reef fin fish until 6 am on the first day of each closure period. The closures apply to waters on Queensland's east coast between Cape York and just north of Waddy Point on Fraser Island, extending to the eastern boundary of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park but not extending to the Coral Sea.

These changes fit the Q2 ambitions of strong and green—strong in that the closures assist the economy by minimising the impact on our important fishing industry and tourism industry, and green in that the closures protect our environment by providing these species with some breathing space in which to spawn.

Sport and Recreation Volunteer Awards

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (9.44 am): Volunteers are an essential part of the sport and recreation industry. Last week I was delighted to announce that eight finalists have been named in the Bligh government's 2009 Sport and Recreation Volunteer Awards. There was no better time to celebrate the amazing work of our volunteers than last week, which, as we all know, was Queensland Week. It is especially fitting in our 150th anniversary year, through our Q150 celebrations, that we celebrate the achievements and contributions of these very important people.

These awards are about giving appropriate recognition to the role that volunteers play in sport and recreation clubs and organisations across the entire state. All over Queensland, thousands of volunteers, such as coaches, officials and parents, devote hours of their own time to support and develop the sport they love. The Bligh government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland ambition is to increase the proportion of volunteers in Queensland communities by 50 per cent by 2020. Queensland already has the highest rate of volunteers in Australia, with 38 per cent of the population participating in volunteer work, of which 24 per cent work directly with sport and recreation organisations.

The proportion of people willing to lend a hand in Queensland is certainly inspiring. Eight of our most outstanding volunteers, who are fine examples of what being a volunteer is all about, have been selected as finalists for the awards. They include Mr Fred Frost, in the electorate of Mount Isa, who was recognised for his involvement in and contribution to cricket for almost 25 years; and Logan City's Phyllis Grant, in the electorate of Woodridge, who was nominated for her service and commitment to netball for—wait for it—over 63 years. These nominees have gone above and beyond to support and develop the sports they love. They are an inspiration to all of us. Without these volunteers, many small sport and recreation clubs, and even major sporting bodies, would be at a loss and some may even cease to operate.

The eight top volunteers are Barbara Morris from Maryborough, Narelle Carroll from Cairns, Fred Frost from Mount Isa, Joseph Burke from Bulimba, Edward Bones from Greenslopes, Arthur Needham from Ipswich, Phyllis Grant from Logan City and Ron Hall from Wishart. I congratulate all of them. Despite the global financial crisis, the Bligh government is keeping grassroots support for community sport going.

Gold Coast Marine Development Project

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.47 am): I would like to take this opportunity to update the House on the status of the Gold Coast Marine Development Project. Despite challenging economic times, the Bligh government continues to work with the private sector to deliver projects that stimulate local economies and keep Queenslanders in jobs. The Gold Coast Marine Development Project consists of two development sites: the 8.2-hectare northern development area and the 2.3-hectare southern development area. Development of the sites will include marinas, commercial, tourism and recreational facilities.

The estimated capital cost of the project is more than \$600 million, to be funded by the private sector, and it could create 1,200 construction jobs and 300 ongoing jobs. In April the project reached a second stage, with detailed proposal documents released to the short-listed bidders for a three-month period. At the request of the remaining short-listed bidders, the government recently extended lodgement of detailed proposals by one month to August 2009. This is a sensible response to unfavourable market conditions that make the financial structuring of major projects highly complicated.

Subsequently, two short-listed bidders for the northern development area have withdrawn from the bidding process citing weak property and credit markets and the scale and scope of the proposed development. This leaves one bidder for the northern development area. The southern development area currently has two strong bidders and a third is considering its position following the withdrawal of a consortium member.

The government will rigorously evaluate these proposals against objectives and strict value for money criteria. If an acceptable outcome is obtained, the state will move to execute contractual arrangements for delivery of the project. Provided the proposals can gain all necessary approvals, construction for both development sites will commence in 2011. The government continues to work with the private sector on this project and is doing all it can to deliver further economic benefits to the Gold Coast.

World Refugee Day

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (9.49 am): Tomorrow we celebrate World Refugee Day. The Bligh government has invested \$30,000 in the Multicultural Development Association for its week-long celebrations for World Refugee Day. This will culminate in a huge festival at the Annerley Soccer Club next Sunday, 28 June. This week I also attended a business leaders' breakfast, hosted by St Vincent de Paul, looking at the contribution that 90 volunteers make to going into families' homes and helping them to learn English.

Tonight I will join with multicultural champion Katie Noonan; author Nick Earls; Queenslander of the Year, Sergeant Jim Bellos; and refugee families to lead a candlelit walk over the Goodwill Bridge to mark this significant event. The United Nations World Refugee Day is a day for serious reflection. All Queenslanders—indeed all Australians—should stop and think about what we can do as individuals and as a society to rescue the citizens of the world who are trapped in the horrors of war, lawlessness, poverty and famine.

This year's theme 'Freedom from Fear' highlights the extraordinary circumstances that ordinary people have faced in their quest to find a safe place to live. The aims of World Refugee Week are to educate the community about refugees, to help people understand the many challenges faced by them, and to celebrate the contribution that they make to our community.

There are an estimated 27 million refugees world-wide, persecuted because of their ethnicity, religion, race or political views. Currently there are more than 700,000 refugees settled in Australia. An estimated 13,750 refugees arrive in Australia annually under our humanitarian program. Since 1999, more than 11,500 refugees have settled in Queensland, mainly in the south-east areas such as Brisbane, Logan and Toowoomba. I know from personally meeting some of these families that they have a better life and a greater opportunity now for their children, overcoming adverse conditions and in many cases personal tragedy. They are indeed survivors.

The Bligh government is continuing to strengthen multicultural communities through the Multicultural Assistance Program. This year, 76 community projects and events will occur across the state to support refugees and multicultural communities.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.51 am): I advise honourable members that the House can continue to meet past 6.30 pm this day. The House can break for dinner at 6.30 pm and resume its sitting at 7.30 pm. The order of business shall then be government business followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.52 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 159, the Body Corporate and Community Management Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this day's sitting.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Report

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (9.52 am): I table report No. 97 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 1 February 2009 relating to the alleged deliberate misleading of the House*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

Tabled paper: Report No. 97 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee titled 'Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 11 February 2009 relating to the alleged deliberate misleading of the House' [450].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: During this morning's session of parliament, the St Anthony's Catholic Primary School at Alexandra Hills in the electorate of Capalaba will be visiting Parliament House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Unemployment

Mr LANGBROEK (9.53 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the 10,300 more breadwinners from 10,300 families who have become unemployed since the election. How does the Premier defend the woeful lack of action from this deceitful government?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I would refer him to my announcement yesterday in relation to the securing of long-term contracts by Santos that will bring 6,000 jobs—6,000 jobs—to regional Queensland as just one piece of evidence of the actions that our government is taking to put in place jobs for Queenslanders when they need them most. If I were the member for Surfers Paradise, I would not be in here this morning talking about a 'woeful lack of action'. If ever I saw a woeful lack of action, it was here on full display about this time yesterday morning.

Ms Nolan: And all day.

Ms BLIGH: And it continued all day. We have been tantalised all week by the Leader of the Opposition and by his shadow Treasurer in their public comments that on Thursday we would hear their economic management strategy. What they would outline in their speeches—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to standing orders. The Premier is addressing a bill which is before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: I will listen to the Premier's answer. I have been listening with care. I was aware that the Premier had specifically referred to the budget. But I would remind the honourable the Premier that there is a bill before the House. I took your comments to be of a wider community concern. I will hear your comments.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Indeed, I think there is some widespread community concern, particularly in the LNP community. What we know is that there is a dramatic downturn in the major developed economies around the world. It is impacting upon Australia, just as it is upon all of the major economies around the world. If it is impacting upon Australia then it is impacting upon Queensland.

This is a time when people need politicians and people in public life to be developing solutions. Mr Speaker, what you hear from our government is a very clear strategy and a path forward. It is a path that commits to infrastructure—infrastructure that will create 127,000 jobs. It will invest in skills development, creating 150,000 apprenticeships and traineeships. We will bring new industries here like the LNG industry and the renewable industry and we will implement job creation programs like our Green Army—four clear planks, four clear ways forward.

What have we heard all week and what have we heard for the last six months from those opposite? We have heard that there is no recession. They do not believe in it. They are GFC deniers, just like they are deniers of everything else. If I were the Leader of the Opposition, I would keep my thoughts on a woeful lack of action—just like we saw yesterday, just like we saw a month ago, just like we saw being proposed during the election campaign, just like we saw before Christmas—to myself. We know what direction we are taking Queensland in. Queensland still has no idea where you think we should be going.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, I remind all ministers to direct their comments through the chair.

Public Hospitals, Co-payments

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I note that an Ipswich patient was told that she would have to pay \$200 to have an MRI at a private facility to receive further treatment rather than receive the same treatment for free at Ipswich Hospital. Will the Premier advise if this is the first step in introducing a co-payment for public hospitals?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Clearly, without knowing the details of the case and without having any material provided on it, it would be ridiculous to suggest that I could give him any details. But I would be very happy to take the details and come back to him on it. I do know that the member for Surfers Paradise, along with those who sit around him, have form on a lack of accuracy in these sorts of questions. But if he wants to provide the details, of course I will look into it.

Mr Speaker, I am very happy to have a chance to stand here and talk about what is happening in our health system, because what you have seen from us in the last 12 months and what you will continue to see over the next couple of years is the rollout of one of the biggest hospital building programs not only that Queensland has seen but that is happening anywhere in Australia. We are not satisfied with having rebuilt all the major hospitals. We are now in the process of rebuilding regional Queensland hospitals. Let us start in Cairns.

In Cairns we are seeing an expansion with a whole new wing that will bring oncology services to Cairns for the first time. In Townsville we are building a whole new wing and doubling the size of its emergency department. In Mackay, we are getting a whole new hospital for that very fast-growing region. What do we see in Rockhampton? There will be a considerable expansion in capacity, including in its emergency department.

Mr Wallace: Mount Isa.

Ms BLIGH: In Mount Isa, we are seeing a whole expansion of the hospital there. We have seen a new hospital open in Yeppoon. Mr Speaker, if you come down the coast, you will find similar activity happening in the hospital at Bundaberg, you will see the Sunshine Coast getting new facilities—

Mr McArdle: Not a new hospital.

Ms BLIGH: Oh, yes. You will see a whole new hospital built by Labor on the Sunshine Coast, and you will see it happening on the Gold Coast. Of course, as outlined by the Deputy Premier this morning, a whole new Children's Hospital is emerging on the south side of Brisbane for our sickest children. Those hospital facilities are going to provide the services that patients need wherever they live in this state, but they are equally providing jobs to Queenslanders in every region that I have just mentioned. It is our jobs program that is being driven by our Capital Works Program that will create the stimulus in the Queensland economy to cushion the blow of the global financial crisis.

Mr Horan: Pushing people out and charging them for MRIs because you're broke.

Ms BLIGH: I would caution the member for Toowoomba South against believing everything that he hears. Of course, what we will not be doing is introducing the Horan hospital tax. Imagine the architect of the Horan hospital tax talking about a co-payment. He is the only person in the history of Queensland to take money out of hospitals. That was the best effort from the member for Toowoomba South. You would think he would be quiet every time somebody talked about health. The Horan hospital tax: that was a corker.

Floods, Recovery Assistance

Ms JARRATT: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Premier's 2009 flood appeals have taken in more than \$8 million. Can the Premier advise the House if this money has begun to be shifted to those in need?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Coming from her region, she has seen her own fair share of bad weather and knows what can happen when floods suddenly impact. On 6 February, I launched the Premier's disaster relief appeal to help those people who had been affected by flooding in the north and north-west of the state during monsoonal floods and tropical cyclones Charlotte and Ellie. I have talked in this House before about the very generous response we have had from around the country, from around the state and from other places, such as Papua New Guinea. In total, we have now raised \$8.19 million. I thank again all of those who have contributed to the appeal. These are tough economic times but we have nevertheless seen businesses, individuals and families respond in a way that is both compassionate and selfless. Only yesterday, I received a cheque for \$18,000 from Wormald, a very well-known company dealing in fire and water equipment. Their staff actually raised half of the money and Wormald offered to match it dollar for dollar, so that was a great effort.

I am very pleased to say that the Red Cross have again decided kindly to manage the disbursement of these funds. They have volunteered their services without any fee or reward. They will be reimbursed for their actual administration costs, which will be provided from my agency, so all of the money that was donated will go to the front line. The Red Cross started making payments from the appeal to eligible applicants from Thursday, 4 June. They received 2,135 applications and they have approved 2,095 applications, so more than 2,000 people have started to receive cheques and they have gone out in the last couple of weeks.

Members on all sides of the House—including the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Mount Isa and other members from the northern part of the state around Townsville—will know that some of the stories behind these cheques are tragic. Some of the people whom the Red Cross have identified as being most in need have heartbreaking stories. They are often people who did not have many resources before the disaster and the disaster has really knocked them for six.

I again thank those people whose generosity has made this appeal possible. I particularly thank the Red Cross for the hard work they have done to make sure those donations go to the right people. When people donate, they always have a bit of a worry about whether the money really does get to the front line and who makes those decisions. I think the Red Cross is an organisation that rightly enjoys a very strong reputation for having integrity and credibility. The partnership it has with government really does make the difference in these sorts of programs. To those people whose lives are still upset by these disasters, I know that everybody in this House wishes them well as they recover.

Hospital Beds

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. The June 2009 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report *Australian Hospital Statistics 2007-08* shows Queensland has the lowest number of hospital beds per 1,000 population for major cities in any reporting state or territory. Given Queensland's massively increasing population, how has the Labor government allowed this disgraceful situation to occur?

Mr LUCAS: What we know about reporting is that under this Labor government we actually report on what is happening in our health system—unlike the man who was lauded the other night, the member for Toowoomba South. We do not know what happened under the coalition, because they reported on nothing to do with Health. We know what happened there. So confident are the opposition members in the member for Toowoomba South's great achievements as Minister for Health that he has gone straight to the back bench, and they have to rely on the member for Caloundra to look after Health for them. That says an enormous thing about their view of what the member for Toowoomba South achieved in his short time as a minister.

The capital building program of Queensland Health is second to none—second to none. You only have to go to Townsville to see a new hospital, or go to the RBWH and see a new major hospital building, or go to the PA Hospital and see a new major hospital building, or go to Cairns where we are building more parts of the hospital, or go to Rockhampton and see where more is being built at the hospital, or go out to the Prince Charles Hospital and see more being built there, or go to Mackay and see where a new hospital is being built, or out to Mount Isa. You can see this Labor government's commitment to Health.

What we have achieved in recent times is the shortest elective surgery waiting list in Australia. The member for Caloundra did not talk about the AIHW's report on that. What we have achieved in the latest quarterly report is a continued improvement in our emergency department waiting times. In my ministerial statement this morning, I announced what we are doing in terms of continuing to build our EDs and continuing to recruit in health.

We all know that the opposition has taken a certain view in relation to privatisations. There are about 12,000 people working in those proposed businesses and, as we know, the Premier has indicated they will grow, just like the Brisbane Airport has. In about a four-year period from I think September 2005, off the top of my head, to April 2009, we employed that entire number of people—that is, 12,000 workers—as new doctors and nurses in Queensland Health alone.

We will continue to invest in Queensland Health, in building and in employing more people, and we will do it at rate better than others. We have the best elective surgery waiting lists in Australia. Our emergency waiting times are improving all the time, but there is still further to go. We will keep on working on this to make sure that Queensland is still the place that will attract the 2,000 people a week who are voting with their feet and moving here, and that is because of this Bligh government.

Queensland Economy

Ms NELSON-CARR: My question is to the Premier. The Premier has taken tough decisions to see Queensland through the global financial crisis. Can the Premier report on any signs that there is light at the end of the tunnel for the Queensland economy?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Mundingburra. The member for Mundingburra understands, coming as she does from an economy that has felt the impacts not only from a downturn in the mining sector but from the collapse of an organisation like Storm, that this is real. This is affecting real people and we need to look forward with optimism.

These are difficult times but as I outlined yesterday in my answer in relation to building approvals, there are some signs of green shoots in the Queensland economy. Coal is the commodity that has been facing some of the most difficulties, but there are some tentative signs that the industry is firing up. Let me go through the numbers. Abbot Point has seen tonnage throughput rise from 0.7 megatons in April to 1.4 megatons in May. Hay Point has seen throughput rise from 6.9 megatons in April to 8.5 megatons in May. In total, our coal ports saw 12.6 megatons throughput in April and this rose to 15.5 megatons in May. That is a 23 per cent increase in coal tonnage in the month of May. Trade is still very volatile and many of our biggest trading partners are still in recession, but these are clear signs and very encouraging signs of green shoots in the economy.

There are green shoots appearing elsewhere, however. Leadership aspirations are no doubt blooming on the other side of the House. Spring is coming early. We could not have seen clearer evidence of a leadership set-up than what we saw here yesterday. The thinker in residence supplied the strategy. The thinker in residence supplied the speech. The Leader of the Opposition delivered it as styled and as written.

There has been a lot of speculation in this place about what front-ending might look like and what it might feel like when it happens to you. What we got yesterday was the best example of front-ending I have ever seen. It was front-ending par excellence. The Leader of the Opposition was front-ended. He will be made de-necessary at the very first chance that the member for Southern Downs gets. The member for Southern Downs said that he would front-end jobs. Well, he is going to start as he means to continue. He is going to front-end the Leader of the Opposition. He started it yesterday. Let us watch him continue.

Northern Missing Link

Mrs MENKENS: My question is to the Minister for Transport. I refer to the proposed Northern Missing Link project connecting Gooneylla to Newlands, the delay of which has meant 1,000 potential job losses. Will the minister take responsibility for the jobs lost?

Ms NOLAN: Yet another shadow minister for transport. In recent days we have had a range of shadow ministers for transport on the other side of the House. I have had questions in this chamber from the member for Warrego, and from the next and former Leader of the Opposition in his capacity as the 'shadow' shadow minister for transport. The member for Gregory has been putting out press releases in the transport portfolio, as has our friend 'Mr Hopper the Swapper'.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You will have to refer to the member by his correct title.

Ms NOLAN: Certainly, Mr Speaker. Now the member for Burdekin is the 'shadow' shadow minister for transport. How could that be?

The real shadow minister for transport yesterday asked me a hard-hitting question about the current investigation into the Cairns tilt train. She asked when we would have an update into the investigation of the Cairns tilt train, and I answered the question to the best of my ability. I said that, as I recall, this information is all on the public record. I said that quite recently my director-general, in his capacity as the rail safety regulator, updated public information as to when that report would be released.

I came out of this House thinking, 'Surely everybody knows that,' so I went and checked. In Google I typed the words 'Cairns tilt train investigation', which are the key words you would use if you were trying to find out information. The first thing that came up was a media release from my director-general dated Thursday, 30 April—some time ago now—updating members of the public. The media release states—

At this stage I expect that the final independent investigation report will be released to me as the Rail Safety Regulator in November ...

This is a matter of public record. No wonder everybody wants to be the shadow minister for transport, because it is not hard.

In response to the member's question, this is a question that I have answered in this House before. That is, the government wants to see this project happen, but it will happen on commercial terms because Queensland Rail is a commercial entity. Right now Queensland Rail is continuing to negotiate with proponents of the project, and it will proceed on that basis. When there are commercial underwriters for this project, it will be built. Nothing has changed.

Jobs

Ms STONE: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Could the Treasurer outline the Bligh government's commitment to job support and creation for Queenslanders?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Springwood for her question. As I outlined to the parliament yesterday, this government is moving ahead putting in place Green Army projects even before the kick-off date of 1 July to give unemployed and young Queenslanders a chance to get into work, to gain skills and to undertake projects of worth to our state. The Premier earlier this week spoke about the moving forward of the LNG industry with the critical contract signing by Santos—the potential for thousands of jobs in Gladstone and spin-off jobs that will flow through the economy and through the community as this government puts all efforts to the front line of supporting jobs in the community and ensuring we have the positive solutions to fight against the negative tides flowing from the global recession.

What we heard earlier this week was a pledge for positive solutions from the opposition. As I pointed out to the parliament yesterday, if you go to the LNP's website and click on 'Positive Solutions' you come up with 'Error 404. Page not found'. It might surprise members of the House that, indeed, contrary to public opinion, action has been taken on this front over the last 24 hours. A visit to the LNP website this morning revealed that they have taken down the 'Positive Solutions' page. They have made it official. They have officially given up on coming up with any positive policies. They still have the 'State Policies' tag there. If you click on that one, you still get 'Error 404. Page not found; under construction'.

It came as a massive surprise to the people of Queensland that we saw such a lack of clarity, a lack of vision and a lack of positive solutions from the opposition this week. It came as a surprise to everybody apart from maybe one person. The one person who was not surprised was the shadow Treasurer, the member for Clayfield, because he had it picked from the start. Not only did he say early this week in a delicious set-up that what we will see is positive solutions; he knew what was coming because back on 1 April when asked by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* what he had that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Langbroek, did not have, Mr Nicholls said 'guts'. Well, he got that right back on 1 April. That was no April Fools joke, and it is right today.

What we have seen this week is the equivalent of the dentist without his shirt on: 'This man is a dentist and we can't show you his policies.' When he emulates the hero shot, the 'Iron-Borg' shot, turn around and you can see it there: the dentist shot from the back, barebacked: 'This man is a dentist and we can't show you his policies.'

Opposition members interjected.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I know it is Friday, and I know we are all excited about the weekend. Let's see if we can get through question time together.

Koala Sustainability

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Will the minister advise how many koalas are now left in the Redlands and explain why this government excessively cleared koala habitat on the site of the future Thornlands south state school?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat, Minister. I will wait until I have complete order before you start.

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. The Bligh government is very committed to supporting the koala habitat here in Queensland. We know that we are at a crisis point when it comes to the koala population. That is why since I became the minister I called together the Koala Task Force and met with many of the stakeholders, who are very passionate about this issue. Since I met with the Koala Task Force I have also met with my colleague the minister for planning. We have been working together on strategies to address this situation.

With regard to the school, despite what the LNP has been saying everywhere, we have made it very clear that, when it comes to urgent infrastructure that the state needs, we are going to continue to build that. That is not a secret; that is something that we have had on the public record for over six months. It is interesting because we do plan. We have a Koala Task Force strategy. That is what we do on this side of the House: we plan.

What we have seen this week is what the LNP really stands for. It stands for let us not plan: let us not plan to deal with the global economic crisis, let us not plan to deal with the challenges of climate change, let us not plan to deal with education, let us not plan for everything. The opposition has come into this House calling for us to take action—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. We will wait until we have order again. The honourable the minister can resume. Start the clock.

Ms JONES: What we see here is an opposition that continues to ask the government to fund projects and additional things when it has no suggestion as to how we do that. A key element of the Koala Task Force strategy—what we committed in December—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides of the House will come to order.

Ms JONES: Back in December and again since I as the new minister called the Koala Task Force together, the state government has committed to continuing extensive koala habitat mapping. That is what we are doing right now. Once we have the mapping completed, that will inform government decision making about habitat and what needs to be retained. Once again, this demonstrates that we are a government committed to planning and dealing with the issues. What we have seen from the opposition extensively this week is that the LNP stands for let us not plan: let us not plan for an emissions trading scheme, let us not plan—

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gympie, I am having trouble hearing the minister. I would say this to the honourable minister: it is very hard for the chair if you are critical of the opposition. They are entitled to respond to that criticism.

Ms JONES: Once again, this is a serious issue. Earlier this week in the House I was talking about a boy who died because of a dingo attack and members opposite made dingo calls.

(Time expired)

Health Services

Mr MOORHEAD: Can the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health inform the House of the importance of investing in the health of Queenslanders and planning for the future?

Mr LUCAS: In 2008-09 the government is spending \$8.35 billion in health and \$6 billion in infrastructure. Health policy is an important thing. As we know, the Leader of the Opposition is a health professional himself. I decided to see what sort of policy ideas he might have. We know that he is speaking to the Media Club in two weeks. Part of his self-styled invitation states that he is a man of policy substance—fluoride, smoking in cars and the like. If honourable members want to find out a little bit more about the Leader of the Opposition there is a very useful website, jplangbroek.com. I went to his website to see what I could find. There were a couple of speeches and that sort of thing. Was there any policy? No. I can tell honourable members what is there; there are a few photos. There are a lot of photos—in fact, there are 194 photos on his website. Look at these individual photos. There he is, the Leader of the Opposition handsome in policy thought, the Leader of the Opposition in a funny mood and the Leader of the Opposition in the corridors of power.

Mr Schwarten: Are there pictures of that cracker speech yesterday?

Mr LUCAS: Yes, his budget speech was so good he has photos about the budget, but he has no new initiatives arising from the budget. His website and these photos are like the website of a Gold Coast modelling agency, not like a Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Spence: Is there an ironing board?

Mr LUCAS: No. I note that the former Leader of the Opposition, the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition, had his photos staged with an iron. No, it is the Gold Coast modelling agency, not boofy beefcakes from the bush.

Every soldier has a field marshal's bat in his kit bag. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, of course, has the iron and the iron has been plugged in. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has got that iron nice and warm and over the next few weeks he will be striking while it is hot.

Tabled paper: Photos from the Leader of the Opposition's website [\[451\]](#).

Tabled paper: Bundle of photos of Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition [\[452\]](#).

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides of the House will come to order.

Purchase of Motor Vehicles, REVS Check

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Transport. It is essential that REVS checks are conducted prior to the purchase of a private vehicle to ensure the vehicle is unencumbered and has not been stolen. However, as it is highly unlikely that the government is selling stolen vehicles, I ask the minister why is it necessary when purchasing one of the thousands of vehicles from QFleet for the purchaser to pay for this REVS check?

Ms NOLAN: The process for purchasing a vehicle is standard regardless of from whom a person is making that purchase. I think it really is appropriate that we establish a standard process for the purchasing of vehicles so that the same standard applies across-the-board, whether it is on the private market itself, whether it is buying a former government vehicle or whether it is buying a vehicle that was funded by a government agency. Frankly, I think it makes sense that the standard should be the same for the purchase of all vehicles.

Healthier and Greener Queensland

Ms DARLING: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. Will the minister advise the House what initiatives his department is undertaking to promote a healthier, greener Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, you have two minutes.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for a very good part of our Toward Q2 agenda for a healthier Queensland. In our department we have taken it very seriously and no more seriously than we have at the Executive Building where, on the Premier's initiative, the fire stairwells were opened so that public servants can use the stairs instead of the lift, saving energy. Indeed, as I understand it, the Premier is one of the most frequent users of the stairs, leading by example. It is a similar case at the Neville Bonner Building and 61 Mary Street where bike racks have been constructed for 351 bikes. Showering facilities have also been constructed so that public servants who want to cycle to work can then have a shower and again help save the environment—a much greener outcome sitting with Q2.

Ms Spence: So is the Minister for Public Works a cyclist?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, I am, but not as good as the Leader of the House who cycles frequently into town. She and her husband were recently at the Capricornia Coast and stayed with us and they set new records in cycling. I do not get into it.

I can tell members while we are on the subject of bikes that it will not be long before those over there are chanting in unison, 'JP, on your bike.' If you have ever seen an undertakers' picnic, there it was yesterday. It would have put a glass eye to sleep, the effort by the—

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Speaking of patting on the back, at least Brutus patted Caesar on the back—even though he had a knife! The Leader of the Opposition in waiting could not manage to do that yesterday. I have been around this place for a long time.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Absolutely. I get to listen to some boring speeches. I have heard some rip-tearers over the years, but nothing could beat that yesterday.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thankfully, the time for question time has ended.

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING BILL

First Reading

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.31 am): I present a bill for an act for a framework to integrate planning and development assessment so that development and its effects are managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable, and for related 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: Sustainable Planning Bill [\[453\]](#).

Tabled paper: Sustainable Planning Bill, explanatory notes [\[454\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.31 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The introduction of the Sustainable Planning Bill 2009 is a landmark moment for the Bligh government. This legislation is a key milestone in implementing significant reform in Queensland's land use planning and development framework—the most significant and comprehensive reform in over a decade since the integrated framework was introduced in 1997. With continued high population growth, we need to ensure Queensland's planning and development legislation establishes a quick and efficient process which stimulates our economy, while protecting the lifestyle for which our state is renowned.

The Sustainable Planning Bill 2009 is part of a review that overhauls and replaces the Integrated Planning Act, IPA, 1997. The proposed bill will be supported by an associated package of regulation and statutory guidelines that will provide further guidance about the implementation of the legislative changes and enable more flexibility into the planning system.

In February 2006, the state government commenced a major and comprehensive review of IPA and IDAS from a broader perspective to challenge its effectiveness and identify opportunities for significant improvement. From consultation with stakeholders it was clear that IPA had become too process driven and needed major reform. That is what we have delivered. The new legislation will ensure the state and local governments are responsive to rapidly changing needs.

IPA served its purpose by bringing together more than 30 separate pieces of planning and development legislative arrangements into one act. It introduced a contemporary performance based planning framework that encouraged innovation and flexibility, and set time frames for efficiency. But times have changed. After a decade, the planning system is under pressure to manage continuing rapid growth and changing demographics and 21st century challenges like climate change.

This extensive stakeholder consultation about planning reform identified the need for legislative, operational and cultural change to give Queensland the high performance system it deserves. In August 2007, the government released the implementation report *Planning for a prosperous Queensland: A reform agenda for planning and development in the Smart State* that addressed these and other issues identified through the review. Almost half of the 80 reform actions required legislative change. Further consultation on the implementation of these legislative, operational and cultural change reforms has been ongoing for the past two years.

Underpinning the delivery of the operational and cultural changes, this bill will significantly improve our current framework by increasing accountability, coordination and integration, effectiveness, efficiency and capacity for delivery of sustainable outcomes. It is key to ensuring a clear line of sight from state and regional plan priorities to development decision making on individual sites, with streamlined processes to achieve clarity for the community, industry and government.

This will achieve better planned communities, faster development on the ground, preserve valuable environmental values and places of scenic beauty, and economic benefits from greater certainty of investment and development to cost reductions realised from clearer, faster development assessment. This new planning legislation is evolutionary, not revolutionary. The key concepts of IPA remain sound and contemporary—that is, it is integrated, performance based and relies on the three-tiered approach to planning; state, regional and local elements.

These results are indicative of the invaluable input provided by the planning reform reference panel, the innovators and early adopters group, state agencies reference group, planners peer review work group and the legal peer review work group. This bill is very much a reflection of their advice and suggestions. I would like to formally thank the members of these groups for their involvement in the process. This extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders ensured that the bill introduced here today achieves as broad an array of benefits as possible to the planning industry, local governments and to the community.

With the help of their involvement, stakeholders have enabled the state government to strike an appropriate balance between the diversity of stakeholder issues and concerns, and the government's desire to deliver a comprehensive, workable and efficient legislative framework. The proposed legislative framework supports the long-term benefits of effective state and regional planning to guide localised planning with clear linkages across all plans and policies, and ensures an array of quick switches to move appropriate development applications through the system more efficiently and effectively. This new framework will improve plan making and development assessment by ensuring outcomes are achieved as quickly as possible, while also ensuring that the system remains transparent, equitable and consultative.

Queensland needs to be at the forefront to ensure its planning and development legislation continues to keep pace with the demands facing state and local government planning and development systems, particularly in the high growth areas of the state. This bill delivers flexibility in the processes and systems to allow for faster responses by the state government and local councils to address emerging needs.

The improved framework offers accountability. It makes all stakeholders accountable for their actions with a no-nonsense planning framework that drives a culture of working together. Better and clearer understanding of the roles, responsibilities and interests of all relevant parties help provide an accountable framework. Public reporting of specific actions also helps ensure an accountable framework.

Applicants have a responsibility to provide the information that will enable efficient and effective assessment. Assessment managers, usually local governments, have a responsibility to assess applications within a timely manner and ensure the level of assessment is appropriate for the application. Referral agencies, usually state government agencies, have new responsibilities to ensure state interests are expressed in an appropriate state planning instrument and avoid overregulation that unduly delays assessment time frames. They also need to become involved more at the plan-making stage rather than the development assessment phase.

Community has new responsibilities to get involved in plan making and not leave their issues and interest to the development assessment phase. The legislation provides for efficient community engagement at all appropriate stages and requires stakeholder involvement to make it effective. The new system drives a more coordinated and integrated approach—an integrated system also needs coordination to deliver innovative on-the-ground solutions. The system is intended to better enable the delivery of innovative and sustainable solutions, and activate areas designated for development.

The new planning and development system is more effective, built to be 'fit for purpose' and appropriate for the complexity of the issue at stake. This means that, if there is a simple issue, it follows a simple process. It is supported by fit-for-purpose tools for decision making. Combined, they enable calibrated decision making and quicker decision making. Providing for clear strategic intent in planning schemes establishes the strategic context for this decision making, further improving effectiveness. New fast-track assessment mechanisms, such as compliance assessment, get the simple applications

through the system faster, enabling better use of scarce resources on the more complex and innovative proposals, driving councils' capacity to manage these innovative developments and see them on the ground sooner. A regulation will prescribe the types of developments which will be the subject of compliance assessment.

The introduction of a deemed approval mechanism in relation to appropriate code assessable applications places clear responsibility with the decision makers and relevant agencies to allocate their resources appropriately and fulfil their roles within the expected time frames. The expectation is that, from this, social and economic benefits flow, with greater certainty for applicants as well as faster on-the-ground delivery, providing more choice to consumers and a more competitive marketplace for new homebuyers. The system is more efficient through streamlining processes at the plan-making and development assessment levels. An efficient planning system will help the state's economy to respond to the global financial crisis, achieved through:

- streamlining at plan-making and development assessment levels leading to simpler, clearer and better integrated planning that produces more certain development assessment, and this results in greater certainty, faster processing, and reduced costs for both applicant and council, improving housing affordability;
- clarity in plan making that 'front loads' plans with clear strategic intent and consistent provisions and structure and clearer and better integrated state interests in planning, and this certainty and integration provides the platform for faster development assessment and cost benefits; and
- greater flexibility and responsiveness in that the streamlined systems, including the movement of processes out of a legislative framework, give the state greater flexibility to adjust the framework and its state level planning interests to meet emerging needs of the state and other stakeholders.

Greater efficiencies in development assessment and therefore achieving on-the-ground faster delivery will be achieved through the abovementioned changes, including:

- reduction in IDAS time frames;
- deemed approval of certain code assessable applications;
- establishing processes for allowing missed referrals to be identified and to 'catch up' rather than requiring the IDAS process to start again;
- the introduction of compliance assessment;
- increased ministerial powers to direct decision makers to speed up decision-making processes;
- expanding the jurisdiction of the Building and Development Dispute Resolution Committee, previously called the Building and Development Tribunal; and
- giving the Planning and Environment Court greater discretion in dealing with procedural issues and imposing costs on commercial competitors.

One of the key changes to the purpose of the act is that the system delivers sustainable outcomes. Sustainability takes into account environmental impacts such as the effects of development on climate change. Climate change is an emerging challenge because of issues such as the projected increase of extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods and indeed rising sea levels. For the first time, climate change has been specifically recognised in the bill as a key factor influencing the sustainability of our communities by referencing it as a prime example of a key planning and community issue that needs to be taken into account in planning and development assessment processes.

Outcomes to be achieved by the bill are significantly improved and streamlined land use planning and development framework and systems which reduce costs and get development on the ground sooner while still providing protection for the community and the environment.

Planning is crucial for all levels of government in managing sustainable growth across Queensland. Mechanisms to achieve state level planning outcomes are enhanced such as accelerated and clearer state planning instrument development processes and enhanced ministerial powers to intervene in the planning and development process such as directly amending local planning instruments where an urgent issue arises.

The precedence and relationship between state planning instruments has been confirmed and indeed clarified. Local governments will have a substantial role to play as part of the ongoing reform agenda, and much of the legislative changes in this bill will enable these bodies to be more flexible in responding to planning demands in their local areas.

The introduction of improved priority infrastructure planning processes will better assist councils to forward plan and resource their communities' infrastructure needs into the future. Limited prohibition has been introduced to apply in prescribed circumstances, enhancing the certainty of development outcomes in local communities. Even the plan-making process for local government has been streamlined to allow for a more state-wide standardised approach to how councils classify precincts and their planning terminology. Moving components of the plan-making processes from the legislation to subordinate legislation and statutory guidelines offers the state greater flexibility and responsiveness to address emerging issues in plan making across the local councils.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes for councils will be in the development assessment processes. Development assessment processes are enhanced by the clarity and certainty achieved by improved plan making through more applications progressing through simpler processes, such as the new compliance assessment track; greater certainty in making applications; and more reliable and compliant applications being made. Time and cost benefits with flow-on economic effects result in faster, better integrated development on the ground. This new framework allows councils to get on with the job and will allow for government to do business better and focus planning investment on major state-wide issues such as sustainability, housing affordability, climate change and population growth.

To reiterate the significance of this reform, this legislation is a key milestone in implementing significant reform in Queensland's land use planning and development framework—the most significant and comprehensive reform in over a decade since the integrated framework was first introduced in 1997. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gibson, adjourned.

PRIVILEGE

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 97

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (10.46 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I note the report tabled by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee—report No. 97—in referring to a matter that was placed on the record in a question without notice that I asked the Deputy Premier last year. I note that the committee has indicated that there is no evidence that in the question without notice asked on 11 September 2008 I intended to mislead the House; that there was no breach of privilege or contempt in this matter; and that the House take no further action. However, I do note that the committee has recommended that I clarify the statement in the preamble to the question without notice in that I relied upon additional sources to the supplementary EIS report. I am happy to table for the benefit of the House a draft briefing paper by Professor Stuart White from the Institute for Sustainable Futures titled 'A dam at Traveston Crossing presents a major risk of increased greenhouse emissions: worse than desalination'. I note that the table in this document shows that Traveston Crossing Dam has estimated greenhouse emissions up to 400,000 while desalination has estimated greenhouse emissions—

Ms SPENCE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I think this has gone beyond the matter of privilege and the member is now debating a case and this is not the government business before the House that we are meant to be debating.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Honourable member, you are tabling the document?

Mr GIBSON: I will table the document for the benefit of the House.

I appreciate the conclusion by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee that I did not mislead the House.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'A dam at Traveston Crossing presents a major risk of increased greenhouse emissions: worse than desalination' [[455](#)].

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL

FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 18 June (see p. 1134), on motion of Mr Fraser—
That the bills be now read a second time.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (10.47 am): I have been in this place for 11 years now—I have been on the planet for a slightly longer period than that—but I have never experienced such dire economic conditions as we are experiencing now, and of course these economic conditions are not of our making. Many decisions that we have made as a government have created strong debate, as we are witnessing, but I think it is fair to say that if we are going to manoeuvre our way through these uncertain times we have to do exactly what we are doing—that is, securing and creating jobs and running the biggest infrastructure program in generations. When the private sector loses confidence and when it cannot invest, responsible governments cannot just sit on their hands and watch the country implode. They cannot take a step back. Rather, they have to step up to the mark and do exactly what we are doing, and that is invest in infrastructure and invest in jobs. Our record \$18.2 billion building program is exactly that and will support 127,000 jobs.

As we have been hearing, these are very dark times, and obviously some very tough decisions have had to be made when putting together this budget. But it puts Queenslanders' jobs first by investing in a strong future. Members should not forget that our election commitments are still being delivered. We have to do this very quickly and that is why we are streamlining, for instance, the local government grants from 12 to one. That means extreme red tape reduction and a tax saving for Queenslanders. We have a new criteria of taking community interest into account. That will require that local governments have to report on the progress that they make and the outcomes/milestones that they have reached. We have committed over \$800 million over five years, which is actually more than promised initially. So we want strong and accountable local governments that deliver for Queensland communities in the most efficient way possible. As I have said, this program will continue on past 2011. These approval changes during such a critical time of economic upheaval will lead to sustainable construction, which will go a very long way towards restoring economic confidence, which is at a bit of a low.

Let us not forget the backdrop from which we operate. The budget has taken a \$15 billion hit over four years. That is one-third of our annual budget. Imagine if the family budget had to be stripped by one-third. The whole family would have to be part of that solution—to find some outcomes during tough times. The same thing has to be said for Queensland. We all have to work together to overcome as best we can the problems and the burdens of the global financial crisis, which we did not create in the first place.

In my electorate, and indeed in the wider Townsville community, jobs and infrastructure are the keys to successfully managing and manoeuvring our way through such unprecedented times. Let me stress that the government's building programs that are going on in my town are the only show in town. This government could have scrapped those same building projects. This government could have done that and, yes, the budget bottom line would have looked a lot better. But the unemployment levels would have shot through the roof. Instead, our government has committed to everything it can to keep people employed as well as to create employment. I suggest that we are more than pulling our weight to stimulate our economy.

Given the commitments to Townsville and the big-ticket items such as the cruise ship terminal, the port access road and work on the mall and the Jezzine Barracks, it goes without saying that the fact that those projects are continuing the way they are illustrates the interest and the commitment that this government has in the Townsville region. My electorate of Mundingburra is unique. It does not have what I consider—I do not like to use the word 'heart'—a centre in that it does not have a council and it is not surrounded by water, although it has a river running through it. But the seat of Mundingburra represents Australian working people and families. Those people may go out of the electorate to work, but they live there and they experience all of the difficulties and the situations that every family in Australia faces.

When I look at this budget, it is fantastic to think, 'The wider Townsville economy is still going to be kept afloat and supported by this government and jobs will still be created in my electorate.' We still have capital works projects, such as the Douglas arterial, which will be duplicated. We have repairs and maintenance being done on Charles Street, bikeways and footpaths being constructed in Annandale, the Dalrymple Road and Banfield Drive intersection being redeveloped and, of course, as has been said many times in this House, we have the Townsville Hospital redevelopment. We have numerous social housing projects, which are up and running, and we have school maintenance occurring in a number of schools in my electorate, including at the ATSI Learning and Engagement Centre, Aitkenvale State School, Annandale State School, Cranbrook State School, Heatley Secondary College, Heatley State School, Mundingburra State School, the Townsville Community Learning Centre and the Vincent State School.

We have also continued to develop skills such as the \$1.76 million trade centre at Heatley Secondary College, vocational training and training opportunities by establishing the school industry trade centre at a cost of \$1.86 million and constructing another two tennis courts in Townsville. We are continuing to support industries, such as the research infrastructure project of the Skin Cancer Research Group at JCU as well as improving services with the overall intention to eventually bring the budget back to surplus.

Let us not forget those who are fortunate enough to have jobs. This budget is designed to keep those people in jobs as well as create jobs. If people are thinking about buying a house, they will receive an increase in the first home buyer vacant land concession. There will also be electricity rebates for pensioners, which are being increased by more than 15 per cent.

When we consider that every week 2,000 people still come to Queensland to live, to call Queensland their home, yet we still pay an average of \$400 less per person per year than any other state in tax, we realise that this budget is hard, it is tough, but it is part of a determined plan to regain our AAA rating and to restore the budget to surplus whilst still protecting jobs, building schools, hospitals and roads today and into the future.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (10.55 am): I am pleased to participate in the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2009. This is the most important budget that has been considered in generations. Upon my election on 21 March, I advised my electorate that my first priority would be to deliver to them our election promises. The passing of this budget will do just that. We will protect jobs and bring investments into our city that will maintain our excellent reputation as a sound place in which to invest and a great place in which to live. It is my intention that Townsville receives the capital and social investments that it needs to continue in its key role in North Queensland.

I am pleased to note that in this bill Townsville will be receiving much needed investments in the areas of health, housing, roads and education. This investment represents an investment in the future of my city. In this budget, Townsville will also receive significant investment in infrastructure projects, \$18.9 million for the Flinders Street redevelopment, \$2 million of a total \$10 million contribution to the redevelopment of Jezzine Barracks, and \$70 million this year of a total \$170 million capital investment for the redevelopment of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. This project alone will create in excess of 1,000 jobs for Townsville people.

There will be \$4.5 million out of a total investment of \$5.73 million towards the Q150 extension of the Townsville Civic Theatre for our arts community. There will be a further \$47.3 million capital investment going towards the completion of the port access road. We all know in Townsville how vital that project is to the port of Townsville and also in terms of taking heavy vehicles off our residential streets.

During the election campaign and prior to that, the Flinders Street and Jezzine Barracks projects were both identified as priority projects by both the community and business sectors. Funding for these projects will have the obvious immediate benefit of creating jobs and a stimulus for the local economy, but they also represent a long-term strategic investment in Townsville's lifestyle, its tourism industries and its military heritage.

Townsville's schools are its community hubs. The Bligh Labor government is stepping up to the plate in this area and is adding to the federal government's investment in our schools. This budget will see nine schools in Townsville receive over \$1.27 million from the State Schools of Tomorrow initiative in much-welcomed maintenance funding. The budget also invests in our public libraries, with an allocation of \$741,000 to go towards the purchase of books for our communities to read. We see in this budget record investment and spending in housing and support services. Some \$10 million in capital expenditure in Townsville, a further \$5 million for Palm Island and additional money for maintenance and upgrade work will mean great things for those families who desperately need these houses.

In addition to the port access and North Ward arterial roads, I am pleased to support the investments in local roads that have been announced in this budget. The suburbs of Garbutt, Belgian Gardens, North Ward, Currajong and Mount Louisa will benefit from that investment. New roundabouts and traffic lights will assist in the flow of traffic and ease congestion around our growing city. It is pleasing that the residents in Landsborough and Cook streets, and Mooney and Hammett streets can look forward to the construction of new roundabouts in their neighbourhoods. There is good news also for my constituents on the Kirwan side of Mount Louisa, who will benefit from the installation of a roundabout at the very busy Dalrymple Road and Kern Brothers Drive intersection. I also welcome the investment in planning for the redevelopment of the Banfield Drive-Dalrymple Road intersection, which at present is highly congested at different times of the day.

There has been much debate about the need to do more in our health system. I support the capital investment in the Townsville Hospital for the provision of 78 additional beds. I am also excited and pleased to support the election commitment to the expansion of the neonatal ICU at Townsville Hospital so that we can care for our sick babies in North Queensland.

Ms Nelson-Carr: Dr John Whitehall will love that.

Ms JOHNSTONE: He will. Both Townsville City Council and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council will also receive essential support in the delivery of local government services in this budget. Investments in sewage and water treatment plants on Palm Island are welcome. Emergency services on Palm Island will receive a boost with the completion of a \$3.4 million joint facility on the island. The fire service and the SES will have a first-class facility from which to base their services including an appropriate control room for use during extreme weather events which, as we all know, happen regularly in the north.

One of the most precious resources North Queensland has is the Great Barrier Reef, and the Bligh Labor government is committed to protecting this environmental asset through the Great Barrier Reef protection package, which has a total investment of \$50 million over five years to implement a range of measures which will prevent broadscale reef pollution. I support this because anybody who knows anything about tropical North Queensland knows that the reef, The Strand in Townsville, Reef HQ, the Museum of Tropical Queensland and Magnetic Island attract thousands of tourists per year to our region. I am pleased to see \$200,000 going to Townsville Enterprise for marketing and product development for tourism and other industries in Townsville and the north.

The budget also supports our non-government and community organisations to continue to make their contributions to the social fabric that is Townsville. Organisations like Dancenorth, which is an internationally acclaimed dance company, and La Luna will continue to provide creative opportunities for our youth. In fact, members of my family have been involved in La Luna in the past.

Ms Nelson-Carr: And mine.

Ms JOHNSTONE: Yes, and the member for Mundingburra's. For a long time social workers, community workers and psychologists working in the community sector have been fighting for fair pay and conditions. I am very proud to support the initiatives in this bill that will provide fair pay for those workers. We all know how important the work is that they do in our communities and they have been undervalued for a long time. I am certainly pleased to support that aspect of the budget bills.

In closing, it was great to see in yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin* that Townsville Enterprise congratulated the government on delivering on election commitments and on investing \$1 billion in our region. I support the Treasurer's commitment to employment and protecting Queensland jobs through the infrastructure program and keeping communities like Townsville moving through these difficult times.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.02 am): I rise today to provide my support for the second Bligh-Fraser budget. I will try to keep my comments brief. I mentioned last year in my budget reply speech that I was keen to support the budget because it had all the fundamentals and hallmarks of a strong Labor budget—that is, huge spending increases for health, education, police, roads et cetera and, in addition, growth was also expected to continue, business confidence was high and the unemployment rate looked well under control.

Well, what a difference a year can make. For those who are unaware, the effects of the global financial crisis have hit not only Queensland but all world economies like a tsunami with equally devastating effect. However, I am pleased to advise that, although it is predicting a deficit, this budget has been framed around a number of strategies to return the budget to surplus in as quick a time as possible.

I can report to this House that my constituents feel that this budget has delivered for them and their families at this difficult time. Firstly, it was great to hear that this government is extending its support to first home owners right across Queensland who build their home. Specifically, I refer to the fact that a number of new measures have been introduced by the Treasurer, but the one that appeals to my constituents and me the most is the planned cuts to stamp duty for first home owners who build their home. This will effectively mean that a first-time homeowner who builds a house will save up to \$5,675 on the purchase of vacant land because transfer duty will be abolished for blocks of land worth up to \$250,000. When we add this bonus to the already available \$21,000 First Home Owners Grant, it spells good news for our young Queenslanders.

Closer to home, there are a couple of announcements that I want to touch on. These specifically relate to local projects which I consider will have significant positive effects for years to come. In particular, I want to applaud the government and the Premier on the wonderful initiative surrounding the Green Army.

The seat of Ipswich West was fortunate to attract the support of the local Ipswich City Council and as such will see the showgrounds located in the rural township of Rosewood turned into a sea of activity over the coming year. It is great to hear that \$471,000 has been granted to establish a regional equestrian centre at the showgrounds by providing opportunities in fencing, planting, drainage work et cetera for 30 unemployed people in three groups for up to 16 weeks each over a 12-month period.

The other initiative I raise today concerns the announcement of funding for the Western Ipswich bypass. This is one of many road infrastructure projects which will receive funding from the state budget as part of the Bligh government's massive building program. However, it is specifically significant to Ipswich and the surrounding area because it fits one more piece of the puzzle into the committed Amberley Aerospace Precinct.

The delivery of \$16.67 million in this budget to continue construction of a new two-lane sealed standard on the Western Ipswich bypass will deliver hundreds of jobs to the local area. Importantly, this will mean that initial planning and construction of a flyover to safely connect the Cunningham Highway with the Amberley Aerospace Precinct will commence in the coming year. It has been a dream of mine for some time to see the land south of the Amberley RAAF base developed into a precinct which will support hundreds, if not thousands, of highly skilled jobs to support our military and domestic aircraft. I know that the member for Ipswich also shares that vision.

I would now like to move on to another cost-saving initiative for small business announced the other day which seems to have slipped under the radar of some of our media commentators. Specifically I refer to the announcement that the government has increased its support for those businesses which employ apprentices and trainees right across Queensland. To do this, the Treasurer has announced that all apprentice and trainee wages will be excluded from an employer's total wages bill when calculating their payroll tax debt. However, that is not all. To make this a really attractive solution for business to maintain their apprentice and trainee numbers, the Treasurer has in fact offered an additional 25 per cent rebate of the total apprentice and trainee wages bill, which will also be deducted from the employer's total wages figure. When we add this initiative to the fact that Queensland businesses already face the highest threshold for the introduction of the payroll tax and the lowest tax rate, we can understand why business is so happy to support this government.

Before I move on, it is important that the House is aware that the government's 10 per cent training policy on all of our infrastructure projects will continue. What this means is that the young people of Queensland can be assured that their ability to partake in construction and building programs will be maximised for all government projects.

In the short time I have left I should also touch on a couple of other issues which I consider will have a huge impact on the state's future. Specifically, the announcement of 645 more doctors, nurses and health professionals, 350 more teachers and teacher aides, 203 more police and 50 more ambulance officers this year is an outstanding achievement considering the difficult economic times. In addition, the solar hot water scheme will deliver 200,000 solar hot-water systems at a fraction of the retail price, commencing on 1 July. As well, \$13 million has been allocated to increase rebates to pensioners to help with power bills and life-saving medical equipment. This will certainly be used wisely in my area of Ipswich West. This rebate will provide an extra \$25 per year in electricity rebates, \$52 per year for oxygen concentrators and \$35 per year for kidney dialysis machines.

I have a significant number of announcements concerning my state road network and of course more good news for my local schools in maintenance funding. However, I will leave these for another time.

Before I conclude today, I once again take the time to personally thank the Treasurer and the Premier for delivering on their promise to plan for Queensland's future and certainly my children's future. I commend the bills to the House.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (11.07 am): On 15 April 2008 it was said in this place—

... according to the latest Standard and Poor's review of the state's finances, a balance sheet that is not in a position to support growth in projects into the future as has happened in the past.

This is a serious situation that the opposition has been warning the government about for some time. We have indicated to the government that its poor management of spending was leading to a situation in which debt was mounting despite increasing revenue and that it would be forced to sell off the state's assets in order to fund matters which, under prudent management, ought to have been able to be funded from government revenue. We have been warning of that for some time.

These were words that I addressed to Appropriation Bill (No. 2) on 15 April 2008. I went on to say—

That has meant that we now have a fire sale of airport assets in an environment in which the market for such assets has significantly dried up.

The response recorded in *Hansard* from the other side is like that of Nelson Muntz: 'Ha, ha!' Even as late as 16 July 2008, which was months after I made that statement here, the Treasurer still did not have a clue. He told the parliament less than a year ago—

We provide a budget that has a surplus of \$809 million. And we provide a budget that maintains our competitive tax regime—
our competitive tax advantage—

and provides further relief aimed squarely at ensuring a success story over the last 12 months—indeed, over the last 12 years. More importantly, for the 13th year in a row we predict a gathering of pace in the Queensland economy that will once again see us outpacing the national economy and delivering what we believe to be a robust result to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

They were spinning it then and they are spinning it now. They do not have a clue. Every serious commentator realised that the storm clouds not only were gathering but were overhead by 16 July last year, yet this Treasurer did not have a clue.

I want to make some comments in relation to the Education budget. The LNP and I, as shadow education minister, are passionate about delivering the best education for Queensland students. We will not accept average or mediocre, but we will strive for Queensland students to have an education among the best in the world. Let me quote—

In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a pre-requisite.

These were the words of Barack Obama in the joint session of Congress on 24 February 2009, and nothing could be more relevant for the education system here in Queensland.

Let us have a look initially at the funding by the state government for educational activities within our schools. State appropriation for early schooling—which is prep to grade 3—is up only 4.3 per cent; state funding for middle schooling—which is grades 4 to 9, and this encompasses the majority of Queensland public school students—is up a meagre 2.5 per cent; and funding for senior schooling is up less than four per cent. Our schools are going to be run on the smell of an oily rag.

With a 4½ per cent pay rise already on the table for teachers—12½ per cent over three years—it is likely that the actual cash available within schools will contract. This will be further compounded by the fact that, even though the schools are doing poorly in relative terms, there is still a one per cent increase in student numbers in the government system, which is not accompanied by any real increase in budget appropriation. There will be no relief under this scenario for overcrowded classrooms or hard-pressed teachers in prep or remote or smaller schools who desperately need teacher aide assistance and no relief for the kids who are struggling to reach benchmarks and need more personalised attention.

I notice the government's spin doctors managed to get a headline out of ABC Radio which said education was one of the big winners. That is easy to do perhaps when you add a large, one-off chunk of federal money for capital works, such as school halls and the like, but these are funds which are not available for schools for their day-to-day teaching of students, for the provision of staff or for a range of other support services. It is also an allocation that will not be able to be continued going forward.

Following on from that meagre funding for the day-to-day operations of education, I had a look at teacher and school staff numbers, and it confirms what we already knew from the funding—that is, that staffing levels within our schools are stagnant and probably going backwards in many schools. The growth in staff numbers at state schools is less than half of one per cent—not even keeping pace with the modest rate of enrolment growth of around one per cent. Teachers and parents have a right to feel cheated, and particularly so in the light of the deceptive rhetoric that is continually pumped out by the Education spin doctors in this government.

Interestingly, the austerity being imposed on the coalface of education within our schools does not apply to the corporate office of Education Queensland, which managed to secure a seven per cent increase in staff—on the back of a 35 per cent increase in the previous year. It is teachers, schools and Queensland families that have been left to bear the brunt of the cutbacks.

There are a number of areas in which I harbour deep concern for students and their future. One in particular is Indigenous education. While 1,550 more students enjoyed the benefits of prep year, chilling figures in these budget papers show that 110—or three per cent—fewer Aboriginal people enjoyed the same benefit. The budget is an indictment of the standards that the government has delivered in Indigenous education. For example, more than half of Indigenous year 2 students are struggling with reading, and all year 2 measures for Indigenous reading, writing and numeracy actually declined. It is hard to imagine a group where we need to make more of an effort to address disadvantage than this group.

Another area of disadvantage which is declining alarmingly is youth apprenticeships. The whole area of apprenticeships and training looks to be a disaster, with a large decline in the number of new apprentices commencing—in fact, some 8,000 fewer new apprentices and an even more alarming 18 per cent decline in youth apprenticeships, down to just 16,000 apprenticeships. There is also a concerning rate of failure to complete, with 33 per cent of apprentices not completing their apprenticeships.

Enough has been written about standards and outcomes, and time will not permit me to elaborate here, but I notice the minister tried to claim that we have been silent on education after he visited the LNP website home page and said he found nothing. That is a real reflection on literacy in Queensland, when the Minister for Education goes to the home page of our website and is not able to read well enough to see prominent on the home page my response to the Masters report, or perhaps the poor fellow's eyesight is failing. This reminds me that, despite the passage of significant time, the minister has been unable to respond to the Masters report. I guess it takes a fair bit of time to work out how you are going to spin your way out of this one. I rather think, however, that the true explanation is that the minister did not want to put his response to the Masters report out prior to a sitting of parliament because his response would not have stood up to debate in this place.

Of course, the smoke and mirrors in the Education budget here is the fact that it is propped up by one-off federal funding for specified purposes, not available going forward. But the administration of those funds has been an exercise in demonstrating how a bankrupt government rorts funds from the children and families in Queensland. The rate for building a structure such as a school gymnasium or hall, according to the authority on such matters, Rawlinson, is about \$1,500 a square metre. For the school hall paid for by the P&C at Holland Park—which was 800 square metres inside and 200 square metres undercover—the total building cost with all fees, project management, design, everything, was \$1.3 million. So this is clearly achievable, and this costing is repeated in projects across the private sector and in private schools.

But have a look at how the government manipulates the figures. Take the school at Beechmont, which is to have a 610 square metre structure comprising a hall, a small kitchen and some toilets. The federal money allocated for this project is \$1.9 million and these are the costings. There is 10 per cent deducted for allowances and contingency, which is a \$200,000 deduction leaving \$1.721 million. Then in calculating the cost per square metre, only the cost of building the hall—\$904,200 for the 610 square metre hall—is used, which gives the government's figure of \$1,482 a square metre. But of course they have left out the fact that they withdrew not only \$200,000, but \$468,000 for what is described in their costings as 'other'. Half the cost of building the hall is described as 'other' and the only details next to that is that it was for prelims and fees.

But it does not stop there. Another \$246,000 is taken for what is called the site-specific component. But none of these costs—half of the \$1.9 million—are included in the cost per square metre for constructing this project. If calculated correctly, \$1.9 million divided by 610 square metres, the taxpayer is paying over \$3,000 a square metre to build a school hall.

But wait, there is more. The government-appointed builder, with no transparent tender process at all, informs the dedicated and hardworking hall committee and the school that \$1.9 million may not be sufficient to complete the project. There is not enough money for doors, windows and shutters. Therefore, you do not get a lock-up stage hall at Beechmont. For \$1.9 million you get an undercover play area. This incompetence, or worse, is being repeated on hundreds of projects across the state of Queensland. This is one of the biggest wastes of public money in our state's history, and the losers are schools, teachers, students and families who could have had so much more from this large one-off payment.

In the limited time available to me, I would like to make some remarks on the budget and my electorate of Moggill, because there are a number of relevant entries. There is an appropriation for \$2.77 million to move the Kenmore Fire Station to Pullenvale Road. There is considerable unrest in the local area about the closure of the Kenmore Fire Station, but under present arrangements people in Moggill and Bellbowrie do not have appropriate fire protection. I would note that the newly constructed state government Moggill Road flooded twice in the last year. The site of the new fire station at Pullenvale Road was cut off by floodwaters on these occasions from the communities of Kenmore and Chapel Hill. This is a matter that clearly has not been considered by the government. I have made it clear to the minister that a much preferred outcome is that Kenmore be left with a fire station and that an emergency services centre with fire and ambulance services be established in the Moggill area in view of the fact that that area does not currently have any effective emergency ambulance cover, nor is it covered effectively for fire protection.

In the budget there is an allocation for a multipurpose community hall at the Moggill State School. This allocation was made last year of some \$400,000, but apart from \$1,000 it remains completely unspent. The Moggill community appears to have been successful in getting some federal funding for this hall, but the question that remains to be asked is: what is going to happen with the state allocation from last year which was promised but not spent when federal money is applied to this project? Is the state simply going to claw back this money, or will it be delivered to the Moggill community as promised? Perhaps a good starting point would be a fire station and an ambulance station complex which is so desperately needed. I have written to the minister on this point to ask him what is happening with the money that has been allocated to my constituents.

There is an allocation for \$3.5 million for acquisition of land for quarry haulage. This relates I think to a number of quarry haulage roads, but one is the Kholo Creek resource in my electorate. This is a double-edged sword because nobody in the Kholo-Mount Crosby area wants a bar of a massive quarry resource. There are also residents whose property is earmarked for the haulage route who find their property unsaleable, and the opportunity to sell it to the government may save some of these people from a desperate situation. So it is a two-edged sword.

I see that \$2 million has been allocated for the completion of the concept planning for the Kenmore bypass. This is a little strange in that the study group which has conducted the study, and which seems to have done so fairly vigorously, has not made any recommendation at all. We still await that recommendation very eagerly. It is a little uncertain exactly what that \$2 million means if we do not have any access to that.

One issue in relation to the Kenmore bypass funding is the concern that local residents have expressed about the possible closure of Gem Road. I have made it very clear that I do not want to see Gem Road closed. There is no other easily accessible route along there. I note comments from the government that it will reconsider the position on the closure of Gem Road. I am pleased that the government has said that. I would encourage it to take that course of action should it come to that.

There are a couple of absences which I hope we might see later in the RIP. There is one in particular that has been promised, and that is signalisation and a pedestrian crossing at Birken Road and Moggill Road in the suburb of Bellbowrie, where tragically we saw a fatal pedestrian accident some time ago. This is clearly needed and has been promised, but I do not see any commitment at this stage to ensure it happens. I appeal to the minister to make sure it happens quickly.

There is a similar situation about which I have met with the Minister for Main Roads, and I appreciate his time in relation to it. We have a dangerous and potentially fatal situation at the corner of Grandview Road and Moggill Road. I believe his department agreed with my position. Their idea of moving the bus stop would make it worse, because pedestrians would be crossing like Brown's cows over a wide distance of Moggill Road. I would urge the government to find the \$1.5 million necessary to possibly save a life. Given the waste that we see in the budget, to save a life in a situation that we both agree is potentially very dangerous is a pretty modest investment.

Because of the ridiculous situation where we are forced to debate so many bills today, I have not had time to move on to a range of things such as the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the introduction of a petrol tax and the asset sales. Nobody could possibly expect a shadow minister to be able to deal with that many things in a meagre 20 minutes. One thing is for sure: the government went to an early election to hide these decisions from the people of Queensland. There is no doubt that the government was making these decisions when it went to the people of Queensland. There is no legitimacy in a government that misleads people at an election in order to be re-elected at an early election and then does all these things it has never told anyone about.

(Time expired)

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (11.27 am): The budget before the House which was introduced by the Treasurer a couple of days ago is a litany of Labor failures. It is a great representation of why generations of my constituents have feared a Labor government. It is a great representation of what Labor governments do when left in power and unchecked for a decade. Nobody should look for a greater example of what you get from a Labor government than that of the document that the Treasurer introduced into this parliament on Tuesday.

It is a document that is full of numbers and it has been covered in spin, but there are only three numbers that the people of Queensland need to remember. There are three numbers that sum up the extent of Labor's failure and the legacy of a decade of Labor government. The first is the deficit. This budget indicates that Queensland will have a \$13 billion deficit over the next four years. We will spend \$13 billion more than we earn. It is like a \$13 billion dollar bankcard bill.

We will engage in \$15 billion worth of forced asset sales at the bottom of a frozen market. It is a panicked asset sale worth \$15 billion. Finally, we will have \$85 billion worth of debt. Those three numbers—a \$13 billion deficit, \$15 billion in forced asset sales and an \$85 billion debt are the three numbers that the people of Queensland need to remember. They are the three numbers that the people of Queensland should not forget between now and the next time they have a chance to express their view about this Labor government—\$13 billion worth of deficit, \$15 billion worth of asset sales and \$85 billion worth of debt. \$85 billion is an incredible number. It is \$85,000 million worth of debt. That is Labor's legacy. That is what the people of Queensland have got from a decade of Labor government.

There are two messages that I want to send to my constituents and to the people of Queensland today. First, the people of Queensland should realise—and I think they do—that it does not need to be this way. It did not have to be this way. The fact that it is this way is the legacy of a decade of Labor government. The second message is that we did not get to this position in three months. That is the great untruth in the government's spin since this budget was introduced and even before that as it has sought to create some sort of a perception that this is inevitable and it has happened since the election. Of course it has not happened since the election. Of course the government strategists knew that the government was in a calamitous financial position. That was the reason the Premier went to an election some six months early—to ensure the people of Queensland were not able to make a decision about the government's performance when they knew all the facts.

It has become obvious since the election that this government has gone broke in a boom. Not only did it go broke in a boom; it went to an election before people realised that it had gone broke in a boom. It went broke in a boom and then raced off to an election before it had to tell the people we represent just how broke it was. Of course, the government cannot hide that when it has to come into the parliament and introduce a budget.

To avoid the public scrutiny of just how broke this government managed to get in what was the biggest boom in Queensland's history, we had to go to an early election—so that we had the election before we saw the Treasurer's budget. That, I think, is the height of deceit. It has probably magnified the anger out in the community. It has certainly magnified the anger amongst the communities that I represent. It has become so obvious that the government was so dishonest and so deceitful as to go to an election before it had to come into the parliament and demonstrate to the people of Queensland the extent to which it had gone broke in that resources boom.

I want to deal with those two things: firstly, the fact that it did not have to be this way. It is, as I said, a great untruth that has been behind the government's spin. I like to think that the Queensland economy is a bit like one of our stately old Queensland homes: it has been well built and made solid by successive coalition governments. It has been well built to withstand all of the elements that we could expect to test it. And so it has for so many years—for all of my life and even longer than that. People of my generation have had confidence in the Queensland economy and have known that we have a strong economy and that we are a low-tax state. We have been proud of that.

Like those grand old Queensland homes, the economy has stood strong and proud and provided us with the lifestyle that we have come to value. However, over the past 10 years the termites of Labor mismanagement have eaten away at that old Queensland. The termites of Labor mismanagement, the termites of successive Labor governments, have eaten away at the elements that have made the economy strong just as, if left uncared for and unmaintained, our grand old Queensland homes would be eaten away by termites.

When the global financial storm struck, our economy was weakened by 10 years of Labor termites, and the result was inevitable.

Mr Nicholls: White ants.

Mr SEENEY: The member for Clayfield calls them white ants. Irrespective of what we call them, the result is the same. Ten years of white-anting our economy to cover up for the financial mismanagement and the ineptitude of successive Labor governments left our economy in a weakened state.

This global financial crisis was not the first global financial crisis. It is certainly not the first time our economy has been asked to withstand such a financial downturn. Previously, of course, it has. It is a matter of history; it is a matter of record. Honourable members can look back at the way our economy was managed in previous recessions. This time when the global financial recession hit—that financial storm—our economy was so weakened by that 10 years of white-ant activity, of that white-ant mismanagement by the Labor government, that our economy has been effectively wrecked.

As we pick our way through the debris of the Queensland economy in considering this budget, just like the victims of a storm may pick through the debris of their shattered home, we need to be very aware of who is responsible for the extent of the damage that has been wrought on the Queensland economy. Without any doubt at all it is the decade of Labor mismanagement. Without any doubt at all it is the decade of financial mismanagement, the decade of atrocious decisions that we have seen in this parliament year after year that has left the state in a weakened financial position.

Those of us who have been here for a while know full well the litany of failures—the crisis management that we have seen engaged in to deal with crisis after crisis. It is a long list. We can work back through the list going from the more immediate to the ones further in the past. The health crisis is the one that has absorbed so much of our state's money. So much of our state's money has been poured into trying to address a crisis in the health service with no effect. The money has disappeared into that black hole of Queensland Health and it has not fixed the crisis.

The water crisis was a direct result of a political decision to not build the Wolffdene Dam. Had the Wolffdene Dam been built by the Goss government then \$9 billion worth of expenditure over the last three or four years would not have been necessary. We would never have had the water crisis. The state's economy would never have been bled of that \$9 billion if the government had made a sensible and logical decision. However, it did not for purely political, ideological reasons. To chase the green vote it made a decision that was politically desirable for it at the time but was disastrous for the state in the long run.

So it is with the electricity crisis—the power crisis. Do honourable members remember when the now Deputy Premier was the minister for mines and energy? He stripped the electricity corporations of so much money that they could not maintain the electricity network. We suffered blackouts every time we had a hot summer's day. The government had to throw money at the electricity industry to solve the power crisis. Hundreds of millions of dollars were once again bled from the state economy to cover up that crisis.

There was the kids in care crisis—yet another crisis. The previous Premier called an election because of the kids in care crisis. The current Premier, the member for South Brisbane, was the architect of that crisis. She likes to try to hide it in the past now, but she was the architect of that crisis.

Once again, hundreds of millions of dollars were bled from the state economy to cover up for her ineptitude and her mismanagement. So it has been a series of crises over the years that have been addressed by throwing money at the political problem. Like a fireman with a hose, they just sprayed the political problem with money to solve the immediate political problem. But the cumulative effect is seen in the budget that is before the House.

While Queensland, as a resources based state, was enjoying the benefits of the worldwide resources boom we were able to have large amounts of disposable income. The government was able to find those large amounts of money to effectively buy itself out of the problem each time its ineptitude resulted in a crisis. Each time it was faced with the political reality of the crisis it was able to buy its way out of trouble.

When those rivers of gold no longer flowed, as they did at the peak of the boom—and it was inevitable that those sorts of income levels were not going to continue indefinitely—the Queensland economy was in a weakened state where it was not able to withstand a return to more normal conditions. It is the government's responsibility. It is the government's fault. The reason that we have a \$13 billion deficit, the reason that we have to resort to \$15 billion worth of asset sales, the reason that we have \$85 billion in debt is the government's management record over those 10 years.

The government and its spin doctors like to blame the global financial crisis. They grab hold of the global financial crisis as some sort of excuse, some sort of reason for everything. They use the global financial crisis as a big duster and wipe the blackboard of history clean so that they can start all over again. Those of us who have been in this parliament and have over the years debated the government's response to the latest crisis know that the day of reckoning had to come. The day of reckoning had to come for the Queensland Labor government when the results of that ineptitude became clear to the people of Queensland. That day came on Tuesday this week when the Treasurer came into the parliament and introduced a budget the likes of which has never been seen in this Queensland parliament before.

The Queensland parliament has never seen a budget that so comprehensively admits to failure and ineptitude on such a grand scale. It is the legacy of a decade of the Labor Party running our state. It is without doubt something that the Labor Party cannot escape and should not escape between now and the next election. Had it any integrity at all it would have introduced the budget and then gone to the election and let the people of Queensland make a decision about its record and its guidance of the state over that decade. Of course it did not do that. It has been a deceitful exercise to avoid responsibility for those years of mismanagement. In 2½ years time the people of Queensland will get an opportunity to express the democratic view that they should have been expressing in September this year about this government's failure. I am confident that the people of Queensland will not forget the three figures that are contained in the budget before the House at the moment—a \$13 billion deficit, \$15 billion worth of forced asset sales and \$85 billion in net debt.

In terms of the budget's impact on my electorate of Callide in Central Queensland, there are some amounts of money that are allocated in the budget for some long overdue infrastructure in Central Queensland, particularly on the road network. As I have indicated in this parliament a number of times, Central Queensland is the place where the resources boom is a reality. It is a place where the enormous wealth that the state has benefited from, that enormous wealth that has allowed the government to cover up its years of mismanagement, has been generated. The demands that the increase in coalmining, gas exploration and resources exploitation generally have put on the local infrastructure have been intolerable.

There was a commitment of \$150 million last year to a program to upgrade the road network in Central Queensland. In this budget document I welcome the \$70 million especially for the allocation to the Calliope Range. The road from Biloela to Gladstone is a major east-west arterial road that services the southern end of the Bowen Basin and carries an alarmingly increasing volume of traffic. The Calliope Range is a particularly bad section of that road. I am pleased to see the \$70 million allocated in the budget. I will be even more pleased when that \$70 million starts to be translated into some work on the ground.

As with so many of the budget allocations that I have seen in these documents year after year, it is one thing to get the money allocated in the budget, it is one thing to get the project included in the budget documents but it is another thing all together to see the work start to happen on the ground. A classic example in my electorate is the Murgon Police Station.

I think the Murgon Police Station has been in the last three budgets. It started off at a \$2.5 million job. I think it is in this year's budget at \$7.5 million. Still nothing is happening there. Every time I go to Murgon I drive around to look at the new police station site. There is just a block of long grass. Nothing ever happens. It is a continuation of the deceit that this Labor government practices. It is good to see those allocations for those roadworks in the budget. That infrastructure work is long overdue in Central Queensland if the state is going to take full advantage of the resources there and continue to receive the financial benefits that the mining industry and the agricultural industries contribute to the Queensland Treasury and will contribute to the Queensland Treasury for the foreseeable future.

It is regrettable that we have had to consider the four bills together in this debate. We have the forced asset sales. The panic sale of Queensland's assets at the bottom of a market cycle is something that the people of Queensland should never forgive this Labor government for. We will deal with those bills separately at the conclusion of this second reading debate. I will address those issues in more detail then, suffice to say that it is, I think, something that the Labor Party and the Labor government will never be forgiven for—that is, the fact that it has been forced by its own mismanagement into a position where it has to sell the state's assets to pay for its own financial ineptitude, to pay for the inevitable outcome of 10 years of failure and mismanagement. The termites, the white ants of the Labor Party have eaten the Queensland economy to an extent that should forever shame them.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (11.47 am): It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Never before in my lifetime have I witnessed an outcome of poor management such as we have now.

The member for Callide canvassed it very well. He quoted three figures. One is the \$15 billion asset sale—and that is if we get \$15 billion for those assets in a downturned market. The only people who might have the chaff to buy them are the Chinese. It would be a nice how-do-you-do if they took control of the monopolies that we have in this state. The other figure is the \$13 billion deficit that we are currently being subjected to. The whammy of all whammies is the \$85 billion of debt that this state is going to carry. It will be the scourge of my grandchildren and everyone's grandchildren. Some members have young children and it will be the scourge of their children.

The way this economy has been managed is the sacrilege of all sacrileges. It is no wonder former Premier Peter Beattie left in the middle of the night. I remember asking him in the House here one night about the \$2 million for the Longreach Airport upgrade that the state government was going to make good. The then Premier said to me, 'Vaughan, the job will be right.' He went and spoke to some of his people in the Premier's department and he came back in here at 10 o'clock at night and walked over and stood right there and said to me, 'The job's right.' We shook hands right here. On the Monday he resigned, and the chaff has never been seen since. I do not know who ate it, but I can tell you that the horse in Longreach never got it. We are still waiting on it.

I come from a place where your word is your bond and a handshake seals the deal, and that is something that does not happen with this government. However, the same situation has happened in terms of many projects in the bush over a period of time. The member for Callide just mentioned the Murgon Police Station, which has now gone to \$7.5 million. The other night I said in the House that in the days before we came to government—1995 and 1996-97—when Wendy Edmond, the former member for Mount Coot-tha, was the health minister in this state, capital works programs were rolled over and over, budget after budget. That happened until the coalition came to power and delivered on those projects. That is what unfortunately will have to happen again when we come back into power, and hopefully that is not too far away.

Success comes with the best knowledge, and the government is not using the best knowledge. My father always told me that if you want to be successful in life you have to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you. Whilst members have expertise in many areas, we do not always have the best knowledge to know the best way to manage a project or a program. I say this to the Premier and the Treasurer: we are in a sad state of affairs, and the situation is going to get progressively worse if we bury our heads in the sand and think it is going to improve.

I ask the Premier to please show leadership on the issue of asset sales, because I do not think this is what Sir Samuel Griffith all those years ago in 1880 had in mind when he was the instigator of Queensland Rail. In 1876 there was £250,000 on rail spending for the Western Railway Bill. In 1877, £223,000 was raised through land sales for the western railway fund. In 1880 the interest bill on the government railway loan had approached half a million pounds, roughly half of total taxation revenue. In 1884 under the stewardship of Sir Samuel Griffith, £10 million was borrowed—the equivalent of \$1 billion these days—to be spent on the great northern line and the lines in support of the graziers west to Charleville in 1886, west from Rockhampton to Barcaldine in 1888 and eventually reaching Longreach in 1892.

We know what wealth those railway lines have generated since those days. If we are going to sell off the coal and mineral division that uses those great lines now, in a time of economic downturn and when there are poor economic prices on the international stage, we will get less than the \$15 billion that the member for Callide mentioned. We would not know what the fire sale value would be. The one thing you do not do in business is sell your best money-earning asset. In a pastoral operation like I ran most of my life with cattle and sheep, you do not sell your breeding stock and keep your dry stock because it is the breeding stock that make you money. When I talk about making money, in this case it is the coal and mineral division of Queensland Rail and our ports. All of those things make money for the Queensland government and the Queensland economy.

I have sat in the chair of the minister for transport and main roads and numerous times I saw Vince O'Rourke, the then chief executive of Queensland Rail, negotiating with the Industrial Court to get better wages and conditions for the workers, but he did it in a fair-minded way—bearing in mind that we had to get outcomes on the bottom line for QR so that it was a profitable organisation and not one where the unions had their hands out all of the time to keep their idea of a monopoly running to advantage their cause. When we talk about Queensland Rail, we are talking about a CSO that operates in many areas—the livestock division, the cattle train division and the freight division that runs west and north. There is also the urban passenger system in Brisbane that runs somewhere around \$500 million a year or maybe \$600 million a year.

These are all important arteries of Queensland Rail. When Sir Samuel Griffith put in place Queensland Rail, he had a vision for Queensland having a heart. The heart was the ports of Queensland and the arteries to that heart were Queensland Rail. Those things have been wealth generators for this state for the last 100-odd years, yet now we see this government with a vision to dispose of the arteries feeding the heart. If you shut the arteries down the rest will die, and I do not say that lightly.

This is a situation in which we must err on the side of caution. Today I would suggest to the Premier and the Treasurer that they put in place a moratorium on the sale of these assets in order to call in the best brains in the business, and there are plenty around Queensland. There are successful businesspeople like George Chapman in the north, David Carmichael, Ian Brusasco, Doug McTaggart at the QIC and Lance Hockridge running Queensland Rail. They are all very intelligent people who have a good understanding of the corporate business of Queensland—and Australia, for that matter. I say to the Premier and the Treasurer: do not be too proud to consult with the best, because if we are going to go forward and do something constructive and positive we must negotiate with the best brains in the business.

This is about preserving what is rightfully ours and what belongs to future generations of this state. When we talk about this great organisation and our great ports and when we look at the mess that one of the big resource-producing states of the Commonwealth is in in terms of financial disarray with a AA+ credit rating, it sickens me to think that we could do better. We should be having visions like Sir Samuel Griffith had, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen had and other great leaders had in building railway lines and ports—in building that infrastructure that is creating growth and creating quality of life.

There is legislation before the House to eliminate the Fuel Subsidy Scheme in that 8.2c a litre will be added to the price of fuel. That may be all very well in the south-east corner, where you might fill up the car only once a month, but people in my electorate might fill it up nearly every day. A return trip from Longreach to Emerald will cost an extra \$10, but there are many people who cannot afford that. Let us take the example of a road train pulling cattle from Longreach to Brisbane. The elimination of the fuel subsidy will create a situation where the cost will go up an extra 10c for every 800 metres they travel—10c for every 800 metres, because most times they use around a litre per kilometre or a litre every 800 metres. In that back country, where there are no bitumen roads at all, they will probably use a litre about every 250 metres when they are changing gears in a hopeless situation of no paved roads and very poor gravel surfaces. Yet this government wants to burden them with this.

We are talking about the wealth generators who make the dollars and drive the economy through the mining industry, through the livestock industry, through the agricultural industry. Just this week we witnessed a situation where major meat processors were trying to get cattle for slaughter into places like Beenleigh and Dinmore. They kill 3,600 head of cattle a day at Dinmore. Some 2,200 employees work in that plant. We cannot afford for one half of one minute to create impediments so that that plant is not reaching its full potential and that chain is not working to capacity. Some 800,000 head of cattle a year are killed at the Swift Australia plant at Dinmore. Whilst the greater majority of those cattle are Queensland cattle, the most important thing is that they mean jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders and they earn export dollars for Queenslanders which keeps our economy running and keeps the value of the economy where it should be.

When we look at the economy as it is now, we see a situation where our growth is forecast to be one per cent but our expenditure is forecast to be 10 per cent. There is no way in the world anybody can run a set of books with those figures and come out in front. The deficit has to go higher. The \$85 billion debt has to grow by such a monumental proportion that I do not think any of us can comprehend it. But I say here today that there are ways of correcting some of the situation. I appeal to the union movement in this state to show restraint, to show leadership and to show responsibility. I have seen that occur through the passage of time when it comes to funding negotiations for Queensland Rail. I see my friend the member for Brisbane Central up the back there, the honourable Grace Grace, who has had a long history of involvement in the industrial commission. I think she understands as much as anybody in this House the importance of restraint and the importance of fair-mindedness when it comes to doing the right thing. I am not anti-union, but by God I am pro doing the right thing. I think it is absolutely paramount that we recognise the dilemma that Queensland is in. It is absolutely paramount that we recognise that we have to work through this situation together. We can throw mud at each other all day long across this chamber, outside the chamber and everywhere else, but I have to say that selling off the state's crown jewels in a fire sale is not the way to go.

I have been down and out in my life, too. You think, 'What am I going to do?' 'I'll go and sell that mob of cattle or that mob of sheep and that will get some cash flow going.' But we have to think things through. I always like to quote that great American industrialist, the great Harvey Firestone, who invented the inner pneumatic tube that we have had for so many years in the inside of our car tyres or our truck tyres. He said that you do not fix the problem by throwing money at it; you have to throw brains at it first. That is what we have to do now.

It is not about throwing money at the situation; it is about making sure that the money we throw at the situation is spent in the proper and correct way to achieve the best outcome. At the same time it is absolutely paramount that we show restraint, we show understanding and we show manoeuvrability in that for those people who are employed, we keep them employed. But for those people who want to retire and there is no need to replace them, that is one way we can do it in the Public Service without retrenchments, without sackings. It is about trying to preserve the workforce. It is about making absolutely certain that we act responsibly for all facets of the community to show that we are leading from the front.

Over recent months 5,000 people in the coalmining industry—the great wealth generator of this state over the past 40 years or 50 years—have lost their jobs. We have to make certain, when the price of coking coal comes back from \$130 a tonne to \$70 a tonne, that we maintain our market and that we know what is happening in the market. Those people who work in that industry have families, mortgages and lifestyles to lead.

I again appeal to the Premier and the Treasurer to not rush into this sale, because it is not the time to be rushing in and it is not a time to have lame-brained thinking about what to do. I probably give those people more credit than is due to them. I hope they will engage some of the best corporate-minded people in the state—and in the nation, for that matter—so that they can ascertain how we can achieve an outcome that takes us forward. If they wanted a bipartisan approach, I am sure they would get a bipartisan approach. But this is crunch time. This is like the 1930s.

I keep reminding members that this situation did not happen in the past six months. It did not happen last October when the international recession hit. This situation happened long before that in Queensland. We have to remind people that we have to go forward from here.

The other points I want to touch on momentarily, as I do not have a lot of time, relate to my portfolio area of police and corrective services. I could canvass a lot of issues in relation to the police portfolio. The Police Service is a very integral part of our state. I believe our police officers do a fantastic job. I have to say that this budget fails to deliver on any new police investigative tools. There is no new money for a further roll-out of mobile computers for all of our front-line police officers, there is no new money for more mobile fingerprint scanners and there is no new money for vehicle cameras to assist officers to record crime. In many cases, police are still forced to use their own money to pay for additional tools to aid them in their basic duties. This is a sad situation.

One of the fastest-growing crime trends in this state is cyber crime. While their federal colleagues, including all front-line officers, will receive training in investigating cyber crime over the next 18 months, Queensland police will not be afforded such training. I find that deplorable. I also note that the police minister has halted the roll-out of tasers to front-line officers after that recent incident in Townsville, which we all regret. I only hope that after the less than lethal use of force issue is made clear, we will again witness the roll-out of tasers to all front-line officers.

The budget delivers an extra 203 police—a figure already budgeted in the forward statements of the previous budget. The minister says that there are 10,000 police on duty in Queensland. There certainly are, but only 6,000 of them are engaged in front-line duty. It is same old thing. We have to make absolutely certain that those front-line officers are equipped with the best equipment, they are given the best opportunity by which they can apprehend criminals and they are given every opportunity to work in the safest environment possible.

I see in the House today the former police and corrective services minister. I have to say that I had a very good working relationship with her. I know she worked hard to try to do the best that she could for the police. It is a difficult area. But we see now, with this taser incident that occurred in North Queensland, that the police seem to be branded the perpetrators. I have to say that that is unfortunate. The duty of police officers is not easy. We have to realise that and give police credit for what is really happening.

I know my time is running out, But I want to say very quickly that I applaud the government for the money that it has given to my electorate of Gregory. The allocation for the upgrade of the Mitchell-Roma road will be very advantageous for road transport in my area. But there are numerous other roads that are going to be upgraded in the eastern end of my electorate.

In the half a minute that I have left to me, I also want to touch on the money that has been injected into the central region for mental health. Mental health is a very critical issue. One in five people are affected by mental health issues. I applaud the government for making those funds available, because at the end of the day there are a lot of people out there who we do know are sick. It is up to us to make certain that we recognise their needs. I appeal to the Minister for Health to make absolutely certain that we have the right professional people there to assist those people in their time of need.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (12.07 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bills that are currently before the House. After listening carefully to the debate that occurred here last night and again this morning, one would think that there are two Queenslands beyond this chamber. One would think that there is a Queensland that the opposition tried to depict, which is sad, depressed and dark, and the Queensland that I know that exists outside those doors, which is strong, proud, resilient and optimistic. That is the Queensland that I see when I walk outside those doors and when I go to my electorate and talk to the businesses in my electorate.

I talk to businesses all the time in my electorate. They tell me that they want optimism and for governments to give them hope. That is what this government has done with this budget and that is what not one single member who sits opposite in this chamber has been able to do in the day that we have been debating these bills. They have not been able to provide a single skerrick of hope, because the reality is that we must create jobs.

I do not believe that those opposite understand what it is like to be unemployed. I do not think they understand what it is like for a man to not be able to support his family. Can they understand what it would be like for a man—or for a woman—not to be able to do that? What a tragedy that would be. What an absolute blight on that individual that would be. What we are facing here in Queensland is that over 100,000 people will not be able to bring a pay packet home. That is a tragedy and we must do something about that. That is why we are right to go into debt to create jobs for this state.

I had a bit of fun with the Register of Members' Interests yesterday when honourable members opposite tried to talk about debt, particularly the member for Dalrymple.

Mr Dickson: He's not here.

Mr O'BRIEN: He is not here but he was speaking yesterday and criticising the government—

Mr Dickson: Easy to pick on people who aren't here.

Mr O'BRIEN: He does not have to be here. He was criticising the government for going into debt, while at the same time he holds two mortgages and a business loan. I will not participate in the politics of envy.

Mr Hobbs: Withdraw that. Don't get personal with him.

Mr O'BRIEN: No. I wish him well. He has made his investment decisions to buy those two properties and to have an investment loan for his business. I genuinely and sincerely wish him well and I trust that his investments will be successful and will build prosperity for him and his family, just as I wish that for everybody in this chamber who is in debt. I have been in debt. I have had to go into debt to pay my house off, which I have done successfully. That is what people do.

That is what we are doing. We are building this state. We are building the jobs for tomorrow and we are creating opportunities in a highly skilled workforce for the future. That is what those opposite simply do not understand and cannot provide answers to. They have embarrassed themselves in the way they have conducted this debate. They have a mistaken belief that in the face of a global economic crisis there is some magic pudding that we can simply do everything for everyone all at once. That is the argument that they have tried to pursue here in this House over the course of the last 24 hours. It is a disgrace and anyone can see through it. Anyone can see that it is simply not possible to deliver that.

On the *ABC News* last night there was some analysis of jobs. Jobs in manufacturing, in retail and in mining are all in decline. The only area where jobs are increasing is in the public sector. That is our responsibility. That is why at this time it is the public sector that must invest. In Cairns at the moment we are seeing building firms like CMC in enormous financial difficulties. That firm has 16 building projects on the go in Cairns. It is in financial difficulty and is trying to stave off receivership. It is going to struggle to get those projects up and running again. That is why it is the government that must step up to the plate to provide those workers with jobs so that they can provide for their families. That is what we are doing, not just in Cairns but right across Far North Queensland.

On Saibai Island, the most northern point of this state, the government is investing over \$6 million in health facilities for people who live on that island. We are investing right up and down the length and breadth of this state. From Saibai Island to the Gold Coast, we are putting money into health facilities, and we have done that consistently during the term that I have been in this House. I snapped a ribbon the other day for a \$45 million hospital at Weipa—a new hospital on a greenfield site at Weipa, a \$45 million project that is part of this government's investment in health. This budget commits another \$40-odd million for health facilities on Thursday Island. In Cairns and Townsville and right up and down the length of this state, this government is investing in priority areas like health, investing in areas that the National Party neglected for many, many years when it was in government. This is an intelligent budget that meets the needs of this time. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (12.14 pm): Throughout this debate on the state budget, the opposition has repeatedly asked, 'Where has all the money gone?' I think it is important to answer that question so that the record is correct on the sound financial management that this government has delivered year after year throughout this decade. So, where has all the money gone?

Previously in this House I have talked about some of the great reforms that the Beattie and Bligh governments have delivered to reshape Queensland. They include delivering a prep year—an extra year of education for young children in Queensland; doubling the Health budget in the last couple of years—delivering more and more health services for the thousands of new Queenslanders who arrive here every week; building infrastructure, whether it be extensions to railways, road upgrades, port upgrades, new schools, new hospitals—again, responding to the incredible population growth that Queensland is experiencing.

I am not really sure why the opposition does not understand this but to do all of these things takes money. So that is where the money has gone. I challenge those opposite to name any of those things that they would rather not have seen delivered in Queensland. Of course the opposition wants them. Of course the government wants them. Of course the people of Queensland want them. That is why we have done them. That is where the money has gone.

After all of that, this government still managed to deliver record surpluses year after year throughout this decade. We did put money away for a rainy day. I will give members a few examples of some of the previous surpluses that this government has returned: in 2006-07, a \$2.3 billion surplus; in 2005-06, a \$4.6 billion surplus; in 2004-05, again a \$4.6 billion surplus; and in 2003-04, a \$3.4 billion surplus. So we did put those massive surpluses away for a rainy day, and this was after delivering all of those great reforms and services that I have just talked about.

But the global financial crisis has not just rained on Queensland; it has been a cyclone the likes of which we have not seen since the Great Depression. That is the reason this government has had to take some very tough decisions in this budget. I do not pretend that some constituents of Everton are not concerned about those decisions. But I have spoken to many of the people who have rung my office and, once I have explained the size of the impact of the global financial crisis on the Queensland economy and explained the kinds of services and infrastructure that must be delivered if we are to minimise the unemployment that will result from the global financial crisis, they understand that those tough decisions are ugly but necessary. This government has made a calculated decision to ensure that the government intervenes in the collapsing economy to minimise the fallout for ordinary Queenslanders. In doing so, we are delivering infrastructure, jobs and services for the residents of Everton and people right around the state.

It is only a few weeks since I gave my first speech to parliament following my election. In that speech I outlined some of my priorities. I am happy to say that this budget, put together in the toughest times we have seen since the Great Depression, has delivered on each of those priorities, both in the electorate of Everton and across the state. The first of the priorities that I mentioned in my first speech was preserving job security. That was obviously the key commitment of this government during the recent election campaign. We are delivering on that commitment and on that priority through our massive infrastructure program that will deliver over 100,000 new jobs that simply would not exist under the opposition's proposal that would have involved cuts to infrastructure.

In addition, Everton residents facing unemployment will benefit from \$28 million in funding across Brisbane for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. This includes funding for the Green Army, an innovative new commitment from the Queensland government to engage young people and those disadvantaged in the labour market in environmental projects. That will be a win for the environment and a win for unemployment.

The second priority I mentioned in my first speech was delivering outstanding children's health services. Again, this government is responding to that priority in this year's state budget. We have put money aside to continue construction of the new Queensland Children's Hospital. I have mentioned before that that was a controversial issue in my electorate, but people are coming to understand the benefits of one consolidated, world-class hospital rather than splitting resources across two hospitals only five kilometres apart. This budget will continue work to build that hospital.

We are also beginning work on the construction of a dedicated children's emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital. Again, the opposition failed to make that kind of commitment in the recent election. The government has made that commitment, and it will actually ensure that emergency services for children are available much closer to the residents of Everton and much closer to many other members of this House who represent people who reside on the north side.

As well as specific funds for children's health, this budget provides funds for the health of residents in general. There is \$2.59 million to complete the new Grovely-Mitchelton Ambulance Station. This has been underway for some time and has now overcome some of the heritage issues that have held it back, so it will be delivered in the next financial year. There is also \$5.93 million for the new community emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital and expansion of the hospital's capacity.

We all understand the benefits to health from physical activity. It is therefore very pleasing that two sporting groups in the Everton electorate have received funding in this budget. There is \$65,000 towards the installation of soccer field lighting at the Mitchelton Soccer Club and \$66,000 towards the supply and installation of lighting to support baseball for the Pine Hills Baseball Club at Arana Hills.

The third priority I mentioned in my first speech was tackling entrenched disadvantage. Everton has relatively low unemployment levels by state-wide standards, but there are nevertheless pockets of disadvantage that need to be addressed. The government has stepped up to that challenge by providing funding to a number of local organisations that assist those in need. These include the Everton Hills Wesleyan Methodist Church, which will receive \$65,000 to provide an early intervention and family support service; the Windana Support Service in Everton Park, which will receive \$379,000 to provide an accommodation and support service for women and children escaping domestic and family violence; the North West Youth Accommodation Service, which will receive \$314,000 to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness; the Picabeen Community Association, which will receive \$68,000 to provide a service for young people to develop social and personal skills and \$306,000 to provide a support service for young people through the education system; and the North

West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Association, which will receive \$282,000 to implement a program that addresses the needs of Indigenous young people in our area. On top of that, there is the 15 per cent increase in the pensioner rebate for electricity costs, meaning that rebate will increase from \$165 to \$190 per year. This government is serious about looking after pensioners.

The fourth priority I mentioned in my first speech was improving the quality of education our children receive. This is one of the best aspects of this state budget for the Everton electorate. We are delivering on our election commitment to build a new kindergarten at the Prince of Peace Lutheran College at Everton Hills. We also have the following: nearly \$150,000 towards a multipurpose hall at Eatons Hill State School; over \$800,000 to complete the redevelopment at Mitchelton Special School; again, over \$800,000 for new facilities at the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE at Grovely; \$36,000 for maintenance work at Albany Hills State School; \$25,000 for maintenance work at Albany Creek State School; \$23,000 for maintenance work at Albany Creek State High School; \$3,000 for maintenance work at the Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre; \$14,000 for maintenance work at McDowall State School; and nearly \$5,000 for maintenance work at Eatons Hill State School. We are also improving road safety around our schools, with \$55,000 towards passenger set-down facilities at McDowall State School this year and \$9,000 towards passenger set-down facilities at Albany Hills State School.

In my first speech, I also mentioned the priority of promoting environmental sustainability. This budget is delivering on a couple of bold initiatives to ensure we look after the world around us. The solar hot-water scheme has already been mentioned by a number of members, so I will not go into the details of that. I do want to mention the ClimateSmart Business Service, which is modelled on the highly successful ClimateSmart Home Service. This service will commence on 1 July 2010 to assist businesses deal with rising energy costs and the impact of climate change.

The final priority I mentioned in my first speech was the need to relieve congestion and provide more public transport throughout Everton. This is perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the budget for the residents and businesspeople of Everton. This budget goes a long way to improving congestion and road safety in the electorate, because it contains \$3 million to complete concept planning for Stafford Road between Gympie Road and South Pine Road; \$642,000 to complete installation of traffic signals on South Pine Road and Albany Creek Road; and \$40,000 this year towards bikeways in the region.

Public transport has not been neglected, either. On top of recent upgrades to local railway stations and track upgrades, this year's state budget provides \$2.7 million for the Mitchelton-Keperra track upgrade as part of the Citytrain track infrastructure upgrades. There will be more money for bus services throughout the Everton electorate. As members can see, there are a number of incredible commitments for the Everton electorate in this year's state budget.

I have outlined the government's plans to help Queensland out of hard times. In our system of democracy, the opposition also has an opportunity to articulate an alternative vision for our economic future. I awaited the opposition leader's budget reply with some anticipation, seeing it was his first chance to put his stamp on the opposition. I was sorely disappointed. I then waited to see if the two pretenders to the LNP leadership—the member for Clayfield and the member for Southern Downs—would set out a plan for how the government should respond to the global financial crisis. But, again, they said nothing. I cannot believe that neither of them has a single idea to build Queensland's economic future. I can only assume they are saving their thoughts for their inevitable future run for the leadership.

Opposition members might think they only need to oppose, but if they ever want to get into government they need to be prepared to make hard choices and come clean with the Queensland public about their plan for our economic future. As I have said before, since opposition members have not articulated a plan to ensure Queensland comes through the global financial crisis, we can only rely on their position in the recent election campaign, where they committed to apply a three per cent efficiency dividend or cut funding to the public sector to produce a \$1 billion saving per annum. This would be achieved by cutting 12,000 government jobs each year over three years by so-called natural attrition, otherwise known as 'front-ending', and by reducing a range of expenditure, which would involve service cuts to the Queensland public.

Through the election campaign the eminent academic Professor John Wanna of the Australian National University analysed the LNP proposal to cut public spending. Professor Wanna concluded—

For a service delivery state with substantial population growth pressures, it defies credibility to claim that \$1 billion can be extracted from the across-the-board expenses of government without affecting services at the front line.

So there we have it: the LNP plan to fix the Queensland economy is cut, cut, cut. This is what we have seen their counterparts in Western Australia do. That means no bandages for hospitals, cutbacks in schools and cutbacks in road funding. I have talked about the services and infrastructure to be delivered by the government in the electorate of Everton. Everton residents could kiss those things goodbye if the opposition were ever to take office.

This government understands that these are tough times. We do not live in a world where we can do everything all at once. Sometimes choices need to be made. To do some things, you have to stop doing others. This budget has involved tough decisions, but those tough decisions will ensure that the infrastructure and services that will benefit the Everton electorate can go forward into the future.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (12.26 pm): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill and the other related bills before the House today. I, too, have listened to what have become wearisome contributions from members opposite during this debate on these bills. The criticism of this government's approach to deficit-fund its record infrastructure program has been predictable and repetitive. The only interesting thing about the contributions from members opposite is that not one member has offered an alternative policy approach—not one. That is interesting, because it portrays how bereft the LNP is of policy firepower. It has no policy firepower.

All the LNP members want to do is come into this chamber and have a bob each way. That is what they have done during this debate: they have had a bob each way. Every single member who has stood up has had a bob each way. They want to say, 'You can't go into debt. The debt the government has gone into is bad debt,' yet not one member has said which projects they would sacrifice.

Over the past five to 10 years, all opposition members have accepted with open arms—not surprisingly—the schools, the new roads, the bridges, the new hospitals, the extra police stations, the new courts, the extra doctors, the extra nurses for our hospitals. They have all agreed with all of that, but when it comes to paying the bills they want a bob each way and they have not had the guts to say which of those projects, which of those front-line services, they would sacrifice.

Mr MESSENGER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the parliament. I said that I would forgo \$15 million worth of funding for the desal plant at Agnes Water. Other members have also indicated that they would like to forgo the funding for Traveston Dam.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Thank you. I call the member for Barron River.

Mr WETTENHALL: What we have seen is a paltry contribution by members opposite to some very, very fundamental questions which I am proud this government, led by Premier Anna Bligh and Treasurer Andrew Fraser, has confronted head on. They have brought forward what every member on this side of the House has acknowledged have been difficult and in some cases controversial decisions.

Nevertheless, they are the right decisions. They are the only decisions to avoid a calamity in the form of unemployment. The issue of unemployment is where the big fault line in Australian politics and in this debate has been exposed. The conservative political parties have traditionally—and there are plenty of examples of this—been willing to sacrifice people's jobs to attain their philosophical objective. Let us not forget in this debate that over and over again in the bob-each-way debate from members opposite we have heard, 'We do not oppose privatisation; it is just the wrong time.' This argument conveniently ignores the fact that the asset sales proposed in the bills before the House will not go ahead for three to five years. I have not heard one member opposite acknowledge that fact. All this talk about it being sales at the bottom of the market is absolute nonsense.

Fundamentally, members opposite have not dealt fairly and squarely with the issue of unemployment. We only have to look back to the recession that confronted this country in the 1980s when Malcolm Fraser was Prime Minister—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr WETTENHALL: We only have to go back to the recession of the early 1980s to remember the position of the Liberal Party on unemployment. Malcolm Fraser said, 'Life wasn't meant to be easy.' He did not care about the growing unemployment queues. He pursued a divisive agenda. He demonised people who had lost their jobs. He introduced a punitive regime for people who were unemployed, and the Australian people threw them out in 1983 in preference for a Labor government that was to pursue a social agenda and a social contract. That is the same mould that has been adopted by members opposite in this debate.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr WETTENHALL: What would happen to the 127,000 people who are going to be employed as a result of this government's maintenance of an \$18.2 billion infrastructure program if the Queensland people—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! The member for Clayfield will cease interjecting.

Mr WETTENHALL: It is interesting that the member for Clayfield is interjecting in this debate, because what would have happened if they had formed a government? It would have cost \$1.5 billion to build a new Cairns Base Hospital. That was their promise in the form of a public-private partnership. They would have added an extra billion dollars to the bottom line of the debt that they are complaining about. The people of Cairns and the people of Queensland did not trust those sorts of promises. They

trusted Premier Anna Bligh. They trusted this Labor government to deal with the worst economic circumstances since the depression and to take us through the tough times fundamentally offering this promise to the people of Queensland: that we would do everything in our power to protect and create jobs.

The people of Cairns are benefiting from that right now in a range of government projects. The only cranes that can be seen in the sky in Cairns are those working on government projects. That is where the cranes are in the sky of Cairns. That is why this government—and I am proud to be a member of it—is determined to maintain those projects even if it means going into debt to do so.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr WETTENHALL: The member for Clayfield should have a look on his computer one day at all of the governments around the world and find one that is not dealing with this unprecedented economic crisis by borrowing funds to maintain infrastructure projects.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Barron River, resume your seat. Members on my left will cease interjecting. The member for Barron River has the call.

Mr WETTENHALL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The following are projects that are occurring in the Cairns region on which many of my constituents will be employed. We have an expansion of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. We have the Cairns Base Hospital redevelopment. We have the new state government office building, William McCormack Place. All of those projects are maintaining employment in a town that has also been hit hard by the downturn in the tourism market.

That is why I am also so pleased to support this bill, which contains \$38 million of new funding—not funding robbed from an existing scheme, which is what the opposition proposed to do during the election campaign—to support marketing our first-class product throughout the state and in Far North Queensland. An extra \$38 million is worth about 1,000 jobs. I am looking forward to the new advertising campaigns that will appear on our television screens and through the media promoting Queensland as a fantastic holiday destination, because that is going to protect jobs.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Noosa will cease interjecting. The member for Barron River has the call.

Mr WETTENHALL: I want to acknowledge a couple of key projects in the Barron River electorate which I am very pleased have been funded under this budget. There is a significant amount of money to continue the safety improvements on the Kuranda Range Road, which is a key link road between Cairns and the tablelands, particularly to pursue safety improvements and to build on the significant investment that has been made. I acknowledge the focus that the previous member for Mulgrave and Minister for Main Roads, Mr Warren Pitt, placed on that. I acknowledge the focus that the current Minister for Main Roads has on the Kuranda Range Road. It is a very significant road. There is money to continue planning for the ultimate widening of that project but, most importantly, there are significant funds to improve safety on that road. There are also significant funds to improve safety on the Captain Cook Highway, particularly in relation to cyclist safety. Both of those issues are issues on which I have had ongoing discussions and have lobbied the relevant minister about. I thank them for allocating those funds on those important road projects.

I want to conclude by mentioning the investment the government has made through these bills in the environment. Other members have spoken of them. This government makes a significant investment into the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which underpins the tourism industry not only in Far North Queensland but also up and down the coast. I am very pleased to see that ongoing commitment. There is also the first tranche of funding towards improving the quality of the water flowing into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon, which is critical to the long-term health and survival of our reef.

These are important environmental initiatives which have been achieved, I might add in conclusion, because of some very good long-term planning and investing of some of the proceeds and the profits from the boom time in those funds which we are now able to draw on in these tough times. That is in contradiction to what we have heard from members opposite over and over again about a failure to plan for the future. Those funds are now being used for important environmental projects. With those comments, I commend the bills to the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (12.39 pm): The bills before the House are the Appropriation Bill, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is interesting that government members have not been talking about the last two.

Mr Dickson: Funny that!

Mr HOBBS: I wonder why! They do not have the courage to do that. The LNP has been rock solid in covering all of those issues and the issues that are very important to the people out there who have great concerns about the sell-off of state assets and also the fuel tax that the government is going to levy—and it is purely a fuel tax. I must congratulate the members on this side of the House, particularly the opposition leader, who made a very comprehensive address on this issue. I make the point for the media that in the 22 years that I have been in this parliament I am not aware of an occasion when a Leader of the Opposition has been slapped on the back in a budget reply. I was quite surprised when that happened yesterday—and I hope the media recognised that that never happens. In fact, it never even happened to the Treasurer over there. Whatever spin you put on it the reality is that it is simply not true, but that is the way you people operate.

The 2009-10 budget is based on debt, debt, debt and deceit, deceit, deceit. You had no mandate to sell the state assets at this time or to impose a fuel tax. Before she was Premier the member for South Brisbane was the Treasurer, and she has been on a shopping spree ever since, throwing money at all and sundry, growing the Public Service, and causing a cost blow-out in capital works. You cannot run a business. You cannot even build a pedestrian bridge. Take your mind back to the Goodwill Bridge; it was predicted to cost \$13 million and then it ended up being \$30 million plus. Even the crane fell over into the river. The Kurilpa Bridge is costing \$65 million. It is being built and suddenly you say, 'Dear me, we have to close the damn road now.' You just cannot run a business at all. You are one of the most incompetent governments that Queensland has ever had.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Warrego, resume your seat, please. As all honourable members are now aware—certainly I am—you must address your comments through the chair and not refer to other people as 'you'.

Mr HOBBS: I appreciate the fact that I get the chance to talk about it again. This government is one of the most incompetent governments that this state has ever had. Even before the global financial crisis arrived on our shores, we had a debt level almost as high or higher than any other state in this nation. You got into debt before there was any global financial crisis. Do not go out trying to use the excuse that you have to do this because of the GFC. It is just rubbish. It is not true and it is absolute deceit. The people out there know that.

The last period of just over 10 years has been the most stable economic period in our lifetime—certainly in my lifetime and yours—and you went broke in that period. You went broke during a magnificent golden era in this nation. Queensland was strong. It is now broke. How do you feel? Are you happy about it? Even Tasmania and Victoria are ahead of you—or us, unfortunately; we are all part of it. We have \$85 billion or 40 per cent of all the states' debt, equating to \$74,000 per household and repayments of \$14 million a day. People often ask, 'Where has the money gone?' It has been spent by incompetent Labor members whose only philosophy is that the government will pay. That is all you know. It is in your DNA. Unfortunately, you are in charge of the Treasury and it is not doing the state's finances or our children or grandchildren much good.

Quite frankly, the Rudd spending will send us the same way unless he can change his ways. He makes Gough Whitlam look like Mother Teresa. If sending us broke is in Labor's DNA, look at Victoria and South Australia, look at Whitlam and Keating and the \$90 billion we had to pay off. Here we go again.

I turn now to the government's proposed asset sales. Where is the cost-benefit analysis of these government sales? We are talking about huge amounts of money. How much are we actually going to get? What is the figure? How much is the net return and what is the long-term benefit when those assets are sold? We do not know because we have not been told. I do not think you know and you are the ones who are selling it. Any business would have to go out and do a full business case and a cost-benefit analysis to convince their board members that they are on the right track, but you do not even do that.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is too much audible conversation in the House. The member for Warrego deserves to be heard in silence.

Mr HOBBS: The members of this government make decisions by putting their fingers in their mouth and holding it up to see which way the wind is blowing. It is a bit like what Kevin Rudd did when he worked out the first stimulus package on the back of an envelope during a flight to Papua New Guinea and back. The challenge to the government is to table the cost-benefit analysis on Queensland's asset sales. We need to know what that is. Frankly, you have already sold a lot of those assets because of the borrowings on them. You know as well as I do that a few years ago your government got those GOCs to go to the banks, get those assets revalued, borrow against them to the maximum and send the cheque back to Treasury. That is why the debt is so high. From what we understand, those assets that you are looking at selling owe about \$9.8 billion. So you have already taken a considerable amount of that asset away—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Warrego, it has already been pointed out to you that the use of 'you' and 'your' is not addressing the parliament through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely. This government has already used, abused and spent most of the money that has been borrowed from these assets. You can sell the state's revenue-earning assets if the timing is right and you put the money into new revenue-earning assets. This Labor government is incompetent when it comes to financial matters. We understand that you have told the unions—and this is why they have been a bit quieter on the issue—that they will get their pay rises when you sell the assets. How good is that for financial management? They will get their pay rises after you sell the assets. That money should be used for far better purposes than that. If you want to save some money, why do you not scrap the Traveston Dam—\$2.5 billion? There is an easy way to pick up a few dollars. Let us look at this fuel tax that you are going to levy. It is 9.2c per litre.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warrego, I will not warn you again about the use of the word 'you'.

Mr Wallace: 'Ewe' is a female sheep.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowala!

Mr HOBBS: I take the point. There are a few sheep over there—and a few goats, too.

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. We know where the sheep and goats lie in this House.

Mr HOBBS: If the cap fits—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us not have the debate between two people. Let us let the whole of the House listen to the debate.

Mr HOBBS: Through the chair, let us look at the likely impact on communities from this fuel tax. The further you go, the more fuel that is used. The impact will be felt more by those people who live further out, and we have a very decentralised state. The impact of that fuel tax will be significant, particularly on freight and rail.

I turn now to Queensland Rail. We have never seen such a debacle, certainly in my area and that of the member for Gregory. For the first time in Queensland's history, save for times of flood when the line has been washed out, the trains have not run. The freight trains just stopped running. You did not tell anybody. My area normally has five services a week travelling from Brisbane to Roma, Charleville, Quilpie and Cunnamulla, and they just stopped. They said, 'We're going to run the *Westlander* out there twice a week and we'll swing a couple of wagons behind that for a bit of freight.' They are dumping freight on to a road that has broken down. It is incomprehensible that the government can run a business like this. You have a huge asset. We have industry that relies on freight arriving on time. We have businesses out there such as food stores who need their products and produce on time. Now it turns up this week or next week or not at all—it gets lost. The locomotives were taken away. They disappeared overnight. It is really quite extraordinary how this happened.

I want to move on to the issue of local government. I want to talk about the impact that this budget has had on local government. Nearly \$100 million has been slashed from the local government budget this year. The water, sewerage, road and drainage funding that would normally go to local governments, particularly in urban areas, has been slashed. This means that the headwork charges of up to \$5,000 per block will be passed on to new homeowners. You are putting the price up for new homes simply because you are not thinking about what you are doing. There are plenty of places you can make cuts. The reality is that you are cutting the wrong things. As a result you have to put up the price of houses. We need to generate more activity in the housing market, not reduce it and contract it.

This week the government has talked about reducing the pollution that flows into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon and our oceans. That is fine; we all agree with that. But the reality is that you are taking away the subsidy to those councils to upgrade their sewerage systems so they will not be able to do the upgrades. You are legislating to make the poor old farmers pay the bill, but the reality is that you have all these sewerage systems that in many instances are outdated and need upgrading. It will not be done. All members from Brisbane and up the coast of Queensland know the demand that is being placed on those sewerage systems. Many of them need upgrading. It cannot be done. Not only are you increasing the price of housing; you are also going to increase the pollution into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

We estimate that removing the subsidy will cost local government nearly \$5 million extra in terms of fuel costs. As many members are aware, local governments do a lot of roadworks. Some of our council areas are nearly as big as Tasmania and a lot of driving is involved. The fuel cost is enormous. We believe that taking away the fuel subsidy will cost local government nearly \$5 million.

Another \$6.7 million was struck out of the street lighting subsidy. It is a very important subsidy. We understand that there have to be cuts, but this is a further cut for local government. At the end of the day, there will have to be an enormous increase in ratepayer contributions.

The government promised that there would be no cutback in the general grant and subsidy programs. Before the last state election the Local Government Association, on behalf of councils, put out a 10-point plan. I responded to the plan on behalf of the LNP and the Leader of the Opposition. The

state government responded to it as well. There were a few questions about the funding grants as a result of the state government's response. A further letter was sent to the then minister, Minister Lucas. He wrote back to them. The letter stated—

I can confirm that a re-elected Bligh government is committed to the continuation of the Local Government Infrastructure and Subsidy Program beyond 2011. We intend to maintain current levels of funding for the programs.

I will say it again—

We intend to maintain current levels of funding for the programs.

What did the government do? It cut the funding. The government is totally untrustworthy. The minister for local government at the time wrote a letter to all mayors about the LNP's so-called proposal for funding for the future budget. The minister stated—

Even after slashing jobs the department would still need to cut grants and subsidies paid to councils to meet the LNP productivity dividend.

That is not what we were going to do. However, the government has done exactly that. It is untruthful. I would like to use a word that is unparliamentary, but I will not.

Mr Messenger: What does it begin with, 'I'?

Mr HOBBS: It begins with 'I'. We will not go any further than that. It is quite serious.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Warrego, please continue. Member for Burnett, the member for Warrego has the call.

Mr Messenger: I was trying to help him out, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Don't, thank you.

Mr HOBBS: I think we all know what I was referring to. The reality is that you just cannot trust the government in relation to these things. They will say one thing and do another. Never did the Premier say during the election campaign that they were going to do away with the fuel subsidy. Never did the Premier say during the election campaign that they were going to sell the state's assets—have the biggest asset sale.

I will talk about some of the roads in my area. The Warrego Highway is very important but it is deteriorating. Now with the trains not running out there we are finding more and more trucks are using that road. The federal government has provided a lot of money over the years to improve these roads. That money has been hidden in the budget and not utilised in the short term.

The Mitchell-Roma road is going to be upgraded for type 2 road trains. Some \$40 million was put aside for that road. Only \$8.8 million has been shown in the budget papers. It might be five years before that road is upgraded. The money is there to be spent and the road needs to be upgraded now. We do not need to wait for a further five years.

Further money that was allocated for passing lanes on the Warrego Highway has been put into the system but pushed back to help increase the government's bottom line. There is federal government money that has to be spent on the roads. We need those roads improved now. We do not need them improved later. By that time they will need to be done again.

The other issue that is very important is the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. That desperately needs to be increased. We committed to increase it if we won government. We would have done it. Now that the government has put on a fuel tax, there is more reason to increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. People out there need to be able to see specialists. The whole health services system is being wound back.

I had cases recently involving the birthing service at Chinchilla. Ladies were going in for treatment there. When they rang up to say that they were coming in to have their babies they were told, 'You can't come here. Go to Dalby.' They did that. By the time they got there, their details were not there. The staff at Dalby had to ring up and get details from Sullivan Nicolaides and so on. The system is breaking down.

The government is not managing this business. It is unfortunate that none of the members opposite has had the courage to talk about the fuel tax they are putting on. It is a shame they have not had the courage to talk about the sale of the assets that people do not want them to sell. They have not had the courage to do it. It is no wonder people are losing trust in the government. The people elect you. The Premier said, 'You can trust me.' One thing we do know is that that is not the case. The Premier cannot be trusted, and she has proven that time and time again.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (2.30 pm): Every time I rise to speak in this place, I feel honoured—honoured that my electorate has placed its trust in me to represent its views faithfully. The work of the parliament is vitally important to our democracy. It is of course the cornerstone of our democracy, and so it is equally important that the effectiveness of the parliament is not hindered in any way. Since I came into this place a number of changes have been made to hinder the effectiveness of the opposition in

assisting the government to govern well and make good laws and getting our alternative point of view out into the electorate. This is particularly the case now as we debate the budget bills. The time constraints for analysis and debate limit good government.

The way in which the budget papers are presented year on year makes comparative analysis very difficult, as I am sure is sometimes intended. The restructuring of ministerial portfolios and the reshuffling of the departments has made objective and constructive analysis more difficult this year than it should have been. Although the budget papers appear comprehensive, the devil is always in the detail, and there is precious little detail on many matters of importance to this side of the House and, much more importantly, to the electors whom we represent and who have got a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

Since the debate on the budget bills commenced, I have been either in the House listening to what Labor government members have been saying or indeed watching on the monitors. It would seem that each and every Labor member in this House is in some form of denial. We never hear the words 'asset sales' and we never hear the words 'fuel tax'. I wonder sometimes just how this is going to be sold by those members when they get back to their electorates.

In terms of my shadow portfolio, the operating budget, excluding water, for the sustainability and climate change portfolio has declined by about \$57 million over the past two financial years. The capital budget, excluding water, has also declined by around \$14½ million. On the other hand, staffing numbers have grown in total from 5,416 full-time equivalent staff to 5,436—a decline in service delivery and more staff to administer the decline! We find the big winners in staffing arrangements are Environmental Protection, where 54 staff have been added; an extra 32 staff have gone to Conservation and Environmental Services; and 22 staff go to sustainable futures, which is of course the Office of Climate Change.

In aggregate, the operating budget has declined while staffing numbers have increased but unequally. For example, the water and catchment services operating budget has decreased by about \$73 million, with only a minor reduction in staffing. It would seem that in this and other areas we have staff sitting around in offices with little or nothing to administer and little to provide Queenslanders with in terms of service delivery. On the other hand, the land and vegetation services operating budget has increased by more than \$17½ million, while staffing to administer those sums has declined significantly. The oddity of this approach is also evident in Environmental Protection. The operating budget for Conservation and Environmental Services has increased by about \$8½ million in part to fund recruitment of an additional 32 full-time equivalent staff.

But when we look at performance and capability, there is a modest increase in the operating budget of almost \$4 million but with stagnant staffing levels. Finally, we come back to sustainable futures—the province of a certain Mr Withers—where the operating budget has declined by \$14 million, yet there is an extra 22 full-time equivalent staff to administer yet another decline in the government's commitment to the environment. This issue goes much further. There are new responsibilities to be added to the Office of Climate Change and new priorities which mean that much of the work—if this is indeed what you call it—handled by the Office of Climate Change will be shelved so that it can now take on new priorities as set out in the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Bill 2009, which, for obvious reasons, we cannot elaborate further on today.

When one goes through the budget papers, regardless of how the figures are presented, sooner or later they crystallise and what cannot be denied is the truth surrounding the Labor government's commitment to protecting the environment. Labor's commitment to protecting the environment for a sustainable future has been reduced from a capital program of \$55.7 million in 2007-08 down \$11 million to \$44.7 million in 2008-09 and then down another \$14.7 million in the financial year to come.

Those opposite can continue to lay the blame of the disgraceful state of Queensland's finances on the global financial crisis. I will be one who will not let either the Labor Party members opposite or anyone I come into contact with forget that, in financial terms, Queensland is right out ahead of the rest of the world. In fact, we are stellar performers in financial management as against the rest of the world because we managed to get a state debt of \$64 billion before the rest of the world knew there was a global financial crisis! Another great first for the state's most unpopular politician—the member for Mount Coot-tha! To go bust in a boom is quite an achievement. When one looks at the statistics, they will see with undeniable clarity where the Queensland debt started to get completely and totally out of control, and that was the very day that Anna Bligh was appointed Premier and Andrew Fraser appointed Treasurer on 13 September 2007. The figures are worth recording. In 1999 the state debt stood at \$20 billion. Just eight years later in 2007 when the current financial geniuses took over, the state debt stood at \$30 billion. The projections for a state debt now are at \$85.5 billion by 2013, but we on this side of the House believe that the Treasurer can do much better than \$85.5 billion: we believe that, without too much effort at all, the Treasurer and this Premier could get our state debt to somewhere around \$100 billion, and wouldn't that be an achievement!

If we look at some of the comparisons that are around, the state debt in New South Wales—the largest state in the Commonwealth—is \$67.2 billion. Victoria, once the rust-bucket state led by Kirner and Cain, has a state debt of just \$39.2 billion. If we compare ourselves with the state most like Queensland—and I refer to Western Australia because it is a resource dependent and large decentralised state—Western Australia has a state debt of \$27.7 billion. The state debt in Queensland—the \$85.5 billion—represents an additional debt of \$78,000 for every family in Queensland, and of course this debt also comes on top of federal Labor's debt for all Australians. It is important to realise that by 2013 on every single solitary day Queenslanders will pay \$14 million in interest payments alone. Due to the downgrading of Queensland's AAA credit rating—something which no other state has managed to achieve—additional interest payments of \$1.2 billion every year will apply. As the shadow Treasurer said earlier in this debate, that is the equivalent of building a new children's hospital every year rather than one in a lifetime.

We have heard a lot of bleating from the government about the pressure the budget is under from severe weather events which have occurred in recent times in this once-great state of Queensland. The government blames climate change for these events—the cyclones and the flooding rains which have impacted on different parts of Queensland over the past couple of years.

If the government really believed in climate change and believed that because of it more would be needed to be set aside to help ordinary Queenslanders who were the victims of it, then the government would have put aside a good deal more than \$15.6 million over five years for disaster support initiatives.

While I am on the subject of climate change, one of the Bligh government's aims in its Toward Q2 target is to cut car use and electricity use by Queenslanders by more than one-third. Once again, it is right up there and able to do it. Look at the way electricity prices have gone, even though we were promised that there would be no electricity price increases outside increases in the CPI. Over and over again electricity prices have gone up. Let us look at the cost of running the family car. We are going to have the most expensive registration in the country. We are also going to have a fuel tax subsidy that is about to become a fuel tax. That will mean that on 1 July an extra 9.2c per litre will be applied to the cost of petrol for families and ordinary Queenslanders. There is lots of advertising, lots of spin, lots of talk but little in the way of a plan. There is investment in this budget for roads but little in the way of investment for planning and designing alternative transport models.

In the south-east corner of our state, the time has come when crucial decisions must be made with regard to koalas. We have witnessed a 51 per cent decline in the koala population of this part of the state in less than three years and still more and more koala habitat, which cannot be replaced, is being cleared and some of it, as we heard this morning, has been cleared by the Queensland education department. The sad truth is that unless this government acts today, the koala will be a native to South-East Queensland only in zoos. Where is the koala crisis response strategy? Where are the funds being made available to purchase land in South-East Queensland that is currently earmarked for residential development but which contains significant koala populations? If the government is serious, it will ban any and all future development in koala habitat and ensure that those koalas that are on the fringes of residential development are protected from predators such as dogs and cats.

The remote areas of our state deserve the trust the Premier promised on the night of the election—'Queenslanders, you can count on me.' There are significant numbers of meaningful jobs to be created in remote rural areas. These jobs would justify making more funds available than the tiny \$7.3 million that has been provided in this budget to the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative. The decline in pressure and the wastage of water from uncapped bores is a major problem, but the response from the Bligh government is only minor.

While I am on my feet, I would like to take a couple of moments to address the budget measures for my electorate of Noosa. This will be a very short contribution. It will take only a minute, because my electorate received a meagre, but very welcome, \$70,000 for a lookout at Hell's Gates in the Noosa National Park. That is about as good as the budget got for Noosa.

A government member interjected.

Mr ELMES: I take that interjection from the Treasurer. I find out that I am now bragging—

Ms Jones: It was not the Treasurer.

Mr ELMES: My electorate got \$70,000 more than the electorate of Clayfield.

A government member: That was not the Treasurer.

Mr ELMES: Do not worry, he will be one day—in about two and three-quarter years time. Sooner or later, Labor will have to acknowledge that the people of the Sunshine Coast are Queenslanders too. They do not vote Labor; they are too intelligent for that. Indeed, from Glass House to Hervey Bay, there is not one Labor seat—not one. But they pay their taxes and they deserve a return on them. If members want to add some Independents into the mix, there is not one Labor seat from Glass House to just south of Rockhampton. If members turn around and look out towards the Northern Territory border and draw a line straight east-west on the map of Queensland, they will find only one Labor seat, and that is the seat of Toowoomba North.

However, I can tell members that my electorate is fortunate to be on the receiving end of a new state school at Peregrin Springs. This school—

Government members interjected.

Mr ELMES: This is great. The members opposite are going to enjoy this. This school has been promised in the last three budgets and construction is underway. That is great and it will be welcome. However, it is phantom funding. It is voodoo dollars.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr ELMES: It is voodoo dollars. That is what we are going to institute as the cash currency of Queensland. It illustrates beyond doubt the bankrupt mentality of this government. The government plans to borrow the capital funding necessary to construct seven schools, two of which will be built during the balance of 2009 to open at the beginning of the school year in 2010. One is at Peregrin Springs, at a cost of \$27.2 million. The supported debt model funding is not well understood and I doubt that it has been used before. The government borrows the funds needed and its private partner then services the debt. The government is able to borrow more money more cheaply than the private sector under the AAA credit rating scheme—however, of course, that has now been lost to Queensland by this Treasurer. The private partner will charge a premium so as to make a profit. So why would the government not just build these schools itself? The truth is that the Treasurer plans not to consolidate the borrowings and, as a result, understate the total state debt. Does the Treasurer plan to fiddle the books? Is he going to cook the books and have another tranche or two of borrowing off balance sheet? Is our now AA+ rating to be put back further? Where else in the budget is this sleight of hand being used? Is our state debt more than \$85.5 billion? I have a funny feeling it probably is.

We should remember that the worst Prime Minister—perhaps apart from Gough Whitlam—Paul Keating left this country with a \$96 billion debt and it took the best Prime Minister and the best Treasurer this country ever had 10 years, spread across 20 million Australians, to pay off that debt. In Queensland's case, an \$85.5 billion debt will be serviced by just over four million Queenslanders and overseen by easily the worst Premier and the worst Treasurer Queensland has ever had.

I forgot one other piece of infrastructure that is coming to the Sunshine Coast courtesy of the Bligh Labor government—that is, of course, the Northern Interconnector Pipeline. This is a little beauty. It is a 48-kilometre pipeline that stretches from Eudlo to Cooroy. It will finish up just outside my electorate. It will cost \$211.5 million this year and \$450 million in total. It will take our water and send it to Brisbane, where apparently it is now needed.

The debate that we are having in the House today is about the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the Appropriation Bill, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As I said at the start of my short contribution to the debate today, in the speeches I have heard from members on the Labor side of the parliament I have not heard much in the way of how they are going to go back to their constituencies and their Labor Party branches—those good, solid Labor people—and justify the infrastructure sale of \$7 billion of Queensland Rail and the scrapping of the fuel subsidy of 8.35c a litre and turning it into a fuel tax of 9.2c a litre.

From the point of view of my electorate, during the course of this budget process one of the things that I was hoping to see was some additional road funding for the Eumundi-Noosa Road. This road carries about 16,000 cars every day. Such is the state of the middle section of this road, it has reached the situation where it would be almost better to take up what is left of the bitumen and take it back to gravel. I am hoping that buried somewhere in some maintenance project somewhere there is some money that will allow that very dangerous section of Eumundi-Noosa Road to be sealed and brought up to some sort of standard.

Also this week we learned that, because the state is broke, the Sunshine Coast University Hospital is to be put off for another couple of years. One of the issues that I have been putting to the minister very directly—both the current minister and his predecessor—is that the Noosa Hospital has the capacity to undertake an additional 700 public procedures a year. The only thing it lacks is the funding. I do not understand why on any day of the week you can drive past the Nambour Hospital and see ambulances ramped up outside with patients on board. Yet there is spare capacity at the Noosa Hospital to be able to deal with those people who badly need attention.

I have heard some Labor members say that they want us to come up with a solution to Queensland's economic mire. Well, I have a solution. Those opposite do not mind early elections, so why don't we have another one? Why don't we have one now, and the outcome would be that we would be over there and there would be very few of them over here!

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (2.50 pm): The 10 most terrifying words for the people of Gympie are: 'I'm from the Queensland government and I'm here to help.' I give my apologies to the 40th President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, for paraphrasing him, but those sentiments in my electorate are very real. We do not want Labor government help when it comes to its proposed policies. We certainly do not want the government's proposed environmentally irresponsible dam. We do not want a fuel tax. We do not want to see increased grocery prices. Nor do we want to be burdened with a massive debt. But that is what we are being given through this budget.

I am an optimist by nature, and I believe that all 89 MPs who have come to this parliament after the recent election have come with a genuine desire to make a difference to this great state of Queensland. I believe that we do so for our children and our children's children because we want to see the state of Queensland become stronger. I recognise that we come from different political ideologies, but our desired outcome is the same: a stronger Queensland. We come from different regions across this state but, again, we are united in our desired outcome: a stronger Queensland.

Our time in this parliament is brief, but the consequences of our actions last long. We must always be able to justify our actions and our decisions. For the sake of our children we must be able to say to them, 'We did all that could be done in the time that we had available to us.' This budget from the position of time will show that not all of the decisions that could have been taken were taken.

I listened to the speech given by the Treasurer and I have listened to the contributions made by those opposite, and I do not believe for a minute that the Treasurer, the ministers, the Premier or any government members plotted the demise of the state of Queensland. I do not believe that over the last 10 years they asked themselves, 'How can we bring the state of Queensland to bankruptcy?' I do not believe that at all. What I do believe, though, is that they did not plan ahead properly, and the evidence is there today when we look at what this budget is presenting for us.

No-one doubts—and we have heard much said with regard to the global financial crisis—that these are difficult times. No-one doubts that at all. But they are times in which we must, as always, be prepared for unforeseen circumstances. What this government has not done over the past 10 years, what it has not done in proper planning, is prepare for unforeseen circumstances. It has not made the hard decisions or the proper decisions when the times were good. Now we find a budget being framed in admittedly difficult economic times, but let us recognise that the problems that underpin this budget do not result from these difficult economic times; they result from the mismanagement in the good times.

Last month in my home town of Gympie there was a wonderful local production of *Oliver*. I know that *Oliver* has been quoted in this parliament—

Mr Elmes: Are you going to sing?

Mr GIBSON: No, I do not intend to sing at all. I know that *Oliver* has been quoted in this parliament many a time with regard to budget speeches.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr GIBSON: No, no. This one I thought was interesting. I enjoyed the performance of *Oliver*, and as I sat listening to the Treasurer's budget speech I thought to myself that he must have been taking financial tips from Fagin, when he sang—

In this life, one thing counts

In the bank, large amounts

I'm afraid these don't grow on trees,

You've got to pick-a-pocket or two

What this government and the Treasurer are doing with this budget is picking the pockets of Queenslanders. The Treasurer has become the Artful Dodger of Fagin's gang in that he has mastered the art of picking the pockets of those Queenslanders who will suffer under this budget. Queenslanders will have their pockets picked at the bowser with higher fuel prices because of the fuel tax. They will have their pockets picked at the grocery check-out with higher prices because of the fuel tax. When the tradesman comes to their place to perform a service, they will have their pockets picked as the tradesman passes on the higher costs of travelling because of the fuel tax. They will have their pockets picked with regard to the asset sell-off, and the government will be picking our pockets into the future with the interest payments on debt that was clocked up in the good times.

I have heard much from government members opposite telling us about how important it is that we make the tough decisions. There was a very easy decision that could have been made. In business we often look at the opportunities to pick what we call the low-hanging fruit. They are the opportunities that exist that are easy to take and provide a good return. There is one decision that this government could have made very easily, and that was to scrap the Traveston Crossing Dam. That decision in itself would have enabled the government to recoup the expenditure on purchasing the land in the Mary Valley and it would have prevented the ongoing expenditure that it has committed to in this budget with the construction of this dam.

I have heard much from those opposite about this government's commitment to various projects. Let me tell them that if they are looking for a saving—and I know that the member for Chatsworth in his contribution asked, 'Tell us what you don't want'—they could scrap the Traveston Crossing Dam, which we do not want. That is one line item that the government can take out and save itself dollars. While the government is doing that, it should scrap the northern pipeline interconnector stage 2. That is not necessary, either. I will go on a little bit later with regard to the breakdown.

Mrs Sullivan: So there'll never be another drought. That is short-sightedness!

Mr GIBSON: I note the interjection from the member for Pumicestone with regard to short-sightedness. It was short-sightedness on the part of the Labor Party that failed to plan for water. When there was an opportunity for planning, the Labor Party took the political option. The Labor Party came to government when there was a dam that was planned for, the land had been acquired and it was ready to be delivered. That dam would have meant that in times of drought such as we have just faced there would have been water. However, this government has shown itself not to be a planner but to be a political opportunist that takes the weak decisions and in the good times has failed to do what is right.

We have heard much about what the debt will be. I must admit that I find it difficult to explain to my children what their future will hold because of the decisions of this Labor government. Some \$85.5 billion worth of debt will be passed on to my children and my children's children if we do not manage this carefully. That is costing Queenslanders \$14 million a day every day. Regardless of what day of the week it is and regardless of whether people are working or resting, the interest is accumulating. They need to be aware that \$64 billion of this debt was clocked up before the global financial crisis was even used as a phrase. The GFC had not entered our vocabulary when we had incurred \$64 billion worth of debt. It is because of the government's failure to plan—not that it was planning to fail but its failure to plan—that we find ourselves in the crisis that we are in today.

I wish to touch quickly on some of the points in this budget that are of concern to me and my electorate. With regard to agriculture, Gympie is fortunate to have a fairly diverse economic base to draw from. We have some dairy farmers, we have macadamia farmers, we have ginger farmers, we have bean and small crop farmers, we have fishermen. We have a broad ranging agricultural base and they contribute well to our economy and across this state.

But this government fails to recognise that farmers are businessmen. If they are not businessmen, they do not stay in business. Because of the relationships that farmers have with their banks and their accountants, they need to ensure that their operations are making money. There is no scope for them to be slack and lazy in their operations. What they often look for from governments is what the department of primary industries was able to provide to them—that is, looking ahead of the curve, investing into the future, providing the resources and the research that individual farmers may not be able to do. What we have seen in this government is a smash and grab with regard to agriculture, and it is disgraceful.

Much has been said about the reduction in the AAA credit rating. I liken it to this situation. Often in the past—and this does not happen as much now—we would get a letter in the mail with an invitation to take on a new credit card. Invariably, what makes people decide which credit card to choose is the interest rate that is attached to that card. There are many credit cards out there, some at 15 per cent, some at 17 per cent, some at ridiculous rates as high as 20 per cent or 25 per cent. It is up to the individual to decide, but most people look at the rates of interest on the credit card and choose the lowest possible rate. What this government is doing with the government credit card of Queensland is knocking it up to the highest interest rates, and the government does not have a plan to bring it back down to the smaller areas.

I spoke about the Traveston Crossing Dam, and let me provide some numbers for the benefit of those opposite who fail to recognise that the environmental damage and the economic mismanagement from this project will burden the taxpayers of Queensland for future years. To date, total expenses for stages 1 and 2 of the Traveston Crossing Dam have been \$691 million—and we have not one drop of water but a valley and its community crushed. Expenses for stage 2 of the Northern Pipeline Interconnector have been \$98 million. This is a pipeline to a dam that has not gained approval. This is how this government manages. It builds the driveway and then government members cross their fingers and hope they will get the development application through to build the garage. This is how ridiculous they are in their management.

We see though that the Traveston Crossing Dam must be great value for money because its price has not increased, despite the fact that this government continues to add on obligations, including \$75 million in environmental remedial work it says needs to occur. So there has been no price increase. The dam apparently will not cost any more money but it will have more work done to it—and, to date, there is not one drop of water. We never want to see a drop of water come through it. The northern pipeline interconnector stage 2 should never be built.

However, as I said, I am an optimist and I recognise there are some good things in this budget. I want to welcome the funding from the federal government, because it was the federal government which committed the money for the Bruce Highway bypass. It was the federal government which decided to step up and say, 'It's about time.' I want to thank Minister Albanese, because he did—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: No, I am willing to, because he did what transport ministers on that side would not do—that is, he listened to the people. He listened. When I asked for a meeting, Anthony Albanese agreed to meet with the federal member, with our mayor and with me. Then, interestingly, before the election was announced, he contacted my office and said, 'I can't meet with you due to a pending election.' I said, 'No, no, no. You must have misunderstood the date. We're not due for an election until

much later in the year.' His answer was, 'No, you can't come to meet with me.' So obviously the federal Labor Party is pulling the strings of the state Labor Party here. Obviously, when the Premier was saying, 'I intend to go full term,' Anthony Albanese was saying, 'No, you don't, young lady. I'll tell you when you're going.'

Ms Jones: Young lady?

Mr GIBSON: I am being nice. I did not make any critical comments about her age. Let us be honest here. This money should have been committed in 2007 when it was there, but what did the Rudd government do when it was elected in 2007? It pulled the money. It said the Bruce Highway bypass was not deserving of the funds. What has the main roads minister done? The main roads minister has been sitting on his hands. He has got arthritis, he has been sitting on them for so long. He has been wandering around looking at bridges you cannot drive under, but he could not find funding. I say bring back the previous main roads minister, Paul Lucas. At least he had the courage to hold the federal government to account. When the Rudd government came in, this government went all quiet. This government did not want to make any waves, it did not want to do anything.

I need to make this point though. I want to thank Wayne Sachs, our ambulance officer. When Minister Albanese said he could not meet with me due to an 'impending' state election, Wayne Sachs went down and presented to the minister very clearly what occurs far too often for him and other members of the Gympie ambulance community when they arrive at an accident site on the Bruce Highway bypass. As Wayne Sachs said, there is nothing worse than getting out of the ambulance and hearing the screams from an accident on that stretch of road—a stretch of road that has been recognised as being one of the deadliest stretches of road in Australia. The funding is committed to stage 2, but we must not stop there. It is a stretch of road that runs from Cooroy to Curra, and all sections of it have taken far too many lives. We need funding.

In the short time that remains, I need to touch on a few other areas. One of them relates to the Gympie Special School. This school is a great school in my electorate. It represents the most disadvantaged students in any educational system. When I was a student, I had the opportunity, as many of us do, to take on work experience and my work experience was working as a teacher aide in a special school environment. So at a very early age in my life, I recognised the great need to invest in our special schools. The Gympie Special School is inadequate for the needs of the students today. It is clearly inadequate. I have been harping on about this since my maiden speech, and I will continue to harp on about it because it is a school with a small student base and therefore a small parent base but it has a high need to ensure that those areas are covered.

When we look at the Infrastructure portfolio in this budget, we see it is struggling for relevance. It is struggling for relevance because this government has time and time again demonstrated its failures in managing and delivering infrastructure. The capital works budget, so trumpeted by those opposite, was underspent by almost \$900 million last year. That is 6,300 jobs not supported by the funding that was announced in the previous budget. How can Queenslanders have any faith in Labor's spurious and discredited promises to create 100,000 jobs when unemployment is rising and budgeted money in the capital expenditure account remains unspent?

Time and time again, we hear from engineering and construction firms saying, 'We have projects ready to go. We're just waiting on the green light from the government.' Unfortunately, this government has its foot on the brake and the green light is very slow in coming and, when it does, it is only for incremental parts of the projects. It is no wonder we have had a damning report by the Auditor-General into the government's planning for our future health needs. I know the Auditor-General has been doing a report on the government's transport planning needs, and I would be surprised if that was not as critical as the Health report, and perhaps even more damning.

The Bligh government is pickpocketing Queenslanders in every way possible. This budget tells the sad tale of 11 years of mismanagement and 11 years of squandered opportunity. But, more importantly, it reveals an incredible dishonesty that was portrayed to the people of this state at the last election. This government did not have the backbone to stand up and say, 'This is our plan. This is where we are going forward because these are the circumstances that we face.' The Treasurer, if he is worth his salt, would have known half the things that he is alleging he did not, and he would have presented to the people of Queensland an alternative. There is a solution to the concerns demonstrated by those opposite, as has been mentioned by the member for Noosa, and that is to call an election and let the people of Queensland decide.

(Time expired)

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (3.10 pm): It was with a sense of wonder and great pleasure that I listened intently to the speech of the honourable member for Gympie, because I noticed that the Leader of the Opposition is not the only member of the opposition who can quote from Charles Dickens. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from *David Copperfield*. The member for Gympie quoted from *Oliver Twist*. Perhaps this just represents the factional difference between the two sections of the opposition, but it is undoubtedly to be admired.

My colleagues have constantly noted one theme in the opposition, and that is the absence of the presentation of any alternative. I think that my colleagues are a little demanding and perhaps a little harsh. It is a lot to ask of an opposition that they should put forward an alternative program. I think we should be a little more inclusive, the way we are in the state schools that we run, for example, where we do not concentrate on what the candidate cannot do. What we try to do is to be inclusive and concentrate on the things that they can do and see if we can find strengths.

I looked for some strengths in the contributions of the honourable members from the other side of the House. I looked for an economic philosophy or an economic theme that underpinned what they were talking about. I noticed that the honourable member for Noosa referred to the greatness of Malcolm Fraser and that great Treasurer Phil Lynch. He spoke with a sense of idolotry of Ronald Reagan. I thought maybe Reaganomics is where they were at. I wondered whether the Friedmanite economics of Malcolm Fraser and Phil Lynch was where they were at. I wondered, as we went back in time, if they had read Maynard Keynes, but they did not seem to be on the same wavelength as every other country in the world which is taking the Keynesian solution of stimulating the economy—keeping the engines of the economy rolling by government expenditure. That did not seem to be where they were at all. They did not even seem to be at one with the thinking of Adam Smith. I then realised where it all came from.

Ms Jones: Where?

Mr WELLS: I note the minister's interjection. It came from *David Copperfield*. You will remember Mr Micawber, who said, 'If you had a few pence above your expenditure in your revenue, then the result was happiness; a few pence below and the result would be sorrow.' What we have from the opposition is Dickensian economics. They are a Dickensian party. Their Dickensian attitude is way out of time and their understanding of the problem is enormously out of place.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated to us that the problem was not the international financial crisis, but clearly it is. Let us go back to the basic issue. The problem is that we budgeted a year ago on the basis of the figures that we had at that time for revenue of \$40 billion over the next few years. That figure for the next four years falls short over that four-year period by \$14 billion. The revenue has gone down directly as a result of the international financial crisis.

It is obviously a problem that we face because we are facing an international financial crisis. The revenue has gone down. We have to do something about the fact that the revenue has gone down. Consequently, there are some options that are available. One of the options would be to increase taxes by the \$3½ billion a year that we would need to increase them by in order to balance the budget. That would not be palatable. Another option would be a wage freeze. That would not be palatable. Another option would be to cut the Capital Works Program by \$3½ billion. That would not be palatable.

So we end up with the option that we have before us in these cognate bills, and that option is the privatisation of some assets. Of course it would be possible to solve the problem by borrowing money if we had not lost the AAA credit rating. We lost the AAA credit rating as a result of the activities of the international ratings agencies whose record in respect of the Wall Street collapse deserves further examination. Those international ratings agencies mean that it is not possible to borrow the money. We are forced back to one of the other options. The most palatable option is the one that we are dealing with in these cognate debates.

Sometimes in public administration you just have to do the least worst thing. Like honourable members who have spoken on both sides of the House, I do not like the idea of privatising assets, and I will say, quite frankly, that I think the government should be running more things rather than fewer things. But sometimes you have no choice. You just have to do what you have to do. The fact is that what we are doing here is the least painful choice and the one that is going to work. We have had palpable intimations—and the world has had palpable intimations—from the ratings agencies that, in order to have a AAA credit rating, this would be a really good thing to do.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr WELLS: I am sorry, I missed the honourable member's interjection.

Mr Johnson: I said ...

Mr WELLS: The honourable member obviously cannot remember his interjection.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr WELLS: No, you had your chance. You can make another speech later. You have to be able to remember from one second to the next what you are on about.

Given that we do not have the availability of borrowing, this is the course that we have to go down. The responsibility of this government is to ensure that, as much as possible, we keep people in jobs and the economy continues to roll over. Many of my constituents are doing it hard. They are not going to like the fact that the petrol subsidy, which is dishonestly referred to by the opposition as a petrol tax, is being withdrawn. They are not going to like the fact that that subsidy is being withdrawn. It will be inconvenient to them, but many of them have said to me that they understand we have to do what we have to do because the most important thing is jobs.

These are difficult times for many of my constituents, and this government is the nightwatchman of many of their darkest hours. We owe it to my constituents and the constituents of every member in this House to do what needs to be done to keep the economy moving, to keep people in jobs, to keep money moving around. If, in order to keep the money moving around and thereby keep the engines of the economy running, it is necessary to sell some assets, then we must do that. Let us hope that at some future time we can acquire others so that the net worth of the state is not reduced, but we have to do the things that have to be done.

The fact is that, if honourable members opposite were faced with the choices which this government faces, they would actually do the same thing themselves. Notwithstanding the fact that they have not said to us what they are going to do, notwithstanding the fact that they have taken refuge in Charles Dickens, notwithstanding the fact that they have been unwilling to actually confront the question of how you do this, that is actually what they would do. I would say to honourable members on the opposite side of the House that the very best thing they could do now is to support the budget and the other bills in the cognate debate.

Mr Johnson: The best thing you could do is resign and have a general election.

Mr WELLS: Let me say to honourable members opposite, including the honourable member who has just spoken, consider Dickens, that novelist that the other side of the House knows and loves so well. Remember this quote because if you do this then it will be 'a far, far better thing than you have ever done'.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (3.20 pm): Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair once said that the art of leadership is saying no, not yes; it is very easy to say yes. He could not have been more accurate in describing some of the decisions that the Premier and the Treasurer have to make in responding to the unlimited demand for funds in preparing for the 2009 state budget. Make no mistake, when the Prime Minister and the Treasurer said that as a country and a state we are facing the worst financial crisis in over half a century, we are indeed facing some very serious and unprecedented challenges.

Commonwealth Treasury expects that the collapse in global demand and global commodity prices could wipe \$50 billion from export earnings in 2009-10 alone. Falls of this magnitude have never been seen in this country in the past half century. The commodity boom is unwinding. This is expected to strip three per cent of GDP, or around \$35 billion, from national income next year. As Queensland is a resource-rich state, we can expect to see 30 per cent of our revenue wiped off in the blink of an eye.

Contrary to the opposition, doing nothing is not an option for this government. The previous Leader of the Opposition and the future recycled leader said last year that there was no recession. At a time when people were fearful for their jobs and economic stability, the current Deputy Leader of the Opposition was promising not to protect jobs but to cut them: 12,000 jobs were to become 'de-necessary'. The opposition was so convinced that the figures it proposed to the people did not stack up that it refused to submit them to the Treasury. It also criticised the hard decisions made by the Bligh government but proposed none of its own. The opposition believes that an LNP government could achieve its cuts without raising taxes, cutting or stalling infrastructure projects, axing public sector jobs, increasing mining royalties or selling assets. Which planet did it come from?

Since launching the LNP campaign on the platform of economic management last year, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been repeatedly hammered by the media on how he will simultaneously fund his election promises, bring the state budget back into the black and restore the state's credit rating all at the same time as improving health, education and transport. How is he going to do that? 'You do not necessarily have to cut anything,' said the honourable member for Southern Downs. 'It is about how you cut your cloth to suit,' he said. That is a very profound statement indeed that would have put Confucius to shame. The only cloth the honourable member cut was the blindfold that he tailor-made for himself and consistently put over his eyes and those of the LNP. As recently as February this year he declared that the global economic crisis was peripheral to Queensland, and he still thought that yesterday.

Fifty-five hours and 55 minutes into orbit, *Apollo 13* experienced a serious problem. Oxygen tank No. 2 blew up and No. 1 was also failing. There was no electricity, no water, no lights and, more importantly, no power to gimbal the engine back to earth. Astronaut Jack Swigert radioed land base and uttered his famous words, 'Houston, we've had a problem here.' Acknowledging there is a problem is the first and basic step of addressing any problem. Without acknowledging that there is a problem there can be no plan and no solution. There is little wonder about the quality of the response from the opposition yesterday.

Graham Young said on his blog—

It also makes you wonder who is advising Lawrence Springborg in Queensland. Today he claimed that Labor is "playing up the scope of the financial crisis". When 57% of your constituents are calling it a depression, they're not likely to give you marks for insight when your claim is so different from the reality they perceive.

British writer Aldous Huxley once said—

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.

The sad thing is that I do not think anyone was advising the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is his own view; that is the scary part. When members opposite realised that voters are not as silly as they hoped they changed their tactic. What is the tactic? Attack the messenger, attack the plan and attack the solutions proposed by this government while they themselves provide absolutely no plan, no answer and no solution.

The time between 11.30 am to 12.15 pm yesterday should go down in history as the most disappointing budget reply made by a Leader of the Opposition in the history of this state. I encourage everyone to download a copy of the budget speech of the Treasurer and compare it side by side with the one delivered by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and ask themselves these questions: which one of these two would they like to lead them out of this global financial crisis, which one of these two has a solution for the crisis, and which one of these two has a plan for the future?

The fact is that yesterday I was waiting anxiously for the opposition to tell Queenslanders what the alternative government of this state would do if they got the key to George Street. After listening to the Leader of the Opposition for 50 full minutes I can only conclude that they have four options to deal with the global financial crisis. This is what they will do if they are in government. There are four choices for Queenslanders from the Leader of the Opposition: to do A, nothing; B, zilch; C, zip; and D, all of the above. The answer is clearly D, all of the above. The LNP has no plan, no answer and no solution. Not only do they have no plan, no answer and no solution, but they have not even looked in the right direction. Members on this side are looking forward and looking ahead even though it is going to be tough. The opposition looks back and wonders what could have been. That is the essence of the opposition's budget reply yesterday: looking back to what could have been. We cannot run a state by looking back. We cannot bring Queensland out of this global financial crisis just by looking back and we certainly cannot deliver a better Queensland just by looking back. That is why this government has a plan to move Queensland back into the black.

You do not drown by falling into water; you drown by staying there. That is why in the first budget of the newly elected Bligh government we are delivering the tough decisions to take Queensland forward through hard economic times. We are delivering \$7.3 billion for roads and other transport infrastructure, \$1.3 billion for new health infrastructure and \$1.8 billion for education and training capital works. We will continue to invest in initiatives to provide solutions to climate change and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of Queensland. We are taking a proactive and positive approach to assist businesses and households to do the right thing for the environment. Almost half of our expenditure next year will be for health and education. This I think is a good indication of the priorities of the Bligh Labor government: investing in the future of our health and education as well as infrastructure for the future.

This is a budget that delivers sound management which means investing in infrastructure and sustaining jobs at a time when the economy needs it the most. This is a tough budget for tough times. For those of my constituents who are fortunate enough to have a job, the state's \$18.2 billion building program and the resultant budget deficit and borrowing is designed to protect their jobs and to keep our economy going. For those of my constituents who are thinking of building or buying a house for the first time, the tax threshold has been increased substantially. For those of my constituents who are looking for work, the state government is spending \$414 million to skill up and train the workforce of tomorrow. For those of my constituents who are on pensions and worrying about expenses, the Queensland government is increasing the electricity rebate by more than 15 per cent.

That 2,000 people per week are coming to live in Queensland poses challenges to all levels of government. We are still employing more police, more teachers, more nurses and more bus drivers every week. We still pay an average \$400 less tax per person per year than people in other states in this country. Imagine our household income had just been cut by one-third. We would have to make some tough decisions to ensure everyone in the family is supported the best way we can until better days. That means we all have to share the burden of the global financial crisis, which is not of our own making.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central in one of her speeches a few weeks ago managed to speak in her mother tongue. I am not going to do that here today except to make a few comments. The Chinese word for 'crisis' consists of two separate words. The first is 'wei', which means imminent danger. We are confronting the worst economic situation since the Great Depression. More importantly, the second word is 'ji', which means immense opportunities. I believe for every challenge there is an opportunity that we can get hold of.

That is why the Bligh government has a plan to bring this state forward. We are determined to return the budget of this state to surplus. When we come out the other end of this global recession, Queensland will be better positioned than ever to capitalise on all the opportunities around the corner. I will end with a statement by Jim Collins. He said—

Greatness is not a function of circumstances. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline.

This side of the House has made a conscious choice and has the discipline to deliver a plan for a better Queensland. The other side is still in denial and has no plan, no answer and no solution. I promise to stand shoulder to shoulder with my constituents to weather this financial storm. I thank the Premier and the Treasurer for their leadership and courage to make tough and unpopular decisions. I commend this budget and all relevant legislation to the House.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (3.31 pm): I rise to applaud the state budget for the important opportunities it provides for Queensland and for the Bulimba electorate in particular. I congratulate the Treasurer on the strength of his commitment to maintaining and creating jobs for Queenslanders and to keeping the economy moving in the face of the worst global financial crisis for decades.

Given the dramatic drop in our forecast revenue, it would be much less painful for the government in the very short term to just close everything down, to stop everything. That is what the opposition would like us to do. However, it is a brave and determined government, like the Bligh Labor government, that resists that urge and keeps its resolve. The government's \$18.2 billion building program will save Queensland in the long term. It will help to provide jobs here and now and it will bring our state through to economic recovery.

I am proud to be part of a government that not only is committed to jobs but also will strike forward in continuing to address the broader issues of our community. These issues include: making sure all Queensland children have access to a good quality education; continuing to invest in other essential services like health, police and emergency services and making sure we have the staff to deliver them; tackling transport and traffic congestion issues; addressing the challenges of climate change and empowering individuals to do their bit towards protecting our future; and looking after the more vulnerable in our community.

These are issues that I know the people of the Bulimba electorate care about. They want to know that the government has the policies in place to look after their interests and those of their families and that the government will put its money where its mouth is. This budget sends that message to them.

The budget has many, many positives for the people of Bulimba. The electorate will benefit from the \$613 million set aside for vocational education and training in the Greater Brisbane region. We will see the construction and upgrading of important facilities that will not only ensure the community has uninterrupted access to those services but also create jobs in the electorate. There is \$259.15 million for the continuation of the Gateway Upgrade Project. There is \$1.43 million at Dobby to upgrade high-voltage feeder capacity. There is \$5.69 million at Dobby to build a new zone substation. There is \$5.3 million for the ongoing works at Colmslie Estate.

The government has also allocated \$1.6 million to commence and complete construction of six social housing dwellings in the Bulimba electorate. A further \$690,000 has been allocated to complete construction of four dwellings in the electorate. A total of \$46.39 million has been allocated across Greater Brisbane for the upgrading and renewal of social rental housing properties. This means more and better public housing to assist those who need it and it means jobs during the construction and maintenance phases.

I have made previous mention in this House of the priority which I personally place on education. It is also a strong priority for the people of the Bulimba electorate. Despite the tough financial climate, I am pleased to say that this budget still puts aside money for some important projects that will make a real difference to local schools on a day-to-day basis—a move that recognises the high level of service offered at our local schools, the vibrancy of our school communities, the hard work of our parents and the eagerness of our students to learn.

Bulimba State School, St Oliver Plunkett and Cannon Hill Anglican College will share in \$85,000 for passenger set-down facilities. Funding for additional maintenance works has been allocated to our schools. There is \$159,000 for Cannon Hill, \$157,000 for Balmoral, \$146,000 for Seven Hills State School as well as \$40,000 towards a bikeway and footpath, \$91,000 for Morningside, \$50,000 for Norman Park and \$16,000 for Bulimba.

This local commitment to education reflects the Bligh government's state-wide focus on ensuring every Queensland child has access to high-quality education. The focus has resulted in a range of important initiatives, including the construction of new kindergarten facilities in schools across the state, the maintenance of our existing schools and the funding of innovative new projects. I am pleased to see the additional support for our students, teachers and principals with teacher aide hours increased and \$20 million dedicated to improving literacy and numeracy and a new leadership centre for school principals. The principals working within the Bulimba electorate are of the highest standard and they do our schools proud. It is such a pleasure to be acknowledging their contributions by providing dedicated professional development such as this.

Undoubtedly, some of the key issues in the Bulimba electorate are traffic congestion and transport. The electorate is a high-density area showing continued growth, and the need for investment in transport and road infrastructure to deliver residents a significant change in their commute is clear. This budget delivers to the local area important funding in that direction.

I have already referred to the Gateway Upgrade Project, comprised of a second Gateway Bridge river crossing and increased capacity on the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Nudgee Road. This important infrastructure project has an estimated total cost of \$1.88 billion and is expected to cut travel time on the motorway by 15 minutes. An additional \$891,000 in joint state-federal funding has been set aside to complete concept planning for a section of the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the Pacific Highway at a total cost of \$6 million.

Then there is the completion of stage 1 of the Eastern Busway by August of this year, with the extension to begin mid-2009. This busway will be so important in reducing travelling time. As the transport minister keeps telling us, a very full bus takes 40 cars off the road. The impact on traffic congestion as well on carbon emissions will be enormous.

People of the Bulimba electorate will also benefit from the investment of a further \$1.2 billion into TransLink for public transport in South-East Queensland. I am pleased to say that active transport options are receiving a significant investment, with \$2.3 million this year towards construction of a bikeway between the Gateway Motorway north, Lytton Road and Schulz Canal, with a total state government contribution of \$4 million.

While in the current financial climate it is critical to focus our attention on the infrastructure and spending programs required to ensure our economy recovers from the global downturn, it is equally important that we do not overlook the greatest threat to our future and to what we leave our children—that is, climate change. I am proud to say that many residences, businesses, community organisations and schools in the Bulimba electorate are committed to addressing climate change. This budget will support them to do that.

Across the state the government is investing an additional \$95.83 million over five years in new climate change initiatives—like \$15 million for the ClimateSmart Business program and \$8 million for the energy efficiency retrofit program and the solar hot-water program, which will provide up to 200,000 Queensland homes with solar hot water or heat-pump systems at a fraction of the normal price. The announcement of this excellent program generated a huge number of calls to my office. Local residents are eagerly embracing the initiative.

The new \$57 million Green Army program will provide 3,000 jobs over the next three years while focusing on projects to protect our environment. I am looking forward to working with a range of groups within the electorate which have already expressed an interest in applying for this program.

One of the things I am really proud of about this budget is the government's commitment to looking after the vulnerable in our community. I cannot speak highly enough of the work that goes on in the Bulimba electorate to help those in need. It is a privilege to visit places like the Cannon Hill Family Support Centre and the Gateway Community Centre to see the work that they do to help the homeless and the people who are struggling to make ends meet. It was wonderful to see the recurrent funding committed to those organisations in the budget and to know that community sector workers who help the elderly, the frail and the disabled will have their work acknowledged by the \$414 million which has been allocated across four years to support them. It would have been so easy not to do this—to bow to pressure and just say, 'It costs too much to acknowledge them.' That is what the opposition would have us do, but that is not what this government is about. This government is about leadership and compassion and about moving our state forward.

I have been taken aback by the attitude of the opposition to the budget. Members of this House have listened to numerous budget reply speeches during the last day or so and in very few of them—certainly not in the speech of the opposition leader—have opposition members expressed any satisfaction or pleasure in the fact that jobs are being generated in their electorates, that young people and the long-term unemployed in their electorates are being skilled to enter or re-enter the job market, that roads are being built, that public transport is being expended, that the schools and the community organisations in their electorates are receiving funding, and that the critical work of their police, their teachers, their emergency services workers, their doctors and their nurses is being supported.

What is it that those opposite actually want? What is their vision? What will they offer to move their electorates and this wonderful state into the future? We are none the wiser in this House. As they did during the recent state election, they wish to put themselves forward to the Queensland public as alternative leaders. But when times are tough, Queenslanders want to know that their leaders are strong, that they know what they are doing and that they are showing a clear way forward through the mire. But after their performance this week, however Queenslanders see the opposition, they will not see them as leaders. I am proud to be part of this government that is offering a real future to Queenslanders, that is showing strength during adversity and that has a real vision for where we need to head.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (3.41 pm): It simply amazes the opposition as well to sit and hear the drivel coming from members opposite. I want to reiterate what our leader said yesterday, and I think John-Paul Langbroek made a wonderful speech. The fact is you do not like it. You do not like what you are hearing. You have to go and face your union buddies—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! The member will resume his seat. Will members please remember that they need to speak through the chair.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The members opposite simply do not like it, but they have to sit in this House and take it. They have to take it, and it is going to be handed out by every one of the members on the opposition benches because, as our shadow Treasurer said, this is the worst budget in the 150-year history of Queensland. In 150 years of history in Queensland, this is the worst budget yet delivered! Opposition members will repeat what has already been said time

and again. This government is delivering \$85 billion worth of debt—that is, \$85,000 million if you can get your head around the number of noughts on that. That is an amazing amount of money. We hear members opposite cry about the economic recession—the economic downturn. However, before the economic downturn was even mentioned, this state was in \$65 billion worth of debt—\$65,000 million worth of debt. As a number of members on this side of the House have said, every day we wake up \$14 million is paid in interest alone. That is \$14 million every day that we could put into a school, that we could put into a health facility, that we could put into the DPI in order to re-employ some of the staff who are going to be sacked by way of cuts in the minister's budget. Queensland has lost its AAA credit rating and, because of that, our interest payments are no doubt going to go up.

In the last couple of weeks we have seen the announcement of the sell-off of Queensland's assets—the assets that the people of Queensland own. The people of Queensland own those assets. If members recall, during Tuesday's question time of the last sitting of parliament all of our leading questions related to whether you were going to scrap the petrol subsidy. It was denied and the government said that we were fools. However, in the *Sunday Mail* three days after the parliament adjourned, there it was! That is the deception that this government is ruling by. That was the degree of the deception before the budget was announced in terms of the sell-off of Queensland assets and that was the degree of the deception before the election. If the people of Queensland had even dreamed that you people were going to do what is being done by this government at this moment, there is no way in the world you would be sitting on that side of the House, and the fact is that members opposite know it. Our deputy leader has got stuck into the unions lately. He has called them a mob of fairies and a mob of pansies, and I totally agree. The very movement that you people are raised up from—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. The member will speak through the chair.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Members opposite have to go out and face their union mates, but what are the unions doing? If we were trying to do this if we were in power, the unions would be out there bringing Queensland to a halt—that is the fact of the matter—but they are doing nothing and this government is getting away with it. We are seeing the sell-off of our ports and the sell-off of Treasury holdings. Forestry Plantations Queensland consists of 200,000 hectares and made \$85 million profit last year. We are seeing the sell-off of the Queensland Rail freight service. The government subsidises commuters in Brisbane by about \$8.25 a head when they get on a train and that costs the government \$500 million, yet Queensland will have to miss out on the profits made from the freight service. Queensland will have to miss out on the profits from our forestry assets as well. Queensland will have to miss out on these revenue-raising profits because of this sell-off to try to raise \$15 billion. Someone told me that Forestry Plantations Queensland was worth about \$1.6 billion but on the current market would bring about \$800 million. So it will be sold at about half the price the government could have got for it two years ago. These are the sorts of points that our leader raised yesterday in his wonderful speech, and many members have spoken about that today and many members will continue to speak about it.

I fear for our agricultural colleges. I was the shadow minister to Tom Barton when he instigated the review and abolished the boards—the local farmers—that ran the colleges. There were 120 students in those colleges. Some of those colleges now have 10 students. If members go back over the *Hansard* from four years ago and read my speech when I was shadow minister, I predicted that this exact thing would happen. There are 5,000 acres of black soil cultivation in the Dalby Agricultural College alone, and I know that this government has its smelly hands all over it looking to sell it because that would raise revenue for Queensland. As long as I breathe air, I will take the fight to this government if it ever tries to sell off that land. Those colleges are the agricultural training grounds that have been put in place for rural Queensland. The only reason Australia is not in recession at this moment is that it is living off the fruits of agriculture. Agriculture has stopped Australia going into recession, yet now we have a budget that has been totally slashed by the Minister for Primary Industries. This government is broke! It is absolutely broke! My grandchildren will be responsible for paying this money back, because we will never live to see it. It is beyond belief that any government could do this in such a short amount of time.

I turn to my shadow portfolio of primary industries. As mentioned, the department's overall operating budget has been cut by 7.4 per cent to \$335 million. Funding for services will be down \$25 million, or 23 per cent, to \$82.4 million. There are cuts right across-the-board. The Primary Industries budget has been slashed. What we need is a minister who sits in cabinet and argues for his portfolio, and the last three primary industries ministers have failed to do that. It is seen as one of the least important portfolios under this Labor government, yet under us it is one of the top priorities. Before the election, under my policy I had \$140 million approved—

Mr Fraser: All evidence to the contrary.

Mr HOPPER: I hear the Treasurer over there squawking. We had \$140 million approved to put into primary industries without slashing one cent. So if you add that to what has been slashed here, it was a major injection into our rural industries in Queensland—the backbone of Queensland, the food producers, the food security, the people who provide the wealth of the state and who stop it from going into recession.

What have we seen from this government? Staff members will be cut by around five per cent, mostly in Biosecurity. When Wayne Goss took over government, there were 600 scientists in the DPI. The staff numbers have been totally slashed. Once again, in another budget we see exactly the same thing happen. It is simply unacceptable. That reflects an overall cut of funding of 10 per cent to \$64.613 million. We will be seeing a whole range of front-line services wound back, withdrawn and axed within the department of primary industries. This cut in funding will result in fewer stock inspectors and agronomists, if there are any left at all. They will not be doing much extension work, apart from over the internet. That is about the only area of expansion under Minister Mulherin, who says his goal is to get half of all services from his department delivered online by 2012. That is very nice, but we do not have people on the ground—the very people who make up the department.

Recently I was in Townsville meeting with those people. The staff members of DPI know what I am saying has to happen. The staff members of DPI do not simply accept what has been put before them in this budget. That is terrific: it will be all done over the net. We look forward to all the vital extension work from the minister coming to us down the line from head office. It is a case of cuts and wind backs, and the morale among the staff of the department of primary industries will continue to fail to improve because money is going out of their coffers. They have nothing to work with. Now, once again the department has been cut. It is simply unacceptable.

The number of cuts and wind backs is shameful. Those actions should be compared to those of the LNP, which had a clear focus to improve the service delivery of a key government department. Although all service delivery is important, the DPIF can and should be making a major contribution to the wealth generation of Queensland. Primary industries are the wealth creators of Queensland. When a dairy farmer milks a cow, he can sell a litre of milk the next day. That litre of milk did not exist the day before. He brings into being a product that creates wealth. I get paid wages for being a member of parliament. I am not creating wealth. It is the people who create things—the coalminers, industry, and our farmers—who create the wealth of our state. Yet we see funding slashed.

We will see the privatisation of Queensland Rail. There will be no governing body to be able to say how much the freight will be for our coal companies. We have not seen the repercussions of that privatisation yet. The Premier announced another coalmine at Miles, just outside Chinchilla. How is the coal going to get out from that mine? The rail line is chock-a-block. Every day thousands of trucks go through Toowoomba. Only recently I had Barnaby Joyce come to Dalby to complain about the road. Old people were falling over while trying to cross the road. This is very serious stuff. People were falling over while crossing the main street of Dalby because the weight of the trucks that are using the road are causing the road to give way. The Warrego Highway is being destroyed by trucks carting coal because no money has been put into Queensland Rail for years and years and years so that there is not a decent track that can get coal to port and coal to Brisbane. So we are seeing more and more trucks on the roads.

The LNP went to the election with a clear commitment to boost the DPIF. It promised a budget of \$500 million this year. Imagine the improvements we could have made to primary industries and, importantly, to departmental staff morale with that level of funding. Instead of having staff constantly glued to seek.com.au looking for jobs and on the net constantly checking their payouts, they would be planning new programs with confidence to drive production with the knowledge that their jobs were safe and would continue to be so. I bet they are wondering about their jobs today. If any of them have read the budget and seen what is to happen to DPI, they would have to be shaking in their shoes. Under the LNP plan, the staff of that department would also have had funds to carry out proper extension work. They would have had the money to put petrol in cars so that they could travel to farms to hear firsthand what the farmers need and not instead be stuck in an office, with no travel funds, trying to do all that work over the net.

The effect of Labor's budget is to further alienate the bush and regional Queensland. It is another case of the government turning its back on the very hand that feeds it, because against all the gloom, farming is one of the few bright spots. We have had three crops in a row on the Darling Downs. We have not had that for 15 years. Dalby is booming, because Dalby lives off the back of primary producers. Once primary producers are starting to do well, the town thrives. There is a brand-new shopping centre there. There are people everywhere.

The best the minister can offer is ridiculous spin on delivering his fresh approach initiative. But in truth, this is more of the minister's stale and debilitating management that sees cuts to funding to primary industries year after year. We have had the petrol tax announced by this government. We have seen the cutting of our rail. For the Dalby sale—a Wednesday afternoon—that one cattle train that is required gets cancelled for two weeks in a row. Instead, 44 decks get sent down the Toowoomba range, if the primary producers can get the trucks. In Central Queensland, Teys Brothers had trains ordered, but they did not show up because this government said, 'We don't have any locomotives.' The government did not let them know until the trains did not arrive. That is unacceptable. Teys Brothers then had to find trucks to transport those cattle. The cattle have already been in the yard for four to six days. They have been mustered, held in the yard at the station, then trucked to the saleyards, then

taken to slaughter at Dinmore or Beaudesert. It is unacceptable that these cattle are held up and those trucks are put down the Warrego Highway and down the Toowoomba range. The roads in western Queensland are simply falling apart. I dread to think of the future under this government. It is very disappointing to see this budget. The Treasurer and Premier should hang their heads in shame.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (3.56 pm): Earlier today, it was interesting to hear the Premier talk about how this state had created an environment of openness and transparency since the Fitzgerald inquiry. However, in the lead-up to the budget we again witnessed this government say one thing and do another. That trend is further strengthened by the way in which this government has bound together these bills so that the rights, the freedoms and the voices of the people are again pushed aside. They are being pushed aside so that the Labor members do not have to explain to their unions and constituents why they have been deceived.

In 21 days time Queensland will wake up and the money will start draining from their pockets. Come Wednesday, 1 July, every time a Queenslanders switches on a light, turns on a tap, buys groceries or puts petrol in their vehicle, they will start paying for this state government's mismanagement. On 1 July, Queenslanders will pay the price for a decade of neglect, budget blow-outs and financial mismanagement. They will pay the price for this state government sending Queensland broke during the boom times.

In preparing for this budget, I reviewed the commitments and comments made only last year by this government. At that time, the state government was heading towards a \$65 billion debt. Projects across the state were experiencing budget blow-outs and registration fees and taxes were starting to rise. Last year, all the members on this side of the House warned the people of Queensland that the 2008-09 budget was reckless, big borrowing, big taxing, big spending and wasteful. In other words, it was a typical Labor budget.

But things have only become worse. After a decade of untold wealth, Queensland is now locked into a decade of debt. The state is heading towards an \$85.5 billion debt. Queensland will be paying \$14 million each and every day to cover the \$6.4 billion interest bill this state government's incompetence has racked up.

Just 12 weeks have passed since the election and, if we believe the Premier and the Treasurer, it is only during this period that this state government has realised that we are being swept into a fiscal black hole. The members on the government side of the House like to show contempt for the people of Queensland and blame this state's problems solely on the global economic crisis without taking any responsibility for the continuous fiscal failings of Labor governments.

The global financial crisis did not send Queensland broke, but it certainly gave the Labor Party a convenient excuse for our dire situation. But the global financial crisis cannot be used as excuse for the government misleading the people of Queensland. Queenslanders know why the Premier rushed to the polls earlier this year. When the Premier was talking about jobs, jobs, jobs, she was talking about just one job; she was talking about her job. That is why the Treasurer did not reveal the full extent of the Sunshine State's financial problems before 21 March.

There was no mention of the \$84 billion of debt Queensland was sinking into. There was no mention of the fuel tax that the Premier was set to introduce. Labor did not talk about the sale of Queensland Rail or forestry and port assets. Queenslanders were told about this government's commitment to spending up big. The government dazzled voters with dollar signs but forgot to mention who would be picking up the bill. Many Queenslanders, including union representatives, have asked why this state government misled them. Or did the state government simply and incompetently just not see this coming?

One has to be suspicious when six months ago the Treasurer told the *Brisbane Times* that he did not believe Queensland would go into a recession. Considering the dire state Queensland's economy was in last year, considering the state of the global economic crisis in January, it beggars belief that the Treasurer—the person trusted with all Queensland's money—did not see this coming. Quite simply, the people of Queensland have had their trust betrayed by the Premier and her incompetent government.

Government members will have Queensland believe that the sale of this state's assets in the current economic climate will save our state. This is simply not true and it is equivalent to this government seeking to sell the family home to pay the bills. The majority of this money is not being used to invest in Queensland's future. It will not create the promised 100,000 jobs for breadwinners. The money from the sale of these assets will predominantly pay wages for workers who will have less job security under this current government. This government has decided to sell Queensland's future by putting money-raising assets up for sale at a time when they will go for bargain basement prices. And the Treasurer cannot even understand why so many Queenslanders are upset and feel betrayed by this fire sale.

We all know how much the Treasurer loves fairytales and that his perception continuously overrides reality. So I will put the latest failures of this government into a nursery rhyme. It is indeed one of my family's favourite bedtime stories—*Jack and the Beanstalk*. The main character managed to get his hands on a goose that laid golden eggs. When the member for Mount Coot-tha became

Queensland's Treasurer, he certainly got his hands on a similar gift. But, unlike the fictional character, the Treasurer has sold the goose instead of the eggs and has failed to secure our state's financial future. The question Queenslanders want answered is: where did the money from those golden eggs go? How did our state's robust economy, boosted by years of the mining boom, GST and stamp duty, end up here?

There are examples of this state government's spending habits everywhere we look, from glossy brochures and full-page ads for the 'made in New South Wales' Q2 initiative to the hundreds of signs advertising the state government at community centres, schools and sporting grounds. There are major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines and hospitals that have come in millions of dollars over budget. But this state government has simply shrugged off its responsibility when the big bills have arrived and simply put them on the credit card for future generations to take responsibility. This irresponsible government will force Queensland to pay an extra \$1.2 billion in interest payments every year because the Bligh Labor government has lost this state's once valued AAA credit rating.

Even the head of the Queensland Treasury Corporation, Sir Leo Hielscher, has felt it necessary to publicly warn Anna Bligh and the Treasurer about their spending spree. Sir Leo has revealed that the cost of the loss of the AAA credit rating is enough to pay for a new children's hospital once a year every year instead of once in a lifetime—words that show the failings of the state government and words that send a shiver down most Queenslanders' backs. Sir Leo went further to identify that the real cost of this mismanagement is the thousands of police, teachers, hospitals and economic infrastructure we would otherwise have if Queensland had not gone bust in a boom.

Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Sir Leo Hielscher are all stating that the black hole and uphill battle Queensland finances face is a result of this state government's financial incompetence. Yet less than three months ago the Treasurer said that to focus on restoring Queensland's credit rating would be 'disastrous' for the economy. I think this state budget is already disastrous for the economy. We have been told that this is a tough budget for tough times. Queenslanders are going to suffer through the next decade of debt, although some Queenslanders will feel the ill effects far more than others.

I would like to address the issues of this budget relating to child safety services. Queensland's at-risk families are big losers in this budget, and children around the state will pay the price for this state government's mismanagement. As the members on the other side of the House will be quick to point out, there has been an additional \$50 million in funding provided to child safety services in this budget. But this budget does little for the children at risk of neglect and abuse across the state, with only nine additional staff to be employed out of this budget.

Yet the department is continuing to take record numbers of children into foster care. There are now 7,630 children in care—3,500 more children in care than before the 2004 Crime and Misconduct Commission inquiry. As revealed by the recently released one-year-old results from the department of child safety report—a report that was tabled during the budget—the department is being swamped by 200 notifications a day. This is set to increase by 300 reports of suspected neglect, abuse and harm to children within three years if the current rate continues.

But this state government has failed to speak up for those children at risk. Despite the rising number of children at risk, Child Safety spends less than 2.5 per cent of its budget on early intervention and prevention services. There has been a total of 4,000 additional intakes by Child Safety, with a record 81,600 predicted in 2009-10. Of the 200 notifications received by Child Safety every day, less than one in five reports of child abuse and neglect is substantiated. The increase in cases has resulted in more resources being used for investigation and assessment rather than prevention and treatment, and this again highlights this government's continuation of reactive measures. But many cases which are found to be unsubstantiated still require follow-up services which are simply not there. There is very little on offer to fund programs that can break the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

Adoption Services will get a 36 per cent increase in funding this financial year, confirming the government's intention to increase the number of adoptions in line with its One Chance at Childhood policy. Mismanagement has allowed a \$75 million computer system to be purchased that to date has become a mechanism to slow down productivity instead of assist hardworking staff in Child Safety. It is a system that is unable to answer simple data requests or properly network the decentralised regions of this state.

Despite the increases in the child safety operational budget since the Crime and Misconduct Commission investigation in 2004, there are more children in care, more staff walking away from the department and more tragic ends to young lives. What particularly concerns me is the Treasurer's refusal to confirm if temporary contract staff working for child safety services will keep their jobs. Twenty per cent of child safety staff are on temporary contracts. There are 674 child safety workers including front-line staff that the minister is leaving in limbo by not confirming whether they will be retained or sacked by this Labor government. This government has used the global financial crisis as an excuse for its incompetence, but it cannot use the crisis as an excuse for its untruths.

The Premier promised Queenslanders this government would create 100,000 jobs, but now it seems the Treasurer is all too happy to cut staff from where they are needed most—on the front line of child protection. If financial mismanagement has seen this state government consider cuts to areas as important as the front line of child protection, it is no surprise that sport in this state will see very little out of this budget.

This budget contains a \$10 million cut in sports funding, and the cuts are coming out of the grassroots sports. It is the Western Suburbs Rugby League Club in Bundaberg, the Buderim Wanderers Soccer Club and the Corcoran Park Netball Association in Townsville that will miss out. It is little clubs which rely on government grants to build a new storage shed or purchase some protection that are missing out in this budget. In fact, I note that jobs have actually been cut from the sports department. This budget costs jobs from the public sector—jobs the Premier promised Queensland she would protect.

There are also winners out of this budget, including the motor sports fans in Townsville who will be able to watch all the action at the Townsville 400 V8 event thanks to funding, and the AFL fans on the Gold Coast are looking forward to the Carrara Stadium upgrade. In fact Stadiums Queensland has done very well out of this budget. Just last year, Stadiums Queensland received only \$14.5 million, but this year the budget of Stadiums Queensland has been boosted to \$48.1 million.

Whilst I acknowledge that Stadiums Queensland generates untold millions every year to the economy in revenue, it should also be noted that the government has let it lose \$80 million in less than a decade. If this state government is serious about fixing our economy, it should be looking at ways to assist Stadiums Queensland to stop this drain of Queensland taxes. It is also noted that this budget rips \$1 million away from local sport and recreation funding. It takes \$1 million away from minor facilities grants. This is from a government that has a Q2 policy to encourage Queenslanders to get involved in local sport.

Looking at the state's bottom line, I am not surprised to see cuts to grassroots sport but I do wonder how the Premier intends to fulfil her recent announcements. Just two weeks ago the Premier and the Minister for Sport both stood in this House and spruiked about the thousands of jobs and millions of dollars that will be pumped into our economy through sporting carnivals and events this year. The Premier also announced the intention to bid for the Gold Coast to host—wait for it—the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Nine years out from the opening ceremony, this government is taking funds away from sports programs and cutting young children's access to facilities. This government is making it harder for parents to take children to sporting carnivals and is making participation in sport more expensive.

How is Queensland—which is expected to have a total debt in excess of \$100 billion by 2016-17—going to finance a bid for these games? How is the Gold Coast going to host such a fantastic event that will require stadiums, pools and an assortment of sporting venues as well as a games village, transport and communications infrastructure in just nine years? When Queensland is paying \$14 million a day in interest repayments, can this state government actually afford to host those games? The Premier believes we can. In fact, her answer for detractors was simple: she said, 'But we cannot use the current situation as an excuse to not plan for the future.' If the Premier and her government had spent more time planning for the future during the past decade, we would not be seeing slashed funding and job cuts in Queensland sports today.

Make no mistake, I believe the Gold Coast and in fact all of Queensland should host as many sporting events as we can. Queenslanders love sport. We are good at it and everyone should have an opportunity to take part in it as participants, volunteers, coaches or supporters. But as Queensland parents know, when money gets tight, it is things we love that are often cut from the budget first.

This government's mismanagement is costing the people of this state more than 9.2c a litre at the fuel pump and will certainly add to the family budget. A further example of how this state government has mismanaged Queensland into the ground is the \$42 million Bundaberg Ring Road—oh, I am sorry, it is the \$92 million ring-road, which is now the \$100 million ring-oad. In just three years, this important project to Bundaberg has blown out by \$58 million—that is more than double what this state government budgeted for at the start of this project.

All the workers involved in this project need to be congratulated for the hard work and diligent manner in which they have completed this project, but they deserve a state government that is able to properly manage the books and budget for the future. Every household knows that if you fail to stick to your budget you will get into trouble financially, but around the state we continue to see budget blow-out after budget blow-out in hospitals, roads and other projects. It appears the only thing Queenslanders can rely on this government for is budget blow-outs and excuses.

Last week, the Auditor-General's report into Queensland Health confirmed what Bundaberg residents already knew—that the Bundaberg Hospital is the perfect example of the Bligh government's unplanned, uncostered promises used to deflect a political crisis. In 2006, then Premier Peter Beattie promised a \$41.1 million upgrade of the Bundaberg Base Hospital that would be completed by early

2008. This budget finally gives a significant financial commitment to that election promise. While the deadline Mr Beattie set for the Bundaberg Base Hospital upgrade is long past its due date, I, like many Bundaberg residents, can take some solace from the fact that the funds have finally been committed to construction.

While this promise is something this state government is all too happy to forget, this upgrade is very important to the patients and staff of the Bundaberg Base Hospital. The reasons for the Bundaberg Hospital crisis have been well documented in two royal inquiries and numerous reports since 2005. Earlier this year, the Bundaberg Hospital emergency unit was reviewed with the Brennan report noting that many of the recommendations from previous reports had not been implemented.

This deceit has forced this Labor government into a position where selling assets, imposing a fuel tax and punishing all Queenslanders is the only way out. It is a shame that we have got to this. I will leave the House with a final quote from Sir Walter Scott, who said, 'Oh what a tangled web we weave when we practice to deceive.' Unfortunately, this tangled web will tie up the future generations of hardworking Queensland families who will still be paying for this government's mistakes for years to come.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (4.16 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the Appropriation Bill, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr Gibson: You'd better hurry up. You've just wasted some of your time.

Mr SORENSEN: I have been listening to members on the other side all day and they have not mentioned those bills, so I thought I would mention them again for the record. The Bligh-Fraser Labor government will pick the pockets of every Queensland family and every Queensland business. From 1 July, it will be more expensive when you switch on the lights, when you turn on the taps and when you go to buy food at the supermarket. But, most of all, it will be more expensive when you go to the petrol station to fill up your vehicle.

How will this affect my community? As one of my constituents who is in the tourist business said, 'It's all right for jobs, jobs, jobs in the public sector, but what about the jobs, jobs, jobs in the private sector?' We will lose jobs in the private sector. After these outrageous tax hikes, how can these small businesses continue to operate? Some of these small businesses are closing their doors, and this budget will be the death knell for many more. This is on top of the huge increases from last year for some of the businesses in Hervey Bay, such as the Hervey Bay Boat Club, which had a 160 per cent increase in its lease charges. It went from around \$200,000 to well over half a million dollars. The tourist resorts on Fraser Island have had something like a 700 per cent increase in the licence fees to operate the sewerage treatment plant. These licence fees have gone from around \$1,500 to around \$10,600.

Other taxes, like land taxes, are affecting the operators of some of our small motels along the esplanade which are classed as sixpacks. Over the last three years, because the valuation of land has gone up and the threshold has not gone up for land tax, the taxes on one small operator have actually increased by \$10,000. That is an increase over three years. These businesses are struggling because of it. These are the sorts of taxes that we have to avoid if we want to keep our businesses alive, especially in Hervey Bay. Fuel taxes affect regional areas in particular, as people have to travel to get to those areas. Fraser Island pays a huge contribution to the Queensland coffers by bringing people not only from Australia but from all around the world. The fuel tax alone will cost us jobs.

The Labor government talks about having a world-class public transport system. So why was an elderly Hervey Bay pensioner stranded at the Maryborough West Railway Station at three o'clock in the morning with no public transport and no means of getting back to Hervey Bay? It is thanks to the kindness of one of the railway employees that she got a lift back to the Maryborough Transit Centre, which is kilometres away. The Maryborough West Railway Station is on the outskirts of Maryborough and it is a fair distance from town.

I would like to table a non-conforming petition with 139 signatures requesting that Queensland government shuttle buses that currently depart from the Maryborough Transit Centre travelling to the Maryborough West Railway Station and vice versa meet with links to all services to and from Hervey Bay Transit Centre for the Cairns tilt train, the Sunlander and the Spirit of the Outback northbound and southbound services and, where necessary, supply an alternative service for Hervey Bay passengers to meet these trains. Mostly this will only require reorganising the timetables to give the Hervey Bay people the opportunity to get on trains to go north and south.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to Queensland Rail shuttle buses that depart from Maryborough Transit Centre [\[456\]](#).

Let us look at the debt level of all the states in Australia. South Australia has a debt of \$7.8 billion. Western Australia has a debt of \$27.7 billion. Victoria has a debt of \$39.2 billion. New South Wales has a debt of \$67.2 billion, and people are saying that New South Wales is a cot case. Guess what? Queensland tops the debt at \$85.5 billion. If the rest of Australia is calling New South Wales a cot case, what are they going to call Queensland?

Queensland is the only state to have lost the AAA rating since the world's so-called recession. What a disaster for Queensland working families and businesses. Sooner or later this government is going to hit the wall. This government has not made the tough decisions to control the budgets in the good times, when the state had rivers of gold flowing into its coffers. What have they done with this money?

Let us look at what it means to have a debt level such as this. There are 89 electorates in Queensland. This is nearly a billion dollars per electorate, or \$78,000 per household. This government has failed the people of Queensland with this level of debt. How can we go back to the electorate and tell them that we owe a billion dollars? We have to tell the electorate that Labor has racked up debt of about \$78,000 per household, and I ain't taking the blame for it. The Labor government has robbed the piggy bank to fund the bad management—

Mr Watt: Bring back McNamara.

Mr SORENSEN: Like I said in my maiden speech, I got disillusioned with the amount of money coming into Hervey Bay, so I still agree with that.

People in my electorate want to know where the money has gone. We certainly cannot see that a billion dollars has been spent in Hervey Bay, that is for sure. This is on top of the rivers of gold that flowed into the state in the boom times. Why did the Bligh-Fraser government go to an early election? Why didn't they tell us what they were really going to do when they were re-elected? Straight after the election they said that we had financial troubles. What a fairytale that was. They knew all about it before they went to the election, and that is why they called an election so early. Selling Queensland assets—shame, shame, shame! Burdening all the families of future generations—

Mr Wilson: Haven't you read your own party's policy?

Mr SORENSEN: Yeah, mate; I will tell you about that a bit later.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will make all their interjections through the chair.

Mr Wilson: Through the chair, haven't you read your own party's policies?

Mr SORENSEN: You will find out in a moment. The fuel tax will have a huge impact on families struggling to make ends meet. What has happened to the once precious Queensland where we were proud of our assets? A further \$75 million will be spent on a hideous Traveston Dam. This government should feel shame, shame, shame. This Labor government has put nothing into infrastructure over the last 20 years, and suddenly we are going to spend billions on it.

Mr Wilson: Where have you been?

Mr SORENSEN: I have been around, boy, I can tell you.

Mrs Miller: He has been under a rock.

Mr SORENSEN: No, I haven't. I have been building infrastructure for the last 14 years. There is no forward thinking or planning for the future. We are just selling assets to pay for the debt incurred by this reckless Labor government.

I now turn to the health system. I must admit that the pathology laboratory for Hervey Bay is a good thing, but we do need extra maternity beds in Hervey Bay.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: Do not laugh about the next thing I am going to talk about. I had two phone calls about a very serious matter. I had one on the Thursday before Good Friday from a lady who said, 'My daughter has just been up at the hospital. Her 18-week-old baby has died.' She was told to go home and ring the next day to see if they had a bed. That is why I ask for extra maternity beds. If you think that is funny, I do not.

Government members: Nobody does.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will speak through the chair.

Mr SORENSEN: Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let us brace ourselves for the slash-and-burn fire sales. The first of the sales will be the Queensland Rail coal and freight. What did the Minister for Transport say a few weeks ago? 'Queensland Rail is not for sale.' I repeat: 'Queensland Rail is not for sale.' Who makes the decisions around here? By the sounds of it, the ministers do not have much say at all. What is going to happen to these workers and their families after the sale goes through? Who will buy these assets in this fire sale, or are we just giving our assets to overseas investors?

With the sale of the Port of Brisbane and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal to overseas investors, they will control our mines, our rail and our ports. What will be left for Queenslanders? We are selling Queensland's ports and selling our workers to overseas investors. We are selling the motorways. This means that a percentage of the money paid in tolls will most probably go to another company. Road transport is a very important part of our whole network in Queensland. We are selling our forestry plantations at a time when other plantations have gone into liquidation. What will these assets bring on the open market? What are we going to sell off in next year's budget?

Mr Watt: Not your speech.

Mr SORENSEN: That's for sure. They sold the Cairns and Mackay airports last year. This year they are selling off Queensland Rail, the Port of Brisbane and much more. What are we going to sell next time?

I am concerned that the government is selling off the rest of Queensland. This morning I listened to the member for Chatsworth criticising us about the efficiency savings in the public sector. Maybe he should read the budget. The highlights document of the budget states—

Public sector efficiency savings will increase to a total of \$280 million per annum in 2009-10. These savings will be achieved through productivity and efficiency improvements in corporate overheads, travel, publication, marketing and communication costs, and through savings derived from the recently announced departmental structure reforms.

How many jobs will really go in the future when this departmental reform takes place? It is quite interesting when we listen to some of the speakers from the other side.

This document was dropped in to me this afternoon. It just so happened that I actually went to an Older Men Unlimited function in Hervey Bay. A small group of men started up this group which is concerned with the health issues of men, especially older men. The document states—

International Men's Health Week (June 15-21 2009)

Eleven years of neglect of Men's Health.

\$9 billion budget for Queensland Health—but not even a line called Men's Health.

It goes on to state—

The Queensland government clearly doesn't care about Men's Health.

A message from the Office of the Queensland Premier:

"... men with health concerns can contact ... the Domestic Violence Men's Line!!!!"

Why would they want to contact the domestic violence men's line when they have a health problem?

I believe we need to open the door to older men's health problems in this state and this country. About 15 people attended the first meeting ever held. At the meeting last week some 130 men actually turned up. The guest speakers at that meeting covered topics such as prostate cancer, dementia et cetera. It gives honourable members an idea of things they could face in the future. I believe we should embrace such issues in the same way that women have embraced their health issues over the last few decades because that has saved a huge number of lives. I believe we can save a huge number of older men, especially in the area of prostate cancer and other similar ailments. It might not be such a great thing to talk about and I may be ridiculed for it, but I will stand up here for the health of older men. Honourable members can humiliate me later for it, but I am quite proud of that organisation in Hervey Bay. It is saving men's lives.

Mr Watt: No-one disagrees with that. We all agree with that.

Mr SORENSEN: Will you? That is good. I thank the member for that. I think every member should try to start up a group like this in their own electorate because it is saving lives.

I turn now to the Green Army because I have been involved with the Green Corps in the past. This gives young people the opportunity to develop their self-esteem. A lot of these young people actually turn around their lives around and go back to school. In these hard economic times I hope this program actually gives young people the opportunity to develop self-confidence to ensure they can go on with life. Some young people believe there is no hope out there. We really need some of these programs to work to give those young children an opportunity in life. I have seen desperate kids on the streets and we really need to help them. I believe that we can help them through this program. We really need to work hard at trying to do that.

I would also like to talk about the road infrastructure leading into Hervey Bay. Around 10 years ago Steve Bredhauer promised to upgrade the highway between Maryborough and Hervey Bay to four lanes. It is good to see that we are getting \$16 million towards that road upgrade. Hopefully, we can expect more money in the future.

In relation to education I would still like to see more because education is our future. I guess everyone would agree with that.

In relation to police, Hervey Bay is desperate for more police officers. The number of new police officers will only cover the growth of people moving into Queensland. It does not rectify the problems that we have currently with the lack of police, especially in Hervey Bay. We have about 40 police officers to control around 50,000 to 55,000 people, not taking into account the number of tourists coming into the town all year round.

I believe that there are certain things that we do have to spend money on. We do need a proper police force in this country. I hope that Older Men Unlimited groups can be established right throughout Queensland to help health matters.

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (4.35 pm): It gives me great pleasure to the speak on the 2009-10 state budget and support this government's jobs and building programs. The Bligh government supports a building program that delivers for all Queenslanders. I was a little bit dumbfounded this morning. The National Party member for Herbert, Peter Lindsay, has been in the media today questioning when construction will start on our Douglas Arterial Road duplication. We have \$110 million committed to this Douglas Arterial Road duplication. Unfortunately for Mr Lindsay, his state colleagues want to stop it by blocking these budget measures. They want to stop this important infrastructure project and others like it in North Queensland. They want to cheat the people of Thuringowa and Townsville out of this road duplication just as they want to cheat them out of \$39.4 million for the expansion of the Townsville Hospital, \$110.5 million for the electricity transmission line between Strathmore and Ross substations to deliver better electricity for the people of North Queensland and, importantly, those members over there want to cheat the people of Thuringowa and Townsville out of \$2.5 million for the V8 Supercar event.

I stand for jobs and the Bligh government stands for jobs. This is a budget that delivers for Queenslanders. In 2009-10 we are going to deliver a record \$3.53 billion on road infrastructure. This commitment will fund the continued delivery of critical road infrastructure and sustain 30,000 jobs, both in the south-east and in rural and regional Queensland. This record budget continues the trend of ever-increasing roads funding over the term of this government.

To put this level of expenditure on our roads into context, the comparative road budget in 2004-05 was \$812 million. Compared to the latest budget, this accounts to a 335 per cent increase in funding for road improvements over the last five years. If we can compare the 2009-10 and 1997-98 budgets, we find that investment in road infrastructure has increased 433 per cent over the years of this Labor government.

This government has further demonstrated its pledge to maintaining both employment and infrastructure delivery throughout the state, with over \$10 billion in state and federal funding already committed to roads over the next four years—a massive program. This four-year allocation will support the continued delivery of projects aimed at directly tackling the impact of urban growth. These works include completion of the \$1.883 billion Gateway Upgrade Project by mid-2011 and construction of the roundabout on Airport Drive as part of the Airport Link project.

There are also a number of major works on the western corridor including the \$255 million Ipswich-Logan Motorway interchange, the \$700 million upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway upgrade between Wacol and Darra, the \$1.95 billion upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway to a minimum of six lanes between Dinmore and Goodna, and the maximum \$414.6 million project to construct four lanes on the Centenary Highway between the Ipswich Motorway and the Logan Motorway in conjunction with the Darra to Springfield rail extension.

We are continuing to deliver road projects to support regional Queensland. Work is commencing on the \$613 million upgrading of section B of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra. I sat in this House today and listened to the member for Gympie criticise this government for working with the Commonwealth government in Canberra to secure this funding. We got this funding with the help of the Rudd Labor government. For 11 years those opposite sat mute and refused to tackle their mates in Canberra to get funding for the Bruce Highway. There is important funding for the realignment of the Bruce Highway at the Cardwell Range. There is \$17 million for the Calliope Range realignment on the Dawson Highway between Calliope and Biloela.

The Bligh government has been prepared to take the tough decisions during this financial crisis to ensure our record building program continues and to ensure jobs are created and maintained. This government's jobs programs are more important than ever before and will play a crucial role in supporting Queensland workers through these uncertain times. Our commitment to our building program will ensure 13,000 jobs in North Queensland and Far North Queensland. As a regional minister, I support a budget that focuses on supporting and creating jobs. Those opposite want to cheat the people of North Queensland of those jobs.

In my region this government has committed \$18.9 million to the Flinders Mall upgrade, \$2 million to the historic Jezzine Barracks upgrade, \$54.4 million for vocational education, \$28 million for two new substations to reinforce our electricity supply and \$3.74 million for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, including Queensland's Green Army to create 560 jobs for young people.

In my electorate of Thuringowa there is \$3.85 million for the Townsville and Thuringowa water supply upgrade project as part of a total state government contribution of \$33.29 million. There is \$900,000 towards Ross River Parkway stage 3 as part of the total government contribution of \$2.5 million. There is \$400,000 for the maintenance of state schools in my electorate. There is \$234,000 to continue improving traffic signals on Ross River Road and \$125,000 to install lighting at the Riverway practice oval. I will finish on Riverway. It is a great project for the people of Thuringowa, a great project for the people of Townsville, but, just like this budget, opposed by those opposite.

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (4.41 pm): I rise to speak on what is one of the most important state budgets in recent memory. It is a budget handed down in the most challenging of times—a time when there are storm clouds sitting on the horizon, when the economic climate is dark and unstable and when true leadership is required to make it through to the next season of prosperity. The people of all nations around the world are feeling the pinch of the global financial crisis. Major banks across the globe have collapsed and governments of all political persuasions have been plunged into deficit through steeply declining revenue. In many cases, political turmoil has broken out.

On the home front, people in my electorate of Greenslopes are facing challenges many have not endured. Businesses are under increased financial pressure, workers are concerned about their jobs and families are doing it tough. The key to survival in such tumultuous times is leadership and courage. These tough times call for tough, courageous decisions to be made by strong leaders who know that there is more at stake than just political reputations.

The budget handed down by the Treasurer this week is a courageous budget. It seeks to guide Queensland through this time of financial challenges and turmoil so that our state and its people emerge at the end of the storm stronger, better and ready to make the most of the prosperous times which we know will return.

This budget is not about handouts and it is not about sweeteners; it is about making the right decisions to invest in Queensland's future. I am very pleased the decisions which have been made will help secure the future for the people of my electorate of Greenslopes. There is no question that for our local communities to sustain the impact of the global economic crisis the most important thing we can do is keep people employed.

Employment is the key to social cohesion. It ensures people are able to earn a living, to provide for themselves and their families. People who make money also spend money which, in turn, supports the jobs of others. People who are working are keeping the businesses and organisations they are involved in operating, stimulating economic growth and ensuring vital services can continue to be provided. That is why this budget is focused so squarely on jobs—jobs for Queenslanders, jobs for people who live and work in my electorate of Greenslopes.

One of the key infrastructure projects that forms a part of this budget's massive \$18.2 billion job-generating Capital Works Program is the Eastern Busway. This budget is delivering more than \$138 million as part of the construction of the Eastern Busway between Buranda and Main Avenue at Coorparoo. This is a long-term project that aims to deliver long-term outcomes for the people of my electorate and the surrounding areas.

This busway will make it easier for people to get to work and, more importantly, to get home at night so they can spend less time in traffic and more time with their families. This busway will make it easier for people to contribute to the health of our environment by utilising public transport and reducing carbon emissions. This busway will take more buses off our roads, reducing congestion for those people who need to drive themselves. These are the long-term impacts this government's investment in this project will have for Tomorrow's Queensland.

This investment is also going to deliver for the people of our community today. By investing in this major project, the Bligh government is helping to create and maintain jobs in my electorate, in Brisbane, in the south-east corner and throughout the length and breadth of Queensland—jobs for construction workers, jobs for engineers, jobs for suppliers and manufacturers; jobs for mums and dads, husbands and wives that put food on the table and keep our economy strong.

The Eastern Busway is just one of the many capital works projects in my electorate supported by this budget. People in my local area will also benefit from this government's \$3 million investment in concept planning for the Pacific Motorway between the Gateway Motorway and Coronation Drive—money that will be used to plan for the future, to ensure we start building Tomorrow's Queensland today.

There is also funding to make our roads safer right away, with \$100,000 to kick-start installation of median barriers on the Pacific Motorway between the Captain Cook Bridge and the Kessels Road overpass, as part of the Queensland government's Safer Roads Sooner program. Because our lives are busy and noisy enough, there is \$2 million for additional noise barriers alongside roads across Greater Brisbane. People can listen to life, not to traffic, and this government can deliver on its Q2 commitment to maintain our great Queensland lifestyle.

In these tough economic times it is inevitable that many people may feel, through no fault of their own, that their lives have been turned upside down. This year's budget is there to help these people. The tough decisions this government has made in the budget are being made to ensure that essential services for vulnerable members of our community are not compromised and that those organisations who provide crucial support for the disadvantaged or downtrodden are supported.

One such group that provides incredible support to young women in need in my local community is the Zig Zag Women's Resource Centre. I am very pleased this year's budget includes more than \$300,000 for this organisation to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of

homelessness. The budget also includes over \$300,000 for the Micah Projects crisis supported accommodation for homeless families in my electorate. This funding will ensure families whose lives are torn apart will have somewhere to turn.

While everyone in Queensland is likely to feel the impact of the global economic crisis, there are some people who will do it tougher than others. The Bligh government does not turn its back on people who need extra support in our community, and this budget is a testament to that. Older Queenslanders will benefit from an increase in the subsidy available for electricity bills to 15.67 per cent to assist with the increased cost of electricity. I know this will make a real difference in the lives of many older members of my community in Greenslopes, and I am pleased this government has taken this decision to ensure this assistance is available.

Many people in my community who are living with certain physical disabilities will also benefit from the \$11 million going towards infrastructure projects across Greater Brisbane's Citytrain stations which will ensure the stations comply with disability standards. Accessible public transport that allows people with a disability to get around and get on with their lives is essential, and I am very pleased this government is investing in these important works.

I am also pleased there is \$350,000 in this year's budget to complete construction of the new Holland Park Police Station by next month. This is the final instalment of the Bligh government's \$5.9 million investment in this new station. It is a station that the community can be proud of. As the new home of the Holland Park police, the station is a modern, state-of-the-art facility which will ensure our police are truly well accommodated and equipped to do their job of keeping the community safe. This represents a major investment in law and order in my electorate, and I look forward to joining the police minister for the official opening of the new station when it is complete.

One of the major focuses of this government is crime prevention. We want to stop crime from happening in the first place. This government makes no apology for being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. This year's budget includes more than \$150,000 for the Impact Youth Organisations Reducing Crime Ltd group in my electorate, to help build crime prevention projects and partnerships to tackle the causes of crime head-on. There is great community spirit in the Greenslopes electorate and these sorts of initiatives help to build the opportunities for people to work together to make our community safer.

Families with children make up around 20 per cent of my constituents so our investment in education is truly important for the people of Greenslopes. There are 10 primary schools and five high schools in my electorate, and I know that every one of them will be pleased to hear that almost 25 per cent of this year's budget is allocated to education funding.

Almost \$5.5 million in this year's Education budget is allocated specifically to schools in my electorate. The largest portion of this funding is being provided for the relocation of Xavier Special Education program, with \$4.58 million allocated to this important project. There is also important maintenance funding for Coorparoo Secondary College, Coorparoo State School, Holland Park State High School, Holland Park State School, Marshall Road State School, Mount Gravatt State High School, Cavendish Road State High School and Seville Road State School.

These schools are the breeding ground for tomorrow's Queensland leaders—the next generation which will have the future of our state in their hands. I am very pleased this budget is delivering important funding to ensure today's students continue to have positive learning environments to develop their minds and help them set the course of their own future.

We know that to ensure our children have access to quality education we must ensure they are led by strong and talented individuals. That is why this year's budget includes funding for 350 more teachers and teacher aides. A big investment in education in this year's budget is for the creation of a new leadership centre for principals to provide them with the best chance to deliver their skills and lift school performance. This is an enormous initiative that demonstrates the commitment of this government to improving education standards across Queensland to ensure that our kids get the best start in life. This budget also includes funding to help ensure our kids grow into strong, healthy adults, with \$28,000 to promote healthy eating and drinking among students and Swim Australia members across Queensland, including in my electorate, through the Good Food for Sport program. Initiatives like this can be the difference between healthy children and unhealthy children, and I am very pleased that this government continues to acknowledge the need for action to reduce the level of obesity among Australian children.

Sadly, sometimes we cannot protect our children from illness and health problems. It is in these cases that we rely on quality health services to help our children back to health. This budget invests significant funding to provide those very services every parent wants for their child. It continues to deliver on this government's commitment to build a single, world-class children's hospital on Brisbane's south side. Some \$80 million has been allocated for a research facility to be built as part of the new Queensland Children's Hospital. This is a major part of this government's hospital building program which, together with funding for an additional 645 doctors, nurses and health practitioners, will help to provide the kind of health services and facilities people in my electorate deserve.

Today's world offers a great array of opportunities for school leavers and job seekers. But in these tough economic times, the jobs people desire can be hard to find. That is why this government is providing major incentives for employers to take on new workers and is investing in training programs to help job seekers build their skills for employment. This budget affirms our election commitment to exclude apprentice and trainee wages from payroll tax and extend a rebate of a further 25 per cent on these wages. This will make it easier for businesses to keep apprentices and trainees on in these tough times and even to take new ones on. We know that providing workers with new skills and training will assist their chances of finding and maintaining quality employment in the good times and the bad.

This budget provides a major boost to training opportunities, with \$124 million over the next four years to create more than 100,000 additional training places for existing Queensland workers and around 46,000 additional training places for job seekers. People in the Greater Brisbane area, including my electorate, will particularly benefit from \$28.1 million being delivered for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, including the Green Army, to create more than 3,500 jobs for young people and those who are disadvantaged in the labour market. By providing people with the skills and training they need to get work and stay employed, we are helping to build the economy and enable people to participate in the workforce.

In tough economic times, when governments must put all of their energy into economic growth and job creation, it is essential that we also make sure that we do not take steps backwards by compromising previous important initiatives for the sake of new investments. While the economic climate may be seen as the most pressing issue for almost every Queenslanders right now, the environmental climate remains of crucial importance. Climate change has not gone away in the face of the global financial crisis and this government remains steadfast in our commitment to addressing its impacts and supporting people in our communities who wish to play their part in a greener future for Queensland.

As part of this government's initiative to confront the realities of climate change, this year's budget is allocating \$15 million over four years for the ClimateSmart Business Service. This program will help small to medium sized businesses in my local community to save energy and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in the lead-up to the planned introduction of a carbon pollution reduction scheme by the federal government in 2011. Businesses in my electorate are very keen to play their part in climate change solutions, and I am pleased this budget will help them to do so.

As the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, I am committed to a Queensland that is fair, safe and just. This year's \$884 million budget for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is delivering on infrastructure, jobs and services. More than \$150 million in funding for ongoing construction of the new \$600 million Supreme and District Courts complex is the centrepiece of my department's budget. This major project—one of the biggest courts capital works projects in Australia's history—is supporting up to 5,000 jobs and will provide the modern facilities our state needs at the heart of our modern justice system. There is more than \$30 million for other courts capital works projects at Ipswich and Toowoomba, as well as funding for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to ensure our state's crown prosecutors can continue to keep pace with population growth and the increasing number of cases coming before the courts.

This budget also continues to support and improve the rights and safety of Queenslanders at work and at home, with more than \$126 million for industrial relations services, electrical and workplace safety. This government is committed to making Queensland workplaces among the healthiest and safest in the country, and this year's budget will help us to reach that goal for people right across Queensland, including in my electorate. As the state member for Greenslopes, I am very pleased to commend these bills to the House.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bills for 2009. The Gold Coast continues to benefit from the Bligh government's commitment to the regions. This budget funds major capital works projects and infrastructure projects that are scattered right across the Gold Coast to ensure the construction industry is supported through the difficult economic times that we face. In addition, the Gold Coast will benefit from the commitments of the Bligh government to front-line service delivery such as increased police, health care, ambulance services and teachers.

The Bligh government's budget decisions have been made with the determination to cushion Queensland and the Gold Coast from the full impact of the global recession. This action is what people expect a government to do—to make every possible effort to create and sustain jobs, to assist businesses and industries. People expect governments to step up to the mark, to make tough decisions and to focus on building the economy. This budget does just that. This budget positions our economy for the future by stimulating our building industry. The budget delivers \$155 million towards the construction of the \$1.762 billion Gold Coast University Hospital. This new hospital will have 750 beds, which is almost twice the number of the current hospital, and will be a nine-storey structure with a total construction area of 165,000 square metres—approximately four times the size of the current Gold Coast Hospital and the equivalent of 25 rugby fields.

This state-of-the-art facility will deliver more comprehensive services in cancer care, cardiac neurosciences, neonatal intensive care and trauma services. There will also be a teaching and research hospital co-located on the site with a tertiary education facility. The LNP did not want this hospital, but the people of the Gold Coast did. The people of the Gold Coast deserve access to good health facilities and the hardworking staff deserve state-of-the-art facilities to work in. It is this Bligh government that is delivering this hospital. It is this Bligh government that will be delivering the 10,000 construction jobs that will be created from this project—the biggest health infrastructure project in the country. This budget also delivers \$135 million for the Gold Coast rapid transit system and \$60 million over three years towards the redevelopment of the Gold Coast stadium at Carrara.

I am pleased that the government is maintaining our commitment to upgrading Queensland roads, many on the Gold Coast and in my electorate. Whilst this budget commitment is about improving safety and transport efficiency for motorists, the \$3.5 billion road infrastructure spending for 2009-10 will support tens of thousands of jobs and assist in stimulating our economy. Road projects have been delivered by this government all over the Gold Coast, including the Smith Street upgrade, the Oxley Drive upgrade and the Nerang-Broadbeach upgrade. This budget delivers funding for critical projects such as the widening of the Gold Coast Highway to four lanes, the widening of Olsen Avenue and the upgrade to the Pacific Motorway between Springwood South and Daisy Hill. I know that any Gold Coaster who travels to Brisbane regularly will know that this project is very much needed. It also delivers \$26 million towards the duplication of Hope Island Road between Santa Barbara and Columbus Drive at a total cost of \$135 million.

As well as protecting jobs now, the Bligh government is developing the skills base for Queensland workers and investing in job-generating projects and initiatives, including \$103.9 million for vocational education and training activities. This budget delivers \$228.9 million to continue developing the \$30.5 million Coomera education precinct at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE and \$4.55 million to create 350 jobs for young people and disadvantaged job seekers through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative which includes Queensland's Green Army, including \$1.31 million allocated in the south-east region.

I know that health is an important issue for residents in my electorate. As I outlined earlier, the Bligh government is building the Gold Coast new university hospital. However, I know that many constituents rely on health services such as home and community care and disability support services provided from other hospitals such as Logan and Brisbane and that they are concerned about the government's commitment to improving health services right throughout the state. I am pleased that this government will invest \$1.296 billion in capital funding for new and existing health infrastructure, including the redevelopment of Cairns Base Hospital, funding for additional beds in Townsville and Ipswich and the redevelopment of the emergency departments at Logan, Bundaberg and Redlands.

I have met with many families who have relied on the excellent professional services offered at the Royal Children's Hospital. Unlike the LNP, my constituents know that the government is not closing the hospital down to do nothing in the area of paediatric care. This government is building a new \$1.283 billion Queensland Children's Hospital. How deceiving was the LNP election advertising! International evidence has shown repeatedly that children receive the best care from one tertiary level children's hospital where we can concentrate on our best specialist expertise, and that is what we will deliver.

The new Children's Hospital will be a single dedicated metropolitan hospital that will ensure that Queensland's sick children will receive the very best of care from Queensland's most experienced paediatric clinicians. The government has announced in this budget that \$80 million will be invested in an academic and research centre to complement the new Children's Hospital.

The Bligh government is investing also in front-line health services, with the aim of employing more than 3,500 additional doctors, nurses and allied health professionals across the state. In addition, \$7.9 million will be spent to train and recruit fully accredited nursing practitioners to reduce emergency department waiting times. The budget delivers \$17.9 million for the new \$36.3 million Robina health precinct project. Queensland Health's operating budget will grow to \$9.037 billion in 2009-10. That is an increase of 8.2 per cent over the previous year.

In addition, it is important to support communities in being active and healthy. The budget delivers \$3.32 million to improve community sport and recreation facilities. On the Gold Coast, the budget delivers \$500,000 towards the construction of stage 1 of six irrigated multipurpose sports fields and a clubhouse for soccer and baseball at the Runaway Bay sports precinct, with a total state government contribution of \$1.5 million. The budget delivers funding to upgrade the field lighting for the Runaway Bay Junior Leagues Club and funding for the extension of the skateboarding and BMX at the Runaway Bay Youth Point Connect.

Mr Reeves: Hear, hear!

Ms CROFT: I thank the minister. There is also funding to deliver Project Dandelion to increase physical activity and improve healthy eating patterns for children with disabilities through the wonderful work of the Arundel horse riding centre.

The Bligh Labor government has a strong commitment to ensuring that every young Queenslanders has access to a good-quality education. It was this government that introduced preparatory studies in all schools, funding the construction and fitout of more classrooms and the employment of more teachers and teacher aides. This budget builds on that commitment.

An amount of \$301 million has been allocated for 2009-10 to continue the State Schools of Tomorrow program to improve and build new facilities. I am pleased that all state schools in my electorate will benefit from this funding. In particular, I acknowledge that significant funding has been allocated to Coombabah State High School to build new toilet facilities and to improve learning facilities.

Improving emergency services is also a top priority. An amount of \$57.03 million has been allocated in this budget for new and upgraded police stations and facilities, including \$2.7 million to complete the new Coomera District Police Headquarters, which will include the Runaway Bay division.

Across the state, \$20.93 million has been allocated for 150 new ambulance vehicles, including 140 replacement vehicles and 10 additional vehicles. There is funding for 22 new or replacement ambulance stations, including \$2 million allocated to build the new ambulance station at Runaway Bay, which I am very excited about. The Southport Fire Station will also be redeveloped at a total cost of \$5.29 million.

I am pleased that the Premier has announced that there will be a donation of a \$6 million twin-engine helicopter to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service to patrol beaches between the Gold Coast and Noosa. I know that this helicopter is welcomed by Surf Life Saving Queensland. But our commitment to build safer communities does not end there. An amount of \$1.22 million has been allocated for vehicles, flood boats and trailers for the State Emergency Service.

There is no doubt that the economic climate presents many challenges to every Queenslanders. The Queensland government presents a budget that keeps our commitment to the people of Queensland at the last election: our commitment for jobs not cuts, our commitment to cushioning Queensland from the fallout of the economic crisis. We have done this at a time when our budget has taken a massive \$15 billion hit over four years as a result of the global recession, which has decimated budgets all over the world. The budget cements our track record as responsible economic managers and charts a path back to surplus and regaining our AAA credit rating through sensible longer-term measures.

During this debate, all we have heard is whining from the opposition members and this absurd claim that if they were in government then they would not have been in this fiscal position. They still do not get it. They still do not have a clue. The Queensland government did not create the world economic crisis. However, from what I have heard tonight I know that if the LNP had been in government, it would not have built Skilled Park stadium on the Gold Coast, it would not have built the Gold Coast Convention Centre and it would not have employed more police officers, more nursing staff or increased the pay for firefighters.

The LNP's idea of economic management is not to spend any money. The Howard government crowed about surplus budgets whilst during its reign people could not access GPs because university medical placements had been capped, disability funding stayed the same, school building funding was cut and support benefits, including the pension, did not increase. The LNP's answer to the global recession, apart from asking 'What recession?', was to cut 12,000 Public Service jobs: nurses, teachers and front-line service staff—\$1 billion from vital services.

Even during this debate the opposition, after three months since the state election, still cannot put to the people of Queensland an alternative budget policy. It cannot say it, but what it really wants to say is that it agrees with our economic policy and the reforms that this government has had to implement in order to restore the budget. The opposition has no plans and no ideas about how to steer Queensland through these tough times. It is not often that I take pleasure in quoting the words of the Leader of the Opposition, but I am delighted to have this opportunity to quote his response to a question asked of him about what he would do to stop job losses. According to *Channel 10 News*, his answer was 'It's up to the Premier to come up with the ideas.' On that note I conclude by acknowledging the leadership of the Premier and the Treasurer. These were tough decisions for tough times, but I am confident that the capital and infrastructure spending will build confidence and restore optimism in our communities and that Queensland will come through these dark times stronger than before. I commend the bills to the House.

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (5.05 pm): It is my pleasure to speak in support of the Bligh government's 2009-10 state budget. This is a tough budget for tough economic times and I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on an outcome that looks to the future for all Queenslanders.

In my electorate of Ferny Grove, I am delighted to inform the House that after months of discussions with the Department of Main Roads, \$3.2 million has been committed to upgrade works along Samford Road.

Mr Watt: Hear, hear!

Mr WILSON: I take that interjection from the member for Everton, who has strongly supported me, along with the member for Ashgrove, in these endeavours. These upgrade works include the commencement of asphalt resurfacing between Dawson Parade and Cobalt Street, Keperra; the installation of guardrails between Main Street and Camp Mountain Road; and intersection improvements on Samford Road at Camp Mountain Road.

Samford Road is an important stretch of road in my local community, servicing thousands of commuters each day. Over the past month I undertook public consultation with my constituents seeking their feedback on the safety and condition of the road. I was then able to pass on this valuable, firsthand information to the Department of Main Roads. The funding included in the state budget for works on Samford Road is welcomed by my local community.

As well as committing to road infrastructure, the Bligh government's budget will also contribute \$4.81 million at Grovely to upgrade substation capacity and replace high-voltage switchgear and \$2.7 million towards the duplication of the Ferny Grove railway line early works program for Keperra through to Ferny Grove.

Public transport is of vital importance to commuters in the Ferny Grove electorate and I am proud to be a member of a government that is continually working hard to ensure that transport infrastructure meets the needs of Queenslanders. When I meet commuters at local train stations, we often discuss the need for top-quality public transport in our community. I am delighted that in these tough economic times the Bligh government is pushing ahead with infrastructure development.

I am also pleased to advise that \$4.36 million has been committed to establish a back-up powerline at Samford to improve network reliability. An amount of \$345,000 has also been made available to assist adults in my local community with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and to participate in the community. In addition, \$19,000 will be used to support school leavers with a disability to make the transition from school to adult life.

This is a budget that supports front-line community services and local community organisations. In these tough times, the Bligh government is standing by sporting clubs, service groups and community organisations as they support our local communities. This budget also provides \$40,000 to contribute to the construction of local bikeways and substantial funding for maintenance and facility works at Ferny Grove State High School, Patricks Road State School, Samford State School, Mount Samson State School and Grovely State School. I am exceedingly proud of the schools in my electorate and I am delighted that funding has been set aside for improvements to school facilities. These works contribute to a better education for our children.

The Bligh government is committed to investing in critical services, such as education. These are tough economic times but we will not back away from our responsibility to provide Queensland students with the best possible chance to succeed. We regard education spending as an investment in Queensland's future. The Liberal National Party's only idea for improving education standards in Queensland is to freeze teacher wages. Today, shadow minister Bruce Flegg told parliament that our teachers do not deserve the pay increase being offered by the government. He claims that the 12.5 per cent pay rise that the Bligh government is offering teachers will take money away from improving education standards for our children.

The shadow minister says that investing in teachers will short-change schools and will not contribute to improving student outcomes. He believes that offering teachers better pay reduces funding that should be going directly to students. The Bligh government feels differently. We understand that quality teaching is the key to boosting literacy and numeracy standards, and that is why we are investing in our teachers. We have increased professional development funding to \$48 million in this budget, and we will hire an extra 350 new teachers next year, along with 100 more science teachers and up to 80 literacy and numeracy coaches. The additional teachers will deliver 10 to 20 hours of intensive teaching each year for underachieving year 3 and 5 students, while the summer schools will help some 9,000 year 5 to 7 students.

This investment is part of the Bligh government's recognition that a quality education is about more than bricks and mortar. But we are investing in that too. We are rebuilding and refurbishing some of the state's oldest schools and building new ones to cater for population increase in growth areas. Our five-year, \$850 million State Schools of Tomorrow program will be supported, with \$301 million in this financial year going to renew and upgrade facilities in some older schools. School maintenance will be boosted with \$126 million and funding of \$43.7 million will continue the Solar and Energy Efficiency Program in schools. The department will also deliver some \$1.2 billion in projects in the coming financial year as part of the Australian government's Building the Education Revolution initiative, while \$1.1 billion is also going to the South-East Queensland Schools Public Private Partnership Project, which is set to build and deliver seven new schools in high-growth areas.

These are tough economic times that require tough decisions, but the Bligh government is continuing to fund vital services like education. We know investing in education is an investment in Queensland's future prosperity. At the last election the shadow minister and his colleagues wanted to rip \$263 million out of the education budget and slash the jobs of more than 3,000 staff. Their accusations

of underfunding and crowded classrooms ring hollow when we consider that their policy would have meant 12 fewer schools being built and an increase in class sizes. Now they have admitted that they would freeze teacher pay because they do not believe that our students deserve a quality education.

Not satisfied with freezing wages, they also want to put a stop to the building programs designed to stimulate our economy and create jobs. During the election they wanted to slash the \$850 million State Schools of Tomorrow program to build and rebuild Queensland schools. Now they are desperately trying to derail the nation-building BER program. But the member for Moggill keeps failing to do his homework.

With regard to this federal government funding program, the member for Moggill claims that state governments are 'siphoning' 20 per cent of funding in fees and charges. He is wrong. The money ends up in the hands of local businesses working on these construction projects, which are all being undertaken by the private sector. He also claims that the funding is being used to prop up unattended to workplace health and safety maintenance issues. He is wrong again. The state government continues to address workplace health and safety issues at schools as a priority, just as we always have.

He also claims that federal government guidelines are being breached and that many dollars are going to schools marked for closure. He is wrong again—wrong, wrong, wrong. The federal government guidelines for the Building the Education Revolution funding program clearly state that schools being amalgamated or relocated can spend the funding allocation at the new site. That is exactly what is happening at every school listed by the opposition. It ensures that students from schools being amalgamated are still able to reap the rewards.

He also claims that schools are being ripped off in the Building the Education Revolution funding program. He is wrong again. Costs are subject to market pressures and tested by quantity surveyors against market prices—any that are considered unreasonable are rejected. None of his allegations are based in fact, and when they are investigated all have been proven to be wrong, wrong and wrong again.

The Bligh government is working closely with the federal government to deliver these projects and ensure the maximum number of Queenslanders reap the benefits. But if those opposite and their Canberra colleagues had their way, not a single Queenslanders would see the benefits of this new infrastructure—no new jobs, no new buildings, no new resources. They wanted to deny Queensland students new and improved learning environments and they wanted to deny Queensland workers the jobs these projects will create. Those opposite claim that this investment in infrastructure is a waste of money.

The shadow minister has been among the most vocal critics of the BER program. Earlier this week he railed against the 'wastefulness' of providing Holland Park State School with a brand new hall. But the member for Moggill's tune changes considerably when it is a school in his own electorate. On 19 February this year he wrote to the former state Minister for Education and Training requesting that Building the Education Revolution funding be directed to Kenmore State High School. What for? A brand new school hall. It is not such a waste of money when it is in his own electorate it seems. He wrote, 'I ask you to put Kenmore State High School forward for any further rounds of funding that may be applicable to secondary schools.' That is after he noted that the school wants a new hall.

In fact, Kenmore State High School has already taken advantage of this unprecedented opportunity being offered by the federal government. It has already benefited to the tune of \$200,000 under the National School Pride program. And when the school's new structures are in place what will we see? The member for Moggill will be scrambling to be the first to claim credit for the benefits of a program his colleagues have opposed all along. I wonder if he will write to the federal education minister and ask for his name to be included on the plaque.

The hypocrisy of those opposite is simply breathtaking. The member for Moggill and his colleagues have been telling anyone who will listen what is wrong with this program, deliberately spreading misinformation to derail this historic, unprecedented investment in our children's education. Yet just a few short months ago he was calling for these same funds to be diverted to a school in his own electorate. It is time the member for Moggill came clean: does he oppose this funding or not? Does the opposition oppose this funding or not? Will he be claiming credit for the school's windfall or will the next item in the Flegg report be calling for the project to be cancelled? This is an absolutely responsible budget before the House today for the tough economic times that we face. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (5.15 pm): I rise today to respond to the budget handed down on Tuesday by the Treasurer. The government has been telling us that this would be the most unpopular budget for many years. In past years, before the government delivered its budget it would selectively release good news stories to the media. This year it did not have one good news story to release at all, and I think we all know why. Perhaps the front-page headline of Wednesday's *Australian* newspaper sums it up: 'Sunshine State beats New South Wales'—that is normally pretty popular—'as the sickest

state'. What a sad comparison and what a reflection on this government—a state that had all the benefits of the mining boom and the revenue that flowed from it that did not manage those benefits in the good times. Instead, the Queensland deficit for next year is more than twice as big as New South Wales—a state that did not enjoy those boom times.

What does this budget offer the people of my electorate of Buderim? Let us look at the specifics of the north coast region and we find the answer: not much at all. Let me first address a couple of pieces of good news for my electorate. I am very pleased to see that Mountain Creek State High School will receive \$2 million for its special education facility. The Kuluin State School will also receive funding of \$434,000 for its covered sports facility. I wish I could say that there was more good news like that. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Let us look at infrastructure. Where is the money going in our region? \$75 million is being allocated for a project supporting the Traveston Dam. The government is spending these millions on environmental and catchment management programs for a dam that is not even approved to go ahead as yet and which should not be built. Where is the justification for that level of expenditure by a government, which is in debt, for a project that may never happen?

Then there is stage 2 of the Northern Pipeline Interconnector, which has been allocated more than \$211 million in 2009-10. This is for a pipeline that is taking water from the Sunshine Coast. To claim benefits for our region is laughable. In the Capital Statement the government says that this water grid will allow water to be moved around regions to meet demand in the area of highest need, but it has not provided a two-way pump facility that would return water to the Sunshine Coast.

On the other hand, the government is providing \$675,000 as part of a \$1.35 million grant to the Sunshine Coast council for water infrastructure. The sting in the tail may be found in the government's decision to withdraw the existing local government grant scheme which provides infrastructure assistance. This is to be replaced with a new capped scheme that will target councils most in need. When we consider that this grant program has contributed \$880 million over five years to infrastructure projects, \$45 million a year under the capped plan will not go far. This means that infrastructure will be delayed or ratepayers will have to foot the bill.

In the budget speech the Treasurer claimed that local government amalgamation 'was implemented to make councils stronger and ... to align future funding with future need'. Amalgamation, combined with the government's highly expensive water grid, has severely impacted on the Sunshine Coast council's revenue base. A reduction in the subsidies will only place greater pressure on ratepayers to make up the shortfall or force councils to reduce services.

Under this budget, councils will lose their street lighting subsidies in order for the government to fund the increased pensioner electricity rebate scheme. In light of the high electricity costs we all face, I have no argument at all with the increased pensioner subsidy, but any lost revenue in subsidies to local government will need to be met by the ratepayers. This is just another example of the government giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

The loss of the street lighting subsidy will cost the Sunshine Coast Regional Council more than half a million dollars a year. Ratepayers are facing a rate hike of up to 10 per cent in 2009-10. It is estimated that the loss of government grants and subsidies could push future rates up by 15 per cent. That is what ordinary ratepayers will have to cop, in addition to all the other extra costs they face. We are losing our fuel subsidy, which will not just affect the individual petrol cost but will push up the price of goods, food and the like as businesses pass on the extra fuel costs.

The news gets no better when we look at road infrastructure, with the total capital funding across the state budgeted at \$3.53 billion. What will that deliver to the people who use the busiest roads on the Sunshine Coast? Just \$4.6 million to complete resurfacing works on the Sunshine Coast Motorway—but lo and behold, that is an existing maintenance project. The Bruce Highway upgrade between Cooroy and Curra will commence, but most of that funding is coming from the federal government.

The government has made much of the money it will be spending on health in this budget. It announced expenditure of \$59.1 million on local inpatient, dental and renal services at the Caloundra and Nambour hospitals. This is not new expenditure; it just continues previous budget commitments to public hospitals that will struggle even more than they do now to meet local demands. There is still a further \$78 million required to spend post 2010 to finalise this project.

And the Sunshine Coast hospitals will not benefit from the \$31 million earmarked to expand hospital emergency departments. It is outrageous that the government has backed down on its promise—a promise made again only a matter of weeks ago—to deliver the much needed Sunshine Coast University Hospital at Kawana. That big promise has now been reduced to a commitment to just 110 additional public hospital beds by 2014 to be provided from the private hospital to be developed at that site. Even that is described in the regional budget statement as 'expected to be available'. This government is a joke. What happened to the 450 beds we were promised for 2014 increasing to a total capacity of 650? The government got it wrong again.

We might well question the priorities of a government that can commit \$37 million in the next year towards a football stadium on the Gold Coast but only \$8.2 million towards this part of the public health system for which there is such a critical need. I think the people of the Sunshine Coast have a right to wonder if this new hospital will ever be delivered. The government is claiming that postponing construction will improve the prospects of finding private sector partners. Public-private partnerships do not have a good record in the health sector, and if the Treasurer and the health minister would like proof of that they might like to look at the Port Macquarie Hospital in New South Wales. The Sunshine Coast health hub has also virtually been ignored in the budget, with an allocation of only \$365,000. That will do little to advance a \$27 million project and is a further insult to the people of the Sunshine Coast who so desperately need better health services.

Another longstanding commitment is the Sippy Downs Police Station. While it is no longer in my electorate, it will service my residents as well as those of Sippy Downs. This was described in the 2008-09 state budget as a \$5.5 million 24-hour police station on which \$4 million was to be spent in the current financial year to finalise the project. The 2009-10 budget figures show that only \$1.2 million has been spent this year, with a further \$1.2 million allocated for next year. How did a \$5.5 million police station suddenly cost only \$2.4 million? What shortcuts have been taken and how will services be affected? I think we are entitled to ask why the budget figures changed so drastically from one year to the next.

While we are looking at police services on the Sunshine Coast, even more questions need to be asked about the relocation of the water police from Kawana. Indeed, \$3 million was supposed to be spent in the current financial year on this relocation, which would give the water police direct water access instead of having to drive from their headquarters to their boats. In the new budget, there is no mention of this \$3 million. Instead, there is a one-off allocation of just \$100,000. How do you change \$3 million into \$100,000? This has been made for a 'replacement water police facility'. I would very much like to know what our water police will get for \$100,000. I suspect the answer is 'not much'. In its regional budget statement, the government boasts that it will spend more than \$57 million on new and upgraded police stations and facilities. Where did the \$3 million go?

The government also plans to spend \$5.7 million to trial a real-time passenger information service for public transport on the Sunshine Coast. This is described as an urban congestion initiative. However, there appears to be no allocation for real improvements to public transport on the coast, including CAMCOS, which is still no closer to becoming a reality. I think the government forgot about the billions there.

To help fund the budget black hole of its own making, the government plans to realise \$15 billion through the sale of state owned assets. It also expects to save a further \$12 billion in capital expenditure. However, even the Treasury is apparently not so optimistic as to provide a time frame for these sales, with the budget strategy paper stating they will be 'influenced by the timing of the recovery in financial markets'. The government has not been able to find a private investor for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, but as these are profit-making assets perhaps there will be more interest in the market. Whether that interest is at the right price in the current economic climate is highly debatable.

It can make very good economic sense for governments to sell off assets that can be better managed by the private sector, but not as a desperate response to poor economic management and planning. We are in danger of seeing profitable businesses sold off in a fire sale. These assets are owned by the people of this state—not by the Bligh government. The people of Queensland have every right to be concerned about the government's decision. Not only is it selling off our assets in a knee-jerk reaction; it kept quiet about it in the state election campaign. Decisions like this deserve a mandate, and this government sure as hell does not have one.

Our experience of privatisation to date has not been a good one. The sale of electricity retailing was supposed to save us money, but electricity prices have gone through the roof. The budget capital statement says in regard to electricity generation—

Continued investment by the private sector will ensure that reliability and demand requirements are met into the future.

Can we rely on that private investment? And at what cost to the end users, Queensland consumers and businesses?

We are entitled to be asking the government why, when it was enjoying the proceeds of the resources and property boom, it did not plan for the future. We should certainly be asking why a state with such a booming economy now faces the highest debt in the country and it is the only state to have its credit rating downgraded.

It is big spending that led to our current problems—not the global financial crisis as the Treasurer keeps saying. During the recent boom years, this government spent money like there was no tomorrow, and that was well before the global financial crisis. And what do we have to show for that spending? Certainly not infrastructure. We cannot even provide a public hospital to service one of the highest growth areas of the state. What we have is a mountain of debt and a reduced credit rating, which itself will add \$1.2 billion to the state's interest bill each year. That \$1.2 billion would build the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, and that is just the extra interest created by our lower credit rating. We have gone from AAA to AA+. The government will get it right one of these days.

The \$85 billion of state debt is not the fault of the global economic crisis. How can it be, when \$64 billion of it was created before that crisis? Neither is it the fault of the natural disasters that have affected so many Queenslanders. It is the fault of bad decision making by successive Labor governments that did not bother to plan. They did not plan for the growth that helped make our economy strong in the good times with our population increase. They certainly did not plan for the inevitable, when the flood of revenue that flowed from the resources boom started to dry up. Instead they managed to do what few other governments have done—go bust in a time of boom. If this government were a business it would be out of business. It would be declared insolvent—just like that company on the Sunshine Coast, Kleenmaid.

The Bligh government claims it now needs to spend \$18 billion on infrastructure in order to create jobs. The Premier made job creation her core election promise. This budget shows how empty that promise was. Nearly 200,000 Queenslanders will be unemployed over the next two years. The government's own economic projections show employment falling in 2009-10. The Premier and the Treasurer think a job is working a minimum of one hour a week. What a joke that is! I do not think their so-called jobs scheme, the Green Army, is going to cut it with my constituents. In the real world, people have mortgages and bills to pay, and those bills are increasing thanks to this government's mismanagement.

I am sure the payroll tax incentive for apprentices and trainees will be welcomed by businesses, assuming they can still afford to employ people at all. The government boasts that it will create 645 new job positions for health professionals across the state. However, a letter to the editor of the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on Thursday states as follows—

It was submitted by a local nursing student in response to the decision to postpone the Sunshine Coast Regional Hospital. The student points out the lack of local opportunities for nursing students, who often have to travel outside the Sunshine Coast to complete the practical component of their studies, because there aren't enough training positions on the Coast.

She goes on to say that next year there will be only 45 graduate positions available across the Gympie, Nambour and Caloundra hospitals and a further 12 positions at Caboolture. These are young professionals who want to work and use their skills and, quite rightly, would like to do that locally. There are certainly many patients on the Sunshine Coast who would welcome those skills if they could only have access to them. That is what this budget is really about—people; the people of this state who have to wear this government's appalling economic record because it is the taxpayers who foot the debt bill. It is not just the current taxpayers but the next generation as well. It equates to \$78,000 for each and every household in this state.

People like that young student nurse will have her tertiary education fees to pay off as well as higher taxes and charges like the fuel tax and car registration. If she has to travel to Brisbane to work, she will need a car because she will not have many other transport options. The government's about-face on the fuel subsidy is stunning. It has always made much of how it benefits Queenslanders, but now it needs to claw back some costs. The fuel subsidy is being described in the budget strategy as not representing 'value for money for Queensland taxpayers'. What an extraordinary turnaround that is.

The budget strategy also states that the state would be required to borrow to continue to fund the fuel subsidy, which would be inequitable because future generations would be required to fund services consumed today. It is a pity that the government did not think about the burden of state debt on future generations before it went on the spending spree that created it. Even the state's superannuation liabilities are no longer fully funded. This government has been hell-bent on growth at all costs but has not delivered the infrastructure to support that growth. Perhaps Queensland will not be such an attractive destination for so many people now that our economy is the basket case of the nation. No matter how much we grow, we have a responsibility to Queenslanders to provide a proper health system, road and transport networks that meet people's needs, and an education system that gives our kids the best possible start in life. We have a responsibility to support real business growth that will provide jobs in the future. Most of all, we have a responsibility to manage the state's economy so these outcomes can be delivered. This government and this budget have let down the people of this state and failed to deliver on its responsibilities.

I would like to know why members on the other side of the House have been so quiet about the sale of assets and the fuel hike. I am sure they would like to go home this evening and talk to their union representatives and let them know what a wonderful job they have done in the House tonight for the people of Queensland—how they have sold out their families, how they have sold out the people of Queensland and how they have sold out the future of every young child who will be born in this state from this point of time on. They have not put the interests of these people forward at all. To think that the Labor Party was supported by the union in the election and funded by the union, and now the Labor Party has shot them clean in the back of the head. It is like rabbits in the spotlight. They said, 'Back us in the election. We'll give you all the support we can,' and the day after the election they said, 'We have this wonderful idea. We're going to sell off the assets and we are going to start with the ones that have union members in them. We're going to sell you straight down the drain.' My family were members of the Labor Party many years ago. They actually helped start your party.

Mr Schwarten: They'd be rolling in their graves.

Mr DICKSON: I reckon they would be rolling around in their graves today because it was a once-great party, but you people have just sold it down the drain—ripping off the unions and ripping off our children's future.

The Kawana Hospital is the note I would like to finish on. We have heard so much talk from members on the other side of the House tonight about how wonderful the health system is in this state and how much they are looking forward to looking after the people of this state. It was called the Sippy Downs Hospital, and it was first promised in 2005. Then they decided they would change the position of the Sippy Downs Hospital to Kawana. I think that was to prop up the member who ran in the 2006 election campaign. That was a promise that was written in stone. It was written in blood by the Labor Party. Guess what? They have broken that promise again. I feel broken-hearted over it and so do the people of the Sunshine Coast. The problem is the Labor Party will have blood on its hands, because when we hit the tourist season our population doubles. The members opposite will have blood on their hands like Pontius Pilate did, but he killed only one person.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that sort of language adds to the tone of the House. Before I call the next member, I would appeal to the House to do two things. Firstly, the level of conversation is far too high. Secondly, I would hope that the tone of the debate would reflect the dignity of the House.

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (5.35 pm): I rise to add to the debate. We have heard many times over the last few days that this budget is diabolical. It is a budget that is going to cost my children, my grandchildren and—God forbid—most likely my great-grandchildren. We are on the edge—no, we are probably over the edge. We are probably in a position now where we will never be debt free. By 2013 our debt is estimated to be \$85.5 billion. That is 85½ thousand million dollars. Write it out in your mind: eighty-five, five, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero. It is a sickening thought that this government is leaving that debt for our children's children to worry about. When it comes to this state's debt, the question that the people of my electorate, the Coomera electorate, are asking is: what is in it for them? That is a natural enough question. It is a question that all Queenslanders would be asking.

Ms Croft: Hope Island Road.

Mrs Keech: I got you a TAFE.

Mr CRANDON: The answer is simple: not very much that is positive, member for Albert. We have got no relief. They are already building the Hope Island Road and we are counting it again. It is going around and around and around.

We have no relief for Exit 38, Exit 41, Exit 54 and Exit 57 on the M1. The answer there is: continue to suffer the frustrations and the safety issues. Continue to be in a traffic jam on Stapylton-Jacobs Well Road just to get on the highway at Exit 38, because there is nothing in this budget to provide relief. Continue to run the risk of a horrific accident at Exit 41 because of the traffic that backs up onto the M1 when all you want to do is get to work. You are running the risk of being tail ended. Expect to be logjammed at Exit 54 for the foreseeable future when all you want to do is drop your children off at school. Continue to be stuck for three or four light changes on Hope Island Road at Exit 57 when all you want to do is get onto the M1 to head north, or once again drop your children off at school. Imagine being in a traffic jam for an hour just to take your children to school five, six or seven kilometres away.

There is nothing in this budget to relieve any of these problems. We have some planning money to expand the Ormeau Woods State High School. That is some good news. We have the money to build the new TAFE precinct at Coomera—more good news, and proof and recognition of what is happening in the area. There have been announcements about a new primary school and discussions about a new high school.

The Coomera electorate in the northern Gold Coast corridor is right in the middle of the fastest growing region in Queensland and Australia. As such, it beggars belief that the Minister for Transport and member for Ipswich had the audacity to say in this House on Wednesday when discussing Queensland Rail rolling stock—

We acted on the results of the 2008 survey that indicated that the greatest need was on the Ipswich and Caboolture lines on weekday mornings.

The minister and member for Ipswich went on to say—

The Bligh government added five new morning peak services to the Ipswich line and three to the Caboolture line, since they were identified as priorities last year.

The minister and member for Ipswich stated that this provided capacity for an additional 6,000 people each weekday and that the reduction in crowding on the Ipswich line dropped from 58 per cent to 23 per cent. I am delighted for the people of Ipswich, but it beggars belief that the minister and member for Ipswich is reading the same report that I am reading. I would like to table a copy of the report now. It is the report that the minister and member for Ipswich released on Monday of this week.

Tabled paper: Report titled 'Passenger Load Survey Q1-2009' [\[457\]](#).

The report that I have been reading—this report—which contains the last five years' figures, does not identify the Ipswich line, which the minister and member for Ipswich states was the one with the greatest need. In fact, the line with the greatest need was and still is the Gold Coast line, specifically the stations from Ormeau to Robina. Passenger numbers on the Ipswich line increased between 2005 to 2009 from 5,939 passengers to 8,133 passengers, an increase of 37 per cent. More recently, the increase in passenger numbers on the Ipswich line from 2007 to 2008 was 4.5 per cent and from 2008 to 2009 it was 2.5 per cent. This is all in the report. The increase from 2005 to 2009 on the Gold Coast line was from 1,637 passengers to 3,430, an increase of 110 per cent. The increase from 2007 to 2008 on the Gold Coast line was 27.8 per cent versus 4.5 per cent on the Ipswich line and for 2008 to 2009 it was 15 per cent versus 2.5 per cent on the Ipswich line.

The minister and member for Ipswich is quite correct in the statement made on Wednesday that the percentage of overloading on the Ipswich line dropped from 58 per cent to 23 per cent year on year. As the minister stated in a press release last Sunday—

... the comfort design capacity was a measure of the number of people a train could hold, while maintaining passenger comfort. For QR's six-car train sets, the comfort design capacity is 750 people, sitting and standing.

During the same period overloading on the Gold Coast line—the line from Ormeau to Robina—increased from 83 per cent to 86 per cent. So whilst overcrowding on the Ipswich line dropped from 58 per cent to 23 per cent, in the same period it rose on the Gold Coast line from 83 per cent to 86 per cent. It is going backwards on the Gold Coast. Based on the figures in the report, the Gold Coast line was by far the most overloaded line.

The minister and member for Ipswich has been caught out in a deliberate untruth. Surely the minister and member for Ipswich has blatantly favoured the Ipswich line, which did not have the greatest need according to the report referred to. The solution could be in the budget.

Page 117 of Budget Paper No. 3 talks about 102 new three-car units in the 2009-10 year for use on the lines between the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The total cost is estimated to be \$155.2 million. That cost will not deliver 102 three-car units notwithstanding the budget paper's words. In fact, it will most likely deliver 10 or 12 three-car units. I wait with great anticipation to see the majority of these three-car units as six-car train sets on the line that is most in need according to that very same report, and that line is the Gold Coast line.

With the new Varsity Lakes station coming online in the new year, I know as do other honourable members that we will have an even greater need with even more people using the peak hour services. The increase in fuel prices through the fuel tax scheduled to come into being on 1 July will also be the tipping point for many people. People will be forced onto the rail service, which will further increase the overloading of the Gold Coast service.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on the member for Albert and, for that matter, the member for Waterford to support me in demanding that the rolling stock that we desperately need be delivered. The member for Albert is particularly affected by these issues as many of the people using the train stations in the electorate I represent, the Coomera electorate, come from the Albert electorate, which is on the other side of the M1. I wish that, when much of the new electorate of Coomera was still in the Albert electorate, the member for Albert had been able to convince the minister and Queensland Rail that the Gold Coast line was then, and still is, most needed.

It is about time that this government stopped ignoring the fastest growing region in the state. This government came to power on the mantra that it is all about jobs, jobs, jobs. I am sorry to say that in the state seat of Coomera we recently saw 450 jobs lost from one firm in the marine precinct. How many other jobs will be lost in the region as a result of this downturn in the industry is difficult to say. I do note an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* dated 19 June. In his comments about the budget, the Gold Coast Mayor stated—

There are currently 291,000 Gold Coasters employed, but there are 17,300 who have lost their jobs in the past 12 months.

The article states—

As of April, 2009, the Gold Coast unemployment rate stood at 5.6 per cent, which remains above the state average.

Those figures are before the 450 additional lost jobs and however many more may have gone as a result of the downturn that has occurred since then. The article continues—

According to the council's economic development and tourism department, the financial worth of Gold Coast-listed companies has dropped from \$6.4 billion in 2006 to \$2.5 billion in 2008.

'The marine industry alone has seen a 35 per cent drop in its worth.'

How many other jobs will be lost? Who knows. I can say that they were full-time jobs that were lost. The breadwinners who have lost their jobs will not be able to survive on OJs, or OHJs. They are those one-hour jobs that the government plans to count in its jobs, jobs, jobs mantra. It just will not wash for them. OJs do not add up to BJs, that is breadwinner jobs. Breadwinners need breadwinner jobs.

Mr Finn: OJs?

Mr CRANDON: OJs or OHJs—one hour jobs. We need to remember these people are real people with real needs, and OJs just will not cut it for them. They are not numbers that can be satisfied with OJs.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: Do members opposite like that? Do they like OJs? If we relied on OJs I am afraid that the added cost of fuel would take most of the pay from the OJs anyway, especially given the traffic jam issues where people are sitting there trying to get onto the freeway to get to the job.

I now come to the broader issue of financial management. As a financial planner for almost 22 years, I would often have people come to see me because they were on big incomes but they seemed to be going nowhere. After some discussion and analysis I would often have to ask some tough questions such as, 'Where did the money go? Have you got a gambling problem? The numbers don't stack up. You tell me your income is X. You tell me your expenditure is Y and yet you have this diabolical debt. The numbers just do not stack up.' Quite often the big income caused an almost manic spending pattern. Does this sound familiar—the last 10 years, a manic spending pattern?

These people were earning big money and they wanted a big lifestyle to go with it. Money meant little to them because it was coming so easily. They did not put the checks and balances in place to curb their spending, to put some money away for a rainy day. I would often ask them to go away and do a detailed income and expense analysis over the next little while. I was able to help those who came back. Sadly, many did not come back because they did not want to admit to themselves that there was a problem. They kept kidding themselves and turning a blind eye to their problem, just like we have seen over the past decade or so with this government.

The richest man in Babylon said it so well: save 10 per cent of all you earn and save the interest you earn on that as well. Why does this ring so true? Because we need to save for a rainy day. Life is not all sunshine. There are rainy days, as we well know in the Sunshine State.

Another piece of advice I would give to these clients when they came to see me is do not sell income-producing assets to pay for living expenses. Certainly do not sell assets when the markets are down—buy low, sell high. That is the rule.

If a fictitious 'Mr Treasurer' and his partner 'Ms Premier' came to see me 12 years or so ago, at the beginning of the biggest economic boom this state has ever seen, I would have said to them, 'As a young couple you need to save and invest a percentage of all of the income you are earning. Invest it in some income-producing assets. Put some away as a buffer for the rainy day that will come. As young people you may think that you are 10-foot tall and bulletproof. You are too young to know that the rainy days will come. Take this advice and you will come through the bad times.'

If that young couple had heeded the advice and did not let the boom convince them that the sunshine would never end then Queenslanders would not be paying more every time they turned on a tap, flicked on the lights, filled up their car or went to the supermarket. The days of Queensland being the low-tax, lifestyle capital of Australia would not have ended today. The last 11 years would have seen Queensland grow stronger and stronger. Queensland would continue as the nation's economic powerhouse. Today the Sunshine State is being eclipsed by the budget black hole that condemns Queensland to, at the very least, another decade of debt.

Ten years of the biggest boom in Queensland's 150-year history could have set us up for these tough times. Unfortunately, there is now nothing to show for a decade of boom other than a looming decade of deficits. Queensland would not be contemplating \$85.5 billion of debt. Queensland taxpayers would not be paying \$14 million a day every day in interest on this \$85.5 billion of debt. Remember, Queensland racked up \$64 billion worth of that debt before the rainy days came—when the sun was shining, in the biggest economic boom this state has ever seen. Queensland would not have lost its AAA credit rating and ordinary Queenslanders would not be slugged twice with the fuel tax—once at the bowser and again at the checkout. Queenslanders would not be paying more for fruit and vegetables. Queenslanders would not be selling profitable assets to fill the massive black hole that this government has put in the balance sheet. Queenslanders would not be selling profitable assets at the bottom of the market. This budget tells the tale of Labor's 11-year record of mismanagement, failure and squandered opportunity.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.53 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the appropriation bills, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. On Wednesday when I spoke in support of the debate of these bills occurring today I used words to the effect that I already knew how I was going to vote on the bills. I note these bills have been introduced for debate into this parliament less than 90 days since Queenslanders went to the election and voted for the representatives whom they thought would best represent their interests for the next three years in state parliament.

Many speakers have claimed that this government received a clear mandate at the recent election to make the proposed changes contained in these four bills. I do not believe the government did receive that clear, overwhelming mandate at the last election, and I will be voting accordingly. I do acknowledge that the Labor Party did win the election, but I do not believe it clearly shared with

Queenslanders its views as contained in these bills. It certainly did not make it clear to the many people I have had discussions with that its intention was to embark on such a significant asset sale and that its intention was to within a fortnight remove the fuel subsidy. I believe many members of the greater Labor Party family feel betrayed by these plans.

Recently I spoke with a long-term friend. He told me that he had always been a Labor supporter. He told me that he was angry and that he believed he had been misled by the party he believed in. He finished by saying that he will not forget.

The Queensland economy did not simply collapse on 22 March. The Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, at page 13, states in part—

The \$1.592 billion Traveston Crossing Dam is continuing to progress through the environmental approval process. In 2009-10, funding of \$75 million is allocated for environmental measures and community projects, such as the establishment of a Freshwater Species Conservation Centre, habitat and vegetation rehabilitation and relevant catchment management initiatives. When complete, the Traveston Crossing Dam will provide an additional 70,000 megalitres per annum of water to South East Queensland.

Earlier during the debate I heard a number of government members say that they had not heard any speakers identify projects that they did not want to see built or say that speakers did not identify savings that could be made. Could I perhaps identify a few.

The first is—surprise, surprise—Traveston Crossing Dam. We could immediately save \$75 million proposed to be spent on this dam during 2009-10. I remind members that this project has not yet been approved. I simply say that, with a federal election not far away and the very strong possibility that the federal Labor government will be voted out at the next election, this proposed \$1.592 billion dam may never be approved. What a waste of taxpayers' money it will have been.

I bet when this proposed dam is stopped by the federal government we will see the all-powerful development lobby in Queensland rock up to the next state government and offer a solution to bring a lot of money into Treasury coffers. They will have a wonderful solution. I shudder to think.

I do not make these comments flippantly, but I do often worry when I look at the assets that this government is planning to sell as a result of the bills we are now debating. I really worry about the future of our Mary Valley. I say to the thousands of supporters of saving our valley and to the hardworking committee: please look at what all members of this 53rd Parliament have had to say in response to the bills before the House. Look at the debate.

The challenge will be: what will the next state government do when it is faced with trying to provide the services our community demands, with trying to reduce the state debt and with trying to generate income? To me, the first fight certainly is to stop the dam, but I believe the real battle will be with the next state government to make sure there is a proper planning scheme to truly protect this valley and protect the Mary River.

Another large infrastructure project that could be stopped and which is funded in this financial year is the \$211.5 million Northern Pipeline Interconnector stage 2 between Eudlo and Cooroy. As this project is also scheduled for further significant funding in the 2011-12 financial year there are further significant savings to be made if this project does not proceed. Another saving I flagged in my response to the Governor's address was not taking parliament to regional Queensland during this parliamentary term.

I genuinely believe that Queenslanders would prefer to see that money spent on improving our health services. Another saving could be made if the parliament were required to serve its full term, but as I have a bill currently before the House on this matter I will not make any further comments until this bill comes on for full debate. Another saving I flagged for consideration by the government is to take on board the Cudgery Estate community's opposition to the proposal to build a new on and off intersection ramp linking Cudgery Drive with the Bruce Highway north of Cooroy. I understand that when this estate was approved by the local council Cudgery Drive was specifically designed and built to only ever accommodate local traffic, yet now our Main Roads planners are planning a new role for this road so that the local network will be connected via Cudgery Drive to a national highway—the Bruce Highway.

On Monday night I chaired a community meeting at the Pomona Showgrounds where residents from the Cudgery community unanimously informed Main Roads representatives of their opposition to the proposed new on and off ramps and for the proposal for Cudgery Drive to become an integral link in the National Highway network, but at the same time they acknowledged the importance of upgrading the Bruce Highway to ensure the improvement of safety for the many people who travel this road on a daily basis. Another suggestion for the government on savings is the Powerlink proposal to continue work on the new powerline augmentation of the Woolooga to West Cooroy site. I believe that this is worthy of being reviewed, because we are not seeing the significant increase in population in the northern part of the Sunshine Coast which the planners originally anticipated.

Because the government released particulars on many of the more controversial components to the proposed budget prior to the Treasurer's budget address on Tuesday afternoon, I was certainly able to come to this parliament feeling confident that I understood the views of many in my community, and I acknowledge that these bills have not yet had the opportunity to be scrutinised by either the estimates committee hearing process or the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. On Monday, 16 June—before the

budget was even introduced or presented to parliament—one of my constituents came to see me at my office in Nambour. She had just been down to the local department of transport office to renew her motor vehicle registration. When she asked why there was an increase in the vehicle registration fee, she was told that the increase will be revealed in the state budget later this week. I believe that is totally inappropriate and totally wrong. People should not be charged the increases before they have even been presented to parliament for consideration.

I also want to read into the parliamentary record one letter that I have received which simply reflects the overwhelming view of my community in relation to the fuel subsidy. It states—

Dear Peter,

I run Queensland Cold Logistics based in Woombye.

The proposed abolition of the fuel subsidy will cause our costs to increase by 3 to 4%.

Our margins are only 3% so unless we get a full recovery of the increased cost from our customers, then our business becomes unviable, resulting in job losses of 25 people.

Either way, we have to pass on this cost to our customers which in turn will see food prices rise accordingly.

Can you please express our serious concerns about this. At least, the subsidy should still apply to business use.

Regards

David McMahon

Managing Director

QUEENSLAND COLD LOGISTICS

I certainly have received many emails and many other letters, but I think that letter captures the views and the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of items of correspondence that I have received.

I now take members to the government's introductory comments contained in the summary statement for the north coast region budget statement, which states—

It might be one of Queensland's smallest regions, but the North Coast has one of the state's highest population growth rates, where more than 460,000 Queenslanders now call the North Coast region home.

It goes on to say in the introduction—

The region features a well-developed infrastructure network.

Many of my constituents do not agree with those claims. Many of my constituents are concerned about the impact of significant population growth happening in the area, and I use the Nambour Hospital as an example. I do acknowledge the building works currently underway at the Nambour Hospital and again take this opportunity to reiterate that all state government building projects should be required to provide the appropriate level of car parking spaces that any other person would be required to provide if the building work was undertaken by an individual or a private company. The Nambour Hospital site is limited, and the sooner the new regional hospital is built and relieves the pressure from the Nambour Hospital the better.

In last year's budget response I thanked the government for listening to my calls to purchase an adjoining house beside the Palmwoods school, and I note that in this budget a further \$2.2 million is provided to construct a new administration block on that site and convert the existing administration area into a new learning area.

Mr Powell: Hear, hear!

Mr WELLINGTON: Unfortunately the school is just on the other side of my boundary. However, the member for Glass House is in the chamber and he shares that great school with me. I also acknowledge that construction has commenced on the new Nambour Fire Station, with \$2.5 million allocated in this year's budget towards that new building. The Nambour town revitalisation will continue, with a further \$875,000 allocated this financial year to our local council out of a total state government contribution of \$1.79 million. The continued allocation of \$11.4 million to continue the construction of the Nambour Hibiscus nursing home, currently located on the Nambour Hospital site, is also appreciated.

While on the topic of aged care, I again repeat that many elderly people are in our hospitals only because our nursing homes and aged-care facilities do not have the staff to care for them, and what a waste of resources it is when hospital beds are being occupied by people who should be cared for in other appropriate facilities. Our nursing homes and aged-care facilities are being required to provide a service that is getting to the stage where staff will be forced to take short cuts and one day a tragedy will occur. Then what will happen? We will have another expensive government inquiry into why, how, when and who was responsible. So I take this opportunity to stress to the government and to our Minister for Community Services to please take this crisis up with their interstate parliamentary colleagues and our federal member because I know there is a problem. The workers in the aged-care industry know there is a problem. What we need is our respective ministers from the states and territories and our federal minister to put more money on the table—yes, more money on the table—to respond before a tragedy happens and we have another expensive inquiry looking for a scapegoat.

Whilst also on the topic of health, I note the funding of \$255,000 for a number of non-government organisations in the region for the provision of palliative care services. I understand an investigation is currently underway into how Queensland Health and our non-government sector can better coordinate the provision of these services to clients in our region. I certainly look forward to the outcome of this investigation, and I know that there will be a stronger partnership and a great outcome for the clients who are in need of palliative care services not just on the Sunshine Coast but throughout all of Queensland.

The budget papers refer to \$9.1 million allocated for the continuation of the redevelopment of the trade facility at the Nambour TAFE campus, and I am very pleased that ever since I was first elected to state parliament the state government has continued to invest real money into this campus, because the day after I was elected I had staff from the Nambour TAFE come and show me a plan. Do members know what the plan was? Private enterprise was going to build a building down on the coast and the government was going to rent it. The Beattie Labor government put real money into Nambour, as Labor governments have continued to do. I say give credit where credit is due, and I thank the government for recognising the importance of a Nambour TAFE campus.

On the issue of renewable energy, I genuinely share the member for Lockyer's concerns about the effects the government's solar hot water program is having on our solar industry. I hope when the government finalises the details of its preferred system the preferred system will come with an acceptable warranty. I certainly support moves to grow our solar industry. After all, we are the Sunshine State. I note that the government has flagged the continued work on the Citytrain network, including duplication of the railway track between Caboolture and Beerburrum. I have to wonder: as there is no real money for the continuation of the duplication of the line further north, does that mean that the government will also make sure that the current planned population growth will also not happen further north?

After 1 July we will see fuel prices in Queensland increase because of the removal of the current fuel subsidy. As the world economy starts to improve, I predict that fuel prices will also continue to increase to a price that many of us would prefer not to think about. On that basis I say that if the government is not going to build the train lines and provide the important public transport services to the northern part of the Sunshine Coast region, let us make sure that the South East Queensland Regional Plan, which is due to be released in maybe a month or two months time, also reflects those intentions.

Whilst on the topic of public transport, I thank the Minister for Transport for listening to my calls to continue the contribution of money to the operation of the Hinterland Connect bus service linking Nambour, Mapleton and Maleny. I understand that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council will also jointly fund this service for a further 12 months. Again, I acknowledge my colleague the member for Glass House for his lobbying and involvement in this matter, together with Councillor Tatton and Councillor Jenny McKay from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. I hope that at the end of this year the government and the council might see fit to change this bus service from trial status to one of more permanency whereby the bus operator will be able to look forward to recurrent funding to continue this important service for the hinterland region.

I note that many funds in the budget have been allocated to schools in my electorate. I certainly appreciate this investment in the schools in my region. Although I acknowledge that much of this money is as a result of direct funding from the federal government, I certainly do not envy the Treasurer's job in trying to balance all of the competing issues. I acknowledge many of the challenges that the Treasurer has had to face as a result of circumstances well and truly beyond his control.

I note there is money in the budget for the continuation of the upgrade of the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road. I am able to report to the House that work on this bridge is nearing completion. Unfortunately, there was a short delay because of unseasonal wet weather. There is also money in the budget for continuing the upgrade of the Nambour Mapleton Road but also, like the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road, there is a need for further funding in the future.

The Nambour Connection Road at the intersection of Blackall Street is an intersection of which I am sure all members would be aware because of the hundreds of petitions about it that have been presented to this House over recent sittings. I also use this opportunity in this budget response to flag to the government that I certainly support the opportunity for traffic lights, if possible, to be installed at this intersection.

I note the budget papers also identify significant money to be allocated to try to provide employment opportunities for unemployed people in this state under the Green Army program. I hope that the north coast region will see some of these projects occurring in the Mapleton Forest and in our waterways. We certainly have a responsibility to seek out and make sure that unemployed people have something constructive to do with their time so that these people are focused on giving something back to our community which is supporting them.

I note in the budget papers there is reference to \$37.8 million allocated to create new jobs in the tourism market. Whilst on the topic of visitors coming to Queensland, I remember the Governor in her opening address at the start of this term of parliament referring to the 1,800 people moving to Queensland every week. I wonder if at some time this parliament needs to have a debate about the impact that such a significant consistent population increase is having on our existing facilities. I know many people on the Sunshine Coast are eagerly awaiting the state government's release of the updated South East Queensland Regional Plan to see how that plan will interact with the local council's plans for dealing and coping with the significant population growth in the future. I look forward to the debate on these bills proceeding to a final vote later this evening.

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (6.12 pm): In view of the time, I will shorten my speech as much as I possibly can to give others a fair go. This budget, as tough as it is, is about jobs and our future—like the 2,000 extra construction jobs for the development of Rockhampton Base Hospital. On the service side of the ledger, there is extra money for cancer treatment, which reflects the eight per cent increase in the Health budget, which is now over \$9 billion. That shows that, despite the harsh economic reality, we are still a Labor government that is providing services to people. That is just one example of the services that are being provided in my electorate. There is over \$200 million in road funding in my area and over \$100 million for electricity infrastructure. The list goes on.

The economic crisis has robbed this state of about \$3.5 billion worth of income a year for the next four years. GST, transfer duty and royalty income is through the floor. To put it in some perspective, this is enough to wipe out most of the budgets of the Police Service, the housing department and Disability Services. It is that serious. If we want to keep these services—and I do not hear anyone saying that we should not—then we have to look at what else we can do. It is not rocket science. Over the years I have known many families who have suddenly lost significant wage earnings. They have been confronted with this same scenario. They face making the same tough decisions: to sell some assets, to cut expenses, to go without things and reduce debt. This budget does all of those things.

I can assure this House and everyone in my electorate that I never believed that I would be confronted with the sale of a section of Queensland Rail. Queensland Rail is a big employer in my electorate. My electorate has a state-of-the-art workshop—and I notice there is allocated in this budget \$26 million for the upgrading of locomotives—for nearly 600 highly skilled employees. My electorate also has coal infrastructure workers. There is also an administration building full of dedicated QR workers right in the middle of my electorate. These are real people doing real jobs and they are my first and foremost concern. Mr Deputy Speaker, I note that nearly \$70 million will be spent by QR in our area.

At the end of the day, the rail lines are made of steel and concrete. Locomotives are made of steel and other componentry. They are not my real concern. Having been in the Labor Party and the trade union movement for nearly 40 years, having lived in Rockhampton for all my life, having gone to school with many rail employees and having drunk with them in pubs and having had all the other exchanges that go on within a community, I am not going to walk away from my responsibility to have these workers come first. That is the difference between Labor and those opposite. Our moral compass always points to the workers.

A stark example of this happened to my own late father who, having run his own business for over 25 years, ended up working for the works department building new schools. He was a highly skilled tradesman, but he was sacked by the National Party government in 1975 when it privatised school construction. He walked away with his holiday pay—no job, no redundancy, no help to get another job. He had to find one for himself. Ironically, he ended up working at the Rockhampton railway workshops. So let us not hear any more of the hypocrisy about this matter from those who sit opposite. I will ensure that that fate does not await any QR employee. I am committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with every single QR worker to get the very best outcome for them that I can.

At the outset, I must point out that any decision on QR is some years away, which gives us time to explore all options. At this stage, there is no final decision on what will be privatised. I have had a number of meetings with the Treasurer and the Premier and I have received assurances. I will continue to be part of the consultative process, which is proceeding, including a union working group. I have met with the local union officials and I will continue to be a conduit between them on behalf of the workers and the Premier's office and the Treasurer's office. As I said, I will fight for every person—every QR employee—for the best deal that I can.

As I said, this is a tough decision, but it is one that cannot be dodged. The harsh reality is that QR must make a substantial investment in the future of around \$7 billion so that it can compete. This money has to be borrowed and the state cannot afford to borrow it without cancelling services and shutting down jobs, like those at the Rockhampton Base Hospital.

My constituents continue to tell me that health, education and police are their highest priorities. They want their kids well educated in schools that are well resourced. They want a free health system in Rockhampton that treats a patient every 20 minutes and they want an emphasis on law and order. This budget delivers that and all the other priorities like housing to the extent that people want to pay taxes and charges to allow us to do that.

The fact is that we have to borrow money to build schools, hospitals, police stations, houses and all the rest. Given that those services compete with those provided by QR, a choice has to be made. Yes, QR brings in around \$200 million, but it also costs us on our borrowings and our AAA rating.

However, as tough as it is personally, as hard as it is for those who work for QR, the fact is that QR's coal network is a commercial business that carts coal and provides no service to the average householder. So when it comes to a choice between QR and working-class kids getting educated in decent state schools, or families getting free health care, the answer is quite obvious.

Finally, as I said earlier, I know many QR workers and they have told me what they think of this decision—and of me, for that matter. That is their right and I must say I do not blame them. But let me say this: not one member opposite—not any person I know—has a solution that keeps jobs, fosters economic growth and allows us to provide the services and the infrastructure that Queenslanders want and rightly demand and should get.

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.18 pm): On behalf of the residents of the Sunnybank electorate, I welcome the wide range of initiatives that are contained in this budget—ranging from job creation to much needed infrastructure on roads, health, housing and education in these difficult times.

The most important issue facing us all is the creation of jobs and the maintenance of full employment. Nothing is more important to a Labor government than making sure that everyone has the opportunity to work. This budget allocates over \$490 million to be spent locally on jobs generating capital works projects. The \$28 million that will be spent across greater Brisbane for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, including Queensland's Green Army to create 3,560 jobs for young people and those disadvantaged in the labour market, will ensure that the local long-term unemployed in the Sunnybank electorate will continue to get their chance by training on the job.

As Sunnybank is the multicultural heartland of Queensland, the \$7 million to promote social inclusion through increasing economic participation in low-socioeconomic urban fringe communities is very welcome.

The allocation of \$22.7 million for stage 2 at SkillsTech Australia Acacia Ridge trade campus, at a total cost of \$62 million, will build on a great local training facility which, along with Eagle Farm campus, is expected by 2010 to deliver the majority of all trade and technician training in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

Residents in Acacia Ridge and those who travel along Beaudesert Road regularly are now enjoying the removal of the rail boom gates on Beaudesert Road where sometimes traffic could be held up for periods of up to 15 minutes at a time. The budget allocates \$54 million to complete the Acacia Ridge rail-crossing overpass on Beaudesert Road by the erection of a double-span bridge to allow multiple lanes of traffic travelling in both directions over the rail line, at a total cost of \$113 million.

Residents on the western perimeter of the Sunnybank electorate will be pleased to hear that this budget has dedicated a further \$11 million to continue a planning study for upgrading the Ipswich Motorway between Rocklea and Darra.

Right across the electorate of Sunnybank, traffic delays are a problem to residents, whether it be commuters travelling to work, parents taking children to day care or school, or local residents simply travelling along the major road networks.

For many years I have advocated for the intersection at Mains Road and Kessels Road at Robertson-Macgregor to be upgraded to an overpass. Planning commenced some time ago and is progressing well on this intersection. A further \$3.87 million in joint state and federal funding will see the completion of concept planning for the Mains Road and Kessels Roads intersection, at a total cost of \$12 million.

Another intersection which is particularly relevant to residents in the Runcorn and Eight Mile Plains areas, including me as I live in this area, is the Logan Road, Miles Platting Road, Padstow Road and Logan Road interchange. Planning for this intersection commenced during the last financial year, and this budget allows a further \$4½ million to continue concept planning for the MPPL interchange, at a total cost of \$10½ million.

Local cyclists such as me will be delighted to hear that a further \$3 million this year will be spent towards construction of a bikeway on a section of the Pacific Motorway between Nathan and the Logan Road entry to the motorway, with a total state government contribution of over \$16 million.

There is also another \$16 million for the Gold Coast corridor track upgrade as part of the Citytrain MetTrip track infrastructure upgrades, including Salisbury to Kuraby stages 1 and 2. The total cost of this project is over \$650 million. It builds on the recent third-line and station renewal program in my electorate.

Other transport and main roads commitments in the Sunnybank electorate include: \$7½ million to complete pavement widening to six lanes on Beaudesert Road between Fox Road and Bradman Street, Acacia Ridge; \$900,000 this year to continue concept planning for Beaudesert Road between Granard Road and the Logan Motorway; \$1½ million this year to commence concept planning for the Granard

Road and Beaudesert Road intersection; half a million dollars in federal government funding towards traffic signal improvements at the Beenleigh Road and Stones Road intersection; and over \$100,000 in federal Black Spot Program funding towards intersection improvements at the Hellowell Road and Signata Street intersection, Sunnybank Hills.

Public housing is a priority, particularly in these difficult times, to allow low-income earners and unemployed residents the dignity of housing at an affordable price. Funding of \$2 million will be spent to complete construction of 10 two-bedroom apartments at 45 Finlayson Street and 2 Foote Street, Acacia Ridge. A record \$46.39 million will be spent across greater Brisbane for the upgrading and renewal of social rental housing properties. Queensland Housing tenants in Acacia Ridge, Coopers Plains and Sunnybank will benefit from this work which includes the upgrading of kitchens and bathrooms and the provision of disability modifications to already established dwellings.

It is further good news for local southside residents to hear that another \$10 million has been allocated this year to upgrade the QEII Hospital emergency department, including refurbishment, to create 11 fast-track bays and additional short stay capacity for people requiring observation, at a total project cost of \$19 million.

Funding of \$7½ million will be spent to further enhance services to Queensland provided at Forensic and Scientific Services in my electorate. Also within the Sunnybank electorate there is funding of \$82,000 in Sunnybank for child health funding; \$167,000 for chronic disease self-management funding in Sunnybank to support the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of self-management approaches to chronic disease; and \$156,000 in community self-care funding to assist self-help groups to provide information and support on a variety of existing and emerging health issues.

Over \$7 million is being injected into the Sunnybank electorate alone for the provision of funds to approved non-government, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations including local government authorities to provide services such as respite care, domiciliary nursing, transport, home care and modifications, allied health, domestic assistance and personal care to the frail aged and younger people with moderate, severe or profound disabilities. Almost \$1 million will be allocated to provide counselling and support services to people who have been personally affected by crime. Half a million dollars will be allocated to provide gambling help services.

David Rieck and his hardworking team of volunteers at the Macgregor Souths Cricket Club will make good use of over \$128,000 directed towards the construction of a new cricket clubhouse at Macgregor. Principal Margaret Berry, parents and the community at Robertson State School will welcome further money to install netball court lighting and an elevator for disability access in the hall at the Robertson State School. In this budget a \$¼ million has been allocated for the planning of an early childhood education and care centre at Acacia Ridge State School.

To keep our state schools fresh, functional and in great condition, funding has been allowed for ongoing maintenance at the following schools in my electorate of Sunnybank: funding has been allocated for the repainting of external surfaces at MacGregor State High School; funding has been allocated for the replacement of corroded guttering and to repaint external surfaces at MacGregor State School. At Runcorn State High School funding has been allocated to replace the tennis court fencing wire and to repaint the covered links throughout the school. At Runcorn State School funding has been allocated to repaint all external surfaces at the school and to replace the box guttering at the pool complex.

At Sunnybank Hills State School—and I was only at that school last week—the principal is very excited that this year he will receive funds to repaint the external surfaces of teaching areas, to replace broken louvre frames and to modify some of his classrooms. At Sunnybank Special School funding has been allocated to replace the cracked and potholed bitumen surface of the driveway and car parks, and to repaint the external surfaces around the school including the gym. At Sunnybank State School funding has been allocated to replace the box gutter of the covered play area, to replace the roof guttering and downpipes of the music area and to replace the damaged bitumen surfaces.

At Warrigal Road State School, amongst many changes, funding has been allocated to repaint the external surfaces at the school. At Sunnybank State High School funding has been allocated for fire safety consultant investigations and reports on the building egress, to overhaul the winding mechanism for louvre blade sets and to replace the corroded roof sheeting at the Assembly Hall.

At Watson Road State School funding has been allocated to replace the holed and aged shade cloth, to replace the broken and missing glass louvre blades and to do some work on their toilets. I was pleased to recently get funds as well for the repainting of that school. At Coopers Plains State School money has been allocated to paint the external northern wall of the school. At Acacia Ridge State School money has been allocated to repaint the timber seating throughout the school and to replace the bitumen surface of the basketball courts.

Visiting these schools is always a pleasure. I look forward to seeing the works in progress and to watch with interest the emergence of federally funded Building the Education Revolution stimulus building projects at these local schools.

I applaud Treasurer Andrew Fraser on delivering a budget that ensures record infrastructure spending in these current unprecedented difficult times not only in Queensland but also around the world. This government has had to make the hard decisions to allow funds for investment in local infrastructure to create jobs and provide for the needs of our growing community.

In these tough economic times we have chosen to undertake a bold capital works program while sustaining our essential services of police, ambulance and health. Many people in my electorate will find it difficult to accept the demise of the fuel subsidy. They will also find it difficult to see the wisdom of the asset sales. But when they see these overdue capital works projects being undertaken and the associated employment that these capital works projects will generate, I am sure that they will understand the need for these tough decisions in this particular climate.

Sitting suspended from 6.29 pm to 7.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Finn, adjourned.

MOTION

Order of Business

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.30 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 18 June (see p. 1063), on motion of Mr Lawlor—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.30 pm): I am very pleased to rise to speak to the Body Corporate and Community Management Amendment Bill 2009. I would like to congratulate the minister on his swift reaction to this very difficult and important issue that came before the courts and was resolved in a very unusual manner on a technicality. This resulted in a major problem for the property industry and the development industry in Queensland which would have had enormous ramifications if it had not been addressed immediately.

I had a press release ready to go that hammered the minister if he had not dealt with this matter in this week's sitting of parliament, because parliament does not sit for another two months and that is the next time we could have dealt with this issue. That wait would have caused enormous damage to the property industry. So I congratulate the minister and his staff and I thank them for the complete, open and helpful way in which they assisted me to come to grips with all facets of the problems that arose out of this court case.

It was not easy for the opposition to take a blanket agreement approach on the legislation that has come to the House tonight. Quite clearly, there is legislation in place—the 1997 body corporate legislation—and it is, for all intents and purposes, correct legislation. However, unfortunately, there have been some aberrations in I suppose the drafting of property matters in contracts for sale, particularly for off-the-plan contracts, and these contracts are a big part of Queensland's property development industry. A big part of the development of high-rise buildings, for instance, is this opportunity to sell a large proportion of the units off the plan. This commitment to buy then gets the financing in difficult economic times, so the developers can go forward with their financial support and complete the project. So off-the-plan purchasing is quite a common thing. Some figures suggest there may be approximately 14,000 of these off-the-plan contracts on foot at this moment. In other words, they play a major part in the property industry, and the government had to address the issue straightaway as a result of the court case that went through.

The court case I am referring to is *Bossichix Pty Ltd v Martinek Holdings Pty Ltd*, which was a Supreme Court case through the Court of Appeal in Brisbane on 5 June. Justices Holmes, McMurdo and Lyons all concluded that there was a technical breach in the contracts that were on foot for the majority of cases—up to 90 per cent of the cases—and that voided the contract. In other words, all the buyers were able to walk away from these contracts, even though nothing had changed with their original intention, nothing had changed from the vendor's perspective. The vendor was clear, the buyer was clear. All matters were very clear in terms of the parameters of the sale that was going to go ahead, but it was just through this technicality.

I congratulate the very smart solicitor who was involved on behalf of the appellants in the matter. I am told that is what their job is; that is why we pay them the big money. He did a very good job and got his client out of the contract, but this did present enormous ramifications for the property industry and the whole Queensland economy. The government believes—and we believe—that the legislation here tonight will address the matter. It puts all contracts back on track in terms of the original intentions, and the original parameters and knowledge of both the vendor and the buyer will be upheld. That will give certainty to a property industry that is under considerable threat at this current time.

The bill seeks to clarify the intent of the existing Body Corporate and Community Management Act in relation to contracts entered into with the intention of purchasing off the plan. Section 212 of the original Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 states—

- (1) A contract entered into by a person (the *seller*) with another person (the *buyer*) for the sale to the buyer of a lot intended to come into existence as a lot included in a community titles scheme when the scheme is established or changed must provide that settlement must not take place earlier than 14 days after the seller gives advice to the buyer that the scheme has been established or changed.
- (2) Also, when the contract is entered into, there must be a proposed community management statement for the scheme as established or changed.
- (3) The buyer may cancel the contract if—
 - (a) there has been a contravention of subsection (1) or (2); and
 - (b) the contract has not already been settled.

The judgement handed down and the wording suggested by the legal fraternity to amend the law was as follows—

No purpose would be served by requiring the exact words to be used. The purpose of s 212 is not to inform the buyer of its legal rights. Rather the purpose is to inform the buyer that the scheme has been established and to allow a sufficient time prior to settlement for the buyer to make any necessary searches and enquiries. (It must be said that those purposes could have been just as well served by a provision which simply deemed every relevant contract to contain such a term, rather than providing a right of cancellation where the relevant term is not drafted according to the statute.

Unfortunately, this is where we go wrong a lot of the time in making our contracts and our legislation so prescriptive—in terms of getting copies of contracts, getting them photocopied in the right order and these sorts of things. It opens the doors and paves the way for very smart young solicitors to find a loophole which will get their clients out of their contracts, when that loophole should not be part of the intention of that contract. We are happy to support the minister's amending bill. As I mentioned earlier, a lot of people have said, 'Hang on. The legislation is correct. If it had been drafted correctly, then people would not have had the opportunity to get out of the contracts.'

The legislation is taking away the buyers' ability to get out of these contracts. On the other side of the coin, had this been the same and the property market had been rising and the vendors had been trying to get out of the contracts, we would have been supporting the government to stop the vendors getting out of the contracts as well. We believe there was genuine intent from the vendor and the buyer. They knew what they were doing. By supporting this legislation, we are upholding our beliefs that the property industry should be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner from both sides—both the vendor and the buyer.

We do not like retrospective legislation. It is abhorrent to our side of politics, and it is to be used in the rarest of circumstances. We certainly believe this is one of those rare circumstances where it is justified and should be used to patch up, unfortunately, the technical mistake that was brought about by this court case which will address the property industry's concerns and will keep the original intention of those contracts online.

The body corporate and community living industry has developed considerably over the last 12 years due to the increasing popularity of community and high-density living since the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 was introduced. I have had representations from industry players, and they believe the body corporate act is in need of an overhaul. I understand it is the minister's intention at some stage in this 53rd Parliament to address those issues, but that is a matter for another day. I look forward to those changes being introduced.

In terms of the property industry, we are looking at a \$24.9 billion industry, or 13 per cent of Queensland's gross domestic product. Queensland has almost 36,000 community title schemes, with more than 329,000 individual lots. The community title sector is a significant contributor to Queensland's economy and continues to grow, with the number of community title schemes increasing by 15 per cent over the past four years.

The real problem that we had with this retrospective legislation has been, in the main, put behind us because of the rapid response and the quick amendment that the government and the minister have put in place to address the industry's concerns in relation to future contract arrangements. The retrospectivity of the bill was necessary for those current contracts. This particular problem will not occur again in the future, and this legislation today will look after those contracts that we have had online since the court case first started—somewhere in the vicinity of 2007, I believe. There was an appeal in 2009.

Without going further on the Body Corporate and Community Management Amendment Bill—because I do believe we are in agreement as to where we should be heading with this particular bill—the opposition would like to make sure it is quite clear from the property industry perspective that we have supported the government in its efforts to amend the situation with this bill as quickly as possible. I hope it does not go wrong, but we believe the government has put in place an amendment that will work and is appropriate. Certainly we would hate to be tied to the fact that we supported this bill if it does not work for future contracts—

Mr Lawlor: We will blame you.

Mr STEVENS: And I am sure the minister will be blaming me. At this point in time we are assured by crown law—and the minister's officers have assured us in our briefings—that these amendments will put paid to this particular technical aspect of the legislation. Hopefully, when we review the legislation in the future these matters will be made clearer and less prescriptive so there are fewer opportunities in the new legislation for these unfortunate circumstances to occur. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (7.45 pm), in reply: Firstly, I thank the opposition for its cooperation in this matter. As has been set out by the member for Mermaid Beach, this is a difficult question but the opposition has cooperated. It has understood the significance of what was being done here. It understood the urgency of what was being done. So I do thank the opposition, particularly the member for Mermaid Beach for his cooperation.

No-one likes retrospective legislation, but the simple fact of the matter is that in some circumstances more harm can be done by doing nothing than by introducing retrospective legislation. Certainly this was one of those examples. The decision in *Bossichix Pty Ltd v Martinek Holdings* provided a technical basis to terminate a contract of sale that was currently on foot. That decision of the Court of Appeal was handed down on 5 June—two weeks ago today. So we have moved quite quickly, and there is always a danger in moving quickly that you do not get to consult with as many people or as many bodies as you would like. Nevertheless, it was critical, given the length of time between now and the next sittings, that this bill be passed tonight.

We are talking about off-the-plan contracts, so we are talking about units. Section 212 of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act requires that the seller advises the buyer that the 'scheme has been established' and settlement cannot occur earlier than 14 days from that advice. Many Queensland contracts provided 'settlement will occur 14 days after the seller notifies to the buyer that the building format plan is registered'. The manual of land title practice kept by the Registrar of Titles provides that the building plan is lodged at the same time as the scheme is established. The practical effect is that the building format plan and the scheme are inextricably linked. You cannot register a building format plan without a scheme, and you cannot have a scheme without the lodgement of a building format plan.

Off-the-plan contracts are the basis for developers obtaining finance for residential projects. Settlement of these contracts is essential to ensure the financial success of any residential project and the continued solvency of most developers and the continued employment of contractors and subcontractors. As has already been mentioned, it is estimated that up to 14,000 contracts could be adversely affected if this legislation is not passed tonight.

It is difficult to cover all situations in such a short time, as I have already mentioned. However, I believe that most of the scenarios will be covered by this bill. By amending the legislation to affirm existing contracts, buyers and sellers are in no different a position than when they executed the contract. It is important to understand that. The honourable member for Mermaid Beach mentioned the fact that what has been taken away here is simply a right to avoid a contract which the buyers were unaware of at the time that they executed the contract. So they are essentially losing nothing.

Bossichix Pty Ltd v Martinek Holdings gives buyers a technical right of rescission. As I said, they were unaware that they even possessed that right when they executed the contract. It is interesting to note some of the comments of Justice Philip McMurdo in the lead judgement in this case. He said—

The purpose of s. 212 is not to inform the buyer of its legal rights. Rather the purpose is to inform the buyer that the scheme has been established and to allow a sufficient time prior to settlement for the buyer to make any necessary searches and enquiries.

So it is not a matter of consumer protection at all. It must be said that those purposes could have been just as well served by a provision which simply deemed every relevant contract to contain such a term rather than providing a right of cancellation when the relevant term is not drafted according to the statute, and that is what has been done with this amending legislation. Justice McMurdo went on—

In the present case, for example, there would be no prospect that the buyer could have been prejudiced by the non-compliance with the statute such that it should be necessary to make the contract voidable ...

So there was no prejudice suffered by the buyer in that case, which the amending legislation is designed to cover. 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 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr NICHOLLS (7.51 pm): I have no problem with the intent or the provisions of the bill insofar as they are set out. I did notice in the minister's reply to the second reading debate that he commented that he believed that this covers all instances where there might be a problem. There is one issue that I have a question about and it pertains to new subclause 362A(3). This is the part of the legislation that deals with the application of the new subsection 212(1). It basically says that a contract settled before 5 June, which was the date of the Court of Appeal decision, is not affected by it. Subclause (b) says that it does not apply for the purpose of a contract before 5 June that has been lawfully cancelled. So the rights of those people who may have wished to take advantage of the technical method of cancellation of a contract and have cancelled their contract validly as the law then stood before the decision of 5 June are protected. The rights of the vendor and the purchaser have effectively been settled between those parties as the law stood at that time before the decision. Subclause (b)(ii) states—

a legal proceeding relating to the lawfulness of the cancellation—

That is the court case that is currently on foot. My question then goes to the provision insofar as it relates to someone who may have given a notice of cancellation on, say, 6 June and for whom the vendor has returned the deposit on the basis that they have been told that that is the law as it stood. There is a period of 14 days when people may have taken action to cancel and the rights between the parties have effectively been settled, but this legislation then deems this clause to have been inserted into a contract that for other purposes has actually been brought to an end.

I ask the minister: what does he understand to then be the legal rights of both the buyer and the seller in those circumstances where the buyer has given the cancellation after 5 June, the vendor has acceded to that cancellation notice, the deposit has been returned and they have done that by mistake? Why not put that provision in terms of subclause (b)(1) up to the date of commencement? Consequently, what is the intended date of commencement?

Mr LAWLOR: My understanding in that situation is that this legislation would not apply—that the contract is effectively terminated because the notice of termination was given by the purchaser, it is accepted by the vendor and the acceptance is indicated by the fact that he has returned the deposit. I understand the point the member is making that he may have been unaware of the change to the law and so on. I suppose we could say that is unfortunate, because once the deposit is returned that is the end of the contract.

Mr NICHOLLS: I understand that this is by agreement—so by another contract they have agreed to cancel the earlier contract. Would there be any reason then why the date of 5 June is put in subclause (b)(1) rather than the date of commencement? That would seem to put a line under it completely and rule out any question about the respective parties' legal rights.

Mr LAWLOR: The date of 5 June is the date that the decision of the Court of Appeal was handed down. If at any time after that—and it might be the 6th, but it could have been yesterday—in the event that the purported decision is accepted by the vendor, that is the end of the contract.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (7.55 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. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (7.55 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.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**APPROPRIATION BILL****INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL)
BILL****FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed from p. 1215, on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (7.56 pm): These appropriation bills outline a budget of tough decisions—tough decisions that deliver on election commitments, continue the biggest building program in the nation and, most importantly, chart the course for future prosperity. In rising to support the budget and the appropriation, I support all of the legislation in this cognate debate and welcome the opportunity to consider them together as a whole package of budget measures.

In the first instance, I comment on the budget initiatives with direct impact on the electorate of Yeerongpilly that I am honoured to represent in this parliament. Yeerongpilly is an engine room of jobs with a significant manufacturing, warehousing and service industry, particularly in the suburbs of Salisbury and Rocklea. National road and rail freight routes also run through the electorate.

This budget, with its focus on creating and sustaining jobs, supporting families and positioning our economy for future growth, is the approach my local area needs for now and for future generations. Local projects funded in this budget and creating local jobs include the new welding facility at Yeerongpilly, upgrades for the Ipswich Motorway between Rocklea and Darra and continued funding towards the Mains Road and Kessels Road intersection and the Granard Road and Beadesert Road intersection.

Local employment opportunities also come through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, the Green Army and vocational education and training funds. Energy infrastructure will be improved with replacement of underground cables at Annerley and the new zone substation at Tennyson.

Local health and community services have been supported with funds allocated to local organisations to support the Queensland Strategy for Chronic Disease and \$71,000 allocated to chronic disease Indigenous health funding to support the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. Additional social housing has been supported with 79 dwellings funded as part of this budget's massive injection into housing.

As announced during the state election, a new kindergarten will be built at Moorooka State School, giving local children the opportunity to have a flying start to their education. Local schools will also benefit, with additional maintenance funds provided for Moorooka State School, Nyanda State High School, Wellers Hill State School, Yeronga State High School, Yeronga State School and Salisbury State School. The budget also delivers on an election commitment of increasing block grant funding to each of the schools in the Yeerongpilly electorate.

I commend this budget to local residents, as it delivers on my commitment to protect local jobs and make the tough decisions demanded by dire economic times. In doing this, I acknowledge that this budget contains measures that not everyone will support. Bringing down a budget rarely is a populist exercise, and now more than ever we need elected representatives to make the right decisions for future generations. Voters in my local area expect their representatives to have the courage to chart a leadership course based on rigour and a preparedness to make the tough decisions. I trust that I am delivering on this today.

I now turn to the bill dealing with the abolition of the fuel subsidy. I have spoken previously about my concerns with the economic and environmental viability of continuing to subsidise fuel consumption. I believe that it is simply not sustainable for governments to encourage fuel consumption and that is the impact of subsidies. I know that the removal of the fuel subsidy will not be popular. I know that, if asked in a poll whether people support the removal of the subsidy, of course most people would say no. I remain, however, deeply concerned about the environmental impacts of subsidising fuel.

Just as the current economic downturn affecting our revenues in Queensland is a product of a global economy, the subsidisation of fuel must be analysed in global terms. Professor of economics Robert Frank recently reported in the *New York Times* that the wide use of fuel subsidies in emerging economies to keep fuel below market costs was resulting in higher fuel consumption than necessary. Frank argues that selling commodities below market cost will inevitably cause a level of wastage. Frank also reports that in a global economy fuel subsidies keep the price of fuel higher rather than lower.

In 2007, countries with fuel subsidies accounted for virtually the entire increase in worldwide oil consumption. Without this artificial demand stimulus, world oil prices would have been significantly lower. An example of this, as reported by Frank, is that early last year world oil prices fell by \$4 a barrel on news that reduced subsidies would increase Chinese domestic fuel prices by about 17 per cent—that is, world prices fall as reducing subsidies reduce demand.

The real impact however of selling fuel below cost is the increased costs that come with increased consumption, particularly environmental costs. When we subsidise fuel consumption what we do is use taxpayer funds to purchase carbon emissions. *Queensland Country Life* recently reported on the AgForce president's comments regarding the fuel subsidy on road freight and estimated that the fuel subsidy is worth on average \$15,000 per truck per year. Using the average cost of diesel in Brisbane for the month of May—\$1.08—the Queensland taxpayer therefore pays wholly for more than 13,800 litres of fuel for each truck. With each burnt litre of diesel producing 2.7 kilograms of CO₂, the Queensland taxpayer buys more than 37 tonnes of CO₂ for every truck every year.

A city dweller driving 20,000 kilometres each year in a four-cylinder vehicle using nine litres per 100 kilometres consumes 1,800 litres of fuel to travel that distance. This vehicle will produce 4.1 tonnes of CO₂ every year, with all Queenslanders purchasing 335 kilograms of these emissions. For every three such cars on Queensland roads, a taxpayer buys a tonne of CO₂ each year. I appreciate community concerns about the impact of removing subsidies on fuel costs. I believe, however, governing for the future not for the headline requires encouragement of individual responsibility for greenhouse emissions. It is well reported that rail freight has greater environmental sustainability than road freight. I acknowledge comments by the president of AgForce that requiring freight operators to pay market costs for fuel will create incentives for rail freight.

In considering this, I now turn to the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill. The decision to dispose of assets is not a decision taken lightly by this government. All of us have seen examples around the world where the disposal of assets has resulted in poor outcomes for workers and for the community. The Labor Party has long been a party that supports governments building and maintaining a strong public asset base, and we remain so today.

The decisions in relation to assets have been taken in view of what governments should own in today's economy and the need to reduce debt. The assets included in this bill, while providing \$280 million in revenue, also require \$750 million in interest payments on the debt these companies seek to carry over the next four years.

The debate regarding asset sales has been highly politically charged and my deliberations regarding this issue have been difficult, both because of the need to grapple with the complexity of the issues involved and also the challenge to my philosophical and political beliefs and background. In dealing with this challenge I drew on the core responsibility of public office—a preparedness to make the tough decisions and a political philosophy of the need to stand up for them.

I reached the position of supporting this bill because of the demands of the economic climate and the need to remove the massive level of debt these assets carry. Most importantly, though, I am supporting this bill because disposal of these assets will enable the building of other state assets and keep our current building program motoring on and employing 119,000 people.

In deliberating on the provisions of the bill, I have considered what it is that governments should own. I have contrasted this bill with the Kennett regime in Victoria that ripped the heart out of that state's community assets by selling off roads and passenger transport and schools. This government's strategy to keep Queenslanders in jobs and retire state debt charts a course to regaining our AAA credit rating. I accept that this does not necessitate governments owning forests, the ports corporation and the roadways tolling company. I accept that it is not the best use of taxpayers' funds to subsidise the infrastructure of coal companies.

The most precious assets of Queenslanders, however, are the naturally occurring ones, and this includes coal and minerals. We must continue to manage these assets in a public-private mix with a regulatory framework that ensures a maximum return to the state, a level playing field for industry, safe workplaces for all workers and the ability for governments to intervene in the public interest.

I note the Treasurer's speech when introducing this bill and its consideration of the potential disposal of the freight operations of Queensland Rail. There is a great need for the restructuring of rail freight operations across Queensland. The shift to road freight at the expense of rail has affected the viability of rail freight operations across the nation.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union's submission to the South East Queensland Regional Plan reports extensively on the greater safety of rail freight and the significant environmental advantages of rail over road. With finite oil resources diminishing and a rapidly advancing worldwide focus on environmental sustainability, the viability of transport operations that provide greater safety and deliver better emission outcomes will improve. In considering the feasibility of the disposal of rail freight, it is my view that we must make every effort to rebuild rail freight operations as viable public assets. This will, however, require a bold commitment to restructuring and significant investment.

I welcome the employment guarantees for award employees and the transferral of continuity of service and accrued entitlements outlined by the Treasurer. I am concerned, however, that, whilst not specified in the legislation, the Treasurer outlined that these guarantees will be in place for two years beyond the date of sale. I believe that a two-year guarantee beyond the date of sale should only be a minimum and that the disposal of assets must be negotiated with the greatest possible protection of employment terms and conditions and that this may involve a longer period of guarantee.

Throughout this debate we have had doom and gloom, conspiracy theories and scaremongering that comes with cranking up the opposition feral abacus. Many of my colleagues have addressed the negativity and the policy and strategy void of the Liberal National Party. Not a single speaker from the opposition has offered an alternative. None of them have said that they will bring back a fuel subsidy or stop the asset sales. Not a single policy alternative was offered from any of their current, former or future leaders. None of them has even attempted to argue that their election plan of economic crisis denial, massive spending and huge job cuts should be implemented in this budget.

The story of the March election is this. The Premier went to the people outlining the dire economic circumstances that would require tough decisions. She sought and received a mandate to make those tough decisions while maintaining a massive infrastructure program and protecting jobs. That is what this budget and these bills deliver today.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (8.08 pm): In rising to support the various budget bills before the House, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on this week's state budget. Tuesday's effort was, as the Premier so succinctly put it, a tough times budget delivered by a tough times Treasurer.

The worst global recession since at least the Second World War may have left a \$15 billion hole in Queensland's finances, but the budget delivered by the Treasurer secures Queensland's future by putting in place a clear strategy to restore our finances while at the same time creating jobs and maintaining the services needed for a rapidly growing population.

In 1931 and facing an enormous crisis of financial confidence, the then federal Treasurer, Ted Theodore—a great Queenslander—understood the urgent need to build infrastructure and keep people in jobs. With more than 300,000 Australians out of work, he petitioned for £18 million to act as an economic stimulus. In his speech to the House of Representatives on 17 March 1931, Theodore said—

There is a vast amount of work awaiting to be done in Australia—work which is necessary for the proper development of the country and would, if completed, be reproductive.

Just like Theodore, the Bligh government understands that during this latest financial crisis there is also work to be done. That is why we are spending \$18.2 billion on infrastructure projects. We have kept building to keep Queensland growing and to create jobs. Our commitment to the building programs and the jobs will allow us to emerge from the global recession stronger, not weaker. In these tough times, we need to take extraordinary action, we need to make the tough decisions and we need to continue investing in the future of Queensland. As I say, the government's \$18.2 billion investment in infrastructure supporting some 127,000 jobs is a testament to that. In these tough times, the Bligh government is not afraid to make those tough decisions—tough decisions like axing the fuel subsidy. It was a tough decision, but it was the right decision. Deciding to sell government assets for some was a tough decision, but once again it was the right one to make.

I agreed with the Premier's analogy and the analogy that others in the chamber have made when it comes to comparing our state's debt to a mortgage. We hear lots of analogies comparing the state's finances to our domestic financial arrangements, but a mortgage is an example of good debt to have because it is creating an asset for the future. But I would like to extend that analogy a bit further. The assets that the government is seeking to sell through the bills before the House are mature assets. I liken them to adult children who are still at home but are more than ready to leave the nest—children who, the way our finances are arranged in the state of Queensland, are taking their loans through mum and dad's bank. I think it is time and only right and proper that we see these assets move off the state's books to allow the state to continue to invest in sunrise assets and future assets for the state's economic development.

We see record investment and sustainable development in the resource-rich Surat and Galilee basins, which will be the focal point for the state government over the next year. We are rolling up our sleeves to create 100,000 new jobs over the next three years, and a significant number of them will be made with the outstanding prospect to create jobs in a liquified natural gas export industry. The budget delivers some \$15 million to acquire and safeguard land for a 70-kilometre long corridor between Callide

and Gladstone for the LNG industry pipelines. This industry is critical to Queensland's long-term future. The Coordinator-General and a specialised LNG industry unit located in the Department of Infrastructure and Planning are focused on building this new industry for Queensland because it means jobs.

Tough times are the best times to build infrastructure because, as I have said, it creates jobs when they are needed most and puts bread on the table of Queensland families. That is why significant investment is being channelled into water, road and other job-generating capital projects. By way of example, construction of the water grid is continuing with \$211.5 million for construction of the northern pipeline interconnector stage 2. The pipeline will be approximately 48 kilometres long and extend from Eudlo to Cooroy on the Sunshine Coast. This project will deliver up to 330 jobs and is due to be completed in 2012. Some of those opposite, like the member for Gympie, would like to see that project scrapped. I heard him say that in the debate earlier. This is just another example of the opposition's short-sightedness. The northern pipeline interconnector stage 2 is a vital piece of water infrastructure that will safeguard the Sunshine Coast from drought.

But the opposition does not think that the people of the Sunshine Coast deserve that security. It would also like to see the Traveston Crossing Dam scrapped, but the Bligh government remains committed to this vital piece of infrastructure. The opposition wants to scrap projects like Traveston and the northern pipeline interconnector stage 2 because it does not have the courage to make the tough decisions, but the Bligh government does. We have shown in this latest budget that we have what it takes to make those tough decisions in these tough times and we understand that Queenslanders need water security.

Infrastructure projects are indeed the powerhouse which keeps Queensland going through these tough economic times, generating jobs and boosting our economy. The House has heard me—maybe ad nauseum—on the Airport Link, northern busway and airport roundabout upgrade projects—

Mr Finn: Too right!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the honourable member for Yeerongpilly. I talk about these projects because they are great examples of the building program of this state. They are great examples of infrastructure which will make long-term improvements to the lifestyle of north siders while generating jobs. Other highlights for my constituents in the Stafford electorate are job-creating projects such as the \$69 million state-of-the-art Queensland Emergency Operations Centre at Kedron Park, the \$21.28 million investment to completing—

Mr Nicholls: That's in my electorate!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is in your electorate, but it will certainly provide job opportunities for people across the north side.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will speak through the chair.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The \$21 million investment in completing and constructing 102 homes in the Stafford electorate is also a very welcome budget measure on behalf of those people who have often been waiting for very long times on housing waiting lists because of a lack of investment by previous governments at a federal level. But it is great to see that huge, as the Treasurer says, Chifley-like investment in public housing that is going to provide opportunities to put a safe and high standard roof over the heads of many people in our community.

Commitments are also made in the budget for the expansion of the Prince Charles Hospital's capacity and towards the provision of the children's emergency department, which was a key plank of the re-election campaign of the Bligh government on the north side. Vital funds have also been set aside for passenger set-down and other transport facilities at a range of schools in the Stafford electorate including Padua College, St Anthony's Kedron, Wilston State School and Somerset Hills State School. The Chermside Ambulance Station will also be upgraded at a total cost of \$1.2 million. I welcome a range of other measures that are contained in the budget, including the increase to the pensioner electricity rebate which will be very welcomed by the older members of the Stafford community and north side community more generally but particularly across the length and breadth of Queensland because the maintenance of the tax competitiveness of the state of Queensland is an important measure that was part of the range of hard, tough choices that needed to be made by this government and have been made.

In contrast, as a keenly interested student in our party systems, I can pinpoint now exactly when the Queensland Liberal Party died. It was not at the time of the merger. That was just the beginning of the decline; that was when the disease started. The death came with the Leader of the Opposition's reply in this debate yesterday. This debate acts as some sort of last rites. The party of free enterprise has capitulated to the old-style agrarian socialists. Labor has always recognised that there is a role for government in the economy, but its role is not to protect sinecures and special pleadings. In Queensland today, as has always been the case, Labor is the modernising party. It is the progressive party. It is the party that Queensland can trust to have a vision for the future. The Leader of the Opposition has identified Margaret Thatcher, John Howard and Lawrence Springborg as his heroes. I feel pretty

confident about where Mrs Thatcher and Mr Howard would have stood in tonight's debate about the role for the government in the economy. I am surprised where the Leader of the Opposition has ended up, but it does reiterate the death of the Liberal Party and the extraordinary ascendancy here in the 21st century of those agrarian socialists who have made up the National Party for so long, and it also reiterates the position of the opposition.

Above all else, in these tough economic times the government remains committed to maintaining the building program. It is extremely important that the program continues not only because of the jobs that it creates directly but also because of the indirect jobs that it creates for the benefit of businesses and communities right across the length and breadth of Queensland. The Renewing Queensland Plan to sell government owned assets and to discontinue the fuel subsidy was made with the two goals of infrastructure and jobs in mind.

The worst global recession in our lifetime means that we must think very carefully about what we spend and what represents the best value for Queensland's taxpayers. We must restore the state's finances to enable, not disable, our future growth. On that note, I commend the bills to the House.

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2009 and the other bills. This year's budget has been drafted during challenging and tough economic times. The government has had to make tough decisions to respond to the harsh realities that are facing our state—about what governments should be involved in and what governments do not need to be involved in.

The Bligh Labor government is committed to building Queensland's future. It is investing a record \$18.2 billion into its building program. It is investing not only to keep Queensland's economy strong but also to emerge from the global financial crisis with better schools, better hospitals, better roads and better services. The government is keeping its promise to invest in front-line services, protecting and creating jobs and rejecting the cuts proposed by the opposition.

That is why I am especially proud that in this budget the Treasurer announced the single biggest allocation of additional resources, which is some \$414 million across four years, to provide support to the community sector to continue their essential work. I can say that both QCOSS and National Disability Services have welcomed this announcement, the single biggest injection in the budget.

The total operational budget for the Disability Services portfolio is almost \$1.4 billion—an increase of \$164.4 million, or a 12 per cent increase on last year's budget. Labor has a strong record of helping people with a disability and those who care for them. From 1999-2000 to now, the Queensland government's funding for Disability Services has increased from \$250 million to a record \$926 million. That is a record that we can be proud of.

The first priority area that the budget addresses in relation to disabilities is the Positive Futures reforms. To continue this important and groundbreaking initiative, \$26.8 million has been set aside for the 2009-10 financial year to continue the specialist response service across the state and the innovative Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Support in Ipswich. This funding will go a long way towards progressing a range of initiatives for adults with an intellectual or cognitive disability who exhibit challenging behaviours.

A further \$15.3 million has been allocated in this budget to the complementary Growing Stronger suite of reforms. These reforms aim to redesign the current specialist Disability Services system to make it fairer and more sustainable. Key features of Growing Stronger are the creation of a single application form for easy access to government funded disability services and a professional face-to-face assessment process that is fairer for all applicants.

Another key priority is early intervention services with the focus on children and young people with a disability. I believe that this is central to the future direction and sustainability of the disability sector. The Bligh government has been listening to the concerns of people with a disability and carers as well as the wider community. That is why it will be investing \$1.1 million over two years to pilot self-managed funding to support families with children and young people with a disability. This will give families more choice and flexibility when it comes to the care and support of their children. The pilot will target two groups: children aged zero to six with a disability, their families and carers, and young people aged 25 to 35 years with an acquired physical disability. The pilot will provide for two non-government organisations each to employ a support worker to support around 40 families, with an approximate funding level of \$4,000 per family or young person per year.

Our program to assist younger people with a disability moving out of aged care and into more appropriate accommodation is also a focus of this budget and a personal key priority of mine. It delivers our key election commitment to provide \$3 million over three years to support the new Youngcare complex to be built on the Gold Coast. My parliamentary secretary, the member for Mount Ommaney, and I had the opportunity to see the Youngcare complex at Sinnamon Park and talk to the residents about how their quality of life has improved. Similarly, at Gordonvale, with the member for Mulgrave, I met a resident of the new accommodation run by St John's Community whose life has improved immeasurably since moving there 12 months ago. This budget will also provide support for those young people who, by choice, remain in residential aged care by giving them access to services and supporting a better quality of life.

The budget contains \$446.8 million for the Home and Community Care program—a 16 per cent boost on last year. With this funding services such as the ever-popular Meals on Wheels volunteers will continue to deliver more than two million meals annually to Queenslanders across the state.

In relation to non-clinical mental health services, this budget provides an extra \$26 million for non-clinical mental health services to help support people transitioning from health facilities to the community. Another example is our commitment to early intervention and prevention. An amount of \$2.2 million is allocated this year, increasing to \$6.5 million over three years, to pilot two residential options to assist young people aged 15 to 25 years showing early signs of mental health illness. We are very fortunate to have both a Premier and Treasurer who understand the value and importance of early intervention. We know that the more support people have in these crucial early stages of mental illness the better their chance of making a full recovery and leading rewarding and meaningful lives.

The Treasurer stated the following in his budget speech—

Not all will get the results we might hope. But through these pilots and these trials we seek not only to avoid the human costs of violence, neglect and lack of support but to avoid the inevitable cost to the public of dealing with the consequences.

The Bligh government is equally committed to supporting Queensland's multicultural communities. Around \$6 million has been provided over three years to strengthen multiculturalism in Queensland in partnership with local councils and community groups. I acknowledge the support of the member for Hinchinbrook for these programs. At least there is something positive over there. As well, the budget has committed \$700,000 to continue the Multicultural Assistance Program.

I now would like to turn to my electorate of Inala. The Bligh government is committed to building Queensland's future today. This coming term I look forward to the progress of some major infrastructure projects in my electorate. The Darra to Springfield railway line will provide significant benefits not only to the constituents of my electorate but also the entire south-west corridor. The heart of this project is the brand-new \$40 million Richlands Railway Station. I had the pleasure of unveiling the cutting-edge plans for this station with the Richlands ward councillor, Milton Dick. We are investing more than \$1 billion to provide the vital infrastructure that is needed for the growing population of the area.

In education, as part of the State Schools of Tomorrow program, the government is injecting \$70 million to build better schools to provide quality education in my electorate. Under this initiative, work is well underway on the modernisation and renewal of six Inala cluster schools. The 2009-10 budget provides \$11 million for Durack State School, \$12.91 million for Glenala State High School, \$10.17 million for Inala State School, \$10.17 million for Richlands East State School, \$8.94 million for Serviceton South State School and \$3.43 million for the Western Suburbs Special School.

I remember when the now opposition leader was protesting on Poinsettia Street at Inala, surrounded by placards, condemning the government for our State Schools of Tomorrow initiative. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition as education spokesman said—

Under LNP policy, the State Schools of Tomorrow program will end.

I think it is a disgrace that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to rip nearly \$70 million out of the schools in the Inala electorate and almost \$1 million in total out of the Queensland education system.

A government member: It is a disgrace.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a disgrace. The LNP stands for one thing and one thing only: cuts, whether that be job cuts, like the 12,000 public sector jobs that would have been slashed by those opposite or cutting nearly \$1 billion out of the state schools budget. On the other hand, we are committed to investing in education as this is integral to the future of Queensland. This is about equality of opportunity, this is about giving students at Inala State School the same educational facilities and opportunities as students who live in Clayfield. The State Schools of Tomorrow program is about creating jobs and building better schools. It is about a Labor government committed to education and delivering for all, not just the few.

The budget recognises the need to continue providing resources to grassroots community projects because we recognise the important work they do. In my electorate, Inala Community Health has been allocated over \$1 million—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member for Clayfield has something positive to say, that would be great and I invite him to please stand up and say something in his speech.

In conclusion, the budget outlined by the Treasurer earlier this week is about building Queensland's future. It is about investing in our schools, hospitals, roads, rail, housing and, most importantly, it is about jobs. In this budget we chose not to cut the essential services that Queenslanders rely on, nor did we decide to stop our \$18.2 billion building program.

This is a budget where we have had to make some tough decisions but at least we make decisions. The Leader of the Opposition has provided us with no plan, no policies, no initiatives and absolutely no response to the global financial crisis that this state has had to face. As the Treasurer said, 'This budget lays the foundation stones for the path that lies ahead.' We are determined to see our state through the current economic situation and this budget is the first step towards that goal. I congratulate the Treasurer and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (8.30 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the cognate bills before the House. What we have here in these four bills is the dire and tragic consequence of Labor's dishonesty and Labor's incompetence. Only 91 days ago this government went to the polls. In the lead-up to election day on 21 March 2009, did the Bligh Labor government openly and honestly present its plans to implement a fuel tax? No, it did not. Did the Bligh Labor government openly and honestly present its plans to undertake a fire sale of Queensland Motorways? No, it did not. Did the Bligh Labor government openly and honestly present its plans to undertake a fire sale of the business arms of Queensland Rail? No. What about its plans to flog off the Port of Brisbane Corporation? No, it did not. And what about the Abbot Point Coal Terminal? No. Did the Bligh Labor government openly and honestly present its plans to sell off at the bottom of the market Forestry Plantations Queensland? No, it did not.

Was the Bligh Labor government up-front and honest with industry, with business, with the unions but, most importantly, was it up-front and honest with each and every Queenslanders who went to the polls on that day? The answer is a resounding no. I wish I could say that it stopped there. Unfortunately it does not. The dishonesty continues.

The residents of the Sunshine Coast are outraged. Even the Premier's own unsuccessful candidate for Kawana has come out in protest of one of the biggest election promise backflips of all time—a commitment to build the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. And the outrage is warranted. The health system is already stretched on the coast. As the mayor of the Sunshine Coast has said, if those opposite want the Sunshine Coast to do its bit in accommodating population growth in this state, then it needs to deliver the infrastructure needed to ensure that the population stays healthy and alive, and it needs to deliver it when it promises it.

Let me give the House a further taste of that outrage. I read from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* dated the 17th of this month, under the heading 'Sell the budget up here, Premier'—

The state government has treated the Coast with absolute contempt in the budget. At a time when the government is pushing to fast track development in the region, it has shown no such commitment to basic services including police, health and schools on the Coast ...

Not only is the Bligh government flogging off assets and borrowing money it can't afford, it is also pushing ahead with projects such as the Traveston Crossing Dam, which should never see the light of day on environmental and engineering grounds ...

Patients who travel every day to Brisbane for treatment—and will continue to do so—because of this government's incompetence will no doubt feel angry.

Like [the] former Labor candidate for Kawana ... they feel rightly betrayed by the Bligh government, which was still talking up the hospital in meetings last week.

Premier Anna Bligh should face the music and come to the Coast to sell her budget. After her non-show before the last election, she at least owes us that courtesy!

Over the past few days the member for Maroochydore has used strong language to express her outrage at this dishonesty. I second the member for Maroochydore's statements. Someone will die because this government has failed to deliver on its promises. But the dishonesty continues.

The LNP went to the last election with a commitment to find \$1 billion in efficiencies from the public sector. The LNP, as part of that commitment, guaranteed there would be no loss of jobs. It was those opposite who believed and then propagated the untruth that such efficiencies would result in 12,000 public sector front-line job losses. So let us dwell on that proposition for a moment. If we use the same logic as applied by those opposite then, as it states in the regional budget statement for the north coast, the 'increased public sector efficiency savings of \$280 million per annum' announced in this budget will result in 3,500 public sector front-line job losses in the coming financial year.

So when is the Minister for Health going to inform Queenslanders which hospitals will be losing front-line doctors and nurses? When is the Minister for Child Safety going to announce the child safety service centres that will be losing their child safety officers? When is the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services going to announce the regions that will be losing their police officers, their paramedics and their fire officers? It is logical, isn't it? If, according to those opposite, \$1 billion equated to 12,000 front-line job losses, then \$280 million surely equates to 3,500 jobs. So when is the Minister for Education going to come clean and list the schools that will be losing their teachers and teacher aides? And when is the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability going to tell her park rangers that their days are numbered? If the ministers cannot do so, then we once again see Labor's dishonesty in action. I can imagine how betrayed my former colleagues in the Public Service must feel.

As I said at the outset though, these bills are not only the tragic consequence of Labor's dishonesty but the tragic result of Labor's incompetence. Let us get something clear: those opposite would have us believe that the predicament we are in is solely as a consequence of the global financial crisis. That is wrong. No other mainland state or territory in Australia has lost its AAA credit rating. Why? Because no other state or territory in mainland Australia had built up such a disastrous amount of debt before the global financial crisis had ever been heard of.

This government through incompetence, ineptitude and mismanagement had raked up \$64 billion in debt before the global financial crisis. How did it do this? By stumbling from one crisis to another. We have had the health crisis, we have had the water crisis, we have had the child protection crisis and we have had the infrastructure crisis. Why has the state stumbled from one crisis to another? Because, despite glossy publications clearly outlining the anticipated population growth for Queensland, this government is incapable of implementing any plan or any project on time or on budget. As a result, in the middle of a boom time for Queensland's economy, the cupboards were bare. Money has been squandered on a \$9 billion water grid that includes the recycled water white elephant, a rusty and faulty desalination plant, a leaky pipeline and a ludicrous dam that is still awaiting federal approval.

Money has been squandered on reactive and poorly planned responses to the child protection crisis. Despite extensive academic and practice knowledge, despite submissions from PeakCare—the child protection non-government peak body—despite submissions from QCOSS, from countless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, from NAPCAN and from the federal government itself, all of which call for greater investment in prevention and early intervention, this government continues to talk up its paltry contributions to family support services. Compare the prevention and early intervention budget with the budget for placing children in care and one will understand why the child protection system continues to reel from crisis to crisis. Why can't the government get this investment right? Because it continues to throw dollar after dollar at poorly planned capital expenditure. In the department of child safety, let us look at one such example.

I note the government is investing another \$8.8 million in capital expenditure for the integrated client management system. The integrated client management system, or ICMS for short, was initially funded in the 2004-05 budget to the tune of \$22.1 million. At the time it was reported in the budget papers to—

... be an integral component for the long-term reforms in the new department—
which, by the way, has gone—

by providing improved and more accessible information on children in care. It will greatly enhance the maintenance of clear case plans for children, provide risk assessment and decision support tools to workers, provide better foster care records, improve the efficiency of foster care payments and improve management and oversight of service delivery. It is expected to have a positive impact on the quality and efficiency of service delivery.

Ask any manager in the department and they will tell you it is anything but that. Five years later, it can still not produce useful statistics in real time to improve management and oversight of service delivery. Ask any child safety officer and they will tell you it has not had a positive impact on the quality and efficiency of service delivery. It is a laborious administrative burden that limits their capacity to get on with their real work of keeping our children safe. And yet this government invested \$22.1 million in 2004-05, \$25.3 million in 2005-06, \$8.9 million in 2006-07, \$6.7 million in 2007-08 and \$5.9 million in 2008-09. Add to that the \$8.8 million in capital expenditure allocated for the coming financial year and you have a staggering \$78 million on an ineffective information management system. And that does not even take into account the operational funding for the same system. This is incompetence and ineptitude in action.

It is this kind of poor planning, poor budgeting and poor project management that resulted in \$64 billion in debt before we had even heard of the global financial crisis. And it is this incompetence and its resulting staggering debt and interest payments that have led us to this: a fuel tax that will slug each and every Queenslanders every time they fill up at the bowser, that will slug each and every Queenslanders every time they fill up their trolley at the supermarket.

I want to pause at this moment and read out one of the many emails I have received from constituents on this matter. There are many I would like to share but, unfortunately, if I did I would be quickly pulled up or accused of using unparliamentary language. A resident from Flaxton writes—

Dear Mr. Powell, I am dismayed by the decision to scrap the fuel subsidy in Queensland. I see this as amounting to discrimination against those residents in country areas.

City dwellers with easy access to public transport may be able to offset some of the added costs but I and many like me do not have this choice. People in the city also get the benefit of competition between suppliers whereas those in the country have higher fuel prices anyway and usually have only one supplier unless they travel to their closest town which probably negates any saving anyway.

Costs for all goods will rise for those whose distance from the producer/supplier is greater, once again causing the brunt of the government saving to fall on those in country areas.

I am not of an age or physical condition to ride a bike and my nearest store (which does not supply all of the necessary groceries anyway) is several kilometres from my home, as are the voluntary activities in which I participate. I have already curtailed my travelling as petrol prices increased and foresee that I may have to give up some of my community work. As a self funded retiree I have suffered losses in the recent economic down turn. Is this to be the straw that breaks the camel's back?

I repeat: is this the straw that will break the camel's back? Has the government stopped to consider the true flow-on effect of this decision? How many such as this constituent will curtail their voluntary commitments—voluntary commitments that often keep small hinterland communities running? Who is going to replace these unstinting workers? Paid workers? Not likely. No, it is the services, the individuals they assist and the communities as a whole that will suffer because of this outrageous and dishonest decision.

The incompetence of this government has also led us to a fire sale of revenue-raising public assets at the worst possible time, with the market at rock bottom. This incompetence has resulted in this disastrous budget.

I would now like to turn to this disastrous budget and consider what the good people of Glass House have or have not gained from it. As I have already explained, they have not got funding for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The reordering deemed necessary by this government means that if—and I stress 'if'—a private partner can be found then we might just have an extra 110 public hospital beds come 2014. This is far fewer than the 650 promised during the election campaign three months ago.

Let me address a few more glaring and damning omissions. For starters, there is no funding for the D'Aguilar Highway. I think the member for Nanango will share my concern at that. Last year the RACQ undertook a detailed study of some 8,000 kilometres of rural highways, including 2,700 kilometres of state funded and controlled roads. In this report sections of road were awarded a star rating between one, being the least safe, and five, being the safest. These ratings were based on such factors as road alignment, the presence of unprotected roadside hazards, shoulder width and whether or not the road was divided. Among the lowest rated roads, with two stars, was the D'Aguilar Highway from Caboolture to Woodford and sections further along towards Yarraman.

The year before, the RACQ released the Australian Road Assessment Program report, which used crash statistics from the state and national highway networks to assess Queensland highways. The report showed that 28 per cent of road deaths in Queensland occurred on just four per cent of our road network. Guess which road featured highly in that four per cent? The D'Aguilar Highway, this time specifically from Caboolture to Kilcoy and Harlin to Kingaroy. Despite all of these reports and regular tragedies, the latest as recently as this week, no funding has been allocated to the D'Aguilar Highway. This is yet another appalling example of neglect, one that I suspect will haunt this government for years to come.

But wait, there's more. Where is the funding for the Beerburrum-Nambour rail duplication? My understanding is that the Beerburrum-Landsborough section is completely designed. It is ready to go. We have had the workers there ready to roll. The only thing missing was and is the funding. The rail corridor services a growing commuter population, a commuter population that would grow, reducing pressures on the Bruce Highway were the duplication to proceed—a duplication that would see an increase in the frequency of services and a reduction in travel time. Once again the Sunshine Coast has been overlooked. This decision not only hurts the communities on the Sunshine Coast; it hurts all communities in Queensland north of Caboolture, all the way to Cairns. This is because not only is this rail corridor key to passenger services; it remains the only route north for rail freight. Is it any wonder the Bruce Highway and all other roads heading north deteriorate so quickly, requiring regular and expensive investment in maintenance and upgrades? With all of the freight being relegated to those roads it is no surprise.

If the government were smart it would be investing in projects that deliver multiple benefits. The Beerburrum-Nambour rail duplication would deliver benefits to Sunshine Coast commuters—not only those currently using public transport but also those who currently use the Bruce Highway, because those who are currently driving will think twice when they are paying an extra 9c per litre for fuel. The duplication would bring benefits to the transport companies that move freight north, and it would bring benefits including considerable savings to the department of main roads through reduced traffic and reduced wear and tear.

Whilst I note that there are commitments to complete the current roadworks on Maleny-Kenilworth Road, again I am appalled that there are no further contributions to improving the standard of this dangerous route. What will it take for this government to invest the less than \$10 million required to finalise the much needed widening of Maleny-Kenilworth Road? A death? A tragedy involving a school bus? I hope not.

To the people of Glass House I say: know that I am committed to ensuring each of the projects is elevated in priority by the government. I will work tirelessly to see appropriate investment in the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, in the D'Aguilar Highway, in the Beerburrum-Nambour rail duplication and in Maleny-Kenilworth Road.

As I approach the end of my allotted time, let me try to be positive for a moment. I would like to acknowledge the \$2.2 million allocated to Palmwoods State School to construct a new administration block and convert the existing administrative area into a new learning area for kids. In doing so I acknowledge the member for Nicklin, who worked with Palmwoods State School until the election, when the redistribution brought it into Glass House. It is the foresight and lobbying of the member for Nicklin which has achieved this fantastic and long overdue outcome.

I also acknowledge the funding for an expansion of the Caboolture Hospital emergency department and support provided for one-on-one midwifery services and postnatal support. However, I would love to see more of it. I know the parents of Woodford are rejoicing that the government has included them in the first round of funding for new kindergartens.

Unfortunately, that is where the good news ends, because what is the largest capital expenditure project slated for Glass House? It is the \$212 million northern pipeline interconnector. This government cannot find funding for the Sunshine Coast Hospital but it continued to waste good money after bad through a pipeline no-one on the coast wants at a staggering cost of \$10 million per kilometre of pipeline. Finally, the government continues to invest in the doomed Traveston Crossing Dam, this year to the tune of \$75 million—incredible.

In conclusion, Queensland has been condemned to a decade of debt because of the Bligh Labor government's dishonesty and financial incompetence. Every Queenslander will pay for Labor's financial incompetence, every day in every possible way for years to come.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (8.50 pm): In rising to speak to the various bills which will form the basis of our 2009 budget, I must say that I know that financial decisions affecting the livelihood of our community are difficult at any time but in this time of a global financial crisis they are mind-boggling. What is even more mind-boggling is the fact that opposition members deny that any crisis exists, yet a number of them have exhibited difficulty in understanding budgeting details.

At the outset, I thank the Treasurer and his staff for bringing down a budget to try to overcome the impact of a declining revenue stream on major expenditure needs which must be maintained. It is a hard budget for hard times. Every other state in Australia has major population areas close to its capital, even Western Australia, with which Queensland is often compared. Queensland is different. We are a diverse state with many major towns and cities which all need adequate funding. The budget was also framed with a view to continuing our infrastructure spending and protecting jobs, which was the promise on which we went to the election in March.

Since the election, the Commonwealth budget revealed that taxes raised under the GST regime would reduce by approximately \$2.1 billion and other revenue streams have substantially diminished. I say to opposition members who claim to have known about any economic crisis that their economic forecasting only serves to make astrology acceptable. They believe their own rhetoric but laugh at gypsy fortune tellers.

From the Leader of the Opposition through to Mademoiselle Morticia from Maroochydore to the member for Kawana, who should never give up his day job and become a comedian, there was one startling omission from every opposition speaker. What was the startling omission? They will not be able to tell you. What was the startling omission? Every one of them has accepted the government's spending program—surprise, surprise—but how many of them have supported the revenue-raising program for 2009-10 which underpins the overall budget program? Not one.

I am going to plagiarise some words, because I have heard a recent comment that governments can provide anything the community or society want as long as the community is prepared to contribute to the revenue needed. What would the opposition take for an answer to, 'I thank you for that money'? Certainly not, 'Sorry, Sunshine, we can't raise enough money.' I guess if you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr HOOLIHAN: Their bleating reminds me of the words of the American psychologist and philosopher, Erich Fromm—and you should listen to this, member for Gympie—

There is perhaps no phenomenon which contains so much destructive feeling as moral indignation, which permits envy or hate to be acted out under the guise of virtue.

I know that there is pain in the budget for many Queenslanders, including the people I represent, but it is apparent that the Treasurer has tried to spread that pain. If the Bligh government had not been returned in March, we would not have had to worry about pain. The LNP intended no infrastructure spending, no jobs and no prospect of any recovery, so agony and increased unemployment would have been the more correct description.

In speaking to the budget, I must thank the many people in Keppel who knew the hard work which I have put into my electorate since my election in 2004 and voted to return me as their representative with an increased primary vote. I thank my electorate staff: Thelma Humphris, who also acted as my campaign director, and Teresa Jones, who knows the daily grind of endeavouring to meet the needs and aspirations of my diverse electorate which has benefited from the budget spending of, firstly, the Beattie government and now the Bligh Labor government. The people who worked with me in the face of a continuing financial meltdown did so facing a possible LNP government, and I believe that that terrifying prospect for Queensland made them embrace their Labor roots more deeply. They were ably supported by the Labor Party state office, and I thank Anthony Chisholm and particularly Chris Forrester for their work to return me to support the implementation of our election promises.

Our infrastructure spending was widely represented to the electorate as part of the strong and ongoing party commitment to workers in Queensland. The promise of 'jobs not cuts' was supported by Allan and Beth Clarke; Hughie and Yvonne Chardon; the Murphy clan, especially Janice and Ray Murphy; Bruce Craig, even though he soldiered on with a badly broken leg; Mick McMahon and John Olsen; and there were many others I have not named who worked with a vengeance to return me to fight to protect Queensland jobs.

My ability to support the bringing down of a budget with \$18.2 billion in infrastructure spending is a result of that work. I know that some of the proposals in the budget scheme will cause them difficulties along with the many others I represent, but they have a faith that the Bligh government will provide a return to prosperity for future generations which will include their children and grandchildren.

Since 2004, I have had pleasure in working closely with the Hon. Robert Swarten to secure our fair share of infrastructure spending, which has supported private construction, and to maintain our public services and necessary spending on education, law and order, community and disability services, and health. It seems to me that the collective myopia of a dysfunctional opposition would doom this state to collapse by working against the budget, as they refuse to support any project which assists Queenslanders and they actively oppose any proposal which protects and advances the needs and aspirations of our citizens. They refuse to acknowledge that our financial situation and that of the whole world is worse than the Great Depression, when governments and private enterprise refused to invest in projects and our communities and its workers were reduced to poverty.

The Treasurer and his staff have worked to avoid our state moving into that type of poverty again. Our borrowings are substantial but, without that funding, infrastructure projects would have stopped or never been started. Some projects may need to be postponed to level out spending, but the many large building and infrastructure projects which are ongoing must be protected and continued. Our \$18.2 billion spend is protecting 127,000 Queensland jobs, with approximately 57 per cent of that spending occurring in regional areas outside Brisbane.

That funding is spread across the whole of regional Queensland supporting the many large communities to which I initially referred. The upgrade of the Rockhampton Hospital, which is the major hub hospital for Central Queensland, is proceeding with state funding and also the Rudd government's support funding. Other spending on education and housing is funded by a combination of state and Commonwealth funding. It is a great boon to Australia that we now have a Commonwealth government which recognises the need to support infrastructure spending.

That was not always the case. I have some figures which should sober the fiscal meltdown deniers opposite. Claimants of Labor fiscal irresponsibility should consider these figures: GDP of minus 2.5 per cent per year, inflation of 11.4 per cent, unemployment at 9.9 per cent, cash rates of 16.7 per cent and housing interest rates at 12.5 per cent. Under a Labor government? Not likely. We heard from the member for Barron River about the Fraser government. That was Australia in March 1983, after eight years of John Howard as the Treasurer in a Fraser government. It took Hawke and Keating 13 years and the floating of the Australian dollar—

Mr Gibson: What was it again at the end of their 13 years?

Mr HOOLIHAN: I am getting to that, Sunshine. The floating of the Australian dollar was the greatest financial move in this nation in three generations. It produced a GDP in March 1996 of 4.9 per cent, inflation of 3.7 per cent, unemployment at 8.2 per cent, cash rates at 7.52 per cent and interest rates at 10.5 per cent—and that put Australia back on track.

Prior to that, in the Depression era the Forgan Smith government was required to run deficits to correct the dire financial decisions of the Moore government—your predecessors—a government which reduced spending, increased taxes and did not invest in infrastructure. It did not support the workers who made up our community and, despite a favourable redistribution, it was not elected in 1932.

After the doom years under the Borbidge government when infrastructure spending was nonexistent, when hospital spending for Rockhampton under the present member for Toowoomba South was plundered for pork-barrelling, Treasurer Joan Sheldon shaved \$6 million from the budget for the court in Rockhampton and built a new courthouse in her own electorate. She ripped around \$900 million in dividends out of the energy companies which took years to correct, but they were corrected by successive Labor governments which also had to meet current infrastructure and service needs for a population which was increasing by 1,500 per week and recently by 2,000 per week. Any raving about where the money has gone is stupidity. It was allocated and spent over the years it was raised as revenue. Blind Freddy could see the infrastructure and services which resulted.

It is a specious argument to suggest that Queenslanders are not substantially better off now than they were in 1998, and that is the result of good government and funding by Labor after the voters rejected the backward-thinking National Party government in 1998 after two years. Yes, two years. In the National Party dominated opposition, masquerading as the LNP, the rhetoric being sprouted is a repeat of the mantra which offers nothing to Queenslanders except their slash and burn policies which would result in massive unemployment.

There were specific funding projects for the Rosslyn Bay Harbour in the area which I represent. I would like to echo the words of the member for Rockhampton because many of the highly skilled workers in our state-of-the-art workshops and all areas of QR live in my electorate. They are people who have supported me and are my friends and colleagues who stood shoulder to shoulder with me, and I

will do no less for them. It is with a heavy heart that I support some of the present actions but, as set out by the member for Murrumba, there is no alternative which will give any better outcome. I will keep faith with the people who elected me. Bricks and mortar and metal are what give our people security and a good standard of living, but the main thrust of any decisions must care for workers and people in the community.

In closing, I leave the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson for the consideration of the virtuous opposition. I think it describes its hypocrisy precisely. 'The louder they talked of their honour, the faster we counted our spoons.' With some reluctance in certain areas which I will be working to address, I support the bills before the House.

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (9.03 pm): I rise to speak to the government's budget handed down by the Treasurer in this House on Tuesday. I use the term 'Treasurer' loosely because the destruction and havoc caused by the member for Mount Coot-tha shows there is little in this state that he treasures. His reckless abandoning of sound principles of economic management and his reckless pursuit of debt has turned a difficult financial situation into a disaster of titanic proportion.

Since he handed down his first budget, he has ridden on the GST windfalls of the Howard government, the mining royalties of the resources boom and a swathe of stamp duties from a buoyant housing market. The Treasurer was on top of the world only a few short years ago riding high on the boom. So how do we now face economic ruin today? The government would have us believe that it is solely due to the global financial crisis. What a fallacy it is. It was staring down the barrel of a gun long before the words 'global financial crisis' entered the public lexicon.

It was the Treasurer and now Premier who allowed growth in operating expenses to exceed growth in revenue in previous years. It was the Treasurer who allowed a massive \$64 billion debt to accumulate before the global financial crisis. The Bligh-Fraser brand of economic management has always been unsustainable. The global financial crisis accentuated what was already a major problem, yet still they persist with using the global financial crisis to escape accountability for their actions.

The government would have us believe that it must go into billions of dollars of debt in order to build infrastructure for the future. So what kind of future is the Labor Party building for Queensland? An \$85.5 billion debt that will likely climb towards a hundred billion. Our state's borrowings will exceed that of the entire nation during the disastrous Keating Labor government years. Extraordinarily, Queensland will borrow about \$18 billion more than our beleaguered southern neighbour New South Wales, despite having nowhere near the capacity to service that debt. Mums and dads across Queensland will share the burden to the tune of \$78,000 per household. The Treasurer's \$85.5 billion debt represents 40 per cent of the total debt of all of the states.

The Treasurer has attempted to couch and qualify this momentous economic failure with weasel word like 'manageable', 'temporary' and 'unprecedented' but his actions belie his words. This \$85.5 billion debt is simply unserviceable and will be the millstone that hangs around Queensland's neck while the rest of the country rebounds into economic growth.

One could be excused for thinking that the Treasurer loves heavy debt. He has been called many things during this week for his disastrous budget, for which he will be forever remembered. He has been suitably described as 'Fire Sale' Fraser, 'Boy Wonder' and like a hoon driving carelessly for his reckless driving of the Queensland economy. I would like to suggest another name for the Treasurer that characterises his actions in this budget. It is clear that he would like to be known as a superhero, the one who saved the Queensland economy from the evils of the global financial crisis. But he is not Superman, not Batman, not even Robin—though that in some ways is close. He is 'Debt Man'. The name of the superhero that I feel best suits the Treasurer in this budget is 'Debt Man', fighting principles of sound economic management wherever encountered and destroying surpluses wherever found. But, alas, unlike other state Treasurers 'Debt Man' is unable to leap over the global financial crisis and to lead Queensland back into the promised land of surplus in the near future.

Then there is the Premier, who has never adequately explained where all of the money went from the boom. She wonders what happened. It has been noted that some people make things happen, others watch things happen, while others still wonder what happened. The Premier has no idea what happened to all the money from the boom. She wonders where it all went. The Premier could be aptly named 'I Wonder Woman'. She is still wondering what happened, and all together 'I Wonder Woman' and 'Debt Man' have fought off the forces of sound financial management and with it any chance of Queensland recovering soon.

But you have to feel for 'Debt Man'. 'I Wonder Woman' has deliberately stalled his leadership ambitions by ensuring that he will forever be known as the 'Debt Man' and blamed for the state's economic woes. He has become the patsy for the government's failed economic policies but, to make sure, 'I Wonder Woman' also made him do the impossible and create 100,000 breadwinning jobs.

But the story gets better. 'I Wonder Woman' and 'Debt Man' are joined by another superhero, 'The Joker'. But 'The Joker' is not considered too evil to join the team. 'The Joker' is disadvantaged, however, as he has inherited poor health. Yes, 'The Joker' is none other than the Deputy Premier, who

was flying high until he contracted poor health. The poor health has set him back on his quest to one day compete with 'Debt Man' and to take over from 'I Wonder Woman'. The government's response to Queensland's financial woes that it helped to create is to sell off valuable state assets at the worst time. Instead of leaping tall buildings, the government is flogging them off.

Sell, sell, sell has replaced jobs, jobs, jobs. This sale of the century is a sell-out of the union movement that the government says it represents, of Labor principles that have been abandoned and, ultimately, of the people of Queensland. I oppose the government's fire sale of \$15 billion of public assets to pay for its spending and debt addictions. 'I Wonder Woman', 'Debt Man' and 'The Joker' are flogging off the batmobile, the batcave and Gotham City itself without having first spoken to the residents.

Another indictment on this government is its loss of its AAA credit rating. It has single-handedly lost this critical status when others have managed the global financial crisis without being downgraded. I should think Premier Rees will be sleeping soundly in New South Wales tonight knowing that his state can no longer be considered the basket case of the Australian economy. Premier Bligh has raised the bar for mismanagement so high that no other state could hope to compete with us. We have gone from the boom state to the broke state in just a few short years.

Very seriously, there is little in the 2009-10 budget for my electorate of Cleveland where the community is already suffering from years of infrastructure, drought and neglect at the hands of this government. Despite this massive debt-financed building program, very little building is taking place in Cleveland and the broader Redlands, identified by the government as a key growth corridor between Brisbane and the south coast. My constituents are not demanding people.

Mr Johnson: Are there koalas down there, Mark?

Dr ROBINSON: There are koalas down there. There are a few left. Like most Queenslanders, my constituents want security of property, of person and of employment. They want basic public services such as health and education to work for them. They want practical solutions to environmental issues, effective mass transit and main roads solutions and a strong police presence to combat the scourge of drug use and youth crime. We would have fared better from this government if the government could handle finance and if it truly cared enough for the region.

One of the reasons there is little to show is the work of the Treasurer, 'Debt Man'. 'Debt Man' has achieved something that few others ever have. By that I refer to the Treasurer's loss of Queensland's AAA rating. The head of the Queensland Treasury Corporation estimated that the rating downgrade would cost Queensland an extra \$1.2 billion every year in interest payments. Imagine what could be done in Cleveland with an additional \$1.2 billion every year. In a few years we could pay cash for many of the road, rail, bus, hospital, school, conservation and tourism needs just to name a few. However, instead we have again largely missed out.

As I mentioned previously, major transport infrastructure is desperately needed in Cleveland. For years my constituents have watched as the spoils of the mining boom were spent everywhere else but Cleveland. So much money goes out of the Redlands but not much comes back.

It is business as usual in this budget. While projects like the Northern Busway, Ipswich Motorway and Gold Coast rapid transit system receive funding, the Eastern Busway link to Capalaba remains so far off it might as well be a pipedream. There is nothing in this budget that will assist bus services to and from Cleveland right now. The government has pushed the Eastern Busway project to Capalaba out until 2026 and it kept it out there when it had the opportunity to bring it forward. The busway link is desperately needed as transit times between the Redlands and the city creep up every year as traffic congestion becomes a major problem. Further, it is possible that there may be cuts to bus services in not only Cleveland but also Thornlands and Ormiston. I ask the Minister for Transport to confirm whether the government does plan to cut bus services within my electorate as has been rumoured.

Another need in Cleveland is the duplication of the Cleveland-Manly rail line. As it stands, trains on the line are few and far between and they are often packed like a tin of sardines. This discourages people to use the train network and forces them back onto the already congested roads. The government has again done nothing in this area and, again, no commitment to the Cleveland station upgrade seems to have been given. Queensland commuters are left out in the cold again.

Further, the government appears to have broken its election promise to upgrade parking at both the Ormiston and Birkdale stations. It also may have broken its promise of installing traffic signals at the corner of Shore and Wellington streets. I ask the Minister for Transport to hold to the government's election promises to the people of Cleveland and to confirm the situation.

I worked out why the Cleveland electorate continues to suffer from the infrastructure drought—no busway, no rail duplication and little spending on the roads. I worked it out while pouring over the budget documents that actually contain very little detail in them about Cleveland. It is a disgrace that details about the electorate were released to the *Redland Times* newspaper for publication today, not to me as the duly elected state representative. I call on the government to stop hiding facts from those elected by the public so that they can do the job they are elected to do.

Nevertheless, I may have worked out the reason for the transport infrastructure drought. The government appears to have lost or misplaced the Cleveland electorate. I refer to the diagram on page 1 of the Treasurer's Regional Budget Statement for greater Brisbane. In this diagram of greater Brisbane there is no mention of any suburb or any part of my electorate. There is no mention of Cleveland, Birkdale, Wellington Point, Ormiston or Thornlands anywhere on the mainland. It gets worse. North Stradbroke Island is wrongly labelled as South Stradbroke Island and has entirely migrated out of my electorate to Moreton Island. Stradbroke Island? What Stradbroke Island? Where has it gone? Maybe it swam north with some migrating whales. What a joke! The Treasurer's own budget paper for greater Brisbane is full of errors.

Even with their superhero powers, 'I Wonder Woman', 'Debt Man' and 'The Joker' cannot find my electorate in a diagram of greater Brisbane in its own budget papers. I guess you cannot build a road, train or busway to nowhere. This government barely seems to know where my electorate is for the purpose of government, yet the Premier seems to know where it is when she wants to take a holiday. They continue to ignore, neglect and forget the people of Cleveland. No wonder they lost the seat!

The cost of living for the people of Cleveland will rise dramatically under this Labor government. Residents will pay more for petrol, food, registration, electricity—well beyond the CPI. They will have to pay off Labor's mismanagement at the realtor, the bowser and the supermarket, and they will be paying for it for many years after those opposite have vacated the government benches.

The fuel tax will have a devastating impact upon Cleveland and the broader Redland city as 60 per cent of workers commute out of the area for work every day. Many of them use cars so their fuel bills to earn a living will skyrocket. It will also put further strain on public transport.

There are very few measures in this budget that assist the small and medium sized businesses of Cleveland to support their current workforce, let alone create new jobs. The facilities at Toondah Harbour are ageing and are now inadequate and in need of a major upgrade. This will create many local jobs and boost our local economy—again overlooked in this budget.

While I welcome the previous commitment of funds towards the expansion of the emergency department at the Redlands Hospital, it has been long overdue. We are also anticipating our fair share of the \$20.93 million allocated for new ambulances across the greater Brisbane area.

Stewardship of the environment is a top priority in my electorate of Cleveland, and I have been incredibly disappointed in recent weeks at the government's lack of practical solutions to the problems we are faced with. In this budget no money is allocated to the expansion of the Stradbroke Island National Park, something the government previously promised to deliver. Disappointing also was the government's commitment to an ecological study of the Moreton Bay Marine Park, promising a paltry \$500,000 for a monitoring program. As any marine scientist will tell you, adequately mapping an environment as biologically diverse and geographically expansive as Moreton Bay would take several years and many millions of dollars. It illustrates once again that this government is more interested in environmental symbolism than tangible outcomes. Related to this issue is ecologically sustainable fishing. I look forward to receiving Cleveland's fair share of the fishing infrastructure funding announced during the election.

Who could forget the plight of the Redlands koalas? It appears that the government has. They are facing extinction in the near future unless the government takes action. I call on it to increase further funding towards koala research and corridor land acquisition among other measures in Cleveland.

In addition to these measures I have listed, I continue to call on the government to take several additional steps: one, to increase the number of police and teacher aides in Queensland; two, to renew the funding to the One Punch Can Kill anti-violence campaign; three, to increase funding for the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative; and, four, to provide further funding to support families and underprivileged individuals.

I will conclude with this. The Premier, 'I Wonder Woman', the Treasurer, 'Debt Man', and the Deputy Premier, 'The Joker', are not superheroes and they never will be. They are a dysfunctional family and what they have done to the Queensland economy in this budget and previous ones makes them villains. 'I Wonder Woman' told untruths to the people of Queensland about why we needed an early election. She told untruths about the fuel tax. They told untruths about the asset sales.

'Debt Man' sold off the batmobile after taxing the bat fuel so that it was not affordable to run. He flogged off the batcave and hocked Gotham City to the hilt. Why? So the trio can stay in power. That is all this is about—surviving through to the next election where they can write up another fantasy and hope again to dupe the people of Queensland.

What about poor Albert in all this? Albert is the forgotten butler in this superhero story. Albert is representative of the people of Cleveland and the workers elsewhere in Queensland. He has been betrayed by our superheroes. The only answer for Queenslanders now is to survive the next two years of this government and to evict the pretenders, the villains in the 2011 state election, and bring in a new LNP government and an era of prosperity for all Queenslanders.

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (9.20 pm): This is a budget which secures Queensland's future—restoring Queensland's finances while creating jobs through an \$18 billion infrastructure program and maintaining the services to cater for our growing population. With this budget the Bligh government is delivering more trains, more tracks and more services for Queenslanders. I just want to speak briefly about our \$3.6 billion transport infrastructure program.

The Bligh government has a strategy to extend rail lines and rail capacity in the outer suburbs while providing a network of busways in the inner suburbs in order to allow commuters to travel quickly through the system and to access the CBD. That strategy is continued in this budget through a massive infrastructure program.

There is more than \$155 million to continue our record investment in additional rolling stock, allowing us to continue rolling out one new train every month for the TransLink network. There is \$125 million this year to progress the Springfield to Darra railway line—one of the first extensions on the network in some time. There is \$62.7 million for track improvements to the north coast, mainly for the Caboolture to Beerburrum duplication which is well underway. There is \$97.3 million for the Gold Coast rail extension from Robina to Varsity Lakes, continuing this government's rebuilding of the Gold Coast railway after the National Party government ripped it up. There is, in addition, \$57 million for a third rail track between Corinda and Darra. This is a project which extends commuter capacity on the Ipswich line and allows for freight to come in from the south west.

There is \$300 million to ensure the innovative busway program continues to meet Brisbane's increasing population. There is \$171.8 million this year towards building the Northern Busway between Enoggera Creek and Kedron. There is \$138.2 million for the Eastern Busway connection between Buranda and Main Avenue at Coorparoo. This is a project which I note the member for Cleveland began to argue somehow did not exist. I do not know how one misses a line item for \$138.2 million, but there it is.

There is \$37.8 million towards building the Eastern Busway from Princess Alexandra Hospital to Buranda. Construction will include an elevated busway station at the PA Hospital and will be a key link in the regional busway network.

There is also \$135 million for the Gold Coast rapid transit project following the \$365 million allocation in last month's federal budget. This is a major project which will fundamentally transform the Gold Coast. It is one which was developed and is now being delivered by a Labor government.

Some \$162.7 million has been allocated for public transport in regional areas, including for long distance rail, coach and aviation services. I noted an interjection a moment ago from the member for Barron River, who will recall that we are currently rolling out about 24 new buses in Cairns. This will provide air-conditioned and disability accessible buses for the people in that region.

This is a budget that takes the tough decisions to secure a strong future for Queensland. The Premier's Renewing Queensland Plan, announced a few weeks ago, will see Queensland assets reach their potential through the involvement of the private sector, allowing us to cut debt by around \$15 billion and alleviate further capital expenditure.

The government owned assets to be considered for sale include the Port of Brisbane, Queensland Rail's above and below rail coal business and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. These sales will restore the state's finances to ensure the future growth of our state. It is also appropriate that the government withdraw from mature assets in order to meet the challenges of our future—that is, developing infant industries, providing social services to ensure equity and meeting the fundamental challenge of sustainability.

This budget also sees the government continuing its very strong commitment to Ipswich. That is something that I very much welcome. The government, through its regional plan, very deliberately seeks to establish Ipswich and the western corridor as growing and sustainable urban centres. I very much welcome the fact that capital commitment is continuing in this much more difficult economic environment.

There is \$27 million for completion of the new Ipswich magistrate and district courts. There is more than \$5 million for the replacement of the Ipswich Police Station and watch-house and nearly \$3 million to complete the new ambulance station in Ipswich.

The Bligh government is protecting and creating jobs in Ipswich, delivering \$1.6 million at Booval to replace transformer and switch gear for increased electricity network capacity, a similar amount at Raceview and another \$1.8 million at Raceview for feeder works to improve electricity network capacity.

The Bligh government is similarly delivering better transport and safer roads in Ipswich. For example, there is \$3.4 million to complete asphalt resurfacing on Warwick Road between Parker Avenue and the Cunningham Highway. There is \$1.1 million for a project, which the community has been looking forward to, to continue the asphalt overlay on Swanbank Road between South Station Road and Sussex Street.

The Bligh government is also investing in health services in Ipswich. For example, we are providing \$4.15 million for the expansion of the Ipswich Hospital in order to provide an additional 84 beds to meet growth and service demand.

Most notably, the Bligh government fundamentally believes that education is the thing that allows people from all backgrounds to have the best possible opportunities in life. We went to the last election with two key commitments for new schools. One was \$23 million for a new school by relocating the Amberley State School, which is being forced to close as a result of RAAF base expansion, to Yamanto. We also made a commitment to rebuild the Bremer State High School. This budget delivers on that commitment with \$35.86 million for that school.

Further, there is \$9.23 million in this budget for a fundamental rebuilding, not just renewal, of the Bundamba State School and \$13.73 million for State Schools of Tomorrow renewal at the Silkstone State School. Those projects were an absolutely fundamental difference between the government and the old National Party at the last election. The National Party made it very clear that should it be elected none of those projects would go ahead. There is in total more than \$100 million of spending for Ipswich schools, which will provide first-class facilities for children who, until now, have been educated in schools which, simply by dint of the National Party era in which they were built, were not built properly and are in quite poor condition.

I welcome both the Bligh government's absolute commitment to public transport as a means of meeting the challenge of sustainability in the future and its ongoing commitment to Ipswich as a means of allowing that growing regional centre to grow sustainably and meet population growth in the future.

This is a budget that makes tough decisions, and it is a budget that makes the right decisions and makes them responsibly. It is disappointing that our colleagues opposite simply stand nowhere on these matters, and I commend the budget bills to the House.

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (9.29 pm): I rise to condemn the Bligh government's management of the economy. This government's incompetence and inability to manage the economy has left Queensland's once-proud claim to be the best and strongest economy in Australia in tatters. It is a tragedy of epic proportions to see Queensland described as being the sickest state in the nation—so badly managed that it risks dragging down the rest of Australia and prolonging the nation's economic downturn. How could Labor have got it so wrong and done so much damage, especially when we so recently had a decade-long boom? This was the greatest boom in our state's 150-year history—a boom that should have set up the state for the decades ahead for better roads, for better public transport, for more teachers and police. Instead, Labor has delivered the worst birthday present the state could receive—the worst-ever state budget in its history with massive debt and deficits, rising unemployment and taxes and our international financial credibility destroyed. There is now nothing to show for that decade of boom other than a looming decade of debt and deficits. How can this government be trusted to steer us through the tough times when it has failed so badly to manage things in the good times?

Labor is desperately trying to shift the blame, wrongly claiming that it is all due to the global financial crisis. Even today we heard the Premier again try to blame the GFC for Queensland's financial crisis. But Queenslanders, deceived ahead of the election, will not be fooled again. They now know the truth—that, under Labor, Queensland went bust in a boom and they must now pay the price over the decades ahead for Labor's incompetence, and the proof of that untruth is when we compare Queensland to the other states. The global financial crisis has affected everyone. These are tough times, but because of Labor's mismanagement these are much tougher times for Queenslanders. Because of Labor's mismanagement, Queensland is suffering far worse than the rest of Australia, and that is all the fault of the Bligh government.

If it was all the GFC's fault, there would be no reason why Queensland would be doing far worse than the other states. But as independent commentators declared this week, Queensland has by far the worst budget position of all of the states and its citizens face the sharpest fall in living standards. It is sad to see how far Queensland has fallen after year after year of incompetent management by Labor compared to the other states. Let us look at how badly Queensland is doing compared to the other states. Victoria, once branded the rust-bucket state, remains in surplus. Queensland is in deficit. Western Australia, which is also enjoying a resource-led boom similar to Queensland, remains in surplus. Queensland is in deficit. New South Wales retains its AAA credit rating. Queensland has had its AAA credit rating stripped away from it. Queensland is leading the states for all the wrong reasons.

While this vandalism of our state's finances would be bad enough alone, Labor's dishonesty during the election campaign is just a disgrace. The denials of asset sales or the introduction of a fuel tax and the subsequent announcement after Labor won the election that they would happen is a deceit that will be long remembered by Queenslanders. Queenslanders are in no doubt now why the Bligh government called the election six months early. Labor knew the true state of Queensland's finances. It knew it had condemned Queenslanders to unprecedented levels of debt for decades ahead. It knew it had squandered the opportunities that the boom had provided. It knew that its incompetent management had doomed Queensland's economy. But rather than admit the truth, it was dishonest during the election campaign.

The immense anger that Queenslanders feel about this betrayal is no doubt why we are witnessing this abuse of parliamentary process by Labor today. Today we see Labor using its majority to ram through the asset sales and fuel tax legislation along with the budget bills in this cognate debate. There should be appropriate and full debate on each of these bills dealing with asset sales and the fuel tax. Instead, members of this House will be given just 20 minutes to discuss these significant measures along with the budget. This is just a sneaky and undemocratic ploy so that Labor members do not have to defend their support for a fire sale of Queensland assets and the introduction of a fuel tax. Instead, they will hide behind the budget debate.

Labor knows that many of its MPs are ashamed of this sell-off, especially when we are seeing Queensland's hard-earned assets sold off at bargain basement prices. They are ashamed that they have to support a fuel tax when it was denied before the election and will hurt many of their constituents. Labor was dishonest with the Queensland public during the election and now its members want to avoid appropriate scrutiny. Not content with being dishonest about the fuel tax and the selling of assets, Labor is now looking to sell out democratic debate as well!

Fortunately, Labor MPs will all be given the chance to go on the record and vote in favour of this fire sale of assets and a 9.2c fuel tax at the end of this debate. All of their branch members, union colleagues and constituents will see that they supported it and everyone who voted for them in March this year will know they were betrayed. They were sold out and deceived at the election, and they will not forget that because every time they fill up their car they will be reminded that Labor members voted for a fuel tax and they are paying an extra 9.2c a litre; every time they pay for their groceries they will know they are paying more because of this Labor government. When they see Queensland's hard-earned assets sold off for bargain basement prices, they will know this fire sale was due to Labor's atrocious management of the economy.

Let me now examine in greater detail some of the more disturbing aspects of this budget. As I have said, Queensland has just witnessed its greatest boom period and the state's revenue base over the past decade has been extraordinarily strong because of record GST payments and windfall revenue from the Commonwealth, substantial increases in specific purpose payments from Canberra, record investment returns from the Queensland Investment Corporation and record payroll taxes and mining royalties. A year ago the Treasurer forecast surpluses totalling \$1.8 billion over the four fiscal years from 2008-09 to 2011-12. In a remarkable turnaround this week, the Treasurer is now forecasting a combined deficit for the same period of \$10.1 billion—a turnaround of \$11.9 billion. This situation would have been even worse if the federal government had not provided the state with an additional \$5.8 billion in grants over the period to help the state budget.

This budget is forecasting a deficit of almost \$2 billion in the 2009-10 financial year. This is more than double the figure forecast by New South Wales, which had previously been seen as a basket case of state economies. The budget deficit for 2009-10 is worth \$454 for every Queenslander and by 2011-12 the Queensland deficit will be more than \$4 billion. In fact, Queensland has been condemned to a decade of deficits. Queensland is expected to have deficit budgets until 2016-17. All up, Queensland is forecasting more than \$13 billion of deficit budgets—all of which will have to be borrowed, all of which will have to be repaid through higher taxes. Labor does not listen when it is told to get its spending under control. All it can do is spend, spend, spend. Even in this budget, general government expenses for 2009-10 will increase by 7.4 per cent over 2008-09.

Well before the global financial crisis began, the Bligh government had racked up \$64 billion worth of debt. Because of this, Queensland was completely unprepared for the crisis. That is why Queensland ended up in this position today. That \$64 billion has now blown out to \$85 billion. This budget revealed that total debt is now expected to be \$85 billion by 2012-13. That will be equal to \$78,000 for every Queensland household. Queensland's annual interest bill will be \$5.2 billion every year, and the Bligh government will have to pay a \$14 million interest bill on the debt every day. That interest will have to be paid before the government can even start paying for police officers, teachers, nurses, ambulance officers and firemen.

Every Queenslander will pay for Labor's financial incompetence every day in every possible way for years to come. It is even more disturbing to hear QTC chair, Sir Leo Hielscher, say that that figure of \$85 billion may be an underestimation. Sir Leo predicts debt to be higher than \$100 billion once the full borrowing program is finished. But even if we accept the budget figure of \$85 billion, I ask members to compare that debt to the debt of the other states: New South Wales, \$67 billion; Victoria, \$39 billion; Western Australia, \$27 billion; South Australia, \$7 billion; and Tasmania, \$0.2 billion. Debt is in Labor's DNA. It knows how to spend, it knows how to squander and it knows how to deceive.

Far from its jobs mantra, the only jobs that Labor was committed to keeping were those of its MPs in this chamber by deceiving the public at the election. The budget is forecasting state unemployment to almost double in the next two years, from 4.25 per cent to 7.25 per cent: 60,000 more Queenslanders are expected to lose their jobs, coming to a total of 175,000 people. Far from fulfilling its promise to create 100,000 jobs, Queensland is going backwards. The Treasurer has now admitted to downsizing those 100,000 jobs. He counts working for one hour a week as a job.

If Labor was committed to jobs, it should have managed the state economy better. Instead, its incompetence has left the Queensland economy more vulnerable to the GFC than any other state. Every loss of a job is a tragedy and it is a tragedy that this government has so badly let Queenslanders down that this state is in such poor shape.

Queensland is the only mainland state without a AAA credit rating. How can we be trailing New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australian and even South Australia? How could we have fallen so far to have the lowest credit rating of all the mainland states? Members might ask: how important is this credit rating? Former Premier Peter Beattie thought it was important enough to fight to keep it. He declared that maintaining the state's AAA credit rating was a sign of confidence in the economy.

Labor has previously said that it was committed to maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating, but it was not just an issue of international confidence in the Queensland economy; there was a very practical reason for retaining that AAA credit rating. Having a AAA credit rating saves Queensland millions in interest payments. Having a AAA credit rating meant that more money could be directed to essential infrastructure and service delivery. But Labor let this AAA credit rating be stripped away, first by Standard and Poor's and then by Moody's. Labor let the state's finances become so critical that international agencies had to downgrade Queensland's credit rating. The agencies did not downgrade Victoria's credit rating, they did not downgrade New South Wales' credit rating and they did not downgrade South Australia's credit rating or Western Australia's credit rating. They downgraded only Queensland's credit rating. Only Queensland was in such bad shape that its credit rating needed to be downgraded.

So what is the cost of that downgrade of the state's credit rating to the people of Queensland? The QTC chair, Sir Leo Hielscher, estimates that the loss of Queensland's AAA credit rating will cost Queenslanders an extra \$1.2 billion in interest repayments each year. Despite that massive bill, the Treasurer said that restoring Queensland's AAA credit rate is not a priority. He said that regaining Queensland's credit rating was now a five to 10 year proposition. On Sir Leo's estimate, that could mean more than \$10 billion in interest payments.

What have Standard and Poor's and Moody's had to say about this week's budget? Standard and Poor's warns of a structural imbalance in Queensland's finances. Moody's said that the financial and debt metrics are expected to deteriorate substantially, with a high level of cash deficits forecast. Those agencies lack confidence in Labor's ability to manage the state's finances. They know that Queensland should have been in a remarkably strong position after the boom. But when the boom ended, because of Labor's poor management there was a structural hole in the state's accounts. Queensland had already gone bust in a boom. So when the global financial crisis arrived, the government had nowhere to run. All it could do was deceive the voters before the election and hope it was not caught out.

No-one should be supporting the sale of Queensland's hard-earned assets at bargain basement prices. This government is willing to sell them off on the cheap in a \$15 billion fire sale. That the government hid its plans from Queenslanders during the election campaign makes this even a further disgrace. Labor's appalling management of the economy, allowing Queensland to go bust in a boom, has forced it to take this action. The only winners will be bargain hunters from this fire sale. While I do not object to privatisation, it is the wrong time to do it. The bottom of the market is not the right time to be selling assets. It is financially reprehensible behaviour from a desperate government.

Like the asset sales, the government ruled out the introduction of a fuel tax before the election. No-one can endorse this dishonest behaviour. To do so would only encourage Labor to continue to deceive Queenslanders. This new fuel tax punishes Queensland families at the petrol bowser and at the checkout. It adds an extra \$300 a year to the average fuel bill. Queenslanders will have to pay more for basic goods and services as suppliers pass on the costs to consumers. The introduction of the fuel tax comes at a time when Queenslanders can least afford it.

With the limited time available to me, I want to say how disappointing this budget was for the electorate of Indooroopilly. In my electorate, Labor has once again failed to deliver on the issues of concern to locals. The government provided no solutions for the growing traffic congestion, especially along Oxley Road and Honour Avenue. Where are the badly needed additional park and ride spaces that were promised during the election campaign? The government has once again failed to deliver additional green space.

What has Labor delivered with this budget? The sickest state in the country. The worst budget in our history. The greatest deception of the Queensland public. Massive debt, massive deficits, rising unemployment and increased taxes. How can anyone trust the government to run the economy? How could anyone trust them to tell the truth?

And what is the solution to all of this? How do we solve this problem? The answer is simple: get rid of Labor. It was Labor's failure that made Queensland the sickest state. Labor is the problem. Getting rid of Labor is the solution.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (9.46 pm): I rise to speak to the bills before the House. Investing in core community services is particularly important in tough economic times. The threat of unemployment places financial and emotional strain on families and we need to ensure that funding for community services is a priority. The 2009-10 state budget provides significant funding for community services as part of the Bligh government's determination to fund core services and to help people through these challenging economic times. I am very pleased that a number of organisations in Springwood will be receiving this funding. In fact, around \$9.9 million has been allocated to them.

I also certainly welcome the \$93.5 million that has been allocated to upgrade the Pacific Motorway between Springwood south and Daisy Hill. There is no doubt that the priority section for this upgrade is the Winnetts Road off ramp and overpass at the intersection of Loganlea Road and Winnetts Road. I have previously raised in this House the urgency of this work. It is needed now. I will say it once again. We have to get on with that work. I want to see machinery out on that road as soon as possible and the job started. The member for Waterford is agreeing with me every bit of the way. Certainly, we have both been lobbying very hard to get this job started, because it is such a priority for both of our electorates.

But that is just one section of the upgrade that has received allocations in this budget. I am also pleased to say that there is \$2.95 million in state and federal funding for planning and land acquisition for the Pacific Motorway between Daisy Hill and Loganholme. The state government is not looking at just that section; it is certainly getting on with planning for future. The government is looking at the whole Pacific Motorway between Springwood south and Loganholme and is planning for bus lanes as well as upgrading the traffic lanes. While we are doing that, it is also important to remember that we should be keeping up the maintenance on the M1. I am pleased to see in the budget that in the Springwood area there will be \$1.3 million for that purpose.

I said earlier that the budget is investing in core services and health has certainly not been left out. There is \$20 million for the expansion of the Logan Hospital emergency department, including 18 adult treatment bays and a dedicated paediatric waiting area and treatment bays. There is also an allocation of \$7.9 million over three years to train and recruit 30 nurse practitioners to alleviate bottlenecks in our hospitals' busiest emergency departments. I know that Logan Hospital would certainly fall within that criteria. So certainly I am pleased to see that allocation. Then there is the \$2 million allocation to complete construction of the dedicated elective surgery centre at Logan Hospital. There is also the commitment for 3,500 new doctors, nurses and health professionals over the next three years. So health certainly has not been left out.

Once again, this government is investing in core services. Let us look at education. The Queensland government will partner with the Australian government to deliver \$1.168 billion in infrastructure across this state. What a great partnership that is. There is quite a number of projects happening in all schools in my electorate. In fact, there is over \$20 million worth of projects happening in schools in the Springwood electorate. That is because we have a federal government willing to work with the state government to deliver these projects. I am particularly pleased to inform the House about the \$1.167 million for the Rochedale-Springwood corridor trade training centre at Rochedale State High School.

Mr Reeves: Hear, hear!

Ms STONE: The member for Mansfield and I certainly have a lot of students attending that school from our electorates. That is a joint project with Springwood State High School. That is going to be a great facility and resource for both of those schools. Not only will these projects bring great facilities for the schools but it is very important to point out that those sorts of projects are supporting local jobs. That is the key to this budget: it is about supporting jobs, it is about core services and it is about getting us through the tough times.

When there are tough times at home, most families sit down and look at their budget and decide whether they really need the second car. They look at other assets that they have bought in other phases of their lives or at times of their lives when things were different, and they weigh up whether that asset is doing what they want it to do now. They weigh up whether it is worth keeping or whether it is better to sell at this time as this may serve them better. They see this as getting ready for their future. Sometimes they need to look for a financial boost by borrowing. That is what responsible people do and that is what responsible governments do. They assess the situation of the day. They assess challenges of the day and what needs to be done to set up for the future. This budget certainly is doing that while ensuring that our core services are being met.

I listened to speakers on the other side of the House talking about grocery prices and the fuel subsidy. I know the consumer group Choice certainly does not agree with the opposition. In fact, I heard an interview recently with Christopher Zinn from the consumer group Choice. He stated—

There's no evidence at the moment that your groceries are actually cheaper than any other State or Territory in Australia. So if the subsidy hasn't resulted in cheaper groceries, then why should the removal of the subsidy result in higher priced groceries?

I could not agree more. He is certainly on the mark there. There is no excuse for putting up grocery prices for that reason.

I was happy to listen to what the opposition leader had to offer as an alternative to the Queensland people. I was waiting to hear what differences those opposites would have in their budget and what other ideas and policies they would come up with. I am still willing to listen because to date there has not been one solution given by the opposition, not one alternative idea. As always, while the opposition whinges and whines and whinges and whines, we will keep working—we will keep building the infrastructure project and we will keep investing in the core services to keep Queensland the great state that it is. I support this whole package because it is the right package for our state.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.52 pm): Politics is like a Rubik's cube: complicated, disorganised, but the answer lies in the problem. Delivering budgets for a state of 4.4 million people is complicated, just like a Rubik's cube. I question whether the Treasurer has ever had the tenacity or the patience to immerse himself in the problem, to understand the problem and to seek innovative ways to solve the problem and make sure that the right colours are on the right side over a period of time. Instead, it is very disheartening to see him come in every morning like a robotic monkey time and time again, with the same sheet of paper, delivering the same words that someone in his ranks has written, without passion, without soul, without heart, without meaning. The Treasurer does not believe in the budget that he has been forced to deliver under this government, which has failed to deliver a future that Queensland can look forward to.

Queensland is the best state in the best country. There is no doubt about it. We have everything here. We have some of the greatest tourist destinations. We have lovely people who have an attitude beyond imagination—people who are willing to bond together and make the best they can together. How is it that when the federal government was tackling a recession in the 1990s, Queensland was bulletproof from that recession, yet here we see a federal government claiming that it is dodging a recession and Queensland is the first cab off the rank to suffer such a disastrous deficit?

Before we even heard of the GFC we were already over \$60 billion in debt. Queenslanders know that something is wrong. The reformative side of politics knows that something is wrong. The government knows that something is wrong. Why does it know that something is wrong? Because we have had over 500 interjections in the last day and a half from government members asking, 'What should we do? What are your ideas? We don't know where we're going?' They have clearly run out of ideas. They have left it to one or two people in cabinet, and they have delivered one of the most irresponsible birthday presents to this state after 150 years.

We have heard the word 'growth' used in such a negative way, yet we are the envy of every other state. We have had over 25 per cent growth here in Queensland. We are the envy of the rest of Australia. With growth comes taxes. Where has all that money gone? Growth is a good thing; it is not a negative thing. The Treasurer needs to understand that growth is good. The Premier has decided to paint a very bleak picture. That is fair enough because in some ways she is accidentally becoming honest. In fact, the Premier has painted such a dark and gloomy picture to try to bulletproof herself from the decisions that her government has made that are completely irresponsible. She has tried to put fear and propaganda into the minds of Queenslanders to justify and defend such drastic measures as taking away the fuel subsidy.

Queenslanders who went to the polls, including the Minister for Transport, had no idea about the assets that were about to be sold off and had no idea about the fuel subsidy that was about to be scrapped. The government ran a dishonest campaign. You cannot win a race honourably by lying. We know here in this chamber that that is exactly what happened. We were honest with the people of Queensland. We were going to provide the efficiencies. We told them exactly what we were going to do. With some 15,000 votes short, for a party just eight months young, I tell members now that the reformative side of politics has a very big future.

The Treasurer studies John Maynard Keynes, the economist from the 1930s, and tries to use last century's tactics to tackle a 21st century challenge. He clearly has no idea. The Treasurer, this state's robotic monkey, needs to take his nose out of the books written in the 1930s and understand that we are now in the 21st century. He has to understand that the theory from the 1930s is not a cut and paste job for 2009.

I have before me what I would like to call constant progressive reform—otherwise known as a CPR. It is a seven-point plan. It is rather ambitious but I will throw my ideas on the table because that is how we are going to get this state on track. Idea No. 1—

Government members interjected.

Mr McLINDON: Are you ready for it? You have made 500 interjections. Here come the answers. Are you genuine or are you just saying it? You do not really want to know, do you? The first idea is operation decentralisation.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Beaudesert. I think there is something we need to hear.

Mr McLINDON: There is, Mr Deputy Speaker. They have been asking for this for two days straight and now they cannot stop talking. The first idea is operation decentralisation. We will give a dictionary to the government to look up the word 'decentralisation' because decentralisation in this state of Queensland is absolutely critical not only to understand but to implement. But that clearly has not happened for the majority of the last 20 years that this state has been governed. Let us take my electorate of Beaudesert, for example.

Beaudesert is just 60 minutes from the CBD. We have more than 800 women in the electorate and we are fast approaching 1,000 new babies being born annually, but where is our maternity ward? I will tell the House where our maternity ward is. We had a maternity ward until 2001 when this progressive, centralised government decided to rip it out of the heart of Beaudesert, and now 800-plus women have to go to the Ipswich and Logan hospitals, which are already at capacity. The government clearly does not understand the ideology of decentralisation.

Then we had the announcement from the Minister for Transport. Beaudesert had passenger rail until 1995, when it burnt down and was not replaced. Then the Minister for Transport releases a report which says, 'We will consider passenger rail in 2026. That is, we will consider passenger rail for the second fastest growing region in Queensland in 17 years.' Where is the government when it comes to decentralisation? It is very clear that centralisation has caused gridlock and has caused this state to stagnate.

I became a councillor on the Logan City Council in 2004. I know that the M1 upgrade in the Logan area was promised for some seven years, but we have seen only patch-up roadworks for the last decade. My first point is 'operation decentralisation'.

Point No. 2 is a rather interesting one. Over the last two to three years the heart of local government has been ripped out by this state government. It has been ripped out to the point that we no longer understand the differing responsibilities of the state government and local government. There is no clear distinction in terms of which issues are the responsibility of local government and which are the responsibility of the state government. Time and time again we have seen assets taken away from local government whilst the state is cost-shifting one item after another. The ratepayers can no longer foot the bill. The subsidy for street lighting has even been scrapped. Fifty per cent of the roads in the Scenic Rim Regional Council area are unsealed. One kilometre of road costs \$1 million to build. We are talking about \$1 billion worth of road that will not be able to be delivered and about a ratepayer base of some 35,000 homes. That is how dire the situation is.

When I look back and read this speech I will see that my prediction has come to fruition. That is, the Labor government wants to get rid of local government. That is exactly what is happening. We are seeing the abolition of local government. If that is the case, I suggest that we hold on to the 73 mayors of this great state and that they make up the upper house.

Government members interjected.

Mr McLINDON: You can get rid of the 480 councillors, because that is exactly where you are heading. You all know that is where you are heading with local government.

Ms JONES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot hear him. I am trying to listen to him.

Mr McLINDON: We have to plan for the future. If this is where we are heading—it is inevitable—that is fine. Get rid of the 480 councillors, but hold onto your 73 mayors and we can do a switcheroo and they can become the upper house. That is my second plan. You talk about cost-shifting. You take water; you give water back. That is where your money is going.

Government members interjected.

Mr McLINDON: If you let me get to point No. 3, we might be able to save another couple of billion dollars.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Beaudesert, resume your seat.

Mr Shine: At least he's got one.

Mr Hopper: Have a bit of respect for the chair.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Condamine, if you wish to interject you will return to your seat.

Mr McLINDON: I will outline point No. 3. In 2008 Queenslanders lost \$1.8 billion not on gambling in its entirety but on pokies alone. Even the good former Premier of this state Wayne Goss regretted that electronic gaming machines were ever introduced into this state. What are we going to do? They have been here for some 20 years. Where will we be 20 years from now?

The Treasurer has mentioned not only the recession but also the 'D' word; he has referred to a depression. He has made the budget so dark and gloomy and tried to bulletproof the irresponsible decisions made by this government by using the word 'depression'. This is actually an insult to the people who lived through a depression.

The Treasurer said that there was five per cent increase in gambling in 2008. At a time of imminent recession, how can we have a five per cent increase in pokie revenue to \$1.8 billion? My humble contribution to the House tonight is that we need to design and instigate an 'Aus Vegas'—somewhere five or six hours away from one of the major cities in this state—and we need to freeze the introduction of pokies to our local communities. Pokies are crippling our local economies. As an example, Logan City lost \$100 million last year alone.

We need to tap into the Asian market and the interstate market rather than slug Queenslanders. We need to make those people who currently own pokie machines part shareholders in the introduction of an 'Aus Vegas'. Not only is it innovative; we will double the revenue. I have been at the front line in hospitality. People come in to a pokie venue, blow their welfare and then leave angry. It is time we looked at the wealthy in the Asian market, which is an untapped resource. 'Aus Vegas' would be a huge tourism destination. I cannot believe that tourism is being crippled in one of the best states in one of the best countries in the world.

Point No. 4 relates to taxation reform. We need to revolutionise the way we tax our small businesses. I am all for the abolition of payroll tax, because that is the only way we are going to increase and expand our current small business across this great state. How many people do we come across who say, 'I would like to expand but it is too expensive. I would like to put on two or three more people but I simply can't'? We need to start thinking outside the square. Look what happened when Joh got rid of death duties. Every state followed suit, and the growth in this state was unprecedented. This is where we have to start looking. The Treasurer has to pick up the Rubik's cube and realise that the answer lies within the problem. But first he must understand that problem.

Another great example is vehicle registration. Why do we see hundreds—probably thousands—of cars on Queensland roads with Victorian registration? It is because Victorian registration is cheaper. So what do members think the rental car companies do? If we reduce the cost of car registration and have an increased payer base, it makes it cheaper overall. This is where we need to start putting our minds.

Point No. 5 relates to health. Some people will find this controversial, but I do not think it is. We need to include alternative and complementary medicines in the public health system. Why have we created a bottleneck in the health system? Someone sneezes and then lines up to see the doctor. Why do we not have complementary and alternative treatments included in our health system? Why do we not have a registry process in place whereby we can direct the queues away from the hospitals? We have to start thinking outside the square. We need to spread those queues right across Queensland to make the health system efficient.

Furthermore, there needs to be localised boards for those hospitals. Hospitals like the Beaudesert Hospital know exactly what resources they need. They have that local intel. The government thinks it knows and is it too arrogant to talk to the locals to implement a better system. Until we get localised health boards we will never have an efficient health system in this state. We will never have an efficient health system in this state as long as the government thinks it can solve it from the buildings in George Street.

Point No. 6—

Mr Shine: How many have you got?

Mr McLINDON: It is a seven-point plan. It is seven ideas more than the collective of government members have had in the last two days.

Point No. 6 relates to community policy formulation boards. These boards can be made up of those community representatives who are already active on their payroll in their separate industries. That would be the policemen, the local teachers, the PCYCs and the chambers of commerce. These boards can be chaired by the local state member and deputy chaired by the mayors. Remember, the 73 mayors will be the upper house. Those two people can be chair and deputy chair of that localised board, and they can see exactly what the community needs and when they need it.

We have seen the formulation of too many commissions—they have cost this state billions of dollars—to bulletproof the government from its incompetence. We have seen commissions designed separate from the government so that the commission—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Beaudesert, take your seat.

Mr Shine: I thought he had a future.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba North.

Mr Reeves: The National Party's back.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr McLINDON: The community boards would certainly replace the commissions we have seen, where millions and millions of dollars have been blown. The commissions are making a decision on behalf of government and the government points the finger when something goes wrong. Those days are over, because I will not stand in this chamber and see this debt cascade and double in 10 or 15 years time, and that is exactly where we are heading.

Until we think outside the square, until the Treasurer is ready to take on the challenge of the Rubik's cube and get the colours back on track, we will always get what we have always got. We can no longer go down this path, and we all know it deep down. I have seen members of the government squirming. None of them like this budget. We know that. We know the government has run out of ideas. That is fine, but just admit it and vote against it. Vote against it and show a bit of courage in your political careers and go back to the communities and tell them it was not good enough, because government members know deep down that it is not. How can anybody sell to their community a 9.2c a litre increase for every litre of fuel? This is a party that says it is progressive.

Mr Shine: No. 7 was the hydrogen car.

Mr McLINDON: No. 7—

Mr Shine: Did I guess it?

Mr McLINDON: I do not think you will. It would probably be a bit out of your league. This one is to do with the arts and entertainment industry. We have an amazing pool of talent here in this state that is completely untapped; it is an untapped resource. I have been in the industry for some 10 years, and I have seen these bands put their heart and soul into it without a brass razoo from this government.

While the Premier may stand and glow and glitter about *Narnia* coming to Queensland—and I am sorry but that was not her decision; that was the director's decision—we have not put enough money into the films and the arts and entertainment industry in this state. We should be pumping out six blockbusters from this state every year. This is the state that has the weather, the sunshine, the beaches, the Great Barrier Reef. We can be the California of Australia, but we are sitting here and extending the credit card as an easy way out.

I can just picture the Treasurer purchasing a thousand dollar Gibson guitar. He goes to strum a few chords but the string snaps and what does he do? He runs down to the pawnbroker and sells it for \$100 instead of buying a \$15 set of strings. That is the ideology of this Treasurer and this government, and we cannot sustain that attitude. It is time that the government grabbed the Rubik's cube and understood that the answer is in the problem. If you do not understand the problem, you will have no hope in pursuing the answer.

We can no longer sit on our hands. It is the government's time now to think outside the square, to get innovative and to make sure we get this state back on track. The only side of politics is the reformative side of politics that has the ideas, the passion, the tenacity and the innovation to make sure that these projects will come to fruition in the future.

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (10.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2009. When I was elected in 2006 all of us, including the opposition's electorates, were riding high. We were all enjoying the good times, the boom times, and none of us could have predicted what would occur between September 2006 and September 2008. Who was ready that September when the American government took control of its largest housing lenders—Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae—at a cost of 200 billion? Next there was the \$700 billion bailout, then Lehmann Brothers failed and \$600 billion was whipped out, and by December 2008 it had hit the world.

By that time, our government had swung well and truly into action. The statewide rapid response team had been set up and replicated across the state and, believe me, in my electorate we monitored each and every job, each and every contractor and mining movement, and this remains so today. I have listened to speaker after speaker in this House on the opposition benches complaining about where the money has gone. In my short time in this House, I would say it has gone on everything the opposition has opposed and which has kept this state ahead of every other state in Australia. The No. 1 plan, it appears tonight, is decentralisation to Beaudesert, where no doubt some of the missing money has gone.

But let me focus on my electorate—that very decentralised one—and what this budget means to us. It is jobs, jobs, jobs, and sustaining workers, families and communities right across my 14 local government shires—14 boards, if I go to that side of the room. Councils that bring down budgets between \$15 million and 24 million—councils like McKinlay Shire Council with a population of 900, Carpentaria Shire Council with a population of 2,100 or the Diamantina Shire Council with just 300—are not big in the big scheme of things, but these councils support workers, their families and their communities. They build and maintain roads, which in many instances is the biggest single component of their budgets. The Diamantina Shire Council alone has received \$5.5 million towards roads this financial year from our government.

In total, the Mount Isa electorate received over \$65 million in road funding across a vast network. It probably does not sound much to some, but to me again it means jobs, jobs, jobs. The McKinlay Shire Council says its budget in this economic uncertainty is a budget aimed at securing jobs. A \$6.3 million Capital Works Program is a major component of the budget, with many long-awaited projects able to be started this financial year. I am delighted that many of these projects are directly funded by our government—projects like their recreation facility, sports oval and tourism project. McKinlay Shire Council will carry out nearly \$11 million on flood roadworks—

Mr Reeves: They have a great mayor there.

Mrs KIERNAN: Absolutely, and there are other works of \$7 million on behalf of Main Roads. The mayor, that great man—

Mr Reeves: Great bloke.

Mrs KIERNAN: He is a good bloke. Mayor Paul Woodhouse in a radio interview this week said—

It is not time for the faint-hearted now, we have to really step up to the plate and deliver the programs that we've been funded for have had on the backburner for a number of years.

So the shire council is moving ahead over the next 12 months to deliver a lot of projects that people across the shire have spoken of for a number of years, so it is a budget of the times.

I could not agree more.

Before I outline some of the significant and valuable initiatives across my electorate and before leaving the area of local government, I would like to pay tribute to two great and notable gentlemen who both passed away this past week and who gave years of dedicated service to their communities. Bobby Moore was synonymous with Mount Isa and served for over 20 years on the Mount Isa City Council and was instrumental in getting the funding secured to build the Lake Julius Dam.

Harry McPherson Grant, who just recently turned 90, was a long-serving councillor and chairman on the Cloncurry Shire Council and will be greatly missed. It was my great pleasure to know and serve at a time when these two great champions of the north-west were in office, and my sincere condolences go to their families. It is fitting that we will commence in July the construction of the \$42.6 million Cloncurry supply pipeline project that will provide long-term water security for Cloncurry, building on the work of Bobby Moore so many years ago.

Education funding has been allocated in schools across the electorate. The pre prep facility at Doomadgee State School will be completed, and the \$1.7 million pre prep facility will be commenced on Mornington Island. Maintenance dollars have been allocated from Birdsville to Georgetown and from Hughenden to Camooweal.

National parks in my electorate are also big winners. More than \$1.8 million has been allocated for the iconic Boodjamulla National Park, which is known to many as Lawn Hill, for the design and redevelopment of visitor and management facilities and for an information centre. These works will provide better facilities for visitors at one of our most beautiful locations which is rightly increasing in popularity, particularly among grey nomads. Also, \$501,000 has been funded to complete the Diamantina homestead complex. These works will include additional accommodation able to house traditional owners and the Diamantina catchment work team, in addition to the park rangers on site.

The Treasurer's decision on the continued commitment to apprentices and training is also greatly welcomed. By excluding apprentice and trainee wages from payroll tax and extending the rebate of a further 25 per cent to these wages, it will ensure that we continue with our strong skilling and training program in the Mount Isa electorate. The allocation of \$3.37 million to our Trade Training Centre at Spinifex State College, Mount Isa Senior Campus, will ensure our young people are offered every opportunity.

The increase in the electricity rebate is about looking after our older citizens. Currently pensioners receive \$165 a year in concessions. That will increase to \$190.85 a year in 2009-10—an increase of more than 15 per cent. Our government will continue to contribute to ensuring that Queenslanders pay the same for power regardless of where they live. Last financial year this was around \$500 million. Whether it be Burketown or Buderim, we all pay the same rate. An extra \$13 million investment in 2009-10 also includes increases for life-support equipment, which will help seriously ill pensioners. The concession for oxygen concentrators will increase from \$84 to \$97 per quarter—more than \$52 extra each year. The concession for kidney dialysis machines will increase from \$56 to \$65 per quarter—more than \$35 extra each year.

My electorate has many hardworking and dedicated people working right across the community sector delivering services in domestic violence, homelessness, youth and disability services to name a few. I am delighted on behalf of these workers that our government has allocated resources in this budget of \$414 million for increased wages across four years. The Treasurer, while having to deliver a very tough budget, has kept the government's sights firmly on the future. I sincerely thank him for his great appreciation of our part of the world and our unique needs.

In this first budget of our new government my electorate's election commitments have been kept. That is not bad in just under three months, I think. In 2009-10 we will continue to support the growth of our mining sector and have allocated a further \$12 million for the Smart Mining Future Prosperity program to stimulate exploration investment. The new \$4.8 million Drillcorp facility will be built this year. This facility will accommodate the increasing stock of Drillcorp samples from surrounding areas and support the promotion of mining and exploration in the north-west Queensland minerals province. The funding of our capital works projects will create and support many, many local jobs.

There is \$32.4 million for improvements to the Mica Creek Power Station. The first stage of the \$65 million Mount Isa Hospital redevelopment will commence, with \$25.42 million allocated for the expansion of the emergency department and additional short-stay beds this financial year. The Mount Isa electorate is fast becoming the leader in alternative power through solar energy in Cloncurry and the upgrade of the landmark geothermal generating plant in Birdsville, which will produce more clean energy for the remote south-western town.

Right across my electorate there are many infrastructure projects which will receive funding from this budget. Projects including health, education, housing, roads, community facilities, sporting facilities, energy, water, tourism and our national parks all mean local jobs, and every last one of them will secure and sustain our region. I have no doubt at all that the many projects in our region demonstrate clearly how valuable our region is and show that we remain pivotal to Queensland's economy. The government has today made a huge commitment to our importance in the state.

In conclusion, I will end where I started my speech tonight. Who knew that in two short years we would be confronted with the worst economic crisis in 70 years? I, along with my colleagues, know full well that this is a tough budget for tough times. Not every decision is easy. We put our hands up for the good times and the tough times. I have confidence in the Premier and Treasurer and have no doubt that the decisions taken today will secure our future. I commend the bills to the House.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (10.24 pm): I disagree with the fundamental tenet of the Treasurer's budget speech for 2009-10 that this is a budget about the future which he delivered with a focus on sustainability for the years ahead. He likened himself to former Premier and Treasurer William Forgan Smith as a fellow Labor traveller. As deficit budgeters, they are of the same ilk, but as state builders the two could not be further apart.

William Forgan Smith was Premier from 1932 to 1942 and Treasurer from 1932 to 1936, at the peak of the Depression. This was the time which the Treasurer compares to our present circumstances. This is not supported by evidence. This Bligh government has paid lip-service to the principles of JM Keynes and Forgan Smith followed Keynes to the 'T'. Critically, I put it to members that this budget is neither core Labor philosophy nor sound future financial planning. I suspect this is an economic response built around years of excessive non-infrastructure borrowing, top-heavy recurrent expenditure and a revenue base that they cannot accept.

The fundamental principles of Keynesian economics are that the budget should be balanced and at times of prosperity public spending should be restrained, but in times of economic adversity public spending should be increased to promote and stimulate private enterprise. Most importantly, public spending of governments should aim to reduce unemployment. I say this because in both the budget and financial statements, as they were called in their day, Forgan Smith emphasised—and I quote from his speech on 29 September 1932—'as an objective being, an attempt should be made to limit the aggregate deficits of all states to the sum of nine million pounds'. The actual state deficit of Queensland at the time was £1,544 million. The average wage at that time for men was £3 and six shillings, and for women it was half that. The budget revenue was £13,299,535, plus the deficit was 11.6 per cent of the budget and state net debt was £111,911,785. This is a 1.4 deficit to debt ratio. However, the proposed ratio of this budget is 2.6 per cent, and the scale of the denominator needs to be understood in terms of the current budget debt of 2009 including GOCs of \$64 billion.

Forgan Smith stated that he confidently anticipated that the judicious expenditure of the special loans to be raised to some degree at least would increase the purchasing power of a large number of people who are not now earning a livelihood. By providing these people with work and wages, trade and industry would be stimulated and this is bound to have a beneficial effect on the state's finances. Sure, he had a budget deficit but nothing of the order of the current Bligh budget or its debt. His revenue was static. This state projects a three per cent increase on net revenue of \$39.2 billion. Bligh is projecting an \$85.5 billion net debt with a near \$2 billion deficit. These two years will come quickly. Forgan Smith by 1942 had only increased his net debt by 13 per cent on his original £111 million. Did you hear that? Forgan Smith deficit budgeted, and he did reduce unemployment.

This Treasurer, representing Bligh and Labor, has no right to want to stand shoulder to shoulder with this scion of the AWU. Add the current figures of this current Bligh 2009-10 budget and there is no historical comparison that gives you any confidence that this debt can be repaid. Without a valid forward strategy to repay that debt within a reasonable time, on balance it must be assumed that the debt has become structural. Looking at the growing levels of Commonwealth debt, they are in no position to save the state.

I predict that the state will struggle to service the debt without drastic cuts everywhere when the interest bill reaches \$5 billion annually. Forget about revision minibudgets; I believe this is a technical default. William Forgan Smith had far worse trouble than Bligh and Labor have in 2009. He had 28 per cent unemployment and the Commonwealth was short-changing him £2 million pounds annually. This was his deficit. Forgan Smith had a deficit budget, but it was nothing of the order of the current budget and its debt. The Commonwealth produced surpluses. What were honourable government members told or not told about the desperateness of our mutual financial situation and this need to bunch these

awful decisions that go to the core of their beliefs? Did they know that Forgan Smith could have sold the rail, too? He sold nothing, but it was his AWU faction that blocked the ARU and expelled many of its members from the ALP for frivolous reasons in the preceding years. You know it takes courage to stick. It is like marriage—in sickness and in good health. Will you stick?

On 4 October 1933 Forgan Smith said—

In addition to creating assets of value to the community, the utilisation of funds for these purposes relieves unemployment in a most effective manner.

He went on—

Business is stimulated by the circulation of increased purchasing power which, in turn, augments the demand for consumable goods. To the extent that consumers' purchasing power is created, so will solvent demand be restored which will permeate, with beneficial results, all sections of trade and commerce.

This was the key statement that was left out of the opening speech of the Treasurer—

Furthermore, recovery stimulus is assisted by the way in which governments can contribute to business recovery by the development of appropriate programs of capital expenditure. I hold the view that this form of policy is an integral feature of any form of national planning.

Note the key words 'business recovery', not government recovery. Private commerce would be their salvation, but he could not massively increase the public debt burden which would eventually stop the recovery in a depression. This made Forgan Smith the enemy of the Left Wing of the Labor Party forever. The hate ran as deep as selling the rail and will still cause deep division for many years from now.

I was disappointed to hear the member for Rockhampton—a town dear to my heart—supporting this flawed bill. I hope he fights the good fight internally to stop it, as he indicated he may. I will not detail how or where the money was expended by Forgan Smith, but it was nation building. The current plan of \$18.2 billion of this budget is embarrassing by comparison. Speaker after speaker has highlighted massive cost overruns on these outrageous cost-plus projects that deliver very little for funds expended. Sure, some are substantial, but Labor dodged the big one that will drive our state and its income with the new crossing over the divide north of Toowoomba. Members opposite know it is not too late. Forgan Smith, Theodore and Hanlon would have done it and I call on government members to do it, too.

Keynesian theory was thought to be outdated in 1970 and 1980, being replaced by Monetarist and New Classical theory, but in recent times it has made a strong comeback. The macro-economic concepts still apply and explain what may occur when applied correctly, which would prevent a serious depression ever occurring again. Keynesian theory targets business and reduces unemployment. Targeted at individuals, it transfers private debt into public debt due to hoarding or the repayment of personal debt. This issue was important to note because, in spite of this government and its members' recurring claims—and I gave the example of the state creaming 20 per cent off the top of the federal government's stimulus payments to schools to prop up its budget—it has awarded only two types of educational building structures on the Gold Coast. The first was to itself through QBuild and the other was to a Brisbane north company who won all the tenders, strangely enough. Its own stimulus payments are directed away from private enterprise. The money does nothing other than cost an interest component to the state for which the public becomes responsible. What Keynes discussed at a micro level was his concept of priming the pump.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: The member for Southport needs to listen to this. It is very important for him. He is an old hand; he should go back and tell them this. This was the idea that governments should spend it; the public would not. His principles were built around the concept of individuals hoarding capital at a time of economic stress because of fear and lack of confidence—and it is confidence that drives the market—that is, the public fear their loss of private capital.

In 1932 and later in 1933 both of these were in abundance when the unemployment level was 28 per cent nationally. Honourable members might ask: what happened? By 1946 the budget was £1 million in surplus, net state debt was £131,171,642, a 13 per cent increase on 1933. That is 13 years later. Deficits had reigned until 1945, but we had six years of war in between.

The future solution in the Bligh Labor budget is either built around a massive turnaround in revenue or, worst case scenario, a very hopeful sales program of key assets and an idea that the present infrastructure catch-up will end and the capital outlays will end. Future growth of revenue, which is the silent aspiration unsaid in the 2009-10 budget, will probably be accompanied by population growth and the demands that come with it for a capital infrastructure expenditure. It will not provide the quantum annually to serially reduce debt. In this Bligh budget the Treasurer is hoping that projected deficits will be ablated by the future revision to an economic outlook implying state income will rise faster than recurrent expenditure. This is hopeful thinking in a world that is destined to face slowly rising inflation and probably steeply rising interest rates. One side will balance out the other. Years of impoverished capital expenditure means that this idea fails to address the realistic assessment of the fact that, in failing to plan, Labor has consigned Queensland to always being behind.

Our current economic circumstances are not like those of the Great Depression. We are not even in recession. Our present unemployment is 6.25 per cent. Our nearest comparison is 1971 post Poseidon, leading eventually to shock at the oil prices being set by OPEC. Liquidity was tighter then. For those who do not remember, the stock market had crashed and a vast amount of capital was destroyed. However, even then the state produced a budget surplus of \$135.28 million when it had a population of 1.1 million.

Most economists think Australia is in a pretty good position—better than anyone else with big emerging gas reserves in Queensland and uranium for Australia. We are looking pretty good, but Queensland is not pulling its weight. The USA put nine million out of work in the past 12 months. After three months there if people do not have a job they are hungry and homeless.

The Bligh government would have us all believe this constant theme of management in crisis; and only Labor has the answers. No wonder it wanted to convince the public that it has a plan to fix things. Labor governments are the cause of most of the problems. We have had the crime crisis, the health crisis, the education crisis, the power crisis, the water crisis and now the money crisis. However, the government will not address the credibility crisis. As we all know, Labor is just not good with money.

A true Labor budget would be balanced at these times when the Commonwealth was producing a massive deficit. Honourable members should do their economics. It would focus on debt repayment and a viable plan to do so whilst maintaining employment, promoting private enterprise and thereby reducing unemployment and creating demand for goods and services. Did honourable members hear those words? They are exactly what Forgan Smith said in 1933. Read the speech. I have it here. This is exactly the opposite of what has been delivered in this Labor budget other than to say that Forgan Smith pursued the taxation route as this Bligh budget does. His reasons? The Commonwealth was short-changing us. The reasons here are the global financial crisis. In other words, the world is abandoning us. The evidence is that it is not. However, it will not pay as much as it did for our key products from which we earned a massive income in the greatest boom since the roaring twenties. History gives us an idea of what to expect in the future.

To put into perspective how much of a debt \$85 billion is: if we equate \$1 to every second, this would give a debt bill of 2,709 years.

Further to this, the Queensland government will have to pay a \$14 million a day bill. Despite the mining boom and the rivers of gold that have flowed for 10 years, not one cent was saved. Within five years we have gone to a \$64 billion deficit. This is an admission of failure. Fire sales will not work. They are being pitched at our lowest market point and with good reason—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: You will learn something here. With good reason funders reduced our credit rating, costing the state at least \$1.2 billion.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: You need that money. New South Wales has a AAA credit rating and is described as a basket case. The Bligh government's \$18.2 billion building program is at risk and there are no hard decisions taken on recurrent expenditure. Without a complementary fundamental, downward spiral deregulatory—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: Listen! Without a fundamental, downward spiral deregulatory approach, in addition to its present solutions to drive business and thereby consumer spending, the budget fails to reverse the decline in GST revenue which would give the budget the essential oxygen it needs to reverse the decline.

Small business is the driving force of our economy, employing up to 80 per cent of the workforce. Small business is the cornerstone of my electorate of Gaven. Without evidence that this government is not just softening us all up for an amended budget later this year based on economic indicators, confidence to invest and just remain in business will collapse. So very simply, and Keynesian principles show, the government should provide widespread, unbiased business investment incentives and not kick Queenslanders when they are down. If those opposite do not think they are getting a kick, they should think about the abrupt removal of the fuel subsidy. What about the car registration increases? What about the 30 per cent rise in electricity costs? What about the potential cancellation of the Sunshine Coast Hospital and closure of the Royal Children's Hospital?

The public were conned at the election, but how were they to know when they were promised 100,000 new jobs and money for everything. Bligh and Labor have breached their position of trust. Labor has failed its core principles and falsely used the GST to blame everyone other than itself. The Labor government does not understand the key to Keynesian theory is for governments to stimulate trade and industry and to restore market confidence.

The remaining issue to examine is attempting to understand what this government is thinking with regard to revenue. It projects negative growth of 0.5 per cent and a \$15 billion decrease in this term of parliament.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: I take that interjection. In truth, revenue in 2009-10 is projected to rise by three per cent. It is capping forward wage increases by 2.5 per cent and is making some very minor cuts to recurrent expenditure as its concession to the expenditure side of the balance sheet.

Honourable members, I do not think the Premier and Treasurer realised when they were doing their part for the environment that it did not involve the recycling of budget promises. If they think it is environmentally friendly to recycle funding promises three times over then they need to ask the Greens what they think of Nerang's imaginary fire station. Most certainly they will receive an unfavourable response.

Not only has the Nerang Fire Station been announced for the third time, but it appears there has been less funding allocated to it. Funding falls short by up to \$650,000 compared to last year's budget. I think the government needs to come forward and tell Queensland that this cut in funding is because they have gone bust in a boom.

Another problem in the Gaven electorate is the opportunity for employment for young people. The government has planned \$4.55 million to create 530 jobs for young people in the south coast region. But, unfortunately, figure distortion is fantastic for newspaper headlines. When one gets the calculator out, one finds that even if every dollar of this promise went to wages it does not include the funding for the administration of the initiative. The average weekly wage would only be a total of \$165. Honourable members, this wage will not even come close to paying the weekly bills, with most weekly rental costs exceeding this sum.

This highlights another critical point of figure distortion—that is, the discrepancy between the unemployment and the underemployment rate. Underemployment is not being utilised in one's job to the full or desired capacity. Governments need to be aware of this factor as severe underemployment can be almost as crippling as being unemployed. For example, one hour a week does qualify as a job.

I think the word 'default' needs to be considered here because the government fails to realise where it is. When one balks at the really hard decisions because one does not understand them one really needs to seek advice. The issue of default should ring alarm bells. Just because the incumbent government delivers the proposal it does not mean it has a mortgage on both insight and common sense.

I heard the member for Murrumba mention Dickens. Dickens was the people's champion. Dickens said—

Credit is a system whereby a person who can't pay gets another person who can't pay to guarantee that he can pay.

To which George Bernard Shaw added, 'The government who robs Peter to pay Paul cannot always depend on the support of Paul.'

(Time expired)

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.45 pm): I rise tonight in this chamber to contribute to the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2009. This week Queenslanders heard a confession—a confession from Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser that confirms the public's suspicion that Labor hid the state of our finances from the voting public just three months ago and before calling an early election.

Today Queenslanders understand just how financially incompetent this Labor government is and that every man, woman and child has been condemned to a decade of debt because of this incompetence. Queenslanders today understand that when we fill up our cars, buy food at the supermarket, turn on the tap, flick on the lights—basically every daily activity—it is now going to be even more expensive from 1 July thanks to the ineptitude and incompetence of this government.

Andrew Fraser and Anna Bligh misled the public and blamed the state of the economy on the global financial crisis when in fact this government had already racked up over \$64 billion in debt long before the global financial crisis hit and allowed Queensland to go bust in a boom. The time for blaming the global financial crisis is over.

I note the former member for Mudgeeraba in her response to the 2008-09 budget stated the following—

The mark of a good budget is one that delivers essential services and infrastructure that continues to build. It bears the hallmark of fiscal responsibility while looking across the horizon and building for the Queensland of tomorrow.

I refer to the definition of 'fiscal' from the Webster dictionary. It clearly states that it is 'of or relating to taxation, public revenues, or public debt'. This budget certainly speaks to taxation and public debt with little public revenue in sight. This is a high-taxing budget with a blow-out in public debt that Queenslanders will be paying off for many years to come.

We are facing government debt of \$85.5 billion. To put it in simple terms, for an average family of four that is a debt of \$78,000 each. Yes, a massive \$78,000 debt each—not per household but each. It is going to cost Queensland's taxpayers \$14 million a day every day to pay just the interest bill on this \$85.5 billion of debt.

The once proud history of Queensland as the low-tax, lifestyle capital of Australia is now becoming a distant memory. This budget is the result of our economic decline under 11 years of a Labor government. We are the only state in Australia to have lost its AAA credit rating. Having previously been the nation's economic powerhouse, this government should be embarrassed that we are now on a credit watch with Standard & Poor's.

We saw during the election campaign this government use funding from the federal government as part of its election promises. But let us be frank. With its record of financial mismanagement and lack of fiscal responsibility, who else but its friends in federal government could it go to with cap in hand asking for more money? This government has, as quoted by my colleague the shadow Treasurer—

The inability to raise funds overseas without big brother, the federal government, coming in to stand as guarantor; the extra interest payments—\$340 million every year—as a result of the loss of the AAA credit rating.

This state Labor government has had 11 years in office to put away money in the good times to protect us in the bad. This is a government without a plan and without a future. This is a government whose record is one of mismanagement, failure and squandered opportunity.

One needs to look no further than the budget debate speech made by the former member in 2008 to highlight how fiscal mismanagement has led to a budget blow-out, a fire sale and the loss of our credit rating. She stated—

Queensland's strong financial budget position means that we can borrow to build for the future—something every Queenslander does when the bank agrees they have the capacity. But today we all borrow to build or buy, depending on our income, financial standing and credit rating. In fact, most people find, like me, that the more they earn the more debt they have. That does not mean my children will be paying off my debt.

Our children and their children's children will be paying off this Labor government state debt. Combine this with the \$318 billion federal debt racked up by another renowned Labor spendthrift and the expectation is looking quite bleak for our future generations. Although expected, it is disappointing that election commitments, albeit almost grudgingly given on the eve of the election, have not been honoured. Sadly, this is a situation that many of the long-suffering residents in Mudgeeraba have been getting used to over the past eight years. One week prior to the election we witnessed the spectacle of this government doing a monumental backflip and committing to undergrounding a section of powerlines in Asperia Street in Reedy Creek. This promise only came after months and months of lobbying by locals.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of people power and the residents of Reedy Creek. More than half of the electorate stuck together and looked after their own neighbours, and only then did we finally see this government back-pedal to try to save its marginal seat in Mudgeeraba. I acknowledge Gecko, STOP, the Mudgeeraba Action Group and residents who refused to give up on this issue that saw this Labor government match—yes, match—the LNP's commitment to underground those powerlines in established residential areas and provide relief and certainty for the homeowners in Asperia Street in Reedy Creek.

Only the LNP and the member for Callide responded to the long-running community campaign in the Mudgeeraba electorate with a plan to underground sections of the proposed powerline in Reedy Creek. Only the LNP saw that the extra cost of undergrounding the lines was justified to reduce the collateral impact on the local community, and only the LNP placed high priority in consultation with communities. Residents of Reedy Creek were sick and tired of being treated like second-class citizens by this state Labor government which continually ignored residents' concerns and whose only solution was to move the problem 100 metres away. They threatened to take this issue to the ballot box, and take it to the ballot box they did, culminating in a resounding defeat for Labor in Mudgeeraba. I can assure this government that the residents of Reedy Creek will not go quietly into the night on this issue. The Labor state government made a commitment to them and I will fight tooth and nail to ensure that this commitment is honoured.

That brings me to the long-suffering residents of Lower Beechmont, who have the dubious honour of having the RACQ 2008 worst state road as their claim to fame. Again, only after this became an election issue did this state Labor government backflip and promise—wait for it—only half of what it will actually cost to completely reprofile and resurface this dangerous road. Since December 2008 there have been 17 accidents on this stretch of road, and only just recently a fatality when a local bike rider hit a pothole. I do, however, thank the Minister for Main Roads for responding today to my question on notice from 20 May regarding Beechmont Road. Beechmont and Lower Beechmont residents will be very pleased to hear that the \$2.5 million election commitment is now part of the Roads Implementation Program for 2009-10.

Only last week I met with Main Roads and the Better Roads for Beechmont Group and, through meaningful consultation, we have identified the three most urgent areas to upgrade. I want to thank the Better Roads for Beechmont Group and 85 per cent of the residents of Lower Beechmont who responded to my protest card and the 75 per cent who responded to the member for Beaudesert's protest card, because we share this road together, for without that pressure and dogged determination of a few residents such as Greg McKenzie this would not have been possible.

It is also not surprising to note that there is no mention of secondary education for Mudgeeraba in this budget. Unlike this Labor state government, I stand by the premise that a state high school is needed west of the M1. The former member, who went from highlighting the need for a new state high school in 2001 to categorically stating eight years later that we would not need one for 20 years, said—

Most of my time since my election has been taken up in dealing with education issues in the electorate because I am facing a legacy of neglect and poor planning which has resulted in a situation whereby local primary schools are overflowing. Even new high schools, such as the one at Robina, are bursting at the seams. A hinterland seat of 26,000 residents has no state high school. I have been visiting my local schools, both public and private, and talking to parents, teachers, principals and students about education resources in the area. I have found that they have been crying out for added facilities to meet demand ...

That is from the *Hansard* of 21 June 2001. Then we got a little bit confused, because in the *Gold Coast Sun* in October 2007 she said that apparently—

There is no demand for a new High School and there is no point in lobbying for something that you don't need, statistics show otherwise.

And then again in the *Gold Coast Sun* dated 11 March 2009 she said—

The latest figures do not indicate a need for a new school for another 20 years and to build one for vanity's sake would strip nearby schools of resources. The minute I see there is a need for one I will be the first person to lobby for it.

Robina State High School is operating at 80 per cent capacity and can only accept approximately 400 more enrolments before reaching that capacity. There are eight state primary schools in the district with a total current enrolment of 4,331. I ask this: which high school are these children expected to attend? I call on the Bligh Labor government to commit to a feasibility study for a new high school west of the M1 in the Mudgeeraba electorate and to provide the documentation which justifies that planning new facilities in a growth corridor such as Mudgeeraba is not required.

Sadly, this brings me to the most neglected part of my electorate and the political football this government has made of this much awaited, much longed for piece of infrastructure. I am well known on the Gold Coast as a fierce campaigner for the upgrade of the M1 and its relevant interchanges because this is the single biggest complaint I have heard in the electorate of Mudgeeraba and indeed much of the Gold Coast. This Labor government has played politics with the M1 for far too long. In 2007 I stood on the Gooding Drive roundabout at exit 77 along with my federal colleagues Steven Ciobo and Margaret May when the federal Minister for Transport, Mark Vaile, announced \$455 million of federal funding for the eight-lane upgrade of the M1 from Nerang to Tugun. For years this state government bleated that it could not even start an interchange until it got matching federal funding. To hear the former member state that the Rudd federal government was honouring this election commitment is a fallacy. Those of us who actually lobbied in Canberra for this funding know that it was already allocated in the AusLink mark II funding and that it was not an election promise but a budgeted promise. Even then, we had to wait until 2008 before the upgrade of that much awaited Nielsens Road interchange began, albeit seven years too late and with a budget blow-out of \$7 million. Locals know why this interchange commenced. They know who stood on the roundabout and on the traffic median at Alexander Drive for a year and—surprise, surprise—they were not wearing a red T-shirt; they were wearing a blue one.

Before the last two elections locals and I watched bemused when yet another house which had been resumed was knocked down so it looked again like something was happening. Interestingly, before the election was called earlier this year, as the former chairman of the Mudgeeraba Action Group I received a Q150 letter asking for my input on what the new Nerang South interchange bridge should be called. I think the bridge should be called the Capon Bridge for Amanda and Brendan Capon, because only after intense lobbying on their behalf was their family home resumed at market value rather than the \$90,000 less that this government was prepared to pay them. We have seen the same \$455 million rehashed, rebadged, reinvented and we still have not seen the M1 upgraded! Residents are sick and tired of a government that keeps bleating about spend, spend, spend on infrastructure whilst I have been lobbying on the side of the road since 2005 for change to this traffic gridlock. It is only now, eight years down the track, we are finally seeing the Mudgeeraba interchange commence, with a further promise to upgrade the M1 from Nielsens Road to Gooding Drive. At least the businesses at City Links Estate are safe in the knowledge that at this rate, the way this government builds, the six-laning will not happen until 2013 and the Elysium Road overpass is safe for a long time to come.

Reedy Creek residents will also have to endure five sets of traffic lights to get onto and off the M1 from their homes and the only reason that anything is happening west of the M1 is because of the Varsity train station east of the M1. I want to remind those opposite that Reedy Creek is actually west of the M1 and the Varsity Lakes station was, until only recently, called the Reedy Creek Railway Station, and of course it goes hand in hand with the Reedy Creek Police Station, which is actually—surprise, surprise—in the Burleigh electorate. As I stand here today to plead yet again for the urgent upgrade of

the M1, it saddens me that my own friend is grieving the loss of her only daughter just last weekend on this treacherous stretch of road. My friend stood next to me during many a protest over the lack of funding for the M1. She has spoken out on this issue as a member of the Mudgeeraba Police Consultative Committee and as a local Neighbourhood Watch coordinator, and together we have fought for funding.

It breaks my heart that today, as a member of this parliament, I am still pleading with this government to make sure that other mothers such as my friend Wendy never have to go through this heartbreak themselves. Each time an accident is reported on the M1, every Gold Coaster knows to expect a fatality. When you drive on the M1 and all of sudden you are at a snail's pace, you know with a sickening feeling what you will be driving past after you have had to move off to the road shoulder to enable the fire trucks, the ambulances and the police to get through the Mudgeeraba car park. Every one of us knows what we will see next. It is too common an occurrence. How many more innocent residents of Mudgeeraba and the Gold Coast have to die before this dangerous stretch of road is upgraded and this state Labor government spends the money it keeps reannouncing to fix this road?

The residents of Mudgeeraba have had eight years of being treated like second-class citizens. This budget, yet again, ignores the most pressing needs of residents, such as upgrading the entire M1, not just reannouncing old Howard government monies; safety barriers and sound barriers now, not in another 10 years time; more police and a state high school west of the M1 now.

This government has a track record of failing to plan whilst the LNP and the former coalition has a track record of building for the present. It seems a lifetime ago from this budget, but in reality it was only approximately 12 weeks ago that I recall the words 'Queenslanders, you can count on me' being said on election night. Yet we have seen this week this Labor government treat Queensland residents with utter contempt and display an arrogance that defies belief. Queenslanders have a right to feel angry and let down. How can the government expect them to count on the government and trust it to have their best interests at the core of its decisions when it is prepared to kick them when they are down?

This budget shows clearly why Queenslanders went to an early election. The government's desperate need for an unnecessary fire sale of profitable public assets to try to fill a budget black hole was not something it wanted the voters to know. The only winners from this fire sale will be the bargain hunters. Fiscal responsibility lesson 101 is that you do not sell assets during a financial crisis or depression. To do so will not result in the best possible price or maximum financial gain.

In effect, the government is short-changing Queensland residents by this sale in the present financial climate. The government's deceit has cost this great state a burden of debt. But unfortunately, it is not a burden that the government alone has to carry. The government has extended this burden to every single Queensland mother, father and child.

Mrs KEECH (Albert—ALP) (11.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill and congratulate him and our government on introducing a responsible bill that is framed against the toughest economic and fiscal times Australia has seen in more than 70 years. The Queensland economy, through no fault of its own, has experienced a king hit, with \$15 billion being stripped from our forward estimates as we see our major trading partners, such as Japan, South Korea, the United States and the United Kingdom, falling into recession. At the same time, revenue from the GST, coal royalties and transfer duties has plummeted.

In introducing this state budget, just three months after an historic fifth-term Labor win, the Bligh government had two choices. One was to do nothing and stick our head in the sand, as the LNP would have us do. The LNP would not even have us wait for the economic storms to pass because its leader is on record as believing that the global economic crisis is a myth. The Treasurer was spot-on when he said that the response by the Leader of the Opposition to his budget on Thursday lacked courage, vision and any solutions whatsoever.

I am proud that the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill, which we are debating tonight, is proof positive that as a Labor government we have the leadership who is up to making tough decisions in delivering on our election promise to put the jobs of families, like those of the tradesmen and women and the small business owners in my electorate of Albert, front and centre as the top priority. Premier Anna Bligh has showed strong leadership in ensuring that as a state we come through this time in a stronger position. That will be achieved by the massive \$18.2 billion building program, which has significant and welcome benefits for the working families of Albert.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mrs KEECH: I take that interjection from the Minister for Education and Training. Infrastructure projects such as the \$1.76 billion for the world-class Gold Coast University Hospital about which, together with the member for Broadwater, I received an update briefing today from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning; the \$1.88 billion upgrade of the Gateway Motorway; the \$1.95 billion upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway; the \$13.8 million across South-East Queensland to fluoridate the

south coast water supply; and the \$464 million from the state government to build the Gold Coast rapid transit project are most welcome. Although those projects are not located physically in the Albert electorate, the flow-on benefits of the thousands of jobs they have created and will maintain for Albert electorate families and businesses cannot be underestimated.

As the *Albert and Logan News* Quest newspaper stated on Wednesday, 17 June—

The state government will pour millions into the local road network through projects funded in the 2009-10 budget.

As usual, the *Albert and Logan News* is correct. Unlike the opposition, that newspaper recognises that in tough economic times the Bligh government has its eyes set firmly on the right priorities, that is, creating and maintaining jobs through its \$18 billion infrastructure program.

I would like to extend my very best wishes to the editor of the *Albert and Logan News* Quest newspaper, Ray Goodey, who has taken leave due to illness. Also, my best wishes go to his wife, Frances. I, together with all the other members of this House who represent the Logan area, wish Ray all the very best in his recovery. Ray has made an outstanding contribution to both public information and social commentary and is widely respected throughout the entire community.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mrs KEECH: I take that interjection from the member. The big winner in the 2009-10 budget is better services for Albert, particularly the electorate's busy road network and particularly the Pacific Motorway, which after the state redistribution now marks the eastern boundary of Albert. The budget will provide significant upgrades to the motorway itself as well as provide more in-house noise treatments for residents, \$12 million in joint state and federal funding for interchange improvements at the Foxwell Road and Pacific Motorway interchange, as well as \$3.19 million in joint state and federal funding for concept planning for the Coomera interchange. As well as improvements for Tamborine-Oxenford Road, I am very pleased to receive \$500,000 for intersection improvements on the Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road at the Tallagandra Road intersection, Beenleigh. As my colleague the honourable member for Waterford is very much aware, this intersection is feeling the pressure of additional congestion, particularly at peak hours and before and after school.

When I was doorknocking during the last state election campaign just three months ago, I promised the families of Albert that if I were re-elected I would look to the future and work hard to ensure that state government services keep up with the projected population boom. That is why I have told the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon. Craig Wallace, that whilst I welcome the \$500,000 for the first stage of planning by his department for the intersection, I will continue to fight to ensure that the funding for the installation of the traffic lights is brought forward. In doing that, I have personally invited the minister to join me and residents to visit Beenleigh-Beaudesert Road so that he can see for himself the need to fast-track the traffic lights and the duplication of this very busy major road. When the minister visits the electorate, I will be able to thank him for the \$100,000 in federal Black Spot funding to complete shoulder sealing on a section of Beenleigh-Beaudesert Road between Mount Warren Boulevard and Windaroo Valley State High School.

The Albert electorate is home to many young working families. They will benefit from a \$4.5 million boost across the south coast for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, including Queensland's Green Army to create 530 jobs for young people and those disadvantaged in the labour market.

With 2,000 people coming to Queensland each week—and most of them, it seems, stopping once they get over the border and settling in Albert; and why would they not—this budget is particularly focused on planning for the future and seeing substantial investment in energy infrastructure and jobs for the region. I welcome the \$5.8 million allocation for the Coomera bulk substation to establish a second feeder to the Hope Island substation, the \$1.28 million at Pimpama east to build two subtransmission feeders to the Gold Coast sewage treatment plant, the \$2.7 million at Cades County for a new high-voltage feeder to increase network capacity as well as the allocation of \$885,000 at Beenleigh towards the upgrade of two transformers, which will significantly boost network capacity.

As a parent of three wonderful children—and happy birthday today to James—and also as a registered teacher, I am so proud of the great schools in Albert and the strong educational leadership that is shown by their principals. I know the Minister for Education and Training shares my passion for and my recognition of their great work, because recently he visited one of the newer schools.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mrs KEECH: I appreciate the minister's interjections. Like their P&Cs, I welcome the extra \$200,000 in maintenance funds for Beenleigh Special School, Cedar Creek State School, Gaven State School, Upper Coomera State College and Windaroo Valley State High School. As well, \$200,000 for planning of stage 2 at Coomera Springs State School—one of the state's newest state schools, with principal Mike Ennis, who is very passionate about young people achieving their potential—is most welcome.

I have worked long and hard with previous ministers in planning for a new TAFE facility for the northern Gold Coast to provide much needed training facilities. After all the hard work, the Premier and the Treasurer have more than delivered. That is why I know that the constituents of the new seat of Coomera would be most disappointed with the speech tonight by their new LNP member, who does not consider the \$28.85 million for the Coomera education precinct for a new TAFE as worthy of even a mention.

It may not have made the headlines, but international research shows that building a foundation on a child's love for reading brings great future educational outcomes. That is why I applaud the Treasurer's \$1.9 million for the purchase of books for public libraries in the Gold Coast region and more than \$1 million towards the purchase of books for public libraries in the Logan region.

Whilst I have been in parliament this week debating the Appropriation Bill, my electorate office has been as usual extremely busy. I would like to pass on my thanks to my hardworking electorate office team of Natalie Main, Brent Davidson, Judy Hendrix and volunteer Ruth Keenan, who regularly go above and beyond the call of duty in supporting me to finding solutions to the many challenging social, community and planning problems a fast-growing region like Albert is faced with.

In the public gallery I would like to acknowledge my husband, Peter, and our son Joshua, a Sydney lawyer and community activist, who, together with our other children, James and Helen, have worked very, very hard indeed during the campaign. I am very pleased indeed that they have been able to join me tonight as we support the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill.

The budget is focused on jobs, building infrastructure and front-line services. I congratulate the Treasurer and commend the bill to the House.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (11.12 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on the appropriation bills, the asset sales bill and the fuel tax bill. Regrettably I will be leaving this place this evening to report back to my electorate that the people of Aspley have been slugged with all the bills and got few benefits from a Labor budget that has failed our area and failed Queensland.

The No. 1 fact of this budget for families in the Aspley electorate is that they are now lumbered with a state imposed debt of around \$78,000 per family and very little to show for it. And that is before they even consider the debt that Labor's Yvette D'Ath is lumbering them with by supporting the Rudd government's federal plan for more federal debt in the future. The No. 2 fact is that locals will be slugged with a new fuel tax after one of the most brazen broken promises and electoral deceptions in modern political times.

On the expenditure side, of the small number of projects earmarked for the Aspley electorate in this year's Capital Statement, most are recycled announcements of previous years. The allocation to schools as part of the State Schools of Tomorrow funding, whilst always welcome, was budgeted for last year, and the money for the police station at Carseldine has been budgeted for the past two years.

It is important to place on the public record that I think the police station at Carseldine, if properly resourced and manned, is a worthwhile and tangible investment in policing in the local area. Indeed, many residents in the suburb of Bald Hills, where I recently held a community meeting, expressed their concerns that, while the Carseldine Police Station is welcome, it might come at the cost of the closure of their police beat that was opened less than three years ago, to much fanfare, at a cost of \$446,000—a police beat that was promised during the 2004 election campaign, delivered just before the 2006 election, and now to be taken away just after the 2009 election. It is apparent that now the election is over so too is the pretence of any commitment by the government to locals in that area.

In the greater Brisbane Regional Budget Statement, the government talks about improving road safety and quality, and reducing congestion to the tune of \$3.53 billion. Whilst I do not begrudge improvements to the Gateway Motorway, the southern end of Gympie Road and Sandgate Road—not in my electorate but all necessary and overdue—I am wondering why there has been nothing to address the growing traffic problems in my local area.

For example, the north coast rail crossing on Telegraph Road creates significant traffic congestion and safety concerns during both peak and non-peak travelling times. At morning and evening peak times the crossing can be closed to motorists for up to 15 minutes. During these times there are 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles per hour travelling down that corridor. Daily numbers of vehicles reach up to 20,000. We need to remove the rail crossing urgently and build a road overpass that will allow cars to pass freely over the railway line.

Traditionally council has provided 15 per cent of funding towards open level rail-crossing projects, and the state government has provided 85 per cent. But, because fixing this crossing is so important, council is prepared to contribute up to half of the cost in order to get it done. In the council's budget that was delivered this week, an allocation of \$2.021 million was made to finalise the business case and resume some of the necessary land for the project.

The Brisbane City Council has engaged in wide-ranging community consultation, and the residents who live locally have overwhelmingly endorsed the planned improvements. Here is the most unfortunate part though: the state government has indicated that it will not even consider funding of this important project until at least 2015. That means that there will be no change to the traffic build-up that currently occurs and no improvement to this safety hazard. There will be no change for the thousands of motorists caught in the traffic, except for one major change—they will be taxed an extra 9.2c per litre for the privilege of sitting in ever-increasing traffic queues. They get all of the bills and none of the benefits.

I want to place on the public record the sort of feedback I am getting in Aspley about the proposed fire sale of public assets. I appreciate that there are mixed views about privatisation and when it might be appropriate and when it might not be. The overwhelming sentiment I get from locals is that of betrayal. They are angry that during the election the Premier promised a fully funded plan for the future and now they are being told of a bargain basement sale of assets—something that was shamefully kept secret from them.

Frankly, many people who speak to me simply do not believe that this was not under consideration prior to the election. They suspect that this was a secret plan that Labor deliberately withheld in the sure knowledge that the electorate would not approve of a fire sale disposal of public assets, in a depressed market, to cover up financial mismanagement. People in Aspley have made it clear to me that they took the Premier at her word, but she has since proven that neither she nor the government she leads can be trusted.

As parliamentarians, we all know that we are here to represent all those within our electorates, not just those who voted for us. I am amazed by the number of calls that we have had to our office from constituents who said they had not voted for me but who are aghast at the Premier and Treasurer's fire sale and tax budget. I have taken all of these calls very seriously, and I want to say to those individuals that I agree that the government should apologise for the deception and the lies.

I would like to touch briefly on the Queensland Rail sale. The residents of Aspley are particularly angry about the fire sale of the profitable entities associated with Queensland Rail and the effect this will have on passenger rail fares. Despite the hefty cross-subsidy that exists with the state's rail services now, the cost of subsidising passenger rail in Queensland is already swelling. While the government keeps on saying that it has big plans to expand and improve South-East Queensland's commuter rail network, it is divesting Queensland of the very assets that might help fund it.

As it stands, the cost of subsidising commuter rail travel three years ago was a hefty \$5.40 for each passenger trip. It is now running at \$8.25, a jump of more than 50 per cent. Without the ability to support the cross-subsidy in the future, locals in my area can expect that to increase further.

Very few in my local area have been taken in by the excuse—the furphy—that this fire sale is necessary because of the global financial crisis. People understand that we are facing difficult economic times, but they do not accept that it is entirely the fault of the global financial crisis. In reality, we were already in trouble before the crisis hit. Despite the mining boom and the rivers of gold that flowed into the Treasury coffers for more than a decade, this state government did not put anything aside for the tough times and is racking up a debt of nearly \$85.5 billion. As I said earlier, that is \$78,000 each, plus interest, for the average family in my electorate to work for and pay back in the future—before one teacher is paid at Aspley State School, before one extra policeman is paid to man the Carseldine Police Station and before one more operation can occur at Prince Charles Hospital.

This fire sale of profitable public assets is not driven by good economic policy but by economic desperation to fill the black hole they have put in the state balance sheet over many years of mismanagement. Selling at the bottom of the market simply does not make sense. As a small business woman I know in these difficult times how hard it is to keep cash going through the till, but you do not just go down to Cash Converters to hock your stock so that you can pay the credit card, and certainly not in a depressed market. What you do is keep your finances in order in the first place. On this front Labor has failed.

The government's plan to scrap our 8.35c per litre fuel subsidy, despite specific assurances to the broader community ahead of the March election that the subsidy would be retained, is a huge impost on local families and community services. Making fuel more expensive through higher taxes will leave Queensland families and businesses with less money to spend on other goods and services—goods and services that will in turn rise in price because of higher transport costs.

Industry groups such as the Queensland Trucking Association, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, AgForce, Marine Queensland and the Motor Trades Association of Queensland are also concerned about job losses in their sectors should an additional 9.2c a litre in tax be added to fuel prices. The residents in Aspley will be slugged with the fuel tax every time they fill up the car and at every supermarket checkout.

Families in Aspley are telling me that the addition of 9.2c a litre to the cost of petrol will hit them hard. They are backed by the RACQ, who state in their budget response 'State budget no joy for motorists'—

Vehicle registration fee increases, combined with the new fuel tax, will leave most Queensland motorists more than \$220 a year worse off.

The registration increases of 17 to 22 percent are more than the combined registration increases of the past six years and have to be seen as a blatant cash grab.

Increasing both fuel taxes and registration fees simultaneously treats motorists as a simple target to restore lost income from other sources.

People in Aspley and in this place know my passion for the Royal Children's Hospital and my strong support for it to be retained at Herston. Because this government has demonstrated a record of underdelivering on projects and overspending, there is no question in my mind that the ultimate cost to move the hospital will blow out, and we simply cannot afford that. There is grave concern that if there are budget blow-outs associated with the QCH project, facilities will be cut and the end result will not be the world-class facility that the government proposes to deliver. We cannot afford to compromise the health of our children.

There is little to commend in this budget for the people of the Aspley electorate. The 100,000 new full-time jobs promised looks like a pipedream. Not only is unemployment forecast to nearly double; the extra fuel and electricity costs will deter small business people like myself from creating new jobs as we have to find the money to pay for the increased imposts on our businesses.

The Premier said that jobs were in her DNA, but you cannot cheat your DNA. What this budget proves is that higher taxes, higher spending, higher debt and poor infrastructure delivery are what is really in Labor's DNA. The unions might be cross with the Premier, but the residents of Aspley are livid. The unions and the Labor backbench might have folded but the people of Carseldine, McDowall, Bald Hills, Chermside West, Bridgeman Downs and Aspley will not forget. They will not be allowed to forget, because they will be paying off this debt for a generation.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (11.25 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the Appropriation Bill, the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. To stand and reply to this budget is a difficult task. It is difficult because the majority in my community have been forgotten. My predecessor must have failed in raising the profile of this electorate, so what is needed is a brief geography lesson. I table a map, which I will call 'Exhibit A'. It is a map of the Redlands which shows quite clearly all the features of my electorate. I also table 'Exhibit B', a map of Queensland which shows where Redlands sits in relation to the rest of Queensland.

Tabled paper: Bundle of maps relating to the District of Redlands [458].

At the conclusion of the speech you can look at the maps and you will see by the location and nature of the electorate—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Will the member remember to speak through the chair.

Mr DOWLING: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I certainly will. At the conclusion of my speech all members of the House can look at the maps and see by the location and nature of the electorate that we have a range of issues not found in any other electorate.

What will my community be thinking when they pore over the budget documents? They will be thinking that they have been sold out, betrayed and neglected—especially those union members out in my electorate. They will feel it even more personally. Never in their wildest dreams would they have thought Labor would just disregard them and that each and every one of their parliamentary Labor members in this House would betray them. My residents will feel that they have been neglected again by Labor—neglect that continues through yet another budget. With very few projects delivered in our area, an area with significant need, why would they, or should they, not feel so cheated?

There was obviously no forward planning to address local issues in the area, where the need is so high. What did we get? We got a fire station at Redland Bay. It received funding of \$2.3 million. This is a project that was essential five years ago. Make no mistake: this is not Labor coming good on a promise; this is the Redlands residents getting their fire levies back. It is getting the money back that they provide for this service.

Redland Bay State School received \$338,000 funding for additional amenities. This is a school that is at capacity, a school that is at the heart of the growth area of Redlands. The school is barely able to cope with the student needs for space and facilities. This funding is a step in the right direction, and I will pass on my thanks on behalf of every parent, student and teacher from that Redland Bay school. I will also extend an invitation to any member of the House to visit the school and see firsthand the need.

But that is pretty much all we found in the budget. We found some reannouncements and we found some stopgap work and some long overdue bits and pieces. But other than that, what is lacking and what will be the end result for my community? They will be suffering from the lack of funding for services and infrastructure—infrastructure such as roads, health, transport, education, marine infrastructure, law and order. Redlanders feel cheated by Labor, by Premier Bligh and by Treasurer Fraser.

Redlands is a community which has issues unlike anywhere else in Queensland that need to be addressed. It is made up of two vastly different communities: the bay islands and the mainland. My island communities are made up of six islands. They have a combined population of approximately 8,000 people. These are people who live without sealed roads. There are countless kilometres of unsealed roads. Redland City Council, which would normally provide road infrastructure, cannot. It needs support from the state and the federal governments.

My island communities also need health-care services to meet the demands of a growing community. It is a community isolated in many ways—physically by transport availability and at times financially because of the cost of travel. The travel cost is compounded because this Labor government has failed to deliver on commitments made in the past to roll out the TransLink and the e-ticketing systems.

Island residents will also be bracing themselves for even higher ferry fares because of the new fuel tax grab—a grab that will ripple through every corner of the economy like a cancer. Islanders, visitors and tourists all suffer from a lack of marine infrastructure. The marine infrastructure can only be described as minimalist. It is minimalist in maintenance, minimalist in design, minimalist in capital investment and minimalist in functionality.

An example I could use is the ferry terminals on the bay islands—Russell, Macleay, Lamb, Karragarra islands. They have a relatively modern new floating pontoon structure, but the structure offers no shelter from the wind or rain so passengers are left standing there huddled together, wet, cold and windblown. Islanders also need to be agile and they need to be able to climb up to half a metre to embark and disembark from ferries because of the height differences between the ferry and the pontoon.

Mr Wendt: What about the tide?

Mr DOWLING: There may come a day when they can walk ashore, but what will they do until that time? Coochiemudlo Island has an even greater challenge with both jetties having only stairs. That means incredible hardship for mothers with prams, incredible hardship for the elderly, incredible hardship for anyone with a disability. Where are these projects listed in the budget to help create employment and deliver on community need and expectation?

This neglect is also extended to the provision of law enforcement. We have one police officer on Russell Island and one police officer on Macleay Island, with almost 3,000 residents on each. How does that compare to the police to population ratio around the state? We have one officer per 3,000 residents. That is nothing like the figures we hear bandied around here—not even close to equitable service delivery.

Before I move on, I need to acknowledge the work of those two officers—Michael Verry and Brad Rantall. They are like a pair of supermen out there. Both were recognised by their communities recently at a police awards night organised by the Rotary Club of Capalaba. It was top recognition for their service to their respective communities. I fear for their safety. Each works in isolation, each goes well above and beyond the call of duty. I raise their plight to highlight yet again the neglect shown to my community when it comes to service delivery from this government.

The issues of isolation are complex and this government has not begun to address them. The barge services are a major concern to all island residents. Prices are prohibitive for residents, adding to their cost of living with freight charges. This is all compounded by Labor's plan to slug everyone with a new fuel tax. It is obscene to think that just over 12 weeks ago the voters of Queensland were sold a pup. They were conned. Not once did the Premier utter the words 'new fuel tax for Queensland'. Not once did the Premier utter the words 'QR for sale', 'motorways for sale', 'ports for sale'. Talk about a con job!

But the biggest con job and the biggest sellout in all of this has been the sellout by members of the government of their long-held beliefs and their integrity to their rank and file members and to their party. Government members have sold out the rank and file members of the unions, every worker, every family the length and breadth of this state. It is the sale of the century. Government members will sell the lie to the community for an election, sell the assets, sell out their mates, sell out their friends and their backers, and they will sell out Queenslanders.

Then there is the mainland part of my electorate. What has the government delivered for them? It has not planned for public transport. Even the police station on the mainland at Redland Bay is not open 24 hours a day. What confidence can residents have when they see a budget like this?

We all know that times are tough at the moment but this is ridiculous. This is a budget that highlights the poor planning of Labor, so what can my residents look forward to? No infrastructure, no projects, no support. But there are some things that are looking up: debt, that is looking up, it is \$85 billion; fuel costs, they are looking up; the interest bill, that is up an extra \$1.2 billion; fees, up; fines, up; charges, up; electricity costs, up; water charges, up; registration, up. At a time when Queensland can least afford it, Labor and this budget are like a cancer—silently spreading into everyone's wallet and purse.

Fuel tax is just one part of the cancer that is this budget. Vehicle registration is another runaway grab for cash by a bankrupt government—morally, ethically and financially bankrupt. I receive calls, emails and letters complaining about the excesses. I will read an excerpt from one recent email, which says—

I have just received my Motor Vehicle Registration renewal, and it has increased by \$100!!! We were all aware that the registrations were being increased, but by \$100! That represents an 18.5% increase. No one is able to increase charges by this amount in one 'hit'. I was expecting, perhaps, an extra \$30.

Boaties are also being targeted with increases in boat registration. Fines are going up. We will see the Queensland Police Service become more like tax collectors and the members of this government like sheriffs of Nottingham for the Treasurer of Queensland, 'Prince John'. They will be collecting fees, targeting working families, seniors and those who can least afford it—the people whom Labor pretends to represent, the battlers. No-one is safe from this morally and financially bankrupt state Labor government. The government is going bust in a boom. Nobody is safe from Prince John squeezing the heart and soul out of every Queensland. Where else can the sheriffs of Nottingham steal from the residents of Sherwood Forest, also known as Queensland? And what of local governments? Local governments will need to tighten their belts even further.

The Bligh state Labor government did not mention only a few months ago that it was cutting the \$13.3 million street lighting subsidy, which is currently in place for local government. Nor did the government promote that it would discontinue subsidies to councils and communities in the sewerage system upgrades. This government does not talk the talk, relying only on media spin and hype. Government members talk about the environment but that is where it ends. One of the biggest contributors to nutrient load in our bay and waterways are sewage outfalls from treatment plants. What a strong signal from the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability to cut that funding. The government is big on colour and movement, big on smoke and mirrors, little on substance. All of this will only add to the burden of local government, and local governments will have to address it and pass it on.

My local council will also be impacted by the almost 10 per cent increase in fuel costs, with the almost 10c a litre increase in the price of fuel. That will see the councils increase rates or reduce services. None of that was mentioned in the election campaign. The only thing that seems to have boomed in this state in the last six months—and it will keep doing so for the foreseeable future—is the spin doctoring.

My community is charged with the added responsibility of the stewardship of an iconic symbol, the Australian koala. My community has been responsible for careful planning, limiting land clearing and responsible development. As a community, we have missed out on much of the capital injection or revenue that comes with development, which in turn stimulates infrastructure rollout. My community is being penalised by this government for managing development.

But what has happened to the glory days of the past 10 years? We were in a boom, revenue was pouring in. We had royalties from Queensland resources, minerals and coal, we had export revenues, we had growth from development. I can see our Treasurer now—sitting in a room with the cash piled high because we were in a boom after 10 years of growth.

I am actually going to move from the image of Prince John and I am actually seeing our Treasurer more like Scrooge McDuck, swimming in an ocean of cash, diving from the Treasury veranda, splashing around in a utopian euphoria. The pity is that the honourable the Treasurer does not possess other Scrooge McDuck character traits—the ability to manage money, save money for a rainy day, put some money in the bank like the Howard and Costello federal government did. But that money was quickly squandered by the current Prime Minister Rudd. Saving is not in Labor's DNA.

How sweet would it be if our Treasurer could still swan dive off the Treasury veranda and into the state coffers and not land face first onto the floor in an empty room. We had unequalled wealth and prosperity for 10 years, and that only ended late last year. Now we have unprecedented debt and no visible means of paying for that debt. We are passing it onto our children, and they will not thank us for selling their future. We have lost our AAA rating. This government is the only one to lose that rating. The cavalier attitude to this loss is astounding.

The government has no plan to regain that AAA rating, instead electing to cost the state and its residents \$1.2 billion in extra interest only, and that is not the payment. That is the cost of being a higher risk financially than any other state in this nation. \$1.2 billion rolls off the lips quite easily. It is only when you consider what you could afford with \$1.2 billion that you begin to realise the magnitude of this travesty—this level of mismanagement. It was summed up so succinctly by Sir Leo Hielscher earlier in the week. \$1.2 billion is 14,000 teachers. It is also building a hospital every year, not once in a lifetime.

What this would translate to in my area in round terms is the duplication of all single-lane roads from Redlands to Brisbane, to the Gold Coast and Cleveland. It would see our foreshore community parks finished. We would be able to sewer the bay islands. We could build a primary school and a high school where it is needed, in the southern part of Redlands. We could roll out TransLink. We could build aged-care facilities for our senior citizens in need. We could provide all the infrastructure needed for my community, but under this government every family will incur a debt of \$78,000. Every day we have an interest payment of \$14 million. Every year we miss out on 14,000 teachers. Every year we miss out on a children's hospital. Every day Queenslanders will remember the great sale.

The biggest sell-out of all was the sell-out by Labor members of this House of their long-held beliefs, their integrity, and their rank and file members in the party. They have sold out the rank and file members of the union, every worker and every family the length and breadth of Queensland. It is truly the sale of the century. They sold the lie to the community at the election. They want to sell the assets at the bottom of the market. They have sold out their mates, the ones they pretend to represent and stand up for. They have sold out Queensland. Labor's trouble is that they overpromise and underdeliver. That is in their DNA.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.42 pm): Preparing this year's state budget has presented both challenges and opportunities for the state government. I believe the Treasurer and Premier have carefully worked their way through and presented a solid budget that is sensible for the difficult economic times we find ourselves in as a result of the global financial crisis.

Queensland has always been the economic engine room of Australia and has helped the federal government deliver record growth and low unemployment. We have as a government concentrated on diversifying our economic base so that we would not be totally reliant on mining, agriculture and tourism. But this will not totally buffer us against the negative growth that is predicted and rising unemployment which may see the unemployment rate reach over seven per cent, which in real terms is 175,000 people who will suffer and struggle.

It is therefore important that we concentrate our efforts on employment creation strategies. We are keeping our \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program across the state, which is a 12.8 per cent increase over the capital spend in the last financial year. What that means in real terms is money being spent on roads and public transport, health, education, social housing, energy and water infrastructure.

This budget will deliver millions of dollars in funding to construct and extend major infrastructure projects in the Pine Rivers area. Pine Rivers Memorial Bowls Club has received \$1.4 million from the state government towards the upgrade of a synthetic green with a covered shade area for their members. The Pine Rivers Bowls Club is really one of the clubs that is the heart of Pine Rivers. Their community work and support is unmatched.

The board had a dream of upgrading its facilities to a standard which would allow all-weather play so that tournaments would not have to be cancelled and so that they could support other local bowls clubs who do not have all-weather facilities. This means that members and visitors will be able to enjoy their planned recreation activities and the social opportunities that are also presented. The club put in a well-prepared funding submission bid, and its dedication through some trying circumstances proves that its foresight in wishing to extend its facilities for the benefit of local residents was correct.

Other infrastructure includes \$24.6 million towards construction of a new 275-kilovolt transmission line between the existing South Pine and Sandgate substations and \$15.5 million towards the replacement of the South Pine 110-kilovolt substation to maintain a reliable, high-voltage electricity supply for businesses and residents. The projects are about providing jobs and services for the local community so the people of Pine Rivers are in a position of growth for the future. Further funding for roadworks includes over \$2 million to complete asphalt resurfacing on Gympie Road between South Pine River Bridge and Paisley Park, and between Dianne Street and the Paper Mill entrance. Dayboro Road will have works funded from the Queensland government's Safer Roads Sooner program, and we will assist council in providing bikeways. Importantly, two schools will receive joint council and state funding towards passenger set-down facilities at Bray Park State High School and Strathpine State School.

Maintenance money through Education Queensland has been allocated to all of the state schools in the Pine Rivers electorate—Bray Park, Strathpine, Strathpine West, Dayboro and Lawnton primary schools, and Bray Park High and Pine Rivers High. These schools have also qualified for the state administered Australian government funded Building the Education Revolution project, which will see halls and library upgrades provided in my local primary schools. It has been wonderful to see that we have an Australian government led by Kevin Rudd that values education and is prepared to invest in the future of our students across Queensland.

Communities want to feel safe and supported by their government and the services that are available close to home. I am pleased to announce that the rollout of the money to provide an upgrade to the community emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital and expansion of the hospital's capacity is going ahead. Families with young children will feel particularly pleased to hear that this election commitment is being delivered.

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association has received funding for its family support program to provide an early intervention and family support service, and for the homelessness early intervention service. Youth Care Pine Rivers, another wonderful community group in my electorate, is funded to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness. This work by dedicated community organisations is one of the social cohesiveness programs that keeps our community working.

The funding provided to Moreton Bay Regional Council through the Home Assist Secure program means that assistance is provided to our older residents to remove some of the practical housing related difficulties they experience when trying to remain living in their own homes.

What I have outlined above are just some of the initiatives that are being funded for my local residents, and there are many more that I am happy to talk to my residents about. As I have said earlier, this budget is determined to deliver jobs for Queensland through increased investment in public sector jobs for an additional 350 teachers and teacher aides, 3,500 health workers, 50 ambulance officers and 203 police officers. Further to this, the \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program will assist in our plan to create 100,000 new jobs over the next three years.

We are focused on looking after the economy, assisting workers, supporting industry and supporting skills development. I am pleased with the commitment to provide payroll tax incentives to employers who hire apprentices and trainees. What this means is that employers will get a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on eligible wages of apprentices and trainees in addition to these wages being exempt from payroll tax. We have also committed over \$124 million over four years to create an additional 148,000 training places, which is essential for job prospects for our young people. Further to this, our successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative has also been funded for our area, and I look forward to watching the new graduates of these programs take their places in future jobs.

We are committed to our \$57 million program for the Green Army which will provide work placements and traineeships for up to 3,000 unemployed people across Queensland. We are proud of our support for business and workers, and we will not be moved from our focus on jobs and skills provision.

In contrast with the 2009 budget plans that have been fulsomely outlined in the budget documents and the Treasurer's speech to the House on Tuesday, we have heard over the past two days the woeful contributions of members of the LNP. Whilst decrying all of the important economic work that we are preparing and implementing to keep Queensland moving forward, it should be noted that they have not offered any positive suggestions or plans. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition has publicly said that is not his job. This is a man who claims to be the leader of the alternative government, but it is really just a policy vacuum.

I note that many members opposite have complained about our budget measures but have then asked for millions and millions of dollars of further work in their own electorates. The term 'hypocrites' does come to mind.

I am proud to be part of a strong Labor government that is prepared to invest in vital infrastructure and in additional staff across the service oriented departments so that quality education, health care and community safety can be delivered to Queenslanders. I commend this budget to the House.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (11.49 pm): I have certainly heard some outrageous arguments from the opposition over the past two days. They certainly have very selective memories when it comes to the history of Queensland.

Yesterday I found the budget reply speech of the Leader of the Opposition curious but not surprising when he spoke for 45 minutes without giving one idea or one plan for Queensland. On the other end of the spectrum, I found very distressing a seven-point plan posed by the member for Beaudesert. It was point seven that caught my attention. In his grand vision for Queensland when wrapping up with that final fantastic point No. 7, he made the claim that his vision for Queensland was that, 'Queensland could be the California of Australia.'

Mr Moorhead: Where is California at, member for Sandgate?

Ms DARLING: That was a very pertinent question asked by the member for Waterford. I found that quite an extraordinary statement to make during a budget debate. I would think that one quick study of the economy of California would have really scared the member for Beaudesert away from that. I am really worried about the great youthful future of the LNP given the seven point plan—anyway, it was a plan. I give him credit for that. We heard some plans. I think he has laid out his intentions quite clearly. So watch this space.

The 2009-10 Queensland budget strikes the right balance between tough decisions in tight financial circumstances, targeted spending to stimulate the economy and create jobs by extending the state infrastructure program to \$18.2 billion and recognising the needs of those who are struggling in these tough times. Here are some of the highlights for the Sandgate electorate.

In infrastructure and jobs, \$125 million will be spent to continue the Houghton Highway bridge duplication between Brighton and Redcliffe at a total cost of \$315 million and \$24.6 million towards the construction of the new 275 kV transmission line between the existing South Pine and Sandgate substations. In housing there is \$1.41 million to BRIC housing through the Community Rent Scheme. They provide short- to medium-term accommodation for low-income housing applicants who have very immediate housing needs and \$225,000 for Home Assist Secure, which helps modify homes for older people and people with a disability. In sport \$125,000 has been budgeted in 2009-10 to upgrade soccer fields and install an irrigation system and a water harvesting system at Deagon Sports Centre with the total state government contribution of \$250,000. There is also \$38,000 to deliver a very innovative program, the Community Grow What You Eat Program, which will include cooking classes and vegetable gardens for school students at Nashville State School. They have a beautiful community garden, and I have been watching it grow over the past 12 months.

In communities, \$544,562 has been allocated in the 2009-10 financial year for a range of child, family and community support programs in the Sandgate electorate with a total Queensland government contribution of over \$1.63 million across the programs. Organisations including SANDBAG and Jabiru contribute enormously to community support services in my electorate, and I am pleased that the state continues to provide part of their funding.

In schools, there will be 350 extra teachers and teacher aides across Queensland. In my electorate of Sandgate there will be \$441,375 in additional maintenance for schools.

In health there is \$11.2 million for funding at Eventide Brighton as part of the Faster Emergency Care in Our Hospitals initiative. The Queensland government has committed to expanding the rehabilitation and transition care facilities. I am also very pleased that work on the paediatric emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital will begin.

In the area of environment, \$15 million has been allocated for the ClimateSmart Business Service to be delivered across Queensland over four years and \$900,000 extra for research and monitoring in the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

In the area of pensioner concessions, the current \$165 per year concession for pensioners' power bills is to be increased to \$190.85 next financial year. Seriously ill pensioners will also get a helping hand with extra concessions for oxygen concentrators and kidney dialysis machines. I was also very thrilled to see that the government has followed up on its commitment to increase the pay of community workers.

There is a broad range of fantastic and exciting initiatives in this budget. These are tough times and yet as a true Labor government we are considering the people who are the most needy; we have made sure that they are not missing out. We have a plan for the future. We are full of ideas. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (11.54 pm), in reply: I thank all members of the House for their contributions. This is a budget that looks to the future. This is a budget that continues the work of this government in providing for the infrastructure that is required for a growing state. It is a budget that continues the tradition of this government in providing the front-line workers needed to serve a growing population. It is a budget that has at its core and its centre an \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program that seeks to bolt the infrastructure into the Queensland economy that our growing state needs, that our growing economy needs.

It is a budget that sends another 203 police to the front-line. It is a budget that sends another 645 doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals to the front-line. It is a budget that sends another 350 teachers and teacher aides to the front-line and another 50 ambulance officers to the front-line. It is a budget that continues the tradition that sees us, since our time in government, delivering 6,300 extra teachers into Queensland classrooms, 2,136 extra doctors, 7,178 extra nurses, 2,765 extra allied health professionals and other health workers and 3,300 extra police to take the number of police serving our growing population to more than 10,000. It has doubled the number of child safety staff.

Those people on the other side of the parliament ask what has been the activity of the government over the last 10 years. We have put together the front-line workers and the infrastructure that serves a growing population. That is what has been going on while we have been here in government. That has been the investment that this government has undertaken.

What we are doing here in this budget is not only dealing with our immediate circumstances; we are dealing with what will confront us well into the future. We are dealing with an economic landscape, which escapes some people participating in this debate, in which this state has been out in front of the nation's economy each and every year of the last 13 years, including this year when once again we will outpace the nation. Again, next year we will outperform the nation. The year after that we will outperform the nation. It has been this government—Labor in government—that has presided over the times that have seen year in, year out this state and this state's economy outpace the nation.

As we confront the circumstances, as we do at the moment, of the wipe-out of \$15 billion worth of revenue, it is this Labor government that looks to the future and makes the decisions to chart a course through those times. It is this government that puts jobs first. It is this government that puts the 127,000 jobs that will be supported by the \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program front and centre in our priorities. We do that because in the absence of private sector activity, it is up to this government to act with courage, commitment and foresight to provide that support for the economy.

What honourable members have seen through this debate is a complete lack of recognition of the problem from those members opposite. If they do not understand the problem and they do not accept the problem then they do not have a hope of being part of the solution. What we have seen is mock indignation about the concepts of deficit and debt. What we have seen through this week, through this debate, is an opposition that is centred at every point in time on a concern about debt and deficit. But as they started talking, each and every one of them to a tee stood up in this place, wrung their hands and each and every person added to the call for more spending, more projects, more infrastructure and more debt to extend the deficit.

There is no recognition of any ability to contribute to the solution. Because it has been ever thus that these people in the Liberal National Party have only ever added each and every year as this government has brought down surplus budget after surplus budget after surplus budget, they have stood in this place and said 'Spend more, spend more, spend more'. Each and every time in every budget reply the Liberal National Party members of this parliament have walked in here and increased the call for spending. They have done it again in this debate.

Put to one side this mock indignation about the concept of deficit and debt, because the minute the Leader of the Opposition stood on his feet and said he opposed the measures in this budget he added \$2.4 billion to the deficits going forward. There is the party of \$87 billion worth of debt. It is this government that is charting a course and proposing the legislation, proposing a plan to deal with those issues into the future. It is the members of the Liberal National Party who oppose those plans. By their actions, by their reflexive opposition, their lowest common denominator politics, born of the irreconcilable differences that exist amongst them, we see them condemn themselves to irrelevancy into the future. They prove by their weak-willed actions, by their lack of ability to chart a course, by their inability to state what it is that they might propose, their irrelevancy to the future of this state. They consign themselves to a remainder position, one in which it is left up to others to come up with the solutions, where it is left up to others to come forward with the ability to put a plan before the people of Queensland to confront our circumstances and understand what it requires to be a government that looks to the future.

This is not a government and this is not a budget that is focused on tomorrow. What we know is that in the short term we expect to take a hit. We know that opinion polls will be unkind. We know that there will be opposition. We know that people will be concerned. But knowing that we confront that. We confront it with clear eyes, with courage, with a determination to look to the future, with an ability to understand the problem, to chart a course for the future, to stand up for what is right.

This week this parliament has born witness to the most irrelevant display of empty rhetoric and a failure of oppositions not yet contemplated in the democracy of this parliament. What we have seen is the bankruptcy of ideas that exists on the other side of this chamber. What we have seen is a political party that stands for nothing except a new logo. What we have seen is a political party that pulled itself together, that airbrushed the difference, took itself to the people of Queensland on the hope and pretence that it could stand for nothing and fall over the line. If you stand for nothing you will fall over.

This is a government that stands up. This is a government that stood up in front of the people of Queensland and described the problem. It put out in full in legislation, which the opposition opposed, the full financial details of the state and went to an election and asked for a mandate to guide the state through these times, asked for a mandate to stand up and chart a course for the future.

What we did in putting forward that proposition was recognise the challenges of our times. Of all the heinous contributions that we have heard from members opposite through this debate, none was more galling than their attempt to verbal Sir Leo Hielscher, their attempt to appropriate the comments of a man who has contributed on both sides of politics to the public administration of this state in a way rivalled by few. Their attempt to misrepresent his comments, to appropriate them to the feeble propositions that they put forward in this debate is surely one of the more galling aspects. I table for their benefit a letter from Sir Leo Hielscher that clarifies the comments and sets out in full what he was talking about.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 18 June 2009, to the Honourable Andrew Fraser MP, from Sir Leo Hielscher AC, relating to interest costs [459].

Nowhere will the members opposite find any evidence for the claim that they sought to appropriate into truth that the credit downgrade cost anywhere near in the order of what they have pretended. As we confront these challenges it is this Labor government that stands up. It is this Labor government, in the true history of Labor governments, that confronts our history. It is this Labor government, in the tradition of good reformist Labor governments, that has always understood that good

government means taking the right decisions, not necessarily the most popular decisions for tomorrow's newspapers, not necessarily those decisions that come without angst, that come without concern. But it has always been good Labor governments that have stood up at times that have mattered in our history. It has always been Labor in government that has confronted our future.

Treasurer Forgan Smith in 1932, in dealing with the finances of the state, recognised the impossibility of reconciling the confronting economic circumstances with the political sanctity of a budget surplus. At that time Treasurer Forgan Smith said of this—

Evidence of this can be seen throughout the world. If governments do not strain every effort to remedy the evil of unemployment, the inevitable consequences will be infinitely worse than unbalanced budgets.

That statement is true. It is true of this time. It is true as we confront our destiny as a state that this government puts forth, square shouldered, our priority to look after the jobs of Queenslanders, to chart a course for the future and to stand up and take those decisions that this state requires. We do that with the combined courage of the members of this government, with the collective determination of the members of this government, drawing on the capacity of Labor when it is at its best to stand up, to confront our history, to use our capacity to look to the future, to look after the jobs of working Queenslanders with a determination to look to the future. With that collective determination and courage this is a government that puts forward these bills to chart a course for our bright future. I commend the bills to the House.

Question put—That the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Reference to Estimates Committees

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! In accordance with the orders of the House of 3 June 2009, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill are referred to the estimates committees.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL

FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Division: Question put—That the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill be now read a second time.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Division: Question put—That the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

Mr NICHOLLS (12.22 am): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 5 (Declared projects)—

Page 5, lines 5 to 7—

omit.

This amendment that we are moving tonight seeks to remove from the bill that is proposed by the government the disposal of one of the crown jewels of the Queensland state and one of the crown jewels owned by the people of Queensland. We have just heard a dissertation from perhaps the future leader of the Labor Party over there, although I understand at the state conference it was the member for Greenslopes who did the convincing on the financial matters and who was touted as the man who saved the day. Nonetheless, we have had the Churchillian stance by the Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, about the tough times. From the words of the Treasurer, one would have thought that the planes were coming over the coast and were about to bomb us back to kingdom come. One would have thought that the world had never come across a financial downturn such as that which we are facing. Given the speech that was made by the Treasurer tonight, one would have thought that no government had ever had to react to a downturn in its fortunes. In fact, one would have thought that the Treasurer is the first person who has had to deal with a massive blow-out and a decline in revenue. Of course, that is completely and utterly untrue. These busts and booms have been going on for centuries. Yet in Queensland, and only in Queensland, the crown jewels are being put up for sale.

Why are we here today to talk about the failure of this government and the sale of Queensland Rail? Why are we here today to talk about it and why are we so keen to see this clause removed? Quite clearly, the answer is debt. It is not a mortgage, as the Premier says. A mortgage is just a document that secures a debt. There will be a lot of those lying around, but the problem is debt incurred by this government recklessly, wantonly, carelessly and a debt that was \$64 billion before the global financial crisis.

The Premier and the Treasurer can dance around the issue as much as they like, they can run the programs that they like and they can spin as much as they like, but they cannot get away from the fact that the \$64 billion debt was there before the global financial crisis.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: The other figure that was there was a \$1.5 billion deficit, not for the current year that is just ending but for the year before. So when the Treasurer stands up here and says for year after year after year they delivered a surplus, he is telling a furphy, because for the past two years the government has been delivering a deficit.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: When did the deficit go bad and when did the debts start building up and when did the necessity for the sale of Queensland Rail and these other assets start to appear? When did that occur?

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: When did the debt go from \$30 billion—which is perhaps manageable—to \$65 billion? Under whose watch? Who was the first Treasurer who did that? The now Premier.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! This will be an extremely long night. Member for Everton, I would ask you to cease interjecting continually.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is interesting to hear the level of feigned complaint from the member for Everton and his conversion, if you like, to the cause of privatisation and competition. It is very interesting to see that come through.

Queensland Rail is an operation that has a return on equity of something just over 10 per cent. It is an operation that delivers in terms of tax equivalent payments and dividends and revenue to the state in the order of \$280 million a year. It is the foundation of the growth of the wealth of this state built up by successive generations of governments, yet it is being put on the chopping block for a fire sale in circumstances where the world markets are suffering a downturn, where credit has dried up and where this government cannot even get a PPP together. The government wants to sell an asset such as Queensland Rail with no clear plan about what it wants to achieve and what it wants to do.

When we talk about the sale of assets and government owned assets, there are some principles that have to apply.

Mr Hinchliffe: Oh, principles.

Mr NICHOLLS: I heard the member for Stafford say 'principles'. That is not something that he actually contemplates on a regular basis. He thought, 'What's that word again? That word is not in my dictionary because as a member of the ALP I will go out and campaign without telling people what we are going to do. I will go out there and not say a word about it.' Only a year ago this government was proclaiming a budget that looked over the horizon. Yet it comes in here every day and says, 'Who could have foreseen what was going to happen?' So the government had this great vision, a sort of great Jindalee radar so that it could see over the horizon and launch its missiles. Yet it saw nothing of the global financial crisis coming towards it, nothing coming towards it.

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: Just wait. The members opposite are all getting excited. At a time when the Premier said—

We face the future with a AAA credit rating, reaffirmed by Standard and Poor's last Friday. We face the future with a surplus bolted into our budget to provide a buffer against a downturn.

What is the 'bolted' in surplus? It was \$549 million in the red, following a \$1.35 billion deficit in the red and on top of growth in public debt the likes of which has not been incurred by any other state. Not even from comrade Kaiser's mates in New South Wales did they get a debt like this before. So here we are engaging in a fire sale of assets to plug a hole in a budget that was entirely of their own making. They are going to rip the guts out of the communities and towns and regions of Queensland and all of those people who mistakenly trusted this government. We could have told them. In fact, we did tell them. They ripped the guts out of the communities of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Clayfield. The words you just used were unparliamentary—'ripped the guts'.

Mr NICHOLLS: Given that the Treasurer referred to me using similar language this morning, I thought there might be some leeway. They have eviscerated the communities of Queensland—

Ms Bligh: Watch out; it's a big word.

A government member: What?

Mr NICHOLLS: The benefits of a classical education have not made it over that way, I am afraid, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, order!

Mr NICHOLLS: Come on, Mr No. 1 ticket holder—settle down. As they eviscerate the communities of Queensland by the sale of Queensland's coal freight, they will leave those communities poorer and Queensland poorer.

(Time expired)

Mr Fraser: It's auditions for the leadership night—character No. 2.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I call the member for Maroochydore.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Labor has no shame. The government still does not admit that it caused the problem that has led to this extraordinary situation where it is flogging off Queensland Rail. There are many rail workers throughout this state who are disgusted, who are ripping up their union tickets and who are saying that Labor has let them down.

Usually if you ask problem gamblers if they have a problem with money they will say, no, they do not have a problem with money. They know how to manage their money. But the next thing you find is that they are ripping off somebody else. They are putting their hands in the till. They are putting their hands into somebody's pocket. They are seeking to take money to feed their habit of bad management. This is exactly what Labor is doing tonight.

Labor has no way of managing the state's budget. The government will not admit that the debt it has run up has been because of bad management. Now it is seeking to put its hands into the pockets of Queenslanders to take their assets, the assets that it promised it would not sell. And now the government is putting at risk the jobs of many rail workers throughout Queensland by what it has proposed here.

Labor is a problem gambler who will not admit that it has caused the problem. When people will not admit that they have caused the problem, they are not able to fix the problem. The freight rail services in Queensland that have delivered into the coffers of Queensland have helped cross-subsidise passenger services. We know that Citytrain relies on something like \$500 million in subsidies from the taxpayer and ultimately from the cross-subsidisation of other services. These money-generating assets of government are not there to take money off the people; they are actually able to cross-subsidise services that would otherwise cost the people of Queensland a lot more.

Labor has created a new definition for fixing the little red wagon. It is going to sell off the little red wagon and meanwhile we will still have a lot of debt in Queensland. Labor has still not worked out a way to pay off the ultimate debt that it keeps racking up in this state. The government owned corporations of Queensland that have been able to cross-subsidise and deliver benefits to taxpayers in recent times have been stripped, with liabilities racked up against them. They have been used as milch cows and loaded with debt in their own right.

Let us look at other states to see what the interstate experience has been. People thought that privatisation as a theory would suddenly become a golden goose that would keep on delivering into the coffers. But they found that where it was not done properly it incurred a liability for future taxpayers. I want to remind those Labor members who, prior to coming to this parliament, alleged that they were opposed to privatisation of these critical assets and services of government that what has happened in Tasmania and Victoria is an absolute disgrace. Where there has not been a reinvestment in those services in those states, we now see those governments having to consider reinvesting because simply the services have not been ongoing. But, as my colleagues have outlined in recent weeks, the move has been on for some time under this government to strip away services from people throughout Queensland who rely upon the government to ensure that they have the appropriate infrastructure to maintain the fabric of their communities and their local economy.

The western freight lines have been surreptitiously cut back and services have been removed without any notice. People have suddenly had to find other means of getting their freight carted without any warning and they have not had trucks in place to make alternative arrangements for stock. Increasingly communities are being left high and dry. What will the new world order be once these services have been completely sold off? Already we have a minister who has taken no responsibility and has no care or regard for the process that has led to this sale by denying that she even knew anything about it.

We have a Premier who tries to sell to Queensland the notion that she had no intention of doing this before the election. It is completely dishonest for the Premier of Queensland to claim that she did not have this as her secret plan before she went to the people of Queensland at the election. It is a complete betrayal of the people of Queensland for Premier Bligh to stand up in this place and claim that she did not intend to do this before the election. People have been lied to in Queensland. How can they trust this government to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to underpin the future economy of this state? There must be ongoing investment in infrastructure in this state. We must not see a state government back away from its responsibilities not just for today's jobs but for future jobs.

I have heard the Treasurer say that this sale is all about realigning the assets of Queensland. What balderdash! This is about the government's mismanagement and a grab for cash. It is not about some careful plan to ensure that it has the appropriate economic plan in place to take us forward. What we have seen from this government is lies and deceit. How on earth can people trust a government that lies to them, that goes to an election promising to do one thing and then a few weeks later it has a detailed plan to do something completely different? The government cannot be trusted. This is a government of deceit. This is not a government that is about building for the future. This is a government that has every intention of leaving future generations of Queenslanders short-changed.

The debt continues to mount, with no plan of repayment. Meanwhile, no lessons have been learnt from these foolish actions being undertaken interstate, without appropriate attention to good economic management and to ensure there is ongoing investment.

What we see left increasingly in the hands of government is a situation where the assets that have actually delivered a benefit to the people and that have ensured taxes did not have to be as high are being removed. Services are paid for by taxes, fees or cross-subsidisation from government owned assets. There has been a proud history in this state of knowing that infrastructure can be delivered with growth without having to sell off the farm.

I have heard the Treasurer say, 'We've got all this growth that has suddenly happened.' I suggest it is about time—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Maroochydore, this amendment relates specifically to paragraph (c), which talks about Queensland Rail. I have not heard much discussion in that respect. Would you please return to that particular aspect.

Ms SIMPSON: In regard to Queensland Rail and its future growth aspirations, if we look at the population in Queensland we find that the percentage growth in population has been higher in the last 30 years than it is today. Growth is not new in Queensland. What is new in Queensland is the ultimate in mismanagement from a government that does not know how to invest the benefits of the boom to ensure it has the means to take us forward into the future.

It is a retrograde step for these assets to be sold in this way. It is a disgrace for this government to say that it is about ensuring the future of this state when they lied to the people. They have made no apology for lying to Queenslanders. In fact, they sit on the opposite side of this chamber and laugh and guffaw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Maroochydore, you will withdraw those words.

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw 'lie'. This government has blatantly misled and told untruths to the people of Queensland. Only a few weeks ago we had an election where they claimed they would not do this. Now we see this disgraceful act with a detailed plan—it was formulated many months before the election—that has now been brought before this parliament. It is in no way ironic that the statutes were changed to make it legal to lie to parliament. So is it any wonder that we have a government that wants to lie to the people of Queensland?

We fear for the future, for the way these assets will be managed. We fear for the future, for the unanswered questions as to who will own these assets—whether we will see a situation in future where, from mine to port, we have single owner/operators, possibly overseas owned owner/operators. I ask the Treasurer: who will own these assets? What care and attention will be taken with regard to the issues of sovereignty and future jobs in Queensland? This should not be just a quick grab for cash with no plan for repayment of the debt that has been foisted on the people of Queensland.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I rise to support my community, oppose this clause in the bill and support the amendment moved by the member for Clayfield. The Premier has risen in this place since the election and, in outlining an intention to sell Queensland Rail, stated that, I believe, there is a plan for two years of job security to be entrenched in any sale document and that after that—these are not the Premier's words; these are my words—QR workers would be thrown to the wolves.

I was a member of this place in the period from 1995 to 1998, when the Borbidge government was in power—I have referred to this on one or two occasions previously—when Suncorp Metway was privatised. In the run-up to that privatisation and in discussions that were held with me in very difficult circumstances, I was given an assurance that in the privatisation process jobs would not be lost. I took that undertaking at its face. The subsequent result was that after the privatisation branches were closed and people lost their jobs. When I confronted the person who gave that undertaking they said to me, 'It's private enterprise now. There's nothing I can do.' That's exactly what is going to happen to QR workers—workers in my electorate and in other electorates. They will be told, 'It is a private enterprise now and there is nothing that can be done.'

This piece of legislation did not come up in the run-up to the election. There was no mandate granted by anybody in this state for the sale of these assets because it was not brought up in the election campaign. During the election campaign we heard 'jobs, jobs, jobs', not 'sale of assets, sale of assets, sale of assets'. Members in my community expected also that their unions would protect them in terms of debate on the disposal of these assets, and they have been let down in that area as well.

Queensland Rail, particularly in the coal freight area, provides a significant income stream for this state in the long term. In the run-up to the election and during the election campaign I used an example where one company in my electorate had its coal freight costs increased by \$8 million a year—out of the blue—and the Premier's response at the time was that it was a contractual matter between the company and QR. Irrespective, an \$8 million increase to the coffers of the state is significant. Therefore, I believe that the overwhelming feeling in my community and in the community of Queensland is that the sale of these assets is unwarranted and unwise. It may be arguable that it is necessary, but it is short-sighted and I will not support it. I support the amendment.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the point of the member for Gladstone. To find another example we only have to look at what has happened with electricity costs in this state. The Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy says every day in this place that there is nothing he can do about the cost of electricity, which of course has been subject to privatisation under this government as well. It is exactly as the member for Gladstone says. That is, there is no control over prices and there is nothing the minister can do, having devolved his authority to the Queensland Competition Authority.

That is a very good example of betrayal. When this government seeks to privatise something—they are doing it here without any consultation, without having told the people of Queensland—that is exactly the betrayal that we are talking about. This government went to the election and exercised deceit by not talking about what they were going to do afterwards.

There was \$23 billion of debt when the member for Mount Coot-tha became Treasurer in September 2007. Now, of course, the debt is heading to \$85 billion. The sale of Queensland Rail will be just another example of the desperation of this Treasurer. In 2008-09 revenue went up by one per cent but expenditure went up by 10 per cent. In 2009-10, when we hear the cry about there being not enough revenue and the need to sell Queensland Rail, we see that revenue is up to \$37 billion but expenditure is up to \$39 billion. This again shows a government that cannot manage its revenue and expenditure, as recurrent costs just keep going up.

We have moved this amendment because this Queensland Rail sale is just an example of the government having to do something to fund recurrent expenditure. The principles of the Labor Party are that assets should not be sold to fix a debt problem. That is exactly what this government is doing.

Queensland Rail, like a lot of other government owned corporations, has a lot of debt associated with it. But this is part of a desperate attempt to get back the AAA credit rating. Today the Treasurer tabled a letter, supposedly from 18 June, which deals with these issues of debt that are interwoven with these issues of Queensland Rail.

We have seen no consultation with the people of Queensland. There have been no checks and balances in the past with other privatisations to make sure there are consumer service obligations in rural and regional areas, as was outlined by the honourable member for Gladstone and as those who have been here longer than I know from past experience. We have seen only that there is talk of a fire sale, which the Premier first talked about on 2 June, when clearly it is something she must have had some sort of idea of.

We see the Premier and the Treasurer come in here with bills and they have lots of advisers outside, but unfortunately in this case they were not advised of the problems with the budget until the day after the election—well, that beggars belief. Of course, now we have a rush to find advisers to oversee the sale.

As the honourable member for Maroochydore mentioned, this amendment deals with the assets and liabilities of Queensland Rail other than the passenger service business, which of course is subsidised by hundreds of millions of dollars. The government is going to get rid of the profitable parts of Queensland Rail in a fire sale. Isn't it strange that the government can talk about selling Queensland Rail, but it has no appetite for selling another private-public partnership where the government obviously needs some investment—that is, the Sunshine Coast Hospital? Clearly, the government has an appetite for the sale of Queensland Rail. Once again, there are so many inconsistencies with this government, which says one thing and does another and thinks the people of Queensland will not remember. The people of Queensland will not forget the issues of debt, deceit and betrayal. They will not forget that.

This is a government with a \$65 billion debt in the year just gone, and of course that is now blowing out to \$85 billion. We are having our biggest deficit budget in the year 2009-10 of \$1.9 billion, and then it will be \$3.2 billion in 2010-11 and then \$4 billion in 2011-12. That is what this Treasurer has given us—deficits and a debt that our children and grandchildren will not be able to pay off, all because the government wants to sell off things when it clearly has not planned for the future. That is my view on this and it is clear, as it is on the other five issues contained here. We will be opposing every one of these and bringing amendments to every one in this clause.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It was interesting to listen to the most unpopular member of the Queensland parliament sitting over there chirping, sitting over there harping on in an absolutely ridiculous manner without anything positive to contribute. Is it any wonder that this man, the member for Mount Coot-tha, is the most unpopular member of parliament? There are 40 losing candidates from the last state election who received a higher primary vote than he received. Is it any wonder? I want to ask all members in this parliament tonight this question: does this government have a mandate to sell off Queensland Rail?

Opposition members: No.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Does this government have a mandate to sell off the Port of Brisbane?

Opposition members: No.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Does this government have a mandate to introduce a fuel tax?

Opposition members: No.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Does this government have a mandate to do virtually anything it is doing at the moment?

Opposition members: No.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Do you know what? The people of Queensland believe the government does not have a mandate either. What we have heard is a lot of absolute aimless and brainless chatter from the member for Everton tonight. He is somebody who has contributed very little in the time he has been in this place, other than to be the most vociferous proponent of the privatisation of Queensland Rail and the Port of Brisbane and all of the others. That is what we know about him.

How do we know that the people of Queensland are opposed to what Labor is proposing? I advise members to pick up a copy of tomorrow's *Courier-Mail* and look at the Galaxy Poll. I will say it here tonight: the member for Everton is out on his ear; the member for Ashgrove is gone; the member for Greenslopes is not here any longer; the member for Broadwater is history. This article in the *Courier-Mail* is very interesting, and I will read it because it will be an education for those people opposite who really struggle to be educated.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this specific clause talks about the sale of Queensland Rail's assets and liabilities.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Absolutely, and that is exactly what this refers to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Continue then.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The article states—

Voters are convinced Ms Bligh and Labor deliberately misled them about the future of the subsidy and are steadfastly opposed to both as methods to rein in burgeoning deficits and debt.

Ms Bligh's personal standing also has taken a battering while Opposition Leader John-Paul Langbroek has gained significant support.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southern Downs will take his seat.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, you have continually interjected from the backbench. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The report continues—

Ms Jones: What about the clause?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is very relevant to the clause. The report states—

According to the Galaxy Poll of 800 voters taken on Wednesday and Thursday night, 72 per cent of Queenslanders believe they were misled by Ms Bligh over the future of the fuel subsidy and asset sales.

Is the sale of Queensland Rail's above-rail assets an asset sale? Of course it is. Do 72 per cent of Queenslanders believe they were misled? Yes, they do. The article continues—

Worryingly for Labor, 50 per cent of those who believe they were misled voted for Ms Bligh at the election.

Voters are opposed to both the asset sales, which will include Queensland Motorways, the Port of Brisbane and Queensland Rail's—

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The member for Everton sits over there smirking proudly as though this is his greatest crowning achievement. He has come into this place and the greatest thing he has done is actually contribute towards the sale of this great icon of Queensland. He is smirking with a great degree of self-congratulation. The article continues—

The poll found 84 per cent of Queenslanders objected to the asset sales with only 13 per cent in favour, while 78 per cent were against the end of the fuel subsidy and 17 per cent in favour.

This is how much the people of Queensland think about it, and Labor members should take this in because this affects all of those members opposite who are sitting there smugly believing in the sale of Queensland Rail's above-rail assets. The article says—

Labor's primary vote has nosedived from 42.2 per cent at the election to 36 per cent—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Bye-bye. It is now 36 per cent and it is going down. It will be down near absolute zero before this mob is finished. The article continues—

... while the LNP's support has jumped from 41.6 per cent in March to 47 per cent now.

It goes on to say—

Based on past preference flows, the LNP would win relatively comfortably if an election was held this week ...

Ta-ta to all the duds on the other side. This puts an absolute lie to any contention whatsoever from that side of the parliament that there is a mandate, that there is any support, that there was ever any veracity to the argument that the people of Queensland for one moment supported asset sales in this state—no way. Thirteen per cent support it; the rest of Queensland do not support it.

We now know why the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer deliberately concealed this secret plan from the people of Queensland—because they knew through their polling that they would be resoundingly repudiated at the election. The other thing we know absolutely—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, I will ask you again to come back to the clause.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The people of Queensland are absolutely furious that this Labor government concealed from them the fact at the last state election that they proposed to sell Queensland Rail's above-rail assets. That is what they are furious about.

Why are they upset about that? It is mainly because they all know that deceit, duplicity, dishonesty, debt and deficit course through Labor's DNA. It has been a part of the evolution of the Labor Party in Queensland for 100 years. Not only that, it is something which has worried a lot of their rank and file members; especially their rank and file union members, and they have been nobbled as well.

Is it any wonder with Labor's proposal to sell the above-rail assets of Queensland Rail that the Premier's own south Brisbane branch of the Labor Party the other night unanimously passed a motion for the disendorsement of the Premier? They voted for the expulsion of the Premier. That is completely and absolutely unprecedented in the history of politics in Queensland.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Well, maybe the honourable member for Stafford has something to add to that. I suppose when you have no principles on the sale of the above-rail assets of Queensland Rail then you sit there, you smirk, you gloat and you put this down as one of your crowning achievements, as the member for Everton has done tonight. He sat there with it pasted on his face.

This has been an extraordinary betrayal. This poll tonight clearly shows that if the people of Queensland had been informed by this government of its proposal for the above-rail asset sale of Queensland Rail they would not be in government today. The simple reality is that the people of Queensland have woken up to the Labor Party. They know they stand for nothing. They know they believe in nothing. They know their principles are absolutely malleable. Like a rubber man, they can be cast aside and torn asunder. This Labor Party stands for nothing and the people of Queensland believe that.

They know that it will take every single bit of the next two years and nine months to attempt to repair the damage which they have caused in Queensland. I will make a prediction here tonight: on this rail sale the people will never forget because they will never, ever forgive those people who went to the election and deliberately lied to them. That is the simple reality.

A government member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker, and superimpose 'deliberate untruth'.

Mr JOHNSON: This is a very serious issue that we are debating this morning. I heard the Treasurer say in his summing-up tonight, 'We do recognise there is a problem.' That problem is called Labor mismanagement. The government talks about the international monetary crisis, but this happened well before any international crisis. When we look back over a period of time, I look back to the former Premier, Peter Beattie, and to a former member for Salisbury called Len Ardill. I wonder what Len Ardill is thinking at this very moment. He would be absolutely jumping through hoops wondering how in the name of God he could reverse this. I will give credit where it is due, because back in 1992 when the Goss government tried to close down railways in this state it was those two blokes who had the guts to stand up to the Goss government and do a reversal.

Where are the Labor members now who believe in the prophecy of what the railways mean to this great state? Tell me who is going to pay anything over \$500 million for any component of Queensland Rail? That sort of money is not found today on the international monetary scene. I do not think this government has done its homework in terms of what purchasers may be out there for this great enterprise.

I would like to take you back through time to look at Queensland Rail and its efforts over all those years. I see the member for Rockhampton in the chamber. When I was the minister for transport and main roads I visited railway workshops in Rockhampton one day where there were 600 people employed, and they devised a mechanism for the bottom dump operation of coal rail wagons. That was an innovative idea that was devised by personnel within QR that helped make profits for the coal lines of Queensland Rail.

At Redbank there was also great work done in those railway workshops by personnel. Coal wagons were built there. Flat-top wagons were built for Pacific National along with other great work. I know that the member for Rockhampton will agree that QR has turned out wonderful apprentices, sheet metal workers, electricians and carpenters over the last 100-odd years. This great network is an artery that has been the lifeline and the lifeblood of addressing the productivity of Queensland.

At the moment, with the complexities of this financial deal that we have on the plate, it is not about getting the best deal. You cannot possibly get the best deal. The reason why you cannot get the best deal is that it is a bad time to be selling assets. The Treasurer knows that. Everybody knows that.

We heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition make reference tonight to polls that have just come out. I would think that is evidence enough to know just how poorly this government is thought of in the electorate. The one thing you cannot do is deceive all the people all the time. When Christ was being persecuted thousands of years ago, he said, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' I have to say to you that the people of Queensland will not forgive you for what you are doing because there are better people in jail. There are people in jail for fraud who have done some horrific things. What you have done is defraud the people of Queensland by your deceit, by your poor management and by your inability to manage funds.

In the last 10 or 12 years under the regime of the Howard-Costello-Anderson government in Canberra we saw all that wonderful financial management. They reduced a Labor Keating Hawke debt of \$96 billion and left the coffers full of chaff for the Rudd government. What has it done? It has thrown that money away. If the Rudd government had given the Queensland government \$10 billion or \$20 billion, we could have easily built bridges, roads and infrastructure which would have meant that we would have people employed.

There are some 5,000 men—and women, too—who have lost their jobs in the Queensland coalmining industry in recent months. With your jobs bank—whatever it is—how many jobs have you found to redeem that situation of some of those 5,000 people?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I would remind the member for Gregory that your comments should be directed through the chair.

Mr JOHNSON: I thought I was, Mr Chairman.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You used the word 'you' consistently.

Mr JOHNSON: Well, members opposite have also. Anyway, I apologise if I have got something wrong but I think I am pretty right on this issue.

Mr McArdle: You're dead right.

Mr JOHNSON: I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, is that meant to be a dissension from my ruling?

Mr JOHNSON: No, it is not. He is not having a go at you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then please refrain from comments.

Mr JOHNSON: I will get back to my argument. In recent years throughout the state, minerals have been found outside the coalmining area of Central Queensland. The coal division is for sale and other areas are for sale. On those freight lines west of Alpha and west of Emerald—and you know that area as well as I do, Mr Deputy Speaker—there are huge multibillion tonne deposits of coal. We are now on the eve of opening up those mines. We have heard the Premier talk in the House over the last 72 hours about the 6,000 jobs that will be created there and the productivity of Queensland Rail.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you know as well as I do about the huge numbers of livestock that come out of Western Queensland and the north-west via Queensland Rail that are processed through abattoirs here in the south-east. Only today I said to the minister that three-quarters of the cattle that are processed in Queensland come from the north-western region, from Mount Isa right up into the gulf and are transported to the south-east. The main carrier of the bulk of the northern cattle is Queensland Rail.

We might talk about the community service obligations, but the important function of Queensland Rail that members opposite are forgetting is the value adding of jobs when that product reaches the coast. Whether that be at the port of Townsville, the port of Gladstone or the port of Brisbane, that product has to go through one of those ports. That is why we should not see this sale taking place now. If an operation is not making money you do not get rid of the part that is making money. You do not divest of the good operation; you divest of the failure. I cannot see a part of the failure being sold here. The failure is the mismanagement by this government.

I said in the House today that the government needs to gather the best and most astute financial managers in the state to assist it to devise a plan to hold this operation together and maintain it for the future generations of this state. This is exactly what we on this side of the House are about. If we are going to sell something like this, it should not be sold in a fire sale because the money that the government will receive for it will go into paying wages for the next two or three years. With that \$85 billion debt that the government is incurring and growing at a rate of knots, after the sale is done it will find that it has lost its main milking cow, and you do not do that. I appeal to the Treasurer, the Premier and the government to show some leadership on this issue and reverse this ludicrous policy.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to support the amendment that has been moved by the member for Clayfield tonight to remove Queensland Rail's above-rail assets from the list of assets that the government is going to hawk in a fire sale. That is what the amendment does. With the passing of the second reading of this bill, we accept that the government is going to sell assets. The amendment before the House seeks to remove one of those assets from the list. That asset is the above-rail assets of Queensland Rail.

The issue of how the government got into a position where it had to embark on a fire sale of assets has been well and truly canvassed in the consideration of the bill in the second reading debate. However, the issue now becomes whether or not the assets that the government has listed for sale are the right assets to sell. Are they the assets that the people of Queensland are most comfortable with the government selling? As the member for Southern Downs indicated, a report in the *Courier-Mail* would seem to indicate that the people of Queensland are not very comfortable with the government selling any assets. They are even less comfortable with the fact that they have been deceived and were not told about the financial situation until after the election. The government will pay a high price for that in terms of the trust and the support of the people of Queensland.

The issue for this parliament now as we consider the detail of this bill is whether that list of assets that the Treasurer has come up with for sale is the right one. The amendment that has been moved obviously says that it is not. It says that Queensland Rail is not an asset that should be included in that list. I would suggest that all members consider the history of previous attempts to close down and sell off railway property throughout Queensland. I remember well the attempts that were made by former Premier Goss and Tom Burns, who was the Deputy Premier, and David Hamill, who was the transport minister, to close country rail lines en masse. It created an enormous backlash of public opinion. It created a wave of anger that those people struggled to understand at the time. It is similar to the wave of anger that I believe is building out there in the community at the moment. Most Queenslanders hold some sort of emotive connection with the railways.

For most people there is something about the railway system of Queensland that is more than dollars and cents; it is more than the base book value. There is an emotional connection with the concept of a publicly owned railway system because it is a publicly owned railway system that has provided the transport options for so much of Queensland. People who live in those regional areas in particular know that private operators would not continue to run those services and they would not have been run in the past when they were needed. They depended on the government to provide those railway services, and those communities have come into existence and prospered because of those railway services.

The government is not going to profit from selling those services that those regional communities depend on. Where they see the big potential for profit is in the bulk coal lines obviously. They are the ones that have the most profit potential. So of course they are the ones that the government has grabbed hold of first as it drew up its list of assets to sell to try to raise some \$15 billion towards the financial black hole that the 10 years of government mismanagement has created in Queensland. They have grabbed what it sees as an asset that will be saleable in a market that speaker after speaker on this side of the House has pointed out is a very difficult market, to say the least. Every individual Queenslanders knows that if they have a few shares, an investment house or investments of any sort, now is not the time to sell them unless they absolutely have to, unless the bank manager is on the phone, unless they cannot feed the kids or pay the bills. They are the only reasons anyone would consider asset sales at the moment.

The people of Queensland are confronted with the reality that the people who represent them, the people who control their assets, the government that they elected 12 weeks ago is going to sell what for them is a prized asset. It is going to sell an asset that, for most people in Queensland, represents public ownership in itself. It is going to sell Queensland Rail. I do not believe that the people of Queensland will support that sale. In fact, the poll figures that are reported in today's paper would certainly indicate that the feeling that I have received from my constituents, from my communities, is a very widespread one indeed.

The message that those people send to this parliament through their representatives who sit on this side of the House is a resounding no to the whole concept of selling assets generally but more particularly selling assets such as Queensland Rail. I know that the members who sit on the government side of this House are getting the same message. I know that people like the member for Rockhampton, the member for Keppel and the member for Townsville—places where the railway business is a big part of the community—are receiving the same message.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr SEENEY: It is all very well for members who represent Brisbane seats to come in here and passionately shout across this chamber because it is noticeable that the rail assets that serve the people who are represented by members of Brisbane seats have been excluded from this list. Those rail assets are very valuable to the people of Brisbane. They have a particular value to the people of Brisbane, but they will never operate at a profit. They have always been subsidised by the more profitable aspects of Queensland Rail's operations, especially those coal lines. It is somewhat ironic that it is a Labor government that is now going to try to patch up its financial mess by selling the assets of Queensland Rail for whatever it can get for them. It is going to sell those assets at a time when they are obviously not going to get anything like the value that they could get at a different point in the economic cycle.

Whatever the government gets for Queensland Rail now will be considerably less than what it could get for it in five years time. Whatever the people of Queensland get from the sale of Queensland Rail now will be considerably less than what they could have got had the government not been forced into this horrendous financial position where it will have to embark on something that everybody knows is not a desirable course of action.

The amendment before the House seeks to remove those rail assets from the list that the Treasurer has put forward in the bill to embark upon his sale program. Every member of this House will have the chance to vote on whether or not Queensland Rail should be in that list of assets. The government did not want to do that. It wanted to have these bills wrapped up with the appropriation bills and limit debate to one contribution from each member on four bills. Rather than each member being able to address each issue on its own, each member in the second reading debate had to address four bills in their one contribution.

The reason we have moved this amendment tonight is to ensure that every member who sits in this parliament gets to vote on whether or not Queensland Rail is part of that asset sales list. The subsequent amendments will give members a chance to vote on each one of the proposed assets to be sold. The first amendment, the amendment before the House now, will mean that every member who sits in this place, every member who represents railway workers, every member who has supported the bill will get to vote individually on Queensland Rail.

They will have to explain their position to the people they represent. They are not going to get a chance to sneak in here like a thief in the night and pawn Queensland Rail at the pawn shop for whatever they can get without people understanding and knowing that individually they had a chance to vote to remove Queensland Rail, and so they should, from that list of assets.

(Time expired)

Mr HOPPER: In following that brilliant contribution I would like to speak to this amendment which is about removing the above-rail assets in Queensland from the list contained in the bill. Why are we in this situation tonight? We have seen 20 years of Labor government in Queensland and we have seen borrowing, borrowing, borrowing. If money is allowed to be borrowed then that is exactly what Labor governments have done. That is where we get money from, according to those opposite.

We are faced with a financial crisis and all of a sudden we have to look at selling the assets that the people of Queensland own. Queensland Rail is one of those assets. There is a massive blow-out in this budget and a massive sell-off is about to happen. Our ports are going to go and our forestry is going to go. Forestry returned \$85 million in profit last year. Some 200,000 hectares will be sold off.

This is one of the most horrific budgets that we have seen in the 150-year history of the state of Queensland. We now have an \$85 billion debt—that is, \$85,000 million. How on this earth can we possibly pay that off?

We see the Premier and Treasurer hiding behind the global financial crisis. This government was in \$65 billion of debt before that crisis happened. This has been total deception of the people of Queensland. Before the election there was no mention of the sell-off of the assets of the people of Queensland. These are wealth-creating assets in our budget. This is disgusting.

The member for Cleveland made a brilliant speech tonight. The member for Cleveland named the Treasurer 'Debt Man'. That name will stick. It has a ring to it. When the people of Queensland pick up on that name I think it will stick. We have heard him called 'Boy Blunder' and now 'Debt Man'. He produces the budget. Every member on this side spoke off the cuff but he had to read every word. I think the contributions we have heard from the people on this side of the House have been brilliant. The name 'Debt Man' must stick. We have \$85 billion of debt.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr HOPPER: I take the member's interjection because her grandchildren will be the ones who are laboured with paying off this debt. They will be the ones—

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Minister.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer.

Mr HOPPER: The grandchildren of the members opposite will be the ones who will be laboured with the results of 'Debt Man's' actions. 'Debt Man' is sitting there with his hand over his head, with his head down and looking very, very sad. His union people are very disgusted with this.

We heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition call them gutless. He has called them fairies. He has called them pansies. That is exactly what they are. We have not seen them come out and get stuck into those opposite who put this in place. They are selling the people's assets and it is disgusting. We cannot accept this. That is why we are sitting here at 25 past one on Saturday morning. I have been here for nine years and I have never been sitting here on a Saturday morning.

Let me tell members about the implications of the sell-off of the above-rail assets for my electorate. We have seen the massive impact of mining in Queensland in the last 10 years. What takes the coal to port? What takes the coal to the power stations? The greatest thing that takes the coal is trains.

How much money has been invested in QR? The answer is very, very little. How much money is going to be invested? Answer: very, very little. We have this disgusting mismanagement of funds and the government is going to sell off the assets. What is going to happen to the produce coming from my electorate? What is going to happen to the wheat that is grown? What is going to happen to the cattle? Everything goes on trains. Take government control away from something and privatise it and what will happen? Under privatisation they want to make money. What will they do? They will look at the quickest thing to load, how to get it out and where the largest amount of money comes from. That will no doubt come from the mining industry. We will see no cartage of wheat. We will see the trains that go to Pittsworth—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer, I have previously spoken to you.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister. If members wish to make comments they should keep them to themselves. The member for Condamine has the floor. If the noise in the chamber continues—that is, yelling across the chamber to one another—I will start taking action. We will listen to the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: When it is privatised they will look to make money. They will look at the fastest and quickest way to make money. That will annihilate the cattle trains from Dalby. That will annihilate the cattle trains that were left behind at Teys Brothers the other day going to Dinmore and Beaudesert. That will annihilate freight. That will mean that the wealth creators of this state will be left behind. That will mean that that stock will go onto semitrailers and then those semitrailers will go on the Warrego Highway and then down the Toowoomba range. There is no range crossing in place. The roads are disgusting now. For every train that is lost, that means that 44 decks have to travel—

Mr Cripps: Straight down James Street.

Mr HOPPER: Yes, straight through James Street. The Leader of the Opposition will be coming to Toowoomba this week and I will show him the number of trucks that go through James Street in Toowoomba and what that will mean. Yesterday the Premier announced that a new mine will open at Miles, and that is a wonderful thing which will create employment. But how are we going to get the coal out? The government is going to privatise Queensland Rail. What happens when something is privatised? It is then about making money. That will put more trucks on the road which will affect my electorate something chronic. The street going through the town of Dalby has been ripped up by trucks on a number of occasions.

The Queensland government subsidises commuter travel by \$8.25. Every time someone gets on a train, no matter how much they pay for their fare, they are subsidised \$8.25 by this government. Some \$500 million is paid to subsidise them. That money is made by the freight that is carried by Queensland Rail. The government is going to privatise that business and it will lose that income, yet it still has to subsidise commuter travel. That is unacceptable. Not only is the government stopping the income coming in but it has to find that money from consolidated revenue or somewhere else to subsidise commuter travel. This does not make sense. This simply does not make sense.

Why would the government sell one of its wealth-creating assets for the state of Queensland because it is in a desperate situation? The fact is that Queensland is broke through total mismanagement and now the government is in dire straits. Look at the polls! Look at what our deputy leader read out, and the so-called 'Debt Man' can listen to this, because it says that Labor's primary vote has nosedived—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Condamine, using the term 'Debt Man' is unparliamentary. I would ask you to use the member's correct title.

Mr HOPPER: I withdraw that. I would ask the Treasurer, who had been referred to by that name, to listen to this: Labor's primary vote has nosedived from 42 per cent at the election to 36 per cent while the LNP's support has jumped from 41.6 per cent in March to 47 per cent now—47 per cent!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: That is not bad, is it? I see that sad look on your face, Treasurer, but never mind, mate. You have only got two years to go. Enjoy your time. To the new members who are here, enjoy your ride because you are oncers!

Dr FLEGG: While I was listening to the debate upstairs waiting to come down to speak about these rail assets, I flicked around a couple of channels. One of the TV channels was showing *Terminator 3* and John Connor was talking about his destiny. I switched the channel and on the next channel another boy was talking about his destiny. He was invoking Forgan Smith and talking as though the sale of these assets was some grand plan, something that he had actually considered, something that he actually thought was for reasons of building Queensland other than desperation. Well, the government does not have any mandate or legitimacy for the sale of these assets whatsoever. It is so ashamed that it will not allow each of these bills to come through in individual debates. It wants all of the bad news stuck in this chamber here tonight one after the other because it not only duped the people of Queensland at the state election; today it does not even want to face up to what it has done.

There is no plan on the other side. If you believe them—and I certainly do not—they never dreamed of this just 12 weeks ago. You cannot tell me that they have worked all of this out on all of these assets and gone through and done a business case and determined that this is the right time. It is a coincidence, isn't it? It is just a fluke that it is the right time to sell every one of those assets! This whole debate has just been a charade on the part of the government. This is about a desperate grab for any asset that can be sold at any price because of the financial circumstances that those opposite have driven us into.

Not one Queenslander is going to believe that this is a considered strategy or that it is anything more than desperately selling assets. In fact, if one looks at the forward estimates, despite the disposal of all of these assets, we still see a continuation of debt increasing—not even stabilising. So these asset sales are not even enough to slow the increase in debt. Just a short time ago this government and this Treasurer were denying that their AAA credit rating was at any risk. They were denying that they would need to sell any assets. They did not have a clue what was going on. Even as recently as months ago, they did not have a clue, and they have no more clue about what they are selling.

In relation to above-rail assets, the best comparison out there at the present time is a company called Asciano, which in fact owns Pacific National and is the major competitor to these Queensland Rail assets, and Asciano found itself in the same state as the government of Queensland—hopelessly burdened by debt when markets changed, when debt—

Mr Fraser: You had shares in it! You had shares in it!

Dr FLEGG: I do not have any now.

Mr Fraser: You had shares in it.

Dr FLEGG: It was hopelessly burdened by debt, unable to service that debt and in an environment where equity is so expensive to raise that it became a basket case and its balance sheet looked something like the government's balance sheet. What did Asciano find? After months, assets, including Pacific National, were unsaleable. An asset sales process—or monetisation process I think they called it—was unable to sell any assets at all out of that company. The Queensland government has not learnt the lesson because it is trying to sell assets into the same market. So what did Asciano do? It went out and raised equity and it was some of the most expensive equity that you could possibly raise.

I went through the annual report of Queensland Rail to have a look to see if I could find any reason why this would be a good time to sell these assets. What does one find when one looks at above-rail assets in the annual report for 2008 of Queensland Rail? If I just look at the above-rail assets, revenue is \$2.136 billion, net profit is a loss of \$8 million, assets total \$3.62 billion, and debt totals \$1.92 billion. These are assets that are making very little money, that are hopelessly burdened by debt and that are very similar to the assets that Asciano found itself holding at the wrong time of the market. I do not think anyone in this place or in Queensland looking at those numbers and looking at markets and looking at what has happened with infrastructure assets and the like could possibly come to the conclusion that this is a good time to sell these assets.

In fact, they will come to the conclusion that we on this side have come to, and that is that this is an act of desperation. I listened to the Treasurer saying, 'Sometime down the track'—down the yellow brick road—'we might get our AAA rating back'. I would say to this place and I would say to the Treasurer that this legislation has nothing to do with getting our AAA rating back. I ask members to look at the forward statements. The debt is still going through the roof despite projected asset sales.

This is desperation, because the Treasurer knows there is another downgrade coming. He knows the only way that this government was even able to continue in business, the only way that Queensland Treasury Corporation anywhere in the world could raise the funds that this state needed to borrow, was by Kevin Rudd coming in and using the Commonwealth's higher credit rating to guarantee those borrowings. I do not know what sleight of hand the government is going to use in the disposal of these assets. I do not know whether the government is going to try to flog them off for their asset value and then try to stick the debt in some other poor unfortunate creature of the Queensland government. If the government, in fact, sells the assets off and repays the debt, it is not going to raise anything like the amount of money that it claims it is going to raise.

There is a whole area of concern. I think they are real concerns and I put them to this place sincerely and genuinely, because I believe in them. We do not have any detail about what this government proposes with these assets, but we know what they have done with previous privatisations and how they have been bungled. I have very serious concerns about three areas in particular. What is going to happen with the charges? If in the process the government ties down the purchaser of these assets with a lot of strict covenants about what it can charge, the government is not going to get money for the assets. There is that temptation, as occurred with the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal where the prices charged were not screwed down and we had a very ugly situation because of that bungled privatisation. That means that once again Queensland's economic competitiveness and cost effectiveness will be hammered.

The other area that I have genuine concerns about—and this is such a rushed process the government would have no idea what on earth it is doing—is that once these assets are sold to a private business, as occurred with the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, how does the government ensure that the operator invests and expands the business? I can tell members that these days private business does not want a five per cent return on their capital. Capital is worth a fortune out there and to invest in this business, the private buyer will want a big return and that means big charges.

So with endangering the expansion and investment, we are risking charges going through the roof and then to service the parts of Queensland like my friend and colleague from Dalrymple said, we are going to end up paying through the nose over the years for community service obligations just to get services into these areas. This is a disaster for Queensland.

Mr HOBBS: One hundred and thirty-four years ago Queensland Rail first ran here in this state. It ran from Ipswich to Bigges Camp, which is now called Grandchester—21 kilometres. Today in this chamber, we are debating the demise of Queensland Rail. Indeed, it is a very historic time.

We now have 10,000 kilometres of rail network in this state. It is probably worth \$11 billion, but it also has a lot of debt. We have coal freight, we have bulk freight, we have intermodal freight, we have retail and regional freight. The Queensland coal industry is the largest in Australia. Eighty-five per cent of our coal is exported, with about 2,000 kilometres of coal rail.

We have an enormous asset and a system in place. For instance, the coal rail network is divided into five rail systems, the Newlands, the Goonyella, the Moura and Blackwater and the western lines. One hundred and eight million tonnes of freight is carried in Queensland. A very small example of what has happened in my area is that a lot of that freight is going on to road. We need to be able to have some control—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr HOBBS: It is certainly not being utilised. We need to be able to have some control and some management back in the system to take that freight off our roads and back onto rail where it should be. Eighty-four per cent of the people of Queensland oppose this asset sale. The government knows that. We have known that for a long time and it is official today in the paper.

The backbenchers have been led by the nose. Maybe they should have been told the real facts. But they are being told now. The reality is that this is a deadly serious issue. The Premier and the government have misled Queenslanders. The members opposite have seen that. They know in their own hearts that they have been misled like lemmings over a cliff. Tonight, the backbenchers have a chance to vote against this legislation.

Queensland Rail has been in existence for 134 years. It pioneered this country. It opened up this country, and the government wants to sell it. Do the members opposite know the figures? Do they know the details? If someone asked, 'What is the real net value of the assets if they are sold?' Do the members opposite know? Has the Treasurer told them? He has not. Queenslanders need to know as well what that figure is. We need to get the truth. We have not been told the truth and I think it is about time we were. It is also about time the backbenchers were told the truth about this issue.

The unions have been called pansies. They have been a little bit quiet. They were making a noise as well, but the reality is they have been told, 'If we sell that income-earning asset, you will get your wage rise.' It does not make economic sense to do that. You just cannot go out and sell assets like that to pay for salary increases. The money has to be put back into revenue-earning activity.

The debt that the members opposite have is incredible. I suspect that the money that the government will receive if they sell Queensland Rail is not going to be all that great and it will not fix the problem. The members opposite are far better off trying to work out a solution. They should put somebody in charge who can run the damn thing properly and make some money out of Queensland Rail. What is the government going to do with all of that grain? We have thousands of tonnes of grain that need to be moved. It will take three years to move the grain that is there now. What is the government going to do? How can people who grow grain and are the food producers of this nation make a living if we cannot even get produce to the port? The only way we can get it to the port now is to use trucks. Those trucks have been queued up in James Street at Toowoomba. They cannot get through. The roads are deteriorating. The system is just not working.

I know we are the only state in Australia that carts cattle. That is important. That is good. That is great. We should be proud of it. We can do it. But that will certainly stop if Queensland Rail is privatised. We need to have a CSO. We need to be able to get the stock, if we can, off the road and on to rail. We want to get freight off the road on to rail. That is what we should be doing. We should be doubling and trebling the amount of freight that we have on our rail network. The Treasurer says that the government has a mandate. A Galaxy poll said—

Ms Bligh and Treasurer Andrew Fraser have repeatedly insisted both measures were necessary in tough times as the state would have had to borrow to pay the subsidy. But voters remain convinced they were misled.

That is what it says. It goes on to say—

Galaxy chief David Briggs said the poll showed many Queenslanders were of the opinion that Labor was re-elected on 'false pretences'.

'There may be many factors that have contributed to the slump in support for the Bligh Government but central to their demise is the widespread belief that Anna Bligh lied and her government misled the people of Queensland during the recent election campaign.'

That is what the poll showed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The word 'lied' is not parliamentary.

Mr HOBBS: I withdraw. I am quoting the paper, but I withdraw. The reality is that what the government is doing is not going to fix the problem. So by pursuing this legislation through the House tonight to ensure that the government gets a sale of this asset is not going to fix the problem. The member for Moggill went through in some detail a while ago what this asset is really worth. Who is going to buy it for a reasonable value? You have to put something in a saleable shape first. If you want to sell a house, you do some work on it—you paint it or you spruce it up. What have you got with Queensland Rail? Out at Roma and Charleville in my electorate there is a railway line and there is not even a locomotive on it. The locomotives are gone; they are missing. How can you sell something like that?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: So you need to have some common sense for a start. You need to have some business acumen about what you do to prepare an asset for sale. It is the same with livestock. It is as simple as that. You prepare for the sale. You do not put the whole mob up for sale. You pick out the ones that are no good and you move them out of the road. You present something that is good for sale. What we have now is not a saleable item that will make the top dollar that we need. It is the wrong time to do that.

I really believe that this government and particularly the bankbenchers need to consider their future. Their future is more important than the Treasurer's. He will be gone. He is on a big salary. The Treasurer will leave and the backbenchers will be left here to carry the can. Unfortunately, they will not make it.

Ms Grace: Neither will you.

Mr Hopper: He's the father of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, I have asked you tonight to refrain unless you take your seat.

Mr Fraser: What's 38 minus 38?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Treasurer, I have also asked you tonight.

Mr MALONE: I rise to make a contribution to the amendment before the House in relation to the elimination of the rail assets from the sale of all assets that have been proposed by the government in Queensland. I speak on behalf of the 1,000-odd workers who work on the Goonyella coal line and who work at the Jilalan rail yard. The Jilalan rail yard is a huge complex. More than \$750 million is being spent on it as we speak.

Mr Johnson: It is the heart of Goonyella.

Mr MALONE: It is basically the heart of the Goonyella rail complex. I can assure members that the workers who work in that complex and the almost 200 drivers who drive the coal trains between Goonyella and other coalmines to the coast, to Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay, are desperately concerned about the direction in which QR is going and, more importantly, the direction in which the government is going in terms of providing them with job security.

I recollect the advertising that was being spread around the electorate three months ago in terms of the Labor Party's policy. The ALP candidate who stood against me was on in the local media and on local radio day after day strongly suggesting that he was the only one who would be able to secure the jobs of those people working in the railways based at Jilalan. He made a desperate commitment on ABC Radio to anybody who would listen to him, even as far south as Rockhampton, that he would stand up for the workers at the QR Jilalan rail yard. Three months later those people are desperately concerned about the future of their jobs, their families and where they are going. From my point of view, it is a betrayal of the old Labor way—it is in Labor's DNA, it is the driver supposedly of the Labor Party.

I go back over a bit of history and I can recollect the strong union movement within QR and the strong Labor ethic. Labor members had an understanding of where they were going and what they stood for. They rallied around their workers and made sure that they were secure in their jobs. It was almost like a big family. Quite frankly, I was a bit jealous of the comradeship and the way in which the union and the Labor Party worked together, particularly in QR. But in the last three months that has all dissipated.

I have to say that the local unions up there have been standing up for their men, standing up for the people who work in QR. But unfortunately at the higher level there seems to have been a conspiracy between the union bosses here in Brisbane and the Labor Party. Certainly they would have been taken along for the ride. Before the election they would have known exactly what was going to happen. But they were not telling the guys out there on the line who were driving the trains or fixing the lines that as soon as the election was over and Labor had won suddenly their jobs would be in jeopardy and they would be selling off the assets of QR.

The coal lines from the coalfields of the lower Bowen Basin—and others have spoken about other lines around Queensland—are just a licence to print money. Anybody who is in the trucking business will tell you that the way you make money is to fill up a truck, take it to a destination, turn it around and go back and do the same job over and over again. That is exactly what the coal haulage operation of QR is about. They go up the hill, fill up at the coalmines, come back to the coast, dump the load and go back again. It is a cycle—almost one train after another every day of the year. It is a highly organised operation. Every day the trains are full. It is a continuous operation. It has the potential to make quite a considerable amount of money for the government.

The potential for expansion on those lines is unbelievable. The amount of coal basically untouched in the hinterland of the Bowen Basin is unbelievable. One tenement is drilling out there at the moment. It is one of the smaller tenements but it has over 30 billion tonnes of coal in reserve. So that gives members some idea. That is just one tenement. So there is enough coal out there for the next 400 or 500 years at the rate they are taking it out, and one would expect that to increase over time. Certainly the assets of QR, with some prudent investment, will bring a huge return for the Queensland government. Of all the rail lines in Queensland, it is that line that would have the potential to secure a future and for the people who work on it to have a future as well.

With the foresight of our forefathers, the coal lines in that region are fully electrified. Very few locos are diesel. All the lines are electric. In fact, when the trains come down Connors Range they have the potential to generate enough power to feed back into the line to take an empty train back up the hill. That is magnificent technology. The braking effect of the trains coming down the mountain actually generates enough power to take an empty train back up. That just did not happen. That line was started in 1970 and it has matured into the operation that it is today.

The people who work in QR—the railway workers, the guys, the union blokes—are all professionals. They all take great pride in the job they do. Right throughout our community they are appreciated for the way in which they operate those trains. It is not an easy job. I have spoken to many of them. It is a huge responsibility. There are only two men driving those trains. Each train carries something like 10,000 tonnes and their responsibility is to get it to the port in a very organised way.

So I stand here early this morning speaking on behalf of the 1,000-odd workers who work at Jilalan in the Sarina area and also on behalf of their families—their kids who go to school and the mums and dads who rely on QR to earn an income. Quite frankly, I cannot really understand how the government can sell an asset that has the potential to generate a very considerable income—and certainly it will be worth a lot more with a small amount of investment into the future—and then supposedly use that money to fund a black hole that the government has created over the last three to five years. From a business point of view, as Dr Flegg has pointed out, it just does not make sense. Quite frankly, I think the government is heading in the wrong direction.

I think the amendment before the House tonight bears consideration by the backbenchers in the Labor Party. I am hopeful that some of them will see the sense in crossing the floor on this amendment and joining the LNP on this side of the House to ensure we have a sensible outcome from this debate tonight. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr KNUTH: I support the amendment moved by the member for Clayfield, and I vehemently oppose the sale of Queensland Rail. Yesterday I had the opportunity coming back from Moranbah to call into Coppabella to speak to the workers and have a look at the rail network. The workers there fear for their jobs and they cannot believe that the Labor Party has betrayed its grassroots principles and everything it stands for.

It was interesting to see the magnitude of the rail network at Coppabella—the multiple coal wagons, the 4100 engines, the electrified network, the railway homes and the billions of dollars in infrastructure that we will see go. One thing was very notable: everyone was proud to be wearing the Queensland Rail logo—and I have had the privilege to wear that logo too. That logo represents 144 years of Queensland Rail. It was built by the taxpayers of Queensland and also built by the workers of Queensland. But once QR is sold that logo will go. That logo will disappear within three or four years. The new logo will be 'Dubai Rail', or the 'Indian Express', or the 'Japanese Railway', or the 'Chinese Railway'. This is what we will see. Those opposite might think this is untrue, but this will become a reality. This 144-year-old icon was built by the taxpayers of Queensland, and this sale of QR is probably one of the greatest betrayals in Queensland history.

The Labor Party was founded, I am led to believe, at Barcaldine at the Tree of Knowledge. But the foundation of the Labor movement also came from the Ipswich workshops, where they would stand up on the podium and promote the Labor cause and everything the Labor Party stands for. Those people would turn in their graves if they saw what the Labor Party is now doing to Queensland Rail.

When Goss came to power in 1989 he came with the perception of having cleaned out the cobwebs from the past and having come out of the Dark Ages and all of this nonsense. Before Goss came to power, we had a rail network where there was a railway station or siding at every little town, where there were cattle yards and trucking yards every 30 kilometres, where 40 per cent of the railway employees were Torres Strait Islanders, South Sea Islanders and Aboriginals. Those towns relied on that rail freight network. It was not until Goss got his hands on it that all of a sudden the Banyo workshops were gone, the Redbank workshops were gone, the Townsville North yard was gone and all of those little railway stations throughout rural and regional Queensland were gone.

Queensland Rail and this government have allowed a company called ARG to take over the western line between Townsville and Mount Isa. We have seen the end of small freight on that line. There is no longer any more small freight on that line. There is no longer any transportation of dangerous goods by rail on that line; it is all transported by road. Likewise, Thalanga mine no longer transports its ore by road. This is a company that is owned by Queensland Rail. So if this is what happens with a company that is owned by the government, imagine what will happen after privatisation.

Likewise, when Goss came to power, we saw the number of Queensland Rail employees reduced from 26,000 to 14,000. Wayne Goss had a 19-seat majority and he lost it. What is happening now is worse than what caused Wayne Goss to lose his majority. So I say to the Labor backbenchers that they should not betray their grassroots. They should stand up for their fundamental principles. They should cross the floor and vote with us. They will win their seats at the next election if they cross the floor and vote with us. But I guarantee that they will lose their seats at the next election if they vote for this.

Mrs MENKENS: I share the major concern about the 'disposal of all or part of the above-rail businesses, assets, liabilities of Queensland Rail other than a passenger services business, asset or liability'. I share the same concerns that 84 per cent of Queenslanders have, according to the latest Galaxy poll.

Let us look at exactly what Queensland Rail is—or, should I say, was. We know this is Queensland's 150th year. So what was the first thing the people of the Moreton Bay settlement did? They looked to transport. They looked to opening up the regions, which is something that this government has tended to forget: it forgets that the regions are very much part of Queensland. So they looked to opening up Queensland, and Queensland Rail became the lifeline to the rest of the state—those parts of the state that had the resources that were actually bringing in the wealth to this new state. So Queensland Rail developed and grew, connecting all of those small communities right throughout the state. We saw the settlers, we saw the miners, we saw the gold miners, we saw the cane cutters all heading out on rail, coming back to the city on rail and transporting their freight throughout the state on rail.

In nearly every small town in Queensland somewhere in a park you will see an old steam train. That epitomises how much Queensland Rail means to those people. I have to congratulate the government on the Q150 Steam Train. I hate to think what it cost to do it up and I hate to think how much taxpayers' money went into it. But it was extremely well received by the communities as it went through the towns. But what hit me so very strongly with all the people who went on that train was their joy and their memories. This is their heritage. Queensland Rail is their heritage. But, more importantly, they owned it. We say that the Queensland government owns QR, but who is the government? The government is the people of Queensland. The joy that those people felt was the fact that this was their rail: it belonged to them.

It is Queensland's heritage. It is unique, as we know. Queensland Rail has a three-foot six-inch gauge and hardly anybody else in Australia has that. However, why is the government selling it? The government has an \$85.5 billion debt. It is going to be paying \$5.2 billion in interest every year. When you run a business you look at where you can make money: you look at what wealth-producing assets you have and you work on them. But what has happened to Queensland Rail? It has been allowed to run down. It has lost its wealth-generating ability because of the absolute uselessness, inability and inefficiency of this government.

I have watched in my area so many loyal, magnificent Queensland Rail staff lose their jobs. I saw the incredible anxiety as Pacific National moved in. Pacific National had a great deal of trouble getting train drivers, because the QR workers who lost their jobs were very concerned about moving to a company that they were unsure of. The stress and unhappiness of the rail workers was very evident.

However, what was QR replaced with? My particular area used to have a really decent freight delivery service. That delivery service went right up and down North Queensland. We had railway stations where freight was delivered, picked up and carried through. We have horticulturists and, as we

have heard, we have coal and we have cattle. All of the freight from those industries would be carried through. However, in my little area now the government in its wisdom has started to get rid of all of the railway stations. Freight that comes from Brisbane is downloaded in Ayr, where it probably sits for about a day or so. Then Q-Link picks it up and backtracks it across the bridge over the river to the people in Home Hill. That might take one day; it might take two days. How efficient is that? How much extra cost is involved? How ridiculous! That is the sort of thing that we have seen with Queensland Rail. That is why it is losing money—because of a lack of efficiency.

It is good that Queensland Rail is keeping its passenger train service. But hold on. How is that being funded? Any hope of Queensland Rail generating any funds would have gone into subsidising Citytrain and Traveltrain. The government is broke, because its wealth-producing assets are just run so inefficiently. Queensland Rail is simply not working. We are looking at a fire sale of assets that Queenslanders do not want.

Nothing has caused more consternation among my constituents than this fire sale. The number of people who have come into my office within the past few weeks about this issue is enormous. We are seeing that occur right across-the-board. The people are concerned, because the government is taking a very serious step—an appalling step—in selling these assets, and particularly Queensland Rail. I do not support the sale of this asset.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! The member who made the last comment should withdraw it. It was an unparliamentary comment and it was a reflection on the Deputy Speaker. I believe it came from the member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take exception to that. I said nothing. I was sitting here watching you.

Mr Hopper: I will vouch for that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not worry about vouching for it. Thank you.

Mr FRASER: The government will oppose the amendment.

MOTION

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.13 am): I move—

That the debate of the bill be now adjourned.

Division: Question put—That the debate be now adjourned.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszcuk, 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, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seene, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.20 am): I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted to move a motion without notice.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszcuk, 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, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seene, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Any further divisions will be of two minutes' duration.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL

FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Allocation of Time Limit Order

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (2.24 am), by leave: I move—

That the following time limits apply to the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill and the Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, both Bills having already been declared urgent Bills—

- (1) Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill
 - (a) Consideration in detail to be completed by 2.40
 - (b) Third reading by 2.41; and
 - (c) Long Title agreed by 2.42.
- (2) Fuel Subsidy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
 - (a) Consideration in detail to be completed by 3.15
 - (b) Third reading by 3.16; and
 - (c) Long Title agreed by 3.17.

If the stage has not been completed by the time specified, Mr Speaker shall put all remaining questions necessary to pass the Bill, including clauses and schedules en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the Minister in charge of the Bill, without further amendment or debate.

On any fair assessment everyone has had a fair go in debating these bills—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms SPENCE: I was going to try to make this as brief as possible, but if I am going to keep getting interrupted it will just bite into the time already allocated. The government and I did not want to guillotine these bills, but obviously—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms SPENCE: Obviously the opposition has taken an irresponsible attitude to the debate tonight. In the past two hours 13 opposition speakers have spoken on one amendment to one clause in these bills. That is why the government has been forced down this path. If they had been responsible in their attitude to the debate on this bill and put their amendments forward in the normal fashion, nominating a couple of members to speak and then voting on it, we would not have come in here tonight and had to restrict the debate.

We have had 22 hours of debate on the second reading stage and 78 members have spoken on the bills. Every member who wanted to speak on these bills has had that opportunity. I am sure that every member has made a worthy contribution in the debate on these bills and I do not believe it will be made more erudite by people repeating their contributions in their second reading speeches. If we sit here for another 12 or 24 hours, we will not hear anything new, either from members of the opposition or the government. All members of parliament have had the opportunity to state their case very clearly on this legislation and we are not going to be better served by sitting here for hours. I encourage all members to support this motion.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.30 am): I second the motion.

An opposition member: Yeah, you would!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I call the member for Callide.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier! Minister!

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (2.30 am): Of course the opposition will oppose this outrageous motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House says that we have been irresponsible. What we have done is ensure that the members of this House have a chance to vote on each one of the assets that the government seeks to sell. Had the government had any respect for

this parliament, it would have allowed this legislation to be debated on its own merits. Yet it wrapped it up with the budget bills so that we could not debate the detail, so that members on that side of the House did not have to stand up and explain why they were going to support the sale of things such as Queensland Rail.

The Leader of the House says that we are irresponsible. The irresponsibility here lies with the government. For it to address the sale of an asset such as Queensland Rail without giving every member who is a representative in this House the opportunity to explain how such a sale would impact on them and their constituents is irresponsible. That is where the irresponsibility lies, and it is certainly not with the opposition. The government wants to sneak in here like a thief in the night and pawn the assets of Queenslanders without having due consideration of what those asset sales will mean. It has ensured that it can use its numbers to close down the debate and not have the full consideration that these asset sales deserve. Of course we will oppose the motion.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (2.32 am): What a disingenuous argument! The Leader of the House comes in here and says that the government did not want to guillotine this debate. For an hour and a half those opposite have been scurrying around out the back. They have had copies of the standing orders out. They have been running around all the way through trying to find a way to get out of the embarrassing situation they find themselves in because they do not want to face a debate on this issue, and let us just look at what we are talking about here. What are we discussing in this particular bill? We are discussing the disposal of Queensland Rail—a \$7 billion state owned organisation that has over \$3 billion worth of revenues. We are discussing Queensland Motorways—an organisation that is currently borrowing \$1.8 billion and undertaking a major road upgrade system and is the major toll road operator in South-East Queensland. We are talking about the disposal of the Port of Brisbane Corporation. The entire port of Brisbane and its access road is now up for sale, and this government does not want to have a discussion about the merits of that particular sale.

The government does not want to discuss the strategic importance of the Port of Brisbane Corporation. It does not want to discuss whether it is a sensible sale. It wants to ram it through and shove it down Queenslanders' throats and say, 'We know best. We told you. We are going to dictate to you what the outcome is going to be.' It wants to ram down Queenslanders' throats the question of the sale of the rail assets of Queensland Rail about which there is an enormous amount to debate—the wisdom of getting rid of the rail track, the thing that provides third-party access. We are talking about the sale of Forestry Plantations—an asset with \$1.3 billion worth of biological assets. And the Leader of the House comes in here and says that the government did not want to guillotine this debate, having already, as the member for Callide has indicated, wrapped them all up in the appropriation bills and guillotined any sensible debate by doing that and forcing these measures through. This is a disgraceful motion. This is a disgraceful attempt by a disgraced and increasingly discredited government that will rebound on it to its great detriment, but it is all that it will deserve!

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.34 am): I rise to speak to the motion and say that we have only looked at one aspect of this privatisation. We want to look at Queensland Motorways, about which the Premier has said that we are only going to be looking for a target to make sure that it does not increase its tolls and looking for some sort of guarantee about motorways—a very valuable aspect of a state asset. Of course there are the others that the member for Clayfield has mentioned such as the Port of Brisbane Corporation. We have only discussed one aspect of Queensland Rail in terms of the above-rail businesses, as the member for Clayfield said. The below-rail businesses of Queensland Rail are another very important aspect that we believe deserved a forensic analysis.

As the honourable member for Moggill has pointed out, the value of these assets means that members of parliament should be able to debate them and not have them all bundled up together. Of course, there is also the disposal of Abbot Point Coal Terminal and Forestry Plantations Queensland, about which the member for Hinchinbrook has a passionate interest. Because we are talking about forestry plantations in his electorate with the greatest proportion of this business, he has the right to speak in this debate. He did not speak about Queensland Rail in the first section, but he wanted to speak about Forestry Plantations Queensland, and that should be his right as the member for Hinchinbrook, yet this government is just arrogantly closing it down. I rise to oppose this motion.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.36 am): Let us make no bones about this: the reason the Leader of the House came in here and moved this motion is that those opposite want to close down debate. Why do they want to close down debate? Because they have been forensically torn apart in this debate during the course of this evening. But the other real reason is due to the growing revolt on their own side. The simple reality is this: we have had speaker after speaker after speaker on the opposition side stand up and categorically tear apart the argument the government has put forward for the sale of Queensland Rail's above-rail assets and privatisation. Have we seen one Labor member who has been prepared to stand up and go on record and say what their point of view is? No! No, because many of them do not support this and the government—the executive—is not prepared to let them have their say. They are wimping out. They are proving themselves to be absolute complete categorical cowards.

There are three noises that are gathering in Queensland today. One is the increasing rumbling from the people of Queensland who, as this headline has proven tonight, have been deceived and betrayed by the Premier, who they said lied to them. That is what the headline says. That is what the headline actually said. The other sound out there is the sound of the knees knocking on those wimpish members opposite who are not prepared to stand up and be counted. The third noise is those who are lining up rushing to the toilet out of their nervousness. That is what we are seeing from those members. You should have seen the exodus in here before! You should have seen the exodus, because they have no courage. They are not prepared to display it and the government has no support; otherwise they would stand up and they would say it tonight. Where is the member for Everton? He is sitting there and is the political personification of a Cheshire cat—not prepared to stand up and put it on the record, but his face says it all.

What those opposite do not want us to know is the simple reality, and that is the real cost of this, the real cost to the people of Queensland and the cost to the jobs of the people of Queensland—the rail workers, the Forestry Plantations Queensland workers, the Queensland Motorway Ltd workers—but more importantly there will be a devastating cost to employment in the Queensland Legislative Assembly in the Labor Party, because what this means when this bill goes through is that there will be an impact on employment and it will be as simple as this: Chatsworth—gone; Everton—gone; Broadwater—gone; Cook—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Barron River—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Toowoomba North—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Whitsunday—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Southport—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Townsville—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Springwood—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Cairns—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mansfield—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Southern Downs!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Ferny Grove—

Opposition members: Gone!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Pine Rivers—

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

Mr SPRINGBORG: But the greatest impact of unemployment will be on the Premier. In the most unprecedented and extraordinary step that we have ever seen, her own local branch lost faith in her. When you are prepared to deceive your own, there is no stopping the level of deception that you are prepared to go to. There is one prediction we can confidently make today and that is that this Premier is damaged goods. She will not be leading this government to the next state election. That is why the debate is gagged.

Ms SPENCE: I rise to a point of order. I question the relevance of the speech by the member for Southern Downs to this motion. It seems to me that none of this debate is relevant to the motion before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The Leader of the House does not even know why she has moved this motion. The simple reality is what I am outlining. It is to protect the government members from themselves. That is why the motion has been moved—to cut off debate—because of the dramatic impact this bill is going to have on the employment of Queenslanders, the Labor members opposite and, more importantly, the Treasurer and the Premier.

The people of Queensland have seen through this government. We are seeing one of the most profoundly undemocratic acts that has ever happened in this parliament. We are seeing bills of parliament that will have an extraordinary effect on Queenslanders in terms of privatisation, of which this government has absolutely no mandate, being rushed through, with debate being guillotined, without being properly set aside for debate on all of their aspects. Whether that be the sale of above-rail assets, below-rail assets, Forestry Plantations Queensland, Queensland Motorways, we have an obligation and a duty in this parliament to properly scrutinise this legislation, because its impact on Queenslanders will be profound. The impact on their jobs will be quite extraordinary. Also, we are going to have a truncating of the debate on the petrol subsidy scheme in Queensland without any member of this government standing up and talking about the impact of the abolition of the petrol subsidy scheme on tourism.

In the past 24-odd hours, did any member on that side of the parliament stand up and talk about the impact of the introduction of the fuel tax on tourism in Queensland? Did one single member on the other side of the House stand up and talk about the impact of the fuel tax on food prices for the average Queenslanders? No! Did one single member of the government stand up and justify the impact of the fuel tax that was being introduced on transport in Queensland? No! In the past 24 to 48 hours, did one single member opposite stand up and seek to justify how people in regional and rural areas are going to be disproportionately affected by the fuel tax in that it is going to cost them more to travel for their medical appointments and then for their social interaction? Did one single member opposite stand up at all and even try to repudiate the contention that was put forward by the Premier in her own Q2 document last year that Queensland is the most decentralised state and Queenslanders travel further in their cars—indeed, 1,000 kilometres further in their cars—than any other Australian and, therefore, the impact, by the government's own concession in that document, that the fuel tax is going to have? No, they did not! The reason this motion has been moved tonight is that the government members want to quarantine themselves from the inevitable criticism that continues to exist and continues to grow in the community. We have seen it here before.

The absolute last paragraph sums it up beautifully. The Galaxy pollster states—

There may be many factors that have contributed to the slump in support for the Bligh Government but central to their demise is the widespread belief that Anna Bligh lied and her government misled—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You will withdraw that word. It is unparliamentary.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw. I quoted that from this particular piece.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Deliberately misled. I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The ruling is based not so much that you have used the word but that you cannot use the article to be unparliamentary, and that is my ruling. It is well-established practice. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw and I substitute 'deliberately misled'—'and her government misled the people of Queensland'. That is the case.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There are ways of dealing with the word. I would substitute 'deliberately misled'.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (2.45 am): I move—

That the question be put.

Division: Question put—That the question be put.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Dickson, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 1281.

Resumed on clause 5—

Division: Question put—That Mr Nicholls' amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Dickson, Messenger

NOES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Kiernan

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Nicholls) negatived.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the resolution agreed to by the House and the time limits for the consideration of the bill having expired, the question is that clauses 5 to 30 and the schedule be agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 30 and the schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.04 am): 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. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.04 am): 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.

FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in detail

Clauses 1 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.05 am): If any issue crystallises what this government is about it is this debate on infrastructure investment and the fuel subsidy, which is the imposition of a fuel tax. This government was re-elected on 21 March, having

promised unequivocally and absolutely that this tax would not be introduced. That promise was made by the Treasurer in February and in January; that promise was made by the Premier in June last year. She said that she would not impose this tax on Queensland because it would be too hard on families. However, what do we have just 12 weeks after the 21 March election? An absolute betrayal by this Treasurer and this Premier. They have lost any trust and credibility that they may have had in the eyes of the people of Queensland. The people of 89 electorates expect their representatives, having been elected to the Legislative Assembly, to come to this place and represent them on issues such as this, even though the Treasurer ruled out unequivocally that this tax would ever come in.

The Fuel Subsidy Act 1997 was brought in by the Borbidge government. The Liberal National coalition of 1997 passed that legislation to make sure that this was the only state in Australia that did not have a fuel tax. Now we have the Treasurer going back on something that was so clear and unequivocal throughout the Labor campaign. Nothing typifies more the disgraceful behaviour of this government than what we have seen tonight. In fact, we know already that the government has hated this subsidy for a long time. In the budget debate last year, the Treasurer wanted to get rid of it through a scheme that involved drivers' licences. Of course, they could not work that scheme out. The dodgy scheme—

An opposition member: The dodgy brothers.

Mr LANGBROEK: Exactly, another dodgy brothers' scheme that was supposedly going to get rid of this subsidy. Of course, they did not manage to do that then, but finally they have managed to do it by blaming a global financial crisis. We had \$65 billion worth of debt and now we have \$85 billion worth of debt, and suddenly there is a desperate need to bring in a fuel tax that Queenslanders have never had before. Every time you fill your tank, every time you go shopping, every time you do any sort of activity in tourism, construction or agriculture, in rural and regional Queensland, it is going to cost you more because of the 9c a litre tax that the government has brought in. It is an indictment on the government. The people of Queensland are rightly furious at this government. The anger comes from constituents throughout the state, including our members whom we listen to when we go to public forums.

I wish to share with the House the views of a Labor person. That person is not from our side of the House. That person sent me a copy of a letter sent originally to the Premier. Mr L Nightingale raises a number of points, and he does so far more succinctly than I could. Mr Nightingale, of 194 Dowding Street, Oxley, writes to the Premier and me:

Greetings. I write firstly as a committee member of the Oxley residents group and secondly as an individual. I am not a member of any political party. I am a member of an industrial trade union. I write about the so-called fuel subsidy in Queensland. It is, in reality, a fuel tax. Study the history and this will be obvious. It is incorrect to say otherwise. I express my opposition to the proposed fuel tax of nine cents per litre for the following reasons: 1. Your government—

This is obviously in reference to the Premier—

—has no mandate for this tax due to the early election and recent election pledge to not bring in this tax, both of which are relevant.

2. To obtain a mandate your government should hold a state referendum on this issue.
3. It is bad politics to break election pledges continually. How can citizens trust a government that continually does this?
4. It is poor ethics to break election pledges. The pledge years ago to have open, accountable, trustworthy government sounds like a hollow promise.
5. Motorists in Queensland have already had registration increase and road fines increase, so now the Queensland government wants to hit the motorists a third time. Is this fair?
6. Poorer Queenslanders in our society will be hit the hardest. Is this fair?

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I know members opposite hate hearing this, but it was great to hear from Mr Nightingale of Oxley, who is a member of an industrial trade union—one of the people whom those opposite are supposed to represent. So let us hear what else he had to say—

7. The RCACQ opposes this new tax. Over 90 per cent of members oppose this new tax via an RACQ survey.
8. The 9c fuel tax will increase the cost of goods and services and impact on jobs.
9. Infrastructure costs will increase.
10. Queensland will no longer be the low-tax state. This will impact business.
11. Rural and regional Queenslanders who are already second-class citizens with a high suicide rate will be impacted. Cars are a necessity for these people.
12. The federal government has already injected billions into LGA and state capital works.
13. Queenslanders would rather have no green rebates and no solar hot-water systems retrofitted than have a 9c a litre fuel tax.
14. The Queensland government Capital Works Program should be economised due to falling revenues and the massive federal government expenditure at LGA and state level.
15. It is time Queensland lived within its means instead of being big spending.

16. Money can be saved by economising on overmanaged top level departments using technology in lieu of travel, government employed journalists, government employed lobbyists, public servants' early retirement.

17. Money was not put away in the good times. I ask why.

That is what Mr Nightingale says. In closing, he says—

Motorists are sick and tired of being treated like milking cows for governments. There are better options as outlined than a new 9c a litre fuel tax.

He finishes as I began—

I am not a member of any political party. I am a member of an industrial trade union.

Yours sincerely

L Nightingale

194 Dowding Street, Oxley

So there we go.

Mr Johnson: You can multiply it by 10 in the bush.

Mr LANGBROEK: Exactly. As the member for Gregory says, multiply it by 10 in the bush because they are the concerns that are being expressed to us by people from all over Queensland who were told that they could count on the Treasurer and that they could count on the Premier just 12 short weeks ago. And how did that turn out in terms of being a promise that they could rely on? It turned out to be absolutely worthless because here we are in the dead of night debating something that this government promised it would not bring in.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I can go for three minutes. The member for Algeester is one of those government members who has misled the people—she made absolutely no representation to her people that that was what she was going to do. That is what they have all done. The member for Algeester is as culpable as all of the 51 Labor members of this House who just 12 weeks ago on 21 March did not tell the people of Queensland what they were going to do. Tonight we are going to see the shameful result of that. The shameful result is that we are going to have a tax that we on this side of the House made sure we never got in Queensland. We made sure that this was the only state in Australia that did not have this tax. Here we are now, with government members all standing up over that side saying, 'Yes, it's fine. We're happy to go and explain to the people who cannot manage an increase of 9c a litre for fuel driving around all parts of Queensland, taking their kids to school, going on holidays.'

As I say, the people of Queensland will not forget. Trust is something that a politician spends a lot of time building up over the years. And this government stands condemned for having brought in this tax. Government members have betrayed the people of Queensland. They are full of deceit and deception. As I say, the people of Queensland will not forget. They should never forget. There is nothing that government members can say that will ever make up for what they have done in terms of bringing in a new tax that the people of Queensland were led to believe they would not bring in.

The member for Mount Coot-tha stands condemned by his own words. As I say, long will the people of Queensland remember this evening—that at quarter past three the government brought in this tax that we have never had before.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Under the provisions of the resolution agreed to by the House and the time limits for the consideration of the bill having expired, the question is that clauses 20 to 54 and the schedule be agreed to.

Division: Question put—That clauses 20 to 54 and the schedule be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Kiernan

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeneey, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Dickson, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 20 to 54 and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.20 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The duration of this division will be two minutes.

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

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.25 am): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The duration of this division will be two minutes.

Division: Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.29 am): I move—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 4 August 2009

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (3.29 am): The Leader of the House has moved that the House do now adjourn, because the Labor government wants to run and hide from the decisions that it has made on behalf of the people of Queensland. The Labor government wants to forestall the opportunity that this parliament presents for the people of Queensland to fully examine and understand the decisions it has made.

The legislation that has passed through this parliament today involves decisions that are profound, decisions that are once-in-a-lifetime decisions for the people of Queensland, and we heard nothing from the Labor members—nothing at all. Not one of them was prepared to stand here and defend their government's decision to sell Queensland Rail. Worse than that, they chose to guillotine the debate on the motion to forestall debate, to shorten debate. Those members who wanted to express a view in this parliament about what those decisions would mean for their constituents were not given the chance to do so.

So now as we consider the motion that the Leader of the House has moved—that the House adjourn and we all go home—we are not going to support that. We do not believe that this House should adjourn. We believe that this House should continue to sit, should continue to consider the questions, should continue to consider the impacts of some of the decisions that this government has made. This House should continue to sit so that members on the other side of the parliament can tell us why they support the sale of Queensland Rail, because nobody has done that yet.

No-one on the government side of the House has taken the opportunity to stand up and explain the impact an extra 9c a litre will have on their constituents. Do we take it from that that they do not believe that an extra 9c a litre will have any impact on any of their constituents? Is that what the member for Rockhampton would have us believe is the impact on his constituents, that there would be no impact at all? He made a half-hearted contribution in here—almost an apologetic contribution in here—this afternoon concerning the sale of Queensland Rail, but I do not think he convinced anyone in this place, let alone the Queensland Rail workers in Rockhampton, who I know are after him in a big way.

Mr Schwarten: They'll never vote for a grub like you, that's for sure—not the scab that you are.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Rockhampton, I would ask you to withdraw those comments.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw.

Mr SEENEY: I can assure members that the railway workers in Rockhampton are calling their member much worse than that.

This House should not adjourn. This House should consider these issues. This House should continue to meet until we have heard from every Labor member on that side of the House who has voted to break Labor Party policy, who has voted tonight to make decisions that would cause the old Labor Party members to roll in their graves. The old Labor Party that I knew when I was growing up would never have considered making these decisions. But they are not the old Labor Party anymore. They want to use this parliament in some arrogant way to force through legislation and not feel obliged to explain that legislation to their constituents and to the people of Queensland.

There are members on this side of the House who are only too keen to outline the impact of that legislation on their constituents. They were only too keen to explain to members who represent Central Brisbane seats that things like an extra 9c a litre cannot be taken lightly if you live in regional Queensland. An extra 9c a litre is not a small, insignificant thing that can be jammed through this House with 10 minutes of debate and one speaker getting a chance to make a contribution to the consideration in detail of that bill. One speaker had an opportunity.

The Treasurer knows full well that in the debate and the consideration of the budget bills, no Labor member took the opportunity to address the issue of the new fuel tax—not one. Not one Labor member took the opportunity to explain the impact of an extra 9c a litre. They had the opportunity in consideration in detail when we considered the clauses. Because of the government's use of the guillotine, not only did they not use that opportunity but members on this side of the House, who badly wanted an opportunity to do their job and express those opinions on behalf of their constituents, were denied. They were denied the opportunity to do the job that the people of Queensland send them here to do. They were denied that opportunity because of the shame and the embarrassment of a Labor Party that cannot face the consequences of the decisions that it has made.

The members opposite know that they have been forced to make these decisions by a horrendous decade of financial mismanagement that has been outlined by speaker after speaker on this side of the House during the debate on the budget bills. They know that, because of that decade of mismanagement, they have been forced to make these decisions that they cannot even bring themselves to talk about. It is so embarrassing. They cannot even allow this parliament to do its job, to allow the members in this parliament who want to do their job an opportunity to do it.

So the Labor Party put all of these five bills together so that they cannot be properly considered. Then when we get to that part of the parliamentary process where we can properly consider the impact of the sale of Queenslanders' assets, when we can properly consider the impact of an extra 9c a litre for fuel, the government comes in, moves the guillotine motion and now seeks to adjourn the House. The House should not adjourn. Every member who is in this House is sent here by the people of Queensland and is paid to do a job. The place to do that job is here in this parliament to consider those questions, and those questions should be considered fully before the House adjourns. There is no way, by any judgement, those questions have been fully considered. Until that happens, then this House should not adjourn.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.37 am): I move—

That the question be put.

Division: Question put—That the question be put.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Messenger, Dickson

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, 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, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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: Dickson, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.45 am): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Springbrook

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (3.46 am): Tonight I rise in this place to speak on behalf of the residents of Springbrook Mountain whose future prosperity remains under a cloud. It is now more than four years after what appears to be a surreptitious attempt by this Labor government to buy up as many houses and businesses in Springbrook as it can under the guise of environmental protection as part of the heritage listed national park which surrounds the residents. The Springbrook Plateau has a total of 160 acreage allotments, with many having been purchased in the 2008-09 state government \$40 million buy-up of Springbrook.

Mr SPEAKER: I am pausing the clock. We have no Hansard writers present in the gallery; it is being recorded but there is too much ambient noise. To be fair to the Hansard writers but also to be fair to the member for Mudgeeraba, I am going to wait until the noise dissipates.

Ms BATES: Despite repeated requests, residents and I are still waiting for the total number of properties purchased to be advised due to the secrecy of this buy-up by the Beattie-Bligh government.

There are only 360 house blocks in Springbrook with all subdivisions of properties ceasing in the late 1960s to preserve the rural charm and tourist attraction of the area. The 700-strong community has been thrown into turmoil with the closure of several national park tracks, the state government's buy-up of land and the recent eight-week closure of the Gold Coast-Springbrook Road. Several businesses have closed as a direct result of these events and a report presented to the Gold Coast City Council recently clearly showed the remaining businesses were suffering from a marked decrease in visitor numbers.

Under pressure from local anger at the way the buy-up was occurring, the former member for Mudgeeraba said in 2007—

But some people are misrepresenting the government's intentions and making wild claims that are hurting local business and putting unnecessary fear into the minds of local families. They are saying that the government is buying businesses in order to shut down the mountain's economy and its community.

... sales were brokered by a local land agent for properties primarily already on the market and the market value was paid.

This is an untruth. RP Data obtained for the period to the end of 2008 clearly showed properties were purchased at three times per hectare more than they were worth in 2006 in the middle of an economic downturn. We have heard the people of this government blaming the state of Queensland's finances on the global economic crisis, yet here we are with a government purchasing land at three times the value. It is no wonder we have a budget in deficit.

In addition, residents were told that there would be an environmental group that would report back to the community. The residents of Springbrook still have the right to know just where this reference group met, where the management plan is that was supposed to come from this group meeting and how they can justify the purchase of land when no environmental benefits other than an increase in feral cats and lantana has occurred.

Repeater Station Road is now—

(Time expired)

Family All Abilities Fun Park

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (3.49 am): On 5 June, in the lead-up to one of the greatest Queensland Days in Mount Isa, the city's residents celebrated the opening of our new \$4.25 million Family All Abilities Fun Park, a Q150 project. The park was officially opened by the Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, and we also had the great pleasure of having the Minister for Public Works, Robert Swarten, sharing our day of celebration. Not only did we open the fun park but also Minister Swarten turned the first soil of our regional tennis complex, opened the Q150 archive display, officially welcomed the Q150 Steam Train and attended at the Q150 shed. What a day! No matter where you turned in Mount Isa, the great sense of community pride was clearly evident.

The family fun park is a facility built from dreams and visions. It has been years in the planning and delivered in six short months. Through the contribution of \$1.75 million by the Bligh government, \$1 million from Xstrata Mount Isa Mines and \$1.5 million from our local council, there is little doubt that the park is everything our local residents and planners hoped for. I would like to recognise the fantastic work of our young landscape architect Jessica Bennett, who led the design team and contributed two years to the project.

This colourful, vibrant, multifaceted fun park is a first for our region. The art work was done by our local students and is nothing less than magnificent. However, what really sets it apart is its focus on meeting the needs of all children, with or without a disability, their families and carers. About 3,000 square metres of this massive fun park caters for all abilities. It caters for children with disabilities and allows them to play outdoors, side-by-side with their friends and siblings. The park's entire surface is rubber soft-fall, which provides full access to people who use mobility aids and parents with prams.

The construction of this park has been a great community effort. Most importantly, the park also complements existing recreational facilities that surround the site, including the sports oval, swimming pool, skate park and our PCYC, which on Queensland Day hosted one of the biggest mega day outs for our young people. That was another resounding success. All of this occurred with the backdrop of the Q150 Steam Train chugging up and down our track, running trips for local people. On behalf of my community, I sincerely thank everyone involved in bring the Q150 train, shed and archives to our community.

Russell and Macleay Island Pathways; Mount Cotton Hill Climbs

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (3.52 am): Tonight I rise to bring to the attention of members two issues. RAMPS, an acronym for Russell and Macleay Island Pathways, is a program that works with young members of the community who are slipping through the cracks for a range of reasons. This program was initiated by the principals of the bay island schools and Victoria Point schools. It targets young people who, for a range of reasons, do not make it to high school on the mainland. It has been operating for five years and was funded through Education Queensland. It operates one day a week each on Macleay and Russell islands. It caters for youth who do not make it to high school for health reasons, social issues, issues with bullying et cetera. It provides a safe place to learn. Some children come from challenging backgrounds.

On 18 June the RAMPS people were advised that their last day of operation would be 26 June, the last day of term. No guarantees were given that the RAMPS funding would be renewed in this new financial year. During the past five years the program has catered for approximately 80 students. Some are placed in employment and some can re-enter the regular school system. The program caters for 12- to 18-year-olds. Currently the program helps 10 students, but it has had up to 18 students and has seven on a regular basis. This is one of the issues that I raised in my budget speech as an area of need. I ask the government to please confirm the funding for this vital program. The two ladies who run it, Lesley Allen and Susan Carriage, are making a positive change in many young lives. Those ladies have correspondence stating that it is a successful scheme and that it was going to be implemented state-wide. I am trying to get a copy of that letter, and I will forward it when it arrives.

I would also like to thank the organisers of the Mount Cotton hill climbs, the MG Car Club, for their invitation to a recent race day. I saw a few hours of very competitive motor sport. It is a time based challenge where you do a lap around a circuit and you are racing against yourself. It took me back to my youth where most local lads—young fellows who grew up in the Logan, Carbrook, Mount Cotton and Capalaba areas—would go and have a crack at the hill. I had a chance to see the track firsthand as a passenger in a WRX. It was not at race pace, but it was a fairly tidy lap just the same. The club was established in 1954 and it is still going strong. Club President Richard Mattea and his committee are, in a word, passionate. It was a great day out for the family and I thoroughly recommend it. It is a most beautiful setting at Mount Cotton and, as I say, I can thoroughly recommend it. The next race meeting will be the third round of the Queensland championships and will be held at Morgan Park, Warwick, on 29 and 30 August.

Nielsen, Mrs J; Q150 Celebrations

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (3.55 am): I take this opportunity to celebrate and recognise the tireless efforts of one of my constituents, June Nielsen. June has given to our community one of the most precious things we can give in this life—her time. At the recent Queensland local ambulance committee conference, June received the commissioner's certificate of appreciation from Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner David Melville. This certificate recognised June's efforts in running the CPR for Life program. This innovative program provides people with practical skills for resuscitation so that they can ensure that their family and their neighbours are safe in the event of injury.

June has worked in partnership with a number of other groups. This program initially started with Neighbourhood Watch in Kingston south working in partnership with the Queensland Ambulance Service. After the ambulance audit in 2007, the function moved to be part of the Logan local ambulance committee, where June has worked in partnership with Ann Langley and her dedicated team to make this program available to residents not only in Logan but also across South-East Queensland. The program has gone from strength to strength. I must also recognise the Loganlea Community Association, which has supported the program through allowing the use of its mannikins and facilities. The program is cheap, it is effective and it delivers real outcomes for people to ensure the safety of their family and friends.

In the time I have left I would like to quickly talk about some of the Q150 celebrations that have taken place in Beenleigh over the past few weeks. The Phoenix Ensemble, supported by the Q150 program, put on a fantastic performance of *Dad and Dave: On Our Selection*. Performers included Brian Byrne and Colin Foot. They were well supported by Anne-Marie Johnson in the cafeteria. This performance was directed by Maria Grills, the wife of the late Lucky Grills. We saw the opening of the historical display boards at Old Beenleigh Town, formally known as the Beenleigh Historical Village. Recently they have opened the Community Renewal funded facilities of the theatre, historic DVD for children and interpretative displays. Finally, residents have been taking up the opportunity to provide a name for the Beenleigh Connection Road bridge. The Logan River District Family History Society has suggested that it be named Thorncliff, after the private maternity hospital that was demolished in 2007, causing much concern to the local Beenleigh community.

Connell, Mr C

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.58 am): I rise to pay tribute to the late Cyril Connell, who passed away last week aged 81 years. Cyril's passing has meant the loss of a wonderful friend and mentor to many people and the end of the life of an extraordinary Queenslander. Cyril was born in 1928 in Rockhampton. Cyril became a teacher and taught at several country schools in Central Queensland before transferring to Toowoomba in 1950. He retired from the education department in 1988, having reached the level of deputy director. In that time he had also been deputy headmaster of Brisbane State High from 1963 to 1964 and a regional director of education based in Roma from 1972 to 1974. In his time as a teacher, Cyril is credited with initiating programs to assist troubled youth and, in his second career, he worked tirelessly to assist young men to build better lives on and off the playing field. Cyril was a great educator and mentor because he genuinely listened to people, especially young people. There was no generation gap when Cyril was in a conversation.

Cyril became known outside the education department as a prominent rugby league player in country competitions during the 1950s. By 1952 Cyril was a Queensland half-back, a position he held for 24 matches against New South Wales. He also captained Queensland on seven occasions. In 1954 Cyril was selected as a reserve to play for Australia against Great Britain, finally making his run on debut for Australia against New Zealand in 1956. At the end of 1956 he was selected in the Australian Kangaroo touring squad to England and France.

Cyril continued to play until the early 1960s in Rockhampton, when he turned to coaching. He coached Rockhampton, with one of his players in that side being a future member, minister and Speaker of the Queensland parliament, now a former member, Kev Lingard. On one occasion I was privileged enough to have Cyril Connell as a guest of mine for lunch here at Parliament House in the Stranger's Dining Room, where Cyril told me a few stories about Kev Lingard from those days in Rockhampton.

After retiring from the education department, Cyril was recommended to Wayne Bennett for a role with the Broncos as a talent scout. The success of the Wayne Bennett-Cyril Connell partnership is well documented. Cyril's scouting resulted in many high-profile players coming to the Broncos as teenagers and going on to represent Queensland and Australia. One of the last players Cyril signed to the club before retiring was not a teenager but 24-year-old Palmer Wopau, a former student of Abergowrie College in my electorate of Hinchinbrook.

Cyril worked with the Broncos until 2008. One of the last roles he held in rugby league was as a member of the Queensland Rugby League History Committee. One of the other members of that committee, a constituent of mine and North Queensland Cowboys historian, Greg Shannon, has told me what an honour it was to serve with Cyril Connell. I did not know Cyril Connell well but, insofar as I was acquainted with him, I can say confidently that he will be sadly missed and fondly remembered as a stalwart of the great game of rugby league in Queensland. I offer my sympathies to his family.

Autism

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (4.01 am): Honourable members might recall that I recently drew attention to the fact that two per cent of children in Education Queensland schools have been diagnosed as autistic—three to four times the level in Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania. This epidemic of false diagnosis blights the lives of children by giving them a label that does not describe them, visits them with a prophecy that might prove to be self-fulfilling and causes them to be treated in exactly the wrong way because false diagnoses of anything often lead to the real problem being overlooked.

These case studies demonstrate that the driver in this tidal wave of overdiagnosis is the fact that you need a diagnosis to get the additional assistance available for special education in Education Queensland. This places great pressure on parents, teachers and paediatricians to provide the label which will attract the funding. The easiest one to fit them with is autism. The papers that I table indicate the dilemma that paediatricians face. Consider the letter to Dr O'Keefe from a parent who says—

I know you do not like labelling kids but I truly think that 'Paul' now needs to have the ASD label at school to get him the help he needs. I have not been keen for this ... but I now think it needs to be done.

Consider the case of eight-year-old 'Jenny', who manifests poor attention control, anxiety, learning problems, poor social skills, obesity, family dysfunction leading to severe problems with social interaction. No extra help is available to her unless she is falsely diagnosed as autistic. Or consider the case of 11-year-old 'Alan', who has poor attention control, anxiety and poor social skills. The doctor's note says—

'Alan' is rejected and isolated at school. His mental health is at risk. There is no extra help available to him from school at present. An ASD diagnosis has been suggested, but is not appropriate.

Then there is 'Julian', a victim of severe child abuse and neglect. The doctor's note says—

'Julian' has extremely high needs, yet does not fit a particular Ed Queensland diagnostic category, so not eligible for extra funding.

This is a catalogue of childhood misery which could be ameliorated by placing more optimal drivers for funding in the system. I would recommend the New Zealand system, where diagnosis is not a precondition for resource allocation. The Kiwis understand that whether a child is hard to teach is an education question, not a medical one. If a teacher finds a kid hard to teach, they fill in a form. A departmental verifier comes out to check and, if it is so, resources are allocated. Kids with remediable problems get interventions designed to help them to get off the special needs list and those with permanent conditions get ongoing assistance. None get labelled. I commend the system to the House.

(Time expired)

Cataract Surgery

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (4.05 am): Twelve months ago the *Courier-Mail's* front page featured Bundaberg woman Dorothy Bauer, who shared the story of her five-year wait for a seven-minute operation to remove cataracts from her eyes. In my electorate people like Mrs Bauer are literally going blind while waiting for elective eye surgery and, thanks to the short-sighted Rudd Labor government, the situation will only get worse.

The decision to halve funding for cataract surgery will make it harder for Bundaberg residents to pay for cataract surgery in the private health system. In the past, patients paid approximately \$3,000 for one eye to be operated on. The slashing of the Medicare rebate will now put this surgery out of reach of many residents who will turn to the public system. There were 3,448 Queenslanders waiting for eye surgery at the end of the March quarter—470 of which were classified as long-wait patients. Of the 2,190 patients who received treatment, 1,024 of them—almost half—received treatment through the Surgery Connect program. Removing cataracts can change someone's life. Well-known ophthalmologist Bill Glasson stated that the inevitable result of cutting the rebate in half is that people on low incomes will be unable to afford it and will be forced on to public hospital waiting lists.

Last year I was approached by one Bundaberg pensioner whose friends and family pooled their money to pay \$3,500 for a cataract operation on one of her eyes. When this elderly lady's other eye began to fail rapidly she sought my help as she could not afford to pay for the other eye privately and, as long as she was waiting on the public health system, she was trapped at home, unable to drive. Fortunately, through the Surgery Connect program, this pensioner had the other eye fixed in a timely manner and she has been able to continue her active role in the Bundaberg community.

More than \$7.2 million has been spent on the Surgery Connect program for eye operations in just three quarters of this financial year. But the cost on the community to not fix these eyes is so much more. Considering the Rudd government's budget cuts, this state government will need to find extra dollars to fund operations for the additional patients at the higher prices the private ophthalmologists have been forced to charge. I urge the state health minister and the Treasurer to treat these operations as a priority and stop Queenslanders from going blind unnecessarily.

White, Mrs S

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (4.07 am): I rise to speak on the passing of Shirley White, asbestos campaigner and community leader. Born in 1935, Shirley was the eldest of eight children and attended Norman Park State School, beginning her lifelong association with Norman Park and the Bulimba electorate. In the years to come, the community would know Shirley for the amazing work she undertook on behalf of asbestos sufferers. Shirley and her husband, Reg, became pioneers in supporting those with asbestos related illnesses and, with Shirley's drive and compassion, they would soon effect real changes in legislation and establish the Queensland Asbestos Related Disease Support Society; the Multidisciplinary Pain Centre research fund; and Milton Clarke House, which provides accommodation for out-of-towners suffering from asbestosis whilst they are in Brisbane receiving treatment.

Shirley undertook these works with vigour, all the while continuing to care for Reg through his battle with asbestosis. She received numerous accolades—each one a proper tribute to the work which made her known not only here in Queensland but across the nation. Fittingly, however, the people of the Bulimba electorate have come to know Shirley not only as an advocate for asbestos sufferers but as a

community leader who gave much of her life to charity work in the Norman Park and Murarrie areas through her work on the Murarrie Progress Association, the Murarrie State School P&C, Norman Park State School and the Bulimba branch of the ALP.

Shirley worked tirelessly on the Murarrie Progress Association. From assisting the association to get the Murarrie progress hall rebuilt in 1975 to covering the costs of the association when it ran out of funds, her involvement was long and fruitful. Shirley's commitment to Murarrie State School started when her children began at the school. She volunteered in the library and was actively involved in the classroom as a volunteer aide, reading to students and teaching them to write on chalk slates. She worked in the tuckshop and supervised students as they waited at the school gates for Bill the pieman to come and sell them lunch.

Even the school gardens were bolstered by plants that she would bring from home to beautify the grounds. Shirley served on the P&C for many years as treasurer, secretary and president and was the first to suggest that the school look at forming a preschool or kindergarten—an idea that would result in a preschool being built as part of the school in 1973. Until only a few short years ago, Shirley continued to attend Norman Park State School, assisting with the care of their swimming pool.

Shirley's time with the Bulimba branch of the ALP was another thing again. At Labor Party branch meetings she was a passionate advocate for the downtrodden and determinedly debated their cause. I had the honour of knowing Shirley for around 10 years. She epitomised that phrase 'a people person'. No matter what was happening in her own life, she always had a smile, she always wanted to know how other people were going and she was always ready with a kiss and a hug. Shirley just loved people. On behalf of the Bulimba electorate, I pay this final farewell to Shirley White, a woman of uncommon character and kindness, who will be sorely missed by all.

Somerset Regional Council

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (4.10 am): One thing we know in the country is that we have to adapt. Since amalgamation, many shires have learned to adapt and cope with what has been thrown at them. They also have to adapt when urban communities start encroaching on rural areas. That encroachment takes away a lot of the cattle areas, the cropping areas and the dairying areas. Regional councils are getting put under some stress in terms of having to look for alternative sources of income.

As this government would know, tourism seems to be the way that most rural sectors are going. One issue that concerns me a little bit relates to Somerset Regional Council and the South East Queensland Water recreation access policy which is being prepared. Part of that policy is that no general public consultation is to be planned for. When organisations such as South East Queensland Water are making rules and regulations and access policy for areas such as the Somerset region, then it affects those people and the council. The council needs to be fully involved in that process. When any of these groups go into these areas, I would like to see that consultation.

The people who are most affected are the local people and the council's rate base. These people come into the areas and they should be allowed to use their motorised boats on the dam. With all of the advances that have been made with boats and marine engines, any damage to the dam—if there is any at all—should be very minimal.

It is the very strong wish of the Somerset Regional Council that it be involved in all of these discussions in terms of water access, because the dams are located in its area. The council needs the resources. It has been squeezed out from many of the other ways in which it accumulated funds. It is vital that the needs of the council be considered and it is vital that the needs of the people be considered. I say to the government that if this policy has not been finalised by now, the Somerset Regional Council should be involved. I hope it will be permitted to access the water. I hope that it receives income and that it will again be a viable council.

(Time expired)

Sydney to Surfers Paradise Charity Bike Ride

Mrs KEECH (Albert—ALP) (4.13 am): Some of my constituents are so passionate about making a difference to the lives of vulnerable young people that they are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to help them. In May of this year, a group of Queensland cyclists, including many from the Albert electorate, accepted the invitation from the Rotary Club of Engadine to ride 1,000 kilometres—from Sydney to Surfers Paradise—over seven days to raise much needed funds for homeless young men and women. In my wisdom, I chose to decline the invitation to ride a bike and instead joined the support crew in a very comfortable air-conditioned van chauffeured by retired professional coach driver Merv Collard and our navigator, Debbie Walker.

For the past 11 years the Rotary Club of Engadine, under the energetic guidance of ride coordinator Ken Robinson and hardworking club secretary Kevin Stuart have, together with club members, their families and supporters, including sponsors Maccsim Fastenings Pty Ltd, raised over

\$1.2 million for Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets. Upon leaving Sydney, the pack pedalled up the Pacific Highway and rode into pretty villages. Then they rode on to Grafton and Kyogle, crossed old timber bridges near Nimbin where they climbed hard to the famous Sphinx Rock Cafe and dodged roadworks and caught their breath as they waited for an ambulance to take another wounded comrade off to a New South Wales hospital. Upon crossing the Queensland border, the 170 cyclists rode proudly and triumphantly in a very impressive pack into Southport's Sea World Nara Resort.

Pack 5 captain, Mike Pearson, and team members and crew Jason Ballantine, Ashley Bassett, Ross Bobbermein, Merv Collard, Ben Craker, Adam and Pauline Guise, Erin, Shea and Paul Heyde, Dave Jeffs, Glenn Johnson, Allan Jones, Peter Keech, Paul Kelly-Taylor, Lorraine Longato, Neil Matthews, Laurie Montague, Mary Rae, Richard Vallack, Luke and Debbie Walker and Paul Willoughby can be so proud of their efforts. Through sunburn, chafing and concussion, with quick pit stops in New South Wales hospitals, I know it was their passion to raise funds for Father Chris Riley's charity that drove them through the pain barrier.

As a former child safety minister, I had the opportunity to meet Father Chris on many occasions and to invite him to consider providing his services to Queensland's at-risk children. I know the almost \$250,000 raised by the club, sponsors and cyclists will be used wisely in giving the young people a new start to life.

I was particularly proud that my husband, Peter Keech, was one of just a few riders who was honoured personally by Father Chris with an award for his fifth consecutive Sydney to Surfers Paradise ride.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mrs KEECH: I thank honourable members for their support. As to the question I was asked every single day during the ride, 'So, will you be riding next year?' my response is: watch this space.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.17 am (Saturday).

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