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WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 2009

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. As honourable members would well know, I have always had a view that when ministers or any member, including myself for that matter, provide inaccurate information to this House, intentionally or otherwise, they have an obligation to correct the record as soon as possible. The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, the honourable member for Stafford, has failed to do so and has misled the parliament on the following occasions.

In reply to question on notice No. 233 tabled on 19 May, I was told to refer future questions on the Tugun desalination plant to Minister Robertson, yet on 16 July this minister said—

... responsibility for construction rests with my colleague the Minister for Infrastructure, and that includes the commissioning phase.

SDS No. 2 for the Department of Infrastructure and Planning lists the department's achievements in 2008-09, and it says, 'completed construction and commissioning of SEQ Water Grid projects including ... Gold Coast Desalination'. This is clearly untrue, as at the time of the statement in June and even today this has not occurred. On 16 July the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning said—

Pre- and post-condition surveys are pretty important to that and they were undertaken along the pipeline, and all property owners were contacted and invited to be involved in that process.

Finally, in reply to petition No. 1223-09, the minister said—

GCDA has made all reasonable attempts to avoid damaging property and pre-construction and post-construction condition surveys were undertaken along the pipeline.

The minister's comments intimate that all home and property owners were contacted when they were not. Not a single person who has contacted my office was offered a post-construction inspection, which makes the claims mentioned by the minister untrue and misleading. Today, I intend to table a further question on notice to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning with regard to inspections to residents' homes, as it still falls under his responsibility.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask you to put the matter of privilege that you are raising in writing to me under the standing orders, rather than proceed with what action you intend to take today. That is the action I ask of you. If you will do that, I will be able to assess that material for myself.

Mrs STUCKEY: I signal my intention to write to you about this, Mr Speaker. I will also refer this to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Mr SPEAKER: Write to me in the first instance and I will make a ruling on whether it should go there.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Unparliamentary Language in the House

Mr SPEAKER: I remind all members that the behaviour of one member in the House reflects on all members. Observers in the public gallery or those members of the public watching or listening via television or the internet gain a lasting impression of what they see or hear. Practice and procedure prevent unparliamentary language. The assessment of what is unparliamentary language by necessity lies in the realm of who is in the chair, but generally it is any language or expression that is unworthy of the dignity of this House as an institution. Sometimes language is used and not picked up immediately. This, however, does not mean that the language used was acceptable. What may be acceptable language in some places outside this parliament—indeed may even be common usage in some places or forums—does not necessarily mean it is acceptable in this forum. I offer a general warning now that, even though unparliamentary language may not be immediately dealt with, this will not prevent me in the future requiring a withdrawal and perhaps an apology to the House by the offending member at a later more public time.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Answers to Questions on Notice

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have ordered that a statement responding to two matters raised with me regarding answers to questions on notice be circulated. I seek leave to have the statement incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

I refer to the matter of privilege raised by the Member for Buderim yesterday concerning the time taken to respond to a Question on Notice. The Member has subsequently written to me about the matter. I have also received another letter from the Member for Redlands about the content of an answer to a Question on Notice. I propose to deal with these two matters together.

One important mechanism to assist the Assembly in ensuring Ministerial responsibility and accountability is questions on notice. As Speaker, I have made an effort, through my directions to Table Officers, to ensure that Questions on Notice asked by Members comply with Standing Orders. Table Officers, acting on my authority, routinely review questions to ensure compliance.

Answers to Questions on Notice, both in terms of timeliness and content, are the responsibility of each Minister. I stress that the 30 days within which Questions on Notice must be answered is not a flexible time limit, and that answering questions within the requirements of Standing Orders is a clear responsibility on the Minister.

While the mechanics of such a process are often delegated, responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Standing Orders cannot be delegated. If there is a sound reason for the lateness of a reply, it is best to give an explanation, preferably beforehand.

As to the remedy for when a Minister fails to comply with the time limit, I note that each Member is entitled to raise such a matter in the House, including utilising Questions without Notice to elicit reasons for the lateness in reply.

With regard to the letter from the Member for Redlands stating that an answer provided on two occasions did not address the question asked, I intend to follow established practice and not get involved in assessing the quality of answers.

As has been noted by previous Speakers, complaints can arise because questions are not answered in the way the questioner desires. It may be that a Minister, or those who draft a response on the Minister's behalf, comprehends the question differently from the way the questioner intended, or misunderstands the Member's question. Again, the Member can raise that matter in the House at an appropriate time, such as Question Time, or outside the House as they see fit.

I remind Ministers that they should strive to ensure compliance with Standing Orders, both in terms of timeliness and answers being relevant to questions asked.

PETITIONS

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

Lake Apex, Gatton

Mr Rickuss, from 1,965 petitioners, requesting the House to restore the Western Island of Lake Apex, Gatton to its natural state and give it Fauna Sanctuary legal status [\[654\]](#).

Vehicle Registration

Mr Watt, from 13 petitioners, requesting the House to reduce car registration costs [\[655\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Ashgrove (Ms Jones)—

[656](#) Non-conforming petition from 1,223 petitioners regarding Harmony Day

Member for Cleveland (Dr Robinson)—

[657](#) Non-conforming petition from 110 petitioners regarding parking at the Birkdale Train Station and Thorneside Train Station

Member for Hervey Bay (Mr Sorensen)—

[658](#) Non-conforming petition from 2,798 petitioners regarding the destruction of dingoes on Fraser Island

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Opposition Billboard Advertising, Email

Hon. AM Blich (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): Yesterday I spoke in this House about an email that originated in the office of the opposition leader, Mr Langbroek. The email was released to selected media on Monday in a bid to justify the purchase of a series of billboards across Queensland that feature vanity shots of Mr Langbroek. This issue has raised very real and serious concerns about the opposition and the office of the opposition and shows a complete lack of judgement by the Leader of the Opposition.

At a time when many Queensland families are tightening their belts and feeling the impact of the global financial crisis, when workers have lost their jobs and others are at risk of doing so, when families are looking at ways to cut back and buckle down, we have someone bucking the trend. We have someone who thinks that at a time when others are doing everything they can to save money it is okay to spend more than \$90,000 on vanity shots to promote himself. This shows a complete vacuum of judgement from the opposition leader. This action shows that, while world leaders are collectively making tough decisions to protect budgets and fragile economies, Mr Langbroek is busy working on his glamour shots. The opposition handbook does provide that reasonable advertising can be paid for on behalf of the opposition.

Mr Langbroek: Including billboards.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He is right; outdoor advertising is provided for, but it must meet the guidelines and the guidelines very clearly state that advertisements by the Leader of the Opposition must not be party political in nature and must not be designed in a manner that significantly promotes the leader personally. No reasonable person could conclude that a billboard with a six-foot high picture of yourself is anything other than a personal promotion. The billboards do not contain any matters relating to opposition policy. They do not advertise any meeting to be held by the opposition. What they do is advertise the leader personally, in express contradiction of the written guidelines. What this whole 'Vanitygate' affair has also shown is the bad judgement—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Let's come to order.

Ms BLIGH: I draw the attention of those opposite to the glamour shots revealed in this parliament by the Deputy Premier in the last sitting week.

More seriously, what this whole affair has shown is not only bad judgement in the expectation that taxpayers should pay for this but that bad judgement then compounded by the decision of the opposition leader to defend the email and to make no effort to chastise or condemn the behaviour but to effectively endorse it. This morning, 48 hours later, the Leader of the Opposition, clearly on the run, clearly under pressure, has hastily sacked his chief of staff. But a dark cloud will now dog Mr Langbroek and his office, and it will loom over every document, every media release and every statement that he issues. I will not rely on Mr Langbroek—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume her seat. Let us stay within the standing orders.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I can assure the taxpayers of Queensland that I will not rely on Mr Langbroek to do the right thing by them. I will protect the taxpayer. When this matter came to light earlier this week, I sought advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet on the application of the guidelines to this issue, and I have been advised this morning that a comprehensive review of the guidelines shows that the billboards do not comply with the ministerial services guidelines. The invoice for this advertising will not be paid.

National Broadband Network

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): In the same way that railroads transformed the supply and demand of the Australian economy during the first half of the 20th century, my government understands that the National Broadband Network will be the critical catalyst for the transformation of the Australian economy for this century. The NBN will usher in a new era of knowledge based industries, better business practices, higher productivity, and improved service delivery by businesses and governments to all Australians.

This initiative spans beyond mere hard infrastructure and technology, and engenders solid economic development and jobs. My government is working hard to position Queensland to take advantage of the Australian government's \$43 billion investment in the future of our digital economy. This means presenting an argument to the Australian government that locating the NBN company head office in Brisbane is in the national interest.

In addition to working with the Australian government on the nationwide rollout, we are determined to bring that head office here and will do everything in our power to do so. I am pleased to advise the House that representatives from the Broadband Development Office within the Department of Public Works, being overseen by Minister Swarten, have met this week with the announced NBN CEO, Mr Mike Quigley. Mr Quigley was presented with the proposal for Queensland to host the head office of the NBN. The Queensland government has strongly committed to assist the NBN establish an office in Brisbane as soon as possible. This is in the national interest as much as in the interest of Brisbane and Queensland.

Furthermore, I am delighted to inform the House that Mr Quigley and I will be meeting in Brisbane to discuss how the NBN company can work closely with the Queensland government to ensure that the best outcomes nationally include those across Queensland. As members in this House know—and many of them represent constituents in regional Queensland—Queensland is the most decentralised state in this country and in my view has the most to gain from a national rollout of a broadband network.

We here in Queensland have a proven and successful record in nation-leading major billion-dollar project experience as well as a long history of attracting and retaining senior executives, skilled professionals, academics, technical personnel and entrepreneurs. Queensland's infrastructure spending—our \$42.4 billion spent on major projects over the past three years and \$18.2 billion allocated for this financial year—has brought with it both major project experience from around Australia and around the world and a strong base of experienced professionals to Queensland.

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, recognises that e-security is one of the most integral factors to be considered in the rollout of the NBN. Queensland has nation-leading expertise on e-security, and Brisbane is the home of the National Computer Emergency Response Team, AusCERT. Brisbane offers the NBN company the full spectrum of its human capital needs, from executive and professionals, such as legal, engineering, project management, financial, accounting and procurement, through to technical and construction skills. Furthermore, Queensland has strong academic, vocational and construction skills training capabilities.

Queensland will drive ongoing research and development into the full spectrum of the NBN, from enablement through its ICT capabilities, through empowerment—its adoption and application—to evolution into a full ubiquitous digital economy. Queensland's utilities are government owned and are national leaders in the delivery of utility based wholesale high-capacity telecommunications infrastructure delivery, particularly in rural and regional Australia. Our utilities have significant assets that could assist the NBN including easements and over 6,000 kilometres of fibre already in the ground. I look forward to meeting with the CEO, Mr Mike Quigley, and presenting these facts which make Brisbane the perfect place for the NBN company to shape the rollout of the NBN not only across Queensland but across Australia as a service to all Australians.

Atlantic Philanthropies

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.46 am): Today I want to place on record the fact that Queensland has earned a unique place in history as the recipient of this country's largest ever single philanthropic donation. We are indeed very privileged to claim that title, but this is about much more than boasting rights: it means that our state is now one of the epicentres of the globe's medical research arena.

The man behind the \$102 million donation to our medical and science research effort is Irish-American philanthropist Chuck Feeney. Mr Feeney has chosen Queensland as the recipient of these funds because he understands that we are home to some of the best brains in the country. He understands that, in order to harness those brains and remain at the cutting edge of scientific research, Queensland needs to build the research infrastructure required. Mr Feeney's quite remarkable contribution toward the building of that infrastructure will keep us front and centre of the global challenges of medical science.

I am deeply grateful on behalf of all Queenslanders for Mr Feeney's support. He has proven himself over the past decade to be one of Queensland's champions. As a major benefactor of our medical research community, there is no-one who is more dedicated. His Atlantic Philanthropies group has previously donated some \$170 million to Queensland's scientific research. So we are talking about allocations of almost \$300 million over a decade. Together with contributions by the state and federal governments, this latest allocation of \$102 million will result in medical projects that are collectively valued at more than \$700 million.

This \$102 million will be met with state funding of \$177 million and Commonwealth funds amounting to \$325 million, and they will be allocated across a number of projects including \$50 million towards the \$354 million Translational Research Institute of Queensland at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. I cannot speak highly enough of the importance of this particular institute to Australia's research effort. This will become the first institute in the Southern Hemisphere that will have the capability to take an idea from the research facility right through testing, through to clinical trials, through to production and right through to the patient. Researchers like Ian Frazer, who had to take some of his research offshore, therefore taking the intellectual property to foreign owned companies in other countries, will no longer have to do that. \$27.5 million will go towards the Queensland Institute of Medical Research's Smart State Medical Research Centre. Mr Speaker, you will start to see the old QIMR building, the Radium Institute, being demolished very soon as the new building begins construction. \$25 million will go to QUT for its Hub for Sustainable and Secure Infrastructure.

This means that these three projects are fully funded. While individually each of them will be invaluable, together they are a tangible demonstration of just how far Queensland has come as a research leader and they are a tangible demonstration of what our Smart State Strategy has delivered for Queensland.

Beyond my government's commitment to build the physical infrastructure that our state requires, there is an equally important commitment to harness our best brains to build our research capability. It is a commitment that has borne fruit with a range of important and historic developments over the past

couple of years. Over the last 10 years we have invested just over \$1 billion in science infrastructure, which has leveraged a further \$1.7 billion from the federal government, from philanthropic organisations and from industry partners. The result is an internationally significant scientific community.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that in 1997-98 when the Labor government came to power in Queensland there were 8,500 scientists. That compared with more than 15,000 in New South Wales and more than 15,000 in Victoria. We have now seen a major shift. In 2008-09, just over 10 years on, there are 18,100 scientists working in Queensland. So we have lifted the effort from 8,500 to 18,100. That is what can be done when a government focuses its effort on a new area of innovation. The growth that we have seen is more than triple the growth in researchers in New South Wales and higher than the growth in Victoria. We deliberately set out to create Queensland as the Smart State of Australia. After a decade of investment we are up there with the best in the world.

Accountability in Government; Lobbyists

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.50 am): Over the past week I have announced a significant platform of reforms to deliver the changes that Queenslanders are demanding from all sides of politics at all levels of government. I am determined that Queensland will lead the nation in this drive for reform towards more open and accountable relationships between politics and business. I want Queensland to remain the state of firsts that Labor has created, delivering for the community in ways that no other state does.

I am pushing ahead with these significant reforms in spite of opposition from major interest groups and from some within my own party. I am doing so clearly without the support of the opposition leader who has dismissed these changes—some of the most significant changes to the way government operates in Queensland in decades—as merely a distraction. I will not be deterred by the complete disinterest of the opposition in delivering open and accountable government. I will continue to call on them to follow my lead.

I have already announced a ban on success fees. I have announced a ban on members of my caucus attending political fundraising events where businesses pay on the basis of seeking access to members of parliament. In the interests of ultimate accountability, I have referred all additions to the urban footprint to the CMC for investigation to put beyond doubt the rigour involved with this process.

These strong moves that I have taken send a clear message to the people of Queensland. I hear their concerns and I am committed to addressing them. That is why today I am also announcing a ban on individuals who are listed on the Queensland lobbyists register from serving on government appointment boards or in other significant appointments paid by the Queensland government.

I have asked my director-general to conduct an exhaustive search of the membership of all government boards and associated bodies to identify any individuals who are also registered as lobbyists on the lobbyists register in this state. Anyone who receives a tick in both boxes will receive a letter from my director-general advising them that they have one month to choose between these two roles. I have instructed my director-general to write to all lobbyists on the Queensland register to inform them of this new government policy.

Subject to the finalisation of this comprehensive search, I can confirm that some of the people who will be receiving such letters include: Steve Bredhauer, Darryl Briskey, Terry Mackenroth, Anthony Mooney, Wayne Myers, Molly Robson, Con Sciacca and Jim Soorley. I have no reason to believe that any of these people have in any way acted inappropriately. Indeed, I have observed them serving the people well in these roles. But given the growing community concern about the relationship between lobbyists and politics in Queensland I believe that we must ensure they are kept at arms-length from the decision-making process.

Put simply, those who want to lobby government must be external to it. The community demands absolute transparency and this announcement will remove any suggestion of conflict of interest that may arise out of an overlap between lobbying firms and government appointments.

This is yet another significant reform that will take our state forward. To my knowledge, it is unmatched by any state in Australia. The Leader of the Opposition continues to stand still. The opposition do not want to follow my lead. It does not want to deliver the reforms that the people of Queensland are calling for. It wants to take our state backwards to revive the secrecy and dishonesty of the 1970s and 1980s. Not on my watch.

Swine Flu

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.54 am): The Queensland government has, from the outset, taken the human swine influenza pandemic seriously. Since April the Queensland government has worked closely with the Commonwealth to respond to the pandemic. In June, under the direction of the Commonwealth, Queensland moved to the protect phase. Queensland was the last one to change its status in relation to its schools and we were criticised for being overly severe in that regard.

Under the protect phase Australian states and territories are no longer routinely testing for the virus, but the focus is on protecting and treating people in our most vulnerable categories, including those who are Indigenous, pregnant or suffering from chronic disease. Queensland's response has been measured but we have yet to see the influenza season peak in the state.

Since human swine flu first appeared on Australian shores more than 8,900 Queenslanders have been confirmed as having the virus, with more than 23,600 confirmed nationally. There are currently 67 Queenslanders hospitalised, 32 of whom are in intensive care. From the outset, we said this disease would result in deaths and to date there have been 13 deaths in Queensland and 70 nationally. Each year in Australia there are several thousand deaths from seasonal influenza.

Last night a 16-year-old female patient with probable human swine influenza was transferred from Townsville Hospital to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The decision to transfer the patient was made on clinical grounds by the Chief Health Officer following advice from intensive care specialists through the intensive care clinical network. The patient is in a critical condition and required treatment using an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation machine, an ECMO.

ECMO is a technique of providing both cardiac and respiratory support through oxygenating the blood of patients whose heart and/or lungs are so severely damaged that they can no longer serve their function. There are currently six ECMO circuits available in the state—three at Prince Charles, two at PA and one at Mater Childrens. Five were being utilised at the time the patient required treatment.

ECMO is not traditionally used in intensive care to treat critical patients with influenza. However, it is more commonly being used in treating younger patients in a critical condition as a result of the human swine flu pandemic. Queensland Health has recognised this and has been moving to expand ECMO capacity across the health system. Two additional circuits have been purchased and are due to arrive early next week.

I am advised the doctors considered the best option for the patient was to transfer her to Sydney with the retrieval team from Sydney which would also leave some capacity in Brisbane should another patient require ECMO in the coming days. ECMO requires intensive staff resources, including an around-the-clock nurse and a perfusionist to manage the equipment and treatment.

Extra staff are currently being trained in order to increase our ECMO capacity. New South Wales has had up to 11 patients on ECMO at any one time. They had six patients on ECMO yesterday and agreed to accept this patient for treatment with their spare capacity. If we had spare capacity and they were nearing capacity we would reciprocate in kind. For example, earlier this year Queensland took seven of the most severely burnt Ashmore Reef refugees. This is notwithstanding that Ashmore Reef is not near Queensland.

The influenza season is yet to peak, which means this pandemic is going to become more serious and place more demand on our hospitals. All of our hospitals have strategies in place to cope with this increased demand, including cancelling elective surgery, opening additional ICU beds and bringing additional staff online. This is not an issue just in Queensland. New Zealand, the UK, Singapore, New South Wales, the ACT and Victoria are all having to cancel elective surgery to meet demand in their hospitals. The Queensland government will continue to work with the Chief Health Officer and the Commonwealth to manage the spread of human swine flu in Queensland.

National Broadband Network

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (9.57 am): Further to what the Premier stated, I would like to advise the House why it is in the national interest for the NBN head office to be situated in Queensland. The head office may not need to be a traditional head office with a suite of professional services in one place. Mr Quigley said that the head office could be decentralised across the major capital cities, which I agree with. Queensland, with Australia's largest civil infrastructure program, has plenty of men and women with such experience and expertise.

With regard to skills and human capital, Queensland has nation-leading expertise on e-security and Brisbane is the home of the National Computer Emergency Response Team, AusCERT. Brisbane offers the NBN company the full spectrum of its human capital needs from executive and professional requirements, including legal, engineering, project management, financial accounting and procurement through to technical and engineering to construction skills. Queensland also has a strong academic, vocational and construction skills training capability.

With the NBN head office in Brisbane, the Queensland government will be instrumental in establishing the Australian Centre of Broadband Excellence to drive ongoing research and development in the full spectrum of the NBN.

The Australian Centre of Broadband Excellence is a truly national initiative. It will, by invitation, allow other universities from other states and territories to be part of it. It is not a Queensland centre for the benefit of Queensland businesses and research, neither is it limited to academic and technical ICT research. The establishment of the centre follows in the Queensland tradition of developing highly

effective partnerships. On this project, for example, Griffith University, the University of Queensland, the Queensland University of Technology at vice-chancellor level and the Queensland government are all working together to have a centre based in Queensland.

With regard to decentralisation, Queensland represents within the one state a full cross-section of Australia's most challenging demographic and geographic profiles. This makes Brisbane the perfect place for the NBN company to shape the mindset of the NBN and to best enable the delivery of services to all Australians. Queensland has the expertise to deliver infrastructure and services to a decentralised population across Australia because of the proven practical experience and expertise of our government owned corporations. In conclusion, the spirit and intent of the Queensland proposition for the NBN is in complete synergy with where the new chief executive, Mike Quigley, is coming from. The significance of this technological leap brought by the NBN cannot be overstated. It is without doubt the most groundbreaking technological revolution in modern times. It will make Queensland bigger on the world stage and the rest of the world smaller in terms of access.

Speaking of small, I will not be diverted from my real job and the futuristic aspirations of this government by small-minded and hysterical media reporting. I note today Mr Andrew Fraser, writing in the *Australian*, notes that a Mr Ross Daley was a former staffer of mine and that I had questions which I needed to answer in relation to Mr Daley. I would have welcomed such questions from Mr Fraser before he filled his mouth with his foot. I would also welcome the opportunity if any member opposite wants to take up Mr Fraser's challenge and ask me a question, as I have plenty to say about what has happened in the almost 11 years since Mr Daley ceased work in my office.

The fact is that Mr Daley was an employee of the Department of Public Works who filled a temporary role in my office for a short time after I became the Minister for Public Works while I established a permanent staff. That was on 29 June 1998—a long time ago. His role was primarily to establish systems between the department and my office and he played no advisory role other than that, and I look forward to Mr Fraser's correction and apology.

Geothermal Exploration

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.01 am): The government recognises that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our age. Through effective planning and targeted initiatives, this government is tackling these challenges directly to provide a clean energy future. The implementation of initiatives outlined in our recently released Queensland renewable energy plan aim to leverage up to \$3.5 billion of investment in renewable energy and create 3,500 new jobs here in Queensland. Importantly, the expansion of the renewable energy sector has the potential to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 million tonnes by 2020.

Within the sector, our rich potential geothermal resources could play a lead role and unlock more baseload electricity for Queensland than any other renewable energy source. Queensland was the first state to actively promote exploration for geothermal resources with the commencement of the Geothermal Exploration Act 2004. Our commitment to the geothermal energy industry takes a further step forward today with the release of an additional 16,000 square kilometres for geothermal exploration. The potential geothermal resources in these areas, on top of the 42,000 square kilometres we have already released, could result in projects that create hundreds of green energy jobs. Applications for geothermal exploration permits under the round 5 call to tenders will close on 28 September 2009.

To ensure we are ready, this government is already developing a legislative framework to support geothermal energy production in Queensland. I am pleased to announce today that we are releasing for industry consultation a paper containing draft legislation that will allow geothermal explorers to progress to production when suitable geothermal resources are identified. This draft bill responds positively to a number of key issues raised by industry such as removing the existing tender process for obtaining authorities, introducing retention status for exploration permits and increasing the maximum authority areas that can be applied for. I look forward to listening to contributions from industry and other interested parties so that the legislation can be finalised as soon as possible. This government is committed to providing Queenslanders with a clean green future while creating jobs, and this strategy delivers on that commitment.

Skilled Workforce; School Fires

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (10.04 am): Queensland's skilled workforce is vital to every aspect of our lives. From trades to industry, health care and personal services, skilled workers make Queensland tick. The nation's skills shortage is still a fresh memory and Queensland will not be caught flat-footed. The Bligh government is determined to look beyond this current global recession and ensure that our workforce has the opportunity to acquire the skills and experience needed when the economy bounces back. We are working to meet our commitment that three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications by 2020.

Through an important initiative, the Bligh government will partner with industry to deliver more than \$2.8 million worth of training to existing workers in the building and construction industry. Through this initiative, which is under the Productivity Places Program, the government will work with Construction Skills Queensland on the training of some 730 existing workers over the next two years, and that funding will be complemented by \$1.1 million from Construction Skills Queensland which comes from the training industry levy and also complemented from funds provided by the private sector in the construction area. Construction Skills Queensland will manage the delivery of training to these existing workers in the building and construction industry.

The Productivity Places Program is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth and state governments. In Queensland, the program aims to create more than approximately 46,000 additional training places for job seekers and more than approximately 100,000 additional training places for existing workers over the next four years. Construction Skills Queensland will assist in the delivery of what will be high-level training to these existing workers under the \$2.8 million program in areas such as site management, estimating, civil construction, supervision, plumbing, construction management, project management and surveying. Construction Skills Queensland, as the building and construction industry centre of excellence, has identified the industry's training priorities and will partner with training organisations to deliver this high-level training. This approach aims to generate better training outcomes for the sector by placing greater control in the hands of industry. We will work closely with key industry stakeholders to support developing opportunities for a highly skilled workforce so that we can position Queensland to take the best advantage of the economic recovery.

Before concluding, there is one further serious matter that I want to quickly address. I want to extend my support to two Queensland school communities that are dealing with the devastating impact of fires in their schools. I know only too well the impact of such an experience, having experienced some years ago this situation with Mitchelton State High School on two occasions within a period of three weeks. At Trinity Bay State High School in the early hours of Sunday morning a fire destroyed teaching block A, which houses classrooms of science and computer labs, and there was overall significant loss for the school. Initial estimates suggest the cost of the damage could be more than approximately \$2 million. At Sandgate District State High School, regrettably, another fire in the early hours of Monday morning destroyed a general classroom teaching block with six classrooms.

Both schools have been inspected by QBuild and independent experts Parsons Brinckerhoff and both sites have been given the all clear. Initial estimates suggest that the cost of damage at the Sandgate District State High School could be around \$1.5 million. This is devastating for both school communities. I offer them my full support. The department is providing its full support, and I commend the two fire situations to the investigating authorities who are undertaking investigations at this point, and that includes the Queensland Police Service.

Commonwealth Grants Commission, Funding

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (10.08 am): Queensland has been the population powerhouse of the country for the best part of the last decade. Queensland represents about one-fifth, or 20 per cent, of the nation's population, but over the last five years we have accounted for 31½ per cent of the nation's growth. With population increases comes demand for more services—health services and disability services—and the workers to deliver them such as nurses, doctors, teachers and police. As a decentralised and large state, that also means demand for new hospitals, health centres, police stations and schools, especially in growing areas. That much is obvious, except the Commonwealth Grants Commission formula—the way that the allocation between the states of federal GST funding is determined—does not presently recognise that reality.

A major review of the Grants Commission is underway and I strongly welcome its proposal to at last incorporate the need for allocations to not only assist in funding the wages of the doctors, nurses, teachers and police but also building the infrastructure for them to work in—the hospitals, the schools and the police stations. The fact is that Queensland governments have almost single-handedly shouldered the infrastructure load for Queensland. We have done that while hundreds of thousands of people from New South Wales and Victoria have seen the light—seen the sun—and voted with their feet. But you are not about to hear about that any time soon from south of the Tweed. Other states, especially Victoria and New South Wales, have long benefited from this arrangement and are now out there in force trying to preserve this nonsensical formula.

If the reforms are implemented, if the recommendation that we have fought for and which has been put forward as a formal recommendation of the Grants Commission is put in place, there is absolutely no doubt that some states will benefit at the expense of others. So be it. Our job here is to secure the best deal for Queensland and we will fight to preserve this recommendation. Our view here is a common-sense view. The proposed change is obviously sensible. It recognises the blatant reality that service provision requires not only people but also buildings. That is essentially what at long last will be recognised by the Grants Commission—and about time.

We are strongly supported by Western Australia in our stance to see the Grants Commission formula amended. I have met with my Western Australian counterpart about this matter and we are working together to see change against the bulwark of Victoria, New South Wales and other states. This is an issue that transcends the political divide and I enjoin the opposition in this parliament to support this common-sense reform for the benefit of all Queenslanders today and into the future.

Gateway Upgrade Project

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (10.11 am): I would like to provide the House with an update on the work that my department has been undertaking to maximise safety on a new southbound traffic section of the Gateway Upgrade Project. On 27 June, a southbound traffic switch was implemented on a new section of works just north of the Gateway Bridge to allow for the operation of the new seven-kilometre section of the motorway. This temporary configuration will stay open until the opening of the new Gateway Bridge mid-2010.

As members may be aware, there have been two traffic incidents involving large trucks at this new section within a short space of time. So I instructed a review of the safety audit be undertaken. Before opening this new section of road, traffic signage in accordance with departmental standards was designed and installed to advise motorists about the changed conditions. This included two 60-kilometres per hour speed advisory signs and two truck turnover signs. Queensland Motorways also implemented a comprehensive communication strategy to advise motorists of the changes. This advertising has been supported by a series of traffic alerts uploaded to the Gateway website and widely distributed.

I have just received an independent report from Parsons Brinckerhoff confirming that the road condition of the new section is safe for heavy vehicles. The review confirmed that the new road configuration has been designed in accordance with design standards for 70-kilometres per hour. However, to promote safety, the operation of the temporary connection is being managed at 60-kilometres per hour. The independent reviewer has concluded that there are no significant matters requiring urgent attention. However, some minor improvements to signage were recommended. Officers from my department are now working with Queensland Motorways and the Gateway contractor to implement the recommendations made by the independent reviewer.

In addition, departmental officers are investigating whether additional measures to those recommended should be applied to the relevant section of the motorway, such as further smart signage. I urge all road users to travel to the road conditions and stick to the speed limits. They are there for their safety and the safety of others.

Ekka Show Bags

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.13 am): With this year's Ekka kicking off tomorrow, a team of officers from the Office of Fair Trading has been busy sifting through and checking more than 300 different show bags before the gates open. Their aim is to reduce the chance of unsafe toys and novelties ending up in the hands of children.

The show bag industry is very cooperative in making sure show bag items are safe. However, even with the best of intentions problems can occur. During the recent search a handful of toys were taken away for further lead testing and some other stuffed toys were checked to ensure that they had the required safety certificates. The Office of Fair Trading has removed three toys from Ekka show bags this year after testing found that they contained excessive amounts of lead. The three toys identified were a transformer figurine, a toy hummer car and an action space shuttle. Product safety officers with the Office of Fair Trading have instructed the supplier of the toys to remove them from sale in the show bags and the toys will not be sold at the Ekka.

Safety requirements for lead in toys were introduced in Queensland in November 2007 following worldwide recalls of popular toys due to excessive lead levels. Although the Office of Fair Trading has minimised the risk to children, I encourage parents to buy only show bags that are suitable for the age of their child and to report any safety problems with show bags immediately to the product safety unit of the Office of Fair Trading.

There was one other bag we were notified about that is still being investigated, and that is the Borg is Back bag. This non-biodegradable brown paper bag apparently includes all-day suckers and snakes, a John-Paul Langbroek voodoo doll complete with a pin in the back, a dining voucher for Fetta's Greek Restaurant in Cairns and a book titled *How to recognise an email forgery* by Godwin Grech. The bag also fails to mention it may contain traces of nuts. In the interest of community safety, we will remove this product. This is just another way the Bligh government is meeting its commitment to protecting the future of Queenslanders.

Cerebral Palsy League

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.16 am): The Cerebral Palsy League has been providing support to people with cerebral palsy and their families in Queensland for more than 60 years. The league is a major disability service provider in Queensland and has a longstanding partnership with the Queensland government. In 2009, the Cerebral Palsy League will receive more than \$38 million in ongoing funding from the Bligh government to provide services to Queenslanders with a disability and their families.

Today, I will officially open the Cerebral Palsy League's new multi-million dollar purpose-built accommodation complex at Fig Tree Pocket. The opening is especially important as this week is National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week. Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week is an opportunity to raise awareness of the most common physical disability in the country, affecting some 7,000 Queenslanders and 34,000 Australians. Cerebral Palsy is a permanent physical condition that affects movement. Its effects can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to an almost complete lack of movement.

The opening of the Fig Tree Pocket accommodation complex marks the beginning and the end of an era for the Cerebral Palsy League. The accommodation facility on the site at Fig Tree Pocket was previously an institution known as Sevenoaks and had been home to 21 adult residents for more than 50 years. Thanks to the generous fundraising support of Channel 7 over the years, various appeals and the community, Sevenoaks will be replaced with brand-new accommodation consisting of 12 individual houses and a community centre. Planning for this building project has taken 13 years and marks a significant shift as the residents move from institution style accommodation into their very own homes. The opening of the Fig Tree Pocket accommodation complex marks the beginning of a new lifestyle for the residents who will now live in their own homes with support to assist them to stay connected with the local Fig Tree Pocket community. The Bligh government will continue to invest \$1.9 million annually into maintaining this residential service. I congratulate the Cerebral Palsy League and wish all the residents all the very best in their brand-new accommodation.

Our Women-Our State Awards

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.18 am): It was not that long ago that one could hardly find a woman in this building, let alone a woman's toilet. Now, 49 per cent of the Labor caucus are women. Thirty-six per cent of the members in this chamber are women. These figures reflect the fact that Queensland women have made some great strides forward under progressive Labor governments. *Profile: Queensland Women 2009*, an Office for Women publication that I launched on Sunday, highlights some of the progress women have made. We are living longer, earning more and are better educated than ever. We are achieving more in business, particularly in the science, engineering and technology industries.

Today I am pleased to announce an exciting awards program to recognise the achievements of Queensland women. The Our Women-Our State awards recognise women who are working to break down barriers in these traditionally male dominated industries. The awards will help us to meet our commitment of creating a stronger, smarter Queensland. They recognise women who help to advance education, training and employment opportunities for other women.

Queensland women continue to be underrepresented in the science, engineering and technology industries. From 1997 to 2007, the proportion of full-time female employees in engineering increased from six per cent to eight per cent. In the information communication technology sector, women represented 18 per cent of full-time employees in 2007, up only one per cent since 1997. One of the greatest gains has been in the science based occupations. In 2007, women made up 44 per cent of Queenslanders employed full-time in science based occupations, up from 25 per cent in 1997. A major part of this can be attributed to the efforts of successive Labor governments to draw the best brains, scientific and medical services and research centres to Queensland.

These figures show there has been some progress, but we want to see even more women take up opportunities in these industries. Female role models, mentors and women leading programs in the science, engineering and technology industries deserve recognition for their efforts. The awards will publicly acknowledge their efforts, which are important to Queensland's future. The awards also include a special award, the Great Queensland Woman award, in celebration of Queensland's 150th birthday. I urge all members to promote these awards in their area. They close on 11 September.

Low Carbon Diet Grants

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.21 am): While the Opposition dithers and denies the reality of climate change, ordinary Queenslanders are getting behind the Bligh government's commitment to reduce our carbon footprint by taking a simple diet challenge. Today I am pleased to announce the latest round of grants to sporting teams, volunteer organisations and other community groups to help ordinary Queenslanders cut their carbon usage. The

Bligh government has committed \$1 million over two years to the Low Carbon Diet Community Funding Program, which has the potential to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by as much as one million tonnes a year. That is because it works like any good diet.

The 18 successful groups, which are sharing in \$153,000, have all come up with their own ways to help their members cut the amount of energy they use and spread the word to the wider community. For example, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs will be pleased to know that the African Seniors Club will be getting the low carbon diet message out to the African communities in South Brisbane using techniques that suit African culture, such as word-of-mouth campaigns via elders, group leaders and heads of families. And just to show that the low carbon diet is suitable for all ages—children and their families—the member for Mermaid Beach will be pleased to know that at the Broadbeach kindergarten on the Gold Coast the children will be learning how to reduce their carbon footprint both at kindy and at home. For grants of \$2,000 to \$10,000, we expect an eventual flow-on effect to touch around 142,000 Queenslanders.

The strength of the program is that it allows all kinds of community groups and organisations to devise their own most effective methods of raising awareness in their communities. The success of the first two rounds demonstrates that Queenslanders are keen to play their part in addressing climate change and are willing to help each other at a local level to achieve results. I am pleased to inform members that the next round of low carbon diet grants is now open and will close on 24 August. I encourage more community groups to apply for funding and become involved in this state-wide challenge to minimise climate change and the impacts on our environment.

You and Me—Community Harmony

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.23 am): Last week it was a great pleasure to visit the Cape York community of Aurukun and to join with the community for several very important events. On Tuesday evening we drove from Weipa to Aurukun and I attended the You and Me—Community Harmony barbecue. Hundreds of people, mostly kids, were there. The barbecue was held in a large park area, down the road from what had been the tavern until it closed on 27 November 2008. That the community is able to come out in the cool of the evening and enjoy themselves in safety without fear of drunken disruption or drunken violence has made a big difference to Aurukun. One of the elders said to me, 'It is like a veil has been lifted and we are seeing a different Aurukun.'

The next morning I was privileged to be present at the Federal Court session that determined the handover under native title to the Wik and Wik Waya people. To the native title holders this means access to traditional lands and validation that those are, indeed, the people who have lived on and cared for this country for thousands upon thousands of years.

I thank Mayor Neville Pootchemunka and councillors. I appreciated meeting with them at such a busy time. We discussed a range of issues, including the future growth of Aurukun and the development of housing and infrastructure. I met also with Commissioners David Gladsgow, Edgar Kerindun, Sarah Wolmby, Ada Woolla and Vera Koomeeta to discuss progress of the Family Responsibilities Commission program in Aurukun. The FRC process has been making a difference. Only one year into the program, some results include 263 hearings, 243 school attendance notices issued and 276 Magistrates Court notices. These figures indicate the number of people in the community who are being called to account and being offered services and support. In the first term this year, school attendance is up by over 10 per cent.

There is no doubt that progress is being made through the alcohol management plans, the Family Responsibilities Commission and the Closing the Gap initiatives. In reading and being briefed about Aurukun from a distance, I had not understood how much hard work has been done by people working in the community on these programs since their inception. In this context I pay recognition to senior public servants such as Aurukun school principal Liz Mackie, Director of Nursing Di Osborne, Senior Sergeant of Police Peter Bannaghan, the Director of Government Coordination, Mr Andrew Clarkson, and there are others. These have been important and challenging reforms and I put on the record my thanks and, I am sure, the thanks of other ministers for that hard and important work. At this time, for Aurukun it may be a new day dawning.

LNG Industry

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.26 am): Most members in this chamber are aware that Queensland is on the verge of a great new industry that will provide a boost to jobs and to our standard of living. Liquefied natural gas, or LNG as it is known, will capitalise on our vast coal seam gas resources to supply a greener energy to the energy hungry world. If all eight currently announced projects proceed to full production, we could see in excess of \$40 billion of private capital expenditure and over 50 million tonnes of LNG per annum exported from Queensland.

Economic studies undertaken by my department indicate that an LNG industry of 28 million tonnes per annum will result in an increase in gross state product of over \$3.1 billion, or over one per cent, the creation of over 18,000 jobs and royalty returns in excess of \$850 million per annum.

The companies involved in LNG projects in Queensland include a very impressive list of energy companies in the world, including British Gas, ConocoPhillips, Shell and Petronas. This is a significant vote of confidence in Queensland by these companies. While the government has put in place a number of initiatives to facilitate the development of the industry, this does not mean that we will automatically approve all LNG projects. The government is also determined that LNG projects meet their environmental and community obligations. To ensure these obligations are met, each project will be comprehensively assessed through the state's EIS process, as is required for all other major projects in Queensland.

During consultations on the extension of the state development area to Curtis Island, community concerns were raised about environmental issues. We listened to the community and declared around 70 per cent of the state development area on Curtis Island as an environmental management precinct, where no development will be permitted. The Coordinator-General has informed me that the master plan for the Western Basin of Gladstone Harbour is expected to be released for public consultation later this month. I urge the community to take this opportunity to have input into the master plan and participate in the development of this exciting new industry.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Establishment of Royal Commission, Allegations of Corruption

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

That this parliament calls on the government to establish a royal commission to investigate the culture of secrecy, political cronyism and allegations of corruption within the government.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ell, Mr T

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Is the Premier aware that the owner of the land included in the South-East Queensland urban footprint after lobbying by old Labor mate Jim Elder was the same Terry Ell who was part of Labor's Netbet scandal in 1999, along with old Labor mates Don Livingstone, Paul Pisasale and Labor paedophile Bill D'Arcy?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have advised the people of Queensland and I have advised this parliament that these matters have been referred to the CMC. The CMC in Queensland, unlike many other states of Australia, is a standing royal commission that has all the powers necessary to identify if there has been any improper influence in relation to the South-East Queensland plan. There are wild and wilder allegations being made by the day but there has yet to be one shred of evidence brought forward into the public arena that would substantiate a single one of these claims.

My government has absolutely nothing to hide on the South-East Queensland plan. What we have done is act on the recommendations of the senior planners of the department of planning. Many people in this parliament have from time to time been briefed by and met these people—

Mr Horan: A royal commission—that's the only way you'll get to the bottom of this.

Ms BLIGH:—and know that they are some of the most senior and experienced planners in Australia. The government has acted on their recommendation. But I have said quite clearly that if the CMC, using the powers that this government supports it having, finds anything that suggests or establishes improper influence then these decisions will be overturned.

I note the constant interjections from some of those opposite. We have the member for Toowoomba South, who sat around the cabinet table and decided to undo the CMC. The member for Toowoomba South voted at the cabinet table to establish a commission of inquiry whose sole purpose was to nobble the CMC. They are in here again this morning implying that the CMC in some way is inhibited from investigating these matters. They have never supported an independent watchdog. Instead of doing things for the people of Queensland they used their time in government to undo the CMC. The member for Southern Downs was part of it, the member for Gregory was on the job and the member for Warrego was up to his eyeballs in it.

Mr Johnson: What have they done? Who have they brought to justice?

Ms BLIGH: Before he was sacked—

Mr Johnson: Have a royal commission.

Ms BLIGH: We have a royal commission, no thanks to you. We have a royal commission in Queensland called the CMC, and we have it because a Labor government put it in place and a Labor government protected it.

Mr Hobbs: Bunch of crooks.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, just be very careful with the imputations you make that you do not transgress the standing orders.

Ell, Mr T; Elder, Mr J

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the House: when did she last meet with old Labor mates Jim Elder and Terry Ell, either singularly or together, and will she advise what was discussed during the meeting?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I have no recollection of ever meeting Terry Ell on any matter at any time, but I am happy to check my diary and if that is not the case to advise the House. I can say that I have never met with any developer or any lobbyist in relation to the South-East Queensland plan. I, along with other ministers, considered the plan on the recommendations of the planners that I talked about in my last answer. I am very happy to stand by those comments.

Accountability in Government

Mr FINN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline further steps she is taking to ensure integrity in Queensland's public processes?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Can I just add to my previous answer, in which I indicated that I had not met with any developer about the South-East Queensland plan. When I was at the community cabinet at Southport, Con Galtos, who is a lobbyist and a previous office holder in the Liberal Party, came as part of an informal delegation—that is, I did not make an appointment with him. He walked in off the street and raised a question with me in relation to land that he was lobbying for in the Coomera area. That land was not included in the footprint.

An opposition member: He saw you for free.

Ms BLIGH: That is right. That is the point. That is exactly the point.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I note that those opposite think Con Galtos's land should have been included in the footprint. Despite what the planners think, I will be making sure that the people of Coomera know that they think it should be overdeveloped.

Tony Fitzgerald's comments last week were very sobering. They do warrant action and, more than that, they warrant leadership. I want to assure Queenslanders that I and my government have what it takes to show that leadership here in Queensland and to show it nationally. That is why today I have announced further reforms that lobbyists in Queensland will not be allowed to hold positions as government appointees. We will be the first state of any jurisdiction in Australia to impose that requirement. It will include people like Bob Quinn, Con Sciacca, Steve Bredhauer and Terry Mackenroth. I am doing this not because of any evidence of impropriety but to ensure that arms-length decision making is not only done but seen to be done.

I accept that leadership can sometimes require decisions that will be deeply unpopular in some quarters, and I am up to that, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who has failed every test that has been set for him in the past week. I listened to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane saying that he will not abandon these fundraising practices. Why is he saying that? Because he knows that his state leader will not pick up this issue. His lack of leadership is protecting the Brisbane City Council's slush fund. The Forward Brisbane Leadership slush fund has been protected by the Leader of the Opposition. Why does he think he can get away with it? Because it is being arrogantly dismissed by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has nothing to offer on this—nothing.

Mackenroth, Mr T

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier. When did the Premier last meet with old Labor mate Terry Mackenroth and representatives from the Devine Group, either singularly or together, and what was discussed at those meetings?

Ms BLIGH: Again, I have no recollection of meeting with those two people on Queensland's—

Mr Springborg: Queensland's Carmen Lawrence.

An opposition member: Can't remember anything.

Ms BLIGH: Just imagine how many people I meet with in a year.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume her seat. The honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: I am happy to answer the question. Of course I have seen Terry Mackenroth recently. There are photographs of the event. It was the launch—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms BLIGH: The point I am making is that the question, as I understand it, is: when did I meet with these two people together about business?

Mr Springborg: Or singularly.

Ms BLIGH: Okay—singularly. There were photos. Ask the members on the Gold Coast. They will show us together at the launch of the new Indy race down there, the Nitro SuperGP. I will be down on the Gold Coast promoting that event on a very regular basis. What I do not know is who was at the \$20,000-a-head dinner that the Leader of the Opposition is hiding and that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is hiding. Can you remember who was at the dinner for the most expensive business fundraising event ever spent?

Mr Springborg: You're so jealous!

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the member for Southern Downs, who says we are so jealous. I have put into the public arena more information on my fundraising events than any other politician in this country. I have asked one thing of the Leader of the Opposition: table the \$20,000-a-head attendees. What did he say in the paper? 'I was not there. You'll have to ask the deputy.' How is that for leadership? How is that for strength of leadership? He cannot even get his deputy to tell him who is on the list!

Everybody on the Gold Coast and everybody who reads the newspaper knows when I last saw Terry Mackenroth because we were there publicly together. What we do not know is who was at the secret, dodgy dinner. That is what we need to know. When are the opposition members going to tell us about it? For as long as they keep it secret, we will all know that it was dodgy. That is what we know.

Accountability in Government

Ms JARRATT: My question is to the Premier. Last week, the distinguished Queenslander Tony Fitzgerald provided a strong reminder to all sides of politics of the kind of corruption that was rife in our state during the seventies and eighties.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JARRATT: Can the Premier inform the House of the importance of these lessons 20 years on?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Just before I call the Premier, I will wait for the House to come to order again.

Ms BLIGH: Much has been reported over the past week about the speech by distinguished Queenslander Tony Fitzgerald. As I have said, I believe that speech was a wake-up call for all sides of politics. He reminded us that the job of improving on accountability and transparency is never done. But, more importantly, he warned that we should never take for granted that matters are now much better than they were. The people of Queensland heard what Mr Fitzgerald had to say and so did my government.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Burnett.

Ms BLIGH: These messages about the dark past of this state have, however, fallen on some deaf ears for those opposite. They have a record of denying the corruption of the Joh era and of the man himself. What did the deputy leader say? He places Joh on a pedestal. Let me quote what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had to say about Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: 'Sir Joh was a great man indeed, in my estimation Queensland's greatest.' And, 'His effect on me was profound.'

Mr Seeney: Gordon Nuttall is sitting in jail and you want to do this.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Ms BLIGH: He went on to say: 'I like many of my colleagues were drawn to his values.' What were those values? According to the member for Southern Downs, Sir Joh cherished Westminster principles. The deputy leader said, 'You could be assured that what Joh did would be good for Queensland and good for Queenslanders.' I beg to differ: What Joh did for Queensland was not good for Queenslanders.

Let me make it crystal clear. The government that I lead knows that Bjelke-Petersen was corrupt. The people on this side of the House know that he corrupted Queensland, yet here we have the opposition defending him again. They sat in the cabinet and worked to undo the Fitzgerald reforms, and the Leader of the Opposition still has every one of those ministers on his opposition front bench. The people who tried to undo the CMC are still on the front bench of the member for Surfers Paradise.

Goss, Mr W

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is also directed to the Premier. Has the Premier, her director-general or her predecessor, Peter Beattie, accepted invitations from old Labor mate Wayne Goss to meetings, lunches or dinners at Deloitte? Did he make representations on behalf of Deloitte or its clients at those meetings?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Here they are this morning seeking to sully the reputation of the man who single-handedly overturned the corruption of the Bjelke-Petersen era. I remember a time when the Liberal Party in Queensland was concerned about the corruption of the National Party. I remember a time when there were people who had what it took to join the Labor Party in this parliament to reform Queensland. I remember a time when there were Liberal leaders and people of strength and there were Liberal leaders who cared more about Queensland—and were prepared to take the political consequences—than they did about cosyng up to a corrupt National Party. In short, I remember a time when there were Liberals, but there are none left now and the question from the member for Clayfield could put that no further beyond doubt. The member for Clayfield's question is a reflection on the member for Clayfield.

What a great week the member for Clayfield is having. Yesterday, he came in here and disputed the place of trade unions in the public life of this country. What he did was imply that trade unions and the people they represent have no place in advising government. Today, he comes in here with a question designed with no other purpose than to sully the reputation of the man who implemented the Fitzgerald inquiry. It will take more than the member for Clayfield and his grubby little mind to bring down the reputation of Wayne Goss.

Liberal National Party; Lobbyists

Mrs KIERNAN: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House what historical records from the federal Lobbyists Register and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission reveal about the credibility and transparency of the Liberal National Party?

Mr LUCAS: Yesterday the member for Mudgeeraba told the House—

I was elected on 21 March 2009 and within days had removed both myself and my son as government and media relations consultants from the register of lobbyists for the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

My office did a bit of a check. You can do these things historically with Google. When you have a look at the snapshot of the page as it appeared from the federal register as at 18 July, the register of lobbyists employed by Entree Vous Pty Ltd included Geoffrey Greene, Rosslyn Bates, Michael Caltabiano and Benjamin Gommers. You know what it also says when it was last updated? 20 March 2009—the day before the state election. The member for Mudgeeraba has been caught out red-handed. She said within days yesterday that she had updated the register. This clearly shows that as at 18 July she had not. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Extract from the website of the Lobbyists Register, downloaded on 5 August 2009, titled 'View Lobbyist Profile' [659].

Tabled paper: Extract from the website of Entree Vous Pty Ltd, downloaded on 2 August 2009, titled 'Government & Media Relations' [660].

Let us have a look at other conflicts of interest. Since 23 April this year the member for Mudgeeraba has been a member of the Social Development Committee, the parliamentary committee for health policy development. Last week, I think it was, she was claiming responsibility for the national registration of nurses. Apparently it was all her idea. The national registration of nurses is all the idea of the member for Mudgeeraba. Hello, no-one thought of that! That is what she was claiming. She is a rolled-gold member of the LNP responsible for health policy development in Queensland.

Yesterday, on I think the 3rd, she changed the lobbyists register to show that she is no longer the owner of Entree Vous. Who is? Geoff Greene, a former state director of the Queensland Liberals. Also lobbyists are Sam Doumany, Bob Quinn—former Liberal leader—Michael Caltabiano—we know what a great man he is—Nick Park, Santo Santoro—whom I have incidentally met before—Larry Anthony, Paul Clauson—yes, I met Wayne Goss, too—Pat Maguire—and I have met Rob Borbidge. In fact, I spoke at a lunch that Rob Borbidge held. Con Galtos—I met him, too. Far from seeking not to gain advantage from her position as a lobbyist, she has testimonials on her old website from federal members of

parliament. 'I have come to admire and respect Ros and Michael as individuals and professionals,' from Nick Minchin. That is how she was marketing herself. The Leader of the Opposition said he would not have someone who did that in his team. She still sits there. He is the only one who is likely to go. We all know about what happened this morning.

Enhance Group

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that two people employed in senior positions in her staff, Stephen Beckett and Nicole Scurrah, were both former lobbyists with the Enhance Group? Can the Premier advise what discussions she has had with these former lobbyists about the South East Queensland Regional Plan either before or since they became members of her senior staff?

Ms BLIGH: The answer to the question, as anyone who read the *Financial Review* this morning knows, is yes and the answer to the second one is none. I welcome the question from the National Party's adviser on ethical and tactical lying. Can't you get someone who has not been involved in it up to their eyeballs? When we need 'Professor' Seeneey to talk to us about ethics, then I think the opposition is in a very sad place.

Let us just remind ourselves, going back to the member for Clayfield, of who his political mentor is. The member for Clayfield sits in this parliament because of the active political and financial support of Santo Santoro.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: It seems that Mr Santoro is a lobbyist. Mr Santoro became a lobbyist. How did he become a lobbyist? Because he was ousted from the federal parliament in absolute disgrace. What for? He and his wife had traded up to 72 parcels of shares in stocks covering health, energy, resources, technology, chemicals and media through a family trust from late 2005 but failed to notify the Senate of almost all the trades. Much more despicably than that, let us remind ourselves that Senator Santo Santoro had not only breached John Howard's ministerial code of conduct—and what a low bar that is—but he compounded his error by, among other things, claiming to have given the proceeds of the eventual sales of the shares to a charity. But did they? No. The sales of those shares went to a lobbying outfit headed by the same person who had sold him the shares in the first place.

To have the member for Clayfield, whose entire political patronage has come from a person of that calibre, question Wayne Goss is nothing short of a joke. We have the Liberal adviser on ethics, the protege of Santo Santoro, and the National Party adviser on ethics, the member who taught Queensland about tactical lying.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think we are all a bit excited because the exhibition starts tomorrow. It will help the House today if we refer to one other by our correct titles. That will help depersonalise the debate. I think if we can contain our anger and direct our comments through the chair, we will all get through to 11.30 together.

Employment

Ms FARMER: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Could the Treasurer outline to the House any initiatives that have been implemented to help support jobs?

Mr FRASER: I can. Here in the sittings after the budget we have a number of new measures underway. Our Green Army is up and running—32 projects, 432 people gaining valuable work experience and skills through that process. There is the new payroll tax measure for apprentices and trainees. It was opposed by the LNP. It has been legislated by this government and has been in place from 1 July. There is also the new vacant land concession for first home owners seeking to build their first home in this state. That measure is supporting the housing industry, supporting jobs, supporting the economy and making sure that employment is supported.

There are other parts of this state, however, where employment is not being supported today. Those parts of that state are just across the way at the Leader of the Opposition's office. What we have seen this morning is an abandonment of employment in the Leader of the Opposition's office. What we know happened this morning is that the member for Southern Downs, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—the putative returning Leader of the Opposition—marched in there with a delegation demanding the head of the chief of staff from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition feebly fought back for a little while, but they had a preprepared statement authored by—you guessed it—the 'Borg Whisperer', Jake Smith. It was preprepared, handed over and ready to sign. But the Leader of the Opposition, try as he might, had to succumb.

What we are seeing—make no mistake about it—are the last days of the David Hasselhoff reign at the LNP. What we are seeing are the last days of the member for Surfers Paradise. ‘Glamourgate’ has come in to put a lie to the falsehood that has been the time of the Leader of the Opposition in this place. What we saw yesterday was him channelling the greats of conservative politics. ‘Don’t you worry about that,’ he said, when asked to prove whether the billboards were approved. ‘You can trust me. You can take my word for it.’ I wonder whether Paul Cormack thinks that this morning. I wonder whether the rest of them think that.

Sure enough, what we are seeing is the ‘Borg Whisperer’ back in, the Leader of the Opposition out, the member for Southern Downs in and the same jigsaw back in place. Look at them go quiet. What those opposite know is that it is a minute’s silence for the end of the Liberal Party. When the Leader of the Opposition is turfed out and Mr Springborg comes back they can kiss goodbye to the tradition of the Liberals who stood up and fought against corruption. They will be complicit in it. We alone through the history of this state have stood up against corruption. Those people opposite have been complicit in it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I call the honourable member for Maroochydore.

Fyfe, Mr S

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Can the minister confirm that his principal adviser, Stuart Fyfe, was previously employed as a lobbyist by CPR Communications? Can the minister advise what discussions he has had with his former lobbyist about the South East Queensland Regional Plan, either before or after he became his principal adviser?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I can confirm that Mr Stuart Fyfe was employed by the firm CPR prior to his returning to work with government. He has of course played his role absolutely appropriately, as I have in relation to these matters. We have accepted advice from senior planners—Australia-wide recognised planners—who are at the head of the Queensland department and have played a role in developing the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan protects some 85 per cent of the region from urban development. It makes sure that we account for and manage properly and appropriately the demands and expectations of the flood of population growth in South-East Queensland. This is a carefully developed plan to manage growth. Some 754,000 homes will be required in South-East Queensland over the next 20 or so years.

We have seen the Premier refer any matters related to areas coming into the urban footprint to the Crime and Misconduct Commission, which I absolutely and utterly support. It is a standing royal commission, with all the powers of a royal commission to investigate these matters. I absolutely support this referral. I support it in every way because it will help maintain and support the standards surrounding the regional plan and the public acceptance of that regional plan.

I know the difference between the commitment of this government to good planning and the regional plan and that of the opposition. That is, the opposition wants to let it rip. It would see LA style urban sprawl from Noosa to Coolangatta and way out to the back of Toowoomba. We will not let that happen. We have the plan that will protect Queensland. Just think of what would have happened if we had Howard Hobbs as minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Call him by the correct title.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: We would have had the member for Warrego as minister send out letters saying, ‘We’ll let it rip.’ I do not think I am going to take lectures about integrity from those on the other side of this chamber. I am going to stand by the important and proper standards of public policy around the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

Accountability in Government

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Minister for Public Works. Can the minister advise of the relevance of the state’s procurement policy to probity and honest government?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am waiting for the House to come to order. I call the Minister for Public Works.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I notice the hilarity with which the words ‘procurement policy’ is greeted. That is the reality. When we talk about procurement and when we talk about probity, it is a laughing matter to those who sit opposite.

The reality is that last week Mr Fitzgerald made some scathing remarks about those opposite in government. The reality is that one of the Fitzgerald recommendations was to have a proper

procurement policy so that it was transparent, so that everybody who did business with the Queensland government did so equally, without fear or favour and without any suggestion that there would be preferential treatment.

In 11 years of Labor government there has been no such suggestion. With over \$25 billion worth of work out of the Department of Public Works, not one builder has ever suggested that there has been anything wrong with our procurement policy because they all get treated fairly.

Can members imagine what the headline would be if, say, a vice-president of the Labor Party paid \$100,000 to the campaign to get the Premier elected and then, on top of that, the Premier put that person onto a board that oversees public works expenditure and that person then—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Listen very carefully to this. Say this vice-president of the Labor Party who paid \$100,000 to the Labor Party campaign was then put on an advisory board for letting tenders when that person was a contractor. Can anybody see anything wrong with that? My very word; I see a lot wrong with that. It would not happen here. Is it happening anywhere in Queensland today? Well, as a matter of fact there is a suggestion that it is. Guess which party is involved? They used to be the Liberals, now they are the LNP and God knows what they are this week.

The reality is that we do not have to walk very far from here to find this happening. It is happening down at the Brisbane City Council. As I understand it, Campbell Newman has received a benefit of a \$100,000 donation from one Gary Spence, vice-president. Guess what? According to my latest search, he runs Brown Consulting and he is on the advisory board for contractors in Brisbane. He is paid \$37,000 a year for his efforts in that regard while he is with Brown Consulting. I will table what they do.

Tabled paper: Extract from the website of Brown Consulting (Aust) Pty Ltd, downloaded on 5 August 2009, titled 'Our services and fields of specialisation' [661].

Tabled paper: Extract from the website of Brisbane City Council, downloaded on 5 August 2009, titled 'Construction Group' [662].

Brown Consulting do cost estimates, construction supervision, project management, and so the list goes on. So does the Brisbane City Council and every other contractor and every other consultant. Is that a conflict of interest? Is it what! If it were this government doing this, would it be on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*? Yes, it would. It could not happen in our government.

That is the importance of having a decent procurement policy. You do not have the vice-president of the LNP dishing out \$100,000, sitting on an advisory board and running a contracting company that does business with the Brisbane City Council at the same time. Clean up your own backyard!

Rainbow Shores

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Can the minister advise when he last met with any representatives of his former employer Rainbow Shores or lobbyists of the firm and what was discussed at that meeting?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me an opportunity to clear up the record in relation to my dealings with the Rainbow Shores project. Since my time in this parliament I have not played an active role on behalf of the Rainbow Shores project. From the outset of my appointment as the parliamentary secretary to the Deputy Premier and the then minister for infrastructure and planning when it became apparent to me that the issue of Inskip Peninsula and Rainbow Shores stage 2 would fall under that portfolio, I made it clear to the Deputy Premier and made arrangements with the director-general of the department and the Deputy Premier's office that I should not be advised or briefed about any matters that related to Rainbow Shores stage 2 or indeed Inskip Peninsula. On 26 March I was appointed as Minister for Infrastructure and Planning.

In that time, I obviously continued the arrangements with the director-general in relation to not being a party to any of those issues. However, in April the director-general drew to my attention that this matter might become a matter of further government consideration and there had to be more formal processes because I now held a position where decision making and matters within government would have to be activated and undertaken by myself as opposed to the role of a parliamentary secretary. So what did I do? I sought advice from the Integrity Commissioner. I understood the course of action that I wanted to take, but I properly, taking into account the processes that are available in the state of Queensland, sought advice from the Integrity Commissioner. I obtained that advice, followed that advice and in fact exceeded it by making sure that arrangements were in place for a colleague to take up any matters that needed to go to cabinet or be responded to in the parliament. That is why I have advised the parliament since around those details. In relation to meeting with the—

Mr McArdle: Just answer the question: have you met with them?

Mr Hinchcliffe: I have not met with them in relation to the project.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: With regard to Mr Andreas Krauchi, who is the owner of the family project, I did meet with him earlier this year to congratulate him on the birth of his son.

(Time expired)

Mr Horan: Is that all you talked about?

Mr Hopper: Gotcha! You won't sleep tonight!

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

Trade

Mr WETTENHALL: My question is to the Minister for Trade. Minister, Trade Queensland's annual budget is approximately \$30 million per year. Would the minister please outline for the House what impact this expenditure has in providing jobs for Queenslanders?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question. It is worth remembering that the Australian economy represents only about 1.2 per cent of the global marketplace. That means that around about 98.8 per cent of all economic activity and opportunity occurs outside of Australia, and that is why the Bligh government continues to fund Trade Queensland in supporting the state's exporters—large and small, regional and metropolitan—to access important export markets. Data from the Centre for International Economics shows that one in five workers are employed in trade related activities. Export equals jobs, and in these challenging financial times the Queensland government is committed to protecting and creating jobs now and for the future.

Trade Queensland maintains its overseas presence in a cost-effective manner, utilising flexible resources such as in-market contractors to maintain a presence in rapidly evolving markets and undertakes an annual review of its overseas presence on a regular basis. The return on a relatively modest investment speaks for itself. From a net operating budget of around about \$30.8 million in 2008-09, Trade Queensland maintained its strategic presences overseas and helped Queensland businesses to achieve well over \$500 million in export earnings. Trade Queensland's network of overseas representation has been strategically located and is maintained to assist Queensland businesses in key export markets and to channel overseas investment into Queensland.

The export success stories of Queensland businesses are numerous. For example, Ipswich based Claypave has worked closely with Trade Queensland and reports that the additional export orders secured in the Middle East and Japan led Claypave to hire 10 additional workers in February this year. NOJA Power advises increased export activity during 2008-09 created an extra 28 jobs. Since July 2008 Urban Art Projects reports that it has employed at least 24 new staff, increasing its workforce by 43 per cent because of international contracts. In Bundaberg precision engineering manufacturer CAMit recently advised of a new export contract which is bringing on a new production engineer and is expected to lead to five to 10 new jobs over the next two years.

These are just a few examples of how the Bligh government is committed to helping Queensland businesses continue to create and protect existing jobs. In these very tough economic times, Queenslanders expect a government to be focused on ensuring that jobs can be protected and investigate opportunities for new jobs to be created. That is what we are doing day in, day out. We will not be distracted from some political sideshow. The work goes on creating jobs every day for Queenslanders that will get us through this recession in the best condition possible.

Mackenroth, Mr T

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Has the minister ever discussed any elements of the South East Queensland Regional Plan with old Labor mate Terry Mackenroth? When did these discussions take place?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: No.

Teachers, Enterprise Bargaining

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Could the minister please outline the current situation in relation to the Queensland teachers' EBA?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Make no mistake: teachers deserve a fair pay increase. We value our teachers. They are hard working and they are exceptionally committed, and we are committed to putting extra pay into teachers' pockets—a fair pay increase. We are so committed to that that we have filed in the Industrial Commission an interim pay increase of four per cent so that the commission can determine—and it is the independent umpire—the balance. That matter will come before the commission this afternoon for procedural purposes for setting out the hearing that will take place at a later time. That would be part of the \$900 million 12.5 per cent proposal that the government has put on the table. That would equate to approximately a \$7,000 increase for teachers in the beginning teacher category over the term of the contract and for senior teachers an

increase of about \$10,000 over that term. That would put Queensland teachers up there with some of the best in Australia—teachers in the beginning teacher category would be second only to the Northern Territory and senior teachers second only to New South Wales on a total salary package basis, taking superannuation into account.

The Teachers Union, on the other hand, has argued for an 18 per cent increase. That effectively means another \$5,000 on top of the \$10,000 for senior teachers. That would equate to about \$500 million. But we have put it in the hands of the independent umpire, and what could be fairer than that? This is a very serious matter, and that is why we have been negotiating hard with the union. Because we have not been able to reach agreement about what is an appropriate and fair thing, we have put it in the hands of the independent umpire. However, a day after the budget the shadow minister for education declared that he was really not supporting the 12.5 per cent offer by the government because if we paid that then there would be no money left to pay for facilities and resources. That was one day after the budget. One day before a rally of teachers outside the parliament today—in other words, yesterday—he said that he thinks that they should be getting the fair pay increase that they are claiming, and that is the 18 per cent. So we have two totally different positions. He has gone, 'Poof!' He is wanting to cast an illusion. What he is wanting to do is cast the illusion that he is the teachers' friend, pulling off a magic trick. He wants to weave a magic trick and have us believe that he is the bespectacled boy wizard Harry Potter when in truth he is merely the muddled member for Muggle.

Sunshine Coast, Cittamani Hospice Service

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Will the minister advise when Queensland Health will provide additional funding to support the Sunshine Coast's Cittamani Hospice Service?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his question. Hospices such as Cittamani do a wonderful job caring for individuals and their families in their greatest time of need. I met with the member for Nicklin on 23 April 2009 when he was doing what good members of parliament do—he was advocating for a very important service. Cittamani House is an existing palliative care provider with a service agreement with Queensland Health until June 2010. The organisation received annual base funding in 2008-09 of \$254,882. In addition, the organisation received one-off funds of \$35,340 in January 2009 to complete its accreditation process and a further one-off payment of \$76,000 in viability funding in February 2009.

The director-general approved additional viability funding of \$263,863 in 2009-10. We are currently conducting a review of the palliative care system of Queensland. That review will be informed by the review of the National Palliative Care Strategy and will draw from work already undertaken by Palliative Care Australia in relation to service provision and service development. That review will examine existing investment across all palliative care services and determine the range and mix of services in Queensland.

Last month, the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission report was tabled. I think it is a very interesting document. I urge all members of this House who have an interest in health issues to read it. I think some of the recommendations that the report makes are very relevant to the issue of outpatient and out-of-home care. It says that we need to have a greater involvement at a national level in relation to step-down care facilities and also in relation to issues such as palliative care.

We know that in Queensland we have the shortest elective surgery waiting list in Australia. We have now gone from fifth to third in terms of emergency wait times and, in that regard, we want to go to first. Specialist outpatient clinics are a real issue for us. Of course, the ability for the Commonwealth to take over the full responsibility of funding for them will at least put Queensland in a similar position to other states. They have been able to cost-shift to the federal government for a long time—a legacy of Joh's stubbornness in Queensland, in fact, that we have that problem.

The issue of palliative care is an important one, particularly in communities as distinct from large institutions. Both are needed. I note the honourable member's advocacy for Cittamani and others who have similar interests and I thank him for the question.

Gold Coast, AirAsia X

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. With the Gold Coast fast becoming the alternative capital of Queensland, can the minister update the House on the announcement of new AirAsia X flights to the Gold Coast?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. Last Friday, I was pleased to join representatives from AirAsia X on the Gold Coast for the announcement that the airline would increase its services from Malaysia to the Gold Coast by 50 per cent. This is a major coup for the region and for Queensland's tourism industry. The low-cost carrier AirAsia will increase its flights, thanks to a boom in passenger traffic.

On 21 October, AirAsia will increase its return run from four flights to six flights each week to cater for the increased demand from travellers. For the Gold Coast market alone, AirAsia X's passenger traffic grew by almost 15 per cent for the first half of 2009 compared with the same period in 2008. The Gold Coast route was AirAsia's inaugural route to Australia, commencing in November 2007. AirAsia X was, in fact, an airline that was attracted to Queensland using the Queensland Investment Incentives Scheme.

The geniuses over there know all about this program, because at the last election they were going to ransack that fund to pay for their election promises. If the LNP had won the last election, Queensland would have seen a forfeit in our arrangements with AirAsia X. Flights would have been cancelled and services lost to the Gold Coast. Not only that, we would now be in a position where we would not have the capacity to attract new airlines and services to Queensland. It has now been 136 days since the last election. All we have seen from the LNP opposition is 14 press releases and not one word of policy. While Mr Langbroek would rather spend money—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Address the honourable gentleman by his—

Mr LAWLOR: While the Leader of the Opposition would rather spend money on vanity boards, the Bligh government would rather spend an extra \$36 million on tourism marketing. I am sure tourism operators in Hervey Bay would much rather see this face on a billboard rather than this face—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will put down the props, thanks. It will encourage bigger props. Put them down.

Mr LAWLOR: Mr Speaker, if I could just explain, one was a migrating whale, the other was a migrating LNP leader.

Mr SPEAKER: They are still props.

Mr LAWLOR: They are both heading south. The Bligh government is meeting its commitments to support the tourism industry through these tough economic times. The Queensland government will continue to work on attracting airlines and new flights to Queensland to secure jobs and to ensure that the future of Queensland's tourism industry remains bright.

Elder, Mr J

Mr HOBBS: My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Has the minister ever discussed any elements of the South East Queensland Regional Plan with old mate Jim Elder? When did those discussions take place?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: No. I can inform the honourable member that I have not spoken to Mr Elder about any aspect of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. But I really appreciate the member asking the question. When it comes—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: When it comes to credibility about planning, when it comes to integrity around planning policy, we know that the member for Warrego has absolutely none. We know that in 2006 after the South East Queensland Regional Plan was first brought into place—an outstanding piece of public policy to protect South-East Queensland from the ravages of the traditional activities of people in support of the member for Warrego—the Nationals fundraising committee chairman, Graham Heilbron, sent a letter to developers explaining that the party was sympathetic to their concerns about a lack of land supply. But it was not just Mr Heilbron putting out the word. Attached to the letter from the Nationals was a letter from the local government and planning spokesperson, Howard Hobbs, which promised—

Mr SPEAKER: Address the member by his correct title.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The honourable member for Warrego, which promised that a coalition government would review land supply. He does not just finish there. He has not got over it. During the last election campaign—this time the LNP rather than just the Nationals, but we know where that is heading—as the shadow minister for local government and planning and regional development, Howard Hobbs announced that the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, the national award-winning regional plan—

An opposition member: Prove it.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the honourable member—an award-winning plan awarded by the Planning Institute of Australia as the national award-winning plan. He wanted to noble it. He wanted to open it up for further consultation.

Honourable members interjected.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Can I remind honourable members that even though you may not have the call and even though you may not be on your feet the terms 'crook' et cetera are unparliamentary. In allowing the free flow of debate that there is this morning, because there are tensions around it is impossible to identify who is singing that out. So I would ask all members to moderate their language.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide.

Climate Change

Mr WENDT: My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Is the minister aware of any new policy developments from the opposition?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the minister, I inform you there is one minute.

Ms JONES: It will not take me very long because the answer is: yes? No? Maybe? No! On the policy front, nothing from the LNP has been more confusing than its position on the Great Sandy Region of Cooloola and Fraser Island. It is very interesting. On 25 May I got a letter from the honourable member for Noosa saying that he would support the Labor government's proposal to include Cooloola in the World Heritage listing of Fraser Island, but only if that was a new and separate listing to be known as the Great Sandy Straits Region. Fast forward a week and he told me, 'Actually, I have backtracked from that letter I sent to you the week before. This week I am saying that we want two separate listings.' Given the time that I have, I will not go into all the details of their flip-flop on this issue.

I went to the website to clarify the policy position of the LNP on this issue. When you click on 'policy' you get an error message that refers you to this website: www.lnp.org.au/policies/Lawrence/policies. The Borg is back! They are working—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Over the last hour or so in the public gallery we have been visited by teachers and students from the Minimbah State School in the electorate of Morayfield, the Southbrook Central State School in the electorate of Condamine, the Queen of Apostles School in the electorate of Stafford and later on today we will have teachers and students from the Talara Primary College in the electorate of Caloundra.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Labor Governments, Allegations of Corruption

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 am): Today in question time we saw another disgraceful episode—

Mr Fraser: This is the last show. Will you be back tomorrow?

Mr LANGBROEK:—with ministers behaving like juveniles, as is the honourable the Treasurer right now. He is behaving like the schoolboy that he is and looks like.

This government is trying to make out as though everyone is the same, but clearly this government is different. The government has been in power for 12 years and last week Tony Fitzgerald said of it—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates, supporters are appointed, and retired politicians can exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

He was referring to this government. He was referring to these ministers.

When the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning was required to give more than one-word answers, he could not explicitly rule out anything, other than to say that he had 'not played an active role' in matters involving Inskip Point. The point is that these ministers cannot absolutely rule out involvement with lobbyists. If it cannot do the things that it is supposed to do, it is no wonder that Queenslanders do not trust the Blich Labor government.

Two-thirds of Queenslanders think that corruption is rife within this government. Eighty-six per cent oppose asset sales. Queenslanders do not approve of the way that the Premier is running the economy and, most importantly, they do not think she can fix it because she has lied—I withdraw. She has deliberately misled the people of Queensland. We need a royal commission, and that is the subject of tonight's motion. We need to see exactly what the government has done. It is not good enough to send the matter to the CMC, as the Premier did yesterday. Thirty-three aspects of land approvals that potentially put millions of dollars into developers' hands will not be revealed via a CMC investigation. We need a royal commission and we need to see that tonight in the 5.30 debate.

Weipa

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (11.32 am): Labor is the party of reform in this state, particularly local government reform. That is why on 28 July it was a great pleasure to attend the Weipa summit into the normalisation of Weipa, the last area in Queensland that is not covered by a local government authority. Last Tuesday, along with the Minister for Local Government, I had great pleasure to attend that summit, which was organised by the Weipa Town Authority.

Weipa is the last place to not be a local government. We have gone through a vigorous process of reform of local government in Queensland, reform that was 100 years in the making. The last item of business left in local government reform is the normalisation of Weipa. It was a recommendation of the Local Government Reform Commission, a commission that was made up of people from all parties and all walks of life in Queensland.

There are some complicating factors as to why Weipa is not a local authority. It is a mining town. Over the past 40 years the town has been built by Comalco and Rio Tinto. But the town is changing. Its economy, while still reliant on mining, is also influenced by tourism and fishing, and it is becoming a service hub for government and other service providers for the north and west of Cape York Peninsula.

Mr Seeney: They all hate you there.

Mr O'BRIEN: I stand in this House. I get elected into this House. Despite having one-quarter of amalgamations in my electorate, I still stand here.

I want to see Weipa normalised. It is the last item on the agenda of the reform commission. It was great to be there the other day to see progress made. A number of options were put on the table for consideration by both Rio Tinto, the community and government. I look forward to Weipa becoming the great Queensland town that it is destined to be.

Labor Governments, Allegations of Corruption

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.34 am): This morning in this place we heard the most pathetic defence of this corrupt Labor government by the Premier and the Treasurer. Indeed, the Treasurer already knows he is on his way out; he is inching towards the back door. He will be out of this place in the next 35 seconds. The jury is in: 65 per cent of Queenslanders believe that the Queensland Labor Party is corrupt. Sixty-five per cent of Queenslanders believe that this Premier leads a corrupt and nepotistic Labor government. The jury is in, and that is all that really matters in Queensland. Even Labor Party luminary Wayne Goss said that there are worrying signs of corruption coming out of this Queensland government.

However, what does this government do? Today it comes into this place absolutely and completely incapable of accepting responsibility for what is going on underneath its own feet. This morning from this side we have heard example after example after example after example of this government colluding with its Labor mates. There is a conga line of Labor mates. They line up, one after the other, to suck on the taxpayer's teat. What does the government say to all its Labor mates? 'All of you, come in, come in!'

Today, the Premier was not able to answer these questions: when was the last time she met with Terry Mackenroth and what was discussed? When was the last time she met with her friends from the Devine board, either singularly or collectively, and what was discussed? There was no answer. What was discussed when they met with Terry Ell? There was no answer. The philosophy of this government is: let's move forward without looking backwards; smear and diversion; never get to the nub of it. That is why we need an inquiry from a government that actually closed down the Cooke inquiry years ago.

(Time expired)

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.37 am): Recently I had an experience that reminded me exactly why I love my job. In my capacity as the parliamentary secretary for employment, I visited the site near Gatton where the first stage of the south-east correctional precinct is well and truly under construction. The site itself is very impressive, but the real reward of the visit was my exposure to the human element of the government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.

I had the pleasure of meeting a group of young men who were participating in a 22-week paid work placement on the site, working alongside qualified tradespeople, gaining qualifications and learning skills that will, in most cases, lead to future employment. The program is part of BoysTown's remarkable Youth at Work project. It is a great example of how a partnership between the government and non-government sector can change lives for the better.

I also acknowledge the fantastic corporate citizenship of the host employer, Boulderstone, which is providing the opportunity for the young people in this particular project to work on real jobs, on a real job site. Boulderstone provides the work activities and the construction coordination and supervision, as well as all the materials, plant and tools necessary for the work program.

In speaking with the job program participants, I was delighted to hear the pride in their voices and the enthusiasm with which they described their experiences. Several of the young men have taken a keen interest in scaffolding and expressed a desire to take up a future apprenticeship in the trade. All agreed that this was a great opportunity, and I am sure that it will prove to be a positive turning point in the lives of all the young people.

I acknowledge the staff of BoysTown, Boulderstone and their subcontractors, officers from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and those from Project Services who have all contributed to making the lives of these young men a brighter prospect. I am proud to be part of a government that puts employment front and centre of our policy platform.

Cattle Trains

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.39 am): I welcome the statement this week from the transport minister that Queensland Rail's cattle train and grain services will continue. I hope she is genuine about supporting our cattle and grain producers and our meat processing industry, which employs thousands of workers around Brisbane and indeed in her own electorate. These services are vital to our cattle industry and particularly for the safe and efficient transport of cattle from the vast western pastoral regions.

Our producers and processors need certainty of service and reliability. That means that if cattle trains are ordered they should be available and not cancelled without warning—and this has been the disgraceful situation that has been ongoing. I understand that the Minister for Transport will be meeting with western mayors tomorrow and with our member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. I hope the minister listens to their real and genuine concerns and gives them an ironclad guarantee that these vital services will continue and, importantly, will be better managed. It is one thing to issue a statement saying that those services will not be withdrawn but it is something very different to guarantee that services will be improved.

This is not just important to cattle producers and grain growers; this is a vital issue about jobs. And I note that our leading meat processors have confirmed that at least 900 and up to 1,200 jobs could be lost from south-east meatworks if cattle trains are not guaranteed. The protection of these jobs is vital. I note the latest unemployment figures show that the minister's own backyard has become a hot spot for unemployment in Queensland. This is a vital issue for regional Queensland. It is a vital issue for sustainable, labour intensive meat processing in this state. It is a vital issue for jobs, and I encourage the minister to give cattle producers, Queensland Rail workers and meatworkers an ironclad guarantee that these services will continue and indeed will be better managed.

Rockhampton, NAIDOC

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (11.41 am): On 10 July, Rockhampton's large and very energetic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community celebrated NAIDOC with a procession and community festivities at the Rockhampton cricket grounds. Our Indigenous community, which is a tower of strength in our society, welcomed about 3,000 to 3,500 people of all ethnic origins to this day of music and celebration of their contribution to our multicultural society. Our Indigenous groups are the Darumbal-Woppaburra people and a large Islander community. The contributions of both groups have made the Capricorn region the most liveable and cosmopolitan area in Queensland.

The Hon. Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, was visiting Central Queensland that day and was able to attend. The department had contributed funding to the day and I think she was impressed. I had the pleasure of accompanying her and catching up with a great many of my own residents who were enjoying the day. Congratulations to the organisers and the NAIDOC committee.

On Saturday, 11 July the Capricorn Coast mob organised NAIDOC on Walkabout at Bell Park in Emu Park. I was honoured to be invited to participate at a flag-raising ceremony and to speak, and the committee welcomed people from all walks of life who enjoyed drinks and a barbecue. Welcome to country was made by Aunty Ethel Speedy, a Darumbal elder, together with Dean Edmund and Sally Vea—two of the children of Mabel Edmund AM, whose achievements make her a great role model for any young woman in Australia.

With others, Aunty Cindy Williams was the organiser for the day, and she is one very special person. This was a great achievement as she is confined to a wheelchair but that does not stop her from using her amazing energy and drive to organise days like this. When Aunty Cindy asks people to help with organising, it is hard to say no. Hopefully, the Capricorn Coast mob will go on to bigger and better things. Congratulations to all involved with NAIDOC celebrations everywhere.

Lockyer Valley, Western Corridor Recycled Water Project

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (11.43 am): I am glad to see the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning is here because my speech is about recycled water and his department's continual conversations about the recycled water project in the Lockyer Valley, where the recycled water pipeline is actually sitting idle at the moment on the east edge of the Lockyer Valley. I table a document that outlines the cost of water in Virginia, South Australia, which is a fairly major recycled water project in South Australia that we visited, and also the cost of water in Werribee.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Recycled Water' [663].

The cost of recycled water in Virginia at its dearest is \$136 a megalitre plus a supply fee. The cost of recycled water in Werribee is \$228 a megalitre, and that water is supplied to the farmers. Yet this minister and this department is talking about charging \$340 to \$450 a megalitre in Bundamba. That is a ridiculous price for water that farmers cannot afford to pay. I encourage the minister to please have a look at this project and to look at the value of this water. It is way overvalued in Bundamba at that price. We do not need purified water; class A water is all we need. I encourage the minister to revisit this project.

We have this \$2.2 billion project sitting there idle—a pure waste of funds. We have viable users in the Fassifern Valley, the Lockyer Valley and the Brisbane Valley who are more than happy to take this water but at a realistic price so that water can be supplied to the farmers to create jobs. Thousands of jobs will become available through improved horticultural production. Horticulture is a major supplier of jobs in my area. Some of the farmers employ up to 450 people. So this is a great opportunity to create some real jobs. This government is trying to price the Lockyer Valley, Fassifern Valley, Brisbane Valley and Warrill Valley farmers out of the market. I encourage the minister to please look at this.

(Time expired)

Transformers

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (11.45 am): Music is a powerful force to both the performer and the listener and particularly so when you realise you are witnessing something unique and of immense value in the lives of the performers. So it was that I joined several hundred people in the Ithaca Room at Brisbane City Hall on Saturday afternoon 20 June for an afternoon of choral music, presented by Southern Cross Voices, with special guests Avaberee and the Transformers in their first ever public performance.

Fashioned after the hugely successful Choir of Hard Knocks, the 45 members of Transformers came together in a hall in West End in January 2009, under the leadership of Ben Pennings of Reclink, with conductor Yani and accompanist Kym Scott to start this new journey which reached its first milestone at this inaugural concert. The anticipation and emotion in that auditorium was palpable as the members of the group took to the stage. They came from various service providers such as Queensland Health and Lifeline, all with varying degrees of social disadvantage—homelessness, disability, mental health issues—and they sang from the very depths of their being. There was not a dry eye in the house, all mixed up with absolute joy at what we were all experiencing.

From their opening number *Say a Little Prayer* with soloists Peter, Belle, Jo and Darl, then *To Be Heard*, followed by *Desperado* by soloist Jo Herbert—which was absolutely sensational—next came *Shackles*, then to the final strains of *Need One Another* the audience was totally at one with the singers. On the final note every person in that auditorium rose spontaneously to their feet cheering and clapping in absolute admiration for what this group had accomplished—many of whom had overcome fears, nervousness and many barriers—and there was not one ounce of tokenism. It was in every sense of the word a remarkable performance. So, apart from making beautiful music, they have formed friendships and found the motivation to give up smoking, lose weight, eat healthier, find housing and one now has a full-time job.

(Time expired)

Jobs

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (11.47 am): During the election we heard about the creation of 100,000 jobs for Queenslanders. Redlanders planned for employment and planned to relieve the pressure on roads by encouraging employers to bring jobs to Thornlands through the South East Queensland Regional Plan. That was thrown out of the window last week by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. This government is out of control doing anything to create a headline—no policy, no strategy and no consultation. But do not take my word for it. I quote from the *Bayside Bulletin* on 4 August in which our mayor, Councillor Hobson, is quoted as saying—

"In relation to the Thornlands development, it was always our position that best practice sustainable planning would allow for an appropriate balance between the environment and economic opportunities."

Further to that, the article quotes councillor for division 7, Murray Elliott, as saying—

... the loss of industrial land at Thornlands “destroyed in a single blow the local jobs future for Redlands residents”.

He went on to say—

“This was a specific commitment by the council to preserve the area only for the employment opportunities, a large education precinct and the proposed regional sports facility.

He went on to say—

“I am astounded that no alternative was directed or indicated by the state at this time when ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’ is its catchcry—

and current mantra—

in the current economic climate.

Councillor Boglary, from division 1, was quoted as saying—

... the loss of local industrial land would lead to more and more travel in and out of the Redlands.

That is again unacceptable. This ill-conceived proposal actually flies in the face of good planning and almost certainly seals the fate of the urban koala. He is a dead koala walking, because we are forcing higher densities into the existing area which is the habitat of the urban koala. But, again, do not take my word for it. I again quote the mayor—

She described as ‘bittersweet’ the decision to zone the land for koala habitat and said the council was concerned by the increased ‘infill’ building in the rest of the city.

This is not good planning. This is a dog’s breakfast. This is the death knell of the koala in Redlands.

Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (11.49 am): Assistance for and promotion of sporting opportunities for people with disabilities are essential parts of a vibrant, active, healthy, tolerant and empowered Queensland community. Providing sporting opportunities for people with disabilities not only provides people with disabilities with options to participate in the sport of their choosing; it also provides an important opportunity for socialisation and public awareness.

A number of groups are contributing to this end. One such group is Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket. Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket was formed by two of my constituents: Patrick Rossiter and his son James Rossiter. James is an exceptional young man who has been a successful Queensland Lord Taverner cricket player for the last seven years and has played for Australia in the Ashes and the Trans-Tasman Test Disability Indoor Cricket Series.

Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket has players from all over the Morayfield state electorate, and the local team regularly plays in South-East Queensland tournament matches. I was honoured to recently attend a training session with the local team and had the opportunity to announce that Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket had been successful in obtaining funding from the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund for a bowling machine. The bowling machine will be a welcome training assistant for the local team.

The valuable work of Caboolture Disability Indoor Cricket sends a clear message to our communities that sporting activities for people with disabilities are an important aspect of a vibrant and active community. I am pleased that the Queensland state government provides some assistance for these sporting groups. I trust that this assistance and further promotion of sports for people with disabilities will continue into the future.

BrisConnections

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (11.51 am): In April this year I spoke in this House about Brisbane Airport Link, BrisConnections and in particular the role of Mr Trevor Rowe. In that speech I noted that, in addition to being chairman of BrisConnections, Mr Rowe is also chairman of the Queensland Investment Corporation, a unit holder in the BrisConnections project. These are just two of the many hats worn by Mr Rowe. Another is chairman of the United Group, which is allied to Thiess John Holland, the builder of the Airport Link.

My particular concern was the potential conflict of interest with Mr Rowe holding these significant positions. At the time, I called on the Premier to meet her election promise of an open and more accountable government by commissioning an independent inquiry into BrisConnections. Instead, we heard late last month that Rothschild Australia has been appointed as an adviser to the government on its asset sales. And guess who is the chairman of Rothschild. It is none other than Mr Trevor Rowe.

Mr Rowe announced that he will stand down from his role as chairman of the Queensland Investment Corporation. It would have been an appalling conflict of interest if he had sought to continue in that role while his company was advising the government on asset sales. Mr Rowe might well be stepping down from his role with the Queensland Investment Corporation but he remains chairman of BrisConnections, among his many other interests. These include being chairman of the Enhance Group, a lobby group under scrutiny over its deals with this government.

Given recent revelations, we are also entitled to question the link between Mr Rowe and Terry Mackenroth over the awarding of the BrisConnections contracts. I am sure that the small investors who have suffered as a result of the BrisConnections float disaster will be unimpressed that Mr Mackenroth shared in a half a million dollar success fee when Mr Rowe's consortium won the project rights. The Premier is quoted as saying that Mr Rowe would be excluded from involvement in the asset sales advisory process, but this government did not perceive there was a problem in appointing Rothschild despite Mr Rowe's QIC role. This is an example of yet another conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest being glossed over by this government. I challenge the Premier to call a royal commission into the corruption throughout her government and in this state.

Queensland Ambulance Service, Replacement Vehicles

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (11.53 am): The Bligh government is committed to ensuring that top-class emergency service facilities are available for the people of Queensland. It has been my pleasure to recently represent the Minister for Emergency Services in officially handing over new and replacement vehicles to the Queensland Ambulance Service. Last month I handed over new Mercedes Benz Sprinter ambulances to the Kenmore, Cleveland, Maroochydore, Nambour, Buderim and Kawana ambulance stations, and I was recently joined by Margaret Keech, the member for Albert, in the official handover of a new Sprinter ambulance for the Beenleigh Ambulance Station.

The new Mercedes Benz Sprinter vehicles are valued at around \$180,000 and provide our hardworking paramedics with the most up-to-date technology available for the delivery of patient care, including the new Stryker stretcher and stair chair. The vehicles feature new highly visible livery, which is designed to improve safety for paramedics and the general public by helping to improve driver recognition when ambulances drive under emergency conditions. These new ambulances are part of the Bligh government's \$20 million commitment for 150 new and replacement ambulance vehicles across the state as part of a massive \$494.6 million allocation to the Queensland Ambulance Service.

Using this opportunity, I thank the professional and dedicated staff of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Our ambos are held in high regard by Queensland communities and deserve the very best equipment and vehicles to enable them to perform their duties. I am pleased the delivery of these new Mercedes Benz Sprinters supports the great work of our ambulance workers.

Acland

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.54 am): In our desperate hurry in Queensland to expand and access the wealth of this great state to offset the increasing massive debt and the global economic recession which appears to be the reason for all the ills of the world at the moment, we often forget the ongoing impact of the decisions we make on the people they affect—people who are left to go on with their lives, often in adverse conditions. Too often they are left in a sea of despair and discomfort, and this is the case for the residents left on the fringes of the Acland mine. The few residents who remain and those surrounding the mine are fighting for two things: first, to keep the war memorial and the gardens surrounding it and, second, the freedom to live without having to wear dust masks while working their farms, without having to live in homes where windows and doors are never opened and without having to sleep with dust masks on.

The town of Acland, as members would know, is being swallowed by the Acland mine. The townsfolk have long recognised their young men who went to war and gave their lives fighting to maintain the freedom and the rights for others that we enjoy and often take for granted. There are not many names on the memorial and there are not many left to fight to keep their memorial in the town they loved, but they are fighting just as hard to honour these men. To remove their memorial to another location is to diminish the sacrifice of those soldiers. To allow their small island of remembrance and reflection to be bulldozed, buried and lost is totally lacking in all that they stood for. It is to bury all that they were.

Those who live on are also being buried—buried in noise, dust and lighting from the Acland mine. The people exist but they have no quality of life. I table an account of one family's life and how they went from secure and idyllic to choking and nightmarish.

Tabled paper: Document, untitled, regarding the impact of New Acland Coal's mining activities [\[664\]](#).

This is what governments do to families when they approve mines but do not tightly monitor the long-term effects. When governments sign off and collect the royalties, they should also be monitoring how those close to the mine operation fare from year to year. I ask the minister and his department to talk to these people—to those who suffer the dust, noise and night lighting and those who fight to preserve this small bit of history and the men they honour. These might be insignificant issues to this parliament, but they are life-affecting issues for the residents of Acland and the surrounding districts. I ask the government to remember the people, not only on the day decisions are made but also long after, when the true, long-term impacts of the decisions the government makes are realised.

Building the Education Revolution

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.56 am): I am pleased to be able to update the House on the Building the Education Revolution program. The three different phases of the Australian government's \$14.7 billion stimulus package are being rolled out by Education Queensland and the Department of Public Works.

The National School Pride funding provides for minor infrastructure and refurbishment projects in Queensland schools, as well as allowing the purchase of equipment such as interactive whiteboards which will help ensure the best learning environment for our students.

The Primary Schools for the 21st Century funding has seen two of the three rounds rolled out, and plans are afoot for the construction of halls and resource centres in much needed areas. Locally, this means all of my state schools and high schools have received funding under National School Pride and work is moving ahead apace. In rounds 1 and 2 of P21, over \$13 million has been allocated to five local schools for the construction of halls and libraries. With round 3 due in the next couple of weeks, the rest of my schools will be able to move ahead with their plans.

Pine Rivers State High School has been awarded funding under the Science and Language Centres program under a competitive bid. Pine Rivers State High School is an excellent learning institution, and the allocation of these additional funds will ensure that local students have the opportunity to study in the most advanced facilities possible.

The other important aspect of this funding is the creation of local jobs for local contractors at a time when Queensland needs to be creating jobs to bolster us against the increasing unemployment rate, which is due mostly to the global financial crisis. This funding goes hand in hand with the Bligh government's ongoing record investment in capital works and maintenance programs to state schools.

It should be noted that the school communities I have been visiting, both as the member for Pine Rivers and as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, have embraced this funding for much needed facilities to be built and modernised. Let us not forget that the Liberal and National parties in the federal parliament opposed this stimulus package. It was also the LNP here in the Queensland parliament that argued against the idea of the stimulus package. I bet they do not mention that when they are in their local schools, attending celebrations of milestones of the Building the Education Revolution program. I will continue to oversee this excellent funding program and commend the government on its investment in Queensland schools.

Yarraman Forestry Depot

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (11.58 am): Over the weekend, the primary industries minister, Tim Mulherin, was forced to do an embarrassing backflip on the future of his department's Yarraman forestry depot. On Wednesday last week, the government told the 20-odd workers that the depot workshop would be closed, the workers' houses would be sold and their jobs, if they wanted them, transferred to Blackbutt. This action by the minister, as members would imagine, threw the entire community of Yarraman into disbelief and indeed fear. This is the second slap in the face that this community has suffered.

Last year the minister jacked up royalties on hoop pine, which forced the local sawmill to put off its night shift, with the loss of approximately half its workforce—a big kick for any small country town. It is the same old story with this minister, who over the past couple of months has been scouring his department for assets that could be flogged off, and he has been focusing on agricultural colleges land sales as well. He has sneakily waited until after the estimates committee process to try this on with the South Burnett community.

I want to put on the record my thanks to the local and regional media for their support to the community in highlighting the effect of the sale on this community, which is far more than this government would do. The sell-off of Queensland Forestry will also affect this community. Two hundred thousand hectares will be sold off. Once they privatise something, they look to make the mighty dollar. What guarantee can the Minister for Primary Industries give to those workers in that forestry department? What guarantee can he give for the solidness of their jobs?

It is about jobs, jobs, jobs. We have seen our agricultural colleges slashed and burnt. When the final outcome comes, I fear for the future of the Dalby agricultural college and its assets, because this government has its greedy fingers on it, crying out for dollars, dollars, dollars.

Amberley Aerospace Precinct

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.00 pm): I wanted to take the opportunity today to keep the House advised of the work continuing on the Amberley Aerospace precinct in Ipswich. In a matter of years a new high-tech defence and aerospace technology park will be taking off adjacent to the RAAF base at Amberley, and with it around 3,000 jobs will be created. The proposed Aerospace and Defence Support Centre will be a high-tech industrial park, with a focus on providing a major regional facility for the existing defence and aerospace industry specialists who are already located on the base as well as those who can see the advantage of an opportunity too good to refuse.

This precinct has the potential to become a major economic powerhouse not only for the Ipswich region but also for Queensland as a whole, with the creation of up to 3,000 jobs as part of a \$100 million one-stop shop for aeroengineering excellence in an industrial precinct focused on the development of advanced aviation technology. I believe it could also be a home base for even more firms seeking contracts to service and maintain the current and the planned new RAAF aircraft located at the Amberley base. With more and more defence personnel calling Amberley home, the development of an Aerospace and Defence Support Centre is an investment in the future and a down payment in local high-tech know-how.

As you would know, Mr Speaker, Queensland companies are already involved in major defence force initiatives, with projects like the delivery of the Tiger and MRH 90 helicopters, the airborne early warning and control aircraft, and the air-to-air refuelling planes. By having a centre of aerospace innovation next door to the Amberley base, we are aiming for the sky and launching the framework for even more high-tech jobs. The way things are going, I expect that the aerospace park could be ready for construction in 2011, and I for one cannot wait.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Estimates Committee A

Report No. 1

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is—

That report No. 1 of Estimates Committee A be adopted.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (12.03 pm): Mr Speaker, I take it that we are debating reports Nos 1 and 2 of Estimates Committee A together in the five-minute frame?

Mr SPEAKER: The advice given to me is just one.

Mr NICHOLLS: So this is the report into the examination of the expenditures of parliament and the Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you for clarification of that, Mr Speaker. Firstly, can I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your frankness and your willingness to provide very comprehensive answers to the committee during the course of the estimates process. Can I also acknowledge the great work done by the Clerk of the Parliament and his staff in providing the services that they do to all 89 members of this House. I particularly want to acknowledge the diplomacy and tact with which the Clerk, his deputies and staff work in a fairly difficult and at times heated environment, and where they are called upon to give advice and perhaps to provide counsel in certain circumstances. It is no easy task to have 89 members of parliament with their agenda, and two sides of politics and Independents all wishing to win the day, if I can put it that way, and all seeking to turn at most instances everything to their advantage. The Clerk and his staff behave in a professional, reliable and discreet manner. I just want to get that on the record.

During the course of the estimates we discussed a number of issues, Mr Speaker, as you are aware. I think some stand out more particularly than others. The electorate office upgrades is an issue that has been of concern to members for some two years now. It has been on the book. I know it was the subject of the estimates committee process last year. I note your answers in that part of the process, where you indicated that it was your desire to have all security upgrades completed by December 2009, with a report to be provided within six months. Hopefully that report will be that the work has been concluded. I am assuming that is subject to the usual caveats of weather, access, availability of materials and those things.

We have conducted a review of my own electorate office security. While it is certainly not one of the high-threat areas, being at the upper end of Racecourse Road, nonetheless it is an issue when staff are left by themselves for long periods of time when we are away on parliamentary business, and the review is necessary. I notice the desire for conformity with the provisions of the security upgrade task force recommendations. For example, having chairs bolted to the floor is something that in my office is impractical, because it is right next to the door and you just cannot move physically. So there may be some opportunity there for some things to be done.

I wanted to also mention the security of the precinct and the work that is done here to ensure that people coming here are secure. I guess it is a great shame of the age that we live in that we have to take these security measures, that people feel either so aggrieved or upset that they think they should take out their gripes on members, the buildings and the staff with whom we work here in the parliamentary precinct. I think the security staff do the job in a relatively unobtrusive way and that is a good sign of the way it is managed here. It would be my desire that we would not have to worry about security. Obviously that would be foolish, but nonetheless I do appreciate the work that is done there, given the people who visit.

I want to pay tribute in particular to the high teas that are served at Parliament House. From my own perspective, I know that making small gifts to community organisations of a parliamentary high tea service is greatly appreciated and is highly valued. I am continually surprised and pleasantly so at the number of people who take up the parliamentary high tea service and take up a tour. It is booked out until December, I believe, and may be booked out even further. My raffle prizes that I donate to local organisations are now going into next year. It is a good service that I think is working well.

I conclude by raising an issue that is particularly close to me on level 9, and that is the new toilets. If there is one gripe that I have, it is the fact that we have spent nearly \$450,000 over four months on two toilets on levels 9 and 10, and for various reasons—some of them I think human induced and others down to other factors—they have not worked in the way that we have perhaps hoped they would. We now have signs on everything from the tap to the wastepaper bin. I was thinking of putting a sign on the door saying 'Push Here'. I was thinking of putting a sign above the men's urinal saying 'Point Here' and I was thinking of putting a sign on top of the button saying 'Flush Here'. We have so many signs in the lavatories on levels 9 and 10 that, in order to avoid any further problems, it is easier and quicker to go to level 11 where you do not have to read the signs and you can just go about your business in a very orderly fashion. I pay tribute to the staff and thank everyone, and I hope that those toilets are flushing faster sooner.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Yeerongpilly, I should have said to the House that we are considering the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill in detail first. It is report No. 1. I neglected to call first the member for Yeerongpilly because I was anxious to hear the contribution of the member for Clayfield. After that small oversight, I now call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (12.08 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was likewise anxious to hear the contribution from the member for Clayfield. I am happy for him to open the batting in relation to reporting on the estimates committee. I rise to address Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee A. As you pointed out, Mr Speaker, it examined proposed expenditure in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, and in particular questioned the Speaker in relation to this proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly.

At the outset I say that it was an honour to chair this committee. I thank my fellow committee members for their participation in the scrutiny and for their cooperation and civility throughout our deliberations. I thank the Speaker for his attention to the questioning of committee members both on notice and at the hearing and for his attendance along with parliamentary officials at the committee hearing.

Scrutiny of the expenditure for the Legislative Assembly considered issues including: security audits and upgrades of electorate offices; security of the parliamentary precinct; budgeting for the parliamentary committee system; community engagement activities of the parliament; and the establishment of the Speaker's Advisory Committee. Consideration of these matters is consistent with issues examined in previous hearings of recent years. That reflects that security of the precinct requires significant expenditure and is an ongoing issue for members and also staff and visitors to the parliament.

During the hearing the Speaker reported that people attending the precinct each year included some 50,000 function patrons, 17,000 school students and 8,000 general tour patrons. Along with this comes 76,000 security scans. With these numbers of visitors it was pleasing that the Speaker reported a low level of need to require people to surrender items. The 76,000 scans resulted in only 145 confiscations. These in the main included manicure sets, scissors, cutlery and, in some cases, tools that are used by contractors.

A high number of people attending the precinct, a high number of security scans and a low level of confiscation reflects and reinforces the focus on appropriate security which ensures a safe precinct whilst maintaining the parliament as an open place. It is important we recognise the moderate levels of risk in the precinct and balance this with the need to allow access for people to their parliament. I am sure all members agree with the comments made by the Speaker that we hope we never see the day when security for MPs in this place needs to be treated in the same way as security for members of the US Congress.

Budget allocations to manage the parliamentary committee system also received significant attention during the hearing. Following the election of the Bligh government in March the government reformed the parliamentary committee structure, expanded the number and scope of committees and enabled the committees to examine key structural and policy areas.

During the scrutiny the Speaker advised the committee of budgetary changes associated with amendments to the structure. He outlined that the pooling of administrative support staff and the travel budget allocations have enabled greater efficiencies as well as an improved process for accessing travel budget allocations.

In relation to the open management of issues affecting the precinct, the Speaker informed the committee about the ongoing role of the Speaker's Advisory Committee, a bipartisan committee to consider decisions effecting management of the precinct. When we consider that there are a number of challenges managing the heritage building that we are meeting in today as well as the ageing Annexe and then some of the issues that we are all aware of in relation to plumbing, air conditioning and the demands on the parliamentary buildings, the role of the Speaker's Advisory Committee will be ongoing and will discuss the needs of the precinct and the need to provide adequate allocations to ensure that we maintain facilities in an up-to-date fashion.

I should also briefly comment on the community engagement activities of the parliament. The community engagement activities raise significant funds for charities, they partner with a range of organisations and they also provide important support across the region. Recently I came into contact with a group of speakers and deputy speakers from Papua New Guinea and the broader Pacific region who were attending seminars in our parliament aimed at assisting skills development and knowledge sharing across our parliamentary systems. This is important work that is done by our community engagement unit.

Can I finish by saying that as chair of the committee I am satisfied that the proceedings of the committee enabled adequate scrutiny of allocations to the Assembly that are contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I acknowledge the unanimous endorsement of the report by the committee and thank the parliamentary staff who assisted with the scrutiny. I commend the report to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.13 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and speak to the report of Estimates Committee A and acknowledge the contribution of the chairman, the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, who has just finished speaking. I was the deputy chair of the committee. It was conducted in good order. There was good natured debate throughout the day. I thank the secretariat—Rob Hansen, Alistair Maclennan and Carolyn Heffernan—and all the parliamentary staff who had to sit in the Legislative Council chamber which we know gets a bit chilly when there are not many people in it.

It was an interesting day. It is always a pleasure to speak about matters involving the parliament itself. As members know, I have a keen interest in the formalities of parliament. I want to acknowledge your contribution, Mr Speaker, in continuing the work of previous speakers in opening the parliament up to the broader public. That was something that was begun by speakers some years ago. When students are going through to QUT, as I did in years past when I was at the University of Queensland and went to band concerts which were called joint efforts at the then QIT and would look in and wonder in a half fascinated way what was going on, they know this building is open to them. Now we open the parliament to the public. I think it is wonderful that we do. The community engagement that you are doing, Mr Speaker, we should continue.

The budget appropriation for 2009-10 is \$68.642 million. I notice that we had over 50,000 function patrons, 17,000 school students, 8,000 general tour patrons and 3,000 parliamentary education program attendees. I know the tea and talks are very popular with members of the public. People will

say to me that they have been here for a high tea. The mystique of the place is sometimes lost on those of us who are here regularly but certainly not on those who come in here infrequently. They think it is a great place. Of course it is the home of democracy in our great state and we should be welcoming more people.

We spoke about security measures and Mr Speaker reassured members about security measures. He has undertaken to report on the status of those within six months. I did express some concerns about whether the security working group had done its work in an appropriate time frame. It has been a couple of years since some security measures were raised via electorate officers in Cook and another office. I raised my concerns about security buzzers which have been allocated to my office and others. I appreciate that you referred to the Speaker's Advisory Committee that members can be on. I was on Speaker Reynolds' advisory committee. It only met a couple of times. The important thing is that it is there. Mr Speaker has committed to doing it. I know that your sense is that we all want to make this a better place for all who visit and all who work here.

I note that there were 145 confiscations. That has received some media interest over the last few years. The honourable member for Yeerongpilly mentioned this. I found it interesting in terms of committee funding that 20 per cent of total funds should be quarantined for travel matters. That is prudent planning and something that we would obviously like to see through all aspects of governance. We need to make sure that we do not spend more than we earn. That is prudent given the current financial situation we find ourselves in.

I was pleased to ask questions and get answers from you about the artwork here. This is a common query from members. Members come and ask for artworks that they think may be displayed here. Mr Speaker has made a commitment to have that considered by the advisory committee and to have some Art Gallery people here to see whether we may be able to either improve our collection or borrow some of theirs. I think that would enhance the experience of members in their offices and people visiting. I am not quite sure of all the details. If I am misleading the parliament I clearly withdraw.

The other issue is bringing the place up to speed. I often say to people when I am describing the parliament that when you stay in the Annexe it is like being in the biological sciences library at the University of Queensland on Christmas Day. When there is no-one else here it is a pretty lonely, funny, musky, dank place and anything we can do to improve it would be appreciated. With that I commend the report to the House.

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (12.18 pm): I was again pleased to be a member of Estimates Committee A. I thank all members of the committee for the highly professional, efficient and friendly way they conducted themselves. This was certainly facilitated under the excellent chairmanship of Simon Finn. I thank the committee secretariat—Rob Hansen, Alistair MacLennan and Carolyn Heffernan—for their hard work. I acknowledge and thank all the other committee staff.

I commend the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology for the information provided during the Estimates Committee A hearing. There is no doubt that each Speaker brings to the business of running this institution their own special quality. Speaker Mickel has brought a sense of renewal of pride and respect to who we are and what this great institution should deliver to the people of Queensland.

Mr Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mrs KIERNAN: To do our jobs, both within these walls and in all of our electorates, we are incredibly fortunate to be supported—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mrs KIERNAN: I take that interjection. As I was saying, we are fortunate to be supported and have a team of people behind us, and when you seriously look at the work that they do it is quite outstanding. I convey special thanks to the whip, Margaret Keech, and the deputy whip, Vicky Darling, for the fantastic support they give us to do our jobs during sitting weeks. First and foremost, we are deeply grateful for the excellent service we receive from Pat and Pauline and the other casual switch ladies who must feel at times like shepherds as we round up our flock. To Neil Laurie, the Clerk, and his staff, who do an exceptional and stellar job, I personally thank and acknowledge the advice that he has afforded me on a number of occasions. To the Hansard staff, who capture our every word and indeed, in some cases, mutterings, and Chamber and Table staff who keep us ticking along and to IT and all of the other service areas that deliver services daily all year around, not only do we acknowledge your great service but many of us truly are very grateful to have you there. To each and every area of parliament that provides service to us, the members, our staff and the public generally I give our sincere thanks.

Last but by no means least, I thank the exceptionally hardworking electorate staff right across the state. Without you we would not be able to do our jobs in the interests of our constituents. I want to place on record today my grateful thanks to Kimmy MacNamara, Jude Wilcox and Barb Campbell, who are the backbone of the Mount Isa electorate and who serve the needs of the people in the most diverse electorate in the state with great efficiency, compassion and commitment. I commend the report to the House.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (12.21 pm): In addressing the Appropriation Bill 2009 as it relates to Estimates Committee A report No. 1, I firstly want to express my appreciation to the chair, the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, for his fair and even-handed approach. I further extend my sincere thanks to the research staff, headed by Rob Hansen. I commend all of the members of this committee for the manner in which they conducted themselves and the spirit of friendly cooperation. I also congratulate the Speaker for his manner and willingness to answer questions and openness to ideas and suggestions that were put forward. It was a willingness, I must say, I have not seen exhibited in many other portfolios. It is also his desire to see the setting of high standards that will uphold the dignity of the Queensland parliament and the Westminster system in which we operate. I commend the Speaker's staff and of course the assistance from the Clerk and his staff and all of the parliamentary staff whom the honourable member for Mount Isa so generously mentioned. I want to add my thanks and appreciation to them for looking after us not only in sitting weeks but outside sitting times as well.

A number of topics were covered in this estimates hearing. I suppose one that affects us all very directly outside of this place is electorate office security. It is critically important that electorate office security is implemented in all electorate offices. Like many, my electorate office in Currumbin was given a security upgrade recently. The workers were very polite but I have to say that, like a lot of boys, they did not clean up their mess too well afterwards and we actually purchased a vacuum so that we did not have metal shavings left for our constituents. I noticed also that the chairs in my front foyer were bolted to the floor with very fine chains. I do question whether this is a waste of money as the chairs themselves actually need replacing. It would take very little to smash them to smithereens, so I question the value for money of some of these upgrades. The front reception glass was replaced but, as one of my electorate officers pointed out, it would still be fairly easy to point a gun through it. I genuinely hope that that situation will never happen.

Under the procurement guidelines, I understand that Queensland companies should get a fair hearing in tender submissions. For matters pertaining to the electorate offices, surely steps should be taken to ensure that these repairs and upgrades are performed by Queensland companies. An example of not using a Queensland company was the changing of our locks, and I understand that several offices on the Gold Coast had their locks changed by a New South Wales company. I really do question why we do not ensure that this work is performed by Queenslanders. Mind you, I am very friendly to our New South Wales counterparts as my seat is right on the state border and I am well aware of the importance of good cross-border relationships and the flow of jobs, schooling and industry.

The issue of air conditioning was raised in light of the upgrades that would comply with government mandates for six-star energy efficiency. I also note that the Speaker requested the Department of Public Works to get an answer for us on that, and I am wondering if that answer has been supplied. It is to be hoped that the Speaker will act to ensure that renovations to the House provide a leading example in greenhouse performance.

I note also the cost to amenities in the Annexe costing \$1.236 million. In 2008-09 it was \$618,000 and again post 2009 this amount was mentioned. I am of course referring to the toilet amenities. I do not wish to be thought of as the 'loo lady' in the future. I note that the honourable member for Clayfield has already mentioned this but, quite frankly, the situation for a lot of us was really quite untenable. I refer to the cost and the time to build these amenities and the condition of the existing pipes. I even noticed the tainting taste to the quality of the water, and I do ask if these issues can be corrected.

I also note that a Speaker's Advisory Committee is to be set up. I am very interested in the heritage aspects of that. Coming from Adelaide and having a heritage listed building of my own, I have enormous respect for these kinds of buildings and the importance of restoring them in the manner in which they were built.

I also want to mention the number of times the lifts are out of order. I almost missed my spot here today because one of the lifts is out of order yet again. I know that these things cannot be helped in an ageing building, but I would ask that they are looked into. I thank all of the committee.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.26 pm): I am pleased to address the House in relation to the Estimates Committee A hearing, held on 14 July this year. Firstly, I want to record my appreciation of the work of the Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie, and put on record the work of the highly dedicated parliamentary staff. Scrutiny by the committee was also of a very high level, and I commend the work of our research director, Rob Hansen, and Parliamentary Service officers

for their assistance at the hearing. I want to acknowledge the work of committee members from both sides of the House and congratulate our newly appointed Speaker of the Queensland Parliament on his first estimates in that position.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill seeks to provide funding for salaries and allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly and funding for the Parliamentary Service, which provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. Increases in funding for the parliament incorporated many changes, including meeting enterprise bargaining salary increases for staff; a number of electorate office relocations, taking into account also the 2008 electoral redistributions; replacement of computer equipment; increased electorate office leasing costs; and the restructure of the parliamentary committee system.

In relation to that, I am very pleased to be working as a member of the Environment and Resources Committee. Recently the committee held a very successful public forum in Townsville and will hold a similar forum in Brisbane this Friday. There is a lot of passion out there in the community regarding the issues concerning energy efficiency and protecting our environment. Of course these forums would not occur without the organisational skills of the parliament's research staff, and I take this opportunity to praise the work of the research director for the committee, Rob Hansen, and his staff for the support they provide to the effective functioning of the committee.

As chair of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for a number of years, I recognise the importance of the bipartisan parliamentary committee system and its role in ensuring the integrity of the parliament. It is important that these checks and balances are put in place with participation from members of both sides of the House. The government and the community in Queensland can only benefit through the committee system and its inquiries into vital matters affecting our great state.

In relation to electorate office accommodation, my office was recently severely affected by storms when water flooded through the ceiling, causing extensive damage to documents, the flooring and office equipment. This was a very stressful time for my electorate office staff, particularly as workstations were disrupted and the water continued to pour into the office. The Parliament House property staff did all they could during this difficult time to ensure that the workplace was safe for my electorate staff and for my constituents. We look forward to our relocation to another, hopefully drier, section of the shopping centre as massive renovations to the centre continue to be completed.

Members of parliament would all agree that parliamentary and electorate office staff work extremely hard in their jobs, which could never be seen as undemanding. I would like to personally mention on record my hardworking electorate officers Luise Melvin and Michelle Bourke. When in the parliamentary precinct for long periods, all members are treated with the utmost respect and courtesy by staff in the Parliamentary Service. Once every term the whole parliament sits in a regional centre in Queensland. This process was introduced by the former Premier and so far the parliament has sat in Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns. Physically relocating the parliament and its technologies is an enormous task, particularly for the Parliamentary Service staff. But they always do a wonderful job and never leave anything undone. It is an important process to take the parliament to the regions. It creates a better understanding of our parliamentary process and the role of its members. It is essential that, in a democracy, parliament is becoming more accessible to the community.

As the Speaker stated at the hearing, there have been many people attending the precinct itself, with over 50,000 function patrons, 17,000 school students, 8,000 general tour patrons and 3,000 parliamentary education program attendees each year. Each member of this House has had a number of their local school students tour Parliament House. Feedback from my schools is always positive and I feel that this is a great opportunity for our young people to experience democracy in progress.

In relation to the security matters that were raised by the member for Surfers Paradise, I believe that the Speaker and the Parliamentary Service treat the security of electorate officers as an absolute priority. Security staff in this place do an excellent job in ensuring the safety of all members. This is not always easy, considering the large number of visitors, as mentioned before, to Parliament House. I congratulate the Speaker and I commend the report of Estimates Committee A in relation to the Legislative Assembly to the House.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.31 pm): I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee A. That estimates committee hearing was held on 14 July. I would like to say that, owing to a lack of places on estimate committees, I was unable to obtain a place and therefore I was not involved in the actual committee process. But I would have to say that I am grateful to be able to speak to a couple of committee reports during this sitting. I wonder if there is not a way possible for all members of the House to be able to be on an estimates committee, because I know I felt like I had missed out just a little bit. To be quite honest, I do not like to miss out on anything. So perhaps some consideration could be given to increasing the membership of each committee in trying to keep a balance.

I would like to comment on a few issues. One of them—and possibly this is one that we have all forgotten—is that quite a few years ago we were all issued with laptops. The aim was for parliament to reduce its paper wastage. I must say that I have not noticed any savings in the amount of paper that has to be purchased or the amount of wastepaper that is disposed of. I wonder if any record has been kept of paper use and whether parliament could be informed of it. It was said that computers would make us a paperless society in years to come, but I think in fact we have increased our paper use and not saved much at all.

A lot of members have mentioned security in electorate offices. Recently, my office in the Nanango electorate was assessed. Barry Hensler from Property Services came up to talk to us about the whole issue. He made it a very pleasurable event. He is such a nice man to deal with at all times. He is at the forefront of the operation of our electorate offices—procuring them, setting them up, making them easy to work in and making everything efficient. I know why this issue came about. Unfortunately, the majority of people will have to wear the negative actions of people in other electorates. I know in my electorate I have never had any great security concerns. My office has even been able to defuse little bits of temper. My electorate staff has had no fear for their security, but all of this occurring became a little bit of an issue for us. Perhaps the people who attract negative reactions from their constituents need to undertake a people skills course to try to limit any further negative events, because members will not always be behind that glass in their offices.

In my electorate office I have a major issue related to hearing. My senior electorate staffer is a wonderful person and she has hearing issues. A lot of elderly people who come to my office also have hearing problems. So I find that hearing is a major issue. If we have to go through this process—we cannot sign a waiver to say that we do not want to be locked behind glass—then I hope that some sort of intercom system will be put in place for both my constituents and my staff.

I would also like to say that the member for Gladstone is recognised unofficially as our whip. Most members will know that, as Independents, we are not as easy to control as the other members of parliament who are members of parties. Therefore, I would ask Mr Speaker if he would officially recognise Liz as the whip, because she does have a bit of a hard job. Also, is it possible to move the phone? In previous parliaments Independents sat near the phone. Is it possible to either move the phone so that it is near Liz, our unofficial whip, or to perhaps make some agreement with the LNP to swap seats to make it a little easier for Liz?

I would like to recognise everybody who works at Parliament House—whether they work in the chamber, the dining room; absolutely everywhere. I would also like to put it on record a special thanks to Mary Kolosowski. I have been here for a long time. She has been here for even longer. She is our unofficial mum. Also, Mr Speaker, in the short time that you have been the Speaker, I would like to recognise that, over other Labor Speakers, you are giving me hope for the future.

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (12.36 pm): I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the debate on the report to the parliament for Estimates Committee A. Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your first estimates committee. I know that you enjoyed it very much. Although I was not a member of the committee, I want to put on record my thanks not only to the Speaker but also to the staff in the parliamentary precinct for the great work that they do in supporting all of the 89 members of this House. I really want to commend the way in which the Speaker holds his position with such great honour and to also commend his staff, who are always open and friendly and most helpful. Mr Speaker, I would like you to pass on our thanks to your staff.

As chief Government Whip for the 53rd Parliament, I would particularly like to acknowledge the quality of the staff here in the parliament and the way in which they really go above and beyond the call of duty to support us. There are many joys in being the Government Whip—

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mrs KEECH: Do not laugh. It is a very busy job, but it also has its rewards. One of the most satisfying aspects of the new position that I hold for this parliament is the opportunity to further strengthen the relationships I have had with the parliamentary staff since 2001.

People ask me, 'What is the role of the Government Whip?' Many people in our electorates have absolutely no idea. They have a view of women in black boots—which I am actually wearing—but I am not holding a whip. I say to them that I believe in some ways the position is a little like being a conductor. I am responsible for 51 members, trying to get them to all sing together from the same song sheet at the one time, which sometimes can be a little challenging but on most occasions we do good work together. I believe that the music is only as beautiful as the team is strong. With our government, we have very strong leaders in Premier Anna Bligh and her cabinet, and I am most ably supported by my two deputy whips, the member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, and the member for Sandgate, Vicky Darling.

The other half of the team is the hardworking parliamentary staff led by the Clerk, Neil Laurie, and the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries. Nothing is too much trouble for the Clerk and his office. They are always available at a minute's notice—they are even available if I have to call them at home—to offer support to honourable members through tactful and confidential advice. On behalf of the deputy whips and myself, I thank the chamber attendants and Hansard.

I thank the IT staff, and particularly Mike Coburn. Recently when my electorate office was broken into and the laptop was stolen Mike was of great assistance to me. Although the Beenleigh police acted very quickly, we still have not been able to find the laptop. Mike was able to provide me with a new laptop within hours. That was something that I really appreciated, particularly since parliament was about to start.

Many thanks go to property services manager Jason Gardiner, and the parliamentary catering services and Jaakko Ponsi for the terrific work they do in ensuring we are all well fed. A person who is very important, particularly to new members, is the man responsible for senior assets, telecommunications and pagers, Colin Ogle. I thank Barry Hensler, who is responsible for all electorate accommodation and who does a great job in ensuring that my electorate office is well resourced, particularly with the new security upgrades.

Like my deputy whip, I would like to thank the invisible ladies whose faces we may not know but whose voices we know very well. They are the ladies on the switch. Pauline Kavanagh and Patricia Reeves do an outstanding job. They are here for as long as we are. If we sit till 4 am in the morning, the ladies on the switch support us. I commend to the House the report of Estimates Committee A.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! I have been advised that we have a major electrical failure with lift No. 2, one of the high-rise lifts in the parliamentary annexe. The technicians have been and will continue to work on the issue. I will inform you when I have more information. Members should expect some delays.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (12.42 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the report of Estimates Committee A. In doing so I wish to restrict my remarks to three areas: the Parliamentary Internship Program, the use of trainees and traineeships, and office security. In the short time I have been in the parliament, the Parliamentary Internship Program has been particularly successful. During the course of the past parliament I have been privileged to have three interns, and all of them have provided quality reports. It has been of great assistance. I know that I am not alone. Other members of parliament take advantage of the Parliamentary Internship Program and the research projects that we can obtain from students who are interested in being involved.

Last year we saw a first for the Queensland parliament. For the first time ever in Australia's political history a deaf honours student took up a position as a parliamentary intern. It is a great credit to the Queensland parliament, to the then Speaker and to all of the staff at parliament for having the vision and the willingness to take on a student with disability, recognising within them their abilities. It reflects well on our parliament. While from time to time some people will say that we can get caught up in the history of parliament, this is a very contemporary arrangement that shows that we are willing to break down barriers when it comes to disabilities and give people opportunities for new and interesting options.

An honourable member: Hear, hear!

Mr GIBSON: Thank you. The student, Rachel Missingham, was an honours student from Griffith University. She provided some very key research into renewable energy capacity in Queensland, which was then a key aspect of my portfolio responsibilities as the shadow minister for clean energy strategy.

I would like to make some brief points about Rachel Missingham. She was not selected for this internship because of her deafness. She was selected because of her interest in and enthusiasm for renewable energy and for her commitment and motivation to be involved in the implementation in Queensland of good policy that pushes forward the opportunities of renewable energy. She is an individual with an incredibly bright future. She has shown that through her academic ability. She certainly proved that to me when she worked as an intern last year. I believe that she will continue, throughout her life, to break down the barriers that, unfortunately, still exist for many deaf people in our community. Rachel does not allow her deafness to get in the way of her life. I recognise and thank the parliament for the support it gave to her, so that she could obtain the maximum benefit out of the intern program. When individuals have disabilities, often there is a requirement to assist them. The parliament did that particularly well. I thank the parliament for that.

The other area that I would like to touch on relates to traineeships. Again I have been privileged—and happy to put my hand in my own pocket—to have a trainee working in my electorate office. I have had three trainees working for me. Currently Jess, who is working towards a certificate III in business, is working for me and previously Hayley and Kylie have worked for me. This could not have occurred

without the support of the parliamentary HR staff, and I thank them for that. It is unfortunate that the federal government has withdrawn funding to provide that support, but I have made a commitment that, even without federal government funding assistance for a trainee, I will continue to support them because I believe in our youth and we need to give them opportunities across this state.

Finally, I wish to touch on the office upgrade. Security is a major issue, which I raised immediately upon entering parliament. I recognised that the Gympie office is seriously lacking in security. I note that a design for the Gympie office upgrade was approved but understandably was put on hold when we had unfortunate incidents in Cook. However, it is of concern that the Gympie electorate office is still waiting for a security upgrade. No work has been done to the office during its occupation by the two previous members. The first to use the office was Len Stephan, the then member for Gympie. It is in serious need of improvement in security.

I echo the remarks of others in this House by expressing my appreciation to all parliamentary staff, who do great work. I recognise the work of my electorate officers, Sharon O'Brien, Jess and Kylie. They are incredibly diligent. Thanks to them, the people of Gympie are well represented whenever I am called down here to parliament. I commend the report to the House.

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (12.47 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the report of Estimates Committee A. I was not a member of Estimates Committee A, but as a new member of parliament I did attend the hearing to watch the estimates process and to get an idea of how it worked before I took my place on Estimates Committee C. I was very happy to watch the process.

The budget for the Legislative Assembly was \$68.624 million. I note from the committee's report that this is for establishing resourcing and administrative support, coordinating the delivery of official community activities, improving the building infrastructure within the precinct, the replacement and upgrade of certain office and computer equipment in electorate offices and relocating a number of members' electorate offices as a result of the electoral redistribution.

As the new member for Chatsworth I have had work done in my office to change signs and prepare the office. As someone whose seat is constantly under challenge, I can say that every time a sign or some permanent structure with my name on it goes up, I feel a bit safer in my seat. I am glad to see that finally the names of the class of 2009 are on the honour board. Each one of these things makes me feel a little safer.

As one of the 19 new members of the class of 2009, I would like to particularly focus on the work done by the parliamentary staff through the induction program for new members, which provides a particularly important and useful three days for new members—some more than others, I would suggest. It was particularly important, given the range of different occupations and places that people come from to this place, to give us a good grounding in the way it works. I commend the Speaker and the parliamentary staff, particularly the Clerk of the Parliament, for the way that they conducted the induction program and the amount of effort and time that they put into ensuring that, as new members went through the induction program, we were able to ask questions and get information on what was going to be required of us in our roles as new members of parliament. I particularly thank the staff involved in that. It is a great process and I hope it continues in the future for new members who may come in at the next election.

One of the other roles of the parliamentary staff is the community engagement unit, and I feel this role is incredibly important to the operation of this House. It is important that we engage the community as much as possible in the operation of this House. From what I have seen of the community engagement unit, particularly in relation to people being able to access information through the parliamentary website and find out what goes on in our parliament, it is an incredibly important part of the activities of the staff here.

We all know that first impressions are important, and the first impression I got of this place when I came here and went through the induction process was the incredible professionalism and patience of the staff who work in this building. I have continued to be impressed with the work and the abilities of the people who ensure that this place operates as it should.

The catering staff here I think do too good a job. In the short time I have been here—I hate to admit—I have managed to put on eight kilos. So I am about to engage in the Find Your 30 campaign and see if I can start getting that down a bit.

An honourable member: There's also a gym.

Mr Kilburn: Where is that? I have not seen that yet. I also want to comment on the work of the Indigenous Liaison Officer, Brett Nutley. I have used Mr Nutley's services on a number of occasions. Importantly, straight after this speech I am going to have a meeting with some members of my local community organisations and Mr Nutley to work on how we can encourage the Indigenous community to engage more with the parliament. I think this is a great concept that should be continued, and I acknowledge the great work that Mr Nutley does engaging with the community.

I would like to thank my electorate staff as well. Margaret Young has worked as an electorate officer for over 17 years. Her knowledge and patience with me as a new member have been very important to me and her knowledge of my electorate has aided me immensely. My new assistant electorate officer Gerard O'Gorman also started work recently. I would like to thank them for the work they do in running my office in my absence.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (12.52 pm): From the outset I put on the record that I was not a member of this committee but it is a pleasure to be able to speak to this report this afternoon. There are many issues that were canvassed by this committee during the estimates committee hearing that I think are well worthy of note. One of those worthy of note I believe is the establishment of the Speaker's Advisory Committee. I think this is an excellent initiative and I congratulate the Speaker on it.

From the outset I want to pay tribute here today to the security staff of this place. I believe they are the absolute champions of this place—all staff are for that matter. But, as a member from a remote electorate, I spend a lot of hours in this place on my own and they are champion blokes to talk with.

Mr Nicholls: You get lonely.

Mr JOHNSON: You do get lonely. There is someone to have a yarn with. I do not get lonely in the way that probably the member for Clayfield gets lonely because he has Mary at home only a few miles up the road. I like girls, not blokes. You have to talk to blokes. Anyway, we are not going to go into that.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Cease those interjections. The member is having trouble.

Mr JOHNSON: I see the member for Cairns, the Minister for Local Government, smiling over there.

Mr Nicholls: You can get lonely together.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, we can get lonely together. But the security staff are bloody champions and I want to put that on the record. Mr Deputy Speaker, no more interjections from the member for Clayfield.

I want to mention here today the Speaker himself. I know he is not here, but I want to pay tribute to the Speaker. I think the Speaker is the fairest adjudicator I have witnessed in this place in 19½ years. His staff are to be complimented and I also want to compliment his wife, Catherine. I believe that since the Speaker has been in this role he and his wife have showed the true leadership of what the Speaker's role is in this place. They have taken on board a fair and open-minded stewardship of the place and I think they complement each other. I think they bring this parliament to the fore of what this parliament is about, representing this parliament with dignitaries from not only within Queensland but also overseas and interstate. I want to put that on the record here today.

I, as the member for Gregory, the member for Mount Isa and the member for Cook—who are both here—the member for Dalrymple and the member for Warrego all represent large electorates. One of the areas of concern to me is the issue of aerial intra electorate travel which is far from satisfactory. The amount of money included in the allowances to fly within an electorate is inadequate. I know that the member for Cook and the member for Mount Isa must face extreme difficulty in servicing their electorates with having to visit island communities and the cost of that exercise. It is a logistical impossibility. The cost of travelling to those areas is prohibitive, and therefore I believe a lot of times the people who live in those areas are deprived of true representation. I urge the Speaker to look at this in the next budget.

The other issue, which again relates to remote electorates, is visitations of children from our schools and electorates to Brisbane to see firsthand how the parliament works. That again is a logistical impossibility due to the cost, whereas many children from the south-east corner or adjacent regions can get here more easily, whether it be by coach, by car or by train. But children in remote areas are deprived of being able to come here, and I think that is an unfair situation and one I hope the Speaker will look at.

The other issue I want to touch on very quickly is the great work Brett Nutley is doing as the Indigenous Liaison Officer right across the state. I had occasion to see him and Glenda Emmerson at Longreach just recently and then they went on to Mount Isa.

I do want to pay tribute to my electorate staff—namely, Carole Tanks in my Longreach office. Carole has been with me for 19½ years. She has just taken long service leave and will not be back. The point I want to make is that it is people like her who make all the difference. In our remote electorates they are there all the time. We are not there all the time. I also want to thank Mark Maguire and Sue Mitchell, my other two staff who are a terrific support to me and do a champion job in providing that back-up to the electorate of Gregory.

In closing, I thank all electorate staff right across the state. I talk to a lot of electorate officers, both government and non-government, and they are very helpful, very cooperative and very professional. I want to put that on the record.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (12.57 pm): I want to say from the outset what a great privilege and honour it is to be the Deputy Speaker in this parliament. It is obviously an important position of trust and one I want to thank the parliament for bestowing upon me. I also endorse the comments of the member for Gregory in his praise of the current Speaker, Mr Mickel.

I also want to take this opportunity to praise the work of the previous Speaker, Mr Mike Reynolds. Mike did a fantastic job and brought a lot of changes into this parliament. A number of people have spoken already about his commitment to Indigenous Queenslanders. Some of the great changes that Mike brought into this parliament are to do with Indigenous people. He was at the forefront of bringing Indigenous people into this parliament. One of the first things he did as Speaker was to pull together a panel of eminent Indigenous people from Brisbane and the surrounding area and invite them into the parliament so that they could advise him on how they could make this parliament more inclusive. I know that the member for Gregory was at that function that he organised in the very early days of his Speakership.

As other people have noted, he brought in the position of Indigenous Liaison Officer. He commissioned the wind yarn, which is played on ceremonial occasions here in the parliament and sits downstairs next to the mace. He helped organise the Cape York to Parliament program. He has made sure that the flags of both Indigenous communities that we have in Queensland are represented here in the parliament. There are other functions that he organised as well. On the day that the Prime Minister moved the apology to the stolen generation in the Commonwealth parliament, we had a very important and very moving function here as well.

In addition to making sure that this was 'Everyone's Parliament'—and that was a program that Mike introduced—Mike ensured that the health of MPs was looked at. It is true to say that because of the lifestyle that MPs lead—because we are such busy people and have so many commitments and so many people who require our time and our assistance—we could be healthier people, and Mike did a lot of work to improve the health of MPs. The gym in this place has been completely revamped. I know that everybody would have been into the gym recently and seen that all of the equipment has been updated so that it is modern and very accessible. Mike also brought the Heart Foundation into the parliament especially for members of parliament to give members advice and health checks, and that work has been built on by Speaker Mickel. This year I had a skin check and a flu vaccine for the very first time; they were provided as well. I know that some people do not like the flu vaccine but I have not had a cough all year, touch wood, and I really appreciate the fact that that was made easily available to me.

There are other things that Mike did. He put in water-saving initiatives. There are now tanks in and around the parliamentary precinct that were not there before and we have dual-flush toilets, as well as other initiatives.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Before calling the member for Cook, I would like to advise that both high-rise lifts are now operational.

Mr O'BRIEN: A number of people who have contributed to this debate today have talked about our electorate officers and the great job they do. They also talked about the security arrangements in our offices. A lot of the concern about security in our offices is due to the incident that occurred in my office when a man armed with a .303 entered and took one of my electorate officers hostage for a period of three hours. This was a terrible event. A lot of security work has been done in my office since that time. The glass has been repaired, new electronic alert buzzers have been introduced and there are different arrangements with the Queensland Police Service as well.

I am very rarely in my electorate office. I probably spend a day each fortnight in the office to clear out the paperwork, so it is our electorate officers who bear the brunt of a sometimes demanding public. I have lost Janet Hughes as a result of that incident. I want to place on the record my thanks for all the service that she provided to both me and my predecessor over the years. She did a fantastic job and she will be sorely missed in the office.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Appropriation Bill

Estimates Committee A

Report No. 2

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! The question is—

That report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A be adopted.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (2.34 pm): At the outset, I wish to thank the chair of Estimates Committee A, the member for Yeerongpilly, for chairing the committee with his usual aplomb and efficiency and to the satisfaction of all sides. Although the matter of the Speaker was dealt with in the immediate past debate, I take the opportunity to pass on to the Speaker my personal congratulations on his appointment to that high office and congratulate him for his outstanding service to this House to date. I also express my thanks to the Clerk and all members of the Parliamentary Service in any way, shape or form for the service they have provided to all members of parliament over the last year.

Reference was made in the report to the regional parliament in Cairns last year which went very well. I place on the record my hope that one day soon we will see a regional parliament in Toowoomba, bearing in mind that that part of Queensland is yet to see such an important event.

I congratulate the three ministers who are the subject of this debate—the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Public Works—on the candid way in which they presented their reports at estimates and answered the questions. They were certainly all unfazed and were forthright and informative. There was, one must say, a lack of vigour from the opposition members on the committee compared with previous years, but nevertheless that should not take away from the congratulations that one offers to the Premier and relevant ministers.

The Minister for Public Works again indicated that things are progressing well in his area, and I congratulate him on that. The Treasurer covered many items of great importance in these grave economic times and indicated the strategy of the government with respect to meeting the challenges. He particularly made reference to the Green Army, the payroll tax measures which will increase the number of trainees and the vacant land exemptions provision in the budget as supporting jobs for the future. The Treasurer made some very pertinent and informative comments on the budget deficit and the government's plan to bring the budget back to surplus.

The Premier covered many aspects in her report to the committee. She made reference to the Governor's address, and I place on record the great pleasure it is for the people of Toowoomba to have a native Toowoomba-ite as the Governor of Queensland. I congratulate Her Excellency Penelope Wensley on the role she plays so well. The Premier mentioned the Q150 celebrations that have been taking place throughout Queensland last year and this year. I place on the record the thanks of the Toowoomba community for the government's gift to Toowoomba in this event of the \$250,000 flagpole at the top of Picnic Point. It is a really spectacular edifice that has received the appreciation of all the people in Toowoomba.

The Premier also mentioned many aspects of Queensland events. As a regional member, I place on the record our thanks for the number of regional events in Queensland. I particularly mention the Hampton High Country Food and Arts Festival, which I have attended over the last few years, and Easterfest, which was formerly the Gospel Music Festival and which up until recently was the subject of grants from that regional events fund. That fund has provided tremendous social and economic activity in regions like Toowoomba, and I congratulate the Premier and the government on these endeavours.

Having obtained the permission of the Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate a list of people who have donated to the Cobb and Co. Museum in Toowoomba and place on the record our thanks for their extreme generosity in supporting this project, which was mentioned by the Premier in the estimates debate.

Leave granted.

05/08 2009 09:49 FAX 48384056

KERRY SHINE

002/003

Page 1 of 2

Toowoomba North Electorate Office

From: Deborah Tranter [DeborahT@qm.qld.gov.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 August 2009 10:58 AM
To: Toowoomba North Electorate Office
Subject: NCF funding
Importance: High

*Request to incorporate
 this list in
 Hansard during
 my Est. A speech
 at 2.30.*

Good morning, please find below information regarding funding for the National Carriage Factory:

Qld State Government \$4,000,000.00
 Board of Qld Museum \$1,000,000.00
 Community/Business \$1,700,000.00 made up of the below supporters donations:

Donor name	Pledged amount (\$)
Clive and Conchita Armitage	500,000.00
John T. Reid Charitable Trusts	500,000.00
Philip Guilfoyle	50,000.00
Frank and Sybil Wippell	15,000.00
Wagner's Concrete (Mary and Henry Wagner)	15,000.00
The Davey Group (Denis & Pat Davey)	26,000.00
Frances & Hugh Tilly	12,000.00
Tilly's Crawler Parts (Helen & Andrew Tilly)	10,000.00
Franklyn and Bobbie Brazil	10,000.00
Bill and Elaine O'Brien and Family	10,000.00
Peter Snow and Co. (David Snow)	10,000.00
Alpine Refrigeration (Ivan Walls)	6,000.00
Southern Hotel (Richard and Judy Bowly)	3,000.00
The Clive Berghofer Group (Mr Clive Berghofer)	*275,000.00
Heritage Building Society	*110,000.00
Wippells Autos (Don and David Russell)	*110,000.00
The Chronicle (In kind)	60,000
WIN Television (In kind)	60,000

*Pledge amount Includes 10% GST

Please advise if you require further information. Regards,

5/08/2009

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A. This is a follow-on from the first part of the parliamentary section of that estimates committee. I again want to thank the parliamentary staff and the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, who was the chairman.

The committee spoke about many financial matters. The principles are that in 2001 Standard & Poor's confirmed that Queensland had the strongest balance sheet of any Australian state. Our net financial liabilities going forward head towards \$100 billion, which the Premier mentioned when we talked about the fact that there is \$85 billion worth of debt. The Premier is saying that we may forego a little over \$12 billion of that debt over a five-year period allowing for the asset sales. Clearly these are things that the people of Queensland were not forewarned about and feel extremely angry about.

We know that 86 per cent of Queenslanders are against these asset sales. The Premier did say that she does not expect we will ever see that \$85 billion eventuate. I am concerned that the Premier thinks that measuring the money thrown at a problem is evidence of her claim that problems are being fixed. I am concerned that the Labor government is set to ensure that an ever-increasing level of budget deficit will lead to higher debt and liabilities that will take decades to overcome.

It is interesting that, since Lehman Brothers collapsed in September 2008, everyone has started referring to the global financial crisis, but these budget papers results showed that in June 2007-08 the Labor government had delivered a \$1.5 billion general government budget deficit, showing that they went broke in a boom. These are the sorts of things that were exposed in our committee.

I had some questions about lobbyists at one stage, at page 31 of our debate, and the lobbyists register, which I notice has come up today for debate. Today in question time we heard members opposite criticising some people associated with the Brisbane City Council. I want to mention that Andrew Brown, who was mentioned this morning, is on the TransApex advisory board, which oversees the tunnel projects and the HSL. It is an advisory board and has no role in procurement. Another person who was mentioned today was Gary Spence, who is on the Brisbane CityWorks Advisory Board. Again, it is an advisory board only, but the best part is that both of these individuals were in fact appointed by the ALP-dominated civic cabinet back in 2004-05. We have documentation supporting this, with Alderman David Hinchliffe's and now Kerry Rea, who is now a federal member. They really are desperate. So there we go. They are the sorts of things that this government this week—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: They were appointed by Labor, and they are not involved in procurement. They are completely different standards. There is none of the corruption and cronyism that goes all the way up to the cabinet table of this Labor government. These are the sorts of things that the Premier talked about in this estimates committee, reassuring us that spending more money is going to fix the problem. There was clearly no acknowledgement that we need proper leadership on financial management. These budget deficits will be over \$12.2 billion over the forward estimates. This is just not a proper way of managing our economy. They are clearly ignoring the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility. When advice was given to the committee, the Premier said prior to the release of the economic and fiscal update that she had not directly taken advice of its effect on Queensland's top-grade credit rating. In order to meet the government's requirements under her own Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility, it requires management of the state's finances to maintain a top-grade credit rating. If the Premier did not seek advice of the effect of the EFU on the credit rating, she must not have sought assurance that her government was complying with the charter.

Of course, the jobs promise was given as well—talk about creating 119,000 jobs. We know that over 3,000 jobs have been lost in the last year. We now have 126,000 Queenslanders unemployed. At the same time last year it was 84,000—a 50 per cent increase. The budget papers show that these numbers will go up to 175,000 over the next few years. In the paper over the weekend Ron Monaghan, the secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions, doubted they would reach the 100,000 target, adding that including jobs as little as an hour a week was not meaningful.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (2.45 pm): I rise to address report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A, which examined proposed expenditure in the appropriations for the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development, and Minister for Public Works, Information and Communications Technology. Primarily the work of this committee considered the appropriation that paves the way for the recently elected government to deliver on our commitments. At a time when Queensland faces the worst of economic crises, the underlying principle of this appropriation is how Queensland addresses an economic crisis that is not of our making but does impact on us. The key issue in framing the budget is the need to address the shadowing of revenue streams. As an economy with heavy reliance on mineral exports, the impact of the economic downturn on our trading partners has cascaded to impact on us.

The fundamental flaw of the Howard government's GST is its failure to cope with a decline in consumer spending, particularly on luxury items, when times are tough. As spending declines, the tax take declines and the returns to the state decline. Along with this comes a hit on state revenues through, for example, levies on property transfers, which are affected by declining property prices and turnover rates.

The Premier and Treasurer took commitments to the election just five months prior to the estimates hearing that outlined how Queensland would tackle the crisis. Front and foremost of delivering on our commitments is the commitment to protect and create jobs. The core commitment to the people of Queensland was to make the tough decisions to maintain the biggest infrastructure-building program in the nation, to protect the jobs of Queensland families, and advance the key infrastructure needs of the state with a vast geography.

Continuing projects like the building or rebuilding of 10 major hospitals was central to election commitments and is central to the appropriation as this provides the essential funds to deliver on these commitments. Consideration was given in detail to Queensland's AAA credit rating and the need to plan for a return to this rating. Both the Treasurer and Premier addressed measures in the appropriation that chart the path back to a AAA rating.

The Premier and Treasurer were examined on the appropriation measures to deliver on the government's commitment to return the state's budget to surplus. Of critical importance to regaining the support of ratings agencies and returning the budget to surplus is the capacity to retire debt, and both the Premier and Treasurer outlined the central element of the assets sales program, which is foregoing significant debt—debt that is contained in the balance sheet of our GOCs but which is added to the equation when ratings agencies evaluate the state of the Queensland economy.

The Bligh government is also committed to invest in training and skills development. It is essential that, as we come out of the economic downturn, we are not in the same place as previous federal governments have left us in previous downturns—that is, with a massive shortage of skilled workers. The appropriation measures contained in the matters before the committee included allocations to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and the Green Army, both of which deliver on the government's core election commitments with particular focus on job creation.

In relation to the Minister for Public Works, the scrutiny considered issues including the commitment to deliver its part in the nation-building economic stimulus plan, a commitment to create jobs in regional Queensland, and the design and safety of the Kurilpa Bridge.

In a previous debate regarding the first report of this committee, I commented on the civility and cooperation of deliberations of the committee, and I again note this and thank all the members for their participation. I should note, however, that non-government members have submitted statements of reservation, all of which are very similar in their criticisms of the estimates process. I have become used to these statements, as they are submitted every year and the text changes very little.

This committee sat for nine hours on the hearing day as well as met on the day and a couple of times both prior and since. We considered 80 questions on notice. Whilst the allocation of time for questioning during the hearing was generally balanced, the ledger favoured questioning of non-government members. At no stage was the question time limited. Matters taken on notice were addressed prior to the completion of the hearing. A free flow of questioning was permitted and extensive detail was considered throughout the process.

As the chair of Estimates Committee A I am satisfied that the proceedings of this committee have enabled adequate scrutiny of the allocations to these portfolios. Whilst in my contribution to the discussion today I have not addressed many of the issues considered by the committee, I believe that the estimates process ensured that the ministers could outline how the appropriation is delivering on the government's commitments and also enabled non-government members to examine the same. I thank the members of the committee secretariat who provided support to the committee and all of the people appearing before the committee. I commend the report to the House.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (2.50 pm): I will join the commentary on report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A relating to the Premier and the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Can I start by thanking the chairman for the courteous manner in which the business of the committee was conducted. I apologise to him for taking the call when we were discussing report No. 1. It was completely innocuous and not designed to cause any offence. I got the call from the Speaker. My apologies to the chairman for that.

Can I also acknowledge the way in which the estimates committee process was handled on the day. I should say in terms of the comments made by the chairman about the statements of reservations that our concern has always been about the vigour of questioning. If one compares the questioning that goes on here with the questioning that might go on in the Senate question time there is a degree of less vigour and less robustness, particularly with regard to public servants answering questions and being asked about the expenditure for a line item. There is also the practice of ministers, in some instances, lecturing rather than answering questions. That is what the statement of reservations is generally about.

During the course of the examination of both the Premier and Treasurer at Estimates Committee A we attempted to get some straight answers to some straight questions about the issues that have been raised in the course of the budget debate. I have already described this year's budget as the worst budget in Queensland's 150-year history. I would go further and say that it is the worst budget delivered by Queensland's worst government in 150 years.

The fact is that this government is now recognised by an increasing number of Queenslanders and Queensland voters as being the worst government they have had to face in living memory. If we are to believe the polls, there would be 20 fewer people on that side of the House and 20 more people on this side of House if we had an election now.

We have to ask why. This budget puts to an end the three great deceits of the Labor government; the three great deceits that it went to the people with back in March. The 100,000 jobs for 100,000 breadwinners is demonstrably false in this budget. There will be 7.25 per cent unemployment over the forward years. The government was not going to slug Queenslanders with a fuel tax. It was not going to hit Queensland families when they were down. This budget removes the subsidy and imposes a 9.2c a litre fuel tax on Queenslanders without the imprimatur. Then we have the fire sale of assets in a desperate bid to prop up the bottom line of a budget that is going to, over the forward estimates and on the numbers that we have seen today, be in debt to the tune of \$85.5 billion, with an interest payment annually of \$5.2 billion.

We had the conflict between the Treasurer and the Premier in relation to the deficit—the deficit that is mounting up each year and cumulatively, according to the answer given by the Treasurer. It is going to be more than \$18 billion in cumulative value of deficits. He said, 'Do I regard a period of 10 years as temporary? No, I do not.' It puts a lie to the Premier's claim that there was ever going to be a temporary deficit.

So we have a decade of deficits, a decade of debt and still only the faintest vestiges of a plan to pull Queensland out of this problem that Labor has put us into by going bust in a boom. We do not have a clear plan that is going to resolve the issue, that is going to control expenses, that is going to reduce debt. All we have is a fire sale of assets by this government as it desperately tries to dig itself out of the problem.

We also see how the proceeds of those assets are dealt with. The net proceeds of the sale of Mackay and Cairns airports and the Brisbane Airport Corporation which were to go into the Queensland Future Growth Fund have been put into consolidated revenue to artificially inflate the bottom line. They are not to be put there to pay out as the claims come through. We have a budget that is demonstrably putting Queenslanders in debt, that is demonstrably increasing taxes, making car registration higher and is giving away the assets of the state of Queensland at a fire sale price.

We had some discussion about the Green Army. This time around we also had the question of unforeseen expenditure. This is a matter that has been referred to the MEPPC so it cannot be discussed. There was \$2.1 billion of expenditure that was unable to be examined in detail due to this limitation.

What do we have? We have a budget that breaks core principles, a budget that breaks the promises made by the government to the electorate and a budget that condemns the government.

(Time expired)

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.55 pm): I am pleased to further address the House in relation to the Estimates Committee A hearing held on 14 July this year. Firstly, I would like to record my appreciation of the work of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology, their directors-general and their departmental heads. We also recognise that the period leading up to estimates can be a particularly hectic and stressful time for all involved so I put on the record my appreciation of the highly dedicated ministerial and department staff for the extremely detailed work and long hours spent doing research and follow-up during the weeks preceding the day's hearing.

Scrutiny by the committee was also of a high level. I commend the work of our research director and Parliamentary Service officers for their assistance at the hearing. I would like to acknowledge the work of committee members from both sides of the House. Estimates is an opportunity for government to take a detailed look at how it is achieving its goals and objectives.

The Premier during her hearing commented on how vastly government changes over sometimes very short periods of time from when our resources sector was booming, property prices were at their highest and there was record economic growth to times when economies of the developed world are affected by the worst economic conditions. We have been caught up in this fallout.

Despite all of this, Queensland is doing slightly better than the rest of Australia in relation to higher growth and lower unemployment. The Premier pointed out that it is due to the government's ability to look ahead, to face the realities and to get on with the job by maximising the opportunities for all Queenslanders. She talked about creating 100,000 jobs in the current term and moving forward with our \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program to build the infrastructure needed for a growing population. These hard times will be an opportunity to prepare for the recovery by expanding our skills base, providing skills and training and supporting new industries into the future.

The Treasurer also spoke of the changing economic landscape over the last 12 months. This is a budget that very much focuses on the long term and puts in place a framework to support employment in the Queensland economy through the delivery of a dividend of infrastructure in the state needed for the future. There is no doubt that Queensland is growing with a recorded 2,000 people a week coming to Queensland in a 12-month period.

The Treasurer acknowledges that difficult decisions had to be made to focus very much on the long-term benefit to the Queensland economy and the people of Queensland and to ensure appropriate services are provided to meet growing needs. Front-line services will continue to be provided with more than \$9 billion budgeted for Health—always a priority for this government. Funding provides for 645 new doctors, nurses and other health professionals, 350 teachers and teacher aides, 203 police, 50 ambulance officers and other front-line officers and workers who are there to provide the services to a growing population. He points out that the government is looking well into the future in relation to ensuring the wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

The Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology also commented about changes over the last 12 months and how his portfolio has a huge capital works program to deliver. He spoke about supporting apprentices in QBuild and his efforts in ensuring energy saving and environmentally sustainable activities in his departments. A major role for his Department of Public Works is the coordination of the Commonwealth's national stimulus package for Queensland—the rollout of over \$4 billion of construction work in schools and social housing throughout the state.

The minister recognised that the impact of the national broadband network on a state as decentralised as Queensland will be enormous. Another issue is the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce, and through procurement activities, capital works programs, ICT initiatives and apprenticeship and trainee schemes, the department will be a strong supporter of the government's job creation policies. The estimates process is very important in ensuring accountability of government in a unicameral parliament. It complements the role of the Auditor-General and other accountability measures. I commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology and commend the report to the House.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (3.00 pm): In addressing the Appropriation Bill 2009 in relation to Estimates Committee A report No. 2, I once again express my appreciation to the chair, the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, for his fair and even-handed approach. I further extend my sincere thanks to the research staff, headed by Mr Rob Hansen. I commend all of the members of this committee for the manner in which they conducted themselves in the spirit of friendly cooperation.

With all of the estimates committee reports before us, I am once again reminded of the facade this Labor government presents of what should be an opportunity for the opposition to examine budgetary items in detail. This year proved to be another lacklustre event where non-government members were severely disadvantaged by the methodology that is used year after year to protect the government from proper scrutiny.

Government members showed disrespect for the process by not utilising their entire timeslots, yet the opposition could not use them. The answers to questions on notice came back only 24 hours before the hearing. At the end of the hearings for my shadow portfolio of public works and information and communication technology, one was confused as to who was the minister and who was the member of staff, as the director-general had to come to the rescue of the minister on all but two occasions out of 21. It was difficult to believe that the minister had been in charge of this portfolio for 12 years, such was the limited level of his knowledge about the workings of its budgetary items. As I stated in my speech in response to the budget in June—

Almost every part of the ministerial statement on this department is a major cause of concern and in many respects it is ... a microcosm of the whole of the Labor administration.

And what a miserable sight it is! This portfolio, like so many others in this decrepit and dishonest Bligh Labor government, suffers from lack of authority and responsibility. It is little wonder Queensland's economic status has diminished! Questions remain unanswered as to what benchmarks the department uses in comparing its costs and prices against those of the many private sector businesses that provide identical services. Does the department believe that it offers competitive or better prices to its captive government customers than they could obtain from the private sector? If so, what specific data is available? The response to a question about QFleet benchmarking would suggest it does not. I remind the minister of a promise from his director-general to try to get some figures from other states.

Is the nearly zero operating surplus—thus no dividends; indeed, some \$53 million of grants or notional tax obligations—a de facto recognition that the cost of services supplied by the department to its customers could be sourced at lower cost without the use of over \$4 billion of taxpayer funded assets or the risk exposure that is inherent in any commercial operation? Queenslanders have every right to ask why the government retains such a high-cost, uncompetitive business when it could reduce costs and investment at the same time without much effort as all of the businesses are matched in the private sector. Where are the cost-saving measures so desperately needed in this state?

In assessing the role of this department, it can be said that its so-called commercial functions appear both unnecessary and expensive when compared to private sector sourcing. It is hard to see why the government continues with them. Some functions in providing technical advice in construction are necessary staff-like functions, but there should be an expanded staff role in purchasing. The way in which the department functions as both owner and landlord is peculiar, and perhaps that is the deliberate intention. It may be that Public Works is the landlord of buildings occupied by a number of agencies and, just as with SSA, the fragmentation of agencies into ridiculously small entities requires this sort of clumsy intervention.

Its income statement reveals how little it operates in a recognisably commercial way. It notes that the increase in user fees follows a realignment of rents to reflect increases in commercial rents generally. Just by chance, the increase is sufficient to balance income and expenditure, as it had been in the previous two years. It does not permit an assessment of whether its investment in property was smart or foolish or whether departments should have rented privately.

The minister has continued to apply a disturbingly lax attitude to the issue of asbestos management in state government properties and could not give any assurance that all staff who could come into contact with this hazardous material have been properly trained, saying that training was the worker's responsibility.

The minister's answers revealed a serious lack of understanding that security measures for government's information systems extend beyond physical security, despite flaws realised in the Auditor-General of Queensland's report to parliament No. 4 for 2009. In summary, the Department of Public Works is there to look after smaller departments. However, the system that government is using is bad. There should be proper internal management and coordination of IT as a whole-of-government exercise. Bligh's Labor refuses to address the ineptitude in this portfolio, just as it refuses to address it right across its government.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (3.05 pm): Before I speak in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee A, I want to clarify comments that I made earlier in response to questions during question time this morning. With regard to the member for Callide's question about my staff, as any reasonable person would expect, senior staff members are involved in office planning meetings. Therefore, I can confirm that both my deputy chiefs of staff have been present and participated in discussions about the South-East Queensland plan in general terms—that is, questions such as the timing of the cabinet submission and the percentage of land protected for koala habitat—but at no stage has either discussed any particular proposal or project with me.

I also want to clarify my answer to a question from the member for Surfers Paradise and advise the House that I met with Stockland last year, prior to the draft plan being released and the formal consultation commencing. This meeting was predominantly about infrastructure issues on the Sunshine Coast, particularly in the area of transport. However, while its specific interests in the South-East Queensland plan were canvassed at the meeting, the outcome that it sought for Caloundra South Halls Creek was not successful.

Let me now turn to the estimates committee report. I thank the committee for its detailed examination of the units and independent agencies in my portfolio. I acknowledge the importance of the estimates process. I note, however, that the Leader of the Opposition has continued the practice of his predecessors in criticising the estimates process—a process that those opposite sat silent on when the standing orders were reviewed in 2004. In his statement of reservation the Leader of the Opposition is once again promoting a policy of don't invest in infrastructure, don't borrow for infrastructure, don't sell assets to secure the budget position—in short, don't do anything. He complains about debt but refuses to comment on what he would do to cut that debt.

Almost unbelievably, the example that the Leader of the Opposition offers up in terms of an efficiency in his plan is to cut a shuttle bus service that links Queensland Health's doctors, dentists, nurses and scientists between CBD health sites, labelling it a waste. Of course, that shuttle bus saves money by precluding taxi fares if we had taxis going backwards and forwards all day. What the Leader of the Opposition's statement of reservation does do, however, is confirm some intriguing budgetary measures that he would implement. He has confirmed that he would immediately slash \$12.2 billion from the forward estimates and immediately review the entire \$18.2 billion Capital Works Program searching for projects to cut. That is the record.

The Leader of the Opposition appears to have a fascination with the number 12, as not only would he slash \$12.2 billion from the forward estimates; he would also slash 12,000 public sector jobs each and every year. The truth is, of course, that the Leader of the Opposition does not know what he wants. On the one hand he wants government to keep all of its assets; on the other hand he does not want to spend the necessary \$12 billion that would be required to maintain those assets. He wants to keep the assets but not invest one cent in their future, thereby condemning them to failure.

I also bring to the attention of the House some interesting mumbo jumbo from the Leader of the Opposition when he argues that government infrastructure spending 'takes money away from businesses' and 'crowds out capital for banks and large corporates'. It is an interesting time in the

economic cycle to be making those comments, isn't it? Let me read them again. This is the mumbo jumbo of economic policy from the Leader of the Opposition: government infrastructure spending takes money away from businesses and crowds out capital for banks and large corporates.

Well, I would invite him to go and have a look around the city of Brisbane, at some of the holes in the ground where private sector proponents have lost capital funding for their projects. I would invite him to go to regional Queensland, to places like Townsville and Cairns, to see the building companies that have collapsed and lost major projects and lost jobs because they are unable to secure funding from banks or any other financial institution. Such scaremongering, of course, denies the reality of the global financial crisis, where government investment plays a crucial role in keeping the economy moving, creating and retaining jobs.

I conclude my remarks on the report of Estimates Committee A this year by recognising the good work of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the good work of Arts Queensland and by thanking all members of the committee for their work. Estimates committees are a very important accountability mechanism for government and one that I take seriously.

I thank all my ministers and their staff for their work in preparing and responding to questions and I congratulate all of my ministers on their ability to respond to those questions. I also place on record my appreciation for the hard work undertaken by my departmental officers in both the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Queensland and also the staff of my own office who worked tirelessly to ensure that the questions from the estimates committee could be answered fully and accurately and in a timely way.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.10 pm): Whilst I was not a member of Estimates Committee A, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to report No. 2, which investigates the expenditure of the Premier and Minister for the Arts, the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development, and the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. Only this morning in this chamber the Treasurer said that with population growth demand grows. He listed a small number of areas where demand grows. Often it is cited that the south-east corner is growing rapidly. At the risk of being repetitive, so is the region that I represent in Gladstone.

This morning the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning cited the LNG plants that are proposed for the Gladstone electorate and stated that they will create 18,000 jobs and generate \$850 million per annum in royalties. That sort of growth and that sort of industrial development places great strain on infrastructure in any region, but particularly a rural region of Queensland. So as the expenditure of the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development and the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology was examined by this estimates committee, I would like to put on the record the concerns in my community in terms of a perceived lack of consideration for allocations of funds in those areas.

On a number of occasions I have risen in this place to speak about matters relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology and his previous portfolio. One thing that can always be said of the minister is that he is concerned about those members of the community who find it difficult to make ends meet. I am sure in the minister's new portfolio, particularly in the area of public works, there is a lot of opportunity to support the community, particularly in the area of QBuild and the federal economic stimulus package, especially in terms of education and social housing.

The economic pressures in my region are having a significant impact on families in my electorate. A family on a normal income finds it very difficult to be able to manage when much of the housing and many of the commodities they purchase are based on inflated construction wages. I ask the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development to review the expenditure that is proposed for the electorate of Gladstone because, as he stated this morning, infrastructure such as hospitals, roads and social services—and he may not have listed them in that order—are the sorts of infrastructure that are placed under significant pressure when the population grows. With the number of jobs to be created in the electorate and the population increase that the electorate is experiencing currently, the existing infrastructure will not cope. In this budget there is a lamentable lack of allocation of funds specifically for infrastructure development to be able to support the industries that are mooted for the region.

Estimates Committee A also dealt with whether the money gained through asset sales will be used to reduce government debt or will be used for other purposes. Advice was sought from the Treasurer regarding further asset sales. It would be remiss of me not to again put on the record the very vocal opposition to asset sales from representatives in my electorate of not only the community in general but also organisations that historically have been staunch supporters of the Labor Party, and that is the unions. All unions but the AWU have opposed these asset sales at organised rallies.

In terms of the steps to be taken by the government to implement its commitment to create 100,000 jobs, jobs are being created by major industries, but can I say at this point that because of the impact of the financial crisis, if you like, a number of major industries are shedding jobs. So it is important that employees who are sacked have the support of government to regain employment.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (3.15 pm): At the outset I thank the other members of the committee and the staff of Estimates Committee A for their participation in this important process. It is worth noting in a week such as this that the estimates committee process was introduced into this parliament by a Labor government. Each and every year in recent times we have seen—quite disgracefully and quite disingenuously in my view—the regular practice of the opposition, the Liberal Party and National Party in this place, seeking to denigrate the estimates committees process in their remarks in this debate. In that context, what is especially galling is that it is patently a faux concern. In fact, one can go no further than the claims that are put in the reports of the opposition members in relation to Estimates Committee A.

I want to quote the following from the Leader of the Opposition's statement of reservation, firstly, in relation to the Department of Premier and Cabinet—

The limited number of questions without notice allocated to each Minister fails to ensure that committee members have the opportunity to prepare adequately for the Committee's hearings.

There is no limit on questions without notice at an estimates committee hearing. I presume the Leader of the Opposition meant to provide some criticism of the way in which questions on notice are conducted. Such is the faux concern that resides in the members of the Liberal and National Party that this false claim is repeated in a cut and paste embarrassing way four times in this report in relation to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Arts Queensland, the Treasury Department, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and also in relation to Public Works. Each and every one of the shadow ministers made this false claim in their reports—a cut and paste lazy claim from a Liberal and National Party that does not actually believe in the tripe that it has put forward in this place.

It has been widely acknowledged outside of this place that the estimates committee process is important and that this year in particular it functioned extremely well in providing the account that is necessary from a side of politics that first introduced the estimates committee process. To be lectured upon it by the Liberal and National parties in this place is, to say the least, beyond galling.

It is important to make the point that in the past there has also been concern—faux concern in my view—put forward in relation to unforeseen expenditure. Let me place on the record very clearly, conscious of other matters, that the number of questions I received about unforeseen expenditure in the estimates committee process was zero. In that context, it is important to point out that, because of the appropriation for the unforeseen expenditure being enjoined with the appropriation bills, this was the first formal opportunity for questioning and I received the grand total of zero questions.

For all its stated concern, we have an opposition that believes in no accountability to this parliament. When challenged or asked about providing an alternative view, when held to account as members of parliament, as the formal opposition, about what their view is, they claimed, stonewalled and denied that they had any expectation, or right, or obligation to put forward to the parliament of Queensland, to the people of Queensland, an alternative view. They have only this view: from the time of budget week, they have had the proposition that they were about to go out there, we just had to wait for the budget reply to hear their view. We waited for the budget reply. Guess what we got? We got nothing. Then we got told that we had to wait for the Press Club speech—the Press Club speech to end all Press Club speeches—from the Leader of the Opposition, and it probably will be the Press Club speech to end all speeches. What did we get? We got nothing. Since that time what have we received? What have the people of Queensland received in terms of alternative views? We have nothing.

The only view put forward is that somehow there is a trust-me plan to restore the AAA credit rating. They have no such plan and they will not support the plans that we have put forward. It is the equivalent of what the Leader of the Opposition said on Monday night. When asked to verify the expenditure on the billboards he said, 'You'll just have to take my word for the fact that it has actually been approved.' We know that they are big fans of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and this is the don't-you-worry-about-that approach to economic policy. The people of Queensland and this parliament deserve better in this debate than the falsehoods that are being put forward by the opposition with its faux concern and the complete absence of any policies or alternative views. When it does present a policy, there will be a debate that will be auspiced in the community. Until such time as it puts forward its bona fides and lays out even a skerrick of information on what it stands for or believes in, the contemptuous, disgraceful, disingenuous criticism that it has levelled should be dismissed for what it is: pure politics.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (3.20 pm): Not having been a member of the committee, I note with interest that Estimates Committee A considered elements of the Bligh government's asset fire sale. My interest stems from the fact that the first cab off the rank happens to be Forestry Plantations Queensland. From the outset I am reassured to see that at least one minister in this government is semi-aware of the plight of Forestry Plantations Queensland. I say this because, in a recent response to a question on notice I put to the Minister for Primary Industries, question No. 599 asked on 17 June, it was very clear that the minister in question could not get out of the business of forestries fast enough,

flick passing all responsibility to the Treasurer. To be honest, this is at the heart of my concern. It is very clear that, having made the decision, having rushed through the necessary legislation and gagging debate in the process, this government wants to wash its hands of one of its top-performing assets.

Why is this an issue for me? Because as the member for Glass House, my electorate is home to one of FPQ's largest plantations of exotic pines, the Beerburrum Forest Management Area, not to mention additional hardwood plantations and a plantation nursery. Aside from being a significant investment in the local economy, for Glass House and the greater Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast regions, these plantations are an intrinsic component of the green belt that we are working hard to protect. Most importantly, individual constituents of mine, the staff of FPQ and other linked secondary industries are each directly impacted by this fire sale. I say 'fire sale' because, if latest reports are to be believed, the original plans to finalise the sale by April 2010 have been fast-tracked to ensure the deal goes through before Christmas this year.

Is the government giving any consideration to the wellbeing of FPQ staff in rushing this deal? Has it stopped to think about the adverse impact on their work environment? Yes, commitments have been made. In an earlier address the Premier put her hand on her heart and promised to commit to a fair process that involved the employees and their representatives, she promised that they will have the terms and conditions of their current enterprise bargaining agreement honoured for the life of that agreement and she promised that employment guarantees will be put in place for two years beyond the date of sale. I will hold the government accountable to those promises.

Even so, it is cold comfort for the FPQ staff who have been condemned to being the fire sale guinea pigs, not only because their corporation will be the first to be sold but also because their enterprise bargain will be the first to end. Whereas all the other assets up for grabs have only recently concluded EBs, FPQ staff are half way through theirs, meaning it will come up for consideration late in 2010. I call on the government to go beyond its original promises and, as part of the transition to private ownership of FPQ, commit to working alongside the employees and the union in negotiating an appropriate and respectful EB so that FPQ employees in my electorate and others throughout the state have greater certainty with regard to their employment, their salaries and their conditions of employment.

In my time remaining I would like to reflect a bit more on the finances of this fire sale. In its 2007-08 annual report, Forestry Plantations Queensland records its total asset base at 30 June 2008 at \$1.37 billion. What is the Bligh government intending to sell it for? I refer to a joint media release dated 2 June 2009 from the Premier and the Treasurer which states that FPQ will be sold for around \$500 million. No wonder there is so much interest. The government is offering up, in its own words, an efficiently run business for less than half its value. But wait, there is more! In the same annual report for the year ending 30 June 2008, FPQ recorded an operating surplus after income tax equivalents of \$85.5 million. At that rate, any interested party would quickly recoup their initial investment of \$500 million in as little as six years. What bargain hunter would not be interested in such an offer? What is more, even without planting one more tree, the new owner has 25 years of timber available for harvesting.

Questions remain. Why is the Bligh government flogging off such a profitable and efficiently run corporation at the bottom of the market? Why is the asking price so low? Is there more to this than is being told to the House, the employees of FPQ and the general public? At a minimum, given it is clear that the Bligh government has vowed to proceed with this fire sale in the face of widespread public opposition, I call on the minister to ensure that the sale process is transparent, that the true value of the FPQ asset is recouped and, most importantly, that the ongoing wellbeing of the management and staff of FPQ is paramount in the government's negotiations.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (3.25 pm): It is a tremendous privilege to stand here and speak to the appropriation bills and Estimates Committee A, which dealt with public works and ICT. I begin by putting on the record my thanks to the member for Currumbin for her invitation to join her in working and preparing for the estimates committee. It was very much appreciated and a terrific opportunity. As one drills down, one begins to see some of the missed opportunities, and the public works section covers a great range of state businesses.

The Department of Public Works appears to have failed in its mission to actually achieve cost-effective government service delivery in a number of areas. It has failed to use key indicators in industry benchmarking to ensure that it has measured itself appropriately and it has failed to achieve its own targets. In the 2008-09 period, it fell \$21 million short of its target savings. This failure is due to the government failing to finalise whole-of-government arrangements for ICT contractors and consultants.

The Department of Public Works takes centre stage in implementing the Australian government's Nation Building, the economic stimulus plan in Queensland. Given this government's inability to implement its own savings and efficiency initiatives, what guarantees are there regarding how much of those funds will be syphoned off in administrative costs by the department, instead of being spent where they are needed?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. The member is not addressing the estimates of this portfolio. We have nothing to do with the delivery of a VER in terms of education. The Department of Education delivers that. There are no funds available to us in that regard. We are procuring the contractors only.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Thank you, Minister. It would help the proceedings if you could perhaps indicate where you are speaking to the report, thank you, member for Redlands.

Mr DOWLING: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will move on. QBuild aims to further develop the safety culture in the building industry in Queensland by requiring safe work practices by its contractors. Are these the same safe work practices that have seen an increase of over 25 per cent in the number of working days lost due to injury? Clearly that is not something to be followed or emulated in any sector.

If we look at Goprint, it continues to operate well below what a commercially sustainable entity would feel is appropriate and successful. In the year that Goprint was required to manage the printing of the first state-wide consolidated local government elections and the Queensland state election, Goprint fell 20 per cent short of meeting its own targets for the utilisation of core equipment and resources. If a company is utilising only 60 per cent of core equipment and resources, it is a pretty dismal claim to say that we are achieving world's best practice. It is not what you would call a worthwhile effort or world's best practice.

The Shared Service Agency, the SSA, should be at the forefront of reducing costs through the more efficient use of resources. The SSA has reduced its labour costs as a percentage of its total expenses. How has it done this? By returning services to agencies. Rather than increasing and improving the range of shared services provided for government departments, the SSA would appear to be returning these services to individual agencies. It defeats the purpose of establishing an SSA. The expected decrease in income derived from user charges in the range of \$30 million is blamed on the return of services to agencies and the transfer of performance return to agencies due to machinery-of-government changes.

Labor has replaced a whole-of-government system for built environment needs—I will start that again.

Mr Hoolihan: You need to start the whole thing again.

Mr DOWLING: If I am given an extra five minutes, I would love to. Labor has replaced a whole-of-government system for built environment needs of agencies that, according to their performance statements, delivered 100 per cent of works on time within budget with a system that only delivers 95 per cent availability. Rather than making more efficient use of resources, they are building inefficiencies into the system.

QFleet is the best fleet when compared to other state government fleets, but what about when it comes to comparisons with other major fleet operators? In tough economic times it is critical to reassess the market and to get comparisons and quotes externally. We need to encourage competitive quoting activities against the private sector. QBuild must be able to compete on a level playing field. QFleet needs to measure up against non-government fleet operators. Otherwise we end up settling for mediocrity and these estimates hearings have no value. It is easy to achieve targets and standards when you can adjust them to suit.

(Time expired)

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (3.30 pm): I table and seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the response to the shadow minister's appalling attempt to justify her existence as a shadow minister.

Leave granted.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A—PUBLIC WORKS AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Context

On 14 July 2009, the Estimates Committee A examined the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2009 for the portfolio of the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology.

The Estimates Committee A Report No. 2, on this hearing, was tabled on 28 July 2009. With reference to this report, Ms Jann Stuckey MP has released a Statement of Reservation.

Proposed Response to Statement of Reservation

In addition to general comments, the Statement of Reservation contains seven specific reservations (*italicised*), for which the Department of Public Works has provided the proposed responses:

1. *Returns of services to individual agencies from Shared Service Agency received the response they were a smart reallocation of resources rather than an admission that the Government had failed to deliver on their original program promises.*

The Service Delivery and Performance Commission's Report on the Review of the Shared Service Initiative was tabled in Parliament on 27 July 2007. The report identified a number of then current services that should be returned to agencies.

The recommendation to return services to individual agencies was focused on achieving improved cost-effective service delivery not the Shared Service Agency's ability to deliver these functions.

The services identified to be returned were services that could be most effectively delivered by the agencies themselves, functions that are specific to individual agencies and not effectively managed by a central point.

Returning the identified services allows the Shared Service Agency to concentrate on streamlining HR, payroll and finance operations and ensure standard efficient processes across government.

2. *No QFleet benchmarking was done with the private sector on the basis that they would not give the government information and there were no attempts to put management out to tender to compare costs and disposal times of assets.*

The Service Delivery and Performance Commission (SDPC) provided an independent assessment of QFleet's performance in this regard. The SDPC report recognised the vehicles sales process was difficult to benchmark because there are various sales models and repair standards in place across jurisdictions.

The SDPC, as an independent organisation charged with reviewing the effectiveness of Government's operations, has validated QFleet's business model relative to other jurisdictions. In the findings section of the report the SDPC states:

"The data analysed by the review and independent statistical analysis shows QFleet achieves a slightly better gross sales price compared to interstate jurisdictions, taking into consideration the average repair cost" (p46)

On Wednesday, 15 July 2009, following the Estimates A Committee Hearing, QFleet contacted the following major government fleet managers—New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia. Four agreed to share their vehicle auction information, recognising that there are differences in operating models.

The information received indicates a wide ranging difference between jurisdictions in the number of days from the date the vehicle is returned to the date of sale and this is due to the differing models in operation in each State. This is substantially the reason why this data is not benchmarked by the Fleet Management Business and Improvement Peer Group (of which QFleet is a member).

3. **Failure to sufficiently progress the IDES project is disappointing as it has not moved beyond the tender process over two years later. This is despite being approved by executive government in 2007.**

Executive Government approved the implementation of the IDES Program on 13 December 2007. In January 2008, the Department of Public Works through CITEC was assigned responsibility to deliver the IDES project and operate the solution over a ten year period.

The IDES Program is a very large and complex project. The IDES program includes the whole-of-Government consolidation of Microsoft Exchange email services; Identity and Directory services; Authentication; and Digital security certificates.

Funding of \$45 million (including GST) was approved through loan funding for the implementation of the IDES program. In year four of the project it will be paying for itself and in year eight the \$45M loan will be repaid.

In just over 18 months the Department of Public Works through CITEC has:

- established a specialised project team
- undertaken significant consultation with Agencies to engage and inform of the IDES Program leading to a signed in-principle commitment from each agency.
- engaged Chartered Accountants UHY Haines Norton as Probity Auditor
- developed a procurement strategy and plan
- undertaken significant technical architectural work
- concluded successful negotiations with vendors who tendered on an Invitation to Offer to the market to deliver certain elements of the IDES solution through four separate, concurrent tenders:

In August 2009, DPW will commence the pilot implementation project. Full implementation of the system across all agencies is scheduled to be completed by December 2010. While the tender process is six months behind schedule it will not impact the scheduled completion date of December 2010. The significant attention being dedicated to the probity and governance of the project will ensure a successful outcome for Government

4. *The Minister was unable to provide itemized costs for Government expenditure, using the excuse that the amounts were expended for total contracts, giving no breakdown of what government money was being spent upon.*

As stated in the Estimates Hearing, the costs payable to Mincom is a one off contract cost and the remainder are departmental resourcing costs.

5. *Justification that Sales and Distribution Services existed to maintain competition with two dominant private sector businesses poses the question of whether it is a suitable investment of taxpayer money to provide competition in a highly serviced segment of the public sector.*

In March 2008 the Government considered the future viability of SDS and approved an enhanced business as usual model.

SDS offers three service streams to its clients—distribution services (office supplies and furniture), publications, and logistics. SDS continues to trade profitably and its interim results for 2008-09 demonstrate another favourable result.

For its major line of business—office supplies and furniture—SDS operates in a completely competitive environment. All of its Government clients are untied and are free to source these services elsewhere. The fact that SDS continues to trade profitably demonstrates that it can meet the servicing needs of its clients.

SDS enjoys a particularly positive relationship with the education sector. The Department of Education and Training (DET) is SDS' largest client. The value of the relationship between SDS and DET is under-pinned by a state-wide online trading infrastructure which cannot be undervalued. Every school in the State has access to online trading with SDS which ensures that goods are delivered to customers within, on average, a few days from the date of order.

Currently approximately 92% of the State's public schools buy from SDS, of which over 60% of total orders are placed on line.

Overall DET regards SDS as a trusted supplier which assures value through open book pricing and the convenience of a highly efficient one stop shop. The department is willing to work collaboratively with SDS Distribution to further develop the relationship which has built up in recent years.

6. *Training practices in the safe handling of asbestos appear to be ad-hoc and in need of urgent attention.*

The Department of Public Works has for many years provided asbestos awareness training and practical training to its staff.

To further enhance these existing training programs, the Department, through QBuild, and in consultation with the Unions, initiated the Practical Asbestos Training on 13 May 2009 in order to improve QBuild's health and safety performance; avoid exposing staff to dangerous asbestos fibres; and comply with the two national Codes of Practice for asbestos.

The QBuild practical asbestos training program:

- is completed in approximately one full day
- comprises approximately 12 staff in each session
- uses a relevant DVD on working safely with asbestos
- includes both theory and practical components
- reflects legislative requirements and best industry practice.

Training is provided in an open and communicative manner, with participants encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions in order to address issues and concerns relevant to working with asbestos.

QBuild has also documented seven new work practices relating to working with asbestos.

Staff have been issued with copies of the new documents and information papers on asbestos from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

Approximately 75% of QBuild regions have commenced the first of these training sessions:

- Brisbane Metropolitan on 13 May 2009
- Darling Downs on 27 May 2009
- Brisbane City on 29 May 2009
- South Coast on 2 June 2009
- Sunshine Coast on 4 June 2009
- Wide Bay on 17 June 2009
- Burdekin on 1 July 2009
- Cairns on 2 July 2009.

The remaining regions, Capricornia, Far West and Whitsunday will undertake the initial practical asbestos training in August/September 2009.

The following QBuild Regions have provided or have scheduled additional sessions since the initial pilot program:

- Brisbane Metropolitan Region has delivered five additional sessions and has scheduled two training sessions most weeks over the next several months.
- The South Coast Region delivered a session on 13 July 2009 with more sessions planned for 29 and 30 July 2009.
- The Burdekin Region delivered a practical asbestos session on 22 and 28 July 2009, with additional sessions planned for 29 and 30 July 2009. Further sessions will continue to be programmed commencing in August 2009.

The overall participant feedback from the training sessions has been very positive. The training program will continue to be run on an as needs basis.

7. *The Minister's answers revealed a lack of understanding that security measures for Government's information systems extends beyond physical security.*

The Queensland Government recognises that information security involves much more than just physical security. For more than 10 years, Information Standard 18 (IS18) has established mandatory policy requirements for Information Security practice within agencies based on Australian and British Standards.

Agencies have been required to meet these obligations and actively implement policy and practice to meet these requirements covering a range of areas including classification of information, authentication, disaster recovery, human resource security, network security, environmental security.

Physical controls include the use of Government's data centres, such as Polaris and 317 Edward Street, and the control of physical access by authorised staff to computing and telecommunications equipment.

Logical controls include password access systems, data encryption, network firewalls, and intrusion detection and prevention systems.

The recently developed Queensland Government Information Management Strategic Framework (IMSF) establishes the strategic information policy directions for the Queensland Government. An integral part of the IMSF is the Information Security Framework based on ISO standards which establishes the scope of Information Security Activities physical and logical controls.

Further, the IMSF commits the QG to the development of an Information Security Action Plan which will proactively establish actions to further enhance agency practices across all areas of Information Security and measure compliance.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Estimates Committee A—Public Works and Information and Communication Technology' [681].

That will speak for itself. I want to respond to the curious stuff I have heard here this afternoon. First of all, I heard the Leader of the Opposition suggest earlier that Labor had appointed one Gary Spence. I am advised that Mr Spence was appointed to that position on 9 August 2004 and I am advised that Mr Newman was elected as the mayor of Brisbane on 27 March 2004—as slippery as an eel in a grease trap yet again. The reality is that the Lord Mayor was the mayor—his nominee. He is caught out yet again—yet again it is the slippery slide. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition will try to sack the Lord Mayor tomorrow like he did his chief of staff and make him the scapegoat for his ineptitude.

I just heard one of the most inept speeches I have heard in this place, and I have been here a long time. I have had a lot of shadow ministers and the most inept one I have had is this one. On the first order of business for the day she directed us to a question and said I could not answer it. She had the wrong page number! We were scratching around—a whole portfolio of people—flicking through the estimates—

Mr Finn: We had to start again.

Mr SCHWARTEN: And we had to stop the clock and start again and she accused me of being inept! I asked her about QFleet being measured against other industry and she said, 'What industry resources?' She turned to the adviser and the adviser said 'industry sources'. That was the best she could do. So I am happy to stack my reputation against hers. I am somebody who has always answered questions and always diverted them to public servants. As the deputy leader would tell you, I have always had a view in answering estimates that it is a whole of Public Service responsibility and I am happy to answer in part and have answers in full from the bureaucracy. That is how the estimates are supposed to work.

I note the almost schizophrenic response that we have heard here today. On the one hand, we heard the shadow minister say that privatisation was obviously what we should be doing—that we should have privatisation of public buildings, that we should not be in that business; that we should not be in Goprint; that we should not be in public works. We are not a competitor. Then the next speaker, the member for Glass House, got up with a rambling diatribe about privatisation, fire sales and all the other nonsense and again repeated that he was anti privatisation. Then the last speaker we had, the hapless member for Redlands, got to his feet and embarrassed himself.

Mr DOWLING: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr SCHWARTEN: You are hapless. I take it back.

Mr DOWLING: I am not entirely sure whether 'hapless' is a term reflective of this arena. I find that offensive.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw. If the boot fits, wear it.

Mr Johnson: Withdraw.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdrew.

Mr Johnson: Withdraw unreservedly.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdrew it. Oh, shut up, you. For God's sake, man.

Mr Seenev: What are you picking on the new kids for?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order!

Mr SCHWARTEN: Well, he started it. You're just an old irrelevancy. I am here and you are there, and you have been there a longer time than I have been here and you are going to continue to be there. Do not go to a gun fight with a stick.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Rockhampton.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am sure Madam Deputy Speaker does not require your guidance, thank you, member for Gregory. It is almost a contempt of the parliament. The reality is that we have been responsible in Public Works for the rollout of a very large Capital Works Program, which was totally ignored in the estimates process. An unprecedented Capital Works Program has been rolled out in a matter of months, and that has never been done before in the history of this state. It has been done without any furore. It has been done by highly competent, hardworking, honest public servants and they do not deserve, quite frankly, the embarrassing lack of attention that the shadow minister showed. I have had a number of shadow ministers and I have clashed swords with them, but this is the most incompetent one that I have ever struck.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee B

Report

Mr SPEAKER: The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee B be adopted.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise today to speak briefly to the report of Estimates Committee B. Can I say from the outset that I felt very privileged to be nominated to be the chair of this committee which examined the proposed expenditure of organisational units within the portfolios of the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services.

Having been involved in previous estimates debates, I considered that Ministers Lucas and Roberts provided a detailed insight into and understanding of their portfolios and in so doing showed a willingness to take a variety of questions on many different and difficult issues. In view of this fact, I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate both ministers' departmental staff from each of the portfolio areas. I am sure that these officers worked for many hours to undertake research to ensure that they were prepared to assist their various ministers should the need arise.

I also think it would be appropriate for me to pass on my congratulations to the parliamentary research staff, and in particular the research director, Rob McBride, for their assistance and guidance during this important process. It would also be remiss of me if I did not take the opportunity to congratulate my fellow members of the committee, from both sides of politics, on the professional manner in which they conducted themselves. The conduct of all committee members during this process made my job very easy and for that I am very appreciative.

Madam Deputy Speaker van Litsenburg, as you would be aware, being on Estimates Committee B gave us the opportunity of challenging and querying the Labor government's most senior ministers on how they spent their departmental budgets in previous years and compare this to how they plan to spend their budgets in the future. I am aware that not everyone is totally happy with the way the estimates process operates, but I do not think that anyone would argue with the fact that the committee process is a very important part of our parliamentary process. I am happy to advise that it is my belief that it provides an assurance that all expenditure from the public purse is scrutinised and that all portfolios are being properly administered.

I am aware that some members of this House will raise the fact that the standing orders favour those who are answering the questions over those who are asking the questions. However, I think it needs to be recognised that the same standing orders were in operation when the opposition was in government. In fact, in my view I consider that the estimates process provides an excellent opportunity for opposition members to demonstrate to Queenslanders how well they have researched their portfolios and how ready they are to be taken seriously as the alternative government.

The Health portfolio is an area that has received tremendous scrutiny and attention over the last couple of years as well as in the House and even on days like today. I personally believe that the Minister for Health displayed a superior knowledge of his portfolio and indeed it was quite obvious that he is working towards making the Queensland health system more accountable and more transparent than ever before. However, I would agree with the minister when he said that more needs to be done and, as such, I look forward to working closely with him in future projects, specifically in my area.

I suppose if I had to pick out a few areas of interest to me it would be the following. In 2009-10, outside of the many big expenditure items we will see, there will be a total funding of \$125.7 million capital and \$19.5 million operational over three years to expand emergency departments across Queensland. Some of that will be coming to my highly regarded Ipswich Hospital, where I can vouch from personal family experience that they do a tremendous job.

In addition, the following will be spent: \$13 million in operational funding on expanding rehabilitation step-down facilities; \$7.9 million total operational funding over three years for more nurse practitioners; \$110 million over three years to provide an additional 20,000 elective operations; \$12.3 million operational funding in 2009-10 out of a total funding of \$37 million operational and \$6.5 million capital funding over three years to enhance cancer services; \$4.9 million operational and \$1 million capital funding out of a total funding of \$16.7 million operational and \$26 million capital over three years to improve services for mothers and babies; and \$250,000 this year for additional operating funding from a total of \$1.1 million over four years to deliver new online tools to assist doctors and nurses in assessing elderly patients.

I think the best of all is the continuation of the five major hospital projects that will establish new tertiary hospitals on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, a new Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane, and the redevelopment of the Cairns and Mackay hospitals at a cost of \$5.468 billion. Of course there is also the continuation of the Ipswich Hospital extension, which I am waiting to see, and an expansion of the current developments at the Townsville and Rockhampton hospitals.

After reviewing the Health portfolio, our committee turned its attention to the Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services portfolio. During several hours, the committee members once again had the opportunity to query Minister Roberts. One of the most significant issues to arise here was the police minister advising the committee that, once again, some 203 additional police officers will be employed in the coming year, with last year's target of 10,000 officers having already been reached earlier this year. I congratulate all on the committee and I will leave it at that.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (3.41 pm): I wish to start by acknowledging the contribution by the member for Ipswich West as chairman of the committee, and I think he did an excellent job in that role. I also congratulate all members of the committee for the great work they did on the day, as well as the research staff and the departmental staff.

I wish to quote from a document entitled 'Draft Appropriate Bill Debate Speech' which came into my possession only this morning. It is the draft speech for the Minister for Health which was prepared in his own offices for today's debate. In this speech, which is really just a series of notes, there is nothing startling, nothing new and nothing inspirational, but he does make this one comment—

This is the most accountable, open and transparent government in Queensland's history.

That is unbelievable. We will see whether he stands by that statement in the 5.30 debate today and whether the royal commission is taken further. If in the House today the minister stands by the comment which is in his draft speech, let him produce the site evaluation, the engineering analysis, the geotechnical analysis and the traffic analysis for the Queensland Children's Hospital. Here I am talking about the first one—the first site analysis that went to cabinet on the back of an envelope and that no-one in the public has ever seen. If he is stating the truth in this draft speech, let him produce those documents.

More importantly, one of the most telling parts of this draft document from the minister's own office is some of the concluding words. These are not the minister's words—I understand that—but the document states, 'Add in our positive guff about the budget.' This is coming from the minister's own office. It is a draft document prepared for the minister to use when he walks in here in about 35 minutes to deliver his speech. His own ministerial office is using the word 'guff' when referring to the Health budget. That is how important his own office considers the Health budget.

Can there be any doubt as to why the Auditor-General referred to Queensland's health planning as fundamentally flawed, when the minister's own office uses the words 'positive guff' in documentation prepared for him to use when he comes in here today? That puts paid to any claim that this minister and this government take the issue of health in this state seriously. They do not even have the capacity to understand that this is an important process, because their own documentation makes a mockery of it.

One of the most treacherous acts in this budget, by a country mile, is the destruction of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. This hospital is needed today, not in six or seven years time. This very second, we have doctors and nurses under incredible stress in the emergency departments at Nambour Hospital and Caloundra Hospital. In fact, the department's status report as at 10 am on 5 August 2009, which is today, shows that in Nambour Hospital there were 21 patients waiting for a hospital bed. Right across this state, 133 patients were waiting for a hospital bed at 10 o'clock this morning in our emergency departments. The Royal Brisbane Hospital had 21 patients waiting at 10 o'clock for a hospital bed and the Cairns Base Hospital had 24 patients waiting at 10 o'clock for a hospital bed. It is an absolute disgrace.

These doctors and nurses will be under incredible stress for years to come. These are the front-line service providers who are needed to ensure that Sunshine Coast residents obtain the very best service, and this government has decided to pull the rug out. I suppose that qualifies as more 'guff' under the terms of the draft document from the minister's office.

The Queensland Children's Hospital is a real issue, and as far as I am concerned that issue is by no means over. The memorandum of understanding between Queensland Health and Mater Health Services is a document that has never been publicly released. It is time that document was released so that the people of this state can understand very clearly the content of the document and, more importantly, the implications in relation to the whole issue.

Mr LUCAS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member was referring to a document. He knows the rules in the standing orders. I ask that he table that document.

Mr McARDLE: I will table it, Minister.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Draft Appropriate Bill Debate Speech' [665].

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (3.47 pm): The budget process in Queensland includes a meeting of estimates committees to scrutinise the spending outlined by individual ministers and departments. Estimates Committee B was convened to scrutinise the spending of Queensland Health and the Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services portfolio. These committees have the capacity to

contribute substantially to the budget process and are multiparty and non-partisan. Despite that, I am amazed that many opposition members use the committees to muckrake and generally waste the very real opportunity to assist with budget matters and to highlight the actual spending by departments.

At the outset, I would like to thank the ministers and their staff for their willingness to provide the detail and information requested. I would also like to thank the committee staff and the research director, Rob McBride, for their assistance and guidance. They have to walk a fine line with their even-handedness, and their cheery approach lightens the usual sombre mood accompanying financial matters.

The areas scrutinised are where there has been considerable spending and more is to be undertaken. Queensland Health has outlaid just over \$20 million towards a new health facility and hospital at Yeppoon, and the balance is to be utilised this year. This facility will provide full medical and community health support for the Capricorn Coast. The people in North Rockhampton, where approximately 45 per cent of my electorate live, will also benefit from the \$76 million in state funding and the approved Commonwealth spending for the redevelopment of the Rockhampton Hospital. The need to spend this amount of money arose because of the reduction in spending caused by budget cuts under the member for Toowoomba South when he was the health minister. Additional funding was also approved for assistance for cancer patient accommodation.

Some of the funding on the redevelopment will be spent on building a bunker for nuclear medicine. I will make one point about this. Many of the questions from the opposition related to a hyperbaric chamber which was not being fully utilised at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. It is obvious, though, that it had been built as part of forward planning. I suppose we will hear claims ad nauseam about the bunker at Rockhampton if it is built and does not commence being used last week or the week before, but it is a good example of future planning.

Queensland Health has in excess of 62,000 employees and a substantial number of infrastructure buildings, and the overall budgeted amount under the health plan will meet the requirements of providing its first-class health outcomes for Queenslanders. I bristle when I hear the empty-headed fools who claim that we have a Third World health system. They obviously haven't been to any Third World country.

The other area covered by our committee was police, corrective services and emergency services. This area of government is relevant to every electorate in Queensland, and the questions asked of the minister were almost irrelevant. There is a spending proposal for \$1.706 billion, which includes increases in police numbers and stations, additional prisons, new ambulance officers and equipment for QAS and other emergency areas such as QFRS, the rural fire brigade and the SES. Yeppoon has recently received a new police station and boat for a total spend of \$12 million, but each area earmarked for spending in this budget will also benefit during the coming year.

Substantial additional support has been allocated to each and every area of the department. All officers showed a close attention to their departmental knowledge, and I am pleased that Minister Roberts is continuing the good work of the former police and corrective services minister, Judy Spence. I compliment the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Their staff work very hard to provide for Queenslanders within the amounts that are allowed to them to budget. They do a great job, and many of the areas within my electorate that are funded, such as emergency services and rural fire brigades—I have 44 rural fire brigades in my electorate—are substantially funded and do a great job.

I thank the other members of the committee for their courtesy and would commend to the opposition members at least an attempt to understand even a veneer of the correct approach to estimates. I endorse the spending outlined in the budget.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (3.52 pm): In rising to speak to the appropriation of Estimates Committee B, I want to echo the words of my colleague the member for Caloundra and thank the chairman of the committee, the member for Ipswich West, for his professional chairmanship of that committee and also the other members of the committee and the support staff. From the outset, I thank the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and his executive staff for doing the best they could in the time allotted to give answers to questions that I asked as the shadow minister for police and corrective services.

I think this is a very important portfolio area and one that is at the forefront of Queensland on a day-to-day basis—policing issues. I would like to talk firstly about the issue of overcrowding in Queensland prisons. It is all very well to be critical, but we also need to have some panaceas for some of these problems. At the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre \$199 million is to be spent on upgrades. That is one prison in Queensland that is overflowing with Indigenous people, and that is something I have concerns about.

I have spoken with the Hon. Desley Boyle, the Minister for Local Government and Indigenous Affairs, in relation to this matter. In Queensland we have 5,615 people incarcerated. Of those 5,615, 1,499 are people of Indigenous extraction, which represents 26 per cent of our prison population. That is something I think we should all be ashamed of, as they represent less than three per cent of the population. In Victoria they have 4,223 people incarcerated and only 250 Indigenous people. I know their Indigenous population is considerably less than ours, but I believe that all members of this parliament should be fiercely advocating to try to reverse this cycle and this trend. I have spoken again with the minister this afternoon about this issue. I have also spoken with the shadow minister, and hopefully we can see a reversal by taking a bipartisan approach to address this serious running sore in Queensland.

Another issue I want to mention is that of the police pay rise. The next EB is 2.5 per cent as of September this year. I say to the minister today that I believe whatever happens here he has to fight to champion the cause of police and make certain their remuneration package is up there. I know that teachers are trying to acquire a pay rise at the moment, but our police are the most important part of our front-line Public Service, and that cannot be denied by anybody. I hope that the resources that will be made available to them in conjunction with their pay that they are entitled to will not be sidestepped in the near future.

The other issue that the minister made mention of is eight missing sex offenders. I know this is a very difficult area for the police to be monitoring at all times, and again it is one that is always going to be a running sore. But I believe it is very important that the government makes absolutely certain that the specialist resources within Queensland police are resourced so that we can monitor this element of society. If we are not sure about them, we need to keep them on the inside rather than let them out.

I know my colleague the member for Mirani has raised on numerous occasions the inclusion of these people on property external to prisons in Capricornia. Regardless of where these people are, they are a scourge on our society. They are most times preying on our young, vulnerable people—the innocents of our society. I believe that as members of parliament it is our responsibility to make certain that the law is going to put those people where they should be.

Another issue I made reference to was the Dog Squad. That has been an issue of concern to me over a period of time. I addressed this with the former minister, the Hon. Judy Spence. I have raised this with the current minister in budget estimates, but I hope he monitors this situation and any other problems with specialist units in the Queensland Police Service. These people are professionals. I do not believe they want the media and the world knowing that there is a problem. I hope we can get resolution in these areas in question and we can see our Queensland police operating in the professional capacity in which we know they do operate to keep our communities and our society free and safe.

(Time expired)

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.57 pm): It was with great pleasure that I was invited to be on Estimates Committee B to examine the expenditure of the departments of health, police and community safety. The Hon. Paul Lucas provided a wealth of additional information under questioning, and I would like to pass on my thanks to the minister and his entire health team for the wonderful job they do in providing excellent quality public health care to the people of Queensland.

The Bligh government has in the 2009-10 financial year provided a record budget. There is a focus on delivering additional staffing of 3,500 new doctors, nurses and allied health professionals over the next three years, continuing our hospital-building program and a focus on easing the pressure in emergency departments and on surgery waiting lists. Obviously providing funding and additional staffing are the key planks in achieving this, but there is also a focus on preventative health care and providing incentives and education so that Queensland people can take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

It was noted that chronic disease causes more than 22,000 deaths per year. There are 2.9 million Queenslanders who have a chronic condition such as high blood pressure. Seven out of every 10 adults in Queensland have two or more risk factors for chronic disease such as smoking, overweight, inactivity, poor diet or excessive drinking, and the number of people with diabetes will triple in the next 25 years. These statistics are frightening and mean we will need to continue with successful education programs such as the healthy eating 2 and 5 promotion, the Dark Side of Tanning campaign, and highlighting the results of high-risk drinking by women and young people.

It was pleasing to hear of the government's commitment to building a single Queensland children's hospital, which is validated by expert clinical advice worldwide which confirms that a single children's hospital provides the best outcomes for sick children. The Deputy Premier also provided information on the Surgery Connect program, which is delivering an extra 20,000 elective surgery operations over three years with an investment of around \$30 million, almost \$13 million for enhanced rehabilitation beds, \$12 million to enhanced cancer services and almost \$5 million to improve services to mothers and babies with support closer to home.

Time was also devoted to discussing the performance of the emergency departments in public hospitals. I was pleased to hear about the continuing reduction of waiting times in emergency departments. Ninety-nine per cent of category 1 patients were seen in the recommended time, which is up from 98 per cent, and there were improvements in all of the other categories.

In 2008 our EDs saw a record 974,000 patients, an increase of 150,000 patients, or 18 per cent, on 2005. The Bligh Labor government has made expanding the capacity of our health system to manage this record demand the No. 1 priority. This is being done through initiatives such as additional hospital beds which have been opened, additional staffing, and the construction of new or expanded EDs at Prince Charles, Caboolture, Redcliffe and seven other regional hospitals.

I am also pleased to say that the Prince Charles Hospital will be allocated \$45.6 million for a new 12-bay paediatric emergency department, 20 short-stay paediatric ward beds and specialist outpatient clinics. This means that residents on the north side can be assured of expert medical attention for children close to where they live and the opportunity to access the new custom-built Children's Hospital if their children are very sick.

Minister Neil Roberts detailed the Bligh Labor government's strong and ongoing commitment to law and order and community safety in Queensland. The minister detailed that the 2009-10 budget included over \$1.7 billion for the Queensland Police Service and \$1.5 billion for the Department of Community Safety. Capital works are a priority again, with more than \$470 million to be invested in new police stations, jails, ambulance, fire and emergency services facilities—once again ensuring that local economies are boosted and supporting thousands of jobs.

The minister provided additional information on initiatives surrounding the Queensland Police Service including \$47 million for road safety initiatives, Task Force Argos, QPS strategies to address domestic and family violence, strengthening of Water Police capabilities, counterterrorism capabilities, and trialling new technologies such as automatic numberplate recognition, mobile LiveScan and in-car cameras.

The recently formed Department of Community Safety supports healthy, safe and secure communities through public safety, emergency management, essential emergency response services and secure and appropriate corrective services. The minister provided additional information to the committee on a variety of issues, including initiatives and funding to assist in managing the impacts of climate change; the QAS implementing demand management strategies; the proposal for an Australia-wide emergency notification process; the benefits of the new Combined Emergency Services Academy; and enhancements to the clinical practice of Queensland paramedics.

I was particularly interested in the information provided about random roadside drug and alcohol testing and its role in increasing road safety. It is well known that alcohol has been found to be the contributing factor in around one-third of all road deaths. It is very important that our police get out there and do the drug testing, which they have been doing. Up until 8 July this year, 15,854 roadside saliva tests had been conducted resulting in 336 drivers testing positive for a relevant drug. It is important that they continue this good work.

I was also pleased to see the interim QPS telephone interception capability to help in the fight against organised crime. There were so many other initiatives that we covered, but due to time constraints that is all I will talk about. I congratulate the committee on work well done and our chair for the excellent job in leading us.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (4.02 pm): I commend the chair of Estimates Committee B, the member for Ipswich West, and the support staff for the smooth running of the deliberations of the committee. I commend the minister's staff and departmental staff who came along to be part of the hearing. They are dedicated people and were certainly well prepared for most of the questions that were asked.

The Emergency Services component of the Estimates Committee B hearing is a very important part. Emergency Services obviously play a great role in creating a safety net for all Queenslanders. Currently the budget for Emergency Services is well in excess of \$1 billion. The opposition's two 20-minute segments in which to ask questions at the estimates committee hearings works out to be \$2.5 million per minute. I would suggest that is a very superficial examination of the budget for Emergency Services.

Many questions were asked. Certainly there were some gaps in the answers that were given. But overall I believe we got a reasonable insight into the operations of Emergency Services and the budgeting of it. One of the questions I asked was about the cost per capita of supplying the services of the Queensland Ambulance Service compared to other states. Unfortunately, we were not able to get a definitive answer on that. The minister indicated that he was going to come back to us on that, but he was never able to really answer that question properly.

The proposal for an Australia-wide emergency notification process is very important. As most members would be aware, a royal commission into the Victorian bushfires is currently being held. The proposal for an Australia-wide notification process is a very important part of that. That is particularly so for us in Queensland, with the possibility of tsunamis and the regular occurrence of cyclones. Any proposal for an Australia-wide notification process has to be able to be fully utilised right across Queensland—that is, from Cape York Peninsula to Currumbin.

There were many other issues discussed. One of them was our preparedness for bushfires. More than 90 per cent of Queensland is protected by volunteers in our bushfire brigades. There is certainly some major angst amongst the brigades about a centralised funding program that this government seems to be pushing through. We need to always remember that those in our rural fire brigades are volunteers who give freely of their time and do the training, and sometimes at great cost to them personally. I think it is very important that we are very aware of the volunteers in emergency services, particularly those in our rural fire brigades.

The government's support for aeromedical and air rescue helicopter services is an important issue. I raised some issues in terms of the Agusta Westland 139 helicopter. It is a major asset acquisition by Emergency Services of over \$50 million. I have recently found out that there is another cost of \$15 million for training. It becomes a very expensive asset for Emergency Services. I highlighted some issues in terms of the stretcher capability, the humidicrib capability and the ability to land on a pontoon in the Great Barrier Reef. There are a number of issues that seem to have been overlooked in the acquisition of these aircraft.

It is important that I point out today that the Central Queensland rescue helicopter service has been raising some major issues for quite some time. It is a not-for-profit organisation. It is funded by the government for 600 engine hours. It is being used for aeromedical transfers between Mackay and Townsville at a cost of roughly \$20,000 a flight. For four to five hours that helicopter is out of its rescue area in Central Queensland. It is an issue that I know the minister is batting aside. It is important to recognise that in that Central Queensland region unions, sponsors and community members pay very substantial amounts of money to allow that helicopter to work throughout Central Queensland. Every transfer that takes place out of the region ensures that helicopter is not available for rescue work for five or six hours.

(Time expired)

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise to support the report of Estimates Committee B, which examined proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill relating to the portfolios of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. I am going to focus in my speech today on the Health portfolio as I have particular interest in the expenditure examined by this committee in this area given my role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health.

The importance of the Health portfolio cannot be overstated. It accounts for about one-quarter of the state budget, employs tens of thousands of Queenslanders and treats tens of thousands of Queenslanders every day. In fact, there are nearly 30,000 Queenslanders who receive services in acute public hospitals around Queensland every single day. Over 4,000 emergency services are provided to patients every day in acute public hospitals around Queensland. I think it is always important in the debate that surrounds our health system to remember the sheer volume of services and volume of Queenslanders who are treated by our public health staff every single day right around Queensland.

This financial year the Queensland government has again risen to the challenge of funding our public health system. This year we have yet again delivered a record Health budget. This time, for the very first time, the Health budget will be over \$9 billion. That is a massive injection of funding into Health and reflects the government's commitment to delivering world-class health services to the burgeoning population that we see in Queensland today.

That funding of course does not only deliver health services and keeps Queenslanders healthy; it also employs tens of thousands of Queenslanders—creating jobs and protecting jobs. As members will remember, that was one of the government's core election commitments at the most recent state election. What this budget means is not only the retention of the jobs of those Queenslanders who currently work in Queensland Health services but also the provision of funding for 3,500 new doctors, nurses and health professionals over the next three years and the continuation of our massive \$6 billion hospital building program.

This in fact is the fastest growing health budget in the nation and the biggest hospital building program, and this is very much needed. Our emergency departments continue to experience strong demand—again, as a result of the rapidly increasing population of Queensland—but in fact presentations to our emergency departments far outstrip population growth in Queensland. Queensland Health has to deal with an extra 150,000 emergencies a year now compared to 2005. To meet that

demand, the government is investing a massive amount of money in rebuilding emergency departments right around the state. We are delivering upgraded adult and paediatric emergency departments at Logan, QEII, Bundaberg, Redlands, Ipswich, Caboolture and Toowoomba hospitals. In terms of something that is of great interest to the residents of the electorate that I represent, this budget will also see the beginnings of a dedicated paediatric emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital which will open in 2012.

As I mentioned, it is important not only to focus in these economic times on the value of the health services provided by this record Health budget but also to remember the many thousands of Queenslanders who are employed to provide these health services. I have already talked about the fact that tens of thousands of Queenslanders are employed to actually deliver health services to patients, but we estimate that about 40,000 jobs are involved in the building program that has been committed to this year in the budget by the Queensland government for Queensland Health.

It is particularly encouraging in this year's budget to see a big focus on preventing and managing chronic disease. A couple of previous speakers have referred to the fact that one of the government's targets in the Q2 document is to reduce by one-third the major chronic disease risk factors—obesity, heavy drinking, physical inactivity and dangerous sun exposure. This budget, as was reflected in some of the comments the minister made during the estimates debate, really does deliver on that. We have a range of health promotion programs. I will not bother listing them due to the lack of time, but the minister talked in detail about those health programs. The member for Rockhampton, as an avowed fan of the Deputy Premier and his constant weight loss battle, will be interested to hear that on—

Mr Schwarten: Has he lost any weight!

Mr WATT: I am glad you asked. On the very week of his estimates hearing, the Deputy Premier ran 10 kilometres and he admitted to the committee that he was a sore man. I am sure he is becoming less sore the more he exercises. The only other issue I wanted to touch on in the short time I have left is the Queensland Children's Hospital and the new emergency department for children at the Prince Charles Hospital. I was disappointed to see that the member for Aspley made an appearance at the committee to yet again criticise the Queensland Children's Hospital and to raise questions about the new emergency department catering for children on the north side at the Prince Charles Hospital. Residents of the electorate that I represent are very keen on this hospital. They understand that it will mean that emergency department facilities are available to their children much closer to home than is currently the case. This government continues to support these two projects—

(Time expired)

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to contribute to debate on the report of Estimates Committee B and will direct my comments to the department of health. One of my political goals is to provide either a new or completely renovated Bundaberg Hospital with at least a 300-bed capacity. All of my constituents of the Burnett rely on the Bundaberg Base Hospital for their public healthcare needs. The Wide Bay-Burnett has one of the quickest growing populations in Queensland. The Bundaberg Base Hospital currently services a population of approximately 120,000 people, but in a very short space of time that number will rise to around 200,000. That might be 10 years or 20 years away, but very quickly it will come to that number. At the moment there are approximately 140 beds—that is not counting the Coke machines and other things like that that the health minister likes to count as beds—and the staff levels are of course to service those beds—just. A recent report by the Centre for Independent Studies shows that the average number of beds in Queensland is 2.4 beds per thousand head of population. With 140 beds in a service area containing 120,000 people, that means that the bed per population ratio is well below the state average for the Bundaberg-Burnett region. In fact, if the Burnett region had the state average ratio today in beds per thousand, the Bundaberg Base Hospital would have to more than double its bed numbers to 288 instead of the 140 beds that it has.

I want to commend and praise the staff at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. They are working in very difficult circumstances. This government does not support or appreciate them, and in many cases their union officials have let them down. The ASU and the Nurses Union representatives have a long history of being part of the official Labor cover-up, and that is the reason that staff have been forced to speak with me in order to have their voice heard so that patients and staff can be protected from Labor government neglect. I say that because I have lived this story time and time again. I have had many workers come to me and complain about the unions and the cover-up that they are involved in with this Labor government. They work hand in hand.

In summary, at the beginning of this year on 28 January the member for Bundaberg and I met with three employees of Queensland Health who worked at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. They made very serious allegations to us. We took those allegations to the CMC. They have made allegations which are now the subject of internal investigations after the CMC, disappointingly, referred those allegations back to the Ethical Standards Unit of Queensland Health. The picture they described in the Bundaberg emergency department at that time was one of dysfunction. Approximately 100 prime official

incident complaint reports were submitted without acknowledgement and/or investigation, and these allegations are made by a senior nurse. Queensland Health employees were being pushed to their physical and psychological limits.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could the member clarify that he is referring to Estimates Committee B report.

Mr MESSENGER: I am referring to Estimates Committee B and you will note, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there were projections for staff increases consulted by that committee, as were waiting times for accident and emergency. I am actually referring back to the committee. In fact, while speaking about accident and emergency, there was evidence that administration officers had been used to triage patients and perform medical care such as bandaging and applying ice. That was one of the important things that I spoke about at the time of the hearing.

We do not have enough doctors, nurses and specialists at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, and that shows up in a number of ways. Firstly, it shows up as a lack of access for ambulance patients where patients are forced to wait in the back of ambulances. Secondly, it shows up in access block in the emergency department where staff are forced to care for patients while they lay on trolleys in hallways. Thirdly, it shows up when medical staff are forced, because of bureaucratic pressure by this government, to discharge patients prematurely—and I recently spoke with a former patient who was quite clearly discharged early. I will be writing to the health minister about that particular case. Given the horrific medical history which was caused by an equally horrific history of Labor government neglect, we should have the best-resourced and best-staffed public hospital in Australia. We do not, but I am going to fight to make sure that we do.

(Time expired)

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (4.17 pm): In speaking to the report of Estimates Committee B, I firstly want to thank the committee chair, the member for Ipswich West, and all of the committee members for the work that they did and also the parliamentary support staff for their input during the estimates process. Before reaffirming some of the more positive aspects of both of my portfolios in terms of police and community safety, I want to respond to a number of the reservations which have been raised by both the member for Gregory, the shadow police spokesperson, and also the member for Mirani.

I might just point out at the outset that the member for Gregory was caught out during the estimates process when he issued a media release part way through the estimates hearing which, based on his incorrect interpretation of the proportion of operational police, made a claim which was blatantly wrong. It was corrected during the hearing but, despite that, the media release still went out and I note that no correction has yet been made to the record on that matter. The member for Gregory raised six reservations about the Police and Corrective Services portfolio, three of which related to the timing and the format of the committee hearing. In concert with a number of other members, it seems that it is almost a pro forma submission. However, I also note that the member stated in his reservations that I was evasive and confrontational in my approach to the hearings which, of course, I reject outright. I never thought that I would have to use these words to describe the member for Gregory, but on the basis of the claim that he has made I think that you could say that he is nothing but a precious little petal when it comes to this particular issue.

The member for Gregory also alleged that I used partial statistics in response—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ROBERTS: I am sorry the member is not here to hear me say that.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ROBERTS: I am sure he will be impressed. The member also alleged that I used partial statistics in responses to questions which, of course, I reject outright. The Police Commissioner, the director-general of Community Safety and the other commissioners who were available answered the questions that were asked both on notice and during the hearing.

The first reservation of the shadow minister for emergency services regards the lack of new community safety programs. I stand by the decision that I made some time ago to refocus the attention of the department of emergency services to front-line services. There was a significant shift in resources away from some important but non-essential areas to the front line. Just to give an example of how that has resulted in a significant change, at the time of the audit the proportion of operational ambulance staff was 77.6 per cent. That was in around 2006-07. Now the proportion of operational staff is 82.5 per cent, which demonstrates a significant structural shift within the organisation from non-operational staff to operational staff. Yes, one of the issues there was the withdrawal of some areas of community safety, but I stand by that decision.

The member for Mirani also used his statement of reservations to again undermine public confidence in the three new Agusta Westland 139 rescue helicopters. He has been doing this continuously over the past 12 months. These helicopters can fly faster and further and they are bigger and have greater capacity in terms of emergency responses than the Bell 412 helicopters that they replaced. In fact, we still have Bell 412 helicopters. We have three new Agusta Westlands and two Bell 412s in our fleet. The fact is that both the shadow minister for police and corrective services and the shadow minister for emergency services were not really able to find much fault in the emergency services and police budgets.

As a government we made the tough decision, in very difficult economic times, to significantly increase the budgets of both of those departments—in fact, by 8.5 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively. The Queensland Police Service budget of \$1.7 billion will deliver an additional 203 police positions this financial year. We have given a commitment to maintain the police-to-population ratio at least equal to or better than the national average. So that will mean a minimum of 600 additional police positions over the next 12 months. I want to thank the committee for the work that it undertook through the estimates process and commend the departmental budgets to the House.

(Time expired)

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (4.22 pm): I was only in the audience of the hearing of Estimates Committee B. I would like to thank the chair, the member for Ipswich West, for allowing me to participate. Today I heard the member for Keppel make a comment about planning and refer to bunkers. I tell members that there is a big difference between putting bunkers in the bottom of a building and planning for buildings and services.

I would like to speak specifically about issues that were raised during the estimates committee hearing that relate to the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is struggling to cope with providing medical services for its existing population let alone the extra 1,000 people who arrive weekly and the nine million tourists we welcome annually. The primary reason for this planning failure is the completely unreasonable response by former Premier Beattie when he was the health minister and now the Bligh Labor government.

Former Premier Beattie as health minister came to a meeting at the Gold Coast. I was at that meeting. He promised us an immediate response. He never did anything substantive to assist us. Labor members who have followed him have championed everything from football stadiums to a flawed desalination plant that actually supplies water to Brisbane at great cost. The members opposite really need to forget their political loyalties and have a reality check. The Gold Coast—stretching from Beenleigh to Coolangatta—is as critical a lifeline to our economy as is mining.

Currently the state Labor government has been totally subsumed by backdoor deals with Labor lobbyists chasing all the gravitas that grubby and even sometimes reasonable projects can generate. I really do not want to get down to that level. The members opposite should not miss the wood for the trees on these deals. Where are they located? They are located in South-East Queensland and primarily on the Gold Coast. We need the Gold Coast to not just survive; it really needs to prosper.

To run a health system on bandaids is an utter failure. The government is failing to plan, and if you fail to plan then you end up with the results of that failure. The new 750-bed hospital at Parklands is inadequate. It was much needed 10 years ago. By the time it will be finished, in 2013, it will have somewhere between 300 and 500 beds too few. Unfortunately, we need those beds urgently. With 4,000 deliveries projected for 2012, there will be no room on site for anyone who has chronic disease. I would say that these people would need occasional inpatient care. I am not saying that they will need it continuously, but they will certainly need it occasionally.

The current Gold Coast Hospital at Southport really needs to be retained—if not totally then in significant part. There are critical buildings on site that are ideal for patient care, rehabilitation, mental health, diagnostic services and in particular teaching. To replace these buildings would be an enormous cost to our state and their loss will be felt very personally by the Gold Coast public. If the estimates process is really to have any effect, the minister needs to re-evaluate the currently expressed view regarding the future of the existing hospital. I would ask him to be sympathetic to the plight of those who favour its retention, at least in some part.

Furthermore, I believe there is a pressing issue currently with regard to nurses and parking on site. Currently, the new day surgery unit operates largely to provide for the Surgery Connect program. A site has become available for car parking, but it may well go up for sale and it may be lost for parking. Currently there are 400 car parks. The nurses use this parking area at all hours. It is the closest major car-parking area to the hospital. Nurses need the security that that kind of car parking can provide them. We are absolutely determined to lobby on their behalf to have safe, secure parking. It is an essential part of any hospital system. I implore the minister to urgently consider that issue.

For many years the Gold Coast economy has been bled dry by federal and state governments. It is really time to give back. For years we heard that Robina Hospital was a National Party plot. It has only just come on the radar because it would have to be said that some of the properties nearby are owned by our state government. Basically, the members opposite need to understand that it was never a plot. In fact, its service is much needed in a much needed area.

I urge the minister to plan for a sensible future for the existing Gold Coast Hospital and to include at least some of the buildings on site as part of the existing plan. That way, I believe the future for the Gold Coast public will be enhanced.

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (4.27 pm): Can I say to the honourable member for Gaven in relation to parking that recently I approved the acquisition of some land. If the member wants some further information on that I am happy to give it to him. I acknowledge that at the Southport campus there are those sorts of parking issues.

I say also to the member for Gaven that he does not represent Coomera, although I understand that the area is pretty close to his electorate. The last thing he would want to do is advocate for the retention of the Gold Coast Hospital at Southport in its current form, because the next hospital to be built after the Parklands one will be at Coomera. So if the member wants to penalise the people in his electorate, despite good planning dictating where the next hospital will be, I think that is very short-sighted on his part.

Clearly we will have a look at a use for the Southport hospital as it is currently—having a look at the buildings and the demands that are on us. I might add that the day surgery there has been working very effectively. If anyone thinks it is sensible to retain the hospital in its current form, they are wasting public funds that could be better spent on the Gold Coast doing better things.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I will respond to anyone in this chamber who has at least some intellectual rigour, and that does not include the member for Burnett. In terms of the Gold Coast, I did an assessment once of how much money the federal Liberals spent on Gold Coast roads. What a joke it was. I think there were five or six years worth of no announcements. The member for Gaven might want to take a bit of a look at that.

The shadow minister made a few comments earlier about draft speeches and the like. Well may he say that, because the statement of reservations was the same for just about every opposition spokesperson in the estimates debate. Clearly, in terms of original thinking, he has shown the same capacity for that as he has in many other areas of his administration. Of course, we must remember that he was the one who, during the election campaign, promised a mental health policy but—oops—forgot about the staff. Local volunteers would have had to keep the mental records. That shows his ability to plan.

The 2009-10 budget is part of our continued push to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. This financial year our public health system will receive a record \$9.037 billion cash from the government and we are investing more than \$6 billion to build and rebuild hospitals across the state, which is the largest health infrastructure program in our history. Our projects range from Coolangatta to the cape and about 40,000 jobs are involved. That is very much in stark contrast to what the LNP was going to deliver, which was the loss of 12,000 jobs.

Every time I talk to a group of health professionals I talk about how the LNP was going to cut the numbers of administrators and support staff and the health professionals shake their heads. In fact, recently at a nurses' conference I pointed that out and I received a round of applause. Nurses, doctors and allied health professionals want to do what they are qualified to do; they do not want to push paper unnecessarily. Any job involves a certain degree of administration, but they know full well that they would have borne the brunt of that policy and it would have impacted upon their service delivery if the then Leader of the Opposition had had his way.

We are also tackling the growing demand faced by our hospitals by investing \$145 million over three years to upgrade emergency departments, with upgraded adult and paediatric EDs at Logan, QEII, Bundaberg, Redlands, Ipswich, Caboolture and Toowoomba hospitals and the establishment of a dedicated paediatric emergency department at Prince Charles Hospital by 2011-12. In this place I try to have a level of consistency and principle about things. For example, as the former minister for transport and main roads I never once accused the Howard government of putting lives at risk in relation to anything. Of course, for the members for Caloundra and Maroochydore that is their standard stock-in-trade thing to say. I never did that against federal tory governments.

I will say how disappointed I and others have been at the disgraceful conduct in relation to the Children's Hospital. For four years they had a policy in support of one children's hospital, then in a show of blatant opportunism, just before the last election, decided that they would support two. How was that going to be done? By a PPP for a hospital that apparently you do not have to put any money into. There

was to be no investment and they were not going to charge anyone to use it. That is the sort of policy formulation process that they undertook. I think people expect a bit more rigour from governments and oppositions.

I am delighted to be part of a government that is delivering on health. We have a long way to go. We have come a long way, but the challenges are there. With federal government cooperation I think we can achieve even greater things.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the report from Estimates Committee B, which dealt with the services to be provided by the departments of Health, Police and Community Safety in the coming financial year. Firstly, I note the budget for the department of health has increased by over \$3 billion for the financial year 2009-10. This is obviously needed given the state of the health system in Queensland. Obviously this state is a growth state in Australia. Our population is not only increasing in size but is also ageing. Armed with this statistic, Health becomes one of the most crucial portfolios the government manages or, in the case of this government, mismanages. If only the department of health had the vision and nous to plan for the future growth of health provision in this state.

While I understand that there are many regions in desperate need of upgraded health services, the situation on the Sunshine Coast is at a critical level. The Nambour General Hospital is the base hospital for the region. Nambour is at the bottom of the ladder in terms of category 3 waiting lists and emergency response times. I have heard it said recently by the health professionals that the average recommended standard waiting time for a category 3 patient in Australia is 30 days. On the Sunshine Coast, we are averaging over 100 days.

The services provided by the staff at the hospital are fantastic. The unfortunate fact is that it takes far too long to get into a bed or to be treated by a health professional. In fact, only last night I received an email from a constituent with respect to this issue. This is the simplest way I can explain to the minister the plight of residents on the Sunshine Coast. The email relates to a lady who has bowel cancer. She is 91 years of age and is in very poor health. Today her doctor arranged for her to be taken by ambulance to hospital. The ambulance could not take her to Nambour as it was apparently full, so she was taken to Caloundra where she sat in a chair from 1 pm to 6 pm as there were no beds there either. At 6 pm the lady's carer received a phone call from the hospital and was asked to come and pick her up. She lives alone and can barely move as she has problems with her back in any event.

The Sunshine Coast held high hopes that our health crisis would be somewhat fixed when the government announced the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, a 650-bed public hospital that is needed to alleviate the shortage of beds on the Sunshine Coast and will be a designated tertiary facility. That facility will dramatically improve the health services offered by the government in the Sunshine Coast health district. The facility will take the pressure off the public hospitals not only on the Sunshine Coast but also in Brisbane. Now we have heard of its delay by up to three years, all because the health minister and Treasurer somehow, two days before the budget was brought down, realised that we are in a global financial crisis and announced that they could not afford it. This is despite a spokesman for the health minister, some 18 days earlier, confirming that everything was on track with the hospital and that the deadline would be met. I would have thought that the replacement for the Premier, the future and maybe in this term the new Labor leader, would have more to say about the dealings of this Labor government.

The government can fund this hospital but chooses not to on the basis of political priority. It has been reported to me that the government did, in fact, have contact from parties interested in building the Sunshine Coast University Hospital by its original deadline of 2014. What has happened? The estimates committee report indicates that some of the issues considered by the committee were the projections for staff increases, the employment of additional doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, travel for patients to receive specialist medical treatment et cetera.

The situation whereby Sunshine Coast residents have to travel back and forth to Brisbane on a daily basis is appalling. Whether the Sunshine Coast suffers because of its proximity to Brisbane is debatable, but what is certain is that those patients are having their health jeopardised by the wear and tear that the travel is having on their general health. Talk about kicking someone when they are already down. I have some personal experience regarding this matter. My mother, a recovering cancer patient, had to travel back and forth from Caloundra to Brisbane for treatment. Luckily she had the support of her family and was strong-willed enough to survive the ordeal. Others are not as fortunate. The Sunshine Coast is a growing region and we need a serious review of the types of medical services offered at the hospitals.

We have all heard my colleague the member for Caloundra note a document that he received. It was the minister's speech notes in which the minister's adviser said, 'Talk about guff in the budget, positive guff.' I ask members opposite if they know what is the definition of guff?

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I can tell the member for Everton that the definition of guff is nonsense. The government treats the health services on the Sunshine Coast as if they were full of guff. The budget is full of guff and, unless and until this government gets serious, the health minister's adviser is right: all they can do is talk about guff and nonsense because that is all they have.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee C

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee C be adopted.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (4.37 pm): It was a great honour to chair Estimates Committee C 2009. I would like to start by thanking the other members of the committee, particularly my deputy chair, the member for Callide. Our committee was ably supported by Renee Easten and Jenny North from the Parliamentary Service. Importantly, I thank Ministers Struthers, Hinchliffe and Robertson for their support for the committee hearing and the provision of a great deal of information that has been used by the committee to develop its report, which is before the House today.

Throughout our hearing process, a number of key issues arose in each portfolio that I would like to bring to the attention of the House. I start with the portfolio of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. One of the issues canvassed was the planning process for the Loganlea to Jimboomba 110 kV transmission line currently proposed by Energex and undergoing a consultation process. I took the opportunity to ask the minister about that project, and particularly the consultation process that is currently underway.

It is reassuring to hear from the minister the initial assessment report consultation that is currently going on and to see that Energex is going above and beyond what is required by the community infrastructure designation process to consult with local residents who are impacted by that proposal. As well, the committee heard evidence about the rollout of the Solar Hot Water Program. This is a very popular program in my electorate that will deliver 200,000 units across Queensland over coming years. This is a great initiative where government investment in partnership with the federal government will see not only the reduction of carbon emissions from householders in Queensland but also a reduction in power bills. This helps Queensland householders invest in reducing their own power bills.

There was also discussion of about \$47.7 million for demand side management strategies. Not only do demand side management strategies provide an opportunity for householders to reduce their electricity usage and therefore their power bills; but they also mean that we can reduce the need for capital expenditure for the ever-growing peak demand. A great deal of the government's expenditure on network upgrades is dedicated solely to that peak demand. If we can reduce that peak demand, we can make greater use of our existing infrastructure and hopefully bring down the cost of electricity for householders.

In the portfolios of the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, there was discussion of the Logan-Beenleigh Young Persons Project, a project close to my heart. This project targets young people who are pregnant and teenagers at risk of becoming parents. It also targets young people who are showing signs of mental illness and provides coordinated and intensive support for up to two years for these young people. Prior to the estimates hearing, the minister actually took the opportunity to come and meet with providers of these services and the clients of these services in my electorate, and I know that that was warmly welcomed. What this program pilots is opportunities for coordination in services.

As well, with the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, there was a release of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program, which outlined a plan for \$124 billion of infrastructure to 2026, particularly in road and transport infrastructure.

There were, of course, statements of reservation from the members for Callide and Burdekin. Those statements of reservation were fairly standard, including a typographical error in the third paragraph. But at least they had the good sense to support the appropriations while having their concerns heard, unlike the member for Gympie. The member for Gympie actually dissented to the report's recommendation that the appropriations be supported. He filed a dissenting report rather than a statement of reservation. If the member for Gympie had his way, these appropriations would not be agreed to. It will be interesting to see what the member for Gympie does when it comes to a vote. Will he call for a division at the end of this debate?

I would like to spend the last few moments I have going through a few of the things that if the committee were to agree with the member for Gympie he would not see done. He would not see the facilitation of the liquefied natural gas industry by establishing economic, environmental and community policy settings. He would not see the coordination of submissions for projects seeking funding under the

Building Australia Fund. He would not see capital funding of \$70.2 million to expand the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in North Queensland. He would not see the funding for increased wages to workers in the community services sector. He would not see \$2 million in 2009 to extend the capacity of Lifeline to respond to the financial counselling needs of individuals and families. At least the members for Callide and Burdekin were prepared to support the appropriations. I commend the report to the House.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (4.43 pm): I rise to make a contribution in the consideration of the report of Estimates Committee C. I begin by congratulating the member for Waterford, the chairman of the committee, on the way that he conducted the committee hearings. Members would remember that for many years now I have made the comment when we consider these estimate committee reports that the estimates committee process can be an absolute farce or it can be valuable depending on the attitude that is taken by the particular chairman, and over the years we have seen extremes of both eventualities. I say to the member for Waterford and to all members in the House that I think in Estimates Committee C we established the right balance between the rights of members to question ministers and the necessity to maintain order. I congratulate the member for Waterford on the way that he chaired the hearings. It certainly should stand as an example to some other chairmen who did not achieve the value from the estimates committee hearings that we did in Estimates Committee C.

I would, however, take issue with the comments the member for Waterford just made about the dissenting report that the member for Gympie submitted as part of this report that we are considering. I am sure that if he considers the comments that he made he would realise that a dissenting report or adding some dissenting comments to a report does not necessarily mean that all of the expenditure that the member for Waterford referred to would be opposed.

I want to refer to some of the issues that were raised by the opposition in the consideration of the expenditure of the natural resources portfolio—in particular, the wild rivers declarations that were part of the departmental budget for the year. It continues to concern us, just as it continues to concern an ever-growing number of Aboriginal communities in the cape, that the whole wild rivers declaration process was simply another grubby election deal that was done by the government in its attempt to try to garner Green preferences at a time when it thought it was in electoral trouble. I really believe that that issue has to gain more prominence in the public debate across the broader Queensland community as the broader Queensland community comes to understand the savage impact that this election deal will have on the economic future of Aboriginal people in the cape.

The hearing also dealt with the budget for the Water Commission. I have spoken in this place a number of times about the enormous amount of money the Water Commission has wasted and the abysmal failure of the Water Commission to ensure that any of the major projects that were contained in the 1992 emergency regulation actually met their contractual obligations. The minister before the committee continued the denial that the government has adopted towards the abysmal failure of the Water Commission.

We dealt with the electricity tariffs and the 40 per cent rise that Queensland electricity consumers have suffered over the last three years. That is I think an outrageous outcome of a series of government policies. Years of government mismanagement have been the cause of that 40 per cent rise in electricity tariffs, and it is part of the government's record that the people of Queensland are becoming all too aware of.

We considered the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. I was appalled that the minister responsible for the resources industry in Queensland had such a very low understanding and exhibited such a low-care attitude towards the effect of the CPRS on Queensland's mining and energy industries.

We considered the Office of Clean Energy—in particular, the employment of a consultant Mr Miley, who is paid \$1,500 a day to administer the solar hot-water scheme. Given that there are 37 people employed within the Office of Clean Energy, the minister could not explain to the committee why it needed to employ a consultant at \$1,500 a day. We still have not had an explanation of who Mr Miley is, whose mate he is and whether he is part of the Labor mates clique that has been exposed since the committee conducted its hearings. But there are still an enormous number of questions surrounding the employment of Mr Miley at \$1,500 a day to effectively administer a solar hot-water scheme that passes applications on to the federal government. The exposure of that issue is a good example of what can be achieved in a estimates committee hearing.

(Time expired)

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.48 pm): I rise to report on the hearings held for Estimates Committee C that covered the portfolios of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy; Trade; Community Services and Housing; Women; and Infrastructure and Planning. Firstly, I acknowledge the fine job of the committee chair, the member for Waterford, and the efficient work of the committee staff and thank them for their assistance in preparing for the hearing. I welcomed the opportunity to question ministers on government spending and the departments' delivery of services offered to the Queensland community.

The hearing for the portfolios of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Trade covered a range of matters, including the extension of the wild rivers protection and the \$47.7 million in funding for Energex and the Ergon Energy Corporation to initiate a range of energy conservation and peak electricity demand reduction measures. The issue of climate change and the range of programs and initiatives funded and supported by the Bligh government were canvassed at the hearing. I found this topic particularly interesting, and I know that these matters are of particular interest to my constituents who look to the government to research and work towards finding alternative energy sources and methods to conserve energy and water.

The Minister for Natural Resources informed the committee of the carbon pollution reduction scheme, the ZeroGen project, which is a low-emission coal technology demonstration project, the Clean Coal Council, the government's legislation and the clean coal technology. The minister also advised how the Queensland solar hot water program will be delivered to registered Queenslanders.

The portfolios of Community Services and Housing and Women provided me with an opportunity to question the government's commitment to the issue of affordable housing provision and the government's work in the area of domestic violence prevention and improving economic and social outcomes for young people who have entered the youth justice system and are at risk of further offending or homelessness. I was pleased to hear the minister advise that the Bligh government has committed \$2 million in this financial year to Lifeline for an extension of its financial counselling services and \$1.8 million for the Seniors Legal and Support Service.

I want to comment on the government's response to questioning about the important issue of homelessness and funding being spent in the area of social housing. Often people comment that they cannot determine the difference between the current political parties as apparently we are all the same. If there was ever one issue I could use to demonstrate the vast gap in policy direction and priorities between the Labor government and the LNP, and in particular the previous Howard Liberal government, it is the issue of social housing. For years the Liberal federal government failed to put the urgent need to address rising rent costs and the increasing demand for social and affordable housing on the agenda.

The minister outlined the positive advancements in the area of affordable housing as a result of the landmark partnership agreement between the state and federal governments. As a result, the minister outlined the initiatives that would never have been possible under the previous Howard government regime. The minister outlined that the Bligh government has set aside more than \$56 million to help more than 176,000 households in the private market get access to affordable housing.

In addition, I was pleased to hear that the Bligh government will inject an extra \$200 million over four years to tackle homelessness. The committee heard that the Bligh Labor government will contribute \$102 million over four years, with matching funds of \$99.5 million from the Commonwealth. The committee was advised by the minister that these funds will go towards a range of reforms, including more street-to-home initiatives for chronic homeless people in hot spots across the state, such as Cairns, Mount Isa, Maryborough and the Gold Coast, and more assistance for people leaving protection services and correctional and health facilities.

The estimates committee also heard from the minister on the government's commitment to reducing the financial burden on seniors by increasing the electricity rebate to pensioners and seniors by 15 per cent at a cost of \$15.5 million. The Minister for Community Services is a passionate advocate for social policy, and I take the opportunity to acknowledge the minister's enthusiasm and pride in which she advised the committee of the great work of her department with regard to the Women in Hard Hats project, the Women on Board strategy, the Smart Women-Smart State Awards, the Kids Under Cover initiative, the Logan-Beenleigh Young Persons Project and the Home and Community Care Modifications Program to help the frail, aged or disabled remain at home.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning outlined the government's commitment to funding major infrastructure projects for the state that, throughout the planning and construction phases, will continue to stimulate our state's economy. In particular, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the minister's comments with regard to the Southern Moreton Bay Marine Infrastructure Master Plan, which will comprise whole-of-government endorsed outcomes to facilitate the marine industry and maritime infrastructure development over the next 20 years. I take on board his advice to get my community involved in the consultation of that project.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (4.54 pm): I would also like to express my appreciation to the chairman and the other members of Estimates Committee C for their cooperation. In particular, I thank the members of the secretariat who were responsible for the effective administration of the hearing process.

Sustainability of families is the keystone to communities, and this is where all outcomes must remain focused within this department. The whole point of the Community Services and Housing portfolio is to assist those people who make our communities strong and to help those in need or in crisis.

Within the housing area, as long as situations such as those in Top Korowra exist, where multiple families are jammed into one small, single house in our Indigenous communities—our housing situation cannot be said in any form to be coping. However, it is not only in our Indigenous communities that people are suffering the consequences of housing failures. Too many young people are held in detention because they have no fixed abode. State contributions to spending have decreased in social rental housing and Indigenous community housing.

With affordability at unprecedented levels and multiple economic strains facing many families and individuals in the community, this is of great concern. But it is true to say that affordability and economic impacts are being felt keenly by the people responsible for so much practical help in our community as well—the non-government sector organisations. NGOs are the lead agencies in the delivery of many of the services within the Department of Communities. Facing ballooning costs themselves through fuel and electricity increases, registration increases and now wage increases, these organisations are also facing increased demands, and many services are stretched to the limit. It was disappointing to see that the government's response to the wage increases among the community sector is limited to \$30 million across five agencies. It will not ensure the viability of so many valuable organisations that have to fight so hard to help the most vulnerable people in our community.

There is no clear direction in the department's treatment of youth justice. Indeed, it seems to be put in the too-hard basket. I look forward to taking up the minister on her offer to work collaboratively in this important area. I believe it is essential that rehabilitation and social reintegration are recognised as integral elements of this area. It is not good enough that the system is currently so heavily populated by young offenders who have been there repeatedly.

The department is also yet to realise its priorities. While the Office for Women spent six times more on administration than programs, seniors had to make do with three per cent of appropriation. The failure yet again to accord a suitable profile to this increasing and ever-important section of our community is reflected in the continuing lack of an official Office for Seniors. Until the government formally recognises seniors in its structure and portfolio, it cannot hope to pay due attention to it in social and economic terms.

Finally, I mention the redress scheme. The tragedy of abuses committed against children in care as outlined in the Forde inquiry in 2002 is a dark chapter in our history. Unfortunately, for the children who lived through those years, that chapter is read over and over again and they are never able to leave it behind. Sadly, it was evident in the estimates process that the story is outliving some of the survivors. Nearly 70 of them—69 people—have died while waiting for resolution of the redress process. These people have experienced heartbreaking and unimaginable horrors at ages where they were vulnerable or did not know differently and were powerless to protect themselves. There certainly was not anyone else to protect them.

After lifetimes of shame and often an inability to talk of the appalling events of their childhoods, these people have had to relive their nightmares in excruciating detail. Money alone cannot compensate these people, but a process that recognises their anguish and distress and allows compensation to be compassionately awarded is essential. The fact that delays and bureaucracy have extended the suffering of these people—and in too many cases seen people die while waiting for resolution—is a very poor effort on behalf of the government.

The fact that level 1 payments have and are being processed is good, but the extended time frame and the implementation of the level 2 payments with the associated levels of stress that this is creating for the original applicants is simply not acceptable. All these people have been waiting for seven years since the Forde inquiry for some recognition, and the fact that 69 people have died since placing their applications for the redress scheme is an appalling indictment on this government.

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (4.58 pm): I thank the members and staff involved in Estimates Committee C for their deliberations. Through this budget we are delivering unprecedented levels of funding to housing across the state. We are strengthening and expanding vital community services. We are giving a helping hand to seniors, particularly through a 15 per cent increase in the electricity rebate. We are also striving to deliver better youth justice outcomes.

During the estimates hearing the member for Burdekin claimed that boot camps in New Zealand were doing a great job of getting young offenders back on track. She even issued a press release accusing me of misleading the parliament about the value of boot camps. This is one of the harshest things a member can be accused of in this parliament—that is, misleading the parliament. It is certainly the sort of accusation which should not be made lightly—and I see that the member has walked out. She is not even going to take responsibility for the claims and accusations she has made against me. I was surprised that a member of her character would make such an accusation. But when my staff went to look for the press release they found that it was taken off the LNP website—another piece of doctored by the LNP. Maybe she did realise that she had made unfair, untrue accusations. I certainly give her the opportunity—indeed, I encourage her—to publicly withdraw the accusations she has made against me.

Clearly, what she showed is that she does not understand the issues around youth justice. An article in the *Townsville Bulletin*, in her own area, last Saturday stated that recidivism has not been reduced by people in alternatives like boot camps. There is no evidence that recidivism is cut. There is some evidence that people come out worse. They are told that they are dumb and stupid and then asked to cope. That was from Dr Coventry, from James Cook University, refuting the benefit of boot camps.

They certainly need to come up with better policies than they are coming up with on youth justice. There are certainly significant differences between Labor and the opposition on policies like youth justice. We are tackling youth crime with workable, sensible solutions. The latest youth crime trends show that the level of juvenile crime in Queensland has dropped in recent years. In fact, the vast majority of young people do the right thing, but the opposition wants to ignore the facts and scapegoat young people.

Our youth justice conferencing program is recognised internationally. I just signed off on a program to send our youth justice conferencing staff, some of our leaders in the state, to Hong Kong. The Methodist Centre of Hong Kong wants to be trained in our youth justice conferencing. Is Hong Kong soft on crime? No way. Why would a country like Hong Kong want our youth justice people to train their staff? Because they know that it works. They know that it is good policy. It is internationally renowned and we have it here in Queensland. It is one of the best programs in the world.

I urge the member for Burdekin, who accused me of misleading the parliament on youth justice, and on boot camps in particular, to withdraw her comments publicly at the earliest possible opportunity. We are here for another couple of days. I invite her to do that.

We have an outstanding range of staff around the state in non-government organisations and the Department of Communities, and now with the agencies working together in housing. We have a really good opportunity to provide not only a secure roof over people's heads but also the support services they need. Young people need support. They do not need the harsh, scapegoating commentary we get from the LNP.

I urge the member to work in cooperation with me. I urge the LNP to give us bipartisan support on these very important areas of community need. They are not interested really in dealing with facts and evidence on these issues. They like the quick fixes. They do not work. They like to put out media releases with these notions of quick fixes. We need evidence based programs that work in Queensland. Let me say again that in the area of youth justice we are world leaders. Let me tell you again: which country is seeking out our youth justice coordinators to train their own?

Government members: Hong Kong.

Ms STRUTHERS: Is Hong Kong soft on crime?

Government members: No.

Ms STRUTHERS: Are we soft on crime?

Government members: No way.

Ms STRUTHERS: I rest my case.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (5.03 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Government members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I note that simply rising to my feet intrigues those opposite. They should pay attention for the next five minutes to what will be coming forward. I wish to make a contribution to the debate on the report of Estimates Committee C. I would like to recognise the chair, the member for Waterford. Despite the spin that he displayed just a moment ago, in his role as the chair he did an outstanding job. I also commend the other members of the committee. As was quite rightly pointed out by the member for Callide, it was a very effective committee. It worked particularly well.

I would also like to put on the record my thanks to Renee Easten and Jenny North, the secretariat, for the great work they did. I should also acknowledge the minister and his staff from the Department of Infrastructure and Planning for their preparation and their willingness to be involved in the estimates committee and to provide information where they can. That being said, it is with some reluctance—and this has been acknowledged already—that I prepared a dissenting report to the committee's report. I did not do that lightly but because of the concerns that I have about the failure of the minister to explain \$75 million in expenditure.

Mr Fraser interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I note the interjections from the Treasurer. He may be happy to have a budget line item of \$75 million that could not be explained in the estimates committee hearing, but I will not accept that on behalf of the people of Queensland. They have a right to know where the money is being spent. Questions were asked again and again, and even when the minister took the question on notice and

then provided a response the best he could provide was 'weed management', in addition to the Budget Highlights comments that he had reiterated over and over again. This is the difference that occurs between this side of politics and that side. On that side they are loose and quick with money. On this side we want to ensure that there is expenditure that can be shown.

There are concerns that I will address with regard to the estimates process. I note that standing order 181(3) clearly states that the minister is required to provide the answers to questions on notice by 10 am. The answers were provided more than an hour and 45 minutes late. With a short window of only 24 hours to take on those answers and prepare for the estimates committee process, it is unacceptable that those answers were late.

The concerns that I have alluded to regard the inability of the department, and in particular of the minister, to provide sufficient detail. When we are going through the estimates committee process, we do so on behalf of the people of Queensland. There is a concept called the separation of powers between the executive and the parliament, and it is clearly something that is not understood on that side of the House. I note with disappointment the comment from the member for Waterford, because I am told through media reports that he was one of only two who were willing to stand up against the asset sell-off that was being proposed. He was someone who had true conviction and appreciated a different point of view.

What I have put forward in this Estimates Committee C dissenting report is an alternative view. It is a view that says that the people of Queensland have a right to know how \$75 million is going to be spent. Despite being asked not just once by me in a question on notice but also by the member for Chatsworth in a question on notice, the minister failed to provide an answer. The minister was then asked during the committee process and again failed to provide an answer. The minister then took the question on notice and once again failed to provide an answer. It behoves me to ensure that the people of Queensland are aware that I will not be supporting government expenditure that cannot be adequately explained.

My report has been accepted into the committee report, so I will of course be voting to accept it, as I would expect others would because my report is part of that. It is part of the committee report, and I expect anyone who believes in good governance and believes that ministers should be able to explain their expenditure would support this dissenting report. The people of Queensland have heard for far too long about poor infrastructure planning. Two recent Auditor-General's reports have been critical of the department. Indeed, the Auditor-General has referred to infrastructure projects only being considered successful if they deliver intended benefits at an acceptable cost. There were no intended benefits shown.

(Time expired)

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (5.08 pm): I rise to support the Estimates Committee C report. I listened with some interest to the comments made by the shadow minister in his contribution to this debate today. Once again, the member for Callide continues to show his complete ignorance of the Wild Rivers Act.

Mr Seeney: That's not nice. You could not answer the question. You did not have a very good day, did you?

Mr ROBERTSON: If you want to talk about people being nice, you should reflect on your own personal attacks that you made on people who have an inability to respond.

Mr Seeney: You could have responded; you didn't know the answers. You did not have a clue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide will cease using the word 'you', especially across the chamber.

Mr ROBERTSON: When it comes to any debate on wild rivers what always needs to be remembered is that in 2005 when the legislation was brought into this place by me as the then minister responsible and it came to the time to nail their colours to the mast on the issue of wild rivers, did they dissent, did they vote against the wild rivers legislation? The answer is absolutely no.

Mr Seeney: The answer is yes.

Mr ROBERTSON: Then the member for Callide is misleading this parliament. The *Hansard* record shows that when the House got the opportunity to divide on the wild rivers legislation he sat mute and absurd and in quasi-support of the wild rivers legislation.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Pitt): Order! That language is unparliamentary.

Mr ROBERTSON: So any comment made by the member for Callide on wild rivers should always be seen through that prism of quasi-support in 2005 when he had the opportunity to vote against the legislation and did nothing.

That is why so much of what went on in the estimates committee hearing on the wild rivers issue was completely misleading. Any reading of the legislation and any reading of the declarations—particularly the last three that were made earlier this year—shows that the economic aspirations of Indigenous people, particularly in Cape York, are protected.

Mr Seeney: Noel Pearson does not think so.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is why when you actually read those declarations and come across provisions that dedicate significant amounts of water to be reserved for Indigenous purposes, reserved for economic development purposes, reserved for projects of state significance you can only come to the conclusion that, in terms of resources coming out of those rivers, that is water that has been reserved with future economic development opportunities in mind. When it comes down to it—

Mr Gibson: Tania Major was wrong? Our Australian of the Year was wrong?

Mr ROBERTSON: I will take that interjection.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: Indeed. Because in 2005 when I stood in this place and introduced this bill I specifically said in my second reading speech that the Aurukun bauxite deposits were excluded from the wild rivers legislation. That was well before any tendering process commenced. In fact you, member for Callide, made comment on that provision and supported that provision.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister will refrain from using the word 'you'.

Mr ROBERTSON: The member for Callide supported that provision. The member for Callide thought that was a sensible provision. When Tania Major makes the allegations that she does she needs, I would suggest, to be very careful to get her history and her facts right before she makes those allegations. That is why, member for Gympie, she is absolutely wrong.

I challenge anyone to suggest otherwise because the facts speak for themselves. We are talking about bauxite leases that are over 30 years old. All that happened in relation to that matter was that I, as the Minister for Mines, took it off the company that held those leases because they did not abide by the provisions and put them out for international tender so that we, the people of Queensland, could actually get the benefit of the exploitation of those resources.

To suggest, as has been done, that there was some corrupt activity in that frankly is galling and absolutely inappropriate and factually incorrect. I hope I actually have the opportunity to speak to Ms Major about that at some stage in the future so we can work these issues through so that there can be no misapprehension into the future about what wild rivers legislation means. I look forward to meeting Noel Pearson in the not-too-distant future to have similar discussions with him.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.13 pm): I want to speak about three matters that were referred to at the Estimates Committee C hearing—the issue of the water pipeline from Wivenhoe Dam to Toowoomba, the missing link of the Wondoan-Banana railway line and the Toowoomba bypass with reference to the Building Australia Fund.

Toowoomba has a social blight that no other Australian city has. We have around 4,000 B-doubles a day going through the main east-west road of our city and through 16 sets of traffic lights. People have to see the deterioration of the road to understand it. We have deaths, injuries, blockages and closures on this highway. These trucks can be carrying cattle or about 10,000 tonnes of grain a day. That amounts to hundreds of trucks a day to carry the grain. They are carrying coal to Swanbank to keep the lights on in South-East Queensland. They are carrying coal and grain down to the Brisbane port. In fact, approximately 70 per cent of what goes across to the Brisbane port for export goes through the main highway of Toowoomba.

No other city in Australia should have to endure what this city endures—almost total blockages and closures at certain times of the day. It is particularly so in the late afternoon. People are almost unable to get into schools, into service stations and into businesses along that road. It has to be seen in the late afternoon to be believed.

Some \$700 million was put aside for this in the last Howard government budget and the Rudd government cancelled it. I have asked questions about this in parliament for many years. The latest answers coming from the Minister for Infrastructure, who is in the chamber at the moment, is that the government is writing to the federal government or lobbying for the money and all the rest of it.

We will not get that road unless the minister is prepared to make it the No. 1 priority. Unless it is made the No. 1 priority every time money comes to this state, no matter how important this bypass is—it is the most important road in Australia that carries all the freight from South-East Queensland to the southern states and to the Northern Territory; it is very important to economy of this nation—it just gets overridden by another ring-road or something or other for the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast or the city

or wherever. It is about time the regions that provide the wealth, that provide the jobs, that sustain our economy and that are the conduit for the wealth of South-West Queensland and Western Queensland that comes through to South-East Queensland are recognised.

There was a recent council petition on this which had 25,774 signatures. It is time that we recognised where our wealth comes from. It is indecent to continue to foist on a city like Toowoomba this sort of road pressure that we are enduring at the moment. It is going to get worse because the cattle trains are no longer able to carry the cattle from out west. More and more B-doubles carrying cattle are coming through Toowoomba to go to the Dinmore, Beenleigh and Brisbane meatworks. More and more grain is coming through Toowoomba because of the last three bumper seasons. More and more coal is coming through.

I asked a question about Camby Downs. It is going to be online by 2010 and producing coal. The minister says that that coal is going to be carried by train. They cannot carry the coal from Acland by train. Some 60 per cent or more of that Acland coal is coming through the city. It is about to double its production. How many more hundreds of thousands of B-doubles that will have to come through the city are going to be needed for not only the Acland coal but also the Camby Downs coal? The Camby Downs coal cannot be taken through to Gladstone because the missing link is no longer there.

Finally, I mention the water pipeline. The rest of South-East Queensland has had water grids. There are water grids up to the north coast and down to the south coast and all over the place. Yet the Toowoomba Regional Council has to pay a contribution of \$112 million towards the total cost of \$1.87 billion for the pipeline from Wivenhoe Dam to our system.

We just never seem to get our share of the money. All the other places in South-East Queensland and the rest of Queensland get it. It has meant that the access fee for Toowoomba residents has doubled in the latest lot of council rates. There are massive increases in rate costs. The cost of a unit of water is up to \$1.50. Everyone is paying through the nose. South-East Queensland gets the stuff free. Our regional council has to pay for that infrastructure.

We sit on top of a mountain. The water has to be lifted around 700 to 800 metres vertically. It is a very special case. One would think we could get something for that. What has the government done? It has taken \$6.5 million in normal state government grants out of the council budget. That has added to and exacerbated this unbelievable impost put on the people of Toowoomba because of the drought and because we have to access a pipeline. Everyone else in South-East Queensland gets the pipelines and it does not cost their council anything. It is put in place. We have to pay. It is about time Queensland got a fair dinkum go from this state Labor government which continues to neglect our city.

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Estimates Committee C report. As a member of Estimates Committee C, I give my thanks to the chair, the member for Waterford, and the deputy chair, the member for Warrego, for their assistance in the lead-up to this hearing and on the actual estimates committee hearing day as it was my first time on an estimates committee.

Can I say from the outset that as a new member I think the estimates committees are very helpful to new members to allow us to get an insight into the way a number of the different departments work. I did take the opportunity to come and listen to a number of ministers in their portfolio areas.

I was particularly happy to be a member of this committee because it meant that I could learn a lot more about the activities of the departments that appeared before that committee. I want to thank the three ministers—Minister Hinchliffe, Minister Robertson and Minister Struthers—for their openness in answering the questions. It is interesting what one learns during this process, and I was happy to learn of a number of projects that this government is running which are very positive and great for this state. I want to talk about wild rivers, which was mentioned earlier, and the benefit that will accrue to those remote areas because of the 10 wild rivers rangers who have been employed at a cost of \$0.9 million. It is great for people in areas where there are limited job opportunities to use their skills to protect the environment for the future.

During discussion on wild rivers a number of the questions asked were very well answered. However, I struggle to understand how members opposite who were at the hearing still have trouble understanding what was said. I can only conclude that they are being deliberately misleading. I have to conclude that, because I cannot believe that they cannot have this knowledge when they go on about what wild rivers is purportedly going to do. In answer to the question that I asked of Minister Robertson, he quite clearly said that wild rivers is not retrospective and does not cease activities such as business opportunities for farming, tourism or anything else. He said quite clearly that it is simply there to protect high-preservation parts of those rivers from inappropriate development.

I do not think that that is that hard to understand. It is quite clear that people can still go about their business. There are still opportunities for people to make a living by developing those areas as long as they do not destroy the area that they are developing or destroy the thing that people are coming there to see. We do not have to look very far to see where that has happened in the past. This is a great thing that this government is doing, and I commend the department for the activities that it has

undertaken. I only wish that the opposition would stop misrepresenting this issue to get a headline in the paper and come on board with the environmental steps that this government is taking to protect that area of the state.

I was also interested to hear from Minister Struthers about a number of programs that this government is running, and I support her comments earlier about youth justice conferencing. This is a great initiative of the government. Once again, it was disappointing to see the LNP members on the committee go back to the good old 'lock 'em up' boot camp simplistic and populist rubbish that they continue to go on with that has proven time and time again to not work. What works is getting people to take responsibility.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr KILBURN: I know a lot more than you do, mate. We have to get people to take responsibility for their actions in order to set them on a better path rather than locking them up and taking away their opportunity to develop as human beings and contribute to the community later on. I congratulate the department on those initiatives. However, there are many more initiatives, including the social housing initiatives of this government. I commend this government together with the federal government. It was highlighted quite clearly in the estimates committee hearing what an appalling effort the Howard government made towards public housing. So it is good to see that we finally have two governments working in conjunction to provide some fantastic outcomes for social housing in this state, and it is a shame that it took so long to get rid of the coalition government in Canberra to achieve it. That is another great opportunity, and I am happy to say that a number of those social housing projects are being built in my electorate of Chatsworth. I was also happy to hear the minister speak about bungalows which are being used to house people in times of need, and I am happy to say that one of these is being put into my electorate with the support of the Carina Leagues Club. It is going to buy one of the bungalows and put it on to the Carina youth—

(Time expired)

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (5.23 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2009 as it relates to Infrastructure and Planning. Infrastructure and planning are key issues for the Sunshine Coast. It would seem that planning in our region is also important to the government because it is so anxious to fast-track development. Unfortunately, the fast-tracking is not being matched by the infrastructure needed to support the growth that the government is promoting. We have heard a lot about this year's budget and about how the government is spending on infrastructure to protect Queensland jobs and invest in the future. Precious little of that spending is being directed towards the Sunshine Coast.

There is no mention in the budget of the multimodal transport corridor or CAMCOS—both essential projects to meet future transport growth. The only expenditure on the Bruce Highway is largely being funded by the federal government. The Sunshine Coast University Hospital has been postponed for two years. Last year the Labor government said that it wanted to develop the Sunshine Coast and fast-track that development so that greenfield areas like Palmview would be developer ready by mid-2009. However, where are the budget commitments to infrastructure which would support the fast-tracking of these developments? The government claims it has a commitment to affordable housing. Affordability assumes that new housing will have access to essential infrastructure—roads, transport, employment, education services. The reality is that on greenfield sites none of this infrastructure exists. It has to be created, which means it has to be paid for.

Let us take Palmview as an example. Palmview is located just south of Sippy Downs. I know it well because it was part of my old electorate of Kawana. It is a greenfield site, so all of the infrastructure will have to be built to service it. It is one of those sites that the government wants development ready years before the local authority thought it was appropriate. The previous Caloundra council local growth management strategy identified that Palmview should not be considered for development before 2016. This would allow for infrastructure and environmental issues to be resolved prior to any housing being built. This was a sensible position, but this government in its wisdom knows better. It is saying, 'Bring it on!', but there is nothing in the budget that commits to state infrastructure to support this decision.

Developers can be asked to fund roads, sewerage and so on, but who is responsible for providing public transport, bus drivers and the buses? Who is responsible for putting teachers in schools? That is the state government's responsibility. Only after providing this infrastructure can the development be justified, particularly greenfield developments which take place where there are no roads, no schools, no existing services. To take just one example, there is even no funding for the planning of the upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Caloundra and Sippy Downs to allow additional traffic to enter the Palmview development, and I hope the minister takes that on board. My question to the government is: how can it justify fast-tracking developments like Palmview when there is no provision in the budget for essential infrastructure? How is it going to support growth over the next decade? This budget offers no answers to these questions. Promoting growth without infrastructure is only destroying the lifestyle. It certainly will not deliver affordable housing and sustainability.

While mentioning infrastructure projects, I understand that the desalination plant on the Gold Coast was a wonderful idea at the time. Some \$1 billion or more has been spent on it and it is still not producing. It is a rusting bundle of bolts that just has not come together. If the government had spent the time and put some thought and energy into planning instead of knee-jerk reactions, it would have had a better outcome. It needs to think about the cost and ask itself: is it going to work in the future?

I also want to touch on the Traveston Dam—another major infrastructure project that is going to happen in Queensland. Much thought had gone into it, but because an election was due the government decided, ‘Gee, we’d better not go forward with this. It’s not going to be popular.’ The government continues to move forward, saying that it is going to spend \$75 million on re-establishing the environment in the area. I do not know how it is going to spend that \$75 million. I understand that it is going to clear weeds, but it may wish to relocate every lungfish and every Mary River turtle in its own six-metre tank so that it can move them individually, because \$75 million is a lot of money! It may be able to afford to do that with that much money! My advice to the government is that the \$1 billion that it is putting towards this dam that it is not building at this point in time—

Mr Gibson: \$1.59 billion!

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, member for Gympie. I appreciate that. That \$1.59 billion will build the hospital on the Sunshine Coast—the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The government needs to think more about the lives of the people of Queensland. The people of Brisbane come to the Sunshine Coast to visit. If they get sick, they need a hospital. So when these people start to drop off the perch and die, the government should take that responsibility on its shoulders. It makes commitments but it does not deliver. It does not have the guts to fulfil the delivery of those commitments that it made to the people of Queensland, and that is why it is going to lose at the next election.

Debate, on motion of Ms Nelson-Carr, adjourned.

MOTION

Establishment of Royal Commission, Allegations of Corruption

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.29 pm): I move—

That this parliament calls on the government to establish a royal commission to investigate the culture of secrecy, political cronyism and allegations of corruption within the government.

For the last month this government has been embroiled in problems with secrecy, nepotism and a culture of corruption that goes right to the heart of the cabinet table. We have seen it with the jailing of former minister Gordon Nuttall, we have seen it with dodgy land deals and we have seen it with ministers who are involved in lobbying. We have had the sight of the Premier having to come in here this afternoon and correct information that she had given in an answer that she gave this morning.

We have heard from a number of senior members of the public in Queensland—the chairman of the CMC, the Integrity Commissioner. Former Premier Wayne Goss said in the paper the other day—

While the accountability mechanisms put in place post Fitzgerald had caught out Gordon Nuttall, the case was a sign of a system where corruption could fester.

He said further—

It is a timely reminder of the risk to the public interest. The result of that recent trial of a minister maybe highlights a system that works but also a culture that is quite worrying.

Over the past couple of weeks we have seen the release of *Dangerous Liaisons*, the CMC report into the police, changes to the South East Queensland Regional Plan, and the lobbying issue of cash for access and success fees. The final person in this quartet of the CMC, the Integrity Commissioner and a former Premier is Tony Fitzgerald, who entered the debate last week with a very famous quote that we have heard a number of times this week in the parliament. I want to share it again, because it is about this government. No matter what the Premier likes to say, it is about this government. Tony Fitzgerald stated—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates, supporters are appointed, and retired politicians can exploit their political connections to obtain ‘success fees’ for deals between business and government.

Those are the words of Tony Fitzgerald, stated in Brisbane on 29 July 2009. No matter how much the Premier wants to say it is about some time before the last 20 years, clearly that is what Tony Fitzgerald was talking about last week. They are the concerns that he has expressed.

So that is why I make this challenge to the Premier: establish a royal commission and invite Tony Fitzgerald to chair it. If you have nothing to fear and nothing to hide, invite Tony Fitzgerald—the great royal commissioner of 1989—to chair the commission. If you will not, tell us why you will not.

Let us look at the history. On Wednesday, 12 May 1987, police minister Bill Gunn announced a royal commission into allegations of police corruption in Queensland. In announcing the inquiry, Mr Gunn said—

This is one way of clearing it up for one and for all, because there have been a series of ministers that have had this hanging over their head and it is not going to hang over my head, I can tell you.

Of course, the subsequent Fitzgerald inquiry exposed the corruption and ensured that those responsible for these reprehensible acts were sent to prison. The Fitzgerald inquiry provided the imprimatur for reforms that led to better accountability in government. What we have seen over the past 20 years, but especially in the last 12, has been this government getting around those recommendations of Fitzgerald. Do we think that if Fitzgerald were reporting now he would say that success fees of half a million dollars paid to former Deputy Premier, Terry Mackenroth, would be appropriate? I am sure he would say that it is completely inappropriate.

Mr Lucas: Absolutely.

Mr LANGBROEK: He would say it is inappropriate.

Mr Lucas: Totally inappropriate.

Mr LANGBROEK: In that case, this government has four ministers who are having relationships with developers and lobbyists. They are doing other things like cash for access. I have already made this offer to the Premier. If the Premier wants to stop taking money from the unions, I am happy in a bipartisan way to work through these issues to stop the perceptions of cash for access.

Today, the lessons of the Fitzgerald inquiry have been lost on Labor. They have found ways to circumvent the system. During the debate on the estimates committee reports the honourable member for Chatsworth said that he reckoned members on this side deliberately have their ears closed. I put it that the members on the government side have their eyes closed and their ears closed. They cannot see what they do anymore. Because they are so close to it, they cannot see it. They are saying all that time, 'What we are doing is genuine,' but they are so involved. As I say, by former minister Nuttall going to jail, corruption is well within the government, going all the way to the top of the cabinet table. We have had Merri Rose—another former minister—going to jail as well for attempted bribery. We have also had another former minister charged with a criminal offence.

Today, the lessons of Fitzgerald have been lost on Labor. Not since the bad old days of Queensland state politics has corruption bred so close inside government.

Mr Lucas: What were the bad old days? Who were the bad old days?

Mr LANGBROEK: Queenslanders want to know just how deep corruption goes to the core of this government. The stench of corruption is pungent in Queensland. Last month Gordon Nuttall, a senior Labor minister, was jailed for corruption. I am happy to acknowledge that it was the National Party that established the Fitzgerald inquiry. I say to the Deputy Premier that we would welcome another royal commission now. The National Party established the royal commission. It was a former National Party minister who was happy to establish the commission.

We ask: why will the Premier not heed the words of Fitzgerald, the man who she thinks single-handedly helped to overturn corruption in Queensland—a revisionist statement that ignores that the Fitzgerald inquiry was actually commissioned by the then National Party government. It established a royal commission. Instead, we have a Premier who has appointed as her chief of staff a self-confessed vote rorter who was drilled out of the parliament and brought back as her chief of staff to come up with tactics and strategies and given a \$100,000 pay rise and a Premier who has her husband in the climate change office without any proper process of appointment.

The Premier says that there are no more bad apples on her benches, but we know that the former Premier talked about eyeballing people. They were the sorts of guarantees that we got from that Premier. From where I am standing, I can see a number of members of the Premier's caucus who were adversely named in the Shepherdson inquiry and the Deputy Premier, the member for Lytton, is one of them.

It is time the Bligh government submitted itself to scrutiny and allowed a royal commission to expose Labor for what it really is: corrupt to the core. The Premier presides over a government where dodgy decision making, backdoor deals and secret bribes are par for the course. The culture of corruption in the Labor Party is fostered by the current Premier's and the former Premier's laissez faire attitudes towards the immoral and illegal actions of her ministers.

When ministers lie to parliament—and who can forget that—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LANGBROEK: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. When ministers mislead parliament and get off the hook because the government changes the laws—and we all remember that day when the Premier Anna Bligh, the member for South Brisbane, came in here and seconded the motion that exonerated

Gordon Nuttall, the then member for Sandgate, and said nice things about him as well, and then came in and changed the Criminal Code, something that Labor governments never want to do but was prepared to do to let parliamentarians lie to the parliament—

Mr SPEAKER: No, again—

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I withdraw—deliberately mislead the parliament. So is it really surprising that ministers might think that they can get away with more? That is the aspect that we are dealing with here tonight. When ambitious apparatchiks who commit crimes by changing their electoral enrolment to stack preselections get rewarded with ministries and highly paid Public Service jobs, is it really surprising that government members will push the boundaries? When ministers are protected from scrutiny by trolleys of documents being wheeled into cabinet, are we really so naive to believe that this government is open and accountable? The culture of permissiveness, the insidious collectivist practice of protecting the bad guys, is what causes corruption.

It is true: this state is run by the mates for the mates. The Labor Party has shown its contempt for this parliament and of this state by letting people get away with wrongdoing. It is time for an investigation, with all the wide-ranging powers that only come with a royal commission. The Premier has talked about referring to the CMC all the issues relating to the South East Queensland Regional Plan—the 33 matters since 2005. How is the CMC going to cope with that? Slowly, slowly, and it will not be revealed here in the parliament as to what is happening. So clearly, we need a royal commission to examine the decisions of those ministers who we know to be corrupt. If they are worth their salt, they will remember that they did not come into this parliament to thumb their noses at decency and integrity. A government that has nothing to hide has nothing to lose by fully investigating these allegations of corruption. I commend the motion to the House.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Southern Downs, I know this is a matter of great importance to both sides. I would ask you to maintain the civility and address your comments through the chair. That way it will not be as personalised as it otherwise might be.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.39 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This is a motion which aims to establish a royal commission in Queensland with the broad terms of reference that we saw from the Fitzgerald inquiry. What is the reason for that? There should be no more obvious reason than the Galaxy Poll that we saw last Sunday that said that 65 per cent—two-thirds—of all Queenslanders felt that the Labor Party government, led by Anna Bligh, was rotten to the core, was corrupt to the core, was full of nepotism and full of cronyism. That is the jury. It is the people of Queensland who are crying out for a royal commission. It is the people of Queensland who are crying out for this government and this Premier to show some real leadership and to clean up this mess. They are crying out for the government to do more than the Labor Party usually does, that is, get its little broom and sweep it along; lift up the carpet, sweep it underneath and put it down as though it has not happened. That is the Labor Party government in Queensland.

This government is rotten to the core not only because it is a modern government in a modern era but because it is a Labor government that believes it can do anything. As Wayne Goss said, it is suffering the scourge of longevity which is actually leading it to make decisions and do things which are inherently a part of governments that have been in office for such a long period.

This Labor government has form. This Labor Party has form and it has pretty dark form indeed. Let us look back at some of its dark history over the past 20 years. Does anyone remember Keith Wright? We all remember Keith Wright. Many of those people opposite were lined up getting their photograph taken with Keith Wright because they wanted him to be Premier of Queensland. He is one of Queensland's worst convicted paedophiles. What happened after that? We remember Bill D'Arcy, who sat over on that side with many of those members of parliament; they sang his praises. They kept him in the party because they needed his numbers—hardly the mark of a party that believes in principle, integrity and probity. They were happy to have their photograph taken with him. They wanted him to be Deputy Premier. He was the deputy leader. What happened? He is one of Queensland's most insidious convicted paedophiles.

But it does not stop there. The list goes down to Merri Rose, who was jailed—another cabinet minister that they sat across from. Then there is Gordon Nuttall, a mate to all, a very special mate to the Deputy Premier, who stood in this place in December of 2005 and sang his praises. I was sitting here and I thought, 'This Deputy Premier is probably going to nominate this bloke for an Order of Australia.' He was such a fine and model citizen! He was closely followed by the Premier in the adulation and the adoration that they could actually profess for this person.

Let us cast our minds back also to Grant Musgrove, the former member for Springwood. He was done for what? Electoral cheating! What happened after that? The Deputy Premier of the day, Jim Elder, was done for what? Electoral cheating—more rorts! Then what did we have? The piece de resistance,

Mike Kaiser, was done for electoral rorting. Peter Beattie, man of integrity, said, 'I'll have no rorters,' and not only that but, 'They will go to jail, jail, jail.' Do honourable members know where the jail is in Queensland? In the Premier's office, because Kaiser is in the Premier's office. He has been promoted. Guess what? He had a \$100,000 pay rise on a \$300,000 salary. So if you are an electoral rorter in Queensland you do not go to jail; you go to the Premier's office and you sit there, you pull the strings and you advise on integrity, you advise on probity and you advise on how to comply with electoral disclosure laws. Have we not seen that recently in relation to the CFMEU that failed to disclose \$225,000 and the Labor Party did the same? There have been serious crimes and serious illegality and this government should pay that money back, but it is not.

This government has form. If the Labor Party had been in power in the 1980s it would never have established a Fitzgerald inquiry. It would have swept it under the carpet. It is an about time that it took a leaf out of the book of the previous government and established a Fitzgerald inquiry with Tony Fitzgerald as head. It needs to clean up this rotten stench of corruption once and for all.

(Time expired)

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (5.44 pm): I move—

That all words after 'parliament' be deleted and the following words inserted:

- 'Recognises that the powers of the Crime and Misconduct Commission are equal to a royal commission; and
- expresses its full support and confidence in the CMC to investigate any matter concerning public administration—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. In terms of this amendment that the Deputy Premier is moving, it quite clearly says 'recognises the power of the CMC as equal to the royal commission'. The CMC knows it is not and this House knows that it is not.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr LUCAS: The Fitzgerald inquiry itself needed a whole lot of Orders in Council to extend its powers—something the CMC does not need. The Fitzgerald inquiry was a watershed in Queensland's political history. Under the Bjelke-Petersen government we not only had a Premier who was ultimately charged with perjury; we had a Police Commissioner who went to jail. He not only went to jail—

Mr SPEAKER: Did you finish your amendment?

Mr LUCAS: I thought I did finish it. The second point states—

- expresses its full support and confidence in the CMC to investigate any matter concerning public administration of Queensland that the CMC sees fit.'

Mr SPEAKER: And it is seconded by?

Hon. CR DICK: I second the amendment.

Mr LUCAS: Mr Speaker, might I start?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, you have five minutes starting now.

Hon. PT LUCAS: The Fitzgerald inquiry was a watershed in Queensland's political history. Twenty-two years ago seems like a long time ago. In those days a Police Commissioner was knighted, a Police Commissioner who subsequently went to jail for 14 years. Who could forget Sir Justin Hickey—and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke about awards—who was given a knighthood because he lived in Victoria and donated money to a nursing home in Kingaroy. That was what happened then.

In no way would I seek to trivialise the outrageous conduct of Gordon Nuttall, who got what he deserved. I was asked the other day about Nuttall. What I know now and what we have seen is that he deserves to be condemned. Contrast the Deputy Leader of the Opposition talking about Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the member for Warrego talking about Russ Hinze. They talked about Russ Hinze and the Fitzgerald inquiry. Tony Fitzgerald said—

While a Minister of the Crown, Hinze, his wife or one or other of their companies was paid or lent more than \$1.5 million by a number of individuals and companies involved in dealings with the Government, often in matters for which Hinze was ministerially responsible.

What is the difference? Nuttall went to jail and was condemned. What is the difference? I condemned Nuttall. On 17 September 2002 the member for Warrego said—

He was a great minister and a good minister and he got things done.

I also table what he did about the Surfers Paradise centre—another loan involved there.

Tabled paper: Extract of document, page 105, in relation to matters raised in the Fitzgerald Inquiry [666].

Tabled paper: Extract of document, page 103, in relation to matters raised in the Fitzgerald Inquiry [667].

Read this document; it is an indictment on your side, and the Liberals in particular ought to be disgraced and ashamed—

Mr SPEAKER: It would help if you address your comments through chair.

Mr LUCAS: I should note that the Premier is absent. She is at a function with the Governor-General. What is the difference between Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who got \$400,000 from crook Alan Bond, and Gordon Nuttall? Luke Shaw. That is the difference. But again the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said Sir Joh was a great man and he was a role model. He said—

I, like many of my colleagues, was drawn to his values ...

What did Tony Fitzgerald say the other day? He said—

The Connolly-Ryan inquiry was soon set up to discredit the reforms which had been introduced on my recommendation so that they could be dismantled with minimum community disquiet, but that exercise failed when the Supreme Court stopped the farce because of ... Connolly's manifest bias.

It soon became apparent to Queenslanders that the Coalition was at that time still not fit to govern—

And there are people in this House such as the members for Warrego, Toowoomba South, Gregory, Maroochydore and Southern Downs who are still in this parliament and will vote here tonight. Of course the Connolly-Ryan inquiry was struck down for bias. They appointed a former Liberal member for Kurilpa as their commissioner who was found by Justice Jim Thomas to say—

Now that our side of politics is back in power we can do a proper critique of the Fitzgerald experiment.

He said—

There was a strong case of 'ostensible bias' on the part of Connolly—

with respect to matters that the commissioner had to consider. They include a perception of his continuing favour for one side of politics. That is the history of it. Fitzgerald went on to say—

... a coalition of Nationals and so-called Liberals, including relics of the Bjelke-Petersen era, regained power in Queensland with the help of the Police Union.

Who could forget the Mundingburra MOU? As I said, it is not a history lesson. Many of these people are still here. For Liberals like the member for Clayfield to sit in here with them and cop them really says more about him. Who would forget the Police Union wanting to sack the commissioner and wanting to sack six assistant commissioners? And Borbidge, their former leader, signed up to it. The very scary part of the debate is that these people are still here.

What about this clip from the *Sydney Morning Herald* 23 years ago, in October 1986, about Sir William Knox, a Liberal leader? The article states—

Sir William said a decision by Mr Hinze to overturn a veto by the Landsborough Shire Council on a development application by the Nationals media director, Clive Palmer, was an example of the special treatment not available to the rest of the community.

These people are still here.

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I was a member of the Borbidge government and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, and I say to the honourable the Deputy Premier, that I find the comments he is making offensive if he is directing them to me and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: If the member finds something offensive, withdraw.

Mr LUCAS: If he finds anything offensive, I withdraw it. This crowd have not changed. The same people are still here. People like Clive Palmer are their benefactors and mentors. The weak Leader of the Opposition is being controlled by the deputy and others, but they are still here. Not only do they want to get the CMC; there are punch-ups at Greek restaurants, tactical lies of its former leaders, doctoring emails and not disclosing donor lists. They have never changed. That is why they do not support the CMC. That is why they do not want the CMC to investigate things. The CMC has investigated and prosecuted people from both sides of politics in this House, and anyone who breaks the law in that regard and is prosecuted by the CMC deserves it. The difference is that we condemned Nuttall; they support theirs and they are still here.

(Time expired)

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.51 pm): I am pleased to second the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. The defining legacy of any government is twofold: firstly, its willingness to confront difficult issues that face the state; and, secondly, the legislative and policy action that is bequeathed to future generations of Queenslanders.

The opposition is unwilling to address the important issues facing our state. The Leader of the Opposition has blamed everyone from his own office to his deputy, leader-in-waiting and mentor, the member for Southern Downs, but has failed to demonstrate one ounce of leadership in respect of public accountability and integrity in our state. Willingness to duck and dive, to obfuscate and ignore are not the traits of leadership.

In the absence of any real policy initiative, in the absence of any leadership, what do we have? We have a call for a royal commission. We have a call to institute a body that would have no greater powers, no greater scope of inquiry, no greater utility in respect of official misconduct than the Crime and Misconduct Commission. But why should we be surprised? When it comes to the other side they

have form. It is ingrained in their DNA to oppose the architecture of Fitzgerald. They have opposed it every time they have had the opportunity. When they were last in government what did they do? They passed legislation to nobble the CJC because it suited their political ends to do so. It was not for increased accountability, not for the good of Queensland and not to protect the public interest; it was to protect themselves.

They passed the Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Act 1996 to upset and seek to overturn the Carruthers inquiry into their grubby little deal with the Queensland Police Union. This was legislation introduced by an Attorney-General who had been the subject of a vote of no confidence and who respected the processes and dignity of this House so greatly that he completely ignored them. They passed that legislation so that their hand-picked, overtly political and ultimately doomed farce—the Connolly-Ryan inquiry—could make every effort to sink the CJC and the work it was undertaking. But this Labor government has been committed to ensuring that the Crime and Misconduct Commission, part of the architecture of Fitzgerald, is appropriately resourced and retains the appropriate powers to carry out its work in Queensland.

There should be no misunderstanding about the extent of the powers available to the CMC in conducting an inquiry. While those opposite seem to believe that there is a certain magic to the phrase 'royal commission', the people of Queensland can be reassured that the Crime and Misconduct Commission possesses a suite of powers that equals, if not exceeds, those of a commission of inquiry. Let us consider for a moment these powers, instead of jumping at the sound of a dog whistle.

In the course of an investigation into official misconduct—and that is what they are alleging—the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 gives the commission the power to: enter and search premises, both with and without a warrant depending on the circumstances and the nature of premises; seize material found during the searches; compel public officials to provide assistance to the commission; compel persons to give evidence to commission inquiries and hearings; require a person to attend a hearing, including prisoners; search persons; direct financial institutions to give information on persons; use surveillance devices to collect information; restrain or confiscate proceeds of illegal activity without any conviction; telephone interception warrants or warrants under the Commonwealth Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979; apply for a telecommunications interception warrant, a stored communications warrant—SMS, emails and so on; authorise access to telecommunications data—phone call records and so on; conduct controlled operations—that is, covert operations—including the power to issue assumed identities to gather intelligence or evidence; and access intelligence databases from other law enforcement agencies. Hearings by the commission can be open or they can be closed. They can require witnesses to produce documents immediately and can take sealed evidence from an individual. Make no mistake: this is a full and comprehensive set of powers that have been granted to the CMC, and a royal commission would not be empowered to do anything more.

The question the opposition may then consider is, once again: why should it be pursuing this line? Because it is a political line. I might have thought the Leader of the Opposition would have a better understanding of the CMC. Look at what the CMC did on the Gold Coast. It had a very broad-ranging inquiry in 2004 into allegations of misconduct that occurred in the very seat of the Leader of the Opposition. The CMC inquiry was into the Gold Coast City Council. What did the CMC do then? The terms of reference included investigating cases of alleged or suspected official misconduct by councillors concerning a range of allegations including false or misleading statements by candidates, bribery, conflicts of interest and any other criminal offence involved. It also included any related cases of alleged or suspected official misconduct by any other persons.

This is a ruse to hide the opposition's failure of policy leadership in this state—the policy vacuum that it represents. Labor will support the CMC to the end.

(Time expired)

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (5.56 pm): What we are talking about here today is not, if you like, the distractions of the Attorney-General or the Deputy Premier. What we are talking about today is having a royal commission to investigate the culture of secrecy, political cronyism and allegations of corruption within the government. That is what we are talking about here—having a wide-ranging royal commission into what this government has done, is doing and is intending to do with its Labor lobbyists in its various guises.

Labor has been in power in Queensland now for nearly 18 of the last 20 years. During that time there has been a significant change in the way politics is perceived and conducted. While we may wish it otherwise, there is a healthy suspicion and scrutiny of the activities of parliament's elected representatives and most particularly governments. In Queensland we have moved from the days of having no oversight of government to having the CMC, as well as the Integrity Commissioner and freedom of information laws, now called right to information laws.

As these protections have grown, we have also seen more sophisticated ways of honouring those laws more in the breach than in the observance, more by the letter and not in the spirit, as well as in more recent times in straight-out breaches of the law and corruption. What does Mr Fitzgerald now say about the situation in Queensland? The Deputy Premier gave us his version of it. Let me repeat what Fitzgerald said. He said—

Ethics are always tested by incumbency—

and here we have a government in power for 18 of the last 20 years—

Secrecy was re-established by sham claims that voluminous documents were 'Cabinet-in-confidence'—

and we know about that one—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

He continues—

Neither side of politics is interested in these issues except for short-term political advantage as each enjoys or plots impatiently for its turn at the privileges and opportunities which accompany power.

Now is the time to put the lie to those last words. Now is the time for both sides of politics to show that they are more than just being interested in these issues for short-term political gain but are prepared to have a full inquiry into the corruption, cronyism and allegations that surround this government and that have arisen particularly over the last week.

We can of course now freely discuss the case of former member of the ALP and a former member of this place, Gordon Nuttall. What we find in that case is clearly a person who did not understand, and still refuses to accept, that there is a difference between his own interests and that of the public.

We see headlines that raise the issue of members of this government having attended fundraising functions organised by the ALP at which large business organisations pay significant sums to get close to decision makers. Here are some of the headlines: 'Out to lunch'; 'Premier defies warning on fundraisers'; 'Anna Bligh continues to charge the state's corporate elite to wine and dine with her despite Queensland Integrity Commissioner, Gary Crooke, warning the fundraisers gave an unfair advantage.' What does Wayne Goss say? Wayne Goss said—

Some things have happened in recent times that have shown standards have slipped.

He went on to say—

There have been a number of people who've gone to jail, most recently a minister from the Beattie government.

That's a clear sign of a worrying culture.

Indeed, today's *Australian* reports that the Prime Minister was the star attraction at a fundraiser that raised \$100,000 to pay one candidate's outstanding bills. We see more and more each day in Queensland the links between former Labor politicians and seemingly positive results for their clients. We have seen the allegations of favourable outcomes in the South-East Queensland plan for companies tied in to Labor lobbyists in areas such as Inskip Point, Palmwoods, Caboolture and Tugun. We see it in the awarding of major construction contracts for infrastructure from Airport Link and others. We have seen success fees of half a million dollars reportedly paid to former Labor members of federal and state parliaments. We see it in this very House as former members hobnob with current ministers in the Strangers Dining Room. And we see it in the lack of openness and accountability that sees decisions made without an open and accountable process or the ability of this parliament to scrutinise those decisions in-depth.

Here in Queensland the employment by the Labor government of a plethora of minders and advisers who hail from the lobbying industry only reinforces the suspicion of cronyism and corruption. There is a list of names that starts with Go Corp and the Netbet affair in 1999, through to 15 July this year when Mr Nuttall was convicted.

But the reality is that if the image of governance is to be improved in Queensland, it will take more than just the referral of matters to the CMC on a one-off basis. It will require a wide-ranging inquiry into the effect of union mates appointments—the AEWU's 15 appointments to boards, the CFMEU's payments and the whole range of other payments. We need a respected independent investigator. We need a royal commission. As Tony Fitzgerald said last week—

Despite their protestations of high standards of probity, which personally might well be correct and irrespective of what they intend, political leaders who gloss over corruption risk being perceived by their colleagues and the electorate as regarding it of little importance.

This is the opportunity to clean up the act in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.01 pm): This debate tonight is about ethics and standards. The irony of this debate is that it is from an opposition leader who has been caught out deceiving the people of Queensland by producing a doctored email as proof that he could legitimately spend taxpayer money promoting his own vanity. This is a man who is so mesmerised by the power that has suddenly been thrust upon him that he thinks the money the taxpayer gives him to run the opposition office should be spent on a six-foot high billboard of his face. This is the same man who is so careless and offhanded and does not take the time to thoroughly question his staff when presented with information that he misled the people of Queensland.

This is a man who thinks he can be leader by shrugging off the legitimate questions that journalists put to him. This is a man so devoid of ethical standards that, instead of coming into this House and offering this parliament an explanation of his own errors of judgement and lapse of standard, he offers up tonight a shallow synopsis of Tony Fitzgerald's speech and repeats the same old lines we have heard from the opposition year after year.

I too have read Tony Fitzgerald's speech to Griffith University and I do not have any trouble with his speech. I think it is instructive for all of us. We should never forget the past. Tony Fitzgerald also said—

... Queenslanders know little of that era and are largely ignorant of the possibility that history might be repeated.

He also said, and I have not heard this quoted tonight, that—

Matters are much better than they were but it is a mistake to take that for granted.

That is something that consecutive Labor governments have never done.

The debate that has been raging in this state for the last three weeks about police and corruption, about how people access government and about how government decisions are made is an important one because it is about how democracy is maintained in this state. It is ridiculous for either side of this House to try to take the high moral ground and for the deputy leader and others to talk about names like Bill D'Arcy, Merri Rose and Keith Wright, when we could also talk about names like Leisha Harvey, Gibbs, Lane, Lewis and so on. Let us face it: each side of politics has its crosses to bear when we examine our past. It is important that we remind ourselves daily that democracy is important and fragile and it is up to us to display high ethical standards to maintain our important level of democracy in this state.

In 1989 when people like me ran for unwinnable seats that had been held by the conservative governments for over 32 years, it was because we were sick of the unethical decades of Queensland conservative governments in this state. We wanted to see a government with reformist goals clean up democracy in this state. The Goss, the Beattie and now the Bligh governments have all introduced new layers of accountability with institutions and laws to safeguard democracy, but this vigilance of course must be maintained. There are always going to be opportunities for corrupt individuals and practices to operate in any organisation.

I have read the CMC investigation into allegations of police misconduct, Operation Capri. I am sure the others have not because there are no pictures in it. It is very clear that our existing institutions—the CMC, the Police Service and our corrections department—are very capable of identifying, investigating and removing corrupt individuals and practices. They even had the assistance of the Australian Crime Commission in this four-year long investigation. I think in many ways it reveals the maturity of these institutions to deal with malpractices. I know from being Minister for Police that most complaints about police these days come from police themselves, not from the general public.

The recent allegations of political cronyism and corruption to which the opposition refers in this motion are being referred by the Premier to the CMC. Queenslanders can have confidence that the CMC has the powers and the capacity to adequately investigate those allegations, as they have done ably in the past. The call by the opposition for a royal commission is nothing more than political grandstanding. The Queensland taxpayer already spends \$43 million on a commission that has all the powers of a royal commission and it is up to the CMC now. I have confidence that they will do their job and investigate these latest allegations.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (6.06 pm): I rise to support the motion put before the House tonight. I think it is right that we do look at recent history as well as past history. On 26 November 2008, I wrote to the chairman of the Crime and Misconduct Commission as follows—

I raise with you my concerns over recent claims the Labor Party (Queensland Division) made \$500,000 in one weekend by charging major companies and lobbyists for private meetings with existing state government ministers.

I continued—

I note that documents obtained by *The Weekend Australian* revealed Labor's Business Observer Program was a "cash-for-access scheme under which companies pay for the chance to push major and often contentious projects".

I then said—

I would therefore be grateful if the CMC could investigate the abovementioned issues and potential breaches of the Criminal Code (s54, s85, s87 and s103). Similarly, I would appreciate you giving consideration to developing guidelines and principles for the interface between political organizations and elected Members of Parliament that will protect the public interest and help rebuild the integrity and independence of Queensland Government decision-making processes.

For those who do not know, I will go through those sections of the Criminal Code. Section 54 is 'Interference with Governor or Ministers', section 85 is 'Disclosure of official secrets', section 87 is 'Official corruption', and section 103 is 'Providing money for illegal payments'. I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 November 2008, from Mark McArdle MP to Mr Robert Needham, Chairman and CEO, Crime and Misconduct Commission, in relation to potential conflicts of interest [668].

We wrote to the CMC in November 2008 highlighting a \$500,000 donation in essence to the ALP. We would not be having this debate tonight if the CMC had taken on that issue. Is that right, Minister? Is that right, Premier? Is it right that we would not be having this debate tonight if the CMC had taken on the letter that I wrote to them back in November 2008? Is it any wonder that we on this side of the House cannot put our faith in the CMC when they were alerted nine months ago to issues that concerned us? Suddenly, this Premier will stand on her feet and say in a few moments time, 'We're going to refer it to the CMC.' What a load of hogwash.

Where is the Bill Gunn of the Labor Party? We had the Bill Gunn of the National Party who formed the Fitzgerald inquiry. Is there one person on the government benches who is prepared to say that a royal commission is the way to go? I bet there is not. They criticise the National Party in government. There was one man there who said he would take it on and he would make it happen.

I stood in this House with Gordon Nuttall, and back in December three or four years ago I can recall the email coming in. The Premier had recalled state parliament for one day—it had been in recess—and for one reason only: to protect Gordon Nuttall. We sat in this House and the Premier moved a motion which, in essence, said what a great guy is Gordon. The Premier of today seconded the motion. We had a whitewash in this House, where he stood and apologised and the government went on with the cronyism and the corruption—and all the details that are now starting to come out.

I can guarantee you, Mr Speaker, that there will not be one person on that side of the House who has the gumption to stand up for Queensland. Certainly the Premier will not. There are no Bill Gunns over there. I can remember Mr Nuttall sitting over there, roughly where the member for Cook is sitting, looking chaste, humble, sorrowful and very mournful, and looking as though he was really going through pain and agony. It was another con job on the people of Queensland. If this Premier and the then Premier had done the right thing, we would not be sitting here today because we would have had an inquiry years ago to clean up this mess.

(Time expired)

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (6.12 pm): I am pleased to join with others tonight in this debate on accountability, transparency and integrity in public life here in Queensland. As I have outlined before—and I am happy to put it on the record tonight in this debate—my government has been characterised by systematic reform in the area of accountability and transparency. The first decision of my first cabinet when I became Premier was to overhaul the freedom of information laws in Queensland—one of the cornerstones of an accountable government. We now have the most open, transparent FOI laws in Australia, and other states are coming to copy them and other jurisdictions are seeking to emulate them.

Last year I put in place a Register of Lobbyists with the toughest requirements in Australia. We are leading the country. I have implemented a ban on ministers and parliamentary secretaries owning shares—the only state in Australia to do so. In February this year I said that we would ban success fees, and that is what we are doing.

The enemy of accountability is complacency. Last week Tony Fitzgerald issued a wake-up call to all sides of politics, but there is only one side of politics that has heard it. In the past two weeks, what have we seen? We have seen this government move forward with the next round of reforms, building on what we have already done, banning ministers from attending exclusive business fundraisers. Have we been matched in that effort?

Government members: No.

Ms BLIGH: So we are reforming and the Liberal Party National Party is resisting. We have disclosed all of those who attended the 2008 and 2009 Labor Party conferences as business observers. Has that been matched by the Liberal Party National Party?

Government members: No.

Ms BLIGH: We are reforming and they are resisting. Every reform that we have put forward has been resisted and opposed by those opposite. Today what we saw was the spectre of the Leader of the Opposition saying on the one hand that he will disclose who was at the conference and the dinners in

the fullness of time and when he is ready and 'Don't you worry about that; you can trust me.' Then the party president, Mr McIver, came down here to the parliamentary precinct and held a conference and said, 'That material will not be disclosed.' That is what happened.

Government members: Shame!

Ms BLIGH: When it comes to the tough issues of accountability, I lead my party; you are being led by your party. You do not have what it takes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the Premier to address her comments through the chair.

Ms BLIGH: Mr Speaker, we have the extraordinary spectre of the member for Caloundra coming in here and waving around his letter, complaining about political fundraisers when he will not disclose the ones that he attended and he will not disclose information about who attended LNP fundraisers. His mock outrage was fraudulent, as their mock outrage has been on these issues for 20 years. This week we have a Labor government leading momentum for reform on political fundraising nationally. We have Labor leading the charge on reform for accountability. How extraordinary that in all of the wild accusations, in all of the public debate on this, it is Labor with the reform ideas and you lot resisting them. You ought to be putting up the ideas and challenging this side of politics. You have not had one idea.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Address your comments through the chair.

Ms BLIGH: Mr Speaker, they have not put forward a single idea for reform. They do not have one suggestion about how to take us forward. So here we are near the end of the parliamentary week and it is Labor that every day has said, 'Here's the next reform. Here's how to take Queensland forward. Here's how to lead the country,' and you are sitting mute and absurd. If they ever activated the dormant organs between their ears, they might be dangerous.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the proposition that has been put before the House tonight by the Leader of the Opposition. Let me say at the outset what a disgraceful contribution we saw from the Premier tonight. If ever there was confirmation of the fact that the proposition that has been put by the Leader of the Opposition deserves support, it is the response that that proposition garnered from the Premier. The Premier stood here and said that hers is a government of reform and we are the ones who resist. Well tonight, Premier, it is you who is resisting. It is you and your government—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Address your comments through the chair.

Mr SEENEY: Sorry, Mr Speaker. Tonight it is the Premier and her government who are resisting the ultimate test of reform. The proposition that has been put to the House tonight by the Leader of the Opposition is the classic reform that Labor has made so much of for the last 20 years. For the last 20 years every member of the Labor Party at every opportunity has waved around the Fitzgerald report as though it is some article of faith. It has been described as some sort of a major turning point—the birth of modern Queensland. In fact, the Deputy Premier came in here tonight waving around a battered copy.

The proposition before the House tonight is that the same sort of inquiry happen again, and the case has been well made for that same sort of inquiry to happen again. The evidence that that sort of inquiry is needed has been accumulating day after day, week after week and month after month. No matter how the government tries to deny it, the weight of evidence is there that that sort of inquiry is needed again.

So that is the test for the government. The test of the government's appetite for reform is whether or not they are prepared to adopt the ultimate test of reform and institute the sort of royal commission that they so much admired 20 years ago. The truth is that those opposite do not have the courage to do themselves what they so much admire in others. They do not have the courage to do themselves what they so much admire in those that have gone before them in this place.

The members who sat in this parliament and instituted that royal commission that is so admired by generations of Labor parliamentarians who have come through here and who wave it around like some article of faith had a whole lot more courage than is being displayed by any member on the government benches tonight. They had the courage to test the rhetoric. They had the courage to test their institutions with the ultimate reform vehicle—the royal commission.

The alternative proposal that has been put before the House tonight is that somehow we do not need a royal commission because we have the CMC. Nothing could be more absurd than the proposition that has been put by various speakers that the CMC can do everything that a royal commission could do in the circumstances that are faced by Queensland today. The absurdity of that is illustrated by what happened at the Bundaberg Hospital, where a royal commission was required to get to the bottom of the incompetence and maladministration that led to the death and injury of so many people there. Without that royal commission those things would still be covered up.

Time and time again we have seen the CMC used as a clearing house. We have seen the former Premier refer things to the CMC, get a response back from the CMC that says, quite rightly, 'This falls outside the jurisdiction of the CMC,' and then the former Premier come in and wave that around like some sort of clearance for whatever the particular issue is.

There is no doubt that that is the sort of use the current government is seeking to apply to the CMC. If the government had the courage of its convictions, if the words that we hear spouted by the Premier and others had any integrity and had any meaning, then it would be supporting the proposition that has been put by the Leader of the Opposition. It would be testing its own credibility with a royal commission that Queenslanders so badly need.

(Time expired)

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (6.22 pm): I rise in support of the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier in this debate tonight. What an enfeebled and shallow effort we have seen from an enfeebled and shallow leader across the chamber tonight. One week post the clarion call—the wake-up call, as this Premier says—from Tony Fitzgerald, what have we seen from the Leader of the Opposition? We have seen an absolute failure. We have seen a failure to act. We have seen a failure to lead. We have seen a failure to make out a case, a failure to adduce the evidence, a failure to advance their argument beyond the shrillness of the broad, sweeping statements that they make without one substantial piece of evidence being furnished in this parliament or to the CMC, the standing royal commission into corruption that exists in this state. What we have seen in turn is a return to type. We have seen a return to form by the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition party—that is, commencing the deconstruction, the destruction and the campaign against the CMC.

Queenslanders have an insight into what an LNP government would be, because it is the same story that they have seen before—back into power and straight back after the Crime and Misconduct Commission as it seeks to dismantle the architecture that has been put into this place by this side of politics and at every point in time opposed by the other side of politics. What it has revealed tonight is no revelation about some murkiness, only its true intentions—that is, to enter back into government and to once again tear down the CMC. That is the only revelation that has been tabled in this parliament here tonight.

What we have seen is a Leader of the Opposition who is singularly incapable of providing the leadership. Why? Because he cannot. Because it is still the same old National Party that seeks to destroy the CMC, still the same old National Party that is riven by internal division, still the same old National Party that practices lowest common denominator politics, still the same old National Party that seeks to stand over what used to be known as the decent history of the Liberals in this parliament, still the same old National Party that seeks to have cash for access to their shadow ministry, still the same old National Party that stands against the reform to political donations—to cap, to regulate and to make the system more transparent—still the same old National Party that believes in running business observer programs and still the same old National Party that will not match the achievements of this government and this side of politics in making bare our transparency in relation to political fundraising.

Yet those opposite come in here and stand up, one after another, and seek to set out a case that they come to this debate with clean hands. They do not. They come here dripping with their history, dripping with their failure to act, dripping with their failure to stand up to their political party, dripping with their failure to lead on this front. What we see is the same old National Party that seeks to deify that old crook Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It is the same old National Party and nothing has changed.

The only corruption we have seen in this parliament this week is the corruption of a formerly good person in the member for Surfers Paradise. I believe that he is a person who would have done better, could have done better and should have done better in this. But he has been nothing more than a human shield for a plot so intricate he had no clue about it. He has been held up as the human shield for the return of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He is about to be removed as a human shield and used as a speed bump—run over along the way. The 'Borg Express', with Jake Smith tooting the horn, has left the station and is arriving at that chair over there any time soon.

The corruption of a formerly decent person in the Leader of the Opposition has been a sad thing to witness in this parliament over the last three months. It has been excruciating to watch from this side of the chamber. I can only imagine the excruciating ability to witness what we have seen from the other side of the chamber. There he lies like the whimpering animal caught in the coyote snare, looking down feebly, not able to work out how he got trapped, not able to work out how he can get out of the trap, bleeding and lying on the floor remembering what it used to be like before he was subjected to this cruel hoax by the architecture of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It has been corruption of monumental proportions. We are seeing the last days of the member for Surfers Paradise. But the people of Queensland remember that what they are being offered is a return to same old National Party of the future. I support the amendment.

(Time expired)

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 38—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 38—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this parliament—

- recognises that the powers of the Crime and Misconduct Commission are equal to a royal commission; and
- expresses its full support and confidence in the CMC to investigate any matter concerning public administration of Queensland that the CMC sees fit.'

Sitting suspended from 6.39 pm to 7.40 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Estimates Committee C

Report

Resumed from p. 1474.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (7.40 pm): At the outset, I want to acknowledge the efforts of the member for Waterford in chairing Estimates Committee C. In this committee questions were raised in relation to the Auditor-General's report with regard to the inability of the government to plan and consult prior to implementation. This is very concerning to me and close to my heart because I am the state member for the second fastest growing region in Queensland, and this concerns me given my years in council. I commend all of the good work done by all councils across Queensland to implement the 2007 planning scheme, which has been constantly undermined by this government—the very government that dictated these guidelines in its initiation. This growth is further evidenced by the draft federal boundaries in the Beaudesert region, in particular with the new proposed federal seat of Wright.

A classic example of the lack of consultation and planning in the Beaudesert region is the proposed detox centre to be relocated from its current location on the Gold Coast. There have been some 800 submissions against this proposal from a community of 7,000 people and 400 of those people turned up on the proposed site, so it is a huge issue for the community to have a proposed detox centre at Eagle Heights. The land in question was purchased for \$5.2 million and on 27 November 2008 the contract was signed, and only then did the government decide to consult with the community after the purchase of this block of land. Questions were also raised about the state government forking out \$5.2 million for the land when local real estate agents had valued the same property at the same time at just \$3 million. A disparity of \$2.2 million certainly begs the question. Whilst there is no public transport in Mount Tamborine and no 24-hour emergency services, I cannot comprehend why a government would not consult with the people at the outset.

While on the topic of public transport, there are no bus services and there is no passenger rail to a region of some 50,000 people. In 2001 the government pulled out the maternity ward and today more than 800 mothers are forced to go to the at-capacity hospitals in both Logan and Ipswich. In 2001 the services of the maternity ward were taken out. After a new maternity ward was built under the Borbidge government, those services were taken out only two or three years later. The area has seen this growth occur for 10 years and the Auditor-General has acknowledged that there has been poor planning and consultation. Given the growth that has occurred over the last 10 years we know the growth that will happen, and with that growth comes good planning and consultation with the community, including areas like Rosevale, Roadvale, Munbilla and Milbong which should be deemed as villages under the South East Queensland Regional Plan to give those small towns a sense of community.

Turning to issues in the southern Gold Coast, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy told the estimates on 16 July that the Tugun desalination plant is running at full capacity of 133 megalitres for a test period of 30 days and had been doing so for about a week. He also said that it was still under the responsibility of Minister Hinchliffe, who referred it to Minister Robertson almost a month ago. These ministers are either not in control of this situation or are refusing to accept any responsibility while anxious residents are left in limbo, not knowing where to turn for help with their claims for damaged property. In what amounts to some of the most appalling buck passing from this government, residents with genuine concerns about damage to their properties have been left in a twilight zone while ministers reveal their incompetence and disregard for local citizens. The Tugun desalination plant is a classic example of the incompetence and hopeless economic management that is the hallmark of this Labor government. This billion dollar baby was built in haste, has been used for countless media opportunities and was due to be fully operational earlier this year but, due to serious defects and faults, is not. Just when will this plant be properly working with safe drinking water running through its massive pipelines?

An election promise made to southern Gold Coast residents to underground the 110 kilovolt powerlines between Mudgeeraba and Currumbin has many residents wondering if this will be delivered. A strong protest involving petitions containing thousands of signatures from concerned citizens, many public meetings and the formation of the protest group STOP resulted in the government matching the LNP's commitment to underground through certain established communities. Since the election there has been silence on this issue, no reference group meetings and a feeling of unease amongst residents who fought so hard to protect their neighbourhoods from these unsightly and home-devaluing metal towers. The minister owes these people some assurance that he intends to keep his government's promise.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (7.45 pm): Before turning my attention to the report of Estimates Committee C, on this first opportunity to rise in the House since question time this morning, I wish to correct the record. I have now had the chance to see the *Hansard* record. Mr McArdle, the honourable member for Caloundra, asked about not only my last meeting with representatives of a former employer Rainbow Shores but also mentioned all lobbyists of the firm and what was discussed at the meeting. In the hubbub of this morning, I missed the latter part of that question and I want to make sure that there is no misunderstanding that I want to answer these questions fully. For the benefit of the record and for the benefit of the member for Caloundra, I met with Kirby Anderson of the firm CPR with representatives of Baulderstone in relation to infrastructure projects and delivery on 5 May 2009 and again with Mr Anderson and representatives of the Brookfield Multiplex company for an introduction to its new CEO Mr Ross McDiven on 19 June 2009.

Turning to the Estimates Committee C report to the Legislative Assembly, I want to extend my thanks and congratulations to the member for Waterford for the outstanding way that he chaired the public hearing of the committee that I was present for and indeed the other committee members who all contributed in an appropriate and forthright manner. I also want to acknowledge the significant role that the secretariat played in supporting them. While mentioning the secretariat, there is one small downside that I want to acknowledge in addressing some of the issues that have been raised in the honourable member for Gympie's dissenting report of Estimates Committee C to this parliament. He noted concerns about deliberations not being able to be properly done because answers to questions on notice were late. The reality is that the questions on notice were submitted within the required time frames. Unfortunately, problems with the committee secretariat's email system—which were obviously out of my control—caused the delay, and I certainly regret that for the committee's sake.

The member for Gympie also raised concerns in that he thought that all major government plans should be released to estimates committees at the time of the release of the budget papers. Of course there are a range of major government plans and planning documents that are released all of the time in different places and in different circumstances. Indeed, there are a range of regional plans, about which I think he may have been referring to in particular, that are being released and finalised at various stages on the basis of the nature of consultation occurring. He was specifically referring to the fact that SEQIPP 2009-2026 was launched on the same day as the plan and was in fact tabled for the committee's benefit at the hearing. SEQIPP was referenced in the budget at page 12 of Budget Paper No. 3, the Capital

Statement. I think it was normal and appropriate practice that SEQIPP be released at the time that it was to ensure that the budget had the appropriate focus on the Renewing Queensland Plan, which was a key issue at the time.

The member for Gympie also raised concerns about the need for the Infrastructure and Planning portfolio to have a greater role. I thank him for his confidence, but I know that the government is working very well with other agencies of government in this space, particularly the new Department of Transport and Main Roads, which provides a much better coordination of management of infrastructure delivery, particularly in those important areas of public transport and road infrastructure. A range of other issues were raised in the committee report. I thank all of the members for their contributions.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee D

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee D be adopted.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (7.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the report of Estimates Committee D and express how honoured I was, too, to chair my first estimates committee. Estimates Committee D was appointed to examine and report on the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2009 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon. Craig Wallace, and the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, and I commend her on her first estimates hearing. I also wish to congratulate my colleagues Ministers Wallace and Palaszczuk, who were very ably supported by departmental staff and advisers, for a job well done in ensuring that the hearing proceeded smoothly, professionally and was informative.

In addition, I wish to warmly thank the secretariat support for all their assistance and hard work, particularly Ms Helen Bogiatzis, Ms Erin Pasley and Ms Tamara Vitale. The committee would not have been able to operate effectively without their extensive service pre and post the hearing. Also I wish to thank my electorate office, Stella Donatini, who provided me with great support during estimates time.

I also thank the other members of the committee: the member for Maroochydore and deputy chair, Ms Fiona Simpson; the member for Capalaba, Mr Michael Choi; the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Andrew Cripps; the member for Maryborough, Mr Chris Foley; the member for Whitsunday, Ms Jan Jarratt; and the member for Murrumba, the Hon. Dean Wells. All members took the opportunity of estimates seriously and I commend the manner in which they conducted themselves during the process. They actually made my job as chair much easier.

I would like to address briefly the Main Roads portfolio component of the hearing. I note the \$3.53 billion allocation to roads capital investment, which will sustain jobs for about 3,000 Queenslanders, and which is very much welcome in these tough economic times. Much of that funding will be directed towards major infrastructure projects that will provide the vital road networks that are needed to relieve traffic congestion in what is the fastest growing state in Australia. Projects like the \$1.8 billion Gateway upgrade and second bridge crossing, the Houghton Bridge duplication, the upgrading of the Ipswich Motorway between Wacol and Darra and the completion of the Bundaberg ring-road, to mention but a few, are significant urban and rural roadworks.

However, I am also pleased to report that road safety is also paramount, with the introduction of the open roads initiative and the rolling out of the five-year heavy vehicle rest areas program. Numerous issues were considered by the committee, including tolls on existing and new roads, the widening of the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road, the incident response plan and even the Q150 bridge naming project. I also welcome the minister's insight into the newly merged Department of Transport and Main Roads and the opportunities that this merger now delivers for road and transport planners.

In relation to the portfolio of Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, it was most pleasing to see for the third year in a row the Disability Services budget exceeding \$1 billion, with a budget for 2009-10 of \$1.4 billion—a 13 per cent increase on last year. There were many issues raised during the hearing, including funding for specialist disability services, funding for Youngcare, the pilot of a brokerage model for families of children and young people with a disability, and assistance for ageing carers. This budget demonstrates a clear commitment to vulnerable Queenslanders who need support and services to live happy, productive and fulfilling lives.

In the area of multicultural affairs, the implementation of Local Area Multicultural Partnerships and Community Action for a Multicultural Society and promoting and acknowledging the benefits of multiculturalism for Queensland are most welcome and important initiatives. These programs are excellent ways of recognising the wonderful contribution that multiculturalism has made to Queensland and celebrates the benefits of a diverse society.

In conclusion, I want to refer to comments contained in the statements of reservations by the two shadow ministers. I place on record that I do not agree with their comments. I think the ministers ably handled their answers. In particular, both shadow ministers complained about the lack of time set aside for the Estimates Committee D hearing. When we first met and unanimously—and I repeat, unanimously—endorsed the timetable for the hearing, neither shadow minister raised the issue of time adequacy nor suggested any additional time requirements and/or amendments pursuant to the various portfolios. As chair, I would have been more than willing to accommodate their concerns if I had only been made aware at the appropriate time. I am afraid it is too late to complain after the event. I commend the report of Estimates Committee D to the House.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (7.55 pm): I would like to thank the staff and also acknowledge my fellow colleagues on the committee for their assistance in this process and our chairman—although, of course, I am going to disagree with her comments regarding the time set aside for the hearing. With major portfolios such as those that were examined at this hearing, what needs to occur is for a whole day to be set aside. The way in which the motions are put to this House means that there is not enough time to address very serious issues. I will be raising that issue also in regard to the Transport portfolio. These are major portfolios where, on average, you would get to ask only 16 to 20 questions a day. They should not be bundled up with other major portfolios that also require significant attention.

I will address the Main Roads portfolio. A major restructure has been put in place, or is still on the way, in regard to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. We agree with bringing these two very important departments together. Where we have had concerns—and I was asking questions about this in the estimates process—was in relation to the costs of this process and there were no adequate answers given about what was going to be done to address staffing concerns. We had two different departments with two different enterprise bargaining agreements and, essentially, people doing similar jobs in a number of roles and not receiving the same pay. Those issues still have not been resolved and they are causing a lot of concern and stress in the department. It was disappointing that there were not adequate explanations from the minister about these very issues.

I believe that the Auditor-General's report goes to the heart of the problems that we have seen with Main Roads and, certainly with Transport. It is about a lack of leadership. Structure is important, but essentially leadership is more important to ensuring that programs stay on track, that there is a timeliness and a good scoping of projects and that forward planning is undertaken so that there is not a need for a crisis infrastructure program that ends up costing too much and has major cost blow-outs. It is significant that, with the merger of these two departments, we still do not see a clear line of responsibility between the ministers. In fact, there is a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, with a third minister involved in the mix and that is the infrastructure minister—Transport, Main Roads and Infrastructure. Ministers were unable to answer questions about their lines of shared responsibilities. Certainly, that is a leadership issue that will not be resolved by this merger, because of the way in which this government has chosen to put these ministers in charge of one department.

I want to address the issue of tolling on our roads. I asked the minister about distance based tolling. People might ask, 'What is distance based tolling?' It is the ability to put tolling gantries into places where you currently do not have tolls. This government is advanced in its process of looking at putting gantries at the entries and exits of the motorways that currently do not have tolls in place. I find it astounding that, when he was asked where this process was at, the minister would not answer this issue in a straight way. Yet it is well known within the public sector that the government is advanced at looking at new tolls on vast sections of motorways where people are currently not tolled.

Is that about congestion management, as he tried to say when he said, 'We might be looking at other tolling options'? No, it is about bulking up the value that the government will receive for an asset that it is about to flog off. The Gateway Motorway and the Logan Motorway have a heavy debt attached to them and the government is certainly looking at ways that it can improve its income stream. It should come clean with people; it should stop misleading the public and tell them just what those plans are, because it is going to cost motorists a lot more.

I want to also address the issues of the cost blow-outs in this state government's program. One project alone, the Ipswich Motorway, has blown out by nearly \$900 million. That is funding that is not available for other roads right throughout Queensland, particularly in rural and regional Queensland where people are dying on roads and where coroners' reports are now saying that the roads are the problem. This government has not made that a priority and yet it continues to badly scope projects that then suck the guts out of the remaining projects that should have a timely process of project delivery. This government is not planning ahead. It is still in a process of crisis management which is dearly costing this department and the program that needs to be rolled out.

(Time expired)

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (8.00 pm): Estimates Committee D examined the expenditure of the portfolios of Main Roads and Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. At the outset I congratulate the chair, the member for Brisbane Central, for the even-handed way in which she managed the day's proceedings. I also acknowledge the important role played by research officer Helen Bogiatzis and her team.

As a regional Queenslander, the Minister for Main Roads clearly understands the importance that roads play in the everyday lives of regional Queenslanders. He is passionate about his portfolio and he is passionate about improving safety for road users across the state by ensuring that the Main Roads budget continues to grow.

The minister described how the record Main Roads budget of \$3.53 billion this financial year will support about 30,000 jobs across the state. I can attest to the importance of these jobs in regional Queensland, where RoadTek crews and successful contractors benefit from a regular income and the community benefits from improved road conditions.

I thank the minister for his two recent visits to my electorate during which he opened two pieces of crucial road infrastructure. In April, as mentioned during the proceeding, we gathered on the newly completed Hospital Bridge, which, as a \$42.9 million project, has brought new levels of safety and convenience to many Mackay motorists. As the minister mentioned during the estimates process, this bridge is one of 63 bridges and the like across the state that have been part of the Q150 bridge-naming project. I was honoured to chair the Mackay-Whitsunday committee, which has sent recommendations to the minister relating to a number of local bridges including the Hospital Bridge. We anxiously await the minister's response to these recommendations.

The minister's most recent visit to my electorate was to cut the ribbon on the latest upgrade to Mackay-Bucasia Road. This was a special milestone moment for me as the local member, as the road upgrade began with a community consultation while I was a candidate in my very first election campaign and ended with the duplication of the final section of that road last month, when the minister came to town. I am very proud of my role in advocating for the four-laning of this critical road link between the northern beaches suburbs of Mackay to Mount Pleasant and the Bruce Highway.

Mr Wallace: A very important road.

Ms JARRATT: I take the minister's interjection; it is a most important road for those residents. As the northern beaches area continues to grow, I know that the one thing I will not be getting calls about anymore are traffic delays due to congestion on Mackay-Bucasia Road.

Many other important matters were canvassed during this part of the Estimates Committee D debate, but I want to finally mention an important area of funding that exists to keep road users safe. While I have to say that I was shocked to hear the statistic that more than 90 per cent of accidents in Queensland can be attributed to human error, that should not keep us from trying to ensure that the physical conditions of the roadways, including signage and lighting, are not contributing risk factors. The Safer Roads Sooner program aims to redress the road toll by providing low-cost, high-benefit projects. This program will see nearly \$3 million spent in my electorate in the next financial years on road improvements like improving signage, lighting and road marking in some of the accident hot spots. I thank the minister for his continuing patronage of this important program.

Turning to the portfolio areas of Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, I want to say how impressed I am with the minister's knowledge of her portfolio and the obvious compassion and talent that she brings to the role of minister in these areas. In the area of Disability Services the minister stated her priorities as early intervention, caring for ageing carers and moving young people with a disability out of aged-care facilities. These are worthy priorities in an area that has been historically underfunded and was only taken seriously as an area of need since the election of the Goss government.

In the short time I have left I want to endorse the minister's focus on the issue of ageing carers, because this is an issue that my community has brought to me as a priority concern in the Whitsundays. The concern for ageing carers becomes most acute when they live in physical isolation—on a farm or property. This just makes it that much harder to access respite and make contingency plans. I say to Minister Palaszczuk in her absence: I wish you well for your ambition to tackle this very tough issue and ask that you give consideration to ensuring that country areas are well represented in the funding allocations aimed at addressing this area of great need.

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (8.05 pm): I rise to participate in the debate of the report of Estimates Committee D. Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow committee members: Ms Grace Grace, Ms Fiona Simpson, Mr Michael Choi, Mr Andrew Cripps, Ms Jan Jarratt and the Hon. Dean Wells. I also thank our secretariat, who worked incredibly hard: Helen Bogiatzis, research director; Erin Pasley, senior research officer; and Tamara Vitale, executive assistant. I think things went very well under the very capable chairmanship of Grace Grace. Grace Grace is to running a committee hearing what Superman is to saving the world.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Maryborough, please refer to members by their correct title.

Ms GRACE: Brisbane Central.

Mr FOLEY: The member for Brisbane Central has that same legendary efficiency. She did very well—impressive.

Turning to the actual portfolio matters, I raised with Minister Anastacia Palaszczuk questions about Disability funding of wheelchairs. There have been some very serious shortfalls, because a lot of times people might purchase a wheelchair that does not last the required time for the funding or they need a particular type of wheelchair which exceeds the medical subsidy rebate. There is some funding available under Disability. That has been provided. I asked the minister for some financing figures on that and was provided those figures. In looking at multicultural affairs, I raised some questions about what is being done to protect the rights of women in minority groups in Queensland to ensure that they are treated the same as other Queensland women.

On the Main Roads side, I did not actually get to ask a question of the main roads minister, but I did speak to him privately during the break about another matter which he resolved very promptly, and I thank him for that. One of the funny side stories is that when I got back to my office I said, 'We got a good outcome on this particular issue,' and my electorate officer said, 'But we just got a letter from the minister saying they will not do it.' So private negotiation has some value. I thank the minister for that.

Overall, I thought everything ran smoothly. I have been involved in a number of estimates committees over the years. Sometimes people can get very passionate about things, and there was some passionate debate in this particular estimates committee. Generally, I was very happy with the outcome. I commend the committee report to the House.

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (8.08 pm): I start by congratulating all members of the committee that I reported to, especially the committee chair, the member for Brisbane Central. I have appeared before a couple of estimates committees now as minister. They are not easy things to chair and certainly the member for Brisbane Central handled herself with aplomb on the day.

As I told Estimates Committee D, it is a privilege to be the Minister for Main Roads because it means that I am involved in issues that I am passionate about such as creating and sustaining jobs for Queenslanders and keeping our state connected. I was grateful for the opportunity to outline to the committee some of the major projects that the Bligh government is delivering to generate and retain jobs and build the infrastructure we need for our growing population. The Bligh government is investing a record \$18.2 billion in capital works this financial year, a program that will support some 127,000 jobs.

Our government went to the March election on a platform of protecting and creating jobs. I am proud to say that Main Roads is delivering on this commitment through yet another record capital works program this financial year, which is an enormous boost to jobs particularly in regional Queensland. Our record \$3.53 billion allocation in roads capital investment will sustain jobs for about 30,000 Queenslanders in these tough economic times, while tackling the impact of urban growth, a rising population and importantly road safety.

I welcome the shadow minister's support for the merger of the former Department of Main Roads and Queensland Transport into one entity. However, what she seems incapable of understanding is that the Bligh government is made up of a team of ministers who work together. The transport minister and I are in daily contact over issues that affect our respective portfolios and there is often crossover within the two portfolios. There is no confusion about who has responsibility for what. The only confusion seems to be in the shadow minister's mind.

I also reject the shadow minister's contention that there is no planning and coordination of infrastructure provision. The Bligh government delivers a five-year rolling plan for road infrastructure right across our state that is updated every year as priorities change. We have a plan for the future and I am currently working with my department to finalise the next version of this plan which will be released in the next couple of months. We also work together on whole-of-government plans such as SEQIPP. Working in cooperation seems to be a foreign concept to the shadow minister. Perhaps that is because she does not feel the same spirit of cooperation in her own party, where her National Party colleagues have their knives out for their Liberal leader.

I also take issue with the shadow minister's comments that Queensland has 'clearly been the loser' in the federal government's transport infrastructure funding. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Rudd government is beginning to make up for 11 years of neglect from the former Howard government and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Ipswich West, would see that every day as you drive along your road network.

In the five years from 2003-04 to 2008-09, the Howard government allocated a paltry \$884 million to the Bruce Highway through its AusLink program. In comparison, over the next five years, the Rudd government has committed more than \$2.6 billion to the Bruce Highway. That is three times as much as

the Howard government spent in its last five years. Over its entire term of 11 years, the Howard government neglected this important highway, allocating only \$1.7 billion in total. What did we hear from the members opposite? Nothing, absolutely nothing. How the shadow minister can say that Queensland has been the loser under the Rudd government's investment in road and transport infrastructure is beyond comprehension. The Rudd government has made a good start on overturning the years of neglect by the Howard government. But we will continue to work closely with the Rudd government to keep delivering infrastructure and jobs to Queenslanders.

The shadow minister also suggested that section B of the Cooroy to Curra upgrade on the Bruce Highway had been given priority over sections to keep the site for the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam available. That is simply untrue. Priority has been given to this section based on safety and traffic needs. This section of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra has the highest crash statistics of the entire length of the proposed upgrade which makes it the most urgent priority. The shadow minister should hang her head in shame.

The endorsed alignment to the east of the existing Bruce Highway—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr WALLACE: Listen to her over there complaining about us tackling safety on the roads, the most dangerous section of the Bruce Highway. I have often described the shadow minister as the 'Chicken Little' of Queensland politics. She keeps trying to scare people but people are not falling for her tricks. The Bligh government is getting on with the job of planning infrastructure in advance of growth demand, delivering our record road construction budget and generating and sustaining jobs for all Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (8.13 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee D, particularly in relation to the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio for which I am the shadow minister. I want to thank the chairman, the member for Brisbane Central, and the other members of Estimates Committee D, as well as the staff attached to the committee for the cooperative and efficient way the committee operated leading up to and during the proceedings.

I want to focus on two issues regarding disability services. Firstly, I want to express concern about the attitude of the minister to declining satisfaction rates amongst those people with disabilities who receive support services from DSQ. I noted that pages 3-25 to 3-27 of the SDS showed that satisfaction fell nine per cent amongst users of accommodation support services, 13 per cent amongst users of community support services and seven per cent amongst users of community access services over the previous 12 months.

I asked specifically during estimates if the minister could explain why client satisfaction rates for these services had declined so significantly and what DSQ intended to do to address the situation. The minister largely dismissed the declining rates of satisfaction with support services delivered by DSQ by saying that an increasing number of service users were indifferent about the services they received and that an increasing number of service users were not sending their survey forms back, to defend DSQ against poor results. I am rather surprised that the minister is not taking the results of the survey more seriously. Excuses will not deliver appropriate support services to Queenslanders with disabilities. The minister needs to take action to find out the real cause of these declining satisfaction rates because these are important core services provided by DSQ to Queenslanders with disabilities.

Last year spending on disability services was down \$23 million on budgeted outlays—specifically, underspending on accommodation support services was in the order of \$8 million and underspending on community support services was in the order of \$15 million. This underspending on important core services may explain the survey results and may even explain why Queenslanders with disabilities and their families have given up on returning their survey forms.

Secondly, I wish to talk about the implementation of the Carter report, also known as the Investing in Positive Futures program, which seeks to support the care of adults with an intellectual and/or cognitive disability who exhibit challenging behaviours. I asked the minister about the costs associated with implementing the Carter report and requested an itemised breakdown of all expenditure to date. It is virtually impossible to compare the 2008-09 Capital Statement with the 2009-10 Capital Statement for the purposes of accurately determining what has and what has not been spent in the implementation of the Carter report.

The cost of implementing the recommendations is ballooning. In the 2008-09 budget, \$24.3 million was allocated for the implementation of Carter report recommendations. In the 2009-10 budget, this had blown out to \$61 million—a blow-out of \$36.7 million in just 12 months. The reporting in the budget is far from transparent, especially when allocations are so drastically altered from year to year. In particular, the 2009-10 budget indicates that \$16 million is being allocated for the provision of specialised accommodation units at Wacol for adults who exhibit challenging behaviour. What we also know from one of the minister's answers to one of my questions is that the funding will deliver 16 beds at

that facility at Wacol. That is \$1 million per bed and raises the question of whether the money provided is being used in the best interests of people with disabilities, especially the particularly vulnerable people covered by the Carter report.

There is no doubt that these specialised accommodation units are not your ordinary run of the mill accommodation units. They will necessarily be fitted out with specialist equipment and furniture to meet the needs of those Queenslanders who need this support. At the same time there has been no transparency in the expenditure. At \$1 million per bed, I would like reassurance from the minister that the cost is being fully acquitted on helping people with disabilities. Something is wrong out at Wacol with the cost of construction. There have been delays, cost blow-outs and changes. The figures do not add up, and the people who ultimately pay will be those people with disabilities exhibiting challenging behaviour. The minister needs to provide more answers about the delivery of this project. An investigation should be undertaken to find out exactly what is happening at Wacol.

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (8.18 pm): The upgrade of the Bruce Highway was the subject of questions at Estimates Committee D. Since then it has been the scene of tragedy. Earlier this week one of my constituents, Murray Goodrich, was killed while serving as a traffic controller at Burpengary. It was a shocking and cruel irony that his death occurred in the course of work that was specifically intended to improve road safety. Murray Goodrich died serving the people of Queensland. I am sure every member of this House joins with me in expressing deepest sympathies to his wife and his young family.

Now I must turn to the estimates issues that we are debating. First, I refer to the Minister for Disability Services. One of the great achievements of the Minister for Disability Services in her first few months as minister was to arrange alternative accommodation for 81 young people who had hitherto been housed in aged-care facilities. The inappropriateness of that kind of accommodation is an inappropriateness with which they had lived for far too long. I commend the minister for hitting the ground running and ensuring that they were transferred into much more appropriate accommodation. I know that that work is continuing and I know that the task is large, but a very good beginning has been made.

Another achievement of the Minister for Disability Services has been ensuring that those who work as frontline disability workers and who therefore assist the most needy and most vulnerable in our community receive a realistic wage and that the wage increases that were independently determined will be funded by the government. This will ensure that those who are in most need receive the care and attention which they are entitled to and which our society owes them.

I would also note the work of the Minister for Disability Services in fostering early intervention. Obviously, when a person has a disability, the earlier you can intervene to take remedial action the more likely you will be successful. I congratulate the minister on those achievements.

I wish to refer to the Minister for Main Roads now. The minister's greatest achievement so far has been obtaining federal funds to improve the most dangerous section of the Bruce Highway, which is the Cooroy section of the Bruce Highway. We have all heard about the black spot area there and we all know that that area has been subject to altogether too many traffic accidents. The early attention that the minister is providing to that issue is extremely welcome and extremely beneficial.

I also thank the Minister for Main Roads for the signage on the Bruce Highway, which has been an issue in my area. The signage has indicated that you can turn off the Bruce Highway in order to go to North Lakes but it has not spelt out that you can also turn off there to go to Mango Hill. Mango Hill was temporarily made a nonplace as a result of the fact that it ceased to be advertised on those signs. This is not a status that the people of Mango Hill deserve, and the issue needs to be remedied. The minister told me today that this situation will be addressed, and I thank him and welcome it.

I also thank my colleagues with whom I worked on Estimates Committee D. They performed with their usual panache—the degree of panache you would expect of them. I also congratulate the chair of the committee, the honourable member for Brisbane Central. As chair, she was both efficient and gracious. Indeed, she had what you would expect as the usual amount of efficiency of a chair in those circumstances but twice the 'grace'. I commend the report of the committee to the House.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (8.23 pm): I rise to make a brief statement about Estimates Committee D, which involved the portfolios of Main Roads and Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. The member for Brisbane Central chaired this committee, which was rather robust at times. She did a very capable job, but I was a bit disappointed with the fact that she was going to extend the time for the parties if she wished. If that comes up next time the member for Brisbane Central is chairing a committee, I am sure she will give members extra time if they want it extended. That will be very good and great for our side, I am sure.

There was a lot of concern about money overruns on some of the projects, including the Ipswich Motorway. I heard the shadow spokesperson mention there was something like a \$900 million overrun on the Ipswich Motorway. It is an extremely busy motorway—we understand that—but it is unfortunate that there has been a \$900 million overrun there. The Warrego Highway, which runs through my electorate and through the electorate of the member for Ipswich West as well—

Mrs Miller: And mine.

Mr RICKUSS: And yours. I actually know the person who is living in that one house that is left standing in the middle there. She is fighting for good compensation.

Mrs Miller: I will look after them.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I am lobbying for that constituent of Jo's; that is right. The Warrego Highway, the Brisbane Valley Highway and the Cunningham Highway are all in my electorate. They really are important roads for South-East Queensland and are in continual need of more maintenance. I am sure the member for Toowoomba North would be interested to have me raise the issue of Toowoomba's second range crossing with him again, because one of his desires is to see Toowoomba's second range crossing built and he is lobbying very hard on that side of the House, without much success I might say. That is the big disappointment, but he has been trying for awhile—very trying. The Ma Ma Creek Clifton Road is actually having quite a bit of money spent on it in my area as well, and the Ipswich-Boonah Road is having an audit done on its safety at the moment.

The chair mentioned truck stops. It is disappointing that there are still so few truck stops in the state, especially considering the strict logbook regime we have for truck drivers. I encourage the minister to ensure that some truck stops are put in place. We have quite a good truck stop on the Warrego Highway bypass just outside Gatton, but it is only on one side of the road so the trucks going the other way cannot get to it. We need to have truck stops on both sides of the road and they need to have showers, toilets and some decent services for the drivers. This has been left to private enterprise a fair bit, but there is always a problem with that because once you get more than a few trucks in even the biggest truck stop it really starts to clutter them up.

The disability services portfolio is always a difficult portfolio for any government. In my area, we are fairly well serviced. We have Anuha Services in Gatton, ALARA in Laidley, which is based at Ipswich, Endeavour at Gatton and the Lockyer Valley Disability Support Group. They all work extremely hard to try to satisfy some of the needs of people with disabilities. It will always be an area that is difficult to fund to the amount that is actually required because the cost of constructing houses, units or respite facilities is very expensive and they are always in high demand. This is an important area that both sides of the House must concentrate on.

Disability services is an area that really needs some extra services in place. If I remember rightly, some of the capital expenditure for disability services has been let slip over the last few years, so that is a disappointment. It is important that ministers ensure that any money that is in disability services is spent on capital expenditure so that as many services as possible can be provided. Like I said, I support our shadow spokesman for Main Roads who has worked very hard on these issues.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (8.28 pm): I rise to report on Estimates Committee D, which examined the expenditure under the ministerial responsibilities of Main Roads and Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. I thank the chair of the estimates committee, the member for Brisbane Central, for her splendid chairing of the committee. I acknowledge that this was the first time she has chaired an estimates committee and I commend her for her positive leadership. I also note that 92 per cent of the projects in the Main Roads portfolio come in under budget and on time. This contradicts the bizarre attack on the department's service delivery by the opposition for the delivery of programs.

I was gratified on behalf of the Capalaba constituents to receive further information about the \$1.88 billion Gateway Upgrade Project. The visionary project of duplicating this Queensland icon will be of huge benefit to residents across the whole of South-East Queensland.

We have been informed by Minister Wallace that the new section of the motorway is expected to reduce existing Gateway Arterial traffic between Eagle Farm and Toombul by up to 40 per cent. More broadly, the Bligh government is currently undertaking an unprecedented \$18.2 billion infrastructure program, of which \$3.52 billion is being invested in roads infrastructure. As a Labor government, we are very consciously pumping up the economy by creating jobs, jobs and more jobs. While the LNP complains, we lead.

We are leading in this portfolio by sustaining 30,000 Queensland jobs, many of which would sadly have been lost if the LNP had won government a few months ago. I note the opposition also criticised the licensing fee Main Roads paid for the popular Queen song *Don't Stop Me Now*. I note that we have had an increase of 155,000 tags issued since the campaign started. It was a huge increase, and the licensing of this popular and catchy song is more cost-effective in my view than putting an advertisement in the paper thus far. This is a resoundingly successful information campaign about the new and improved free-flowing system of the Gateway Motorway. If we had not had a professional campaign that cut through to the public, the opposition would also be complaining that no-one knows about the new go via tags and people were being unreasonably confused. You cannot have it both ways.

Minister Palaszczuk delivered three key priorities to the estimates committee: early prevention, housing for ageing carers and supporting younger people to get out of aged-care facilities. The Positive Futures initiative of the Bligh Labor government is delivering for disabled Queenslanders across Queensland. The minister is working towards providing support for those with an intellectual or cognitive disability and severely challenging behaviours. As the former parliamentary secretary to the minister for multicultural affairs, I very much appreciate the good work that can and has been done in this area. It was gratifying to see that this work continues under the leadership of the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk and her parliamentary secretary, Julie Attwood, with great attention, care and respect.

In my parliamentary secretary portfolio of trade, I see firsthand how beneficial our growing reputation is as a multicultural community which is safe and welcoming of those with diverse experiences and backgrounds. I have many personal ties with community organisations, representing people from all over the world. In fact, only this afternoon I have met with representatives of the Australian-Nigerian council discussing how Queensland can increase its trade relations with African countries generally. These trade opportunities can only happen in a safe and welcoming community.

From an exhaustive day of detailed examinations, one could only take away the impression that this government is efficiently planning and building the roads for tomorrow; Labor is capacity building with practical opportunities and solutions for the disadvantaged and their carers; and the Bligh government is championing a multicultural society. I would very much like to place on record my utmost appreciation for the tireless work of the Hansard staff and parliamentary research staff. It has been an opportunity to examine departments which reflect the breadth of the positive initiatives and programs of the Bligh government. It was a resounding success, in my view, in the transparent showcasing and scrutinising of government work. I commend the report to the House.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (8.33 pm): I rise tonight to contribute to the outcome of Estimates Committee D, in particular the department of main roads. Where do I start? Unfortunately, there is much to outline of the roads in my electorate, both the M1 and many rural roads. Yes, they have received some funding. However, these amounts do not allow for the appropriate upgrades and required maintenance work to be undertaken.

The Nerang South interchange exit 73 upgrade was first proposed in 2002. Here we are seven years down the track and it is still yet to be completed. This is despite their big brother, the Rudd federal government, allocating \$22.5 million in April this year to make sure this vital project is completed by the middle of the year. I call on the Minister for Main Roads to check his calendar. The middle of the year has come and gone. Local residents have had to put up with roadworks on this interchange since 2004. Can the minister guarantee when this upgrade will finally be completed?

We also saw last month work beginning on the construction of the 80 million Varsity Lakes interchange exit 85. This upgrade is supposed to be completed in 2011. How can this interchange upgrade be completed in two years when exit 23 has taken seven, not to mention the budget blow-out on exit 73 of over \$7 million? How are Gold Coast residents expected to take seriously the word of this Bligh government? There are delays in work being started, delays in works being finished and budget blow-outs.

As a cherry on top for the M1, in December 2008 joint funding of \$158 million was announced by Premier Bligh and her banker, federal minister for infrastructure, Anthony Albanese, to fast-track the widening of the very dangerous section of the M1 between Nerang and Worongary. When this was announced, there was much excitement from residents, as this stretch of the M1 is heavily congested. Motorists thought that perhaps their daily travel through the Mudgeeraba car park could be at an end.

A couple of months went by and there was no more word on when this fast-track would commence. A state election came and went and still no word. It was not until last month that the Minister for Main Roads, Craig Wallace, issued a press release announcing these works would commence early next year. What a joke. What an absolute farce. Tenders are not even being called for this project until the fourth quarter of this year. Even when the builder is selected, early next year means what—anywhere from January to June? And this is fast-tracked. Again this government is treating Gold Coast residents with contempt.

On behalf of residents I urge the Minister for Main Roads to commit to installing safety barriers on the M1 between Nerang and Mudgeeraba. This is the only section of the M1 on the Gold Coast that does not have safety barriers. You cannot ignore the statistics of crashes and fatalities. Action is needed now, not in two, four or seven years time when this upgrade is finally completed. I would again urge the Minister for Main Roads to make sure that these barriers are installed before another young Gold Coaster is killed such as my friend's daughter six weeks ago.

Rural roads in my electorate have also been neglected. In 2008 the RACQ named Beechmont Road as the worst state main road—something the residents of Lower Beechmont and Beechmont are well aware of and about which they lobbied the previous member for Mudgeeraba on numerous occasions. Almost on queue, this government pledged prior to the last election \$2.5 million to upgrade Beechmont Road even though the LNP pledged \$5 million, which is what is required. Let's be realistic,

shall we? This amount is well short of what is needed to properly upgrade this most dangerous road. It does not need pothole repairs. There are sections of road that need to be completely shaved back, realigned and resurfaced. I put the minister on notice that I, together with the members of the Better Roads for Beechmont Committee, will continue to be loud and vocal to make sure that this road is upgraded to ensure the safety of local residents and children to prevent further fatalities.

I have not even got around to mentioning Springbrook Road and Worongary Road, which has no funding allocated to it for the next five to 10 years. An article in the *Courier-Mail* last month highlighted the cost and impact on the state's economy as a result of road crashes. Last year alone the economic fallout and cost to communities was \$653 million for fatalities and injuries, and apparently that was a good year. What will the cost to communities, local mums and dads be for this year as a result of the disrepair and neglect of our state roads?

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (8.38 pm): I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee D, ably chaired by the member for Brisbane Central. A major issue for the Coomera electorate is access to the M1. The Coomera electorate is bordered by the M1 from the Logan River and Eagleby in the north to Coombabah Creek and Helensvale in the south. Some 10 exits affect the Coomera electorate over its 31 or so kilometres. The most difficulty is experienced at exits 38 and 41, which are both at Yatala, and exit 54 at Coomera. Exit 54 is a major problem. I have spoken about it in this House before. There is little in estimates to provide any relief, particularly for exit 54. A slip-road on the western side of the M1 has the potential to create more problems for the eastern side.

I can give members an instant fix, at least partially, for exit 54. It is quite simple, really. Increase the number of additional trains on the Gold Coast line beyond the one that is being promised by January 2010, when Varsity Lakes opens. One in 2011 is also a possibility. There has been no consideration whatsoever for the growth in the Coomera area when decisions have been made about the Gold Coast train line.

The Minister for Transport has credibility issues. We have heard the minister wax lyrical in this House about new trains for Caboolture and Ipswich. An extra 15,000 commuters a week can be accommodated, says the report. That may be additional capacity but it is not what is needed.

These figures are not supported by the government statistics. The government is spending billions on the Ipswich line. By the way, I congratulate the government for the planning in that area. Why will the minister not listen? Surely the minister has advisers telling her what is needed. The Gold Coast line needs more trains.

Let us have a look at the figures on passenger numbers and rolling stock. New six-car train sets have been provided. The Ipswich line has five trains, the Caboolture line three trains and the Gold Coast line no trains. That is eight six-car train sets for Caboolture and Ipswich when over the past two years combined growth has been around 1,293 travellers in the morning and 1,284 in the afternoon. There have been no six-car train sets for the Gold Coast when over the past two years—the same period—growth has been 1,094 travellers per day in the morning and 1,134 in the afternoon.

People might say that they were more needy, more overloaded. This is not so. In the morning the Caboolture line compliance capacity before the trains were put on was 56 per cent. After, it was 33 per cent. For the Ipswich line it was similar figures—58 per cent before the new trains and 23 per cent after.

Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order. Estimates Committee D did not actually cover the portfolio of Transport; we only dealt with Main Roads. I seek a ruling on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Condamine! I do not need a ventriloquist. The member for Coomera may continue.

Mr CRANDON: The Robina line compliance capacity in that same period, when we saw 56 per cent for Caboolture and 58 per cent for Ipswich drop to 33 per cent and 23 per cent respectively, was—wait for it—83 per cent before those trains were put on to the Ipswich and Caboolture lines and 86 per cent after. Eighty-six per cent of the carriages were overloaded during that same period. The figures were similar for the afternoon trains.

Let us turn to population growth. The population around the Coomera area in 2008 was 28,800 people. It is expected to be 53,000 in 2011—an 85 per cent increase. What about some comparisons? One of the 10 fastest growing local areas is the Gold Coast. It had growth of 16,500 people in 2006-07 as opposed to growth in Ipswich of 5,026. This confirms that, in sheer numbers, the Gold Coast is the fastest growing local government area in Queensland.

We need more trains. More trains will solve traffic problems around exit 54 on the M1. I have been saying—and I will keep on saying—that it would be a win-win for everyone and particularly for exit 54 on the M1.

(Time expired)

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (8.43 pm): I rise to address the report of Estimates Committee D in relation to the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio. I would like to officially acknowledge the committee and thank the chair, the member for Brisbane Central. A special thankyou goes to the members of my departmental staff and my ministerial staff.

In 2009-10 the disability services budget is \$1.4 billion—the third year in a row that it has exceeded \$1 billion. During the estimates hearing a number of issues were raised. These included: the cost of implementing recommendations of the Carter report; capital infrastructure investment; employment opportunities for people with mental illness; the Local Area Multicultural Partnership and Community Action for a Multicultural Society programs; and English language tutoring and interpreting services—just to name a few.

During the hearing I outlined my three key priorities which provide a focus for our policy development and service delivery. These are: early intervention strategies for children with a disability; better accommodation options for ageing carers; and helping younger people with a disability move out of aged-care facilities.

In relation to the third point, we are meeting our commitment to help younger people out of aged-care facilities through our partnership with the Commonwealth government. Under the \$48 million Younger People in Residential Aged Care Initiative, the Bligh government has not only met but exceeded the Commonwealth target by helping more than 80 younger people to find more age-appropriate accommodation since the program started on 1 July 2006.

I was very pleased during the hearing to point out that the member for Hinchinbrook has visited the Young Care facility. I am sure that all members will be pleased once the new Young Care apartments open on the Gold Coast which will be funded by the Bligh government's \$3 million election commitment. I would like to point out to the member for Coomera that land has been identified in his electorate and this is where the new accommodation will be built.

In the member for Hinchinbrook's statement of reservations he raised concerns about a number of issues which I would like to take the opportunity to briefly address. The member asked a very specific question regarding funds budgeted and funds spent within 2008-09. I provided him with very clear answers. However, judging from his reservation statement it seems as though he still has some uncertainties about more specifically what constitutes an underspend.

As I explained very clearly during the hearing, the variations the member referred to reflect a timing issue in relation to the rollout of funding for projects within the financial year. The member's interpretation of my explanation as 'just the usual deferral' was an oversimplification. Whether it was accidental or not is not for me to say. However, I will reiterate it for the member.

Administratively, this funding has been committed but deferred. This means that the services can and will be delivered in the 2009-10 financial year. Reasons behind the deferrals are not difficult to understand and can range from anything from unforeseen natural events, like floods, to extensions in community consultations for design and planning—for example, around the all-abilities playgrounds or purchase of appropriate land for disability accommodation. This allows for necessary and appropriate planning to ensure we are meeting our commitments to programs and projects.

The member's statement of reservations also indicated he has some misunderstanding of the Bligh government's response to the Carter report. The Queensland government recognises the importance of the Carter report and responded with the Investing in Positive Futures initiative through my portfolio. Some \$113 million was allocated over four years, from 2007-08 to 2009-10, and the estimated budget for this initiative is \$53.13 million.

I note that the member recently raised the issue about the accommodation at Wacol. I can assure the member that every dollar that is committed to this initiative will be spent on that site. I am also happy to invite the member to come out to Wacol, which is also in my electorate, to have a look at the designs and the accommodation that we will be building and also to meet with some of the people with a disability who present with these challenging behaviours. I think he will appreciate the complexity of the problem and the reason that we have committed funding to this initiative.

In terms of multicultural affairs, the Bligh government has worked to promote cultural diversity and enhance community participation. To help meet this commitment we have invested almost \$6 million over three years for the Local Area Multicultural Partnership and Community Action for a Multicultural Society programs, which support 35 workers in local councils and community organisations.

In delivering fair and inclusive communities to our multicultural society, the Bligh government also recognises the importance of translator and English language assistance services. To meet this commitment the government has invested \$5.8 million in the NGOs to provide translators to any Queenslanders who need them. The Bligh government has a vision for Queensland that supports fair and caring communities for all Queenslanders regardless of their ability, background or belief. I commend the report to the House.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee E

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee E be adopted.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (8.49 pm): I was very grateful to be given the opportunity to chair Estimates Committee E. The deputy chair was Lawrence Springborg, the member for Southern Downs. I also want to thank the other members of the committee: Glen Elmes MP, the member for Noosa; Ray Hopper MP, the member for Condamine; Amanda Johnstone MP, the member for Townsville; Mary-Anne O'Neill MP, the member for Kallangur; and Carryn Sullivan MP, the member for Pumicestone. I particularly want to thank the secretariat who did an outstanding job—Kellie Moule, the research director; Alistair MacLennan, the research officer; and also Narelle Robinson, the executive assistant. Their professional support to me personally as chair and to all members of the committee was very good.

I want to talk briefly about a couple of issues, particularly in relation to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. This is a department that I served in for many years as a public servant. The department is very important to public administration in Queensland, but I personally believe that it is often seen as a Cinderella department in public administration in that it does not raise revenue to any great extent but affects so many people's lives in the courts and the tribunals and also the many tens of thousands of people who are justices of the peace in the community. I often think that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General should be up there with the Premier's department and Treasury, so we should have the Premier's department, the Treasury and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as the three coordinating and leading agencies in the state because that is where I personally believe that that particular department should be.

I want to talk briefly about justices of the peace in the community. There are JPs at Redbank Plaza on duty as well as at the Orion shopping centre. I want to talk briefly about JPs in our community because I think that they need to realise, particularly our justices of the peace (qualified), that it is not just a gong to put after your name; it actually means that you are supposed to be serving the community. I am particularly concerned about banks and financial institutions, because some will not allow their officers to undertake JP work unless they are customers of the banks or that particular business, and I think that is quite discriminatory. I would ask the Attorney-General whether he would consider having the registrar of JPs or maybe the JP council look at perhaps appointing justices of the peace for five or 10 years or whatever and come up with recommendations on that matter, because I think there are too many people in the community who want to be justices of the peace (qualified) but they do not want to serve their community.

Primary industries are very important to our state economy. With regard to Swift Australia's Dinmore plant in my electorate, in the last couple of weeks over 400 people have been sacked which is, in my view, an absolute disgrace. A close personal friend of mine got sacked after 30 years of loyal work at AMH, which was then taken over by Swift. The workers at Swift want certainty in their days of work and their hours of work, because we all have to realise that they have rent to pay, mortgages to pay and cars to pay off.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Yes. I am well aware of what those opposite are saying, but the end result is that some 400 people in my electorate have been sacked. I thank Minister Tim Mulherin for his wonderful support of the primary industries portfolio. In relation to climate change and sustainability, I am getting sick and tired of people in the community bashing the coalmining industry in relation to climate change. It actually makes me sick to death. The coal industry is at the forefront of climate change in our community, and I want those people bashing this industry to pull their damned heads in because I am sick of it. People should know that every time they turn on a light, whether it be here or in any other area of the community, there is a coalminer at the other end of the chain, and the coalminers are the ones—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I am a coalminer's daughter; that is right. People need to realise that they should not use climate change to bash the coal industry.

(Time expired)

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (8.54 pm): Before turning to the estimates committee report, I want to put on record the terrible tragedy that happened in a football game at the Christian Outreach College in Toowoomba Thursday week ago. Young Lewis Moss, a 16-year-old boy, was kicked in the head during the game, and the Christian Outreach College and his family have suffered immensely over the last 10 days. Unfortunately, at 3 pm on Sunday Lewis lost his life. These people are friends of my family. They are just a wonderful family and he was a wonderful Christian boy. We will be farewelling Lewis on Friday at 11 o'clock.

I turn now to the report of Estimates Committee E. I want to respond to the contribution made to this debate by our chair, and I give the chair, the member for Bundamba, credit for the way she handled the estimates committee. There is no doubt that she did a brilliant job. However, in response to her statements about meatworkers losing their jobs, that was as a result of this government cutting the rail trains that took the cattle to the meatworks. That is why the meatworkers have been sacked. Dinmore and Beaudesert have laid off two shifts each because freight has been cut by the Minister for Transport in terms of bringing cattle from the Downs and Central and Western Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Member for Condamine, I was quite tolerant with previous speakers talking about trains, but I am a little bit mystified as to how the Minister for Transport is dealt with under this particular estimates committee.

Mr HOPPER: This is an animal welfare situation. Under the primary industries portfolio, there is an animal welfare code and cattle were left in yards that were waiting for trains that had to have 42 decks in order to pick them up because those trains were cancelled by the minister, and that comes under primary industries. That is a disgusting episode caused by this government which has resulted in the loss of those jobs that the member for Bundamba just spoke about.

The estimates committee process started with the very same minister feeling very confident, and he was backed up by a number of staff. I certainly appreciated the effort the minister made to answer my questions. However, at times he became quite flustered and by the end I would say very frustrated. We covered most areas within his department. Due to the lack of time allowed for our portfolio and the committee hearing process, there would have been a lot more questions I would have liked to cover in order to get answers for the people of Queensland. There were real questions and real issues that we did not have time to address.

We talked about outdated research stations and the money being used to reinvest in the beef industry. That was just the start of the massive sell-off that this department has undertaken under this minister's leadership. This is just part of the revenue needed to service the \$10 million to \$12 million every day that is needed to pay this government's debt on \$85 billion. No doubt pressure has been put on this minister to raise money in this area, and he has taken on a slash-and-burn policy. He has cut his department by \$23 million. As I said, this department has been cut by \$23 million, and this will not be accepted by me or any of my colleagues on this side of the House. We will not accept this. The only reason Australia has not gone into recession is due to agriculture, yet we have a minister who is cutting the budget. He is not fighting for us in cabinet. He is not fighting for us; he is rolling over and getting his tummy scratched by Fraser and Bligh. It is as simple as that, because they need money for Treasury.

I have some things in store for the minister in the very near future, and it is extremely disappointing that the minister is not here this week. Why is he not here this week? The Yarraman forestry depot is going to be closed. I put media releases out about that and he backed down immediately. That is just one thing he is faced with. There are a number of issues that he should have been here to face questions about, yet we will have to ask the Premier questions in the morning because he is not here. He knew what was coming and he has disappeared. He is missing in action. What the primary industries minister is clearly lacking is a strong voice. We need a minister who fights for his department and a minister who is not subservient to the pressure put on them by this government.

The sale of departmental facilities across Queensland is disheartening to say the least. I asked the minister during the estimates process if the sale of those assets is going back to the DPI and the minister said, 'Yes, absolutely.' The minister said—

It is all being reinvested back in. Treasury has given us approval to reinvest, through the asset sales, into new facilities.

My colleagues and I will watch with interest. We will scrutinise the money that is received from the sale of those assets to make sure that it goes back into agriculture and back into the department, because we are not going to see this department slip any more.

(Time expired)

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (8.59 pm): I have been on a number of estimates committees over the years and I was pleased once again to participate, this time on Estimates Committee E. Unfortunately, as usual, the opposition members showed little regard for the estimates process. They have no knowledge of what the process is all about, which is a parliamentary examination of public expenditure. With unprecedented budgets to be questioned, the opposition members spent their time asking questions about everything but expenditure. The previous speaker's speech was irrelevant, as were his questions on the day.

On the other hand, my questions to the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland, the Hon. Tim Mulherin; the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, the Hon. Kate Jones; and the Attorney-General, the Hon. Cameron Dick, were relevant and current with regard to issues raised by my constituents or to electorate matters. I will touch on them shortly.

At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in the process. The day, albeit very long, ran smoothly, thanks to the dedicated staff and the chair of the committee, the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I am glad that members of this House remember my husband very fondly. We have been married 29 years this month. Because of the interest shown by my constituents, I want to concentrate my remarks on Minister Jones's comments regarding national parks, the state government's Eco Fund and the Moreton Bay Marine Park, which are all relevant.

The Bligh Labor government has made a significant commitment to protect Queensland's unique landscape by increasing the national park estate from five per cent to 7.5 per cent. This commitment will achieve a land area totalling 12.9 million hectares. This is a massive task. However, under Premier Anna Bligh the state government has already acquired 382,000 hectares in less than two years. The state government believes that retaining and protecting these areas of national park ensures biodiversity in Queensland—not the slash-and-burn approach by the National Party.

Among the acquisitions for national park are the historic declarations of two areas of Aboriginal land in Cape York Peninsula, totalling 194 hectares, and more than 134 hectares of former state forest and timber reserve land. I have spoken before about the extra large expansion of national park on Bribie Island, and that announcement was most welcome. I applaud this government's ongoing protection of the environment.

The Eco Fund was established in January 2009 as the Bligh government's main carbon and environmental offset provider, serving government entities initially, including local government. The Eco Fund is a vital tool in the government's efforts to meet the 2020 commitment to expand protected areas throughout Queensland. The minister reported that the Eco Fund had already raised more than \$900,000 in funding for national park acquisitions. Better still, this funding is expected to be matched on a two-for-one basis, with more than \$1.8 million from the federal government's National Reserve System funding.

In addition to the national park acquisitions, from January to June this year the Eco Fund undertook approximately \$3.5 million in carbon and environmental offset transactions and also provided carbon offsets and related advisory services, including calculating carbon footprints, minimising greenhouse gas emissions and offsetting. The Eco Fund is helping to tackle the real threat of climate change, which the opposition is still in denial about.

The Moreton Bay Marine Park rezoning has delivered on a commitment that the Bligh government made to protect this extremely important waterway, which supports extraordinary natural values. This rezoning follows the banning of professional fishermen in Pumicestone Passage under the Goss Labor government in 1994. This plan has robust scientific integrity behind it and is backed by reliable data, habitat mapping and scientific guiding principles. Under the new plan, 16 per cent of the marine park is now protected by green zones, and I fully support it.

Since the plan started, departmental staff have conducted an extensive education campaign to help bay users familiarise themselves with the new zones. Feedback has indicated good acceptance of the rezoning plan. In addition, over 75,000 copies of the user guide have been distributed, more than 200 signs depicting zone boundaries are currently being installed throughout the region and eight new public moorings will be installed in coral reef habitats to improve access to these areas.

Throughout the three-month grace period, only 70 warnings were issued to water users in the rezoning area, which indicates that people are taking the changes seriously. Unfortunately, the opposition wants to abolish the green zones and allow fishing back into these very sensitive areas. Let us hope they never get the chance.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs SULLIVAN: It was their man up there who said it in a statement.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs SULLIVAN: The member might deny it, but he does not because—

(Time expired)

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (9.04 pm): Going through the estimates process for the first time was certainly an enlightening experience. The preparation and then the experience itself—of being in the red chamber and questioning a minister who was surrounded by 20 or so minders—was an education, and one that I enjoyed. I was extremely fortunate to have the assistance of James Martin and Sam Scanlon from both my office and the opposition office. The understanding and helpfulness of the chair of Estimates Committee E, the member for Bundamba, was also deeply appreciated, as was the friendly

way in which I think the entire committee went about the proceedings. I would also like to record my thanks to the parliamentary staff who assisted the committee. They are a further example of the outstanding assistance that every member of this place receives from every single parliamentary staff member all the time.

The estimates process in theory is good. It is good for our democracy and it keeps both ministers and shadow ministers on their game. However, it is certainly a process that could be improved upon enormously. The opportunity to ask more than 10 questions on notice and so gather additional data would improve estimates. To have the requested information delivered two or three days prior to the hearings is essential, and it makes a joke of the process when that information is not provided in a timely manner. The answers to my questions on notice came in five minutes before the deadline, which was certainly better than the experience of some other shadow ministers. I would also like to suggest that ministers should be required to be a bit more forthright when using their three minutes in which to answer questions. The continual stream of briefing notes pushed under the nose of a minister who is clearly in difficulty might be a safety valve for the minister, but it is hardly conducive to an open and accountable process.

During the time allotted to me I raised a number of issues, a couple of which I would like to revisit as either the answers were inadequate or use was made of the process that made it possible to avoid giving an answer at all. One of my concerns is the administration of the ClimateSmart Home Service. Even with my simple understanding of maths, I know that the cost to fit the target number of 26,000 households will be many millions of dollars more than what was budgeted for when the program was planned. Examples include the cost to train electricians in the first place and the huge drop-out rate of those trained and the change in the basic structure of the home visit just three weeks after the beginning of the operation, where the amount paid to an electrician per visit changed from \$38 plus GST for half an hour to almost \$51 plus GST over 40 minutes to do the same work—a higher cost with fewer homes visited every day. The last time I looked at the ClimateSmart website, some 73,000 home visits had been undertaken. The cost overrun on just that part of the program will be in the order of \$2.4 million.

The ClimateSmart program is a worthy one, but unfortunately there is no place in the schedule for contact to be made with participating householders to judge whether any real and lasting reduction in carbon emissions by the home will be made. It is a further example to me that, when it comes to running any project within budget, Labor should not even be trusted with the petty cash tin.

The management of Fraser Island water quality, the treatment of dingoes and World Heritage listing will be ongoing issues, as will the decline in koala numbers both throughout the Koala Coast and the rest of South-East Queensland, including my own seat of Noosa. If the government were serious about ensuring the survival of koalas it would need to put its hands in its pocket and purchase land from private landholders so that it can be set aside to be used as part of the vital habitat that is required.

During the estimates committee hearing the headline grabber for the minister was the announcement of the Cooloola recreation area. My community and I are grateful for the extended time allowed to fully discuss the implications of this announcement. Last week I convened a meeting which was attended by councillors and staff from the regional council, environment and resident groups, businesspeople and other interested people. I am pleased and proud of the progress made, as it shows the maturity of the Noosa community. A further meeting will be held next week, after which a considered view will be put to the minister.

If there is one thing Labor is good at, it is spin. The use of deception has been developed by this government into an art form. What the budget and estimates have clearly shown is that over the last three years capital expenditure for this department has continued to decline. I for my part will continue to highlight this government's short-sightedness and neglect of the environment.

Debate, on motion of Mr Elmes, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.09 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Townsville, V8 Supercar Event

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.09 pm): As a Townsville born Queenslander, I was very proud in my capacity as shadow minister for tourism to visit the iconic new tourism event in North Queensland, the V8 Supercars of Townsville along with the member for Hinchinbrook, the wonderful Andrew Cripps, who supported it all the way. The V8 Supercar event lured approximately 160,000 people—

Mr Reeves: Hear, hear! I saw him there.

Mr STEVENS: It was very disappointing; I did not see the Minister for Tourism there, to be honest. I know the Minister for Sport was there. The V8 Supercar event lured approximately 160,000 people to the Townsville region for the three-day event over the period 10 July to 12 July which, on early estimates, has been predicted to generate \$10 million in economic benefits for the North Queensland region. The flow-on effects from the event will have long-lasting benefits for the region and the community, and it has placed Townsville on the map for event based tourism in Queensland.

I was extremely impressed with the city of Townsville and how it coped with the influx of 160,000 people over the three days. The racing facility that was put in place was world class and every racegoer from every vantage point had the opportunity to soak up V8 racing at its best. For a relatively small city, the mammoth logistical exercise was done extremely well and the whole event was handled with ease and enthusiasm.

This inaugural annual event has been one of the most successful tourism events that Townsville and North Queensland have ever seen. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners of race 11, Jamie Whincup, and race 12, James Courtney. This fantastic event for tropical North Queensland was located in the vicinity of Reid Park near Townsville and lured tourists from around the state, interstate and overseas.

Tourist numbers to tropical North Queensland have always been significant, but this annual V8 Supercar event will bring in tourists who have an interest in motor racing and who will inevitably stay on or come early to explore the region and the close Whitsunday Islands and Great Barrier Reef including islands such as Magnetic Island. I constructively suggest in future years that the party atmosphere be extended throughout the city for the preceding week.

I say congratulations to Townsville. It should be very proud of the success of such an exciting motor racing event. I say thank you to the sponsors and the hundreds of volunteers and staff for delivering and embracing such a fantastic event. I wish them well for next year's event.

I also suggest that event tourism be high on the agenda for future tourism employment opportunities in Townsville, whether it be cultural events, another sporting event suited to tropical North Queensland, wonderful winter weather or a water based tourism event centred around the magnificent Magnetic Island. Townsville can proceed confidently in the knowledge that it can expertly run any national or international event along with any other city in Australia.

Bones, Mr E; Volunteers

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.12 pm): I rise in the House to speak about a very special constituent of the Greenslopes electorate, Mr Edward—otherwise know as Ted—Bones, who epitomises what it means to be a volunteer. As many honourable members would know, I was a volunteer for three years in the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu under the then Australian Volunteers Abroad program. Volunteering is something that means a great deal to me. I am grateful that there are people like Ted in my electorate.

It is especially fitting in our 150th anniversary year that we celebrate the achievements and contribution of volunteers who are not always in the forefront but who devote countless hours of their own time to improve opportunities for all Queenslanders without need for reward. A volunteer's contribution to the community cannot be understated and stories such as Ted's, while not unusual for those who dedicate their time to others, are truly inspiring.

Ted has spent his entire life helping others—60 years of active volunteering, an amazing feat. Born into a family that embraced the service that is volunteering, Ted's parents were both founding members of what is now known as the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland. A founding member himself of the Coorparoo Youth Group, Ted has dedicated more than 20 years to supporting youth and scouting groups around Brisbane. Perhaps most noteworthy, Ted has been highly instrumental in his various roles within the South Moreton branch of the recreational fishing organisation, Sunfish. He has assisted in the creation of fishing programs and angling courses for schoolchildren and children with disabilities. Ted has been hands on, both as a teacher of these courses and in the creation of partnerships with Disability Services Queensland. Further, Ted has liaised with councils and provided consultation to various port authorities on building boat ramps and car parks suitable for the entire community. These are just a few of the services that Ted has dedicated his time towards.

Quite deservingly, Ted has been recently recognised as one of Queensland's top volunteers under the Queensland government's 2009 Sport and Recreation Volunteer Awards. I acknowledge the presence in the House this evening of the Minister for Sport and I congratulate him on this terrific awards program. These awards celebrate the volunteers who give their time to bettering sporting and recreational organisations throughout Queensland, organisations that would not survive without their contributions.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of a good community and I am inspired to know that Queensland has the highest rate of volunteers in Australia, with 38 percent of the population participating in some form of volunteer work. That is a great credit to Queensland and a great credit to the calibre and integrity of who Queenslanders are. I am even more inspired to know that my electorate is home to dedicated volunteers such as Ted. I would like to take this opportunity, as I stand here in parliament, to congratulate him on his very deserving award as one of Queensland's top volunteers.

Urban Land Development Authority, QUT Carseldine Campus

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (9.15 pm): I rise to speak about an issue of great concern in the Aspley electorate. Locals in Aspley and in Carseldine are particularly unhappy about the ULDA's plans for high-density development of the former QUT Carseldine campus, because it does not meet their aspirations for local green space and preserving this educational facility for future generations. From the outset, I want to make it absolutely clear that locals and I are not opposed to a good quality development at Fitzgibbon. Our concern is loss of green space at QUT, the traffic impacts and inadequate public transport with the influx of 6,500 more people.

The main point that I want to make tonight is the significant mistrust in my local community as a direct result of an appalling lack of consultation. Until I raised the issue before I was elected, most locals did not even know about it. Other locals felt they were misled because it was not clear that the so-called Fitzgibbon development also affected Carseldine.

While the ULDA likes to think that the subsequent public meeting it had to have was a sign of good faith, the fact is that it was forced to hold it as a result of community outrage. We have achieved some limited success—a reduction in the height of the development from 10 storeys to three storeys stepped to eight. That would not have happened if the community had not rallied together.

I did invite the minister to the electorate in order to hear local concerns first hand. To his credit, he did take my advice to come out. However, putting politics ahead of a good outcome, he chose not to tell me until the very last minute and even then he only invited a select few locals to come at all. If that was not bad enough, when he got there, people discovered that he had already made his decision. It is no wonder there is a clear view in my community that the ULDA and the government are not listening.

But do not take it just from me; I have had any number of letters, emails and phone calls from people complaining about the government's failure to listen. Honourable members would understand that not all of the things locals said about this whole process can be repeated in this place. But let me share a few. One local from Binara Court, Carseldine said—

It is a joke. His attempt to be personal by writing my name at the top was a waste of time as clearly he did not even read the letter.

What was particularly galling for locals was the ULDA's smug, self-congratulatory advertisement in the *Courier-Mail* claiming to be consultative when most locals think that it was anything but. One emailer wrote to me—

I am not surprised Mr. Eagles feels the need to self promote his organization—no one else I know has a single good word to say about their 'achievements' to date. To date the ONLY 'consultation' I have ever been notified of by the ULDA (apart from this letter) is a glossy expensive booklet containing enough facts to fill one side of a single post-it sheet.

Comments like these simply demonstrate that many people in the area know the government has stopped listening and that the government cannot be trusted to protect their local lifestyle.

Dragon Abreast Australia

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.18 pm): Dragons Abreast Australia, or DAA, established in 1998, is a phenomenon that has taken Australia by storm. It is highly effective in promoting the message of breast cancer awareness and education through the sport of dragon boat racing. Dragons Abreast is based on participation and inclusiveness in a supportive environment where those travelling the journey with breast cancer gradually develop their fitness levels through participation in this ancient Chinese sport.

The idea for a Bribie Island group began when the founder of DAA, Michelle Hanton, whose parents live on Bribie, spoke about dragon boat paddling at an Anglican Church support group meeting. Local resident Dawn Worley was inspired to take up paddling and joined the nearest DAA member group, which was located 40 minutes away at Redcliffe, and paddled with them for four years. Dawn met Anne Cousins and Cathy Goldsbrough and under the guidance of Jo Parry, Queensland state representative for DAA, and Lexie Warren, national community liaison for DAA, formed Dragons Abreast Bribie Island, or DABI, in 2008.

Lexie assisted with the development of the group by speaking at Zonta and Rotary Club meetings. The fledgling group received wonderful community support, and in early 2009 was able to purchase its own dragon boat thanks to a very substantial and generous donation from the Zonta Club of Caboolture Inc. The Rotary Club of Bribie Island also assisted with sponsorship that enabled the club to purchase a pink marquee, shirts, hats, life jackets and paddles.

On Sunday, 3 May, a large crowd gathered to witness the awakening of the *Spirit of Bribie*, DABI's new dragon boat. The ceremony entailed dotting the eyes and ears of the dragon to awaken its spirit and Sue Droughton, president of Zonta Club of Caboolture Inc.; Roger Platt, president of the Rotary Club of Bribie Island; Dawn Worley, president of DABI; and I all participated in this important rite. Mayor Allan Sutherland, an avid paddler himself, added his words of encouragement to the group.

Also in attendance was Hazel Cowburn, who designed the *Spirit of Bribie* emblem which is painted on the boat, and the 'Pinkaboutit' logo on the back of the members' shirts. Bishop Raymond Smith blessed the boat and paddlers, followed by the traditional incense burning and a Chinese lion dance.

Recently I presented a state government cheque for \$8,534 to Dawn Worley, the club president. The bulk of the money will be used to purchase a trailer to transport the club's dragon boat for extended training sessions as well as to attend regattas. DABI participated in its first regatta at Tin Can Bay in early July. There was still much excitement when the novice team won its first race. They are now looking forward to the inaugural DAA Queensland regatta to be held at Lake Kawana on the Sunshine Coast on 28 November.

Dragons Abreast Bribie Island now has close to 40 members who are breast cancer survivors and their close supporters. Current executives are: president, Dawn Worley; vice-president and publicity officer, Kay Ellis; secretary, Janet Brooks; treasurer, Bronwyn Pawley; and assistant treasurer, Carole Harrison.

The attainment of many of the club's goals in such a short period of time has shown the credibility and value of the DAA name and that so much can be achieved with the support of community groups who work together. As breast cancer remains the most common cancer in women, I encourage women to take the opportunity to have a free mammogram as part of the state government's preventative measures to combat this insidious disease. For further information visit www.dragonsabreast.com.au.

Corruption Inquiry

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (9.21 pm): The Fitzgerald inquiry is rightly regarded as a watershed in Queensland politics. It exposed political and police corruption and we all hoped that it would put an end to the bad old days. Sadly, it seems the lessons of the past do not always last. The Beattie and Bligh Labor governments are demonstrating similar corrupt practices, with cronyism, secret deals and payment of success fees to lobbyists. What is worse, this is not just my opinion or the opinion of the media; it comes from no less a figure than Tony Fitzgerald himself. In Mr Fitzgerald's own words, as reported in his recent speech on the 20th anniversary of his inquiry—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

How disgraceful it is that we have a former Premier sniping from his taxpayer funded job in America, trying to defend his government's practices. This is the same former Premier whose trusted cabinet minister Gordon Nuttall now sits in jail for taking money from big business and the same person whose one-time deputy and state Treasurer Terry Mackenroth is now under CMC investigation for possible improper dealings. Terry Mackenroth left politics and became a lobbyist and pocketed a share of a half a million dollar success fee from a successful BrisConnections consortium.

Now that the heat is on, the Bligh government has decided it will outlaw such success fees. That will not undo the damage of the past 12 years. The Premier is trying to blame the lobbyists and says that they are not necessary to companies seeking to do business with the Queensland government. It beggars belief that companies run by smart business people would pay big fees to lobbyists unless they were getting lucrative contracts in return. BrisConnections is just one notable example. Does the Premier really expect us to believe that Mr Mackenroth and his colleagues received half a million dollars for nothing? Ms Bligh and Mr Beattie have had 12 years to address these issues, but it is only now as corrupt practices are coming to the public's notice that the government has decided to act.

Outlawing success fees and pay-per-view political donations for access to government ministers are just examples of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. Only this week we have heard about undisclosed discussions between current Bligh government ministers in regard to the Inskip Point development. On top of that, the Premier's own Chief of Staff previously acted on behalf of the developer. In the current climate, Queenslanders are entitled to ask questions about these types of dealings.

What the people of Queensland deserve is more than CMC investigations into individual examples of corrupt practices and cronyism. We need another Fitzgerald inquiry that will look into all aspects of government dealings with business in this state.

While I have a couple of minutes up my sleeve, it would be really handy if the government delivered infrastructure to the Sunshine Coast—CAMCOS, the multimodal corridor, and the Sunshine Coast Hospital. Government members should remember that people are going to die on the coast until they deliver this hospital, and I am going to bring it up at every opportunity I get because the deaths will be on the hands of each and every single one of them and the blood will be on the hands of each and every one of them.

Brisbane City Council, Bus Depot Plans

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.24 pm): Labor Brisbane City councillors have reported that cracks in Campbell Newman's LNP council team were revealed last night after secret plans for a new bus depot were rushed to council. The controversial new depot will be located in Brisbane's south at Sherwood Road, Sherwood, and will house around 200 buses, plus administrative and staff amenities buildings, a garage workshop building, a bus refuelling facility and a transformer and generator enclosure.

Apparently the Lord Mayor pushed the decision on to council's meeting agenda at the last minute in an attempt to avoid proper scrutiny by the Labor opposition. Labor councillors have serious concerns about this proposal, which has been pushed through without proper scrutiny, debate or community consultation. This is how bad decisions are made and does not make for open and accountable local government. Even Councillor Newman's own LNP councillors acknowledge that something is rotten. In a clear sign of division in Councillor Newman's ranks, the LNP councillor for Tennyson ward joined with Labor councillors in speaking out against the proposal. When infighting between LNP councillors broke out, the LNP administration used its numbers to gag debate on the bus depot. However, the LNP councillor who spoke against it left the chamber.

Also in question is the proposed financial arrangements for the depot, which means that the Brisbane City Council will not even own the bus depot after paying \$16.5 million to purchase the land, selling it to a developer, then leasing it back from them for \$100 million to \$125 million over 25 years. Yes, that is right. Under the proposal, Brisbane ratepayers will be forced to pay a third-party developer for an expensive leaseback arrangement that will cost around \$4 to \$5 million per year.

This arrangement will not deliver value for money for Brisbane ratepayers and in the long term it will cost the city even more. This is just another example of an arrogant Liberal Party administration which refuses to listen to people in the community and prefers to run roughshod over them. People in the Sherwood and Corinda communities will again have more pain in the form of increased traffic congestion along Oxley Road, unsafe roads around schools such as Sherwood and St Joseph's, with 200 buses going to and from the depot and with absolutely no say in this decision at all.

I am sure the local schools, Sherwood and St Joseph's, and churches and businesses around the area will not be impressed. Local environmental groups and local residents will be very concerned regarding the impacts such a proposal will have on this area. I know how hard they lobbied council against undesirable developments in the past. What I would like to know is will the local member for Indooroopilly and that part of Sherwood Road join his colleague the councillor for Tennyson and voice his opposition to the proposal?

(Time expired)

Tugun Desalination Plant, Damaged Properties

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.27 pm): Residents in the Currumbin electorate who live along or adjacent to the Tugun desalination pipeline route have asked me to represent them on the floor of the Queensland parliament. They are beside themselves with worry and want me to place on record their ongoing grievances with the lack of this government's assistance to ensure that their damaged properties are restored to pre-desalination plant construction condition. Residents are seeking an independent engineering building inspection condition report to be completed on their affected homes as, despite being offered a pre-construction building condition survey report, none of them who have contacted me have been offered a post-inspection survey.

Why on earth were these people offered pre-construction reports that were pretty detailed documents in the first place if there was no intention to follow up? When residents are left to their own devices to book post-inspections, they tell me they are appalled to find out that they are not done on the entire property as they were in the first instance. Only the parts that residents claim to have altered are

inspected, not the entire property as happened in the original survey. They want to know why some people's claims have been favoured over others in the same street. A few people have had repairs done fully, others very partially and others completely refused.

Residents have been given a range of reasons why their properties are not in the same condition they were in prior to construction of this plant and associated pipelines. This is a cruel way to treat people who patiently put up with enormous disruptions over a prolonged period, some even being moved out of their homes for weeks on end. They are desperate to have their homes restored to preconstruction condition. I call on this neglectful government to support these residents and provide the means for them to have an independent engineering building inspection condition report at no cost to any of the people who were offered a preconstruction inspection.

Both the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning have been playing a game of seesaw, which is fully reported in *Hansard*. By behaving in this manner, both were able to abrogate their responsibility to their respective portfolios and, more importantly, to the citizens of Queensland—namely, those in the Currumbin electorate to whom they owe a big apology.

I stand in this House as a voice for the people of my electorate who put their trust in me to represent them actively. They feel they have been hung out to dry by this Labor government, whose ministers have been flipping them between each other to avoid any responsibility. It is not only residents who feel hung out to dry; the Tugun Seahawks Football Club has seen its facilities deteriorate rapidly since construction began. After pleading with this government since last year to even get a hearing, which it finally received last month at a closed meeting with the abovementioned ministers, the club is still struggling to survive on a weekly basis as deplorable conditions get even worse—no night lights, portable dressing rooms, potholes opening up around the grounds, no spectator stands. And still the government refuses to listen.

Everton Electorate, Harris Family

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (9.30 pm): We have heard a lot this week about businesses paying to attend events with politicians. I am very pleased to be part of a government led by a Premier who has taken a strong stand to ban businesses from paying big money to gain access to politicians, but I would like to mention a recent event which I was involved in that businesses did pay to attend but with the very best of motives.

The Harris family of Ferny Hills in the electorate of Ferny Grove have had a very difficult 12 months. Their son, Billy, a strapping 15-year-old, was left brain damaged after an accident on his bike last October. Having met him, I can tell the House that Billy is a wonderful young man, and prior to his accident he was a standout player for the Wests Arana Hills Junior Rugby League Club. To make matters worse, Billy's mother, Leanne, was diagnosed with breast cancer earlier this year. As members can see, it has been a very tough 12 months for the Harris family.

I am pleased to inform the House that there has been a small bright side to the Harris family's plight. On hearing about their situation, the member for Ferny Grove and I resolved to do our bit to help Billy's family raise funds to assist him. We arranged a business breakfast in partnership with the Hills Chamber of Commerce, with all proceeds donated to the Harris family. Businesses in the Everton and Ferny Grove electorates are not immune to the global financial crisis. Many are experiencing a downturn in their business, as consumers watch their budgets that bit closer. Despite this, the event was extremely well attended, with around 100 small business people from our area making the effort to get along there that morning. They were well informed about the state of the economy by our guest speaker, the Treasurer, and, more importantly, together we raised about \$2,000 for the Harris family. In total, our community has banded together and raised well over \$50,000 for this wonderful and deserving family.

As is so often the case, adversity—in the form of the Harris family's plight—has brought out the best in our local community and in particular our local businesses. I would like to thank the Treasurer for attending. I would also like to give a very big pat on the back to Max Matthews and the rest of the Hills Chamber of Commerce for banding together to support this wonderful and deserving family. Most importantly, though, I would like to thank the Harris family for showing us all how courage and a tight family bond can help us all get through the most difficult moments in our lives.

Slavery

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (9.33 pm): If you asked the average person in Australia whether slavery exists anymore, they would probably say no. If you asked them whether it exists in Australia, they would almost certainly say no. But there are approximately 27 million people in slavery around the world at any given time. Today I was able to sponsor Ruth Thomas, the director of World Hope in Australia, who has set up an antitrafficking program called No More Traffic, and Kristin Wiebe, who is the antitrafficking program director for Asia for World Hope International, and she is based in Cambodia.

Rescuing people trapped in slavery is very dangerous and heartbreaking work. The human trafficking industry is worth \$44 billion annually in profits for traffickers around the world. It is the third largest illicit trade in the world behind drugs and weapons. Fifty per cent of the people trafficked are children and 50 per cent are adults. A child being pimped for the purposes of being raped is not engaged in 'work'.

When we ask, 'Does it exist in Australia?' we would be shocked to know the answer. An Australian citizen recruited four men from China and enslaved them in a factory in Australia. A man was trafficked from India and enslaved in a restaurant in Glenbrook near Sydney. Recruiters from Australia go to Russia to hire women for tabletop dancing in clubs which often have links to brothels. In June 1995, a 13-year-old Thai girl was found working in a Sydney brothel. The girl was one of 300 indebted Thai women working as sex slaves in Sydney brothels. There are 3,000 children, some younger than 10, in the Australian sex industry, which includes brothels, escort work, street prostitution, pornography, sex for favours and stripping. The one that really turned my stomach is that a travel agency in Victoria held slide nights promoting child sex tours in Thailand. Australia ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, called the Palermo Protocol, in 2005 and implemented domestic legislation against trafficking.

Today we met with members of our Parliamentary Christian Fellowship. We spoke with the Speaker and had an appointment with the Attorney-General. I am heading to Cambodia with my wife in August to see how we can provide ongoing support for the incredibly important work of caring for people who are poor and powerless.

Chatsworth Electorate, Whites Hill State College Tuckshop

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (9.36 pm): I rise to talk about a wonderful thing that is happening in a school in my electorate, the Whites Hill State College. On Friday, 24 July I visited Whites Hill State College and I was escorted around the school by the principal, Karl Shrubsole. Whilst we walked around, he showed me a number of programs they have running there including the school's tuckshop, which is now named the Nosh Pit 2 Cool 4 School. It was established in July 2009 and has been taken over by chefs Brent Southcombe and Colin Wells, both of whom are not only passionate about food but also passionate about providing truly health driven alternatives for children who purchase food in their school tuckshop.

Mr Watt: Have you been eating there as well?

Mr KILBURN: Yes, I have been eating there as well. They believe it is important to encourage the consumption of food that not only positively influences health but also will establish healthy eating habits for the future.

When approached to transform the tuckshop at Whites Hill State College in Brisbane, Brent and Colin took the task seriously, taking a radical approach to the term 'healthy tuckshop'. After spending months investigating the so-called healthy alternatives for children's snacks and lunches, they discovered that many of these products that claimed to be healthy were in fact full of preservatives, additives and food colourings, which have been proven to contribute towards health and behavioural problems in children.

As the existing tuckshop facilities at the college were not suitable to produce the volume of nutritional quality food that would be served, the entire tuckshop was gutted and rebuilt with a new configuration, including a new stove, cold room and wash-up area. A new menu was established featuring freshly made hot and cold meals, soups and sandwiches using preservative-free and additive-free ingredients. Produce is sourced, where possible, from local farmers, including dairy products from Barambah Organics and Maleny Dairies, preservative-free sausages from Farmer Dave and organic eggs from a local poultry farm. All meals are made daily on the tuckshop premises by qualified chefs.

Within the first week of operating, tuckshop sales at Whites Hill State College were 38 per cent higher than previous takings. Teachers have already reported an improvement in the students' behaviour, which they readily attribute to the consumption of healthy food at the tuckshop. The Nosh Pit 2 Cool 4 School is now looking to help transform the eating habits of schoolchildren throughout Brisbane and possibly Queensland. One of the other interesting things that has come from this is that, because they have a professional kitchen and chefs, they have been able to create 11 traineeships for the students at the school doing vocational education and training which allows them to participate in certified training.

Whilst I was there I did an on-the-spot survey of the children who came to the tuckshop, and the overwhelming response was that the new, healthy food was far better than the food they used to have. As I said, the behaviour at the school has improved due to this healthy option. I commend the principal, students and staff at Whites Hill State College for this innovation.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.39 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, 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, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson