



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2010

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

P150, Database Launches

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as part of the P150 celebrations this week, a launch and demonstration of two new historical databases of parliamentary information will occur at 1 pm this afternoon in the Dandair Room. Being launched is a web page containing the *Record of Proceedings* of the first year of the Queensland parliament. These reports, published in the *Moreton Bay Courier*, have been transcribed, digitised and published online for all to read. As well, we will launch an online database of biographical information of each of the members of Queensland's first parliament, which sat from 1860 to 1863. On behalf of all honourable members, I congratulate those Parliamentary Service staff who have worked to create these valuable resources.

PETITIONS

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

Cleveland-Redland Bay Road and Anita Street, Upgrade

Mr Dowling, 3 petitions, from 456 petitioners in total, requesting the House to upgrade the intersection of Anita Street and Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, Redland Bay to allow a safe passage when exiting this estate [\[2227\]](#) [\[2228\]](#) [\[2229\]](#).

Daylight Saving

Mr Foley, from 401 petitioners, requesting the House to discontinue any action towards implementing daylight savings throughout Queensland both now and in the future [\[2230\]](#).

Charters Towers, Dental Service

Mr Knuth, from 1,284 petitioners, requesting the House to take immediate action to provide a permanent dental team in the public health system to service Charters Towers and district [\[2231\]](#).

Herbert River District, Flood Proofing

Mr Cripps, from 1,599 petitioners, requesting the House to pursue alternative options in flood proofing the Bruce Highway to minimise any detrimental impact on the economic viability of the Herbert River district and potential negative impacts on farms and sporting venues [\[2232\]](#).

Gateway Motorway, Noise Barriers

Mr Kilburn, from 126 petitioners, requesting the House to install suitable acoustic barriers along the Gateway Motorway, specifically east of Yeates Close continuing north east of Kenilworth Place to Ridgeview Street, Carindale [\[2233\]](#).

Racing Industry

Mr Rickuss, from 88 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately ensure that the Queensland Country Racing Committee and the Queensland Country Racing Associations are not dissolved; this statute be incorporated into any new legislation; and to guarantee no further loss of racing dates [\[2234\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts)—

[2235](#) Public Interest Monitor—Six Monthly Report of the Public Interest Monitor, delivered pursuant to section 363 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000: Reporting period 1 July 2009-31 December 2009

[2236](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts) to a paper petition (1413-10) presented by Mr O'Brien from 127 petitioners requesting the House to convene an urgent and wide-ranging Royal Commission into the arrest rates, imprisonment rates and deaths in custody of Aboriginal people

Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace)—

[2237](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1418-10) presented by Mrs Cunningham from 62 petitioners requesting the House to reduce the speed limit from 80 km/h to 60 km/h through the township of Benaraby on the Bruce Highway between the Benaraby Junction and Marrawing Road

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Hinchliffe)—

[2238](#) Copy of pages 91 to 109, Queensland Government Gazette No. 13 dated 14 May 2010—Notice under section 125(1)(f) of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, in relation to the Queensland Curtis LNG Facility

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Nicklin (Mr Wellington)—

[2239](#) Non-conforming petition from 234 petitioners requesting the House to direct the Premier to implement the mutual goals of good government, listening to resident right abuses, and environmental protection, and to direct the government to fulfil its Green Queensland promises as a priority

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Road Infrastructure

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.34 am): Before I make my ministerial statement, I am very pleased to take the opportunity this morning to wish the Leader of the House, Judy Spence, a very happy birthday. I am very pleased to advise the House that the Leader of the House now shares her birthday with a very healthy Thomas Anthony Cronin, born to Kate Jones at two o'clock this morning.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms BLIGH: The new Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge is now just days away from opening to traffic. That means that here in Queensland we are putting the finishing touches to one of Australia's largest road and bridge projects. But the government's commitment to our \$18 billion capital building program means that we will not be resting on our laurels. I am happy to report that we have reached a very critical point of work on the Airport Link—the largest tunnel and road project in Australia's history. Right now there are 3,000 workers on this project. As we speak, two \$45 million tunnel-boring machines are being assembled at the Airport Link work site at Kalinga Park. They arrived in pieces from Germany late last year and are now being assembled by a crew of some 80 people. This assembly work has been ongoing since November 2009, and these two massive drills are now nearly ready to get to work. Firstly they have to be lowered in pieces into their launch site—a huge specially constructed launch box at the Kalinga Park work site. In total, two 150-tonne cranes and three 40-tonne cranes are required to lower these awe-inspiring machines into place. As we speak, a purpose-built gantry crane towers above the six-storey deep tunnel-boring machine launch box at Kalinga Park. In coming weeks the 12.48 metre-wide cutter head—the biggest ever used in this country—will be lowered into position. I am very pleased to be able to report that in July the first of these huge machines is expected to begin its 12-month subterranean journey from Toombul to Lutwyche.

As members of this House will know, Airport Link is one part of a package of infrastructure projects worth nearly \$5 billion on the north side of Brisbane. So far more than seven million work hours have been spent constructing Airport Link, the Northern Busway from Windsor to Kedron and improving the airport intersection. The latest on the airport roundabout upgrade is now well on its way to eliminating Brisbane's best known bottlenecks. In the excitement of last weekend's community day you may have missed it but on Saturday night northbound traffic was switched on to a new 180-metre overpass section of the Gateway Motorway. This new overpass will allow construction of the flyover that will completely bypass the airport roundabout—one of Brisbane's worst traffic snarls eliminated by a Labor government. It is expected that southbound traffic will also be using this new overpass within a month. The old bridge will then be demolished to allow further construction of the new airport roundabout flyover. With projects like this, we are building tomorrow's Queensland and we are creating jobs when we need them most.

Ted Smout Memorial Bridge

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): As members know, we are intent on creating jobs and on building infrastructure. What we are doing is not only big projects like the Gateway upgrade, but I am very pleased to say that we have another project very close to completion, and I can announce that another community day will celebrate another major bridge building milestone. On Sunday, 11 July we invite Queenslanders to celebrate the opening of the new 2.7-kilometre Houghton Highway duplication. This \$315 million new bridge will be known as the Ted Smout Memorial Bridge, named after one of Australia's Great War veterans. The 2.7-kilometre long bridge highway links Brisbane and Redcliffe, and this is another project delivered on time and on budget.

This new bridge has been designed to a one-in-2,000 year storm standard. It is the first of its type in Australia and among the first in the world, and it reflects the lessons learnt from Hurricane Katrina. A pedestrian path and bikeway and a dedicated fishing platform are just some of the features that will make this new bridge very special. Not every bridge can boast a custom-built pelican perch, but the Ted Smout Memorial Bridge sure can in recognition of the iconic symbol of the Redcliffe and Sandgate areas—our pelican. This is a win for motorists, it is a win for the bayside and it is a win for pelicans.

Mr Lucas: And the fishing platform.

Ms BLIGH: I said the fishing platform. It is also a real win for workers. It has generated more than 700 jobs in the midst of the global financial crisis.

On the community day there will be big parties at both ends of the bridge, one in Sandgate and one in Redcliffe—an all-day festival with vintage cars, competitions and a big bridge race. I expect that thousands of Queensland families will be there on 11 July to walk the new bridge and to see for themselves the benefits of our capital building program. But we are building more than bridges in Queensland. We are building a stronger economy. I am very pleased that Redcliffe and Sandgate and the people of the bayside will have new infrastructure as a result.

Arts Queensland, Events

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.39 am): One of the most extraordinary exhibitions to be recently staged in Queensland is currently underway at Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art and I encourage all members—indeed, all Queenslanders—to take the opportunity to see it if possible. The unique work of Australian born London based Ron Mueck is truly worth a trip to GoMA, as I discovered when I attended the opening last week and had the opportunity to see this remarkable work and meet the artist himself. The exhibition highlights Mr Mueck's confrontingly lifelike sculptures and, judging by the thousands who have queued to gain admission, it promises to be another hit for GoMA.

Just 13 years ago Mr Mueck was a relatively unknown struggling artist until his work *Dead Dad* was exhibited in London and launched him on the world stage. The dramatic *Dead Dad* forms part of the powerful GoMA exhibits. Some of them are colossal—significantly bigger than life size—some are very confronting, most of them are naked, some are miniature, some are gut wrenching, some of them are very amusing, but all of them are very moving. The show caused a sensation when it was based at the National Gallery of Victoria, with whom GoMA is partnering to bring this show to Queensland and where it attracted more than three times the anticipated audience.

The exhibition opened on 8 May and to last Sunday nearly 20,000 people had experienced this extraordinary show—so 20,000 people in just a little over a week. Advertising and word of mouth is certainly playing their part in spreading the news, but there is something interesting about this exhibition because it has excited a very active social media campaign via twitter that is attracting a raft of much younger visitors.

To ensure that Queenslanders in our regions can also enjoy Ron Mueck's work the gallery, as part of this exhibition, will tour its giant sized Mueck acquisition called *In Bed* to four venues: to Ipswich, to Mackay, to Townsville and to Cairns. Regional Queenslanders can share the experience and touring Mueck's work will ensure that arts and culture are not confined to the south-east.

In 2009, our government announced a new approach to arts touring, which is already re-energising performing arts across Queensland. For the first time, local venues can choose the shows or workshops that they would like to present to their own communities from a menu of the best touring productions that are available in Queensland. Queensland communities have responded enthusiastically, with 72 expressing interest in presenting performances from this menu and Queensland made productions are very strong on the list. Full Throttle—formerly known as Tropic Sun from Townsville—and I know strongly supported by the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone—will tour *3 Blokes and their Barbie* over five weeks to 17 regional and remote Queensland communities. This production will cover 6,500 kilometres north to the Tablelands, west along the Flinders and Matilda highways and south to the New South Wales border. This initiative has brought communities together, with Emerald, Blackwater, Capella, Springsure, Redridge, Blackall and Winton all working collaboratively to bring tours to their respective towns. Presenters in this program, that is local communities, receive 100 per cent of the ticket sales, enabling them to reinvest in their local communities and their venues. As a key outcome of our government's Coming to a Place Near You Touring Strategy, we are leading the way in developing new arts and new arts audiences in regional and metropolitan areas very simply by offering a quality product that people want to see.

Health Funding Reform

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.43 am): At the recent COAG meeting on 19 and 20 April 2010 the Commonwealth and all states and territories, with the exception of Western Australia, reached agreement on the most significant and far-reaching reform of the health system since the introduction of Medicare. Many of these reforms will fundamentally change the way health services are delivered in Queensland.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr LUCAS: That is right. The opposition, which has no policy on anything, would not have a view on federal health reform. Of course, the opposition would not support the first time that the Commonwealth government has signed up to growth funding in health. Additional Commonwealth funding will begin to flow into Queensland in less than seven weeks time on 1 July.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Isn't it funny, the member for Caloundra speaks, but what did we hear from the member for Burnett? He said he first had his doubts about the LNP when he stood behind the member for Caloundra when he announced a mental health policy where they had volunteers undertaking the work. That is what the member for Burnett said about the good old member for Caloundra at the last election campaign. That is when he first had his doubts.

At COAG, the Premier's first priority was to ensure that any agreement reached was in the best interests of our state. The result we got at COAG was a huge win for Queensland's public hospital system and patients. As a result of this agreement, for the first time the Commonwealth government is committed to locking in funding to meet the growth and healthcare costs—a floor, not a ceiling.

Over the past 10 years, healthcare costs in Queensland have been growing at around 11.3 per cent per annum whilst inflation grew at 3.5 per cent per annum. That is the stark financial reality of health care now and into the future in Queensland. The other states and this government understand that and are acting and delivering on it. Over the next four years the amount of the GST clawback will be fully returned to Queensland to fund health services and the Commonwealth has now committed to a minimum of \$3.4 billion from 2014 to 2020 for future growth to guarantee that Queensland will be better off.

Queensland welcomes the Commonwealth becoming the dominant funder. While we have to give up some GST revenue for this to occur, this helps secure a more sustainable future for our health system as a whole and for all Queenslanders as taxpayers. Queenslanders will see significant improvements in service quality in the areas of elective surgery, emergency departments, aged care, primary care and the health workforce.

As a result of the Premier's negotiations—and I thank her for that—leading up to and at COAG, there is now an additional \$1.06 billion of new money flowing into the system over the next four years from 1 July this year. That is money that Queensland would not otherwise have had. The problem with the opposition members is that they have an opinion on everything and a policy on nothing. This includes key investments for Queensland's hospitals of \$150 million for better emergency departments, \$160 million for elective surgery, and around \$325 million for sub-acute care beds. It also includes an estimated \$23 million to boost community funded mental health services and \$148 million to improve the aged-care sector. This funding will go a long way to meeting growing demand in Queensland, fixing aged care to take the pressure off hospitals and tackling the disconnect between GPs, hospitals and community health.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr LUCAS: The member for Caloundra did not worry about that. He had a mental health policy that relied on volunteers. Importantly, this is on top of a huge nationwide expansion of \$643 million—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides will come to order. It will help if the Deputy Premier sticks to his ministerial statement and it will help me enormously now if the member for Caloundra ceases to interject. He has had a fair go.

Mr LUCAS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Importantly, this is on top of a huge nationwide expansion of \$643 million in training for the health workforce. Nationally, 1,375 more GPs will be practising or in training by 2013, there will be 5,500 new GPs or GPs undergoing training within a decade and 680 more specialist doctors will commence within a decade.

Importantly, 400 more clinical training scholarships and a locum scheme for the same number of places are funded for allied health students in regional and rural health areas nationwide. Of course, Queensland led the way when it came to bonded internships. There will be greater local accountability

and clinician engagement with the establishment of new local hospitals networks. At COAG, Queensland was vocal in ensuring that our rural and regional services were guaranteed. These hospitals will continue to be funded under block funding arrangements to give these essential services certainty throughout the state.

Although adequate health funding is an extremely important consideration, stopping people from becoming ill in the first place is the key to relieving pressure on our health system and improving health outcomes. The Commonwealth recognised this in its recent budget with the announcement to establish Medicare Locals. Medicare Locals will assist in coordinating care for patients as well as delivering health promotion and preventive health programs. Medicare Locals will work closely with the local hospital networks to improve patient care and the quality of health and hospital services provided to the community. Together, they will ensure that GP primary health care and hospital care are better integrated so that patients can smoothly transition in and out of hospital and continue to receive all the care they need.

The Premier and this government have delivered \$4 billion in extra funding from COAG for Queenslanders over the next decade. This is on top of the largest health infrastructure commitment in Australia of \$6.2 billion over the forward estimates to 2012-13. That shows the level of our commitment to new health services and facilities that this government has to ensure that Queenslanders get the health care they deserve. The Bligh Labor government is delivering the real dollars in our local communities that it takes to improve our healthcare system. We are fully committed to working cooperatively with the Rudd government in implementing this generational reform to ensure better health care for every Queensland.

Local Industry Policy

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (9.50 am): Queensland's manufacturing industry matters to this state. It matters because it represents about nine per cent of the Queensland economy and, more importantly, because of the thousands of people it employs. It is a key component of our economy. The local industry policy is well regarded by industry and unions alike for its intent to provide local businesses with full, fair and reasonable access to bid for government contracts. It does not seek to guarantee that local firms will always win, but it does seek to ensure that every opportunity is provided for them to be successful.

While the policy enjoys wide stakeholder support, the implementation of the policy and enforcement mechanisms can be improved. This is consistent feedback on the policy. The Bligh government has therefore signed off on a proposal to legislate the requirement for a local industry policy to ensure that this policy becomes part of the furniture in Queensland.

The proposal to legislate will include a requirement for an annual report, which will require a report to be prepared and tabled in the parliament by the responsible minister. These extra steps will enshrine transparency and accountability and, more importantly, ensure the best outcomes for the Queensland taxpayer and Queensland industry. It is a measure that employer groups and unions have said is needed and will ensure that our world-class supply industries have enhanced opportunities to compete for work within our globally competitive supply chains.

Already we have seen success stories like Cochlear, the New Farm firm developing cutting-edge cochlear implants to help millions of people around the world. With an investment of up to \$3.6 million to expand its state-of-the-art facility, its workforce is set to grow from 150 to 200 workers. It follows other good news stories like Ferra Engineering, which recently secured a second lucrative contract with US defence companies Lockheed Martin and Marvin Engineering for the Joint Strike Fighter. At its full rate of production this is a project with the ability to create 100 to 150 jobs.

This is an important step forward in an area of policy which has been integral to our economic development strategy for Queensland since the start of the decade. It has already secured great results, with Queensland manufacturers landing nearly 3,000 contracts worth \$4.5 billion, which translates into 35,000 direct and indirect jobs for Queenslanders. We are ambitious about where we think manufacturing can be in this state and the contribution it can make to our commitment to creating 100,000 net new jobs over the life of this parliament.

Building Services Authority, Review; Fatality Free Friday

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (9.52 am): I am pleased to inform the House that, to ensure the Building Services Authority continues to provide an efficient and effective regulatory model, the BSA will undertake a comprehensive organisational review. This is a timely opportunity to review the operations of the BSA. It has been five years since the last review and the challenges the industry faced as a result of the global financial crisis have presented the industry and the BSA with a number of new challenges, including an increase in building complaints, claim payouts and company collapses.

This review will ensure Queenslanders continue to be protected by a well-regulated building industry and the most cost-effective Home Warranty Insurance Scheme in Australia, if not the world. To date, a key factor in the success of the BSA has been that it is based on an integrated regulatory model involving strict licensing requirements, compliance activity, dispute resolution, consumer and contractor education and legislative and contractual protection mechanisms. The review will consider options for the maintenance of a high level of service delivery while adapting to the national occupational licensing regime and taking into consideration future service demands. The review will specifically examine and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes and structures; examine and evaluate the sustainability and funding of the current regulatory model; and identify and evaluate the relationship management mechanisms between BSA and clients, customers and stakeholders.

The review will be carried out by an independent consultant and it is expected to be finalised before the end of the year. The BSA is currently carrying out a select tender process in order to appoint the consultant. While I believe that the regulator and the regulatory model is working in Queensland, it is always important to review the system to make sure that if there are any incremental improvements that can be made these changes occur for the betterment of the community and industry.

I would also like to bring to the attention of members here today that Fatality Free Friday will be held on Friday, 28 May. The aim on 28 May is for a completely death-free day on Australian roads. If drivers consciously think about the risks of driving for just one day, that day's toll—on average over five deaths—could be reduced to zero.

Everyone here can join the campaign by taking the Fatality Free Friday pledge. I am pleased to advise that QFleet is a sponsor of this event. The pledge is simply a commitment to yourself, your family and your friends to do your best to use the roads safely on 28 May. I have signed the pledge and members can sign it here today. I only signed that pledge, I might add. The pledge book can be signed by members in the members reading room. I hope members take this opportunity to sign it in order to increase awareness and encourage road safety.

Solar Energy

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.55 am): The Bligh government has set the target to double the state's solar energy over the next five years. We are working to build a 500-megawatt virtual solar power station across the roofs of thousands of Queensland homes. Key to this plan is our Solar Rebate Scheme. This scheme offers a \$1,000 rebate for pensioners and low-income earners and a \$600 rebate for other residents who want to do the bright thing and install solar PV or a solar hot-water system.

I am pleased to inform the House that, since we announced this new scheme five weeks ago, thousands of people have shown an interest in switching to solar. There have been 25,640 downloads of the rebate guidelines package at our www.qld.gov.au website. Of these, almost 5,000 downloads occurred in the past five days alone. More than 250 people have already lodged applications for the rebate. This number is sure to continue to rise, with up to 100 calls a day coming in to our 13GETSOLAR hotline.

By helping Queenslanders to do the bright thing, we can dramatically reduce our state's carbon emissions while also supporting the creation of new jobs in the solar energy sector. By embracing solar energy Queenslanders can also save on their electricity bills. Right across Australia, and indeed here in Queensland, there is increasing pressure on electricity prices due to the need for infrastructure expansion to cater for a growing population, as well as the increased pressure that comes from Queensland's growing love affair with energy-hungry air conditioners and plasma TVs. That is why we are working hard as a government to provide Queenslanders with renewable energy alternatives. We are determined to make Queensland the solar state, so that Queenslanders can reap the benefits of a renewable energy revolution.

Springfield, Schools

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.56 am): The Bligh government is dedicated to delivering jobs and building vital education infrastructure. I am able to announce that from 2011 a primary and high school worth \$50 million will transform the education landscape in Springfield. Construction on the two schools will begin next month, ensuring that both schools are ready for the first intake of students from the first day of term 1 in 2011.

Springfield Central State High School, with an estimated cost of \$31 million, will have a capacity for 381 students in phase 1, with that capacity increasing to 1,800 students over time. Springfield Central State School, which will cost about \$17 million, will have a capacity for 226 students from 2011, increasing to approximately 1,000 students in the future. Both schools will have top-of-the-range green credentials. Things like energy efficient lighting, rainwater collection for general water use and solar hot

water will all be standard, on top of the environmentally sustainable design of the buildings themselves. Our students will be learning in the best possible environment in a growing area ready for whatever the 21st century brings.

The Springfield area is on the fast track for growth and the Bligh government is keen to meet the forecasts ahead. These two schools are an example of that commitment. I recognise the support of the member for Bundamba on these important initiatives. This comes back to one very important point: education is not just important; it is vital. It is vital that we do everything possible to give young Queenslanders a flying start into learning and life.

What would the other side do if it was in power? We know that the opposition is a policy-free zone right now. Where do we have to look for its policy? Looking to the last state election, we see that it was going to put in place a public assets freeze and also slash jobs. That would mean that in this financial year, contrary to what the Bligh government is doing, 5,500 jobs would have been slashed building schools of tomorrow—new schools and classrooms, replacing and enhancing existing facilities, solar energy efficiency programs, teacher housing—and 10,000 jobs would have been slashed if it had been successful at the federal level in its opposition to Building the Education Revolution.

In the training area, 540 jobs would have been slashed for \$70 million of public expenditure being cut. This government is committed to delivering on jobs and delivering on vital education—contrary to the other side, which is dangerous to the education of Queenslanders in our schools throughout the state.

Young People with Disability

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.00 am): Today I am pleased to announce a landmark achievement. More than 100 younger Queenslanders with a disability have or are being diverted from aged-care facilities into supported accommodation. That is more than 100 young Queenslanders whose lives are being changed for the better. The Bligh government truly is leading the way when it comes to supporting younger Queenslanders with a disability. Some time ago we recognised that aged care was clearly not the best option for younger people with a disability. Last week I had the opportunity to witness this commitment become a reality, with the opening of the \$1.8 million Ellen Buckley Place at Inala in Brisbane's south-west. Clearly this is another example of how the Bligh government is delivering the vital infrastructure we need for tomorrow's Queensland.

This accommodation in the south-west will enable eight younger Queenslanders with a disability to live independently with support, after being moved or diverted from aged-care facilities. After listening to the stories of the future residents of Ellen Buckley Place, it is clear to me that this program is not only essential; it is life changing. I spoke with one man, David Johnson, who is only 47 years old. After suffering multiple strokes that left him in a wheelchair, David had been residing in aged care since 2007. Now, thanks to this program, he has the opportunity to move into Ellen Buckley Place, live among people his own age and receive appropriate support and care. His life has improved immeasurably.

The accommodation that I opened last week was named after Ellen Buckley. She touched the lives of so many in her local community, including my own. Ellen passed away last year from Huntington's Disease, a genetic brain disorder that affects the functions of the body and mind. Ellen was committed to living at home rather than residing in aged care.

We have exceeded our targets for 2009-10 and are leading the way on this issue. This is about choice, it is about independence, but most fundamentally this program is about improving people's quality of life.

Velo-city Global

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.02 am): Brisbane has successfully reached the shortlist to attract the world's biggest cycling conference, Velo-city Global, in 2012. Velo-city is a prestigious event that attracts up to 900 world-class speakers, technical experts and cycling practitioners from all over the world. Its focus is on making cities more cycle friendly. The Velo-city cycling conference is completely in line with the Bligh government's aim to cut one-third of Queensland's carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use. The 2012 host city will be announced in the coming month. Cycling is booming as more people choose pedal over petrol to enhance their quality of life, help ease congestion and save the planet. Currently, cycling accounts for only 1.2 per cent of all trips in South-East Queensland, yet nearly half of all residents have access to a bicycle. Last year in this country, new bikes outsold new cars for the tenth year in a row.

In response to this demand, the Bligh government is spending a massive \$556 million on the South-East Queensland Cycling Network Plan to build integrated cycleways from Noosa through to Redcliffe, Brisbane and Ipswich to Coolangatta by 2026. In 2009-10 alone, \$100 million is being spent.

We have delivered world-class iconic facilities such as the cycle centres at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and King George Square, stunning riverwalk bikeways, and the soon-to-be-opened Gateway Bikeway, as part of thousands of kilometres of bike paths, bike storage and end-of-trip facilities.

The state government is also working with councils to actively promote cycling and other forms of sustainable transport through the \$22.6 million TravelSmart program. Local governments have been invited to apply for capital grants for cycle infrastructure projects across South-East Queensland. Applications closed on Friday, 14 May. \$11 million is available to be matched by councils to build the best infrastructure that will get more people commuting by bike. Successful projects will be announced early in 2010-11.

Finally, I am concerned about what appears to be a recent increase in the number of cyclists being hit by cars and trucks. Accordingly, I have asked my department to develop new information materials encouraging cyclists and motorists to safely share the roads. Safe cycling and driving are up to all of us and these materials will be distributed in coming weeks and months.

Affordable Housing

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.05 am): The Bligh government is committed to delivering affordable housing for Queenslanders. This year alone the government has declared three urban development areas to provide diverse and reasonably priced housing in the fast growing regions of Gladstone, Townsville and Mackay. Those urban development areas, which were announced in April and are to be overseen by the Urban Land Development Authority, will provide much needed affordable rental properties and homes for purchase, with between 40 and 50 per cent of all lots for sale to be delivered at or below the median house price.

On 4 May in Gladstone I hosted one of the Bligh government's eight regionalisation forums to promote and address growth. In Gladstone, the Clinton urban development area will deliver a residential area of up to 250 lots. Sixty per cent of those homes, six kilometres south-west of the CBD, will be on sale at or below \$365,000. In Mackay, two-thirds of homes within the 180-lot development planned for Andergrove, which is five kilometres north of the CBD, will be available at or below the median price of \$380,000. In Townsville, the urban development area in Oonoonba, three kilometres south of the CBD, is a residential development of up to 900 lots and it is proposed that 50 per cent of the homes will be sold at or below the \$365,000 median house price.

The Urban Land Development Authority, which was established as part of the Bligh government's 2007 commitment to affordable housing, will continue to work with the local and state authorities, the community, local landholders and development industry representatives to progress those areas. The need for additional, diverse and affordable housing was one of the key issues raised at the Gladstone regionalisation forum. I am sure it was raised at many other regionalisation forums held around the state. The forum addressed the need for infrastructure to match the population growth, which is forecast to rise from 58,000 residents recorded in 2008 to between 90,000 and 115,000 residents by 2031. Those at the forum, including the member for Gladstone, identified the need to protect the region's great lifestyle in the face of this expansion. Those projects highlight the Bligh government's commitment to preparing for growth, providing affordable housing and building tomorrow's Queensland.

Youth Justice

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.08 am): The Bligh government has the toughest youth justice laws this state has ever seen and strong youth justice programs to tackle the causes of crime. Work is already underway on the \$170 million upgrade of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to double its capacity and we are also expanding the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre in a sign that the Bligh government is serious about jail time when it is needed. However, any response to youth offending must tackle issues like homelessness, family breakdown, mental health and other underlying causes of offending.

As I travel the state, I hear many success stories. The aggression replacement program has been offered through the Gold Coast Youth Justice Service since 2008. Since its introduction, 39 young people have completed the program. None have reoffended; that is a 100 per cent success rate. The words of one parent show the benefits of the program. They state—

Our entire family has gained from (our child's) involvement in ART. I thought we had lost her. I've seen her grow, week by week, we all have. Thanks for helping us get our daughter back.

A young person who successfully completed the program tells the story of being hassled by kids at the bus stop. He said—

Before I would have smashed them. But guess what, I started thinking then I laughed and walked away.

That is what we want to see these young people do. Let us be clear about this: 60 per cent of young offenders have just one contact with the youth justice system and do not return.

While it is judges and not politicians who decide what sentences are handed to young offenders, we have put the systems in place for courts to be tough on youth crime and tough on its causes. Despite the scandalous mistruths peddled as fact by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in a press release yesterday, our youth justice system is working. The young man that he said had not seen the inside of a detention centre has in fact spent 98 days in detention and is still there. The member for Southern Downs is himself a serial offender. He never lets the truth get in the way of a good story.

Port of Brisbane Motorway Upgrade

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (10.10 am): Hot on the heels of the asphalt just laid on the new Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge, I have got more good news for Queensland. Australia's biggest road and bridge project is now getting bigger and better. The Bligh government is spending half a billion dollars more. All up, our Gateway Upgrade Project is a massive \$2.5 billion.

We are about to embark on a major extension to boost one of the state's economic engine rooms—the Port of Brisbane Motorway. It is a \$320 million project. And you know what that means, Mr Speaker—hundreds more jobs for workers in road construction. Today I can announce the short-listed companies chosen to put forward designs for this vital piece of infrastructure—Leighton and a Seymour Whyte-BMD joint venture. They will now start work on designs for the upgrade and, when the successful team is chosen by the end of the year, construction will kick off early next year.

It is a critical project for Queensland. The Port of Brisbane is the third busiest container port in the country. It moves around \$30 billion in cargo every year. This is about planning for and managing future growth. Total trade at the port is projected to grow to 53 million tonnes by 2026. We are rising to meet that growth. It is good for Queenslanders and good for our economy. That is why this upgrade is so important—it will deliver a more seamless, smoother motorway all the way to Port Drive.

But there is more good news for Queensland. We are going to widen the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Miles Platting Road from four to six lanes.

Mr Reeves: Hear, hear!

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. He knows how important that is to the motorists of South-East Queensland. It is a \$240 million upgrade and it means even more jobs for Queenslanders. It is all about managing growth, easing congestion, slashing travel times and making life better for motorists along one of the state's busiest motorways.

Mr Johnson: What about our western roads?

Mr WALLACE: The member for Gregory should not worry about out west. It is just as important as this neck of the woods. It is all about managing growth. Just like the people out west, we are looking after the people in South-East Queensland by easing congestion, slashing travel times and making life better for motorists along one of the state's busiest motorways.

Ultimately, we will have six lanes all the way from Nudgee in the north to Nerang in the south. We are getting on with the job of building a first-class road network for all Queenslanders in Australia's fastest growing state, be it here in South-East Queensland, be it in the far north where we are building the Endeavour Bridge—

Mr Johnson: What about out in the west?

Mr WALLACE: Or be it out west, where the member for Gregory is quite rightly saying we need to concentrate our efforts as well.

Law Week

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.13 am): This week is Law Week, a very important part of the legal calendar in Queensland and the flagship annual event for law and justice issues. This year's theme is 'Law and justice in your community', which brings together many activities aiming to raise awareness and promote greater understanding of the law, the justice system and the legal profession in Queensland.

Events are taking place Queensland-wide—from mock trials by James Cook University students in Townsville to the Brisbane Magistrates Court Open Day this Saturday, 22 May. Other events are being held in Mount Isa, Gladstone, Mackay, Maroochydore, Pomona and Ipswich. Courthouses all over the state are organising activities such as court tours, information sessions, student visits, mock trials and mediations, and free legal advice.

Events have included the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House's Walk for Justice, which I took part in on Monday. I was joined in that walk by the member for Barron River, and I thank him for his participation in that event. The walk started at the current Law Courts complex in George Street.

Participants walked past the new Supreme and District Courts complex, which is under construction. We then proceeded over the Kurilpa Bridge—proudly built by this government—along South Bank, then back over the Goodwill Bridge—also proudly built by this government—and through the Botanical Gardens to Old Government House. I also thank the member for Southern Downs for participating in the walk and for crossing those two bridges, which have been the subject of such vehement criticism over such a long period of time by the state opposition.

I will also be heading off during today's lunch break to participate in Legal Aid Queensland's Hypothetical at the Banco Court in the Supreme Court building. This hypothetical promises to be a lively discussion on ways the legal system in Queensland deals with law-breakers who have a substance abuse problem, including how they are sentenced. The public have been invited to be the judge. After hearing all the facts in the case, attendees will decide on an appropriate sentence. The hypothetical is being moderated by Nova radio personality Meshel Laurie, who will be accompanied by a panel of experts, including the Chief Justice of Queensland, the Hon. Paul de Jersey, and the Chief Magistrate, Judge Brendan Butler. I thank Meshel and all of the experts for volunteering to participate in this important event. The hypothetical is a great place for people to ask questions about the issues that confront our courts, prisons and community services each and every day.

Another focus of Law Week is to raise awareness of legal issues affecting young people and to provide legal resources to Queensland students. Just last week I attended a terrific mock trial at the Holland Park Magistrates Court conducted by Mount Gravatt State High School students from the Greenslopes electorate who were keen to learn more about careers in the law, as well as the Queensland justice system. I encourage everybody to take part in Queensland's Law Week in some way or another. To find out more about events in your local area, visit www.lawweek.qld.gov.au or contact your local courthouse.

Davis, Mr I

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.16 am): I would also like to take a few moments to extend my sympathy and sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mr Ian Davis, a full-time member of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. Ian passed away suddenly at the weekend, and his death has come as a great shock to the members and staff of the Queensland Law Reform Commission and to the Queensland legal fraternity. Ian had previously been a commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission and was a highly respected member of the profession. He will be sadly missed.

Best Job in the World Campaign

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.16 am): The Best Job in the World tourism campaign is widely regarded as the most successful tourism campaign in history. To date it has generated more than \$410 million in publicity for Queensland and has seen Ben Southall promoting Queensland worldwide as a Queensland tourism ambassador.

Since January, Ben has visited the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and the Middle East as part of a global mission to promote Queensland. Highlights of Ben's global mission include appearing at G'Day USA in the United States; on the *USA Today* show, which has an estimated 1.5 million viewers; and cable news show *Fox & Friends*, with around 700,000 viewers.

Further global media exposure is assured following last week's launch of the National Geographic channel's six-part documentary series, which premiered in Australia on 13 May. As a result, Queensland's profile is at an all-time high. It is still early days, but we are seeing positive signs out of key international source markets, even though the international tourism market remains extraordinarily difficult. Wholesalers in Germany and the UK have reported that Queensland sales are bucking the trend for bookings generally.

Additionally, visitors from the UK and European youth markets—key target markets for Queensland—have increased. Backpackers to Queensland increased two per cent to 370,000 during 2009, which was driven by UK and European backpackers, where we saw more significant growth of six per cent. International visitors to the Whitsundays also increased one per cent last year, while nights spent there were up five per cent and expenditure was up 16 per cent to \$156 million. The Japan market to the Whitsundays, while still a relatively small market, also grew significantly last year from 6,000 to 9,000 visitors. This bucks an overall declining trend in Japanese visitors to Australia.

This campaign is helping to safeguard the 220,000 jobs that tourism employs in Queensland. It is part of our plan, as the Treasurer mentioned yesterday, that resulted in 6,500 jobs being created in Queensland last month. This is what you see when you have a plan and you stick to it through the good times and the bad, unlike the opposition, who cannot even stick to each other from breakfast time to lunch time.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.18 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That, in accordance with Standing Order 159, the following bills be declared urgent and that the remaining stages of each bill be completed by 10.00 pm on Thursday 20 May 2010:

Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2)

South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

- (2) If the bills have not been completed by 10.00 pm on Thursday 20 May 2010, Mr Speaker shall put all remaining questions necessary to pass each bill, including clauses and schedules en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the minister in charge of the bill without further amendment or debate.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would suggest to you that the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House is out of order. Even though the Leader of the House quotes standing order 159, the motion that she has moved quite clearly does not conform with standing order 159. Standing order 159 states that 'a Minister or Leader of the House may move that a Bill be declared an urgent Bill'—a bill, singular. The Leader of the House has moved a motion which declares four bills urgent at once. Standing order 159 goes on to refer to the bill declared urgent in the singular. There is no provision in the standing orders for a Leader of the House to move that four bills be declared urgent at once. The motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House quite clearly contravenes standing order 159 and should be ruled out of order.

Ms SPENCE: Mr Speaker, standing order 159 does say 'a bill' in subsection (1) but it goes on to subsections (2) and (3), and they are in the plural.

Mr Seeneey: Subsection (3) is in the singular.

Ms SPENCE: Subsection (3) starts with 'Bills', which to me is plural. I do not know: that is what I taught my students when I taught them English.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Let me rule on the point of order. The point of order is in relation to a motion. I will therefore accept what the Leader of the House is putting forward.

Ms SPENCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, you will note that I have not included specific time frames for each bill at this stage to allow the opposition maximum flexibility in managing the time it wishes to spend on each bill. I invite the Leader of Opposition Business to contact me by lunchtime today to discuss how this time will be managed. I will also continue to monitor the situation and take further action if necessary.

I think the reason these four bills are declared urgent this week needs to be explained to the House. Each of these pieces of legislation does have to be passed by 1 July. The transport bill must be passed because it contains changes that are critical to the delivery of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project. The next stage of detailed bidding for the project is due to start in July. If these amendments are not passed, bidders will not have the necessary certainty about the legislation applying to them and the project could be delayed. I am sure no-one from the Gold Coast wants to see that happen.

In relation to the South-East Queensland water bill, last year the government introduced the first round of legislative reforms required to restructure the water sector in South-East Queensland. At that time the government committed to the establishment of the new distributor-retailers to commence operation in the 2010-11 financial year, and the SEQ water bill facilitates this.

In relation to the racing bill, a key element of this legislation is the establishment of one control body for the three codes of racing by 1 July. Any delay in the development of a single control body will dramatically impact the investment that the state believes should be made in racing infrastructure.

The Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is required for passage by 1 July to ensure implementation of properly accredited assessors of pools to ensure improved child safety in time for the late 2010 swim season. I am sure no-one wants to see that delayed, either.

Apart from the four bills we need to get through this week, the government will be requiring the parliament to consider two bills in the next sittings of parliament, which is the budget sitting which has limited time. Those bills will also be required to be passed for various reasons by 1 July.

So today I invite the opposition and the Independents to sit down with me and talk about how we structure the time in the next two days so that each bill can be properly debated. I am told that the opposition wants to oppose this bill but, clearly, we really have to start sensibly managing the time. If people are going to take up 20 minutes and speak on every piece of legislation, we simply will not be able to get all of this required legislation through the parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the motion seconded?

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.24 am): I second the motion.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (10.24 am): The motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House is indeed an extraordinary one. I do not think, in 12 years in this parliament, I have ever seen a motion moved by a Leader of the House that seeks to declare urgent four bills on the *Notice Paper*. In fact, so extraordinary is the motion that I believe it is arguable—

Mr SCHWARTEN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think if you check the record you will find that I did it when I was Leader of the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr SEENEY: I believe it is arguable that such a situation was never envisaged by the authors of the standing orders of the parliament. Be that as it may, the motion has been moved and it is for debate in the parliament.

I think the people of Queensland should appreciate the extent to which this motion demonstrates the degree to which this government has lost its capacity to operate. It has lost its capacity to operate within this parliament, just as surely as it has lost its capacity to administer public policy in this state. This government cannot plan and carry out the operations of this parliament, just as surely as its ministers cannot plan and carry out the administration of their respective departments.

This motion is an illustration of the extent to which this government has decayed. The government that sits opposite us in this parliament is a sad reflection of the government that was elected here 12 years ago. When Premier Beattie was first elected I remember well the frontbenchers who sat on that side of the House. I remember well the then Leader of the House, Terry Mackenroth. The extent to which those people administered this parliament and administered the government in this state is light years away from what we see in this parliament and in this state today.

So while the Leader of the House can come in here and move a motion that seeks to declare four bills urgent all at once, it reflects on them. It says more about them than it does about anything else. This motion speaks volumes about the degree to which this government has lost its capacity to govern. It speaks volumes about the degree to which this government has lost its capacity to administer this parliament.

Let us look at the motion and consider what could happen when this motion is carried. Tomorrow night we could see a situation where four pieces of legislation are put to the vote in this parliament at once, three of which may not have been considered at all. With this motion we could have a situation where three pieces of legislation are put to the vote in this parliament without any consideration at all. That is clearly absurd. It is clearly absurd for any Leader of the House in any government to suggest that that is a legitimate use of this parliament, that that is a legitimate course of action for a competent government.

Of course, we have illustrated before that this government has gagged this parliament more times than any government in Queensland's history. This government has gagged this parliament more than any other government in Queensland's history. I do not think any government has previously sought to put four pieces of legislation to the vote at once, three of which may not have even been considered.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr SEENEY: That is the absurdity that the Deputy Premier is part of. That is the absurdity that the Deputy Premier thinks is fair enough. That is the absurdity that the Deputy Premier also applies to the administration of his department. The health department in Queensland under the administration of the Deputy Premier is another illustration of the extent to which this government has lost its capacity to govern.

This government is a pale imitation of its former self. It is a great shame that the people of Queensland have to wait another 18 to 20 months before they have an opportunity to pass judgement on a government that is clearly past its use-by date.

Nothing illustrates that more than the motion before the House today. Of course we will oppose it, and every member of this House should oppose it. Every Queenslanders should realise the significance of it.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.29 am): I will be brief. I realise the government has the numbers to force through this motion. My question to the Leader of Government Business is: what guarantee and assurance can she provide to the Independents that we will have a fair and just opportunity to speak on the bills that she has referred to in this motion?

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.29 am): The Leader of the House has made false and erroneous claims in relation to the need to have the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill declared urgent for this particular sittings. She quoted financial sources as the reason for the government's allocation of funds to the racing industry. Quite clearly, when that has to go forward has not been identified.

Mr SPEAKER: I want you to come to the motion before the House.

Mr STEVENS: The motion before the House in relation to declaring the Racing and Other Legislation Bill urgent in this particular sitting is not needed.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.30 am): I understand what the Leader of the House has said in terms of what she sees as a need for these bills to go through. In particular, the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is intensely controversial. I have had a lot of representations made to me by people who are concerned about the restructuring of racing. I believe that that bill, and perhaps the others as well, need full and frank debate. This guillotine motion will not allow that.

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.31 am): I am very disappointed that the opposition has rejected the unique offer that I have made today. That is to allow it—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat! I will wait for the House to come to order. I call the honourable Leader of the House.

Ms SPENCE: I offered those opposite the opportunity to sit down with me and responsibly discuss and debate how we are going to manage the business of the House on a weekly basis. I have made the offer once before. I do it again today. They obviously have no capacity to see any change in this parliament at all. That is what the government wants to see. I think our parliament can work better. I think we can debate things more responsibly. I think if we could sit down like mature people and discuss how much time we should allocate to each piece of legislation then there would be some certainty for everyone in this chamber. We could ensure that all members had the opportunity to speak for an appropriate length of time on each piece of legislation.

This is what happens in other parliaments in Australia and indeed around the world. Every parliament does not operate in the same way as the Queensland parliament. I think it is about time that we looked at how we can change some of these issues in our parliament and sit more responsibly. That is the offer I am making the opposition today.

I will make one final point. I visited the Scottish parliament two weeks ago and found out that members in the Scottish parliament speak for between four and six minutes on pieces of legislation. If there are too many speakers then the Speaker gets to reduce that amount of time. The notion that everyone gets to speak for 20 minutes on every piece of legislation is not one that is widely held in parliaments around the world.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Ms SPENCE: I know the Leader of Opposition Business harks back to the days when we sat until three or four in the morning in the Queensland parliament. I have been here for the last 20 years and have done my fair share of four and five o'clock mornings. I do not want to go back to that. I think 10.30 pm finish times are sensible. I think that allows us to be refreshed for the next day so we can sensibly participate in debate. That is the kind of regime that I want to encourage in this parliament.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Ms SPENCE: Finally, I would just like to say to the Independents that I am very happy to sit down with them when we are considering how long we should spend on each piece of legislation. If everyone in the parliament spoke with the brevity of the Independents and with the sense of purpose of the Independents then we would not need to pass motions like this. I am happy to sit down with any of them to make sure that they have their fair say on each of these pieces of legislation.

Division: Question put—That the Leader of the House's motion be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Darling, Pitt

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.40 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Climate Change will be absent for this session of parliament and the next session of parliament. Questions should be directed to the Premier until the acting minister is formally appointed.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Resource Super Profits Tax

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.41 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this parliament expresses deep concern about the effect the proposed resource rent tax will have on the Queensland economy and the future job prospects for Queenslanders and calls on the federal parliament to reject this new tax.

Given the Premier's speech last night to the Australian petroleum industry, I look forward to her seconding the motion.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: Visiting Parliament House today will be students and teachers from the Jimboomba State School, the Brisbane School of Distance Education and St Mary's School in Laidley. Also, honourable members, Ms Prue Lovell from the electorate of Buderim will be leaving us after her service to the Parliamentary Service. I am sure all honourable members wish her the best in her retirement. She is in the public gallery today.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will end at 11.41.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK (10.41 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Health workers have woken up this morning to check their pay packets. Some have found that they have not been paid for five consecutive cycles. This shoddy treatment of Queensland workers cannot be glibly fobbed off any longer. Untruthful Labor minister Gordon Nuttall was exonerated and bullying Labor minister Pat Purcell was exonerated, and I ask: will the Premier please assure Queenslanders that she will no longer exonerate the incompetent Labor minister, the member for Lytton?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. There should be no employee of Queensland Health who has gone without wages for the period of time that the member asserted. If the member is aware of any such person, then the member has an obligation in my view to bring to that

person's attention the assistance that can be made available to them today. So I think any suggestion that anybody has gone without pay for five pay cycles that the member opposite may know of and has done nothing to help them reflects very poorly on him. As I said yesterday, I have made it very clear to the senior people in Health that I expect to see continual improvement in every pay cycle. That is what we have seen in the last two pay cycles; that is what I expect to see today. But I accept that there may continue to be some problems for some staff and I also expect to see a safety net in place for them. I also expect the Minister for Health to take responsibility for this, and that is what he has done. The Minister for Health has been sitting down with payroll people in their offices. He sat down with the unions. He has been talking with front-line staff. You could not get someone more hands-on, more determined and more concerned about the wellbeing of the staff for whom he is responsible than the Deputy Premier.

Let us just take a few other mistruths—cannot tell the truth in any question that he asks—from the question that was just put on the record by the member for Surfers Paradise. What did he say? He said that the former member for Sandgate was exonerated. While the former member for Sandgate is sitting in a prison cell, he must think that the member opposite has a pretty interesting view of exoneration. And who sent him?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is just impossible for me to hear your answer, Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As the former member for Sandgate is sitting in a prison cell, he must think that the member for Surfers Paradise has a very strange—very strange—definition of exoneration. Who was it that sent those complaints to the CMC? It was the government. It was the government that got them investigated. So repeating something over and over again does not make it true despite the dishonest attempts.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Just wait, Premier. It is impossible for me to hear your answer to make sure that you are being parliamentary. I would ask for moderation in tone from both sides of the House. I call the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: What we did not do is what we heard yesterday—that is, when there is a serious allegation of potential corruption, what do those opposite do? They send it off to Bruce—Bruce McIver! In fact, no, those opposite do not send it off. They knew there was an investigation but they did not send it, so we do not know how it got there. The Leader of the Opposition tells us there are no others, but how would he know, because he is not the person who sends these things to Bruce. How do we know what Bruce does when he gets the complaint? How do we know what the outcome is?

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. This morning the Minister for Health claimed on radio that it was fashionable to knock the health system, and I ask: does the Premier share the minister's view that criticism of Labor's health system is just a fashion, or does the Premier think that criticism may reflect a real anger over waiting list blow-outs, unpaid health workers and ambulance ramping that is letting people die in hospital car parks?

Ms BLIGH: I heard what the Deputy Premier had to say, and I think that if you take his comments in context you will see what he is talking about. I think the Queensland health system for some people, particularly some people on the other side of politics, has become a bit of a kicking ball. I know the people who work in Queensland Health, and the people I see in our hospitals deserve our praise—the doctors, the nurses, the radiologists. I can tell members that I regularly get letters from Queenslanders who want to tell me what a great experience they had in a Queensland hospital. Of course from time to time I also get letters from people who have not had the service that they expect, and I welcome those complaints because that is how we make the system better.

I want to thank those people who have taken the time to write to me, and they do it regularly. They write to me, they write to local members and they write to the Minister for Health because they have had such an incredibly good experience in the care of our doctors and nurses. Many of them say in the letters that because of some of the things they have heard in the political arena they were worried about the service that they would get and they could not be more pleased with the service and the excellent support of our staff. Not only are those staff well-trained professionals; they are deeply caring people. People who go into the health system and who spend their lives working in it are people who care about their patients, and I think they deserve our praise.

I am very happy to have the opportunity this morning to say a very big thank you to the Queensland Health staff who every day are at the front line—often in emergency and traumatic circumstances, often in very tragic circumstances where people are losing loved ones and where they are making a difference every single day. I support the Deputy Premier's view that a bit of support for

those people, particularly from those opposite, who think this is just a political football for them to kick whenever they want a free point, would not hurt you. It would not hurt you. It would not hurt you to stand up every now and then—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I have never heard you thank a Queensland nurse or doctor. All I hear from you is constant complaints.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Again, it is impossible for me to hear above the din. I call upon the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I look forward to seeing continued great work in our hospitals. I know from my local members that when they visit our hospitals, when they visit our health centres and when they go to our preventative health worker teams they see dedicated people doing a great job for their patients and for their communities. They are world class. Some of our researchers are recognised world-wide for the work that they are doing, and they deserve our support. They do not deserve the criticism they get from those opposite on an all too regular basis.

Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association

Mr FINN: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier provide to the House some details of the meeting of the Australian Petroleum and Production and Exploration Association currently being held in Brisbane?

Ms BLIGH: Last night I was very pleased to attend the 50th anniversary dinner of the Australian Petroleum and Production and Exploration Association conference. They are holding the conference here for their 50th anniversary because they held their very first conference here 50 years ago. As I said to the people attending the dinner last night, why would you not hold your 50th anniversary here in Queensland when we are so well poised to take the opportunity to grow this industry to a new export industry for Queensland.

Our government is very serious about making that happen. That is why we have developed an LNG industry unit that is a one-stop shop into government. It is why we have developed a common user pipeline. It is why we have developed Curtis Island as a dedicated state development land area. What you see is a government that is absolutely determined to support this industry.

What I see from those opposite is constant criticism, as always. What I do not see is a plan to grow LNG or, in fact, a plan for the mining sector at all. It is little wonder they do not have time to develop a plan for mining—or indeed anything else—because what we heard yesterday was nothing short of extraordinary. Yesterday, we heard shocking revelations about how the LNP in Queensland is being run. Let us call what we have in the LNP for what it is: it is an extortion racket. This organisation is now being run like some sort of two-bit Mafia show. If you speak out, if you are a critic, then the bovver boys—Bruce McIver and Barry O'Sullivan—will be sent around and they will come with their baseball bats and they will have a simple message. They will make you an offer that you cannot refuse: 'You take the baseball bat or you pay us \$12,000.'

Yesterday, we saw the contract. What does the contract say? What do you get for the \$12,000? The package includes a whole lot of treats, including that they will coordinate shadow ministerial visits to your electorate. So for \$12,000 the member for Aspley can get the member for Warrego to a fete. It is not just the marginal seats, of course. If you are a critic of the party you have to pay the \$12,000. So the member for Mermaid Beach, if he is lucky, will get the member for Condamine. For \$12,000 the member for Indooroopilly can get the intellectual powerhouse from Gympie over to Indooroopilly. I reckon there is a few of them raising \$12,000 to make sure that the shadow ministry does not turn up in their electorates. They must be passing around the hat and saying to Bruce, 'Take the \$12,000 and stay as far away as you can.'

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. As Queensland Health workers continue to suffer because of Labor's health pay debacle and have not received their lawful entitlements under relevant industrial awards, what investigations and actions have been commenced to prosecute the employer for failure to comply with their legal obligations under such awards? Or does the government have a different set of standards when it comes to investigating employer negligence when the negligence is from his Labor government?

Mr DICK: As the deputy leader knows very well—very well—this government is doing everything it can to ensure that those valuable workers in Queensland Health are getting their pay. What do we see again this morning? The Leader of the Opposition comes in here with some sort of claim—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Just resume your seat for a second. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you have asked your question. I am not sure that you have been personally affronted by the honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations—

Mr Springborg: I'm just getting in early.

Mr SPEAKER: I am applying the rule of anticipation.

Mr DICK: I am restraining myself, Mr Speaker.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Mr DICK: I am trying to answer the question. They ask them, we answer them. What did we see this morning? We saw the Leader of the Opposition come in here with another claim about someone who may not have been paid. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well the systems that we have in place to ensure that people are paid. We have dedicated people on the phone to answer any inquiry that people have. We have people in the pay offices of hospitals to give people the money they need. As the Premier has said, with every pay cycle the system improves.

These employees are valued and valuable to our state. We regard this as an extremely serious problem and we are doing everything we can to address it. This is a large organisation of tens of thousands of employees. It is a complicated pay system. It is a complicated award system—an award system that this Labor government supports.

We do not seek to take the rights and entitlements away from workers, as we know the opposition seeks to do. We know that Tony Abbott, supported by all of those members of the LNP opposite—when he speaks the gospel truth—wants to bring back Work Choices. What did the Howard government do? It stripped away entitlements from one million Australian workers. That is what those members stand for. They stand for taking away the pay and entitlements of workers. They stole the superannuation of SEQEB workers when they were in government in the 1980s. They have no regard for workers in this state.

We have this mealy-mouthed sort of question coming from the worker's friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is sharpening the knives. When the Leader of the Opposition is overseas he will be sharpening the knives to take him on. He knows two of the critics have gone. He knows that it is his time. Can you imagine the discussion in the leadership room? 'Should I go overseas do you think, Lawrence?' 'Of course! Why don't you travel. Have a long trip. Take as long a trip as you can,' because while he is away the cats will play. The numbers are being done. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: enjoy the honeymoon, because when he comes back the party is over. His job is finished and all of those members opposite will be taking his job away from him.

(Time expired)

LNG Industry

Mr PITT: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier report to the House on measures that are being taken to ensure that Queenslanders are equipped to find jobs in the LNG industry?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for his question. I know of his interest in the development of this new industry for Queensland. I have outlined at length some of the programs that we have put in place to support this industry. But one of the things that we understand as a government is the importance of making sure the industry has the skilled workers that it needs and, just as importantly, making sure that Queenslanders have the skills that they need to access some of the new jobs in this new industry.

Many of the skills needed will be the traditional skills that are in wide supply and many people will have a chance to take them up. But there will be other areas that are very specific to this industry that will need people to upskill and to bring on new qualifications. So I am very pleased to advise the House that the skills program that we announced in March when we said that we would set up a hotline is going very well. The hotline started in April and in just less than six weeks we have now received 573 inquiries to the hotline from people who are all looking to work in this industry.

We have put them in contact with the industry as part of the partnership and we look forward to seeing them take on those qualifications. One might ask oneself what skills are needed to run the Liberal National Party in Queensland. It is clear from yesterday's revelations that one needs to be an expert in thuggery and have highly honed investigative skills because from head to foot the LNP is rotting.

The front page of the *Australian* reports that a federal Liberal Party member is under investigation by the LNP for having his fingers in the till. Brisbane City Councillor Nicole Johnston will be facing a disciplinary committee on Friday night. We know that Mr McIver has been investigating at least two of the state members. No wonder Mr McIver could not face the media yesterday: the disciplinary committee is in perpetual session. It is a revolving door; one comes out and the next one goes in. It is the LNP inquisition.

We have questions that have yet to be answered. The member for Surfers Paradise came in here and tried to pretend that he would answer questions. He has said nothing about the dodgy contracts. Read his comments in here; there is not one word about contracts. How many contracts have been signed and who has signed them? He said there were two investigations into rorts. We only know about a travel rort investigation. What is the other one? He would not know how many investigations there are because he does not run the show. The member for Surfers Paradise is a puppet for the unelected, dodgy, bovver boy Bruce McIver in an extortion racket where unless one pays \$12,000 they are out.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. The Premier would be aware that the Auditor-General is exempt from disclosing information under RTI legislation unless it is already publicly available under section 53 of the act. Does this not mean that by diverting part of the health department payroll inquiry into the auspices of the Auditor-General the government has tried to build a new barrier against the full public disclosure of the facts behind Labor's multimillion dollar health payroll debacle?

Ms BLIGH: Those opposite can barely hold a position for a day. The LNP called for the Auditor-General to inquire into this.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides of the House will come to order. I am having difficulty hearing the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: I would be very dismayed if the LNP were to start a campaign against the independence of the Auditor-General. I do not think anyone could deny that he has demonstrated his independence or that he has demonstrated over and over again his ability to conduct fair, rigorous and forensic investigations and to make them all public.

I give this assurance to the people of Queensland: the Auditor-General will make public all information available to him, as he always does. I am very happy to endorse the capability of our Auditor-General, as uncomfortable as he might make it for government sometimes. What would be very interesting, I think, is if the member for Clayfield could answer the questions that the member for Surfers Paradise cannot. How many audits, investigations or reviews are being undertaken of members of the LNP?

Yesterday the member for Surfers Paradise told this parliament that there were two members under investigation for misuse of allowances or entitlements. Who are those two members? He should come clean. Yesterday he came in here beating his chest saying, 'I'll answer the questions', but of course he did not mention the contracts. Members will not find the word 'contract' in *Hansard*. What we have is dodgy contracts calling for elected members of the Queensland parliament to turn over \$12,000 in return for some protection. That is what it is for. The member for Beaudesert was required as part of a disciplinary hearing, as part of the settlement—punishment—in a disciplinary hearing, to sign a contract as part of that settlement. That contract is protection money. There is a protection racket operating in the LNP. What does the member for Surfers Paradise know about it? Is he involved in it? How many members of his party have signed the contract?

What we do know, of course, is that the member for Surfers Paradise—if members get the documents that were tabled later in the day yesterday—entered into a discussion with the then member for Beaudesert saying he would support him as his deputy leader. Now we know why the poor member for Beaudesert nominated. He thought he had the vote of the member for Surfers Paradise. He shook on it. We know it means nothing.

Health System, Infrastructure Program

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Could the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health please advise the House how the government's infrastructure program is creating jobs and improving health services around the state?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is very important in a state the size of Queensland that we devote our resources to rolling out a health system up and down the coast in Australia's most decentralised mainland state. We have a \$6 billion health building program, the largest infrastructure building program in health in Australia by a country mile. The nearest is New South Wales with \$2 billion. That gives members an idea of the infrastructure program in Queensland, a state which in population terms is much smaller. In fact, that \$6 billion creates 40,000 jobs, let alone the extra jobs in health and the services that it will provide. In Cairns we are spending \$446.3 million on a hospital redevelopment.

Ms Boyle: It's going well.

Mr LUCAS: It is going well. What we will get there is not only additional beds but also a new cancer care system that will allow us to treat cancer patients in Cairns. That then has a knock-on effect, of course, of liberating more spaces in Townsville for people to be treated there. There is an \$11.1 million expansion of the emergency department as well.

In Townsville, 350 kilometres down the coast, there is a \$332.8 million hospital expansion including a new expanded ED that will then be the largest emergency department in Queensland. It will increase from 40 to 75 treatment spaces by mid-2011. It will also provide an expanded neonatal intensive care unit so that more kids and babies in North Queensland can stay in that northern region. I think off the top of my head there will be 100 interns this year in Townsville.

In Mackay, further down the coast, a \$405.6 million hospital redevelopment is occurring, nearly doubling the number of beds and providing a larger ICU dialysis unit and a dedicated coronary care unit. There will be more beds which means more people being treated in their community. In Rockhampton where I was the other day, we have stage 1 of a \$149 million hospital redevelopment, including a new renal ward, a new ED, a new maternity department and an MRI.

Going west to Mount Isa, there is a \$65 million hospital redevelopment with an expanded emergency department and mental health services. Then down to Gladstone, \$16 million for mental health and oral health service development. In Bundaberg, there is a \$41 million development. On the Sunshine Coast, in Brisbane at the PA, in Brisbane at the Prince Charles, on the Gold Coast, the new university hospital, in the Redlands and Caboolture—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: On the Sunshine Coast 96 beds will be opening and, indeed, as the local AMA president, Dr Andrew Southey, said, the announcement on the rollout of more medical services is five to 10 years ahead of what was previously announced. That is what Dr Andrew Southey said in relation to the Sunshine Coast.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to a document which shows the flawed Queensland Health payroll system could not pay health workers who worked multiple positions or from multiple sites in Queensland Health, requiring an additional payment of over \$400,000 to fix. How on earth did the minister allow his department to sign off on this payroll system and will the minister now admit it was his failure to properly oversee this project that has led to this utter disaster?

Tabled paper: Extract of CorpTech/IBM Change Control document, dated 22 September 2008 [2240].

Mr LUCAS: The honourable member is tabling a Department of Public Works document, not a document from Queensland Health. Indeed, it is a document dated 22 September 2008. I was not the health minister at that point in time.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I was not. Indeed, I have made it crystal clear: first of all, I apologise to our hardworking Queensland Health staff who have to put up with this; secondly, I thank them for the work that they do every day; thirdly, I particularly thank our payroll staff, who are the great unsung heroes in this. The fact that this system was rolled out in the manner in which it was is utterly unacceptable. I have made that clear. In fact, some here might note that I made that clear in somewhat colourful terms a little while ago. It is unacceptable. When companies like IBM, SAP and Workbrain and people in Queensland Health and other government departments are being paid large sums of money to do these things, we have every right to expect that they will do it appropriately. It is no different if someone goes to their local lawyer or GP. If the lawyer or GP is an expert in their area, that person has every right to expect that they will do their job the right way.

I expect a thorough review of how the whole issue has been dealt with. I expect to examine how people have dealt with each other in a contractual sense, what individual parties have done—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I note with great interest that several weeks ago—in fact, a month or so ago—it was the shadow Treasurer who called on the government to refer the matter to the Auditor-General. Did you write to the Auditor-General? He actually wrote to the Auditor-General and, today, news flash! He does not want the Auditor-General to deal with it. I table the letter from the Auditor-General to the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet dated 14 May 2010, in which he indicated—

In my view it would be a more efficient use of resources for my office to complete our current audit work, and for you to then progress with the KPMG management review based on my audit findings.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 14 May 2010, from Auditor-General to Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet regarding the review of the implementation of the new payroll system at the Department of Health [2241].

That is what he said, yet the honourable member thought it appropriate to refer it to him. I have no difficulty with that. We will get to the bottom of this. Our staff and taxpayers in Queensland deserve to take the view that they should get value for money under this system, but they have not got value for money. They have been let down. I will continue to make sure that we do the work, not only to fix this but also to deliver a better system for them because they deserve it and as taxpayers they warrant it.

(Time expired)

Research and Development

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Could the Treasurer update the House on the government's investment in new research for tomorrow's Queensland?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Keppel for his question and for his interest in the efforts of this government to invest in jobs of the future and to invest in the Smart State agenda. Last night I hosted a reception for the 28 Queenslanders who have been selected under our Queensland International Fellowships Program and Queensland's Smithsonian Fellowship Program to study overseas, to have the opportunity to advance their skills, to advance their research in world-leading institutions and bring back that experience and research here to Queensland, to make sure that we are capturing and nourishing the best brains in the state. It is through their research and findings that we get the breakthroughs of tomorrow, that we produce the products of tomorrow, that we discover the health breakthroughs of tomorrow and that we create the jobs of tomorrow. For example, Dr Trudy Fletcher-Baker from the Queensland Brain Institute will be off to the UK to study the causal connection between older fathers and the prevalence of schizophrenia and autism in children. This is the sort of cutting-edge research that can make a difference to people's lives. We are determined to continue to support our best and brightest, as they head overseas to bring back those skills.

On the other side of the chamber, they have also been looking to tap into some brains. While we have been looking for the best and brightest for the future, they have gone to the old fading lights of the past, asking former Prime Minister John Howard, the architect of Work Choices, to come here and give them his views on electoral success. It probably started with how he lost his seat at the last election. He is only the second Prime Minister to lose his seat. Can members imagine how the little bloke felt when he turned up here, shoulder twitching, bottom lip out, wandering around looking for where the Liberal Party used to be. He must have been wondering where his old Liberal Party had been put. It was just like 1986 all over again. He turned up and it was the same old Nats, bomb throwing and wrecking the joint. He turned up here to give a speech about unity while two of them walked the plank. As he turned up here to give them a view about how to win, the Leader of the Opposition said, 'It's a ringing endorsement of the LNP'. But what did he do? He turned up here and he waved the finger at them and said, 'You should tell the truth and you should put out policies.' Quick as a flash, what did the Leader of the Opposition say? He could not even tell the truth about what the former Prime Minister told him until he had rung Uncle Bruce. Uncle Bruce said, 'Here's the line: you have to say that John Howard doesn't know anything about Queensland.'

The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition cannot tell the truth. As the documents tabled yesterday by the member for Beaudesert show, he has not been telling the truth about his support for the member for Beaudesert's run for the deputy leadership, he has not told the truth to the deputy leader, whom he faded out on, and he has not told the truth about the contracts. Who was offered what, when did they reject it and what was the basis of the offer? As we know, in the same documents the tactical liar—I apologise—the tactical mistruth teller, the leader of opposition business, says that he told the truth. He said, 'If we go after our electoral allowances, we'll be in all sorts of trouble', and aren't they what?

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. I refer the minister to these documents, which state that the new Queensland Health payroll system did not comply with the minimum privacy and security requirements of the government. As a result, the personal and private information of 75,000 health workers was at risk of being available to anyone in the world. How on earth did the minister sign off on a deal that did not even meet the government's own minimum standards for privacy, or is the minister going to blame someone else for this too?

Tabled paper: Extract of CorpTech/IBM Change Control document, dated 22 September 2008 [\[2242\]](#).

Tabled paper: CorpTech Request Identification form, dated 30 June 2008 [\[2243\]](#).

Mr SCHWARTEN: If Barry O'Sullivan is Queensland's replacement for Gordon Ramsey, then the honourable member asking this question—

Mr Springborg: You're jealous now, aren't you?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I have already foregone the crown to him. Obviously the honourable member is not acquainted in any shape or form with contracts. This document is dated 22 September 2008, so it is ancient history. It is part of the development—as indeed was the previous one—of a contractual basis, outlining what they want to be fixed. Let us use a building analogy. When you go through a contract, is it normal to say, 'We need to change the scope to allow for greater water pressure, but let's not put a variation in the contract. We'll ignore that'? That is what the opposition is suggesting. This is part of the normal process of identifying problems and solving them along the way.

Let us go to the duplicity of the honourable members opposite. This morning the member for Clayfield said that we were hiding behind the Auditor-General. Aside from the disgraceful smear upon the integrity of the Auditor-General—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. I made no smear upon the independence of the Auditor-General. I find the minister's comments offensive and I request that they be withdrawn.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw. I table a press release from the Auditor-General, one from the opposition spokesman, another one from the honourable member who is rudely interjecting at this moment and another one from the Clayfield electorate and old 'salmon chops' opposite. The fact is that the Auditor-General was called in by us—

Tabled paper: Correspondence regarding requests to the Auditor-General to investigate the implementation of the Queensland Health payroll system [2244].

Mr Nicholls: Oh.

Mr SCHWARTEN: We had no problem. We set up an open inquiry. The honourable member wrote to the Auditor-General and asked for him, but this morning he stands in this place and says, 'We don't want the Auditor-General; we can't trust him.' That is what you said. You wrote to him, but now you cannot trust him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SCHWARTEN: They wrote to the Auditor-General, but this morning they undermine his position. They say they cannot trust the Auditor-General to do the right thing by this parliament. That is a disgraceful slur by you and you—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN:—and no amount of interjecting, with your idiotic bird-like behaviour, will change that. The fact is that you owe the Auditor-General of Queensland an apology for suggesting that somehow he is going to be muffled by the government for referring something to him, which is in fact what you asked him to do. Caught out! You are dishonest, you are decrepit and you are duplicitous.

(Time expired)

Mr Nicholls: You're responsible for the SAP program. Tell us how they got the contract.

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

Mr Swarten: The SAP—how they got the contract? Stand outside and ask that question. Go on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable the Minister for Public Works.

Mr Lucas: Send it off to the Auditor-General and then complain.

Mr Swarten: And then say you can't trust the Auditor-General.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister for Public Works, I have asked you to desist. I will now take you down a process. If you again defy my orders, I will take action under the standing orders.

Building Industry

Mrs SMITH: May I first acknowledge in the public gallery student leaders from St Andrews Lutheran College in the electorate of Burleigh. My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. While unemployment rates on the Gold Coast are higher than the average, workers in the construction industry have been particularly hard hit. Could the minister advise of any trends that are evident in the building industry?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, I can.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory. I am asking for the tone of the House to be lowered a bit. The honourable the minister had barely started and you were into him. I ask for a bit of decorum.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a very important question by somebody who cares about the building industry not only in her electorate but in Queensland, and she has good reason to care because on the Gold Coast there is indeed a huge nervousness in the industry and with good reason. Something like seven out of 10 builders in the housing industry on the Gold Coast are experiencing difficulties in terms of getting jobs as well as another six out of 10 in the commercial industry, which is exhibiting the same sort of weaker industry. They are significant issues.

If we go to the top of the state, we get similar figures there. These figures were released by the Master Builders Association. I attended a function with Graham Cuthbert recently where he outlined what are very troubling circumstances. But can you imagine, Mr Speaker, what the circumstances would be if members opposite had got their way last year and cut the capital program? Just imagine what would have happened on the Gold Coast, with 10,000 jobs depending on the hospital and stadium projects, and in the far north of Queensland we have 6,500 jobs depending on Lotus Glen, the new hospital building and the William McCormack building. Just imagine what those circumstances would be. I heard the budgie from Kawana last night talking about where are the jobs. I suggest to him that he go up there and cock his ear and listen out for the ring of a Cheney hammer or the whirr of a saw. They are real people doing real jobs and they are employed by this government to create the sort of infrastructure that the health minister talked about here this morning.

The reality is that Queensland's answer to 'Barnaby Joke'—I mean Barnaby Joyce—the deputy leader over there, with his same mangled syntax that he applies in Queensland, was last year saying that what he would do is freeze capital works. Now we have the answer to 'Tony Rabbit' over here—the Queensland representative, 'Tony Rabbit'. He is hopping around on all the issues about privatisation, 'Well, we wouldn't do this and we wouldn't do that.' What is the net effect of not going down that path? It means ETU members, it means CFMEU members, it means BLF members will not have jobs in Queensland. That is what it means. It means in Cairns the people—

Mr Rickuss: Tell us what the signs say.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I know you do not want to hear about workers. You wouldn't get hot on a stove. The reality is that people like the overweight gentleman over there who is taxing the health system—he should have listened to what the health minister had to say yesterday.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Don't deny you're overweight.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable the minister.

Mr Lucas: I don't think people in glass houses should throw stones.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Exactly. The truth is that I am not surprised that somebody like the honourable gentleman, known for his inanity of interjection in this place, would not want to be associated with building workers as he has never done a hard day's work in his life. But these are real people doing real jobs on the Gold Coast. Without them, not only would we not have hospitals being built but, if the 'Tony Rabbit' look alike over there, the mumblar that he is, had his way in this state, these people would not have jobs.

(Time expired)

Nambour Hospital

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. I refer to Nambour Hospital, where Mr Neville Evans died waiting on a trolley and where ambulance ramping has gone from 29 per cent to 46 per cent in two years. Given that Nambour Hospital has one of the longest surgery waiting lists in Queensland and that patients there have been stored in cupboards, will the minister admit that the reckless delay in building the Sunshine Coast University Hospital has cost lives? And will the minister now recommit to building the public component—the public component—of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital by the original time frame of 2014?

Mr LUCAS: I was just looking for the clipping from the local paper on the Sunshine Coast on 8 May 2010 in which it was indicated by the opposition in the article, 'LNP plays safe on new hospital'—

LNP leader John Paul Langbroek has expressed support for the hospital, but has refused to make a policy commitment before getting a complete understanding of the state of government finances.

When was that in the paper? Eleven days ago. The opposition has a view on everything and a policy on nothing. One would have thought that the member for Kawana, who parades himself around here as a future leader—God help us—would have been able to extract a little bit more from his leader,

in all of the speeches that his leader has made, than no commitment to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. No wonder the member for Burnett left. That is all he was able to extract, with all the demonstrations, with all the marches and all the people who in good faith signed the petition.

Let us have a look then at what we have done in relation to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, because we know that 11 days ago the opposition had no commitment. When the original plan for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital for 2014 was not able to proceed, we committed to a procedure whereby they would get beds delivered in the private sector sooner. So, instead of 2014, beds would come online in 2013—sooner. This, of course, is not the only time they have failed to make a commitment. At that time, again the Leader of the Opposition did not commit to any different time frame. Again, you have asked me about it but you do not have an alternative. An opposition has an alternative policy. Additionally, we are building 96 beds at Nambour Hospital. They are slightly ahead of schedule and anyone can see them there.

Most importantly, I have taken a considerable amount of time speaking with clinicians at the Nambour Hospital. What we have been talking about is how we might ramp up services with the new beds coming online at Nambour prior to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The announcement I made about a month ago, with the senior clinicians alongside me—not Labor Party people—was for a new cardiac catheterisation laboratory, a new vascular surgery procedural suite, a new outpatient neurosurgery service and a new dedicated endoscopy procedural unit at Nambour. The President of the Sunshine Coast Local Medical Association, Andrew Southee, said that having these services would fast forward the region's health services by five to 10 years. That is in addition to any commitment that was ever made in the past. More—that is what we have delivered. What you have delivered is no commitment. That is your effectiveness.

Tabled paper: Article, dated 8 May 2010, from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* titled 'LNP plays safe on new hospital' [\[2245\]](#).

(Time expired)

Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Sector

Mr SHINE: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. Can the minister outline for the House how the natural resources, mines and energy sector is supporting jobs for Queenslanders?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question and his ongoing interest in the development of Queensland's emerging coal seam gas to LNG industry. Currently there are around 40,000 people employed in the Queensland resources sector, with a further 18,000 potential jobs coming from the development of an LNG industry both in Gladstone and up on the Darling Downs, an area the member for Toowoomba North is passionate about.

Right across my portfolio we have infrastructure projects which support jobs for Queenslanders. Our infrastructure program in the Department of Environment and Resource Management has also created around 2,000 jobs in projects such as the western corridor recycled water pipeline, the trunk water pipeline infrastructure, the renewal works on South-East Queensland's water infrastructure, the water grid, the Wyaralong water treatment plant, the raising of the Hinze Dam wall—and the list goes on.

You can only deliver infrastructure and jobs like that if you demonstrate leadership. What we have seen over this week is the contrast between leadership on this side of the House and a complete absence of leadership on the other side. What we saw yesterday was the tabling of documents which demonstrate an extraordinary bullying culture in the LNP. What have we seen in terms of leadership coming from the member for Surfers Paradise? Absolutely nothing. This graduate of Tony Abbott's school of ethics has failed to stand up to a bullying culture that has emerged in his own organisation. I remind the House what the Leader of the Opposition said only a couple of weeks ago in relation to juvenile bullying. An article states—

... John-Paul Langbroek said a "revolving door" juvenile justice system was "driving a culture of school violence, bullying and street crime".

The first test, when faced with bullying in an organisation where he actually has an opportunity to do something—

Mr RICKUSS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, just resume your seat. Stop the clock.

Mr RICKUSS: What is the relevance of this to the answer to the question? It is not even the minister's portfolio.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: This is about leadership. Faced with a strong accusation of bullying in his own organisation, what does the Leader of the Opposition do? Absolutely nothing. Ted Malone got it dead right—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, you will refer to the member by his correct title.

Mr ROBERTSON: The shadow minister for emergency services got it dead right. He almost described what happened to the member for Beaudesert when he said—

This boy has slipped through the cracks ... but the system just doesn't seem to be able to help him.

Does that not describe the LNP to a T?

Gladstone Electorate, Population Growth

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. I thank the minister and the member for Yeerongpilly for their interest and their visit to Gladstone, and I ask: given the need for infrastructure and training for the increased population in my electorate to service new and existing industry, what investment in Gladstone is planned to proactively address these needs?

An opposition member: Wake up!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: My fault, Mr Speaker. I was distracted by a constituent of mine who is in the gallery. Could I please ask for the honourable member to repeat the question? My apologies.

Mr SPEAKER: With indulgence.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister and the member for Yeerongpilly for their interest and their visit to Gladstone, and I ask: given the need for infrastructure and training for the increased population in my electorate to service new and existing industry, what investment in Gladstone is planned to proactively address these needs?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: As the member for Gladstone appreciates, particularly in the context of the regionalisation forum that was held on 4 May in Gladstone, there is a focus on the part of the government across the state, in terms of looking at our major regional centres, on how we can support the better distribution of the growth that the state is experiencing—some 2,200 extra Queenslanders each and every week. It is good to see that we have the opportunity, with great, strong regional centres like the city of Gladstone, to accommodate that growth. But that growth can only be accommodated with appropriate application of employment opportunities and appropriate infrastructure. Those things do come hand in hand.

Certainly Gladstone, with the concentration that the Queensland government has had on the Gladstone State Development Area for some 20-odd years, is a great example of where there has been application over an extended period of time of appropriate and improved infrastructure. There certainly is more to happen and more to do, not only in the face of continued development of the state development areas but also in the face of the application of the opportunities arising out of the liquefied natural gas industry.

I have been meeting with council in the Gladstone Regional Council area on a regular basis. I have also met with the member for Gladstone on a number of occasions to hear from her directly the concerns and issues that there are in relation to the needs in Gladstone. I know that there is a range of issues, including housing matters, that are very, very important. That is why the state took action with the declaration of the Clinton urban development area. That is why the state is continuing to work with the region on the investigation into the social impact needs. Very soon we will be confirming with the Gladstone community the list of opportunities that there are to see further development, particularly of social infrastructure, in the Gladstone region in response to the ongoing development that is happening in that part of our state. I look forward to my department and myself working closely with the member for Gladstone on the application of those opportunities in response to the extensive development.

Courthouse Building Program

Ms O'NEILL: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Could the Attorney-General provide the House with a progress report on the building program currently being undertaken within his portfolio?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in justice matters. The Bligh government has been undertaking a significant modernisation agenda within Queensland's justice system. This agenda has included the bricks and mortar that constitute our courts as well as the laws that are applied within them. Our courthouse building program has been extensive in recent years, providing new facilities and creating jobs along the length and breadth of our state.

We completed the \$12.1 million Pine Rivers courthouse in the electorate of Pine Rivers in September 2008 on time. We completed the new \$5.4 million Mareeba courthouse, in the electorate of Cook, in December 2008 on time. And we finished the magnificent new \$75 million Ipswich courthouse in December last year servicing the electorates of Ipswich, Ipswich West, Bundamba and beyond—the biggest building project in central Ipswich in a decade as part of the Bligh government's commitment to our fast-growing western corridor.

The courthouse building program continues apace. The upgrade of the Southport courthouse, worth \$4.5 million, is underway, on budget and due for completion in December. Our \$10.5 million upgrade to the Toowoomba courthouse is also on budget and due for completion later this year. And the new \$600 million Brisbane Supreme and District Courts complex is on budget and scheduled for completion in 2011.

The Bligh government made a commitment before the election to keep Queensland strong, to keep our economy growing during the greatest economic crisis in 80 years, and that is what we have done. The difference between this side of the House and the other side of the House could not be clearer. We are focused on delivering our economic plan. We have a plan—delivering on our economic plan, creating jobs and building infrastructure to create a stronger, fairer, better Queensland. The only thing that motivates those on the other side of the House is self-interest. We put the public interest first; they are champions of self-interest. If we look at the front page of the *Australian* today what do we see? We see a member of the Liberal National Party in the federal parliament with his hand out for a \$12 million success fee. Success fees are banned by this government.

It is mooted that the next series of *Underbelly* will be based on the 1980s in Queensland and the corrupt National Party Bjelke-Petersen government. They do not have to go back that far; they can look at the protection racket that is going on at the moment in the LNP: 'If you pay \$12,000 out of your electorate allowance to the party we will give you political protection.' Can you see the players in the drama? The godfather would be Bruce McIver. The bagman would be the treasurer, Barry O'Sullivan. He is known for a fruity turn of phrase. Wouldn't he make good TV talent, although you could not show that during family time! At the heart of this lies the credibility of the Leader of the Opposition. What are his capacities and his capabilities as the leader? These questions go to the heart of his capacity. The central charge is: what did he know and when did he know it? That is the question that all Queenslanders need to have answered.

(Time expired)

QBuild

Mr FOLEY: When a fluoro tube goes out in my home I simply change it. My question is to the Minister for Public Works. How can QBuild justify charging the Queensland parliament \$252.48 to replace one fluoro light and light switch in December 2008? If that was not bad enough, they then turn up to replace the same light 16 months on from the original job placement claiming that the first job was never done?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I do not have those details with me. QBuild does something like \$700 million worth of work a year so I do not go around and examine every job.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I know those opposite are warming to the task of belting QBuild and workers; that is all right. We will get to the bottom of this. If the honourable member would pay me the courtesy of giving me that information, I will have it looked into.

Let me say this about QBuild. There has been an ongoing undermining of the good work that the people in QBuild do. I notice now that the Independent member has joined in. I remember when those opposite had an unfortunate incident up on their floor. They were very pleased to see the QBuild plumbers turn up to fix the problem that had been caused by their own mismanagement of the lavatory system.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is true. That is when they got their own back. They did not like it when they got their own back. They have never got out of it. Witness this week the evidence given against these people by the rats who have swum away from the ship.

Like every big organisation, within QBuild there is bound to be something that goes wrong. Let me tell members that they are very pleased to see QBuild turn up when a school burns down and all the rest of it. A number of people have written me letters about that.

Let us get back to the situation that those opposite are in. I know they are trying to get away from all of this. Let us go back to the major question that was asked here yesterday. Instead of referring their things to the CMC they refer them to Bruce McIver and Gordon Ramsay. I do not blame them for what Gordon Ramsay has said. That is quite all right. But the reality is that we want to know why it is that those opposite referred that matter to the Liberal Party instead of the CMC.

Ms Nolan: Whoever.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Whatever it happens to be this week. That question has never been answered to anybody's satisfaction. When anybody has made an allegation about one of our members, what have we done? We have sent it over to the CMC. Do they think that Gordon Nuttall ended up in jail as a result of some sort of miraculous divine intervention? He was sent to jail as a result of an action taken by this government. That is why he went to jail.

If those opposite thought these two blokes were crooks and they covered up for them while they were on their side and in the leaky old ship that they are passing for an opposition—and they wisely as rats got off; we can tell when a ship is sinking because the rats get off—why did they not go to the CMC?

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time is over.

ELECTORAL (TRUTH IN ADVERTISING) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.43 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1992, the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government Act 2009 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Electoral (Truth in Advertising) Amendment Bill [\[2246\]](#).

Tabled paper: Electoral (Truth in Advertising) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[2247\]](#).

Second Reading

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.43 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill of great significance to Queensland. Ensuring honest and truthful election advertising is a crucial element of a fair and just democratic electoral system. This bill is about restoring confidence in our electoral process and restoring honesty in government. It is about ensuring that when people look to our state parliament—irrespective of what side of the political divide they stand on—they can respect our democratic system rather than be suspicious of our democratic system.

This bill will seek to introduce a series of offences into the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government Act 1993 and 2009, which will make it an offence for a person to authorise the publication of false or misleading electoral advertising. The bill also makes it an offence for a person to make a false or misleading statement purporting to be fact that is inaccurate or misleading to a material extent.

The bill also gives the Electoral Commission the power to direct the advertiser of the misleading or false information to withdraw it from publication or publish a retraction. Under this bill, all forms of publication are covered, including broadcasting or publishing of the advertisement even on the internet, if the website is maintained outside of Queensland.

Just over 12 months ago Queenslanders were subjected to a barrage of false claims and false election promises. Queenslanders now feel betrayed, feel let down and cheated by a democratic system that had no checks in place. When Queenslanders are told that their assets will not be sold, they have a right to believe their assets will not be sold. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

When Queenslanders are told 100,000 breadwinners—100,000 fulltime jobs—will be created, they have a right to believe those 100,000 full-time jobs will be created.

When Queenslanders are told there will be no fuel tax—that the fuel subsidy will remain in place—then Queenslanders have a right to believe that there will not be a fuel tax.

Recently the State Government released a so-called green-paper on honesty and integrity in government.

A green-paper on honesty and integrity that refuses to deal with dishonesty in the Parliament and refuses to deal with dishonesty in political advertising can hardly proclaim to be a true discussion paper on honesty and integrity.

That's why it is left to the LNP to drive the reform agenda ... to drive the agenda that will restore public confidence in our parliament.

This Bill is the next step in the LNP's Honest Government platform. The true test will be whether the Government is willing to step up and support an honest election advertising campaign.

The amendments to the Local Government Acts are about ensuring that the same high standards of honesty and integrity are enshrined during Local Government elections as well.

We on this side of the House are committed to restoring honesty and integrity in politics and this Bill forms part of the platform.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dick, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Maleny Neighbourhood Centre; Landsborough Sport and Recreation Centre

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.45 am): I rise this morning to inform the House of vital community infrastructure being delivered by the Bligh government. Recently, I represented the Minister for Community Services, Karen Struthers, to officially open the new Maleny Neighbourhood Centre. The official plans to build this centre date back to August 2006 when then Treasurer Anna Bligh visited Maleny and announced an election commitment to fund this new centre. The Bligh government delivered on its promise with \$2 million.

This centre was conceived, designed and planned by Maleny residents and it was a pleasure to lobby for the funds. The result is that after 16 years of operation, the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre has a permanent home, which is both modern and spacious and well equipped to deliver its many excellent services. It also houses the Maleny Flexi School. I am thrilled that it has a permanent base to help children and young people to learn through an alternative education program. I would like to thank the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for working with the Bligh government to see this centre built.

I also represented the Minister for Sport, Phil Reeves, at the official opening of the Landsborough Sport and Recreation Centre. Special thanks must go to Councillor Anna Grosskreutz for her tireless commitment to the project and to the Landsborough Loggers Cricket Club, Landsborough Junior AFL and Sunshine Coast Radio Control Car Club for their cooperation and understanding.

So many people and organisations put their hands up to help us achieve the goal of building a first-class sporting facility in Landsborough. The Landsborough Sport and Recreation Centre received \$435,000 in Bligh government funding to construct a multipurpose recreation centre, incorporating three activity spaces and a canteen. The total project cost was almost \$1.5 million with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council providing the balance of funds for the amenities block and, most importantly, the club house and serving area at the western end.

Not only will this facility accommodate Queenslanders who love their sport, but also those who are looking to increase their fitness and get involved in physical activity. Under our Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland initiative we are striving to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people by reducing obesity by one-third by 2020. With the assistance of the community to involve the next generation and by developing and supporting sport and recreation programs, I am certain we will make this goal a reality.

Dialysis Treatment

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (11.47 am): Today's *Cairns Post* carries a very disturbing story in relation to dialysis patients—patients who are living in motel rooms for up to five years whilst they receive weekly treatment. The article focuses on two ladies, Seba Missi and Lency Stephen, who have been forced to live in motel rooms for five years and two years respectively. They are living 900 kilometres away from their communities and their families. For five years they have been forced to live in motel rooms far away from their families because this government has not been prepared to supply the nurses and requirements at Weipa and Bamaga to allow these people to return to their communities and receive the treatment they require. This is a shocking indictment on the government.

We have two women living in motel rooms for up to five years so they can receive their treatment. How appalling is this health system when this takes place. How ridiculous is it that these women cannot find the succour and security of their own families and their own communities because the government is simply not able to put in place a system that puts the resources, technicians and equipment into their own communities. This is an appalling situation. There is no doubt that these people who have been suffering for so long should be at home. There should be provision made to make certain that they are at home and get their treatment.

The only thing that is stopping this from taking place is this government's inactivity, incompetence and negligence, because these people deserve much better than this. From a budget of \$9 billion in the last financial year, this government has done nothing to secure the need and comfort of these two women. This government, as I said yesterday, should hang its head in shame and horror for what it has done to these and other women who live in the cape in this state.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Lucky I could not interject on that one. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Cross River Rail

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (11.49 am): The Cross River Rail project is the single largest transport project ever planned in this state and continues this government's commitment to building the infrastructure we need to manage population growth. The new PA, the new Children's Hospital, the South Eastern Busway, the Eastern Busway and the Ipswich Motorway upgrades are just a few of the projects completed or underway on the southside targeted at managing growth and reducing congestion as part of a massive infrastructure building program. Cross River Rail is a partnership between the Queensland and Australian governments, with a federal government contribution of \$20 million and a state contribution of \$5 million towards the detailed feasibility phase of the project. Recent project activity has centred on public consultation on the draft terms of reference for the environmental impact statement. The draft terms are comprehensive and address significant issues, including land use, climate change, air quality, waste management and flood mitigation within a framework of assessing the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project.

I welcome this public consultation process and the opportunity for local residents to contribute their feedback and ideas at community information sessions and staffed public displays. As the local MP representing communities impacted during the construction of this project, I recently made a submission to the Coordinator-General as part of the formal public submission process. In particular, my submission highlighted the need for the EIS to consider potential community impacts including local road network movements, dust impacts in the vicinity of the works and along vehicle freight routes removing spoil, adequate car parking for worker vehicles on the construction site, as well as impacts on local businesses and existing rail network services. Cross River Rail is a great project for Brisbane and the south-east. As a local representative, I will continue to advocate on behalf of my community through the consultation, approval and construction phases.

Queensland Ambulance Service, Response Times

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (11.51 am): Last Monday, 10 May, on a small property near Marian just half an hour from Mackay Greg Van Moolenbroek died after suffering a heart attack. Greg telephoned his wife to call an ambulance. She was by his side within 35 minutes—some considerable time before the ambulance arrived 75 minutes after the call for assistance. The call-out was given a code 2A; it should have been a code 1—full emergency response. It was dispatched within five minutes but got lost. There was another incident on the very same day in the same area where an ambulance arrived an hour after the call-out after again getting lost. Thankfully, that incident did not result in a fatality. In addressing the issues, the minister said that the Mackay region was adequately resourced. I wonder who told him that! Mr Van Moolenbroek's death is the third death in less than three years under very similar circumstances.

With regard to the coronial inquiry into the death of Mr Howlett, what was the outcome? Did the minister implement the recommendations? I received an email from the minister at approximately 2 pm last Saturday, 15 May, requesting me to pass on the details of all of the contacts I had received by the close of business on Monday, 17 May. I have refused to do that on the grounds that I would firstly need to contact each and every one of those people to ensure that they were comfortable with me releasing their details. My instinct is that they would not and they have approached me because they were unable to get satisfaction from either the QAS or from the minister's office. You would think that instead of asking me to do his job the minister would do it himself! The minister is always telling us that we have the best ambulance service in the world. If that were the case, he would be ensuring that every instance of response times outside of the service's own standards would be investigated as part of world's best practice and appropriate actions taken to ensure that our system is working as it should.

National Stroke Foundation, Know Your Numbers Campaign

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (11.53 am): According to the National Stroke Foundation, cardiovascular disease is Australia's biggest killer and accounts for more than 10 per cent of health system expenditure. This year 60,000 Australians will suffer new and recurrent strokes. That is one stroke every 10 minutes. Within 12 months a third of people who have a stroke will die, a third will live with some form of disability and a third will make a complete recovery. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, stroke survivors with disability are much more likely to have a profound

limitation to their core activities than the average person with a disability. But strokes are preventable. That is why this government strongly supports the Stoke Foundation's Know Your Numbers campaign which aims to raise awareness about high blood pressure and stroke in the community.

This week is annual Know Your Numbers Week, so I am pleased to advise the House of the Bligh government's commitment to reducing the incidence of strokes in our community. The Bligh government is providing \$2.5 million over three years to the National Stroke Foundation to run the Know Your Numbers program across Queensland. This week over 350 pharmacies across Queensland will provide free blood pressure checks, and based on past participation rates it is expected that about 36,000 Queenslanders will take up this service. Those people with higher blood pressure will be encouraged to visit their GP for a more detailed assessment. This program will prevent dozens of strokes and the social and economic burden that they cause. Many participants last year reported changes to their lifestyle after visiting a pressure station. Forty per cent increased their exercise, one-third lost weight and more than 10 per cent had started on blood pressure lowering medication.

Last week I had the pleasure of dropping in to visit the great staff at Garozzo's pharmacy in Blackwood Street in Mitchelton to see their preparation for Know Your Numbers Week. It is just another great service provided by this friendly local pharmacy. I encourage all Queenslanders to take the time to attend a pressure station and have their blood pressure checked for free. You can find your local blood pressure station on the National Stroke Foundation website. I want to congratulate the Stroke Foundation and the Pharmacy Guild for this great partnership with the Queensland government. The Know Your Numbers program has done a great job of giving Queenslanders at risk of cardiovascular disease a jolt to take better care of themselves.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (11.55 am): I rise today to mark Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month—an occasion that is sad by its very existence and that is cause for reflection on the largely hidden impact of this social crime. While the impact of domestic violence on the abused spouse or partner is obviously traumatic and devastating, there are two vital points that need to be addressed in order to make substantial improvements in this area. The first seems obvious but is too often sadly neglected. A child who suffers through their formative years seeing one parent abuse another will suffer emotional trauma with lifelong effects. There is no escaping the nightmare for these children, which stays with them throughout their lives. What is without doubt is the suffering of all of those people—a suffering that must be recognised and actively addressed.

The second essential consideration has to be making the victim's fear of taking action less than their fear of staying in that abusive relationship. Currently processes and bureaucracy are intimidating and they often cannot ensure safety. They cannot always protect from retribution. Whilst victims fear the processes more than their attacker we will make no progress in stamping out domestic violence. There is a stigma with admitting violence. There is a tangible fear amongst those who know that what they are suffering is unacceptable.

There are many worthwhile organisations that work to wipe out this fear. Sadly, they too are struggling with funding under this government. One notable example and an indictment of this government during Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month is the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative, which looks likely to close its doors next month thanks to the government's slashing of its funding. This, along with other decisions across the state which have seen situations like closing down shelters in favour of housing victims in motels, shows no compassion on the part of the government. It may come down to bureaucracy and budgets, but each such decision betrays the women and children who cope with horrible and preventable situations every day.

Bribie Island Seaside Museum

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.57 am): I was delighted to represent Premier Anna Bligh at the official opening of the Bribie Island Seaside Museum last Friday. Bribie is a special place. I have lived there with my husband, Jon Sullivan, for almost 26 years, so I know the area and its history well. Bribie is famous for the role it played as a primary defence for Brisbane during World War II. It is also well known for its famous reclusive artist Ian Fairweather, and these both feature strongly in the museum. Two longtime locals, Warwick Outram and Adelle Carr, supplied rare photos of the artist to the museum's curator, Allan Baptist, to copy and add to the museum.

Everyone will recall that last year our great state of Queensland celebrated its 150th anniversary. I am pleased to say that this museum, along with 90 other projects, was the proud beneficiary of the state government's Q150 Legacy Infrastructure Program funding. In partnership with the Moreton Bay Regional Council, which generously provided \$1.7 million towards the total cost, the state government kick-started the project with a cheque for \$1 million. I want to thank Mayor Allan Sutherland for his dedication and commitment to this project. His level of professionalism and cooperation was appreciated. The state government's commitment, although substantial, ended in the handing over of the \$1 million cheque. The rest has been up to the council's managers. They had the difficult job of public consultation, location, design and what went in it. They of course will also manage and maintain it

in the future. The purpose of the state government's Q150 grants is to leave a legacy of not just bricks and mortar but social infrastructure that will serve communities well for generations to come—for the next 150 years—and the Bribie Island Seaside Museum is a part of that.

On the day I presented Mayor Sutherland with a rare booklet of a real estate brochure on Bribie in pounds, shillings and pence—that is, prior to the introduction of decimal currency in this country on 14 February 1966. It shows that you could buy a new unit for around £250. I want to take this opportunity to mention the merry band of 70 well-trained volunteers and new staff. I know that, with their dedication and expertise, they will make this museum a great success.

Green IT Awareness Week

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (11.59 am): A constituent in my electorate is the driver behind a global environmental initiative that would see enormous reductions in carbon emissions just by getting people to turn off their computers when not in use. Mark Winter is head of ComputerOFF.org. and the Australian mastermind of International Green IT Awareness Week, which will run between 1 and 7 June. This initiative has already attracted huge support from overseas.

Awareness is at the heart of this global campaign, which aims to spread education and enthusiasm for implementing green technology policies to individuals, businesses and governments. The Green IT website offers 100 tips on ways to be more sustainable, including setting defaults to double-sided print, turning up the temperature of air conditioners by a degree and turning off screen savers.

ComputersOFF.org. has two main ambitions: to educate and to certify. Educating people and businesses on how to be more sustainable with technology coincides with their certification program—a national program that certifies businesses and organisations based on their sustainable technology policies. The largest certified government department is the Australian Crime Commission, which is one of the 60 or so organisations that is becoming certified through the ComputersOFF program each year.

Simple power management policies, if implemented for the 16 million computers that operate each day in Australian businesses and government departments, are proven money savers and reduce Australia's carbon footprint. A computer left on overnight for a year creates enough CO₂ to fill a double-decker bus. If every Australian consciously does one small thing to save energy, that is 22 million incidents that will significantly reduce the negative impact on our planet.

Electricity consumed by an average PC generates almost 160 kilograms of carbon dioxide each year by simply running at full power and when no user is present. ComputersOFF has a simple motto: saving the planet, one idle computer at a time. That sounds like a responsible, cost-saving strategy for an environmentally minded government to adopt, which is why it is included in the LNP's power management policy. I urge all members of this House to get behind Green IT Week.

Deaf Services Queensland

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (12.01 pm): The launch of the Deaf Services Queensland office in Townsville last month is a very welcome addition to Townsville and the surrounding region. Minister Anastacia Palaszczuk was in Townsville on 27 April for the launch and the announcement of recurrent funding of \$140,000 per year to support a community worker and a part-time translator at this service in Townsville. Services that can now be accessed by Townsville's hearing impaired community include: enhanced interpreting services; community access; the teaching of Auslan in order to improve access for the hearing impaired; employment and lifestyle support through advocacy and referral through the community worker; and practical supports, including the provision of resources such as computers and specialised fire alarms.

The causes for conductive hearing loss can either be acquired or congenital. Otitis media is one of the major causes of conductive hearing loss in our Indigenous children. In layman's terms, otitis media is middle ear infection. Many of us would remember treating our children for middle ear infection when they were infants. Unfortunately, what many do not realise is the long-term damage that can be caused if conductive hearing loss is acquired as a result of middle ear infections. Anecdotal evidence suggests that 68 per cent of children on Palm Island are affected by otitis media. Even more disturbing is a figure reported to the Catherine Freeman Foundation that estimates that 80 per cent of students attending both schools on Palm Island are experiencing mild to moderate hearing loss.

The consequences for children and adults affected by conductive hearing loss are far reaching and severe. This is particularly the case for children's educational outcomes. My research indicates that the symptoms of mild to moderate hearing loss can present as identical to ADHD. Any misdiagnosis of behavioural problems has obvious negative impacts on learning outcomes. But it goes further. Northern Territory psychologist Damien Howard reports that studies have found that 85 per cent of Indigenous prisoners have some degree of hearing loss.

So I welcome Townsville Deaf Services Queensland. I think the excitement and number of people at the launch is testament to how needed its services are to the north.

Toohill, Mr A, Barton, Mr J; Southern Rail Freight Corridor

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to make the House aware of an unfortunate incident that happened at Gatton on Saturday afternoon 15 May. Unfortunately, two young men, Alex Toohill and Josh Barton, who are cousins, were being a bit overadventurous and put some sparklers into a pipe. They decided that they might drill into the pipe to put a wick in there to see if they could make a pipe bomb. Unfortunately, the pipe exploded and both young boys have ended up in hospital with serious injuries to their lower legs and even to their faces. I hope they do recover fully from this terrible experience. Their families are very worried about what is going to happen, but I am sure that they are resilient young patients and they will battle on. This morning I spoke to Toby Toohill, Alex's father. He said that Alex is a tough little bugger and he hopes that he will recover well.

Unfortunately, these sort of things have been taken off the internet and, taken out of context, they are quite unsafe. I ask all the youth of Australia, and particularly the youth of the Lockyer, to be careful when they are doing these high-risk sort of activities that can be really dangerous. I would like to thank the emergency services who attended Josh's family home and who helped the boys. That night a helicopter flew in and now they are down here in the Royal Brisbane Hospital. It is a worry for the families.

One other thing that I would like to mention is the southern freight rail corridor. Apparently, the director-general of the office of the Minister for Transport cancelled a meeting with the southern freight rail corridor fair go committee, which is unfortunate. This freight corridor is probably 20 years away, yet the department seems not to be talking to the people who are concerned about this rail freight corridor. I am disappointed that the departmental officers are not going to meet with the fair go committee.

Premier's ClimateSmart Sustainability Awards

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (12.05 pm): The Premier's ClimateSmart Sustainability Awards play an important role in achieving the state government's Q2 goals of protecting our lifestyle and environment and creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas, acknowledging as they do the achievements of Queensland communities, businesses and industries in reducing carbon emissions, taking action to abate climate change and improving sustainability. The awards will be announced on 4 June and I am proud to say that Bulimba State School is a finalist for the ClimateSmart School Community awards.

Thousands of tiny worms are feeding this school's ambitions to be totally sustainable. Students have fed more than 1,000 litres of pureed food scraps to the worms to produce 500 litres of worm castings and 200 litres of liquid fertiliser—ideal organic fertiliser—for the garden. That is a huge effort for such small worms and it is helping the school raise funds for its many other substantial environmental projects.

The awards are sponsored by a range of excellent companies that are committed to achieving strong sustainability goals in their own right, including the Bulimba electorate's own Australian Country Choice, the beef and veal supply chain managers. They are a good corporate citizen in the Bulimba electorate and clearly operate in the same manner on a more global scale.

These awards are important for their encouragement of best practice. However, there are so many other practical things the state government is also doing to encourage individuals, businesses and the community to reduce their carbon footprint, such as the ClimateSmart Home Service, the ClimateSmart Retail program, the new vehicle offset contributions scheme, the ClimateSmart Business Cluster and the Low Carbon Diet. I congratulate the Morningside Tennis Centre and Transition East on receiving a \$10,000 grant to run a low carbon diet themselves and for their excellent launch last week to encourage the local community to take part.

I have also spoken in this House about the Bligh government's ecoBiz program, which encourages businesses to identify efficiencies in waste, water, and energy for financial and environmental benefits. My own local area's Priestley's Gourmet Delights and Bunnings Cannon Hill are ecoBiz partners and are excellent role models for other businesses in achieving efficiency gains.

I congratulate the Premier on her initiative in encouraging, with her awards, these organisations and individuals. I wish Bulimba State School the best of luck.

Solar Hot Water Rebate Scheme

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (12.07 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of one of my constituents with respect to the Queensland state Labor government's failed home solar installation scheme. In April 2009, a constituent in my electorate thought that he would attempt to reduce his carbon footprint by installing a solar hot-water system on the roof of his home. My constituent sought to avail himself of the Queensland government's Solar Hot Water Rebate scheme. He dutifully paid his \$500 and waited for

the installer to arrive. He waited for the rest of 2009. Eventually—nine months after he made his original application and paid his \$500—a solar hot-water system was installed. The hot-water system was installed by an installer who was allocated by the Queensland Labor government. My constituent had no say in who would install the system. It was dictated by this current Queensland government.

My constituent has informed me that, as part of the scheme, the installation of this solar hot-water system must be inspected by the local regulatory authority. In this case, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council was to ensure that the system and the installation complied with the regulations. On Thursday, 6 May 2010 an inspector from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council attended my constituent's home for the purpose of conducting the compulsory inspection of the system and the installation carried out by the Queensland government's own contractor. Guess what? It failed. Yes, the Queensland government's contracted installation of this solar hot-water system failed to comply with the government's own regulation.

Let us all pray that this Queensland government scheme does not turn out to be a carbon copy of the federal government's home insulation scheme. We all know how that has ended up. It is costing the Australian taxpayers multimillions of dollars. This is something that should have been done right and it is another indictment on this Labor government. It is a failed application of a product that should have been easily installed, but again, and again, and again, this Labor government fails, fails, fails.

Ataxia Telangiectasia and Friedreich's Ataxia, Clinics

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (12.09 pm): Two new specialist clinics are now up and running thanks to the hard work of my constituent Krissy Roebig, Queensland Health specialists and Gold Coast dad Mike Dwyer. The clinics could dramatically change the lives of many Australian children with the rare diseases ataxia telangiectasia and Friedreich's ataxia.

Dr Kate Sinclair, director of neurosciences at the Royal Children's Hospital, has been instrumental in bringing together the top specialists and researchers in rare childhood diseases so that the clinics could be established. By bringing together all the children around Australia who have been diagnosed with these degenerative diseases the clinics will enable vital collection of medical data and give clinicians a critical mass of information so that improved diagnosis and treatment options can be developed.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Minister for Health, Paul Lucas, the parliamentary secretary, Murray Watt, and head of Queensland Children's Hospital, Peter Steer, who recognised that by allocating essential resources to this project this rare disease clinic could become a reality. I also acknowledge the support of Professor Murray Mitchell of the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research which is housing the clinics at their state-of-the-art facilities at the Royal. Mark Dwyer is co-founder of the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Foundation and his support has enabled joint clinics to be established.

Above all I pay tribute to the utter determination of Krissy Roebig and her husband Sean. Krissy has two children with ataxia telangiectasia and has never stopped fighting for answers and improved treatment for her beautiful children. She established the charity BrAshA-T to raise funds for critical research and I know that the member for Aspley is also a great supporter. Her family is currently facing difficult times and I was pleased to be able to help establish these clinics. I know that Krissy's strength will carry her through life's future challenges.

Far North Queensland Branch of the Liberal National Party, Financial Management

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (12.11 pm): Today I am writing to the police minister and providing him with this documentation which has recently come into my possession. I table the document.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, dated 21 September 2009, to Mr Bruce McIver, President of the Liberal National Party, and an email, dated 4 September 2009, in relation to concerns regarding financial management of the Far North Queensland region [2248].

It outlines serious concerns regarding the LNP's Far North Queensland financial management. The document says the issues are centring around Dennis Quick, with some concerns also regarding the position of the regional chair, Warren Entsch. I am asking that the police minister refer this document to his commissioner so that an investigation into the serious and unanimous concerns of 15 executive members of the Far North branch of the LNP, including, I am advised, a serving member of the AFP Fraud Squad, can be carried out. I am asking that this investigation be carried out in order to give those 15 members a guarantee that there has not been any crime committed during the management of Far North Queensland Liberal National Party accounts.

I have been advised that a copy of this letter was addressed and hand delivered to the LNP Party President, Bruce McIver, in September 2009 calling for an investigation but to date no such investigation has taken place. I have also been advised that some people who signed this letter before it was delivered to Mr McIver have subsequently been contacted by LNP party official Barry O'Sullivan and, because of his bullying and abusive phone calls and threats of legal action, have been reduced to tears.

If the LNP is so keen to ensure honesty and accountability in the political process as witnessed by its secret committee investigations, why has it failed to investigate and tried to cover up the unanimous concerns of 15 of its senior executive LNP members in North Queensland? It is now up to senior members of the LNP to explain what they knew about the allegations of impropriety and what steps they have taken to protect the hard-worked-for finances of the grassroots members of the LNP.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Resumed from 18 May (see p. 1602).

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Ms SIMPSON (12.14 pm): This bill has been gagged by this government. We have about two hours to go through substantial clauses in relation to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). Some 25 pieces of legislation are being amended by this bill. A number of quite substantial changes are being made. The only reason the government gave as to why this bill was being declared urgent, from what I can recollect of this morning, was the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project. I believe that is actually misconstruing the facts. The urgency for the government is that it wants to facilitate the sale of Queensland assets.

There is only one game in town and that is changing this rotten government. If anyone is against that wish then they are flying with the government. If someone flies with the crows they will get shot down with them. We need to change this Labor government. We are in \$85 billion worth of debt and the government is selling our kids' inheritance. The sale of these assets by this government will not reduce that debt. In fact, it will barely cover the interest rate. It has no plan to deal with Queensland's finances. I will not be held back from criticising a government and working hard to see it changed. Anyone who is not working to see a Labor government changed is flying with the members opposite and wants to keep them there.

I want to take the minister to task. This government deliberately misled the people of Queensland about its position on asset sales before the Queensland state election. The minister stood up in this place and said that her government has always been consistent. I need to remind this transport minister of a few things. I asked this transport minister what her position was with regard to the proposed sale of assets before it was announced. On 21 May 2009, when I asked the minister about a proposed sale of Queensland Rail and any of its components, she replied in this place, 'Queensland Rail is not for sale.' Then what did we see? Within days in the paper it was revealed that the government was looking at the sale of Queensland Rail. A few days later this minister, who claimed that she would not support the sale of Queensland Rail and its assets, with the smell of ministerial leather around her, had a road-to-Damascus conversion when, on 4 June 2009 in this parliament she stated, 'That is the position of which I am entirely supportive'—that is, the sale of Queensland Rail.

Well, was that a backflip! Then on 2 June 2009 the minister said, 'That is a decision which I fully and wholeheartedly support.' Talk about a government that misleads the people of Queensland and mushrooms its ministers, who allegedly did not know—if that in fact is the truth, because it is quite clear the Premier knew and the Premier misled the people of Queensland. The transport minister might have been flip-flopping around on her position in relation to the sale of Queensland assets but we will stand firm against the sale of these assets. It is selling the inheritance of the children of Queensland. Until this rotten government is thrown out we will continue to see it make poor decisions for Queensland. The only way to fix the problem is to throw this government out, put the LNP in charge and get some good economic management. We do not want to continue to be in this rotten situation where our AAA rating is lost and downgraded to AA because this government has no idea how to manage the state finances.

I refer the parliament to the fact that this bill has been gagged. There are some sections of this bill that we support, such as the toughening up of the marine provisions. There are some sections in relation to the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project that we support. However, I draw the attention of the House that this minister had ample opportunity in her summing up to explain the very grave concerns of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and we heard nada, nought, nothing in relation to the committee's concerns. That is just not good enough. The Leader of the House said there has been plenty of time for

consideration of this legislation and that it is the responsibility of the opposition to help the government shovel it through, or words to that effect. No, it is the responsibility of this government to do its job and organise the business of this House in a timely way. When we have a minister who does not even have the courtesy of responding to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's report containing significant concerns about compromising compulsory acquisition powers and a number of other rights and liberties under other acts then something is awfully wrong. There has been no explanation from this minister.

I will table the relevant pages that relate to some of the issues arising from the examination of the bill by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, because this minister has treated the parliament with contempt. We have seen nothing from the minister to address the majority of those concerns. In two or three months time a little letter to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee will probably turn up, saying, 'The bill has been dealt with, tough luck!', but it will not address the fundamental issues before this parliament.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—Legislation Alert No. 6 of 2010, pp. 51-52, in relation to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) [2249].

While we have indicated our support for some aspects of the bill, such as toughening up on marine pollution, we do not support the gagging of this parliament as these are significant provisions. Certainly we do not support rushing this legislation through the House, particularly as it facilitates aspects of the assets sale. Shame on this government! It wants this parliament to be a rubber stamp for its corrupt activities and its disrespect for the people of Queensland. Queensland deserves better. It needs a change of government and that is what we are committed to.

Ms NOLAN: There were no questions in that, Madam Speaker.

Ms SIMPSON: As the minister has no answers for why she has flip-flopped on her position in relation to the sale of Queensland assets, I table the relevant sections from *Hansard* to remind the people of Queensland that this government does not tell the truth before elections, its ministers cannot keep a straight line on where they stand and they will not stand up for Queensland. Certainly they are not standing up for Queensland with Kevin Rudd wanting to rip off 42 per cent of our GST and the future royalties of this state by compromising it with a super tax on the mining industry. That says everything: they will not stand up for Queensland, but we will.

Tabled paper: Extracts from *Hansard*, dated 21 May 2009, 2 June 2009 and 4 June 2009, regarding the sale of public assets and Queensland Rail [2250].

Ms NOLAN: Clause 2 refers to the commencement date of the bill. The matters that the member has raised were dealt with in the parliament in June 2009. She has not brought any new matters to the attention of this House.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 42, as read, agreed to.

Clause 43—

Ms SIMPSON (12.22 pm): This clause has been raised as a matter of concern by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. I challenge the minister to table her response to all issues raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. Because of the gag that has been applied in this place, we will not be able to go through the bill clause by clause. If the government has even a skerrick of courtesy or respect for the parliament, we should see a detailed reply to each of those concerns in the parliament within the next two hours.

Clause 43 excludes avenues of judicial review available under the Judicial Review Act. It states—

Clause 43 inserts new section 18C. New section 18C provides that the *Judicial Review Act 1991* does not apply to a decision of the State or a relevant entity (the port lessor, a port lessee or a port manager) made in carrying out its functions or powers under part 3A (Liability for, and recovery of, charges and expenses), chapter 8 of the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*.

The explanatory notes do not address the consistency of clause 43 with fundamental legislative principles. It is a fundamental legislative principle. It is a fundamental principle that Queenslanders have the right of judicial review. However, when it comes to the sale of assets, this government is exempting itself and a port lessor, port lessee and port manager from its applications. I ask the minister: how can she tolerate this?

Ms NOLAN: This matter is quite clear. Generally, it is not regarded as appropriate that matters relating to fees and charges are the subject of judicial review. The process for people who have objections to the fees and charges of the new port is that they can seek to have the port declared under either the Queensland Competition Authority Act or through the ACCC. That is the process through which there is oversight for port charging, not through a process of judicial review.

Clause 43, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 44 to 55, as read, agreed to.

Clause 56—

Ms SIMPSON (12.24 pm): This matter also points to the heart of the secret state under this Labor government. QR is exempt from right to information during the transition. When this government has been asked to be transparent about the processes and what it intends to sell, it has been far from honest. When I asked the minister a question on notice about which parts of Queensland Rail were for sale, referring to the rail lines and other assets, in her answer I was referred to a website that did not provide that breakdown. When I have gone to briefings and asked the same question, I have not been given that breakdown or explanation. I have talked to stakeholders who have a key interest in the future of this state, its infrastructure and accessing that infrastructure. They too have asked that question, but have failed to receive an answer. This is just another example of the secret state under the Labor government, which wants to keep people in the dark about what it really intends.

Ms NOLAN: If the member has a question as opposed to a fairly uninformed statement, I would be more than happy to take this opportunity to answer it.

Ms SIMPSON: I refer the minister to the fact that she has been asked about the division of assets in the Queensland Rail asset sales, particularly in relation to rail lines and a number of workshops and other assets. No clarity has been provided as to what the government is flogging off. Given the fact that the minister failed to provide that detail on any website, in any answer to a question on notice or in answer to any public queries from stakeholders, today will the minister commit to giving us a breakdown of what is for sale, particularly in regard to which rail lines are to be sold and aspects of those rail lines in terms of access and so on, as well as other assets such as workshops.

Ms NOLAN: As I have told the member earlier, the information that she refers to is publicly available on the asset sales website run by the Treasury. I am conscious of the member's time, given that one of her complaints has been that there is not enough time to debate this legislation. This clause relates to the application of right to information to the new Queensland Rail GOC. My answer is twofold: first, the information about which lines are in and which are out has been consistently on the public record for some time now, so it is surprising that the LNP does not appear to be across it—although perhaps that is not that surprising. Secondly, if the member has a question that relates to these clauses in relation to the application of right to information legislation for the new Queensland Rail government owned corporation, of course I would be more than pleased to answer it.

Ms SIMPSON: This minister claimed she knew nothing about the asset sales when she said that Queensland Rail was not for sale. Clearly, she does not understand what is on the website either, because the information that was requested is not displayed on that website. This minister has no idea about what is going on. Clearly there are sections of rail line where there is no clarity as to the ownership provisions. There is no clarity with regard to a number of other major assets of Queensland Rail. Currently, those assets belong to the people of Queensland but this government is not coming clean about how the asset sale is operating and what is being flogged off. The minister may rely on a website or ring a friend, but in this regard she is misleading the parliament.

Clause 56, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 57 to 68, as read, agreed to.

Clause 69—

Ms SIMPSON (12.29 pm): This is another concern that has been raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to which the minister has not yet replied either in her second reading summation or in anything tabled before the parliament. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has remarked that this clause affects rights and liberties of individuals with interest in land not owned or leased by QR Ltd but where rail transport infrastructure has been constructed or installed. Could the minister please explain why?

Ms NOLAN: As the explanatory notes state, this statutory right only applies to rail infrastructure that, prior to the commencement date, augments, duplicates or replaces pre-1995 rail infrastructure that has the benefit of a similar right under existing section 244. What that means is that this is not a new provision. It continues something which has been in place for some time—which is a statutory right to keep existing rail infrastructure on land that they do not own or lease. In some cases, there is rail infrastructure on land not owned or leased by QR. That has been the case for a very long time, and this provision allows it to continue to be the case in future. As such, it does not bring any change to any pre-existing rights or liberties. It just continues something that already exists.

Ms SIMPSON: I ask the minister to give an example of these circumstances.

Ms NOLAN: I cannot give the member a physical example, but it would be things like there might have been an existing right of way for a bridge and the bridge since 1998 has been duplicated, so it will allow that bridge's continuing right to exist. There are cases where the land is not necessarily owned but there is rail infrastructure, and this allows it to continue to be operated.

Clause 69, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 70 to 73, as read, agreed to.

Clause 74—

Ms SIMPSON (12.32 pm): Under the LNP, Queensland assets are not for sale and we oppose what this government is doing. What we see in this provision is not a strengthening of Queensland's position but in fact a weakening. Currently Queensland Rail is 100 per cent owned by Queenslanders. Currently this asset and all of its operations belong to Queensland. There are provisions where the state is saying it will retain a certain percentage of ownership, but that is a downgrade from what Queensland currently owns, which is 100 per cent.

We want to make it quite clear and put it on the record that we are opposed to what the government is doing. The members opposite do not have a plan to fix the economy of Queensland; they only have a plan to save their political hides. We believe this will be of detriment to future generations, not just for the current balance sheet. They are selling the house to pay the grocery bill, and that is why we will oppose this particular move.

Ms NOLAN: It is of course a remarkable irony for members of the House to hear the LNP argue that it is the government that is lacking an economic plan. It is pretty clear to the world that this government has an economic plan. It is not the easiest political path in the world but it is one that is right, that is entirely justifiable and that allows the government to continue investing in social infrastructure that we need to accommodate growth, to continue building schools, hospitals and public transport for the people of Queensland and to continue providing social services.

In stark contrast, the LNP is simply opposed to everything. Its speakers last night in the debate on this bill gave us a totally unfunded and uncosted wish list of projects across the state that they would like to see delivered in their own electorates but entirely failed to make any mention of an economic strategy to deliver it. This is ultimately why the LNP does not present itself credibly as an alternative government for the people of Queensland. I think that matter has been clearly expressed in this parliament for just over a year now. My question is: does the member actually have any questions about this clause? If not, how can it be that so much time can be taken up on fairly unimaginative statements and the time that is dedicated to questions on the detail of this bill be entirely wasted by the member for Maroochydoore?

Ms SIMPSON: It is clear that the minister has no regard for the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's remarks, which she has failed to take the opportunity to address. I refer to the fact that it says that this particular amendment may allow amendment of an act other than by another act, and that is clearly something that is considered not good practice. Once again, the minister has failed to address that. We will be opposing this clause.

Division: Question put—That clause 74, as read, be agreed to.

AYES, 45—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 74, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 75 and 76, as read, agreed to.

Clause 77—

Ms SIMPSON (12.42 pm): Minister, this is another provision that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has raised concerns about. It notes that it overrides common law rights which may be held by individuals. I ask you to please explain.

Ms NOLAN: What I will do in a second, given that the member is so concerned about her time but seems dedicated to spending the time in some fairly technical detail of the bill relating to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee report, is table a full response prepared by my department to the matters raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in the hope that that will be of assistance and allow the member to better spend her time.

The provision is a transitional matter. The bill preserves the benefit of the common carrier exemption in respect of contracts which QR Ltd has entered into on the basis of that common carrier exemption. The transitional arrangement is justified as it preserves existing contractual rights which were agreed upon in reliance on that exemption. Without this statutory preservation, the discontinuation of the exemption in relation to existing contracts would alter third parties' contractual rights. That is clearly not something which would be broadly acceptable. As I said, I am happy to table the details so we might more satisfactorily spend the member's precious time.

Tabled paper: Response by Minister for Transport, Hon. Nolan, to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, in relation to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) [2251].

Ms SIMPSON: I acknowledge that this is the first mention that the minister will table that particular document. I certainly look forward to seeing it. We are in the middle of considering this bill, which has been gagged. We have not seen the minister's explanation in relation to all of the clauses. It would have been a common courtesy to table it with the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee before this bill came before the House.

It is in fact part of the usual parliamentary process that members are able to ask technical questions during consideration in detail. That is why we have this stage of debate. For the minister to suggest that that is in some way extraordinary or an inconvenience I think not only is rude to this parliament but also shows how much contempt this government has for the parliamentary process. This is the committee stage, where we are able to look at the detail—it is called consideration in detail—which gives us the opportunity to ask ministers questions and raise other matters. We are able to raise matters that may not involve questions. That is also a standard part of the parliamentary process. Minister, I have not seen the tabled document. I certainly look forward to seeing it. Perhaps in future we will see some respect for the parliament.

Ms NOLAN: The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee report was tabled only yesterday morning. This is a pretty comprehensive bill, as the member has discussed, and I have just tabled for the benefit of the House a detailed response running to perhaps a dozen pages which has been prepared by my department in response to that Scrutiny of Legislation Committee report. It is a written response. I think that is a fairly comprehensive response from my agency in a reasonably quick turnaround time, so I would consider that criticism of officers within my department to be a little unfair.

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, it is your responsibility as minister, in dealing with the Leader of the House, to ensure that these matters proceed through the House in a timely way with adequate time for scrutiny. The fact is that there are major issues raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee that you could not have the courtesy of responding to in a more timely way. You should not be saying that it is not your fault. I think in fact it is your fault and the fault of your government.

I draw the minister's attention to the answer she gave to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee that was tabled only this week in relation to the last piece of transport legislation that was passed through the House. On page 71 of that particular *Legislation Alert*, tabled this week, the minister was asked for a response to a large number of clauses in that legislation. The minister's response has only just been tabled. It states—

Dear Jo-Ann—

that is Jo-Ann Miller MP, chair of the committee—

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2010 about the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's comments on the Transport and Other Legislation Bill 2010.

The Committee has noted that the Bill contains a number of potential breaches of fundamental legislative principles and has referred them to Parliament. The Committee has also identified material in the accompanying explanatory notes justifying potential breaches.

As you are aware, Parliament has now considered and passed the Bill.

I thank the Committee for its careful consideration of the legislation and for their comments.

I read that because it was not going to take much time, because the minister obviously did not put much time into it. I also table it.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—Legislation Alert No. 6 of 2010, regarding correspondence from the Minister for Transport, Hon. Nolan, response to the committee in relation to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) [2252].

It is time to treat this process of consideration in detail with some respect. I will look at the minister's response but I would note that the arrogance of the minister and the government does not serve this parliament well. To simply have this detailed response put into the parliament now, rather than prior to the legislation going through, is a disgrace. The fact that the minister will not stand up against this legislation being gagged I think says everything. This minister does not stand up for anything.

Ms NOLAN: In relation to this bill, which is obviously the bill before the House, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee brought down a report yesterday morning and 24 hours later I have provided a 10-page written response to the parliament. I do not regard that as a slow turnaround or as something which is disrespectful to the members of the House. It would not have been possible for me or my agency to respond to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee before their report was provided. The member has in front of her a 10-page written response to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee.

Clause 77, as read, agreed to.

Clause 78, as read, agreed to.

Clause 79—

Ms SIMPSON (12.49 pm): This provision and a number of provisions following it relate to amendments that will help facilitate the sale of Queensland assets under this dishonest Labor government. As we have said, we do not support the sale of assets under this dishonest Labor government. It has misled the people of Queensland. We are standing up for Queensland; this Labor government is not. We will be opposing the clause on that basis.

Ms NOLAN: What would John Howard have done?

Ms SIMPSON: We know what this minister would have done, and that is get rolled by the Premier and not stand up for workers in Queensland. A number of the amendments that are contained in this bill will facilitate the sale of the Port of Brisbane. This is a minister who has not stood up for her principles and neither have the backbenchers of the Labor Party. What we see is a gutless government that gives in to Kevin Rudd and sells out Queensland. They are selling Queensland's future. We are going to stand up for Queensland. We will not stand for this legislation which will facilitate the sale of assets.

Ms NOLAN: What would Tim Nicholls have done?

Division: Question put—That clause 79, as read, be agreed to.

AYES, 45—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

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, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 79, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 80 to 82, as read, agreed to.

Clause 83, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 84 to 112, as read, agreed to.

Clause 113—

Ms SIMPSON (12.58 pm): This particular clause covers about 45 pages of the legislation. Before I make some specific comments about this, I point out that this is sloppy drafting. We have seen some abuses in this parliament with regard to individual clauses that are presented in legislation across a number of pages. This is another such abuse. It concerns quite a significant issue—that is, the land management of the Port of Brisbane. A range of issues are covered.

For the benefit of those who do not sit in this parliament, read *Hansard* or listen in, I point out that usually there are opportunities for members of parliament to ask questions about the detail of a bill in the consideration in detail stage. The shadow minister usually has three opportunities to ask questions. A backbench member would get two opportunities per clause to ask questions or to put a statement on the record. Legislation that is drafted in this way deliberately thwarts that consideration in detail process. Because of the gag motion that has been moved today there is a further limitation.

I know that we are going to have the government defend itself and say that it is justified because it has the numbers and can ram it through. To give people an idea of the provisions within clause 113, I point out that it goes from page 75 right through for another 45 pages. It deals with issues such as the Brisbane core port land, the balance port land, Brisbane port LUP, the Brisbane port railway land, community infrastructure and so on.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Ms SIMPSON: In addressing clause 113, which is 45 pages long in the legislation, I will not have a chance to ask questions about all of the areas that we wanted to address because of the time constraints and the way that this legislation has been drafted. I ask the minister to please give an example of balance port land and core land. I also ask the minister to address the very real concerns of existing tenants on some of these areas who have been facing considerable hikes in their leases and who are concerned about their ability to pay these leases into the future, and I refer in particular to community groups but there are also many small businesses that are affected by these price hikes.

Ms NOLAN: I thank the honourable member for those questions. Broadly, clause 113 establishes a planning regime for strategic port land because the current regime is predicated on the assumption that the port will be publicly owned whereas in future the Port of Brisbane will be on a 99-year lease. At the moment the way port planning works is that the Ports Corporation develops a strategic land use plan

which is essentially assessed by my department and approved by me as the minister. The new regime which is proposed is that the new port company will similarly do a land use plan which will be jointly assessed and approved through the Department of Transport and Main Roads in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure and Planning.

The shadow minister asked about the differentiation between, to borrow John Howard's terms, core and non-core port land. There is a definition of that in the bill, but to explain it in simple terms core port land consists of the berths and the areas of land that are about the port's function as a place at which ships berth and unload. There is also other land around each of the ports on which, for instance, warehouses are situated. That is obviously important to the port's operation, but that could be a little way away. It does not have to be right on the port land, and so that is the difference between core and non-core port land.

The member raised a concern about port rents. It is the case, as she suggests, that some lessees on port land—probably not as much at the Port of Brisbane as Mackay, and there is a bit of a concern at the moment in Bundaberg as well—have a concern about the amount of rent that they pay. The answer to that is that, while all of the ports of course have been operated on commercial principles for a considerable period of time, in cases where a landholder on the new privatised Port of Brisbane has a concern about the rent that they would pay, that would be a simple commercial matter between the two entities. As I said before in relation to access charges to the port, there would be the capacity for landholders to seek regulation of the port if they felt that there was an exorbitant fee structure.

The member also raised the issue of community groups. In relation to the non-commercial and community oriented parts of the Port of Brisbane such as the boat harbours around Manly and at Cabbage Tree Creek, in consideration of the fact that they are land holdings which are owned by the current Port of Brisbane Corporation but which are used for community purposes and are not ever going to be entirely commercial, they have been taken out of the existing port and are being transferred to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to speak to clause 113 and pose a few questions to the minister. First of all, I want to bring to the attention of the House a Parliamentary Library study that I have had conducted on the sale of the assets. I asked the library to collate any figures it may have on the preparation and the sale cost of these port assets, and I understand that if this legislation was not allowed to pass this place then the sale of the assets of Queensland could not proceed, and specifically we are talking about the port land here. The library has come back to me and said that no figures have been found on the preparation for sale and sale costs of the assets to be sold. However, it said that one of the costs of sale would be the \$1.9 million myths versus facts asset sales brochure produced by the government and distributed throughout Queensland. One question I want to pose to the minister is: how much has it cost to prepare for the sale of these assets, specifically the port land, and what costs might the minister envisage in terms of actually commissioning studies and the commissions of those employees for selling this land?

The library says that the Port of Brisbane Corporation, but not including the Port of Bundaberg, has been tentatively valued at an estimated \$3.5 billion and the government has indicated that it will retain ownership of the port and associated strategic infrastructure such as wharves, buildings, terminals and roads. The land and infrastructure will be leased through a competitive bidding process for a 99-year lease. TS Bundaberg, a naval cadet community association in my area, has approached me because it is very concerned about its lease on that land. I would ask if the minister can guarantee or at least assuage the fears that many community organisations have over the change in ownership of the port land that will come about as a result of this bill. TS Bundaberg is a fantastic community group. It is one of the pre-eminent community groups which does a great job training children as naval cadets. However, its training and care for those children is under threat with the sale of these assets. It needs security of tenure for that land.

I have a high regard for the shadow minister. However, there have been some inconsistencies in the LNP's position over the passage of this legislation. Last night and throughout today we have heard the LNP say that it is going to commend this bill to the House with reservations. It appears that it has backflipped on that particular position.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Burnett, you can ask the minister a question but I do not think you can ask the shadow minister a question. You should refer to the matters in the bill, please.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you. I was merely making an observation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which I do not think is relevant.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you. Maybe the minister could comment on the apparent backflip of the LNP over its case. If I could get her to comment I would appreciate that because, as we have seen throughout *Hansard*, speaker after speaker on the LNP side rose to say that they were going to

commend this bill and support it with reservations. It appears that, after a speech by the Independents and, indeed, the Independents calling for a division last night on the second reading, the LNP has backflipped and is now going to oppose this bill.

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. It was the shadow minister that called the division last night.

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me rule on the first point of order first. For the first point of order, there is no point of order. You have a chop now.

Mr MESSENGER: I appreciate that. I rise to a point of order. I think that the opposition whip may have been misleading the parliament. I was here and distinctly heard the Independents call the division last night.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Ms NOLAN: The member for Burnett, of course, is not the first to observe the inconsistency in the so-called Liberal National Party's position in relation to asset sales. It is well understood that the Liberal Party used to be the party of the private sector, the party of free enterprise, the party of capitalism. The National Party members, of course, are well known as old-fashioned agrarian socialists and, of course, have failed to really move into the modern world since their defeat in 1989.

I think that the point that the member for Burnett makes is that, of course, this is an incredibly difficult marriage to hold together. One party does not have a philosophical commitment to free enterprise and another party is fundamentally, and has been since Menzies established it, committed to such a thing. I think that the inconsistency of those two positions is why we see such difficulty with the LNP trying to find a *raison d'être* and trying to find a common purpose and trying to find a cause and trying to find a consistency among its members. That is why this is a party that right now is falling apart before our eyes.

In relation to the two specific questions that the member for Burnett asked, firstly, in relation to the transaction cost, it is the case that, just like when you sell a house you get a real estate agent, in selling an entity there is some cost for professional advice. The Treasurer has made that clear over a period of time and has also indicated that he will make publicly available those transaction costs when the transaction is completed and we, therefore, know in total what they are.

In relation to the member for Burnett's concern about the community organisation the T.S. Bundaberg, given that the Port of Bundaberg is not a part of this sale, I would be happy to answer if the member can explain how it is that he thinks that it is affected by the current bill and the asset sale.

Mr DOWLING: In relation to the Port of Brisbane land use plan, new clause 283S references a number of points about the impacts and outlines the existing land uses for land—which is the adjacent land—adjoining or neighbouring Brisbane core port land and how the adjacent land is dealt with by the planning scheme for the adjacent land. I wonder whether the minister could explain the relationship and the head of power that the Port of Brisbane land use plan will have on that adjacent property or whether it is simply in relation to how to deal with its own mitigation on its own site, because it seems to overlap. It offers authority almost beyond its own curtilage. I wonder how that might play out logistically and the mechanics of it.

Ms NOLAN: I thank the member for Redlands for the question. This provision relates to the port owned land itself. It puts some conditions on the use of that port land. The bill itself states that you cannot build things on it that are totally inconsistent with a port. For instance, you could not build a school or a hospital on that port land.

In relation to the impact on neighbouring land, it is the case that in the last transport legislation amendment bill I brought forward some powers for the Department of Transport and Main Roads to condition development adjoining the port. For instance, the member would be aware that there have been some problems at what were the old Roma Street rail yards. People have moved in next to the railway line and have then complained about the rail noise. This government has sought to manage those kinds of conflicts by creating a power for my department to condition developments adjoining transport infrastructure to ensure that, when they are built in the first place, they take account of the continuing need to operate the transport infrastructure so that you do not get that kind of conflict down the track. A little while ago we legislated to ensure that that was the case.

For instance, you would not want someone building a high-density residential dwelling on land that they owned right next to a port and then subsequently seek to shut down the operations of the port after hours because they felt that it impacted upon their amenities. To some extent those provisions were contained in the last transport bill. This issue is more about the land use on the core and non-core port land itself.

Mr McLINDON: If this clause did not go through, would the possibility of the privatisation of these ports be prevented from happening?

Ms NOLAN: It would probably make it more difficult, but the bottom line is that you would not have proper state control over the future planning of the port and I do not think that that would be a particularly good outcome.

Clause 113, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 114 to 127, as read, agreed to.

Clause 128—

Mr MESSENGER (2.49 pm): This clause amends the Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Regulation 2005. I put to the minister that the ports' annual contribution to the Queensland economy is about \$1.9 billion, according to the parliamentary research. The operating revenue for the financial years 2004-05 to 2008-09 was \$189.1 million, \$271.6 million, \$282.7 million, \$606.6 million and \$677.4 million respectively. There was no information found on the expected revenue for the next five years. I was wondering whether the minister could provide us with any information on expected revenue should this clause be passed. Also, what is the forward projection? The dividend payments for the years 2006-07 to 2008-09 were \$49.6 million, \$205.7 million and \$339.1 million respectively. Would the minister be able to detail how the government is going to make up the shortfall of those dividends?

Ms NOLAN: Dividends from year to year are reported in the annual reports which come out usually around September. In relation to the member's concern about lost future earnings from the port and other assets, as the government has fairly consistently explained, the GOC earnings comprise really only a very small part of Queensland government revenue and all of these entities—the rail, the port and the others—require very substantial capital investment going forward. For instance, I am sure members would be aware from flying into Brisbane Airport that the Port of Brisbane is undergoing an enormous expansion through the reclamation of future port land. That is obviously a really expensive exercise.

Given that GOC revenues form only a very small part of the state's income and that these entities require very substantial capital investment in order to keep growing, to keep generating economic activity and to keep expanding the size of their workforce—and, of course, government is always limited in what it can invest in—the view that this government has taken is that we would be better off allowing the private sector to invest in these commercial entities and focusing the government's limited capital capacity on infrastructure for people.

Mr MESSENGER: I thank the minister for the answer, but I do not think I received the detail that I was asking for. I repeat the question: how does the government intend to make up for the shortfall in the dividends paid? I was wondering whether the minister could also revisit the question of the costs of preparing for the sale. They will be significant costs, most probably in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and it is an issue that the government has not been challenged about or answered properly.

The library has supplied me with a list of government owned corporations, which I suppose could all be up for sale. There is CSI Energy Ltd, total assets \$2.3 billion; Energex, total assets \$7.9 billion; Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd, total assets \$7.6 billion; Powerlink, total assets \$5.4 billion; Stanwell, total assets \$1.9 billion; Tarong Energy, total assets \$1.9 billion; Port of Brisbane, total assets \$2.6 billion; Port of Townsville, total assets \$243 million; QIC Ltd, total assets \$245 million; SunWater, total assets \$774 million; Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Ltd, total assets \$209 million.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Burnett, those are not the GOCs that we are here to discuss. Can you please refer to the clause before the House.

Mr MESSENGER: Referring to clause 128, could the minister give a guarantee that those ports that I have mentioned in those other GOCs will not be up for sale similar to the sale that is now being carried out that is covered by this particular clause?

Ms NOLAN: Let me make two points: the first is that clause 128 provides that this part amends the Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Regulation 2005. This clause does not even do anything; it just refers to something else. As such it seems remarkable that the member wants to get into such a broad-ranging discussion. Nonetheless, given that that is where we are, I think that the extent of this government's agenda in relation to asset sales is pretty well known and has been pretty widely discussed over the last 11 months or so.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to speak in relation to this clause. I note that the shadow minister has spent quite some time explaining how the opposition is the only party that has the capacity to stop the asset sale. I reflect on a time prior to the election last year when some of the very members in this House who are now shadow ministers—and the opposition—went to great lengths to publicly say that they would prefer to be in opposition than to work with Independents. What we have seen in this debate is the Independents clearly, without any doubt, state categorically that they will not support the asset sale. Yet prior to the election last year—and history will confirm what I am saying here today—the shadow ministers were out there publicly saying to Queenslanders, 'We would prefer to be in opposition

than work in partnership with Independents to form government.' This is another example of shadow ministers and the opposition saying whatever they believe is appropriate at the time, without any consistency.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nicklin, what you are saying may be true but it is not relevant to the bill currently before the House.

Mr WELLINGTON: The relevance I see is in relation to this very issue of an asset sale. The parliamentary record of this debate will show that the Independents will do whatever they can—without question—to stop an asset sale, yet history will show that the shadow minister and her colleagues are totally inconsistent. They will say one thing in here, one thing to someone else and another thing to the media. There is no consistency whatsoever.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nicklin, resume your seat, please. The clause currently being discussed before this House is clause 128, which reads—

Regulation amended

This part amends the Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Regulation 2005.

It is a simple clause and I ask you for the last time to refer to the matter that is currently before the House.

Mr WELLINGTON: Could the minister advise: assuming this bill is supported, what is the proposed timing for the next step, for action to be taken in relation to the proposed sale?

Ms NOLAN: I did not get the end of what the member for Nicklin said. Are you looking for the timing about the sale of the Port of Brisbane?

Mr Wellington: Yes.

Ms NOLAN: It is out to market now. It was advertised in April and it is proposed to be finished by the end of the year.

Mr Wellington: Thank you.

Clause 128, as read, agreed to.

Clause 129, as read, agreed to.

Clause 130—

Mr MESSENGER (2.59 pm): I will be very brief. Can the minister please detail and confirm that, if this clause and the legislation do not pass the parliament, the sale of the coal division of Queensland Rail could not proceed? If the minister's answer is yes, can the minister answer this: there is \$600 million or thereabouts that the government receives in dividends and revenue for Queensland Rail and that I am led to believe also subsidises the cost of rail tickets in the south-east corner. Can the minister please give a guarantee that, after the privatisation of Queensland Rail, the costs of general passenger fares throughout the state will not increase?

Ms NOLAN: Let me read this clause for the benefit of the House. Clause 130 states—

This part amends the *Transport Infrastructure (Rail) Regulation 2006*.

On its own, this clause really does not do anything at all.

Mr MESSENGER: If this clause does not do anything at all, perhaps we should not worry about it because it is not integral to the legislation! Quite obviously, this clause is an integral part of the legislation. If this legislation were to pass without this clause, it would be harder to sell off the assets and privatise the assets of Queensland—assets that belong not only to us but to future generations. Once again, I ask the minister: if this clause was not part of the legislation and the privatisation of the coal division of state rail assets could not happen—and I understand that the \$600 million, or thereabouts, that is earned by the coal division goes back to the government and subsidises rail costs and general fares throughout Queensland—can the minister confirm that the general fares in Queensland will not increase? Has the minister done any studies or future forward projections on the cost of general fares if the legislation and this clause pass through the House?

Ms NOLAN: The simple answer to the member's question is no. The proposition that the member is putting is that the bill assists with or authorises the asset sale. That was done in the legislation that went through the House on 19 June 2009. The purpose of this bill is to put in place protections, for instance, as we have just discussed, around land use planning at the port. I responded to Mr McLindon who earlier had a similar question in relation to the port.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The minister must refer to the member by his title.

Ms NOLAN: As I said to the member for Beaudesert earlier, this bill does not facilitate the asset sale; it puts in place some protection around it. In relation to his question, the Port of Brisbane still could have been sold, but it would not have had a land use planning mechanism in place.

As I said earlier, clause 130 does not do that much of itself, but when combined with clause 131, which deletes references to QR Ltd in certain sections and inserts references to 'a rail GOC', it provides that the activities of the rail GOC, other than its activities formed as part of its community service obligations, are considered to be activities conducted on a commercial basis. That does not mean a great deal that is new. Queensland Rail was corporatised in 1994. Therefore, it has been accepted for a very long time—this is not new news—that large parts of Queensland Rail operate as a commercial entity. Specifically, it has been accepted, in accordance with provisions like this one, that the coal and freight operations of Queensland Rail are a commercial entity; they are not an instrument of a government community service obligation.

In 1994 specific CSO payments were put in place for parts of the bill that relate to community services. One of those parts was passenger services. Every year, through its budget, government provides a community service obligation that subsidises passenger rail. That has been the case. That is the mechanism under which government supports the Citytrain and the Traveltrain networks and keeps fares at a level that is well below the real commercial cost. That mechanism will continue with this bill, but that in itself does not constitute news. Since Queensland Rail was corporatised in 1994, it has been accepted in this place that some of the work of Queensland Rail, such as passenger services, are a community service obligation and are specifically paid for as such, whilst other elements of the organisation, like the coal and freight services, are commercial.

When in government from 1996 to 1998, the National Party did not seek to put in place a CSO, for instance, for coal and freight. As such, that side of politics agreed with the principle that passenger services are part of government's core service delivery obligation and should be subsidised from the budget as such, but that commercial and freight services should be operated on commercial terms. This is not new. Everyone has accepted it since 1994.

Clause 130, as read, agreed to.

Interruption.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.09 pm), by leave, without notice:
I move—

- (1) Further to the order of the House this morning, that in accordance with Standing Order 159 declaring certain bills urgent, that the remaining stages of each bill be completed at the following times:

Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2)—

- (a) consideration in detail to be completed by 3.28 pm today
- (b) third reading by 3.29 pm today
- (c) long title agreed to by 3.30 pm

South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—

- (a) second reading by 9.30 pm today
- (b) consideration in detail to be completed by 9.58 pm today
- (c) third reading by 9.59 pm today
- (d) long title agreed to by 10.00 pm today

Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—

- (a) second reading by 7.45 pm tomorrow
- (b) consideration in detail to be completed by 8.28 pm tomorrow
- (c) third reading by 8.29 pm tomorrow
- (d) long title agreed to by 8.30 pm tomorrow

Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—

- (a) second reading by 9.45 pm tomorrow
 - (b) consideration in detail to be completed by 9.58 pm tomorrow
 - (c) third reading by 9.59 pm tomorrow
 - (d) long title agreed to by 10.00 pm tomorrow
- (2) If the bills have not been completed by the time specified, Mr Speaker shall put all remaining questions necessary to pass each bill, including clauses and schedules en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the minister in charge of the bill without further amendment or debate.

I put on the public record my appreciation for the cooperation I have had from the opposition and the Independents in discussion about these times.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 1651.

Clause 131—

Ms SIMPSON (3.09 pm): This is supplementary to the earlier clauses in regard to QR National and pertains to the structure of Queensland Rail and the proposed structure of the sale of assets. What input has the minister had into the proposed structure and the regulation surrounding it?

Ms NOLAN: As the Minister for Transport and a cabinet minister, I am firmly of the view that the structure decided is in the best interests of both the organisation and the people of Queensland.

Ms SIMPSON: I table an article from the *Australian Financial Review* today concerning Asciano comments, highlighting the issue that has been raised about whether what the government is doing is in the public interest let alone in the interests of the commercial sector.

Tabled paper: Copy of an article, dated 19 May 2010, from the *Australian Financial Review* titled 'Asciano move may delay QR sale' [2253].

We have certainly raised concerns that we do not believe it is in the public interest. According to people in the marketplace, they believe that the current structure is anticompetitive and unworkable, and they are seeking to take this into a federal jurisdiction of regulatory control.

Could the minister please explain what this means in regard to the adequacy of the so-called regulatory controls that she said she was putting around this sale and the fact that people are saying that it is inadequate to protect the public interest and inadequate to protect the issues of competition given that this Queensland government is proposing a privatised monopoly?

Ms NOLAN: I would make three points in response to the shadow minister's contribution. The first point is that it is pronounced 'As-ci-ano', not 'As-ia-no'. The second point is that this clause does not deal with the competitive regulation of Queensland Rail. So, in addition to having some trouble with the syntax, the member's point is irrelevant. The third point is that the member has just stated entirely incorrectly—I think displaying a glaring ignorance of what Queensland Rail is in 2010—that Queensland Rail in 2010 is a state owned monopoly.

A number of years ago legislation was put through the Commonwealth and Queensland parliaments in relation to national competition policy. The member may have heard of it. What it did was provide for what is called third party access to the state owned rail network. It created a circumstance through which an operator other than the owner of the tracks was allowed to operate on the Queensland network. In 2008 Asciano, under the trading name of Pacific National, commenced operations on the Queensland coal network. In just two years that operator has moved to take over 15 per cent market share of above rail coal haulage on QR's network.

So there are two points. The first point is that it is astonishingly ignorant for the shadow minister to suggest that this is therefore a state owned monopoly. The second point is that it is also a big call for Asciano to argue that they are somehow competitively disadvantaged under the existing regulatory regime from having access to the QR network when they have gone from zero to just over 15 per cent market share, including picking up a very big Macarthur Coal contract just a few months ago. It is a big call to argue that there are some kind of regulatory barriers to entry which prevent that organisation from competing equally in this market.

Ms SIMPSON: I would remind the House that the minister's verbal abuse does not equate to regulatory protection for those who are engaged in anticompetitive behaviour. In fact, the minister's words will hardly protect those who are subject to anticompetitive behaviour. I quote again from comments in the marketplace about the problem with the government's structure and its so-called regulatory protections. The managing director and CEO of Asciano, Mark Rowsthorn, said that declaration—that is in regard to a federal declaration—was necessary to prevent a privatised QRNational from engaging in anticompetitive behaviour by using its track monopoly to benefit its freight business.

I think the criticism publicly about the way this government is proceeding is well and truly out there on the public record. I remind the House that we have seen no evidence that this government is acting in the public interest and acting to ensure that with the structures it is pursuing it has any intention of addressing this very valid concern about anticompetitive behaviour. The minister's verbal insults do not equate to adequate protection.

Clause 131, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 132 to 166, as read, agreed to.

Clause 167—

Ms SIMPSON (3.16 pm): This clause is to do with granting a licence in relation to busway land or busway transport infrastructure and it is to mirror the light rail provision in clause 172. Why is the minister providing for a licence over busway land? Is it proposed to flog this off, too?

Ms NOLAN: The government is very proud of its record in building busways for better public transport in South-East Queensland. In pretty stark contrast to the LNP, which proposed cuts in services at the last election, over the life of this government South-East Queensland has gone from having no busways to having around 25 kilometres of busways now—including the South East Busway; the early stages of the Eastern Busway being completed and more is under construction right now; and the Northern Busway, which has been constructed as far as the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and is well on its way to Kedron. We are entirely committed to busways, and the tens of thousands of people who commute on those busways every day are well aware of that.

What this provision would allow to happen is for future busways to be constructed under a PPP arrangement if it were deemed necessary. At present, we have a billion dollars worth of busways under construction, and that is not the kind of model which is being applied but, seeing as we were on this occasion legislating for the construction of the Gold Coast light rail system through such a delivery mechanism, the decision was made to legislate for the possibility of such a model for future busway construction as well.

Clause 167, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 168 to 171, as read, agreed to.

Clause 172—

Ms SIMPSON (3.19 pm): In speaking to this clause, I reiterate our support for rapid transit infrastructure on the Gold Coast. We also support having a whole-of-Gold Coast system of integrated transport that supplements that and really addresses the needs across the Gold Coast. In commenting on this, I note that this has potential implications on licence conditions. Could the minister please explain what the proposed licence conditions are for Gold Coast Rapid Transit in terms of the length of time the corridor is likely to be in the hands of the private operator, when the proposed expiry of that licence will be and whether that will revert to the state?

Ms NOLAN: It is proposed that an operator franchise should be entered into for the delivery of the Gold Coast light rail project. Government is currently out to market and about to enter the detailed bid phase on that project, so it would, I think, be inappropriate to go into a great deal of detail about the commercial provisions. But, in response to the member for Maroochydhore's issue, yes, ownership of the project will revert to the state.

Clause 172, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 173 to 181, as read, agreed to.

Clause 182—

Ms SIMPSON (3.21 pm): This particular clause relates to the adult proof of age card. What is the proposed costing schedule for the adult proof of age card? We raised concerns about the new Queensland driver's licence and the price hike. Will the cost structures be the same for the adult proof of age card?

Ms NOLAN: I do not have the year-by-year progression in front of me. I think they are on the website but if they are not I will provide them to the member. The adult proof of age card, though, remains cheaper than the driver's licence as it is now. Last week, when we announced this project, we did put forward a thorough five-year price progression, which I am sure is a mark of accountability that

the shadow minister would note, given that nobody else puts out a five-year price path. You do not know what a Mars bar is going to cost in five years, but in relation to both driver licensing and public transport this government has put forward a full five-year price path which is, I think, a pretty strong display of transparency.

Ms SIMPSON: Will the minister confirm that the adult proof of age card will also hold a chip and be able to store private information? Will the minister advise how people will be able to check the information on that card?

Ms NOLAN: The member has spent a great deal of time complaining about the time available to her but has spent a fair bit of the time available for this debate raising issues which are not in the bill or relevant to it. The adult proof of age card is, as I outlined last week, on the same model as the driver's licence. That is, the security provisions in the adult proof of age card, including the use of biometric imaging for the face to prevent fake IDs being produced and the existence of watermarks, shadowing and holograms—all of those security provisions, including the chip—are consistent with the driver's licence.

Ms SIMPSON: We have raised questions about the adult proof of age card and the new Queensland driver's licence every time legislation has come before the House. Previously when we asked about price paths we did not get anything out of the government. Quite frankly, now we just do not trust or believe the government because every cost they have committed to has blown out. We have seen the cost of the new Queensland driver's licence blow out from an estimated \$20 million to more than \$80 million, and now it is estimated at more than \$100 million. People have been expected to pay more than double for the new Queensland driver's licence.

The minister has been unable to clarify what this new proof of age card will be but, once again, it will be a card that can hold people's private information and there are no answers about how that is going to apply. We have real concerns about Big Brother and a big government that is not being honest about how it intends to use this. Given that the government has continually refused to answer questions on this issue, we will be opposing this clause.

Ms NOLAN: I will make a few points in relation to that. Firstly, this is really quite reminiscent of the debate we had recently in relation to alcohol interlocks in which the member for Maroochydore, who has been in the parliament for 18 years and has been the shadow minister for transport four times, on that occasion sought to convince the House that she had been campaigning diligently for years around the introduction of alcohol interlocks when an examination of the record revealed that she had never in the parliament or in the media raised the matter at all. Similarly in relation to the adult proof of age card and the new Queensland driver's licence, a library search could reveal no occasions on which the member had in question time asked questions of—

Ms SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. We voted against it and it is in *Hansard*. The minister is misleading the House and I think we deserve some honesty from the minister. The minister is misleading the parliament and I take offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): There is no point of order.

Ms Simpson: It is on the parliamentary record. Can't you read the record?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order, member for Maroochydore. The minister has the call.

Ms NOLAN: There have been no occasions in question time on which the member had raised questions about this with either of the two previous members.

Ms SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is offensive and untrue. It is on the parliamentary record where I have asked the minister these questions. It is offensive and untrue and I ask it to be withdrawn.

Ms NOLAN: I withdraw. Clause 182 provides that the act amended in this part is the Adult Proof of Age Card Act. The amendment is to ensure administrative simplicity in relation to information collected in association with the card. It simply confounds me as to why the member would seek to vote against this provision. It is just a matter of administrative simplicity so it seems, frankly, quite remarkable.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of the resolution agreed to by the House and the time limit for the consideration in detail of the bill having expired, the question is—

That clauses 182 to 281 and the schedule, as read, be agreed to.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 182 to 281 and the schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (3.29 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszcuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

Interruption.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I acknowledge in the public gallery the ambassador from Turkey and his delegation.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Resumed.

Long Title

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of the resolution agreed to by the House and the time limit for the long title of the bill being agreed to having expired, the question is that the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GEOHERMAL ENERGY BILL

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (3.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to enable and facilitate the production of geothermal energy, to amend this act, amend and repeal the Geothermal Exploration Act 2004, to repeal the Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act 1987, to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001, Electricity Act 1994, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, Forestry Act 1959, Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, Land Act 1994, Land Court Act 2000, Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, Land Title Act 1994, Local Government Act 2009, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Pest Management Act 2001, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, Queensland Heritage Act 1992, State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003, Sustainable Planning Act 2009, Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, Valuation of Land Act 1944, Water Act 2000, Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 and Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 for particular purposes and to make a consequential amendment of the Wild Rivers Act 2005. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Geothermal Energy Bill [\[2254\]](#).

Tabled paper: Geothermal Energy Bill, explanatory notes [\[2255\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (3.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Climate change has been recognised as one of the greatest challenges of our time. The Bligh government is taking steps to reduce the impact of climate change on Queenslanders through recent developments such as the Queensland Renewable Energy Plan, which outlines a road map for the expansion of the renewable energy sector in Queensland. The Geothermal Energy Bill is another strategic response from the government to tackle climate change as we move to broaden our energy mix away from a reliance on fossil fuels.

The bill aims to support this innovative industry by delivering a flexible framework for regulating geothermal exploration and production and delivering a clear message to the geothermal industry—you can invest in Queensland with certainty and confidence. Due to the time constraints, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Geothermal resources are renewable energy sources derived from heat within the Earth's subsurface.

Queensland is well placed to capitalise on geothermal energy. Based on research to date, we are home to most of Australia's hot rocks.

Geothermal energy production has the potential to make a significant impact on the Federal Government's national renewable energy target of 20 per cent of Australia's electricity supply to come from renewable energy sources by 2020.

This Bill supports the Government's investment in geothermal initiatives, for example our \$15 million investment in the Queensland Geothermal Energy Centre of Excellence and our recent \$5 million commitment to the Coastal Geothermal Energy Initiative, which will identify high geothermal heat flow areas close to existing electricity transmission lines along the Queensland coast.

The purpose of this Bill is to implement the Queensland Government policy for geothermal energy production and use by:

- Underpinning the concept that the people of Queensland own all geothermal energy resources;
- Ensuring a consistent approach with other Queensland resource-based legislation; and
- Providing security and flexibility for the fledgling geothermal industry.

This Government is committed to encouraging the widespread production and use of geothermal energy to maximise its climate change benefits, and potential to support rural and regional jobs growth.

This Bill will regulate large scale geothermal energy production.

Other geothermal production activities will be regulated through existing legislation, for example the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

A key focus of the new framework is to promote competition in the geothermal energy field and promote Queensland as an attractive place for the geothermal industry to do business.

Queensland receives wide interest from the resources industry, therefore much of the State is subject to other resource-based tenures. The Bill provides mechanisms for resource holders to arrive at an arrangement for land use where they have overlapped an existing authority.

Responsible land and resource management is another key element of the Bill. We have a responsibility to ensure that our resources are managed wisely. The Government will monitor geothermal developments by ensuring that geothermal explorers and producers supply regular reports of the activities being carried out.

We will also manage the environmental impacts of geothermal activities by ensuring companies obtain the relevant environmental and water authorities before exploration or production activities commence.

The resource and agricultural sectors are the backbone of Queensland's rural and regional economy and their co-existence is critical to the long term economic prosperity of the State. It is critical that processes are in place to manage the interaction between the sectors to ensure both industries continue to grow and prosper.

Recognising this issue, the Bill provides the legislative framework for the implementation of the Land Access Policy Framework which has been developed collaboratively with key resource and agricultural sector stakeholders.

The Bill introduces new provisions for access to private land and compensation including:

- a requirement for compliance with a single Land Access Code of Conduct;
- notice of entry requirements for access to undertake low impact preliminary activities;
- a requirement for Conduct and Compensation Agreements to be entered into prior to access for advanced activities;
- a prescribed process for negotiating agreements, including mediation; and
- improved compliance and enforcement powers.

A single Land Access Code of Conduct has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and is given force through the Bill.

To assist in developing Conduct and Compensation Agreements under the new regime, a standard agreement form is being produced to assist negotiations.

The Bill delivers consistent land access processes that will improve the transparency, equity, and co-operation.

The Bill also clarifies that coal seam gas (CSG) proponents may undertake agreed low impact surface activities, that do not invoke a resource right, in underground coal gasification (UCG) pilot areas. This will allow CSG production activities in surrounding areas to continue whilst allowing for the trial of UCG technology.

The Bill also includes an amendment to the Electricity Act 1994 to provide a head of power for improvements to the retailer of last resort scheme to better balance the recovery of associated costs.

The scheme protects customers of a failed electricity retailer by automatically transferring them to a retailer of last resort, so the customers continue to receive electricity. The scheme operated successfully in December last year, when Jackgreen (International) Pty Ltd was suspended from trading in the National Electricity Market.

Currently, retailers of last resort can recover their costs of providing this service by imposing a fee on the transferred customers. The amendment in the Bill will enable a more equitable approach, by allowing the costs to be spread across all electricity customers through distributors' network charges. The amendment will enable the improved cost recovery process to be developed and included in the regulation which sets out the details of Queensland's retailer of last resort scheme.

The Bill also includes a number of other minor amendments as detailed in the Bill's explanatory notes.

Mr Speaker, the legislation I have today placed before the House for its consideration will encourage the geothermal industry to invest in Queensland and help the State move towards a cleaner, greener energy future.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 April (see p. 1260), on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (3.38 pm): I am pleased to make a contribution to the consideration of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Given the fact that the time for debate on this bill has been constrained by a resolution of this House, my comments this afternoon will be more restricted than they otherwise may well have been.

The bill before the House deals with a number of issues, some of which are contentious and most of which could have been the subject of much more extensive consideration by this parliament. The bill deals with the final stages of the government's water reform program by providing the regulatory framework for the water retailers in South-East Queensland. It seeks to deal with the issue of the water that is produced from the coal seam gas industry in the Surat and Bowen basins. It seeks to deal with some issues surrounding the class 2 water boards that stemmed from the Weller review that the government has been puzzled about for some time now. It seeks to make some changes to clarify the situation surrounding resource operation plans during the transition phases of water resource plans. It also deals with standards for recycled water.

Every one of those issues is complex and every one of those issues could be the subject of very detailed consideration. But, because of the time constraints today, the consideration of this legislation will, as I said, be constrained.

Let me first deal with the part of the bill from which the bill takes its title. The bill is titled the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The South-East Queensland water reform process has been a great indicator of the incompetence of the Labor government to carry out any complicated process with any sort of professionalism in public administration.

This is the second of two bills that reduce the local government water entities from 10 to three. It is the last stage of a long process which began in a panic when the government realised that South-East Queensland faced a water crisis brought on primarily because of the government's failure to invest in infrastructure and the government's failure to make any plans for a long-term secure water supply for South-East Queensland. It was the former Premier's so-called water reform process.

The bill before the House provides a regulatory framework for those entities that provide the retail water services to Queenslanders in the south-east corner. It is the last piece of legislation to implement what was a council model—a model that was suggested by the councils in South-East Queensland to replace that part of the water reform process that they saw as being inadequate in terms of providing those retail services. Like the rest of Queensland, they knew that the government had bungled the water reform process from the start. It had bungled the process to such an extent that consumers in South-East Queensland will pay exceptionally high water costs for years to come. Something I have spoken about in this House before is that the retail entities that this bill deals with will be the retail entities that the water consumers will deal with, and they are in grave danger of being blamed for the increased water prices that are already happening and that are coming in the water price paths that have been established.

Nobody in South-East Queensland should ever lose sight of the fact that the increases in water prices that have been imposed on consumers in South-East Queensland and will be imposed on consumers in South-East Queensland in the future and will be levied through these retail entities are the responsibility and the fault of the state government. It is the cost of the bulk water that the state government has seriously inflated because of its incompetence.

Already we have seen water prices go from \$506 last year to a projected \$747 in 2012-13—almost a 50 per cent increase—and consumers in South-East Queensland have every right to know why that increase has occurred. They have to look no further than the bungles that the Labor government has presided over. I refer of course to the Traveston Dam debacle. The \$250 million of unrecoverable costs that were sunk into the Traveston Dam debacle will be recovered from water consumers in South-East Queensland over the next decade in these water charges. I refer also to the \$2½ billion that was sunk into the western corridor pipeline and the water recycling plants that are currently not being used or are being used in a very minimal fashion. That \$2½ billion will be recovered from the water consumers in South-East Queensland, and those moneys will be recovered through these retail entities that this bill deals with.

Nobody should ever forget—and we certainly will not let the government forget and the water consumers in South-East Queensland should never forget—that those high prices are the fault of the state government. It is the responsibility of the state government because of its maladministration of the water reform process that we see those high water charges and the price increases that people are seeing now and will continue to see for the next 10 years when they receive a bill from the water entities that are the subject of this bill before the House today.

This bill provides the operational framework for those entities. It allows them to deal with trade waste compliance notices and customer service requirements. It facilitates customer service charters, hardship policies and all of the regulatory framework that is necessary for a retailer to operate in the domestic retail water market. It provides for such things as meters to be read once a year. It deals with the details of customers requesting a test if they believe that those meters are faulty. It provides for such things as security deposits and deals with issues where customers do not pay their bills and allows for the retail entities to restrict flows. It provides the entities with the ability to resume land for water and wastewater infrastructure and it ensures that they have the regulatory framework to properly operate as a retailer in the water market. There is nothing in the detail of the regulation that is provided in this legislation which I would consider to be out of the ordinary. It is what one would expect a water retail entity to have control over to operate properly in a market such as the one that these water retailers are expected to operate in.

I turn now to the second part of the bill which deals with the issue of coal seam gas water. As we have heard in this House a number of times, the coal seam gas industry is undergoing a huge expansion throughout the Surat and Bowen basins. With the extraction of coal seam gas, there is a large amount of water produced as a consequence of those processes. That gas is primarily methane and is a very valuable energy source. It is in fact I think a very exciting industry. It provides enormous economic potential for Queensland and enormous environmental benefits for our state and our country as a whole. If the industry grows to provide gas for export, it will be a very large industry indeed right throughout Central Queensland, and the amount of water that will be produced as a consequence of that industry will be large indeed.

In fact, the explanatory notes to the bill suggest that in 2007-08 approximately 13.5 gegalitres of coal seam gas water was produced in Queensland. The explanatory notes estimate that the production of gas for domestic consumption in the Surat Basin will produce an annual average 25 gegalitres of coal seam gas water for the next 25 years. The potential for growth, though, will boost those figures to something like 126 gegalitres for a 10 megaton capacity industry or 196 gegalitres a year for a 28 megaton industry or even up to 280 to 300 gegalitres of water. They are large amounts of water, and there is no doubt that the prospect of those large amounts of water being drawn from underground in the Surat and Bowen basins is causing grave concern to landholders who depend on underground aquifers in those areas. The accepted science—the accepted geology—has held up until now, if you like, that coal seam gas water was separate from Great Artesian Basin water, but I believe that that issue needs to be clarified by the government.

While the industry has proceeded, I believe, on the basis that there is that separation between coal seam gas water, which is extracted from the coal seams and which has always been assumed to have been laid down with the coal seam 170 to 200 million years and which is not part of the sandstone aquifers that are the Great Artesian Basin, there needs to be a much more stringent monitoring process in place to establish that that is actually the case. It is understandable for landholders and stakeholders generally to be very concerned about the quantities of water that will be extracted along with the extraction of this coal seam gas. I think the government has failed to ensure that there is a monitoring system in place that can give individuals, landholders and communities the confidence that the accepted geology is, in fact, the case—that the monitoring programs in place reinforce and support what has always been accepted as the separation between the coal seam gas water and the Great Artesian Basin water.

The minister said in this House a couple of days ago in response to a question by the member for Warrego that it is not a case that that industry should proceed at all costs. That is a point of view that I agree with. It is an industry that we have always supported. It is an industry that has enjoyed bipartisan support in this parliament and very broad support across the Queensland community, because it is an industry that can bring enormous economic benefits to a wide range of communities and a wide range of Queenslanders. But there also needs to be sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that all Queenslanders can have confidence that what is accepted in terms of the geology and the science behind the extraction of this coal seam gas water is, in fact, the case.

The bill before the House deals with management plans to allow coal seam gas companies to beneficially re-use that water. When the industry was first established it was established around the concept of evaporation ponds, which effectively evaporated the water and disposed of it that way. That was very quickly identified by us and landholders in the Surat and Bowen basins as being an unsustainable method of dealing with the water in the long term. We drove the agenda to have the concept of beneficial re-use included in the licensing for the industry to develop. The bill before the House is an important step in establishing that concept of beneficial re-use as an accepted method of dealing with this water.

There are a number of very good examples of beneficial re-use that have already been adopted by companies operating in the coal seam gas sector. Those beneficial re-uses cover a wide range of activities. Some of this water is good enough to be used for stock watering purposes without treatment. Some of it is able to be treated and supplied for domestic purposes where it exists close to urban centres. In other areas further removed from urban centres, it is treated and used for a range of irrigation activities—everything from growing stock feed through to growing timber plantations, all of which can be very beneficial re-uses. So there is a wide range of options available and I am very supportive of the provisions that are contained in this bill that ensure that that beneficial re-use concept becomes an accepted part of the industry.

I am also gratified that the minister introduced into the House a few moments ago legislation, which I have not had a chance to read, that deals with the land access issues, because there is, too, a deal of confusion and concern sounding those issues. Those issues need to be dealt with in a responsible way to ensure that the industry can develop and provide economic benefits not just to the communities in the Surat and Bowen basins but to Queensland generally.

I move on to the issue of the Weller review and the class 2 water boards that this legislation deals with. This legislation seeks to facilitate the first stage of the implementation of the government's response to the Weller review. I have spoken in this parliament before about the class 2 water boards, because I have an inordinate number of them in my electorate. They are very important to the people who depend upon them, and since the release of the Weller review there has been a deal of uncertainty about the future of class 2 water boards.

The government's initial announcement was for the functions of those water boards to be taken over by local governments. That came as a rude shock to local government and to the people who depended on the water boards. The councils involved did not want to know about them and did not want to be involved and the people who depended on a water supply from those water boards certainly did not want their water supplies to be taken over by the councils as part of a council water supply, which was the initial government intention. I know that there has been a deal of negotiation between those water boards, departmental officers and the minister's office and between local members on this side of the House and the minister's office in an attempt to find some sort of a solution to this issue. The provisions in the bill before the House are a first step, if you like, in facilitating the transfer of assets that those water boards hold. In some cases, those water boards hold considerable assets of great value and, if the usual stamp duties and transfer costs were going to be associated with the transfer of those assets, it would have represented an unfair impost on those water boards. So it is gratifying to see these first elements of facilitation.

However, there are a range of issues still to be addressed by the government to provide the security and the certainty that those water boards require. There are issues such as the continuance of the statutory powers that water boards need to carry out their duties in a full way. Those statutory powers allow them to set levies, to enter properties and to do emergency works. How those statutory powers are going to be carried over into the new model is something that we are all waiting somewhat impatiently for to receive answers.

Models have been put forward that revolve around landowners forming cooperatives, or corporate structures which, I believe, can work if that issue of the statutory powers can be dealt with. But it is an important issue, especially for people who depend upon those class 2 water boards. I think it is fair to say that almost without exception they would have preferred to have been left alone. Almost without exception they were happy with the system as it was. The people at meetings that I have been to have strongly expressed the view that there was no need to change anything. But the government, for its own reasons, chose to adopt without question the recommendations of the Weller report. I think it is

incumbent on the government to ensure that the administrative processes are in place to allow that change to happen in a way that does not adversely affect the people who depend on those class 2 water boards.

The other section of the legislation that I wanted to comment on very quickly was that section of the legislation that ensures that the resource operations plans continue during the period of changeover, or turnover if you like, of the water resource plans that they are associated with. The water resource planning process began 10 years ago and now some of the first water resource plans are coming up for their first 10-year review. In fact, 10 years ago they were called WAMPs. Now, they are water resource plans. I think the first water resource plan to go through the process of that 10-year review is the water resource plan for the Burnett River basin in my electorate. It is a process which gives the stakeholders an opportunity to review the use of water in that basin.

Ten years ago I stood in this parliament and said that there was no scientific basis for the water allocations that had been made in those original water allocation management plans. Ten years on I am still of that view. The allocations that were made in those original water allocation management plans, the original WAMPs, were political allocations almost without exception throughout Queensland, beginning with the one that was done in the Burnett River basin. The allocations, very coincidentally, were exactly the allocations that had already been allocated. Almost without exception it was somehow scientifically established that the basins were fully allocated at what had been allocated and no further water was available for allocation.

It was very coincidental that no further water was available for allocation. The water allocation management plan did not seek to take back any allocations that were there because, had they done that, they would have been subject to compensatory payments. Instead, they recognised the allocations that were there for political rather than scientific reasons and the allocation, if you like, has been controlled by the resource operation plan by using the mechanism of the announced allocation. For those who are not familiar with the process, water entitlement holders have a nominal allocation which is set under the water resource plan but then their annual allocation—what they are allowed to use—is announced each year. Without exception, the announced allocations are always less than 100 per cent of the nominal allocation.

Water entitlement holders through this whole process over a 10-year period have lost access to an entitlement they had because of this sleight of hand, because of this trade-off between their nominal allocations and their announced allocations. To make it worse, the government sets out to collect on part A of their tariff, which is often 75 per cent of the cost of the water entitlement on the nominal allocation rather than the announced allocation. It is one of the greatest injustices that I have seen in public administration in the time that I have been involved. Water entitlement holders across the state are consistently slugged for 75 per cent of an allocation that they have next to no chance of ever using.

I have said a number of times, and I have given commitments over a number of election campaigns now—and I do so again—that the LNP in government would move quickly to correct this injustice. We would ensure that part A of the tariff was calculated on the announced allocation rather than the nominal allocation so that it was a fair system rather than a system that requires people to pay 75 per cent of the cost of a water entitlement that the government very deliberately manoeuvred so that they would not be able to access it all. It is something that I look forward to correcting in the years ahead.

I encourage the government to be more even-handed and fairer in the process of the reconsideration of the water resource plans as it moves through its 10-year review process. I encourage it to take decisions more based on science than it did when those water resource plans were first put in place 10 years ago. I have little optimism that that will be the case. The obligation that I believe exists on the government with all natural resource management decisions is to base decisions on science and on fact rather than on politics, as the water allocation process was based on politics 10 years ago when these water allocation management plans were put in place.

Because of the time constraints on the consideration of this bill I have considered each of those issues in a much more restricted way than I normally would, but there are a number of members of the parliament who want to make a contribution to the consideration of those issues so I will cut short my contribution to the consideration of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.04 pm): I wish to confine my comments to the section of the amendment bill that relates to the amendment of the Environmental Protection Act 1994, in particular that which relates to the regulation of the water which is a by-product of the coal seam gas industry throughout Queensland. As the shadow minister has said, this is an industry that is becoming increasingly important to the economy of Queensland and to many of the communities throughout Queensland. That is not without some pitfalls—there are issues that do need to be better considered—and it is not without potential long-term negative consequences.

There is no doubt that there can be some very significant short- to medium-term economic benefits to many members in our community from the development of this particular industry, but we have to look further down the track at what the consequences of this industry will be if we do not look at not only the short-term environmental issues but also how they will be managed in the medium to long term. Some of those problems are becoming compounded and concentrated as this industry moves its attention and its focus to some of the more intense, built-up agricultural areas such as the eastern Darling Downs. That is the area that I want to speak about as it is in my electorate. There is drilling going on as far south as Warwick, up around Cecil Plains and out at Goondiwindi. It is very much a wait-and-see exercise for many of those people, but they do have some concerns.

The amendment we are debating today seeks to deal with the issue of the disposal of water that is a by-product of the coal seam gas industry. As a consequence we need to consider the possible impact on the Great Artesian Basin of taking so much water from such deep levels. It is interesting to note that under the ROP for the artesian basin, which has been in place since 2006, there is a strict limitation on access to those reserves of water and an inability to take any more water from those artesian reserves. Yet we keep hearing, as the shadow minister indicated, that there is not a direct connectivity between that artesian water supply and this water which is actually now being generated as a consequence of the coal seam gas industry, because apparently it has been laid down—or so we are led to believe—in some sort of primordial bowl where there has been a concentration of vegetation that has been compressed many millions of years ago and the water came as a consequence of the formation of those particular coal seams.

It is very difficult for many people to completely understand, fathom or even believe that there is not some sort of connectivity if one looks at the extent of those resources and what is happening under the ground and in relation to cracks and fissures. There is that concern. There have recently been stories in the media—and it has been raised in this parliament—about the fall-away of some of those water reserves for many beneficial users which have been at reliable levels through their bores over a long period of time. We do need to have more science, investigation, study and reassurance in relation to the impact on underground water supplies. Many people, myself included, remain to be convinced, notwithstanding the obvious benefits that can come from the coal seam gas industry, that there may not be some long-term effect with regard to those underground water supplies which are so crucial to many individuals and many communities through southern and western Queensland.

The minister talks about make-good provisions. I acknowledge that there are provisions in this bill that are very much a step in the right direction. There are existing make-good provisions in other instruments around the place. There is a degree of concern that exists out there in the community about how effective those make-good provisions will be. One of the reasons for that is that if a water level has been significantly affected by taking so much water out of something which takes so many years to recharge—potentially millennia—then some compensatory provision does not necessarily transcend the generational timescale that we need to look at for the long-term sustainability of those communities that will continue to be there after the coal seam gas has been extracted from those particular reserves which are laid down. People need assurances that there will not be that effect on those communities. That water is vitally important for the sustainability of those particular areas into the future, whether it be agriculture, other resource development—that is, mining—or even tourism.

In relation to the evaporation ponds, I am heartened to see that evaporation ponds as a primary source of disposal will be phased out. That will no longer happen, except in the most exceptional circumstances. That is a strong step in the right direction. I would like to hear a little more about where it may be seen to be necessary. This is becoming more of a concern as the industry encroaches into the flood plain area. The flood plains are much more interesting and challenging for the establishment of this industry than the broad-acre farming areas in south-west Queensland or even the grazing areas. The evaporation ponds have a far more proportional impact on a farming enterprise. If you put down three or four bores or wells that draw off the gas, it creates a major management problem for the irrigator or farmer, who has probably spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in laser levelling the land. The farmer is told that they can farm around them, but that is not always possible because of the way it is set up. That in itself is a difficult challenge. The compensation that goes with those wells is very marginal in comparison to their overall impact on that highly developed agricultural block. Indeed, it is some of the most, if not the most, developed in the world. Add to that the possibility of an evaporation pond and you have a major encumbrance. You have a major problem and effect—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Potentially it is a contaminated site, as the honourable member for Condamine said. There is the issue of being able to work around that. We know that the evaporation ponds will be phased out and that is very good, but where they do exist or if there is the possibility that one could be established in exceptional circumstances, what happens in relation to the remediation or the clean-up? The problem is not just the salt. Other chemicals and minerals create not only short but also medium and long-term contamination. There is a concern about what is going to happen with regard to that. I think some further assurances need to be given. We may need to make that water good for a beneficial use, as some of it is not suitable to put immediately onto the land but may have to be

desalinated in some way. Of course, there are issues surrounding the storage of the brine stream. What happens with regards to the effective, proper and safe disposal of that further down the track? There is still a range of unanswered questions.

While I acknowledge that this bill contains some significant steps in the right direction, I want further assurances from the minister about the impact on the Great Artesian Basin. That water source is very important to many communities through southern and western Queensland. More assurances need to be given with regard to potential long-term impacts. People are concerned about the nature of short-term and significant economic impacts. They are also concerned that while there are very strident regulations about taking water for other beneficial purposes, this water can be disposed of in extraordinarily huge amounts from aquifers that could be connected in some way. My constituents need to hear those assurances from the minister. Having said that, this bill takes some steps in the right direction and we look forward to its implementation to see if it will be as good as has been promised.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (4.13 pm): I wish to speak to the areas of the bill relating to the coal seam gas industry and the extraction of coal seam gas water associated with the industry, as well as the salts and other contaminants that remain. The coal seam gas industry is an extremely important part of Queensland's economy. The huge expansion of the industry within Queensland has been extremely rapid, with many rural and regional communities enjoying the monetary benefits of having a new industry in their backyard. But unfortunately not all the news is good. The coal seam gas industry is also responsible for a great deal of anger and concern amongst the agricultural communities located within the Great Artesian Basin. Landholders are concerned that the assets they own—their land and the underground water—are under threat from the coal seam gas industry and will be left permanently damaged, with no hope of ever recovering. This is devastating news to landholders who, over decades, have had to cope with the changes in weather, low commodity prices and the loss of water allocations. Now a very different problem has reared its ugly head.

It is predicted that over the next 20 to 25 years the coal seam gas industry will have over 40,000 gas wells sited within the Surat Basin. Each year, approximately 350,000 megalitres of water will be extracted from the Great Artesian Basin and over 2,000,000 tonnes of salt will be introduced to the Murray-Darling Basin system as a consequence of the coal seam gas industry. Some 400,000 hectares of land currently producing food and fibre may be lost. That is a very frightening picture for primary producers who have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years to improve their land by adopting new technologies to save water. They have changed planting configurations, invested in new machinery and infrastructure, used tram-tracking techniques and planted drought-resistant varieties of crops, to name but a few examples.

The Condamine Alluvium is currently going through a water reform process to meet the sustainable diversion levels set by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. Allocation reductions to existing water licence holders will be approximately 60 per cent. Groundwater users are reluctant to accept those significant reductions and the vast economic losses directly attributed to a reduction in allocation, especially when they see the coal seam gas industry removing vast quantities of water that are left to evaporate, leaving only salt and the very real danger of permanent alienation of the soils that produce so much of our food.

The sustainable yield of the Great Artesian Basin is approximately 450,000 megalitres per year. Currently, the bore discharge is 570,000 megalitres per year. The entire Great Artesian Basin has been experiencing declining water levels since the 1880s. For example, the sustainable yield for the Eastern Downs Queensland zone is estimated at 71,760 megalitres per year, but the present annual extraction from this area is 96,720 megalitres per year. Extraction is 34.4 per cent higher than recharge. How can this government allow the further extraction of up to 350,000 megalitres per annum from the coal seam gas industry? With the introduction of this bill, we see the government enhancing environmental management plans for coal seam gas water, establishing criteria and an evaluation process for assessing the effectiveness of coal seam gas water and making other improvements to the current situation. However, surely those measures should have been in place before the coal seam gas industry started production, rather than after the event? There needed to be a scientifically based accountability system in place to assess the potential impacts this industry may have had on our environment—before it commenced, not during or after. It may be too late for many landholders and much of our underground water.

Personally, I do not think the government has gone far enough. The enormity of this issue does not appear to have been understood by the minister, such as the serious issue of the possible cross-contamination of aquifers through the process involved in the extraction of coal seam gas water. What scientific evidence has been produced by the department to reassure the landholder that the aquifer that he obtains water from to produce food, foliage and fibre will have the same amount of water available and that the quality of that water will not be compromised by the impact of coal seam gas extraction? That is the question that cannot be answered in this House today. What assurances do landholders have that salt and other contaminants brought to the surface during the coal seam gas process will not

have long-term effects on their farming systems? The amount of salt is staggering. There have to be alternatives to allowing it to contaminate our soils. A commercial use for this salt needs to be investigated and answers need to be found as to how to utilise those huge quantities of salt.

Landholders have major concerns about a number of different issues, including the contamination from associated water stored at the surface to land and water resources, and draining contaminated water from coal seams into deeper clean aquifers within the Great Artesian Basin. They are concerned about the cause and effect, where the cause is drilling and the effect is draining, contaminants and the intermingling of aquifers. This effect could be 10 to 15 years or longer away. The contamination of relatively clean groundwater could also occur from the chemicals used in the fracturing or drilling processes. They are concerned about a reduction of recharge retention in areas of gas extraction. Groundwater recharge is a natural yet unpredictable event where the seam meets the surface on the inner ranges. Recharge will still occur regardless of the coal seam gas extraction footprint, yet how much of the recharged water would make it into the Great Artesian Basin management where gas extraction is taking place? The use-it-or-lose-it approach applied to authority to prospect licensing exerts a time pressure that is inconsistent with support for long-term viability and sustainability of existing industries.

Many of the towns and communities in my own electorate of Condamine rely on the groundwater supplies from the Great Artesian Basin. All groundwater aquifers are or will be managed under a water resource plan in the near future. The Great Artesian Basin Resource Operations Plan clearly identifies how this valuable asset should be managed and protected. The plan specifies a process for making up to 23,400 megalitres of unallocated water available across the basin from the general reserve. In addition, 10,000 megalitres of unallocated water for projects of state or regional significance, or for future town water supply, has been reserved to provide for further economic opportunity in the basin. The extraction of a further 350,000 megalitres per year from the coal seam gas industry does not appear to comply with this plan. What happens when our towns cannot supply water to their ratepayers?

The LNP has recently announced, as part of a five-plank policy—I read it out on Tuesday—for the protection of prime agricultural land, the establishment of an independent rural water advisory panel, which will include community involvement through a community reference panel, for the monitoring and reporting of any impacts the coal seam gas industry is having on aquifers and river systems. This panel will allow for transparency and public confidence in understanding the impact the coal seam gas and the underground coal gasification industries are having on our water supplies. This government has failed to invest in proper research, which is not only alarming to the agricultural sector but has the potential to be harmful to the perception of the coal seam gas industry.

In conclusion, coal seam gas extraction in the Great Artesian Basin presents long-term water sustainability concerns under the current state government legislation. Just the sheer volume of water predicted to be removed from the Great Artesian Basin over the next 20 to 40 years should be of great concern to every town and community that uses this water as their main source—small businesses and landholders who use bore water to grow crops and water their livestock, and every other Queensland.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.21 pm): In rising to participate in the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I would like to address the amendment to section 27(2)(b) of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and discuss some of the water issues in South-East Queensland.

This amendment merely seeks to correct an omission following the passage of the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill in 2007. This bill amends the Nature Conservation Act to allow the granting of a survey licence or a pipeline licence in a national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) if an authority under the relevant section has been granted for that licence.

The new form of tenure created by the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007—national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land)—was inadvertently excluded from being reflected in this provision in the amendments to the Nature Conservation Act in 2007. This amendment does not in any way change the test applied by the chief executive of the Department of Environment and Resource Management in determining whether such an activity is awarded under other relevant sections of the act.

This government remains committed to the hand back of traditional lands to the Cape York people and working with them to jointly manage their country for the benefit of all Queenslanders. To this end, I look forward to the anticipated creation of the Alwal National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) at the end of this month.

In regard to South-East Queensland and water sustainability, major change has been undertaken in the South-East Queensland water industry, including the building of major new water assets. These assets, which form part of the SEQ water grid, include a desalination plant, extra groundwater and the western corridor recycled water scheme, some of which ran through my electorate of Mount Ommaney. The water grid ensures adequate water supplies are maintained throughout the South-East Queensland

region. It is designed to ensure the security of supply for urban and industrial areas. From July 2010, the state owned SEQ water grid will be delivering high-quality water to the three council owned distribution retailers. This means high-quality and responsible customer services.

Saving water is everybody's business. There has been widespread relief over recent rainfall which has allowed easing of restrictions, but it has been great to see the community take care and find ways to save on their water consumption. Across South-East Queensland, business, industry and government agencies account for around 30 per cent of our region's water use. As at 7 May this year, the average daily individual water use in South-East Queensland was static at 136 litres per person. It is great to see that the habit of conserving water has not been lost. This bill provides for consistent and mandated standards of customer service in the water sector. It will ensure the region's water distribution infrastructure supports the SEQ Regional Plan and responds to the region's growth. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (4.25 pm): I rise to support the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I want to direct my comments and observations to coal seam gas water and the adaptive management regime that is set up in the bill.

The liquid natural gas—or LNG—industry is of vital importance to Queensland's economic prosperity. This government is supporting this growth industry to provide jobs and wealth for Queenslanders into the future. As a government, we are committed to getting the balance right between supporting this growing industry and protecting valuable farm land and water supplies. The bill before the House introduces a number of elements which go about protecting environmental impact of coal seam gas operators and groundwater supplies.

The minister has recently reinforced the need for industry to take on more responsibility for environmental impact. Amendments to the Environmental Protection Act provide a framework for coal seam gas operators to ensure that they keep up with best practice when it comes to environmental impact and coal seam gas water. The bill ensures that any new knowledge about the management and opportunities for disposal or re-use of coal seam gas water is incorporated into operators' management regimes.

The amendments introduce an adaptive management regime to the management of coal seam gas water. This bill will extend and introduce further stringent requirements for coal seam gas environmental management plans. It will also ensure performance is assessed annually against established criteria. All new level 1 operators will be required to include more detail on the management of coal seam gas water in their environmental management plans as part of a licence application. This information will include predictions about the amount and quality of the water that is likely to be produced and how that water will be managed. Performance criteria must also be established, against which the successful management of the water can be assessed.

Every year, as part of the annual return, the operator will be required to evaluate the success of their coal seam gas water management against those criteria. If for some reason the operator has failed to meet the criteria, they will be required to rectify the situation. As a first step, operators who fail to meet approved criteria will need to develop a plan to ensure that they meet the criteria. This plan must outline how management practices will be changed to exceed the required criteria. Strict time lines will also be a requirement of such a plan.

This is a process the Bligh government is setting in place to provide operators with certainty as to what is required of them and to protect the important water resources of landholders. As the coal seam gas industry is still predominately in the exploration phase, government is outlining these high standards for coal seam gas water management which operators must maintain. Additionally, to ensure a level playing field for new operators, this process will also be rolled out to cover existing operations. Existing level 1 operators will have 12 months to submit a revised environmental management plan that includes the new details about managing coal seam gas water.

Another important element of the bill will put an end to the use of evaporation dams except in extenuating circumstances. While some operators will already have evaporation dams that cannot be easily ended, this process will allow them to work out other actions that they can take to improve their management of the coal seam gas water or to treat the water so that it can be used for another purpose. This requirement is in line with community expectations and is vital to ensuring that farm land and the environment are protected. It will also play an important role in encouraging the beneficial re-use of coal seam gas water. And this, in turn, will have a positive impact on the development of other industries and the environment. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of all water consumers in South-East Queensland but, more specifically, those of my electorate and the Sunshine Coast generally. On 29 January this year, Unitywater was announced as the business that would provide the Sunshine Coast and the Moreton Bay Regional Council area with water supply and sewerage services. The changeover will occur on 1 July. Former Brisbane Lord Mayor Jim Soorley has been announced as

the chairman of Unitywater. Unitywater will formally begin operation on 1 July 2010 and provide services to almost 262,000 customers across an area of 5,138 square kilometres. The pricing of water to consumers will be a real issue of concern heading forward. The Unitywater chairman has already flagged that it is becoming a real concern for consumers.

As reported in the media on 30 March 2010, Mr Soorley, who was the chair of the retail arm of what he called the state government's complex mongrel beast of water supply and distribution, said that drought had driven all manner of crisis spending and that consumers would now have to pay for it. Publicly released figures show bulk water prices on the Sunshine Coast rising from \$683 per megalitre in 2008-09 to \$2,755 in 2017-18. That is the just the bulk water cost. Then there is the cost of getting the water to the customer to say nothing of what would be needed to cover Unitywater's operating costs. Mr Soorley said the whole water grid model had been based on the electricity model. He said in an article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily*—

But water is not electricity. A kilolitre of water costs a lot more to shift.

Did the Premier hear that? Jim Soorley has also told her that. The Premier and her government have got it wrong again. The article goes on—

While cost may be on consumers' minds, Mr Soorley said the issue of price would not be addressed by Unitywater's board until much later this year.

Frankly, I do not think that is good enough. The board should meet and have a pricing structure in place before Unitywater takes over on 1 July. The new authority can add a maximum of eight per cent to the water cost it charges customers. I look forward to seeing how that eight per cent will cover the Unitywater costs, especially when we factor in infrastructure provision and replacement.

Also, it appears that in the future there will need to be a payroll increase for Unitywater employees transitioning across from the two councils. The Combined Unions Unitywater newsletter dated February 2010 refers to the framework. It states—

... the Combined Unions have met with management representatives on Wednesday 27th January at the Water Reform Employment Consultative Committee (WRECC) to commence the implementation of the SEQ Distribution and Retail Water Reform Workforce Framework 2010 (the "Framework").

All unions have been approached by members concerned that colleagues at other Councils, performing the same role as them, are being paid a higher classification level.

An issue that needs to be rectified sooner than the classification/pay level issue is the different pay scales across the two former Councils. For instance, level 4.1 within the 'Indoor Award' working at Moreton Bay receives \$57,215 per year compared to Sunshine Coast at \$55,517.

The newsletter further states—

Unions realise that members being paid differing levels simply cannot continue in the medium to long term, however, it is something that we will need to fix through the Enterprise Bargaining process due to commence in the latter half of 2010.

The SEQ Distribution and Retail Water Reform Workforce Framework was implemented on 13 October 2009; commences as per legislation; and expires three years from when the employee transfers to the new water entities, or three years from the date nominated in the notification to employees who will remain with the council, or on 30 June 2013 for any new employee employed by a new water entity on or after 1 July 2010. The framework further provides—

When an employee is required to travel greater than 5 km from their previous workplace location to a new work location travelling expenses will be paid to the employee in accordance with existing industrial instruments or with the safety net provisions outlined.

Travel expenses as defined in attachment 3 to the framework are—

... the payment to compensate the employee for additional distance and time travelled to and from home from their former Council workplace to a new work location.

The payment for the additional distance will be a rate per kilometre (in accordance with the rates set by the ATO and amended from time-to-time).

Currently, the ATO provides travelling expense amounts of up to 75c per kilometre. So a quick calculation, say, of 40 kilometres to work and 40 kilometres home at 70c per kilometre would see a daily allowance of \$60 or \$300 per week. Not a bad little earner! The framework further provides—

Where an employee is required to travel greater than 5 kilometres from their previous work location to a new work location the travel will occur during the employees usual ordinary work hours.

Let me say that again: the travel occurs during their normal working hours. So this framework provides that when an employee is required to travel more than five kilometres from their previous work location, not only are the water consumers of South-East Queensland going to pay them an allowance for this extra travelling to get to and from their paid job but the employee will be able to undertake this travelling during their working hours.

As we have seen in the past with forced reforms, any cost in the setting up and running of the new entity including salary and wage increases is passed on to the consumer. Look at the council amalgamations. What a dog's breakfast! Noosa, Maroochy and Caloundra councils were forced to amalgamate. The current Bligh Labor government has reneged on the promise to meet all the costs of amalgamation, in this case \$13.9 million, and now the poor old beleaguered ratepayers are paying for it. They are going to cop it in the neck again as the council is proposing to increase household rates in order to make up for the Labor government shortfall. On 23 April, Mayor Bob Abbot is quoted in the media as saying—

The State government decision not to pay out the 13.9 million dollars in amalgamation costs, along with the uncertainty of revenue flow from the new entity Unitywater, does not help the situation. The Bligh government at its worst forced something to happen and then turned its back on the local authority.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in accordance with the approval of the Speaker I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech.

Leave granted.

At the media event on 29 January 2010, Mayor Allan Sutherland from Moreton Bay Council said "Today's announcement ... means the two Councils hand over the on-going day to day decision-making required to set up UnityWater, and in due course we will assume our new role in the water business as shareholders."

Mr Sutherland added "We look forward to an open and collaborative relationship that brings together the best of all three organisations to provide great customer outcomes."

Providing great customer outcomes may be the intention, but I have a question. Where's the plan or plans as the case may be?

This Bill lets us know that despite all this new bureaucracy the distributor-retailers have no plan. They have no plan to examine water pricing until much later in the year after the takeover happens on 1 July, but also it appears the distributor-retailers are missing plans on a lot of fronts.

It's all about utilising the existing plans of local government to manage assets, manage leaks, manage drinking water quality, and manage recycled water until the distributor-retailers manage to come up with a plan of their own.

What if for example Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast Council's have different plans for managing drinking water quality? Which one will Unitywater adopt, or is it the case that there will be no uniformity across the Unitywater model or the models of the other two distributor-retailers? The more things change, the more they stay the same!

I would have thought new plans for new entities would be a fairly necessary component of a new system for delivering water to the people. Then again, a shiny new system doesn't necessarily mean nurses are going to get paid, does it?

This Bill is one thing. It's a monument to the lack of planning this current Labor government puts into everything, but especially water projects.

Let's reflect upon the lack of planning that went into the south east Queensland water fiasco that was the Traveston Crossing Dam water project.

A truly 'Yes Minister' episode. Members of the government including Anna Bligh had a rush of blood to the head and decided to waste six or seven hundred million dollars doing 'preliminary' works and at the same time kick a few hundred families out of their homes on a project destined to be doomed. The members of the government would have said. "Let's not worry about the necessary approvals from the Feds, let's just do it."

The Premier's own Co-ordinator General placed one thousand two hundred conditions on the dam before actual construction was to commence; but that was no deterrent to the Premier. Don't worry about a plan or the necessary approvals.

Premier Bligh's fingerprints are all over the failed water project at Traveston. Captain Bligh was at the helm of 'Traveston'. Just like the skipper of the Shen Neng 1.

All ahead full steam, but no idea where she was heading, and just like the skipper of the Shen Neng 1 the Premier was completely oblivious to the damage she would ultimately do.

Even Peter Garrett, champion of the 'plan-less' household insulation scheme, could see the folly of Traveston and consigned it to infamy forever.

When it comes to water planning, the members of this current Queensland state Labor government need to have a good hard look at themselves if it takes Peter Garrett to set them straight!

This Bill requires interim application of relevant service standards for each constituent area and requires the distributor-retailer to comply with the relevant participating council's existing customer service standard for each constituent area.

For example, the distributor-retailer for the central geographic region (which encompasses five local council areas) would be required to comply with:

- the customer service standard previously applied by Brisbane City Council for any transactions with water customers within the Brisbane City Council geographic area; and
- the Ipswich City Council's standards for customers in the Ipswich geographic area.

No uniformity across the entities there! Different areas will have different levels of customer service.

This Bill provides for the restricting of water supply for not paying charges or giving security and empowers the distributor-retailer to restrict water supply to a premises where the customer has been given at least a month's notice to pay outstanding charges, or to provide a required security, but has failed to do so.

Here's the "how long is a piece of string?" bit.

The Bill states "Water supply may be restricted to the minimum level necessary for the health and sanitation purposes of a customer (including a non-residential customer). The distributor-retailer is prohibited from completely shutting off water supply to the premises." I have another question. What is the minimum level or is that at the discretion of the person turning the valve?

Clause 99AD of this Bill with respect to customer service provides that:

Each distributor-retailer must make a customer service charter that—

- (b) states the distributor-retailer's policies about—
 - (i) customer hardship because of inability to pay accounts; and
 - (ii) the payment of accounts by instalments.

The Bill further provides that

'Before 1 July 2010, each distributor-retailer must—

- (a) publish its customer service charter made under section 99AD on its website.'

As of 17 May 2010, this charter is not available on the Unitywater website.

The new Chapter 4A provides for a south east Queensland design and construction code which will set the technical standards for the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure.

This new code is to be in effect by 1 July 2013 at the latest. This is the same time as a distributor-retailer's new planning document, the water netserv plan.

2013! Please! These plans and codes should have been developed and be in place by 1 July THIS YEAR, not 2013.

I would have thought we needed improved water infrastructure technical standards now when we recall the corrosion problems that emanated from the Tugun desalination plant.

Only last July it was reported in the Courier Mail and I quote "... In April, the plant was shut down for almost six weeks. Experts have been crawling through pipes to pinpoint problems that the Government admits might not be fixed for months."

The Courier Mail article further revealed that more problems have emerged since January (09), when then infrastructure minister Paul Lucas announced 'several issues' needed to be addressed ... "Those issues included 45 pipe couplings that were found to be corroding after only a couple of months of stop-start operation. The joiners, which were meant to last 25 years, had to be replaced."

At the time, infrastructure Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said "... independent experts called in by the Government had found further 'serious' faults that threatened the plant's long-term future."

The problems included concrete cracking within the inlet shaft that takes water from the ocean via a 1.2 kilometre pipeline.

I am at a total loss as to why we have rushed into this.

The Bill requires that the three distributor-retailers must, on and from July 2013, have a south east Queensland design and construction code. That's years away. Again, I believe this code should be in place by this 1st of July.

The Bill sets out a plethora of technical matters the code may provide for, including standards about meters and connections to infrastructure, gravity and pressure pipelines. It should also provide for standards relating to demand and peaking factors for flow of water and waste water, location of access chambers, reservoirs and pump stations including wastewater pump stations, water reticulation and distribution pipelines, wastewater pipelines, recycled water supply and other related matters. They are all valid areas which clearly should be addressed by the construction code.

So even taking into account the debacle regarding the Tugun desalination plant, this Bill is quite content to wait for at least another three years before a rigid construction code which sets guidelines for technical standards must be in place.

When it comes to planning, in particular planning around the community's water needs, the members of the Labor government opposite remind me of what Forrest Gump said sitting on the park bench with his box of chocolates. When it comes to planning; Forrest said, "You're never quite sure what you gonna get."

So after Traveston, and after council amalgamations were rammed through by the government, this Bill is nothing more than the same old same old. The government are saying "People of south east Queensland, trust us, we're here to help."

This Bill however does nothing more than seek to provide legislative approval for the shiny new water entities to drag the chain when it comes to providing an efficient and cost effective water supply for consumers.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise today to make a short contribution to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The objectives of the bill include the following—and I will confine my comments in relation to water provision to the Gold Coast and recycled water usage. The bill provides for the regulatory framework, including operational powers, to enable the three new council owned distributor-retailers to deliver from 1 July 2010 water and wastewater services to customers within South-East Queensland. It enables a continued and effective management of water restrictions and associated water efficiency programs. The Liberal National Party has always believed that councils should retain ownership and control of their own water infrastructure.

On 1 July 2008 South-East Queensland's bulk water supply and water transport assets were transferred to the state government. On the Gold Coast this transition included the Hinze Dam, Little Nerang Dam and the Mudgeeraba water treatment plant, all of which are in my electorate. The Hinze Dam was upgraded in 1989 to a storage capacity of 161,000 million litres, covering a surface area of 972 hectares, and is currently being upgraded for flood mitigation and increased storage. Based on average rainfall and weather patterns, it can provide on average 191 million litres of water per day. Currently, the stage 3 upgrade of the Hinze Dam is in progress. This upgrade will raise the dam wall from 93.5 metres to 108.5 metres to increase water supply to the Hinze Dam to 225 million litres per day, reduce flooding in the lower Nerang River catchment and ensure the dam complies with current safety standards and guidelines.

Whilst ownership remains in the hands of local councils, what control they have is still debatable. The residents of the Gold Coast are sick and tired of being treated like second-class citizens. This government must actually believe that residents on the Gold Coast have short-term memory loss. Whilst we were on water restrictions for years, residents in Brisbane were hosing down their driveways.

I have commented previously in this House on the parody of the former member for Mudgeeraba by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* over comments on how our Brisbane neighbours helped us poor Gold Coasters out during the drought by giving us water from Logan. Unfortunately, as noted by Sue Lappeman in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in November 2007, the member got it all wrong when she spoke in parliament, much like this government does with everything it touches. The former member stated—

The Hinze Dam, the Gold Coast's major bulk water supply asset, lies smack bang in the middle of my beautiful electorate. Over the past seven years I have watched it hit its lowest point, when the old stop signs and street signs were visible sticking up above the level of the water, and I have also watched the water go over the spillway when we have had good rain in good times. I have been relieved to know that, when the water level in the Hinze Dam was below 30 per cent, water security for my area was guaranteed by the supply of water coming from Wivenhoe Dam when it was full via a pipeline from Brisbane.

Recently I obtained from the minister the clarification as to whether the Gold Coast, as in the current boundaries of the coast, ever received water from Brisbane and I table the letter.

Tabled paper: Copy of letter, dated 20 April 2010, from Hon. Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade, to Ms Bates MP relating to connection of the Gold Coast desalination plant to the South-East Queensland water grid [2256].

By the response it is obvious that the Bligh Labor government continues to peddle a line that Brisbane saved the Gold Coast. Can I say that no-one on the Gold Coast believes this furphy at all and Gold Coasters are sick and tired of this arrogant, out of touch, on the nose Labor government. One has to worry about this government overseeing control of any water resources when its own members remain confused about whether there is a pipeline in their own electorates.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise to speak to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The regulatory framework for the new water distributor-retailers is not travelling too well for the residents of South-East Queensland. The worst government in the history of Queensland is doing Queenslanders again when it comes to water.

Water prices are going through the roof in the Redlands, and they are still going up. Where will this end? Unfortunately, it will not end. It will not end under Labor. Mismanagement is the stock in trade for this Labor government. Debt is the only strategy Labor knows. Those opposite do not understand planning and budgeting.

This Labor government and its partners in crime federally—the Rudd Labor government—are responsible for creating the global financial crisis in this country. Someone described the spending patterns of the Labor government as like those of a sailor on shore leave. That is offensive to sailors because when they spend what they have they stop spending. It is as simple as that. They stop spending. That is what makes this the worst government in the history of Queensland. It will be a photo finish between this state government and the federal government when it comes to who is actually the worst.

Mr ROBERTSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the House has been tolerant with respect to the comments that are completely unrelated to the bill before the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! I would ask the member to come back to the point of the bill.

Mr DOWLING: I will come back to the bill. Over the years we have seen opportunities for water supply mismanaged. Rudd, Swan, Beattie et cetera were the catalysts for the shortage of water in South-East Queensland when they stopped the dam being built. For 20 years we have had that pattern of failing to plan. They were busy patting each other on the back. During that 20 years we saw substantial growth.

'Come to the Sunshine State, the Smart State', was the cry from successive Labor governments. It was the land of growth and opportunity. We blew that opportunity. At a time when revenue was secured through the GST, through mining royalties and through the rivers of gold running into Treasury, Queensland got nothing but debt. When we should have been growing with the population we were stagnant under Labor mismanagement. Now the worst government in the history of Queensland has done it again.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could I remind the member to return to the topic of the bill please.

Mr DOWLING: I will, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Residents of the Redlands are really being squeezed by this water reform because they had a viable water business. It was managed efficiently and effectively. In turn, that allowed for a price point that reflected a competitive market.

An even more pressing concern is what is happening to the water business in the Redlands. It is now part of Allconnex with the Logan and Gold Coast city councils. Residents are reporting to me that the water resource is not being managed as well as it once was. There are practices being used like drawing the maximum possible volume of water from the Stradbroke Island water source and directing it through to Logan instead of balancing it with the Leslie Harrison Dam water supply. I am hearing concerns about the quality and capability of the Leslie Harrison water treatment plant to sufficiently treat the water. The Leslie Harrison Dam is a shallow, broad surface dam that suffers from evaporation and blue-green algae.

During the minister's second reading speech he said that the distributor-regulators will fulfil four key roles. The first role will be customer service. The second role will be planning. The third role will be development approvals. The fourth role will be asset management. Can I suggest that there was one more key role. That is to gouge the residents of the state and to dip into the state coffers in a mad scramble to raise revenue by selling off the assets.

The worst government in the history of Queensland has botched planning, stolen the water assets from the residents of the Redlands—that is certainly the way they feel—forced increased water pricing and sold off the farm. The government has now added to that by gagging the time for this debate. I will end my contribution there.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill introduced into the House by the Hon. Stephen Robertson, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, last month. I acknowledge him and his staff who are in the House this evening and congratulate them on a very thorough and thoughtful bill.

This bill amends the Water Act 2000, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The amendments to the EP Act will introduce a regulatory regime to improve the environmental management of water produced while exploring or extracting coal seam gas. I recently attended an information session on liquid natural gas—or LNG—to learn more about alternative energy. The LNG industry is not only a growing industry in Queensland but also very important to our state's economy. Its growth will create jobs and wealth for Queenslanders not only now but into the future.

Earlier this year, the federal Labor Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon. Martin Ferguson, announced a \$60 billion contract to export 72 million tonnes of LNG from Queensland to China over 20 years. This deal will add a much needed boost to our state's economy. Later in March the Queensland government signed a deal to supply another 24 million tonnes of LNG to Japan. Queensland has hooked into these important markets, meaning that the LNG industry can continue to expand.

These deals support the Curtis Island LNG project, which is currently under development in Gladstone by the BG Group's subsidiary, QGC Pty Ltd, where up to \$10 billion is expected to be spent in construction over the next four years. This project will create 8,500 jobs for the construction of the plant in Gladstone and in the pipeline and gas fields in the Surat Basin. Once operational the project will employ a further thousand people.

The extraction of coal seam gas can have environmental impacts if it is not appropriately managed. Coal seam gas is mostly methane which is trapped in the coal seams below the ground. To extract the gas, the water that is also contained in the coal seam needs to be removed. This water is highly saline and also contains other contaminants. If the water is not managed correctly it can cause environmental harm, such as increasing the salinity of the land, and it can have impacts on the local economy.

In 2007-08 approximately 13.5 giganlitres of coal seam gas water was produced in Queensland. With the growth of the LNG industry this figure will expand considerably. Our farming industry, on whose land many of these gas projects are located, have rightly raised concerns about the impact of this saline water on their land. Importantly, this water can also be seen as a resource that could be used for other purposes if appropriately treated.

In 2009 the Queensland government released the blueprint for Queensland's LNG industry. Amongst other things, the blueprint stated that evaporation ponds are to be discontinued as the primary means of disposal of coal seam gas water. Instead, coal seam gas water is to be treated to the standards defined by the Department of Environment and Resource Management—DERM—so that it can be used for other purposes. The blueprint also announced that the government will introduce an adaptive environmental management regime by appropriate conditioning of new environmental authorities for coal seam gas projects.

The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 in this bill address these specific issues. Most importantly, the amendments will ensure that evaporation dams will only be able to be used as a last resort—that is, evaporating the saline where there is no other technically feasible option.

Operators will be using other methods of treating the water, such as reverse osmosis plants, so that the water is treated to a standard where it can be used for other purposes. The Queensland government is supportive of this treated water being used for other purposes such as livestock water, irrigation or in industrial processes.

Guidelines were recently released by DERM to support the beneficial re-use of this water. What was previously an unwanted by-product of the extraction process can now be turned into a useful resource for local properties and industries, and in this state—so often struck by drought—this is essential and practical. The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act also introduce an adaptive management regime to the management of coal seam gas water. All new level 1 operators will be required to include more detail on the management of coal seam gas water in their environmental management plans which will form part of a licence application. This information will include predictions about the amount and quality of the water that is likely to be produced, how that water is proposed to be managed and the criteria against which the successful management of the water can be assessed.

Each year as part of the annual return the operator will be required to evaluate the success of their coal seam gas water management against that criteria. If for some reason the operator has failed to meet the criteria, then they must include a plan about the actions they will take to change their management practices to meet those criteria and the time in which they will be taken. Through this process the operators will be required to adapt their management of coal seam gas water so that high standards are always maintained to protect the environment. Additionally, to ensure a level playing field for new operators, this process will also be rolled out to cover existing operations. Existing level 1 operators will have 12 months to submit a revised environmental management plan that includes new details about managing coal seam gas water. While some of those operators will already have evaporation dams that cannot be easily ended—and we understand that—this process will allow them to work out other actions that they can take to improve their management of coal seam gas water or to treat the water so that it can be used for another purpose. These amendments will ensure that Queensland's burgeoning LNG industry operates in accordance with the principles of environmentally sustainable development. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (4.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. As the minister knows, the recycled water project is very important for the Lockyer Valley. The pipeline is sitting idle up to Wivenhoe Dam and it is vitally important that something starts to transpire with recycled water so that it can be utilised by the rural industries of the Lockyer and Fassifern valleys and the Brisbane Valley. It is an ongoing concern that over \$2 billion has been spent on this project and there has been virtually no utilisation of this water except for the 30 megalitres a day being used by the power stations, and that makes this whole system totally unviable.

In terms of the utility boards that are being formed, I hope that the minister selects the appropriate people to serve on those boards so there is good management of this whole system, because it is going to be quite a complex system. As was mentioned earlier by my parliamentary colleague the member for Buderim in terms of those workers and their pay rates, this transition is concerning those workers. I know of a couple of local workers who have been asked to join some of these groups. I hope that appropriate measures have been taken for those workers.

I again say that recycled water is vitally important for the Lockyer Valley, and I am sure that it would be a great asset to the community if we can put this system in place. It would not only be an asset to the local community; it would be an asset to the whole of South-East Queensland because it will improve environmental flows and take some of the nutrient-rich water that goes into the bay at the moment out of circulation, which will therefore improve the standard of water going into the bay. The fisheries industry and everyone would be more than happy with that solution. However, I have to say that I honestly struggle to see how this is going to save that much money and I wonder if it is going to be utilised as well as it is supposed to be.

There are some dams that are of concern to local areas in my electorate, such as the Scenic Rim and Somerset councils—the Bill Gunn Dam, the Lake Clarendon Dam, Moogerah and Maroon—because those dams are being transferred to this scheme. Many of those dams were set up as rural irrigation dams. I would encourage the minister to keep a watchful eye to ensure that those dams are utilised that way. They are not really for urban consumption. I know that the bureaucrats realise that, but they have to realise that as far as charging for water goes, because some of these dams are fairly unreliable. As the rainfall distribution in the south-east corner appears to have got less, the dams have become much more unreliable. Perhaps the minister and the department should be looking at self-management with some of these dams. Perhaps they could be transferred over to the local irrigator groups so that they can manage the water and its distribution themselves. They would probably do as good a job a lot more cost effectively than trying to run it from a central board. I know that the department is having trouble getting its head around those sorts of proposals, but I really do think that it probably is the way forward in the long term to have this self-management system simply because of the bores and the underground water in the aquifer.

It will be a great increase in water to the local area if we can get recycled water into some of the off-stream storages located in the Lockyer Valley. I have spoken to the minister privately about this and his department has been speaking to some of the major irrigators such as the Lockyer Water Users Forum to see what can be done about this whole situation. That will also pick up the Fassifern area, which is quite a big user of water and one of the major suppliers of carrots in eastern Australia, particularly during winter, and will also pick up some of the Brisbane Valley farmers as well. I am sure the member for Toowoomba North, who is sitting over there grinning at me, would know that some of that recycled water could even be used at times to assist Brisbane River irrigators when there is a greater demand on Brisbane water for the—

Mr Shine: If I had said the same thing, I would have declared my interest—like, no doubt, you have.

Mr RICKUSS: I will declare my interest. I actually own a property. Thank you for reminding me of that. I am sure the minister realises that I own property on the Lockyer Creek.

Mr Reeves: It's not the minister; it's the public record.

Mr RICKUSS: And the public record. But I am sure that it is quite common knowledge that I am a landholder in the area.

Mr Seeney: You're not getting any benefit anyway!

Mr RICKUSS: That is right; I am not getting any benefit. Actually, the minister took about 30 acres of land off me last parliamentary sitting when he moved the ambulatory boundaries of the creek. So he picked up about 300,000 grand's worth of land off me. I think he did all right there.

Mr Lawlor: It wasn't yours anyway.

Mr Robertson: Exactly; it wasn't yours anyway.

Mr RICKUSS: That is what happened with the ambulatory boundaries. I lost about 30 acres of land, but that is just the way it goes.

Mr Lawlor: How much you got left?

Mr RICKUSS: I still have a bit left, yes.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Johnstone): Order! Members, please!

Mr RICKUSS: It really is important that we start something with the recycled water project, and I encourage the minister and his department in that regard.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Amongst the objectives of this bill are proposed amendments to the Water Act to facilitate the first stage of the government's response to the review of Queensland government boards, committees and statutory authorities—the Webbe-Weller review—to abolish category 2 statutory water authorities and, in relation to these water authorities, remove the mandatory requirement for public notice of a proposed dissolution or amalgamation of a water authority; and, as far as these reforms are concerned, provide relief from transfer duty under the Duties Act and administrative fees under the Water Act, the Land Act and the Land Title Act, and provide for the continued operation of a water resource operations plan following the release of a new water resource plan after the 10-year review provided for in the Water Act. I intend to focus my contribution on these two aspects of the bill.

Firstly, in relation to the amendments proposing to facilitate recommendations proposed in the Webbe-Weller review to abolish category 2 statutory water authorities and facilitate the transfer of their responsibilities to alternative entities, I want to discuss a number of concerns that I have raised with the minister which, at this point in time, appear not to have been understood or addressed.

The electorate of Hinchinbrook is one of the wettest electorates in Queensland. As a result, quite a number of the class 2 statutory water authorities affected by this bill are located in my electorate in the form of drainage boards. The work of these statutory drainage boards is extremely important, particularly for rural industries where the effective operation of drainage systems impacts significantly on the performance of land under primary production. The class 2 statutory water authorities in my electorate of Hinchinbrook include the Cowley Drainage Board, the East Euromoo Drainage Board, the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority, the Mourilyan Drainage Board, the Orchard Creek Drainage Board, the Riversdale-Murray Valley Management Board, the Silkwood Drainage Board, the Stagnant Creek Drainage Board and the Wanda Creek Drainage Board. A number of these authorities service a small number of landowners. In contrast, the Lower Herbert Management Authority is a much larger entity that delivers services to many landowners in the Herbert River district.

What is proposed by the recommendations of the Webbe-Weller review is that the powers, functions and responsibilities of each water authority will be transferred either to the local council or an alternative non-government institution such as a cooperative company or an incorporated association. I certainly want to express my concern that local councils will find it very difficult to cope with the new responsibilities to manage these drainage systems without being provided with significant extra resources by the state government. I have no confidence that this will happen, because all too often it is commonplace for the Bligh Labor government—and previously the Beattie Labor government—to shift costs and responsibilities to local councils without providing the necessary additional resources. The Bligh government might think that it will be relatively easy to handball the responsibilities and functions of drainage boards in North Queensland to local councils, but it is more complicated than that. It is not that simple. The Bligh government needs to look at these recommendations very carefully. It will certainly come back to bite the government if it does not provide appropriate resources to local councils to undertake the necessary works and maintenance that were previously handled by the drainage boards.

I am not suggesting that class 2 statutory drainage boards are perfect in every way but, as a local member, I can certainly say that in respect of the small drainage boards in my electorate I receive very few complaints about the management of the drainage systems under their control. When a local member receives very few complaints about statutory authorities, you tend to be wary of proposals to reform that entity. As the old saying goes, if it is not broke, why fix it. If the Bligh government just dumps the cost of managing these drainage systems onto local councils, I believe that local ratepayers will be significantly disadvantaged and the level of management of the drainage systems will decline. If the necessary resources are not available, properties serviced by these drainage systems will be disadvantaged, not to mention the negative impact that it could have on the environment, which would certainly be a perverse result.

Drainage systems that are not managed properly in North Queensland are prime candidates for the proliferation of pest weeds both in terms of land based weeds on the banks of drains and water-borne weeds in the drains themselves. In relation to the larger entity in my electorate, the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority, the problems associated with abolishing the statutory authority have been explained to the minister but it would seem that these warnings have been ignored. The Lower Herbert Water Management Authority itself has approached the minister via his parliamentary secretary but has been very disappointed with the lack of understanding that DERM has displayed in respect of the possible ramifications of abolishing this class 2 statutory authority.

I have reviewed the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority's submission to the minister and made representations to him on this issue myself but, unfortunately, the minister has failed to address the concerns that I raised with him. The minister's reply to me was as poorly informed as the reply from his parliamentary secretary to the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority itself. I have seen a copy of the reply from the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Natural Resources to the LHWMA and it really does not take any notice of the concerns that the authority raised with him or the arguments that were made soundly for it to continue as a class 2 statutory water authority. The authority made a number of valid and salient points in its submission justifying why it should be maintained in its current form notwithstanding the recommendations of the Webbe-Weller review in respect of class 2 water authorities.

Unfortunately, the review adopts a one-size-fits-all approach insofar as the status quo is not considered to be an option by the government. The authority makes it clear that it has consulted with the relevant local council and that the Hinchinbrook Shire Council has real reservations about the prospect of taking on the significant responsibilities of the existing LHWMA in the Herbert River district. The submission goes on to articulate clearly how the proposed reforms would result in a decline in service delivery and an increase in cost to landowners. The unwillingness of major stakeholders such as Sucrogen—formerly CSR Sugar—and the Hinchinbrook Shire Council to make financial contributions to a new non-statutory entity such as a cooperative company or an incorporated association, which are the alternatives suggested to the LHWMA by DERM, would immediately undermine its capacity to operate effectively without statutory powers. The incapacity of a non-statutory incorporated association or cooperative company as proposed by DERM as an alternative to local council control to raise funds for its operations by rating eligible land, to be eligible for natural disaster relief payments and to exercise statutory rights of entry to properties to maintain infrastructure and to undertake emergency works is another problem that the Bligh government has failed to address.

There is some suggestion that statutory powers could be accepted by local councils and then delegated to non-statutory entities. But it has not been explained to any of the stakeholders in my electorate as to how this proposal is less complicated or more efficient than the current arrangements involving class 2 water authorities. In my electorate of Hinchinbrook there is no clear or present failure on the part of class 2 water authorities that undertake the management of drainage systems. In my view, interference by the Bligh government is unnecessary and it will be responsible for any future decline in service provided to landowners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in view of the resolution of the House constraining the time available for the consideration of this bill, I would ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into *Hansard*. I have previously approached the Speaker in this regard and he has indicated his agreement.

Leave granted.

I turn now to the proposed amendments to the Water Act that provide for a new water resource plan, also known as a second generation water resource plan, to replace an existing water resource plan. The new water resource plan may address different or additional matters not addressed in the existing resource operations plan for the area. What this arrangement seeks to ensure is that a ROP continues in operation supported by the existing WRP, while the WRP is revised.

This amendment certainly makes sense in view of the fact the development of Water Resource Plans can take many years to complete. I have canvassed this issue previously during debate on the Natural Resources & Other Legislation Amendment Bill in March this year, particularly in respect of my concerns about the potential for the development of the Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan to take many years to development, keeping the water entitlements of landowners in limbo across seven individual catchments, from the Herbert in the south to the Daintree in the north.

I noted during that debate that the Condamine Balonne WRP had taken more than a decade to develop and finalise. In contrast to the Condamine Balonne WRP, which is based on a relatively discrete area that shares similar issues and a similar stakeholder base, the Wet Tropics WRP is proposed to cover seven distinct catchments, including the Herbert, Tully-Murray, Johnstone, Russell, Mulgrave Mossman-Port Douglas and Daintree catchments. The industry stakeholders are different from catchment to catchment.

I have been advocating that the Wet Tropics WRP be progressed on a catchment-by-catchment basis. I can see the possibility of a real problem developing with the consultation process in one or two catchment areas, even a legal problem, which would see the finalization of the WRP delayed and water entitlements in other catchment areas held to ransom while these problems are sorted out. We know that legal problems do happen, because it happened in respect of the WRP developed in the Condamine Balonne Catchment and we need to minimise the risk for the Wet Tropics.

Water entitlement holders in a catchment where the development of a WRP has been completed swiftly should not be made to wait and the security of their water entitlements continue to be uncertain while legal proceedings or some sort of dispute in another catchment area in the Wet Tropics drags on. DERM has been conducting public consultation on the development of the Wet Tropics WRP in recent weeks and I have attended some of these public meetings. DERM is still not presenting to the public, the data and evidence that it used to justify its claim when it declared the moratorium that the reliability of ground and surface water is declining in the Wet Tropics.

DERM is just presenting a bland explanation of the process involved in the development of the WRP. I have asked for that data and evidence from the Minister for Natural Resources. So far the Minister has not been forthcoming with that information. I think the public is entitled to see that data and evidence so that landowners and industry, who actually have practical experience on the ground, can compare the information being used by DERM against their own experience in the Wet Tropics. That would be a transparent approach to the development of the Wet Tropics WRP.

I am not confident the Bligh Labor Government has any intention of being transparent. I will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of water entitlement holders and landowners in the Wet Tropics for a fair and science based outcome for the Wet Tropics WRP. The same principle applies to the development of second generation WRP's. As outlined in the explanatory notes accompanying the bill, because the new WRP may address different or additional matters not addressed in the existing resource operations plan for the area, it ought to be the case that DERM release the data and information it will utilise to develop the second generation WRP for public scrutiny, in the interests of transparency.

Whether it is a first generation or a second generation WRP, the Bligh Labor Government ought to develop WRP's based on public transparent science. This is not happening in the Wet Tropics and I will continue to inform North Queenslanders that this is the case.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise to speak in this debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment bill 2010, which was introduced into this House on 13 April by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. This bill includes the second and final stage of SEQ's water reform, which was introduced last October and which established three council owned distributor-retailer entities to take over the delivery of water and wastewater services that is presently provided by Queensland's local governments.

The amendments to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 will provide the regulatory framework for the operation of the three new council owned entities to begin from 1 July 2010. My brief contribution to this debate today, owing to the fact that the government has once again guillotined a series of bills and prevented thorough debate, will focus directly on the provisions that relate to water supply in South-East Queensland.

The shadow minister and honourable member for Callide has indicated that the LNP has some reservations about some of the provisions in this bill. With the passage of this bill and the commencement of its provisions on 1 July, South-East Queensland local governments will cease to be the service providers as these three distributor-retailers will take over that function. These retailers—Queensland Urban Utilities, which services Brisbane, Ipswich, the Scenic Rim, Somerset and the Lockyer Valley; Unitywater, which services the Sunshine Coast and Moreton; and of particular interest to me and my constituents, Allconnex, which services the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands—will have four key roles. They will be providing customer service through issuing water and wastewater bills, reading meters and providing information to consumers; developing water and wastewater network and service plans consistent with the SEQ Regional Plan and council planning schemes; assessing the water and wastewater aspects of development applications before the council; and managing the assets to meet future needs and ensuring that service and environmental standards are met.

Where councils used to supply water services locally, now the state government owned Seqwater, WaterSecure and TransLink will supply bulk water to the water grid manager at a price determined by them, which would onsell it to water retailers, being the three council owned entities established under this act. They in turn will sell this water to customers and pay the distribution entity to deliver the water. Unfortunately for the good people of Queensland, steep increases in water prices are inevitable under this Labor government. Gold Coast ratepayers in particular will feel the pain of high water costs over coming years.

Before the takeover of council assets by the state-run Queensland Water Commission in 2006, the Gold Coast was producing water for its residents for just \$160 a megalitre, or 16c a kilolitre. Now the cost of desalinated water is revealed to be \$731 a megalitre, or 73c per kilolitre compared with treated dam water at around 30c a kilolitre, or \$300 a megalitre. Retail prices are expected to jump 250 per cent over the next six years as ratepayers are forced to cough up for the cost of the state government's \$9 billion extravaganza, the South-East Queensland water grid. Bulk water prices set by the Queensland Water Commission will increase over the coming years to cover the cost of the incompetence shown by successive Labor governments in 18 of the last 20 years, which all failed to prepare for the water situation that has plagued South-East Queensland.

Bulk water prices for the Gold Coast increased by \$270 in 2008-09 and are predicted to increase by \$256 in 2009-10 and a further \$243 in 2010-11. Considering these figures and the growing stockpile of defective projects undertaken by recent Labor governments to contribute to the state's water debt, local councils should not be forced to be put in the firing line of the public's outrage over rising water rates. Again we witness the typical buck-passing by this Bligh government when it has made a mess of things and wants someone else to be the fall guy.

Concerns have been raised by the Gold Coast City Council regarding the asset management role of the new entities. Council's water committee is concerned that parcels of valuable land currently owned by Gold Coast ratepayers that will be transferred to the new entity may become underutilised or land banked in order to boost the entity's asset value. Just how will locality-specific issues of local government be taken into account by these new superentities? Will the Gold Coast City Council's staunch opposition to the doubling or, if rumours are to be acknowledged, tripling of the Tugun desalination plant be considered? When making decisions pertaining to the future of water assets, will the homes and livelihoods of local Tugun residents be protected by Allconnex, an entity with no direct relationship to the land or the people of the southern Gold Coast? Will innocent taxpayers and homeowners be trampled on, as were the good residents of Tugun and others along the pipeline route? These are questions deserving of answers from the minister.

The passage of this bill has also raised a particular concern for the survival of our local clubs and not-for-profit groups, whose value to the community is immeasurable. Currently, over 500 groups on the Gold Coast, including surf clubs, charities, scouts, Rotaries, Guide Dogs and animal shelters, are given discounts of 50 to 100 per cent by the council for their water consumption charges. Organisations in my electorate are worried that Allconnex, the entity responsible for the Gold Coast, will cease to grant these donations when it begins operations on 1 July.

Not-for-profit clubs rely on the community for survival, and having water consumption charges thrust upon them, after routine concessions from the council, could see many of them struggling to stay afloat. The local girl guides hut at Currumbin and our surf-lifesaving clubs currently receive a 50 per cent discount on their water and a 100 per cent discount on their annual wastewater and water service charges from the council. Our struggling Volunteer Marine Rescue at Currumbin also receives a 50 per cent discount on water and a 100 per cent discount on wastewater and water service charges. Will the minister give a rock-solid guarantee that water rate concessions currently given to local charities and organisations by councils will be continued by the new distributor-retailer entities? Premier Bligh's gouging of \$10 million from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for solar projects only makes matters worse for these respected volunteer service providers.

As was the case in the 2009 SEQ water reform legislation, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 is being amended once again. These amendments purportedly seek to enhance and clarify reporting obligations of recycled water and drinking water providers. The need for more stringent reporting conditions on drinking water has been highlighted on the Gold Coast many times in recent months. Untreated recycled water and break-outs of E. coli in our drinking water supply are dangerous and unacceptable and, disappointingly for the Gold Coast, are becoming more frequent. Many residents in my electorate of Currumbin, home to the defect-ridden desalination plant, regularly contact my office concerned with the quality of drinking water in their homes. If ratepayers are forced to pay such wickedly high prices for drinking water, I certainly hope these amendments will ensure that those in charge of our water are guaranteeing that it is clean and safe to drink.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to make some brief comments in relation to this bill. Having regard to the interjection that was made earlier, I do declare a possible vague interest in relation to this matter in the sense that I am part of a family partnership that has an irrigation licence on the Brisbane River.

The major part of this bill deals with the allowance of the council owned retailers, as set up under legislation introduced in October last year, to commence operation on 1 July this year. These are for the Brisbane, Ipswich, Scenic Rim, Somerset and Lockyer areas under the auspices of Queensland Urban Utilities; for the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands under Allconnex; and for the Sunshine Coast and Moreton under Unitywater.

The aim of these legislative measures is to ensure appropriate standards will apply so that regional water needs can be met in a sustainable manner. These centres are connected to or are potentially dependent on the South-East Queensland water grid. Whilst the bill does not itself refer to the water supply to Toowoomba, Toowoomba is, of course, dependent on that very grid. It is important, therefore, to mention some facts that are relevant to Toowoomba's now dependence on the water grid.

Honourable members will remember that Toowoomba's water supply has been at critical levels for a number of years, going down to about eight per cent only a short time ago. To cut a long story short, the state government came to the rescue of Toowoomba and I was happy to make certain submissions along the way and to be involved in a water task force and so on, the end result being that the government committed \$187 million to the pipeline between Wivenhoe and Cressbrook dams, which was opened by the Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning in late January this year. That, of course, now provides water security to Toowoomba. It will give confidence to the whole of the Toowoomba area, but particularly to business.

When one takes into account that Toowoomba is on the cusp of great expansion as a result of the Surat Basin, one sees that it was an absolutely necessary move bearing in mind that, in our wisdom as a city, we rejected the recycling option which would have been much cheaper. The total cost is \$187 million. This government is paying 60 per cent of that and the Toowoomba ratepayers are paying the balance. Many ratepayers are having difficulties doing that, understandably, but the alternative would have been a great deal worse.

We can compare the contributions made to other major water supplies—Cooby Dam, Perserverence Dam and Cressbrook Dam. Cooby Dam received a state government subsidy of 50 per cent from the Forgan Smith government in the late forties; Perserverence received a subsidy of 29 per cent from the National Party government; and Cressbrook received less than 20 per cent. When one takes into account that this is a 60 per cent contribution, one can see that Labor governments, from the forties to 2009-10, have been extremely generous in meeting Toowoomba's water needs. I do not know whether that is a point that is widely recognised or valued.

I wish to refer to the LNG provisions in the bill, particularly those provisions that put an end to evaporation ponds except in certain rare circumstances. This has been an ongoing problem. In my previous role assisting the Premier in western Queensland I was made aware of it by farmers, particularly those in the Dalby area, who are very concerned about the effects of saline water on their pristine agricultural lands. Their concerns have not been at all abated. I am informed that on this very day at Cecil Plains on the Downs many farmers have gathered in a protest meeting. They have asked for a moratorium to be imposed on the further expansion of the LNG industry until more scientific tests are carried out. I understand their concerns and why they have requested such measures to be taken into account. Their concerns are serious and need to be properly examined by the government. I am sure the minister and the government as a whole are well aware of those concerns and are equally determined to ensure that we have good and sustainable results at the end of the day.

The final point that I want to make in relation to the legislation relates to the proposed amendments to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act concerning dam safety. These are timely measures. Members do not have to be in a remote part of Queensland to understand the need for proper regulation in this regard. If they drive between Ipswich and Toowoomba, on the left at Haigslea they will see a dam that burst a year or so ago. That occurrence can happen on a fairly regular basis. I congratulate the minister for being conscious of the need for this type of legislation and for bringing the legislation before the House. I congratulate him on the bill generally.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (5.21 pm): This afternoon I rise to speak to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. Of course, I will keep my comments short as today, once again, democracy has been slapped in the face by the Bligh Labor government. The good electors of Kawana would expect me to stand in this place with the opportunity of delivering a 20-minute speech, but we have been cut down and guillotined by the government. This has happened time and time again.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Quite a number of constituents in Kawana watch on the tube. This bill will amend 11 pieces of legislation, including the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. The bill is the government's final step to effect its water and wastewater reforms. The bill aims to provide for the regulatory framework to enable the three newly established and council

owned distributor-retailers—Unitywater, which impacts on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland Urban Utilities and Allconnex—to commence operations from 1 July 2010 and to deliver water and wastewater services to customers within South-East Queensland. It will allow for the making of the grid contracts to allow for the effective management of water restrictions. It will introduce a regulatory regime to improve the environmental management of water produced while exploring or extracting coal seam gas and, of course, will enhance the regulation of drinking water and recycled water.

Prior to amalgamation, the 10 local governments in South-East Queensland operated their own entities to distribute water and waste water. Like all dictatorships, the Bligh government initially intended a full state government takeover of those entities as part of its water and wastewater reforms. I recall it was another one of those state government crisis—

Mr Kilburn interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Chatsworth wants to hear it again, so I will tell him. At the time it was another of those crisis management solutions undertaken by the government of the day. However, following local governments lobbying extensively on this issue, the state government has now agreed to the council owned distributor-retailers. Talk about backflips! First, the local councils owned the water entities, then the state government took control of them and now the state government is returning ownership to the local councils, of course making sure that the state government takes its cut of the future profits before handing them back to council. I must say that the number of backflips that we continually see from the Bligh government indicates that it will be well and truly ready to compete in the gymnastics at the next Olympic Games in London in 2012. Of course, the decision to take control was made without proper consultation with Queenslanders and local governments. This is what Queenslanders have come to expect from Labor governments, whether they be federal or state. It is policy on the run. I might add, it is bad policy on the run with a lack of long-term planning.

In his second reading speech on this bill, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade said that the state owned South-East Queensland water grid will deliver high-quality water to three locally owned council distributor-retailers. The distributor-retailers will in turn deliver high-quality and responsive customer services. What the minister did not mention was the increase in costs to the consumer that will result from the introduction of a middleman. This is the result of the state government's takeover and continual backflips. Already under this government we have seen living expenses spiral out of control. We have seen water charge increases, vehicle registration increases and local government rate increases as a result of the amalgamation. The price of electricity has increased, as have fuel prices imposed on all Queensland motorists. Licences are set to increase by 108 per cent. Queenslanders are hurting in the hip-pocket as a result of this government's mean-spirited higher taxing agenda.

In his second reading speech, the minister did not mention the fact that the councils have been directed by the state government not to refer to bulk water charges as a state government charge. If it is a state government charge, why not tell it how it is and say so? Again, another characteristic of this and all Labor governments is spin, spin, spin and no substance. This minister is like a mouse on an exercise Ferris wheel. He goes around and around but he never gets anywhere.

Mr Reeves: That was funny! That cracked them up!

Mr BLEIJIE: It was not meant to be funny. It was meant to point out that the current minister is on a Ferris wheel that is going around and around but does not go anywhere. He got off the Health one, which he left to his mate. Now he is on another one and he cannot get off.

The bill seeks to enhance the regulation of drinking water and recycled water. In 2008 new regulatory frameworks were established for recycled water and drinking water. However, in April 2009 we saw the Bligh government's complete inability to manage Brisbane's water supply by the release of too much fluoride into the drinking water supply at North Pine Dam. On some estimations, up to 20 times the allowable dose was put into the dam. While enhancing regulations may be needed, once again the Bligh government cannot guarantee to deliver safe water under the current regulations.

My time is short because democracy has been slapped in the face by this government again today and we do not have the opportunity to speak for 20 minutes on bills that are being rushed through the House. However, I point out to honourable members opposite that the water supply to Caloundra City, where I have lived for 21 years, was effectively managed and controlled by the local council. People paid reasonable fees for their water. Of course, in another crisis management situation, the government of the state thinks that it can do everything—

Mr Reeves: What would you do? Get on your knees and pray for rain?

Mr BLEIJIE: In this House whenever the government is criticised its members say, 'What would you have done?' They cannot cop the criticism. The minister cannot deny the fact that the government must not only make the decisions for the people of Queensland but also accept responsibility for the decisions it makes. Government members cannot do it. They cannot accept the responsibility.

As I said, the Caloundra City Council ran water efficiently and effectively, and people paid a reasonable price. Under the crisis management of the Bligh Labor government and the Beattie-Bligh government, the government thought it could do a better job than the local councils so it took over the management of water. As we know, that has turned out to be a complete failure. This is a crisis management government. Three council owned bodies will now run our water. Let us hope that they are in a position to effectively run water as it used to be run on the Sunshine Coast and not as this crisis management government ran it.

Debate, on motion of Mr Bleijie, adjourned.

MOTION

Resource Super Profits Tax

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this parliament expresses deep concern about the effect the proposed resource rent tax will have on the Queensland economy and the future job prospects for Queenslanders and calls on the federal parliament to reject this new tax.

At the outset of my speech let me make very clear that I have investments in superannuation funds, as I think nearly everyone in the House will have. In fact, it would be interesting to work out how many Australians will not be affected by this. I do not say that as a disclaimer; I say that because I am a typical Australian, a typical Queenslander, and nearly everybody in this House—in fact, nearly everyone employed in Australia—who may have investments in managed super funds will be affected as a consequence of this ill-thought through, rushed decision by Wayne Swan in last week's federal budget because of the implications it has for the resources sector.

Most importantly, we have not seen Premier Anna Bligh and Treasurer Andrew Fraser standing up for Queensland. We see reported in today's *Australian Financial Review* that they have been meeting with senior executives from gas companies over the past few days as they attempt to develop a compromise plan to put to the government on the controversial tax. Very clearly, as I saw last night from the Premier at the APPEA ball, the Premier is not standing up for Queensland. Yet she is saying to companies, 'We appreciate what you have done for Queensland in the past in terms of employment.'

There are very significant ramifications of the super mining tax on Queensland. There is no doubt that, as the announcement came through the week before last about the plans to slug the mining industry with a massive tax on top of every dollar it earned over the risk-free government bond rate, all Queenslanders were shocked. It beggars belief that the Rudd government could so callously attack the most productive sector of the economy in such a brutal way.

I think all Queenslanders were shocked to hear the Premier's response. The Premier's response was varied. At first she said that it may prevent her from being able to fulfil a significant promise—the promise of 100,000 full-time, bread-winning jobs—that she made in the lead-up to last year's election. Subsequently she has said, 'We think we might be able to create those jobs.' So that shows that the Premier is all over the shop. Very clearly that is not leadership. We have not seen leadership from the Premier on this matter. We have not seen her standing up for Queensland against a tax that is fatally flawed.

This tax does not pay regard to a company's weighted average cost of capital. It brutally imposes a bureaucratic profit level of the long-term bond rate. Many companies' cost of capital exceeds this amount, but clearly the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, does not understand the difference between the two. There is also a perversity in reports that certain Treasury officials have been quoted as saying, 'If a few mining projects fell over, it wouldn't be an entirely bad thing.' What an extraordinary statement—a ridiculous and callous comment that could only be made by bureaucrats who are directed by Labor politicians who have no idea of the realities of business.

Foreign investors are alarmed. Even tonight on the Channel 10 news we heard that Fortescue Metals has announced that two of three developments it was planning, with 30,000 jobs and \$17 billion worth of expansion, have now been put on hold because the bank is refusing to lend. This shows that there is alarm. Australia is now being seen as a high sovereign risk destination to invest, and there is a significant risk of major capital flight out of Australia. Capital flight out of Australia would be disastrous for our economy. It will destroy investment, jobs and growth. This super mining tax is the Rudd government's response to what is colloquially known as 'Dutch disease', where a booming resources sector sucks labour and capital from other domestic industries.

There are other countries that have had success through starting sovereign wealth funds. I know that Norway has been very successful. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Treasurer Wayne Swan have launched a campaign of levying more and more taxes to slow down the successful industry. They had the three Rs to deal with—revenue, reform and restructure. Clearly in an election year they

are only prepared to deal with revenue. That is what they have done with this tax that they have brought in. Very clearly they were not game to incite debate on Commonwealth-state relations and the federation before an election as perhaps a further political fight would weaken their position at this time.

Let us have a look at the effect of this on Queensland. It is a highly risky strategy that the Prime Minister and Treasurer have embarked upon. Of course our Premier should have been standing up with her political friend in Kevin Rudd. That is what was claimed in the lead-up to the 2007 election—that Kevin Rudd understood Queensland, that Kevin Rudd was from Queensland and would work with our Premier in a special relationship because of his relationship with Queensland. Once again, we cannot trust Premier Bligh on these issues. The people of Queensland know that this is a highly risky strategy. If it fails, it will mean death to the goose that lays the golden egg.

Only yesterday we saw that trends in China are indicating a potential slowdown in its economy following the fiscal stimulus that it has applied, and there are concerns there, as I saw last night, about the rapid increase in housing prices. Very obviously Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd could not construct a fiscally responsible budget and forward estimates without an enhanced tax base, and this resource super profits tax was politically palatable.

We have seen the Premier over the last two days in this House saying, 'Well, there are certain issues with this tax that we want to try to get right.' Very clearly, though, the budget was predicated on the out years, with Wayne Swan saying, 'We will have a \$1 billion surplus in about three years,' and saying that that was ahead of schedule. As I said yesterday, that was a schedule that the Treasurer only came up with last Tuesday to make up for the schedule that he changed from last year because he could not keep up with the previous year's schedule.

Very clearly, the mining industry in Queensland provides a huge benefit to Queenslanders. As I understand it, 40,000 direct jobs—one in 12 jobs in Queensland—are to do with mining and resources or are in support of the mining industry. We know that Queensland and Western Australia have a massive comparative advantage over the other states. What do we get back from the federal government? An infrastructure fund that is returning a small portion to Queensland. The Premier and Treasurer have said that they are going to stand up and ask for a significant portion of that to be given to Queensland. Very clearly they did not stand up for the GST in the health debate only a month ago, as we found out that they are giving 42 per cent of the GST away.

This is an industry that provides \$1 in every \$5 of Queensland's wealth, or gross state product. Last year it paid \$3.3 billion in royalties to the Queensland government. The resources industry in Queensland is our comparative advantage. It is our birthright and our path to future prosperity. It is a ridiculous notion to suggest that Queensland should get a share of the tickets sold at Sydney's Opera House, but Sydney is about to demand a share of every dollar earned in the Queensland mining fields. This super mining tax is flawed in its conception. It assumes that every dollar of profit over the risk-free rate is a super profit. Never mind that: when asked about the NBN project, the same return of about six per cent is defended as 'modest'.

On top of that, the coupling of the company tax rate and the super 40 per cent tax leaves less than half of every dollar of profit to be used for future investment that will create new jobs. In fact, it makes it a punitive tax rate of 57 per cent when many of our competitors have rates in the high 20s, the 30s or the 40s. Very clearly that means that these companies will be looking to invest in other places. They will not be creating new jobs. They will not be able to return their profits as dividends to shareholders, many of whom are mum-and-dad investors.

It is not, as the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, has said with a hint of xenophobia, that these are overseas owned companies that are not returning profits to Queensland. We know that many of these companies have invested in Queensland and Australia, and continue to do so. But, once again with this government, it has sovereign risk in a number of areas. Companies cannot invest—whether it is development companies or others—because of infrastructure plans. They just do not get certainty from this government, which does not consult or it makes out that it is consulting but does not really listen.

Resource tax reform has to have simple principles: it has to be prospective; it has to protect our international competitiveness; it needs to be differentiated by resource commodities—not all resources are resources; it should be levied on primary resource value only; and it needs to be equitable and efficient. Very clearly, we are not seeing this government standing up for the state of Queensland, standing up for the people of Queensland. We need a leader who will stand up to Canberra and demand better. Queenslanders have had enough of Labor's failures. We must ensure that the greatest Labor failure of them all—the Premier of Queensland—is not the end of Queensland's resources industry.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and member for Surfers Paradise calling on the Premier and the government to stand up for Queensland. That is what this motion is about tonight. This motion is about calling on the government to do something which it should have done from day one, and that is to stand up for Queensland. It is a no-

brainer that Queensland is a resource based state. Our economy is a resource based economy. If ever there was a government that should stand up to the attack that has been launched by Kevin Rudd in Canberra on the resources industry it is the Bligh Labor government because the Labor government in this state, through its years of incompetence, has been saved over and over again by the resources industry. This is the government that depended on the rivers of gold that it received during the mining boom to get itself out of crisis after crisis after crisis, many of which were presided over by the now Premier. But when her Labor colleague in Canberra sets out to kill the goose that lays the golden egg we get a very lukewarm response from the Premier on behalf of the people of Queensland.

The Premier and the government should be standing up for the people of Queensland. The motion before the House tonight calls on the parliament to recognise the impact on the people of Queensland. As the Leader of the Opposition said, this resources super tax will impact on every Australian because of their investments in superannuation funds or investment of every sort. But most of all, it will impact on the people of Queensland because they have a government that has run up \$85 billion worth of debt. The only way that debt is going to be repaid is by growing the economy. The only real way to grow the Queensland economy is to grow the resources sector. Already our economy is dependent upon the resources sector for about 20 per cent of Queensland's GDP. About 20 per cent of the Queensland economy is directly linked to the resources sector. Certainly in areas that I represent the figure is much higher. So the Queensland government should be leading the charge against a tax that threatens any chance that any Queensland government has of addressing that massive debt. The Queensland government and Queenslanders are those who are affected most of all.

Just after the tax was announced analysts at Citigroup produced a table, which has been picked up and repeated in many publications since because it very clearly indicates the impact. It says who gains most from the government's proposed super tax on Australia's mining industry, and the answer is Canada. It does not ask the question, 'Who loses most?', because the answer to that would be Queensland. Along with Western Australia, Queensland loses the most. We lose most because the proposed super tax takes the total tax paid by mining companies from 38 per cent now to a level of 58 per cent in the future. That is the impact. It takes the total tax paid by companies who seek to invest in Queensland to 58 per cent. The table that was produced by the Citigroup analysts shows that in Canada a mining company would pay 23 per cent tax. That is the choice that faces mining companies in their investment decisions. They can invest in Queensland and pay 58 per cent tax or they can invest in Canada and pay 23 per cent tax.

It is a no-brainer that this government should be pursuing the federal government for imposing that sort of a tax rate on the companies that it needs to invest in Queensland to pay the debt that it has run up due to its own incompetence. We have heard the Premier and ministers stand up in the House and repeat over and over the great potential of the LNG industry and the coal seam gas industry in Central Queensland. I know that to be a fact; there is enormous potential. There is enormous potential for expansion of the coalmining industry throughout the Bowen and Surat Basin. Thousands and thousands of jobs can be created in those communities if those investment decisions are made. But all of that is threatened by this super tax that has been proposed by Kevin Rudd at a federal level. The response from the people who should be representing those communities in Queensland has been lukewarm at best. This motion calls on the Premier and the government to stand up for the people of Queensland, and it should be supported by every member of this House.

(Time expired)

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.44 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'parliament' be deleted and the following words inserted:

- notes that a resources rent tax can be a taxation regime that promotes investment and jobs;
- notes that the Minerals Council of Australia supports profit based taxation reform in its submission to the Henry tax review; and
- notes the consistent advocacy of the Premier for a mining tax package that promotes investment in and expansion of the mining industry while delivering a fair return for taxpayers as owners of the resources being developed.

This amendment seeks to put a few facts and a little bit of truth into the debate tonight. It starts by noting that a resources rent tax can be a taxation system that works, and in fact it does work in many jurisdictions. It notes that the Minerals Council of Australia, in fact, sought this sort of taxation arrangement and it notes the consistent advocacy of this government in standing up for Queensland—and we will continue to do so—in a way that seeks a taxation arrangement for the mining industry that, one, continues to encourage and incentivise investment, growth and development in mining and, two, ensures a reasonable rate of return to the people who own these resources, the taxpayers of Queensland and Australia.

We know that these sorts of regimes can work. We know that they are working. We know, for example, that we have seen a very big project here in Australia, the Gorgon project, signed up on exactly a resource rent tax. However, I note that the resource rent tax regime on the Gorgon project is

different to the one that is now being proposed. That is where we get to issues of details. These sorts of arrangements only work if we get the details right. I have said from day one that it is important to Queensland—imperative, in fact—that these details are resolved.

What are the details? I have said from day one—and my position has not changed—that the current definition of 'super profit' needs to be reconsidered, that is, the point at which the tax is levied. Secondly, the calculation of eligible capital needs to be reconsidered in my view. Most importantly, particularly for our LNG proponents, we need to do so certainly sooner rather than later. I call on the federal government to ensure that its consultation process, while it is thorough and gives all stakeholders a chance to be involved, does not overly extend the period of talking so that we can get some certainty for those proponents.

I will continue to fight for the best outcome for Queensland. What is good for Queensland when it comes to mining is good for Australia. I expect that those in Canberra will be listening to what we have to say, as they have over the last week or so. I will be meeting with the federal Treasurer to put Queensland's case.

What was the Leader of the Opposition's contribution to this situation? Last week he put out a press release offering to jump in a plane and fly to Canberra with me. Can you imagine anything less persuasive than turning up in Canberra with John-Paul Langbroek? I would say, 'Hi, Kev. I've brought John-Paul.' 'You've brought who?', he would say. 'Who's that?' 'You know, the guy who just lost two members of his own party; the guy who brings you Warren Entsch and Michael Johnson; the guy who runs a party that doesn't have a mining policy, that doesn't have an LNG policy. We think he might have something to say if he turns up in Canberra.' I will do everything that is reasonably possible and I will fight for Queensland, but I will not be fighting with my hands tied behind my back, which is what I would be doing if I turned up in Canberra with John-Paul Langbroek.

I can understand why the member for Surfers Paradise would be desperate to get out of Brisbane and would seek any reason to get on a plane and go to Canberra or, indeed, anywhere else. But why would anyone in Canberra want to sit down with the member for Surfers Paradise and talk about an issue of any kind, let alone this one? It is little wonder that we see him bringing in this debate tonight. He wants to talk about Tony Abbott's issues. He does not want to talk about his issues.

We have now had two days in a row with the most extraordinary and shocking revelations in this parliament, and what has the member for Surfers Paradise told the people of Queensland about it? Nothing, not a thing. He skulked out of the chamber yesterday and he hid in his office and he would not face the cameras. What did he do today? He skulked out of the chamber, hid in his office and would not face the cameras. He is a coward in hiding. If someone wants to be a leader they would go and face people and answer the questions. Tell us about your shonky contracts! Tell us about the reviews on the allowances and the entitlements! Tell us about the dispute in Cairns!

If he wants to stand up in here and back Tony Abbott's position, let us hope that he got Tony Abbott's position in writing. We know that if it was not in writing it does not mean anything. When he comes in here backing Tony Abbott, I hope he got it in writing.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (5.49 pm): I second the amendment moved by the Premier. The Premier has outlined the consistent position that this government has taken in relation to the announcement of the super profits tax by the federal government—that is, that we believe in a fair return for the people of Queensland and Australia for the exploitation of its natural resources, its mineral resources. We have said that all along. Whilst we have a different position from that which is being proposed by the federal government in terms of where that tax comes in nonetheless the principle remains the same. We stand firm with the federal government that Australians deserve a fair return from the exploitation of their natural resources.

I have been waiting for an occasion like this. In the two-headed Hydra of the LNP we finally see the Liberals get on top of the Nats on an issue. Over the last couple of years it has been the Nationals, the good old boys, who have been setting the agenda for the LNP but tonight we have seen the old party of greed and self-interest rise above that and put forward the motion that we see tonight. What the good old boys of the National Party have done is actually roll over on a point of principle. It is that principle that I mentioned before—a fair return for the exploitation of the natural resources of this state—that would benefit rural and regional Queensland the most. An increased tax take from the federal government goes back into infrastructure delivery in the communities that those opposite purport to represent.

What we have seen tonight is the good old boys from the National Party roll over on those principles and the commitment to infrastructure and service delivery in rural and regional Queensland. That is what getting a fair return for the exploitation of natural resources in this state, in this country, actually means.

I had the opportunity to address the APIA conference earlier this week. I was able to put forward the principles that the Bligh government has enunciated over the last number of weeks about where we would like to see improvements in relation to the tax announcement by the federal government. I note with some interest that the Minerals Council of Australia views a resource rent tax as an appropriate way to go. Again the argument is how or at what level it comes in at.

When we look at the business section of today's *Australian* there is a very interesting article on one of Australia's competitors in terms of the mining industry—India. India is actually considering bringing in a resource rent tax similar to what is being proposed in Australia. To suggest, as those opposite do and those in Canberra do, that this is some anomalous position internationally is simply wrong and denies what is actually happening in the international marketplace as we speak.

The Premier has announced that we will continue to argue with the federal government for an appropriate outcome. The principles that have been put forward we stand firm on. We will continue to argue with our colleagues in Canberra for an appropriate outcome that does not have an impact on investment because we want to see that coal seam gas to LNG industry develop here Queensland. It is an industry that can deliver up to 18,000 jobs principally in rural and regional Queensland. That is why we have stood up for Queensland. That is why we have argued our position with the Commonwealth government that a resource rent tax is appropriate in terms of getting fair value for our resources but that those additional funds should get reinvested into rural and regional Queensland—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: Some of the comments are starting to get a little bit base and offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock.

Mr ROBERTSON: I know the old National Party gets a bit embarrassed at these stages.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable the minister.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I thank you for that protection because the language was getting a little bucolic over there. We do expect that from the old National Party from time to time. It is a very bucolic approach to the English language.

As I have said all along, our commitment is to ensure that our mining industry in this state grows for the benefit of all. We do that by promoting jobs. We do that by demonstrating leadership. We do that by coming up with policies to protect new industries like the LNG industry. We will also get fair value in terms of the exploitation of the people's natural resources. That is exactly what we are doing here tonight with the amendment moved by the Premier.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (5.55 pm): I very assuredly rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition tonight and to reject utterly the amendments moved by the Premier and seconded by the Minister for Natural Resources. Let me update members with the AAP report on the Australian stock market delivered at 1.34 this afternoon and let them know what is going on. It says—

The Australian stock market was continuing to fall at noon amid ongoing uncertainty surrounding European markets and the proposed Australian resources rent tax.

The benchmark S&P/ASX was down by 66.4 points. The All Ordinaries had fallen by 69.5 points. It was described by a securities adviser as 'another day when we are bleeding in this war of attrition'. In the resources sector Fortescue mining was down 21c or 5.16 per cent after placing two of its three expansion projects on hold due to the mining super tax. BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto were both lower.

The magnitude of the disaster that is Labor's super tax is that it is referred to in the same sentence as the financial uncertainty surrounding Europe, and in particular the Greek sovereign debt crisis. Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan have delivered a new tax that is having the same effect on the stock market here as the Greek sovereign debt crisis. What a remarkable achievement from a duo who have destroyed the golden inheritance that they were left by the last coalition government, including a \$20 billion surplus and a Future Fund packed to the rafters with billions of dollars and growing. What have Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan done? They have thrown it away and wasted it in an attempt to buy themselves back into government. What have they left themselves with? They have left themselves with a massive deficit.

No-one should be under any illusion about this super mining tax that is going to tax the industries that have saved our country. They will impose this tax because they need \$9 billion a year to plug a deficit in their budget after throwing away the golden inheritance that they were left by John Howard, Peter Costello and the coalition. The plain fact is that they cannot take \$9 billion out of an industry and not have a negative impact. They cannot do it.

The Commonwealth proposes to introduce this new super tax in spite of the fact that resource sovereignty lies with the states. I heard the Minister for Natural Resources parroting the lines of Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan that this is a resource for all people of Australia. I disagree. These are resources that belong to the people of Queensland. The resources in the ground, the coal in the ground

in the Galilee Basin and the Bowen Basin are the resources of the people of Queensland. The gas in the ground in Roma and in the Surat Basin is the gas that belongs to the people of Queensland. The lead, silver and zinc at Mount Isa are Queensland resources. Phosphate Hill is in Queensland, not New South Wales, Victoria or Tasmania. These are Queensland resources. They should be controlled by a Queensland government. This government should not be cravenly handing over resource sovereignty, financial sovereignty to the federal government. We should not be giving up Queenslanders' rights to extract the maximum value from Queensland resources which is effectively what we are doing.

If this Treasurer was worth his salt, he would be fighting Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan to protect Queensland's wealth and resources and jobs, not rolling over and handing them back to Canberra. He talks about vertical fiscal imbalance, but what does he do? He hands it all back over and ends up as a mendicant at the table asking for the crumbs from the feds. Earlier I heard the Premier say that she is fighting for Queenslanders and is going to do all that she reasonably can. There is no sign of any change from the federal government. Today Ken Henry said that he is not going to change the rate, he is not going to change the level and he is not going to change the resources. So Premier and Treasurer, the question you have to answer is this: what will you do if there is no change? What will you do if the threshold is not increased above six per cent in the long-term bond rate? What will you do if the corporate tax rate stays at 40 per cent? What will you do if the extractive industries—the cement, the sand, the phosphate—are not changed? That is the question you have to answer. Protect Queensland, not your Labor mates!

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (6.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment. There is little doubt that the proposed resource rent tax raised immediate questions. My electorate boasts some of the biggest base metal miners in Australia. From day one and from the community's perspective, it has been important to let the dust settle and wait for the detail to filter through. The federal government is making its point in saying that this tax can work. What has to be resolved, however, is the how. It is a fact that the Minerals Council of Australia had previously called for a profit based tax in its submission to the Henry review. Obviously there was some belief at that time that this could promote investment and jobs. Since day one the Premier and Treasurer in our government have been at the table working with our miners across the state, along with the Queensland Resources Council. In my electorate Xstrata and Mount Isa Mines are an employer of over 4,000 direct jobs. The decisions being made today by them and our biggest miners reinforce the fact that the industry and indeed our communities need to have this resolved as a matter of urgency.

Mr Johnson: Betty, be careful! They'll read this speech in Mount Isa tomorrow.

Mrs KIERNAN: The question the Queensland government has pursued is whether the design that is being put forward can overcome concerns around investment certainty and job creation. I think I can let the member for Gregory know that I know my electorate just as well as he thinks he does. This should not be an issue about politics. We know that there are currently—

Opposition members: Ha, ha!

Mrs KIERNAN: I tell you what: Mr Abbott, like you, has no policy. We know that there are currently approximately 99 known resource projects proposed to commence in Queensland between 2010 and 2015. The majority of these projects are coal and mineral mines, with eight LNG projects. The total capital proposed to be expended on these projects over their economic life is in excess of \$150 billion. These projects over their economic life will provide more than 20,000 operational and 50,000 construction jobs in Queensland. The design of the resource tax and the model results that it will be a long-term benefit to the Australian economy are heavily grounded in economic theory. We get that. However, we are not all economists, just everyday people trying to find middle ground. In theory, the resource tax is supposed to, and possibly will, have a positive impact on investment.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs KIERNAN: I am not an expert, just like you lot are not. Therefore, even if you agree with the theory and believe in the long-term benefits, this does not preclude the introduction of the tax affecting some of the financial investment decisions associated with the current projects and others planned. The message is loud and clear in that a prolonged period of uncertainty associated with the tax will continue to be detrimental to project investment. In many respects, the potential for prolonged uncertainty and speculation about the tax is the greatest immediate threat to Queensland and indeed my local interests. I get all of that.

Given the tax's complexity, the Commonwealth has a major communication challenge—and I recognise this coming from my electorate—to explain it to the community. Key issues are concerns about the impact on projects close to reaching final investment decisions. It is also about the importance of the mining industry investment for Queensland's economic recovery. I am part of the area that is resource rich and contributes, but I also get that we have a responsibility to the whole state. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to the nation. We need for the consultation to produce clear resolution of the core policy issues. Setting up the panel is moving forward. I can say to members that our government is listening to what the mining industry is saying to it, and will continue to listen. The

industry itself is pursuing its interests with the federal government. The message is this: this has to be quicker, simpler, remove investment uncertainty and ensure we remain internationally competitive so that we will see the expansion of jobs across this state. At least we are contributing to finding the way forward, not like the opposition unfortunately.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (6.05 pm): The federal government taxed alcopops to reduce drinking. It heavily taxed tobacco to reduce smoking. But now it is seeking to convince us that by heavily taxing mining it will not discourage mining—the same sort of stupidity we have in the amendment from the government and the sell-out from the member for Mount Isa of her resource-rich electorate! Minerals and energy extraction accounts for 70 per cent of this nation's export earnings. It underpins our national income and our standard of living. It is one of the key reasons, along with the financial prudence of the Howard government, that Australia entered the global financial crisis in such a powerful condition.

Anyone who thinks that this incompetent act of heavily taxing miners in excess of the levels that prevail in other competitive countries will not seriously damage this country and Queensland in particular is fooling themselves. We have already seen a flight of capital from Australia—dumping of mining shares and a significant devaluation of the Australian dollar, which approached 85c today from a recent high of 92c just days ago. That is a flight of capital because of loss of confidence in this country. Commentators have been quick to realise the dangers. BT's senior portfolio manager said—

Effective tax on the mining industry moves from the mid 40s—

that is, per cent—

to the mid 50s and makes us materially higher than any other country in terms of tax rate.

She also went on to say there was limited consultation and that the tax is retrospective. This country learnt a basic rule of financial competency the hard way, and that rule is that in a global market you must be competitive. We went through a painful adjustment under the Hawke and Howard governments through micro-economic reform in the areas of taxation, dividend imputation, waterfront reform, tariff reform and industrial relations to try to give this country a better financial base and keep it competitive. The incompetent Rudd government cannot read or learn the lessons of history, even those learnt by previous Labor governments. JP Morgan analyst David George said—

The imposition of the tax will destroy a lot of wealth in Australia's mining sector.

We have already seen that for superannuation funds, but we will also see it in loss of jobs and loss of tax revenue to this state government and the federal government. Moody's investment service said the fallout could be similar to what happened in 2008 in Zambia where mining exploration reduced after a similar windfall tax was introduced. The following year Zambia had to repeal the tax, hoping to reignite its mining exploration industry after it collapsed just a year before with the introduction of such a tax. Not only can the Rudd government not learn the lessons of history; it cannot even observe what is happening now in other parts of the world. Australia's third largest iron ore producer, Fortescue, has placed two projects worth \$10.5 billion and \$7 billion respectively on hold. Its principal, Mr Forrest, said—

We can't find a way that we can maintain our Australian equity in these projects and still develop them under this highly theoretical new tax. I do regret to say that any project we can't get going before the tax cuts in will not continue.

OZ Minerals has put on hold its Western Copper project. And if members are tempted to think it will not happen in Queensland, Santos has already warned that its \$7.7 billion Gladstone liquefied natural gas joint venture is under a cloud and that it requires more information in relation to the government's new tax before a decision is made that it can proceed. There are 5,000 Queensland jobs at stake in that one project alone and it is on hold.

Rudd's definition that a super profit is anything that exceeds the risk-free government bond rate betrays his attitude that private businesses are not entitled to a return for the risks that they take. The LNP believes that miners and gas companies that are prepared to take those risks are entitled to a return. It is hard to argue that miners, already paying 45 per cent, are not major contributors. The LNP knows that in a competitive world, if your tax regime is uncompetitive, investors and customers will look elsewhere.

(Time expired)

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Premier and seconded by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. Since the surfacing of the possibility of this resource super profits tax by the Commonwealth, the Premier has consistently advocated that the final design of any tax package must promote, firstly, further investment in Queensland; secondly, the creation of more jobs; and, thirdly, the delivery of a fair return for Queenslanders as owners of the resources being developed.

On the one hand, yesterday Dr Henry used his speech to the Australian Business Economists lunch to again state that mining projects that are marginal, especially small resources projects, will become profitable under the proposed tax regime and that projects that are earning supernormal profits will continue to earn supernormal profits. But of course the resource sector disagrees.

It is commonly accepted within the resources industry that there may be additional capacity within the sector to return more to the people, but some of the current proposals suggested by the Commonwealth are of significant concern to the industry. The state government shares some of those concerns. For example, a rate of return on capital higher than the long-term bond rate may be required before the tax applies to ensure continuous investment in the mining sector. The industry has indicated that a threshold of around 11 per cent would be much more appropriate than the long-term bond rate. With the mining sector being involved in high-risk investment, we would encourage the federal government to consider that proposal.

The Queensland government is working with the resources sector and the Australian government to refine the details of the resource super profits tax to ensure that the resources industry—a vital contributor to the Queensland economy—is able to further expand. I encourage the Commonwealth government to continue to undertake meaningful consultation with both the resources sector in Queensland and this state government to ensure that those elements of the package, including an appropriate rate of return on capital, which make the material difference to an investment decision and, in turn, employment and royalty returns, are fully considered.

A largely overlooked part of the Henry tax review proposed by the Australian government is the proposed resource exploration rebate, which the Commonwealth government has introduced instead of a flowthrough shares scheme. This \$1.1 billion rebate over two years will apply to both greenfield and brownfield exploration projects in this country. It will also apply to the emerging geothermal industry, providing an important boost to exploration for this vital renewable resource. This reform is important because, put simply, today's exploration means tomorrow's mines and jobs.

The Bligh government is also facing up to this challenge and is determined to make Queensland the greenfield exploration capital of this country by 2020. We have already achieved outstanding success by providing new exploration information and collaborative drilling grants to industry through our \$49 million Smart Mining—Future Prosperity and Smart Exploration programs. In fact, industry exploration expenditure in Queensland during the life of these programs has increased from \$244 million in 2004 to \$751 million last year. That well and truly delivers on our 2006 election commitment to double exploration expenditure by 2009.

We are also stimulating further exploration activity through other government initiatives, including the Carbon Geostorage Initiative and the \$5 million Coastal Geothermal Energy Initiative. Additionally, the government makes land available for mineral, petroleum and geothermal exploration in underexplored areas of the state. For example, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade recently released a call for tender for about 54,000 square kilometres of land in the state's north-west and south for petroleum exploration.

A healthy exploration sector means a healthy economy, regional development and, most importantly, jobs. That is why the Bligh government will continue to provide tangible support to industry and help Queensland become the greenfield exploration capital. We will continue to work with the industry and the federal government to find a way forward with this new tax regime to ensure that our mining sector continues to grow and that Queenslanders continue to receive their fair share of the wealth generated by their resources.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.15 pm): Two weeks ago we saw the dead hand of a socialist government rise up out of the coffin and descend like a pall on private mining investment throughout Australia. Since that time we have seen that reverberate not only in the share market in Australia but also in share markets throughout the world. Earlier tonight, the shadow Treasurer indicated that again today we have seen the impact of this socialist policy on investment in Australia and confidence in our stock market.

What we see from the Labor Party in Queensland is very clear. We see the economic baseball bat of socialist envy, which continues to burn below the surface. We see it from an entity that hates private wealth. We see it from an entity that hates private investment. We see it from an entity that hates private profit. We see it from an entity that just cannot bear to understand that out there in the community somebody has something that it does not have. It feels that it needs to take it away and it feels that it should distribute it for the so-called greater good.

But as we have seen in recent days, the so-called dead hand of socialism, which has again crept up and descended upon not only our state but also the rest of Australia, has had devastating consequences for that investment that drives our economy so much. You need to fundamentally understand that one of the things that motivates and drives a private individual is a desire to achieve. The thing that motivates a private individual is to be able to enjoy significant benefits for their investment. That is what drives people. That is what the Labor Party does not understand. That is what the LNP understands.

The Labor Party has this public policy absolutely wrong. The Labor Party believes in collectivised mediocrity, it believes in collectivised inefficiency, it believes in collectivised waste and it believes in collectivised incompetence. That is what we have seen from them and that is what we are going to continue to see from them.

We had the Premier stand up and say that this is going to be a great thing. We had the member for Mount Isa stand up with some degree of fear and trepidation and say that there is a very small chance that it could be a good thing, but generally it is looking like a very bad thing. So they know that this is devastation. You cannot have a situation—not even for one second—where Origin Energy and Incitec Pivot are saying that they are reviewing their investment decisions in Queensland. Origin Energy, one of the major proponents behind the so-called development of this super LNG industry in Queensland, is reconsidering its investment. They are the people who are talking. They are the people who are making these decisions. They are the people who understand and know the financial bottom line that drives their investment decisions.

When I was in Mount Isa a couple of weeks ago I spoke to Xstrata. At that stage they said that they were reviewing their investment decisions. They were likely to wind back their investment decisions in Queensland. Guess what? The following Monday they made the announcement that they would be doing that. If you do not have the profit, if you have the dead hand of socialism in your pocket, it means that you have less money to drive and invest. If you have less money to invest, then you are going to have fewer jobs, you are going to have fewer opportunities in your community, you are going to have less infrastructure and you are going to have fewer services. That is the important issue that arises from this proposal.

We have seen absolutely no assurances whatsoever from the Prime Minister or anyone that this money, even if it could be raised, will go back into those communities from whence it came. This money is not targeted for Queensland. This money is not going back into those communities in Queensland that have already been stripped and mined by this Labor government by way of royalties without a significant and substantial return on investment in services and infrastructure in those communities. Now we are seeing it all over again with what is proposed by Kevin Rudd and the Labor government in Canberra.

We have to stop this policy of envy from the Labor Party, a Labor Party that is jealously driven by the fact that it cannot stand to see anyone earn any profit and if they do they need to take that away. This government will rue the day that it has been prepared to stand up in this parliament and not support the interests of Queensland; to stand up in this parliament and not say to Kevin Rudd that he needs to stop this policy because it is bad policy for jobs in our community.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (6.20 pm): I rise in support of the amendment put by the Premier which seeks to recentre this debate from a starting point of reality. Let everyone in this House understand that a resource rent taxation regime can work and it can be good for jobs and investment.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FRASER: Well might those on the other side of the chamber begin from a starting point of laughing, but it certainly did not pass the Liberal Premier of Western Australia by when he noted that the Gorgon project went ahead under what? Under a resource rent taxation regime with a 40 per cent tax take. Let us understand that there is another group of people who know that a resource rent taxation regime can be good. Which group of people is that? It is the Minerals Council of Australia. It said so in its submission to the Henry tax review. What did it say? It said that when it comes to minerals tax reform it wants to see—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Just stop the clock. It is impossible to hear the Treasurer.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Do not, when I am speaking, interject—ever.

Mr FRASER: What did the Minerals Council of Australia say? It said it wanted to see a resource rent tax regime that is profit based rather than income or ad valorem based. It wanted to see a move toward profit based taxation because it knows it can be good for investment and jobs. What we have here is a situation where there has been a change proposed. What has this government done from day one? We have said quite categorically that we believe that any regime package that comes forward needs to be able to promote jobs and investment. That is the test we have put on this. We have said that we do not believe that the super profit arrangement that is in place at the moment is appropriate and that there should be room to move. We have said that from day one. We have also said that the capped allowance mechanisms that are in place are also an area where there should be attention. We have been completely upfront about our care and concern for all the efforts that we have put into shepherding LNG into this state and we want to see those investments go ahead. We are talking about transitioning arrangements, grandfathering arrangements and the policy hard yards that we are doing behind closed doors to try to make sure that we get an outcome that is good for the state.

What have those opposite done in this context? They have done nothing but stand up and oppose it. Have those opposite noticed that the resource companies of Queensland are running around saying they are not getting the appropriate support from the Bligh government? The answer is no. Why is that? Because on day one we have sat down with the industry, with APIA, QRC and individual proponents and they are satisfied with the work that we are doing to achieve an outcome here that can ensure that taxation change is to the benefit of the resources sector in this state, not to the disbenefit. So anti policy are the members opposite that they are desperate to come in here and rail against everyone else's. Did they propose one constructive change in their contributions tonight? No. The only thing that the shadow Treasurer raised was that one of the policy concerns he has is we do not have the ability to raise royalties into the future. They have come in here and advocated on behalf of the resource sector but I draw the attention of the resource sector of this state to the remarks by the shadow Treasurer that he wants the flexibility to raise royalties into the future.

Mr Nicholls: How much did you raise it two years ago without telling them?

Mr FRASER: And here they go. So he wants to do it in the future but he is not happy that I did it in the past. There you go. These are people who are so devoid of substance, so devoid of policy grunt that they make Tony Abbott look like a fair dinkum guy. They cannot come in here and put forward a policy. They come in here without any ability to propose and just a unilateral ability to oppose. The Leader of the Opposition comes in here pretending that he is concerned about jobs. We all know that he is only concerned about one job at the moment and that is his own. Pretty soon, while he has had a job target of zero throughout his time, he is going to need a job target of one because he is going to have to find himself a new job. We know that his concern extends only to his own interests. As the old saying goes, if you had a racehorse you would call it 'Self-Interest' because you knew it was always trying.

What did the Leader of the Opposition come in here and say? He came in here and he backed himself in. Is it any wonder, because he did not reveal—as contained in the pecuniary interests register—that the Leader of the Opposition owns shares in Woodside Petroleum, Beach Petroleum, Greenvale Mining, BHP and Rio Tinto. He comes in here and advocates against this tax but he does not come clean about—

(Time expired)

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The House will come to order, before I yell myself hoarse. The question is that the motion be agreed to since which it has been proposed that the question be amended by omitting the words after 'parliament' and inserting the words contained in the Premier's amendment.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarden, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

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, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarden, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

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, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this parliament:

- notes that a resources rent tax can be a taxation regime that promotes investment and jobs;
- notes that the Minerals Council of Australia supports profit based taxation reform in its submission to the Henry tax review; and
- notes the consistent advocacy of the Premier for a mining tax package that promotes investment in and expansion of the mining industry while delivering a fair return for taxpayers as owners of the resources being developed.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 pm to 7.30 pm.

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1677, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (7.30 pm): In summary, this bill covers issues to ensure the region's water distribution supports the SEQ Regional Plan and responds to the region's growth in a substantive way. Secondly, it legislates for the management of coal seam gas and water management systems via amendments to the Environmental Protection Act and through amendments to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act. I intend to restrict my speech to those areas specifically related to my electorate. I endorse the comments about coal seam gas affected zones made very forcefully by the shadow minister in his speech earlier.

Where this is applicable to the Gold Coast, I believe that this looks like a script from *Groundhog Day*. This unique film very closely parallels a major component of the SEQ water bill. The stars of the film, the Phil 'twins' Phil Connors and Punxsutawney Phil, live through a surreal time where every day is repeated and Phil Connors—or in our case, the Queensland public—is the only one who really knows what is going on. I remind members that today the state Labor government legislates part of what existed before, only the names have changed and it will cost 900 per cent more. The state is the monopoly bulk water supplier owner/operator and the regional councils are now grouped into three geographic distributors and are distributing the water that they previously used to distribute.

In some ways the Minister for Natural Resources is like Punxsutawney Phil. In the movie he is the hedgehog whose arrival signals the end of winter. Is this the Labor method of 'here we go again'? The public is completely outraged that it is paying for this again and again and again. It is *Groundhog Day*. Ned Ryerson is the insurance agent who tries to sell Phil Connors a dodgy life insurance policy, and the public feels the same as Phil did. Are you guys listening, or do I need to repeat myself again and again? Finally, Phil Connors has had enough and he punches Ned on the nose, and Ned deserves it. I think 'frustration' would be too kind a word for what Phil felt.

In this four-year journey, the waste has reached levels that have never been trawled before. Need I remind members of the carcass of Traveston which cost \$1 billion, the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project which cost \$2.5 billion and the Tugun desalination plant which cost \$1.2 billion, as well as the Water Commission? This black hole has consumed vast amounts the extent of which we may never know. Australia is the driest island continent on earth. We learned that fact in our schools—

Mr O'Brien: Did you actually write this?

Dr DOUGLAS: Absolutely, and the member should listen. We asked our councils not to plan for a rainy day but to plan for drought. The Goss Labor government started with the cancellation of the construction of the Wolffdene Dam and successfully blocked the Glendower at the back of my electorate, the Wyaralong Dam, which has been restarted, stage 2 of the Boondoomba Dam and the Nathan Dam. The Labor Party describes dams as 'old technology', yet now we are effectively legislating for outrageous increases in bulk water pricing to distributors that will cause great pain to consumers, who are already reeling from rises in electricity prices, interest rates and the general cost of living.

Because this is *Groundhog Day*, I remind members that on the Gold Coast bulk water prices will rise from \$1.32 a megalitre to \$2.75 a megalitre by 2016. Council has the job of pumping, distributing, metering and charging 236,000 dwellings while trying not to make a loss in doing so. In 2016 we are looking at a retail distribution price of \$4 a megalitre. I table the document that shows the price rises.

Tabled paper: Copy of a document titled 'Bulk Water Prices 2008/2009—2017/2018' [\[2257\]](#).

The regional groups that will receive this bulk water are Queensland Urban Utilities, which covers Brisbane, Ipswich, the Scenic Rim and the Brisbane Valley; Allconnex, which will supply the Gold Coast, the Redlands and Logan; and Unitywater, which will cover the Sunshine Coast and Moreton. The bulk water distributors will charge fees for each lead group. They will collect the water and distribute it to those regional councils directly.

The public should not be asked to pay three times for the same thing. I say this because Queenslanders generally, but especially the people of Gaven, paid to build the Hinze Dam on the Gold Coast, they are being asked to pay grossly inflated fees to the bulk water operator and those fees will rise further to enrich the bulk water supplier to repay the Labor government waste. This is unconscionable, it is morally wrong and it is totally unjustified. My current estimate is that the bulk water seller for the southern supply will make a \$600 million profit in its first year of operation, building to \$1 billion within five years. If this is the case, with a cap rate the target will be been split for auction and float, with an end value of \$12 billion. This bulk water supply money belongs to the public and it is being used to potentially inflate the statement of assets and liabilities of a failed state government.

Amazingly, this bill specifically directs local government not to refer to bulk water charges as 'state government charges'. Yesterday the Premier herself said that the people of Queensland were entitled to 'worry about this organisation'. Why would the government direct a local government entity to make an incorrect statement? I suspect that common sense regionally will prevail. The councils will eventually refuse to pay these exorbitant charges. They will build large stormwater storage facilities and effectively become their own bulk water suppliers. I think this is a near certainty if the price rises continue. Under those circumstances the bulk water suppliers would be looming dinosaurs for all the wrong reasons. I believe that the bill mandates that this will happen. I say this because the bill is seeking to potentially limit this in return. It is one of the first pieces of evidence of forward planning from an administration acting out of fear.

This bill does make amendments to the recycled water and drinking water supply regulatory framework under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act. Recycled water must not be placed back in our major water catchments. A major selling point to tourists, particularly in the Gold Coast region, is that our water can be drunk safely from the tap without any qualification. We have plenty of uses for recycled water on both coasts and in Brisbane and we need to explore them. On the Gold Coast we use recycled water extensively on everything from sports grounds to golf courses. Now it is also piped into homes through separate supply lines that are marked purple. The Pimpama Wastewater Treatment Plant is world-class and was constructed on advice from the Singaporeans, who have extensive skill in this area. Ultimately, they produce a tertiary treated effluent that can go back to users and not into the seaway on the outgoing tide, as is currently the case. Ultimately, waste water will supply much of that water currently provided by class 1 drinking water.

For those who may not know, one per cent of every litre from our dams is consumed by humans and we have contact with only six per cent.

A government member: Garbage.

Dr DOUGLAS: It is not garbage; it is a statement of fact. The loss of such an expensive static resource is frightening. The ambition of all councils is to double the utilisation of class 1 water consumption every three to four years in the future. The government and the Labor Party have sensibly stayed away from this area. I am concerned that the minister has raised the issue of dual reticulation schemes not to be exempt from waste management schemes. This seems to be a lurch for the cash via fees and charges—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the chamber. Please cease. The member for Gaven has the call.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a foolish attempt to control what may be supplied in the future—it may be a service of reduced bulk water volumes, whereas I believe that they are trying to ensure that their bulk water supply volumes are protected. The reason for this is that dual systems have enormous capacity when combined with treated rainwater harvesting to massively decrease the dependence of even small landholders on water supplies. All conventional treatment systems are being charged fees by local councils to verify what the owners already pay the service agents for. For the government to be drafting legislation that looks like it wants a bite too, it looks too greedy. Many in my electorate of Gaven use and operate many such systems. They will be concerned today. They have made great personal sacrifices—from purchasing expensive bulk water from council to be transported by pipe and tanker to building complex water management systems. They have set examples in their own lives that we should all take notice of. They have done so in the absence of government support, and now they are being asked to potentially further contribute.

The minister in his second reading speech has defined the four key roles that distributors will fulfil. He calls them distributor-regulators. I do not know what regulation they have made or will ever make. The fourth aspirational goal of the bill was really one to laugh about in view of the government's shameful, deceitful actions in hijacking our water supplies. He says that fourth key role will be asset management. He goes on to state that distributor-retailers will need to demonstrate how their networks will be reconstructed and maintained to meet future demand, to ensure service standards and to protect the environment. The whole paragraph is political doublespeak. The state Labor government grabbed ratepayers' assets, paid near to nothing for them and quickly vacated the distribution of the service when it realised just how hard it is to retail water and make a profit.

We will all be left wondering what this water grid was really all about. Was it one man's ego? Was it about one more electoral term? Was it about chaos? I think the last is true. It was a Labor government in crisis and chaos. It has huge numbers of bureaucrats but there was no real painstaking cost benefit analysis of any plan nor any prudent financial stewardship of the grand schemes that they proposed, and all the while underneath there was a hardworking, apolitical group of government people who went on existing in a terrible climate of mediocrity and financial rationing.

Water is life. Here in Queensland we have a very impressive history of prudent planning and a great history of delivery at a very reasonable cost to consumers. The public did not deserve what was done to them under the guise of making Queensland waterproof Labor style. This bill begins the

unwinding process of four years of chaos and 10 years of nothingness in water provision but it comes at a terrible cost. Just who will wear the responsibility for this disaster? Is it the current Premier, who will retire on a very generous parliamentary pension when she is finally defeated? Will it be the former Premier, who conceived both the nonsense of Traveston and 'fortress Brisbane' in relation to water? No.

Mr O'Brien: You stood in this House and you opposed it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Cook.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This bill will almost assure that it will be the group regional SEQ councils who tried vainly to get people to see sense. This is ultimately a bill that brings great shame on the government in Queensland. The exorbitant water charges on every ratepayer's bill is the report card on Labor's abysmal performance in managing water supply in a drought—water that you will all be receiving in your homes. I would ask that no-one should ever forget that it started with stopping Wolffdene and ended at Tugun, which is a rusting, decaying carcass of a desal plant. This will be forever the legacy of Labor's experimentation with water management in Queensland and how not to do it.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (7.43 pm): That was a good speech. In speaking to the South-East Queensland Water (Restructuring and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I am not going to go into the complexities of the legislation that the minister has put before us. But I do want to talk to aspects of it that I feel are applicable to my part of Queensland.

There has been much talk and much debate in recent times, and my colleague the member for Warrego has certainly done an excellent job of exposing some of the fears that people in the LNG gas areas are experiencing in Queensland at present. If members watched the *Landline* program a week or so back they would have seen Dr Jim Baker in Roma and the angst that he is experiencing. I think we have to show some leadership and some responsibility in relation to meeting the requirements and addressing the needs of the LNG industry.

The LNG industry is an important industry but at the same time so are agricultural industries. They have done a great job in this state over the last 150 years. The LNG industry has the potential to be a wealth generator for the Queensland economy over the next few decades. But it is important to remember that agricultural industries, which are based in the heart of these gas fields, should also be accorded the due recognition of their worth to the economy over the last 150 years as well as well into the future in addressing the needs of the state in food and fibre production.

The Darling Downs, the eastern Warrego and Arcadia Valley, which I represent in Central Queensland, are areas that are applicable to the issues of the LNG industry. The one thing that is important to remember is that the minister says in this bill that it is part of the government's plan that the LNG industry is environmentally sustainable. No-one disputes that. But it is paramount that the adjacent agricultural industries are also environmentally sustainable, as they should be. We have witnessed here in South-East Queensland over a long period of time the situation of seeing some of the prime agricultural land adjacent to our capital city of Brisbane becoming residential estates. We are fast running out of this prime agricultural land. So there is a need to address the ongoing viability of not only prime agricultural land but prime irrigation agricultural land, and this is some of the land in question. I know my colleague the member for Warrego will touch on this.

The use of treated coal seam gas water will be encouraged where it has beneficial use, as the minister says. I do not have a problem with that. But I have a problem when we waste millions of dollars. The current minister had stewardship at the start of the magnificent program of capping the Great Artesian Basin bores. A lot of those bores were running wild and were an absolute waste of water. Where those bores have been capped, we are seeing that we have retained that water, and meaningfully so to the extent that we now have a sustainable situation and that water is being used in a more responsible way. The program is ongoing. The fact is that the Artesian Basin is in this mix with the gas industry, and once again we have to get the mix right. As my colleague the member for Warrego said on numerous occasions—and we only had to see the television news this evening to witness what could happen—there are maps in America where the pipelines from the gas fields have interlocked with the agricultural land and virtually rendered it useless and shut it down.

I have visited farms in my electorate, and one in particular in the Arcadia Valley just recently. They are gravely concerned about the ongoing viability of their operation, especially in the cropping areas where these gas wells will go. The Santos company is instrumental in its activities of gainful productivity in the LNG industry. More importantly, there is fear that these gas companies can just come in and take over. One of the most important things is that those companies have to get access. They have to have an access and activities agreement before they can come on to the properties in question. I appeal to the minister that we have to get the mix right here.

There was a meeting today out on the Darling Downs, wherever it was, of some 500 people. Where was it?

Mr Hobbs: Cecil Plains.

Mr JOHNSON: There were some 500 people in attendance. When we talk about Cecil Plains we are talking about some of the best agricultural country in Queensland—beautiful cultivation. It is the same right through the Central Highlands region. We have the same mix again with the coalmining industry in the golden triangle south of Emerald. We have seen the arguments over Haystack. Now we have this mix of the gas industry and agriculture. It is not just any ordinary agriculture; this is the prime Mickey Mouse article. It is the best land in Queensland for growing cereal crops that ultimately form the food production line for many people not only in this country but also overseas by way of exports.

This bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to improve the management of water produced by way of coal seam gas and LNG projects. Whilst it is an amending bill, we have to progress the cause further by engaging with our agricultural based operators, our farmers and graziers, in these areas in question. I implore the minister to please sit down with these people and put a responsible policy in place that addresses the needs of these people.

I am also gravely concerned about the future viability of the Great Artesian Basin. As I said, I have spoken with my colleague the member for Warrego. In his second reading speech the minister said—

The bill will be supported by guidelines that will encourage the beneficial use of treated coal seam gas water.

The minister went on—

The bill will also ensure that waste dams are regulated by the most appropriate act—the Environmental Protection Act.

That is all very well, but sometimes these mining and gas and oil companies seem to be a law unto themselves. When it comes to the wealth generating capacity and their worth to this state and this economy, sometimes they seem to be given the right of way and the farming industry comes to the stop sign. Nobody heeds their need. The situation is grave at this point because there is angst out there.

The minister said on the news tonight that he is not deaf to the farmers' concerns, and I am pleased to hear that. I hope that, as a result of his genuineness in the media today, we will see an outcome whereby this fragile artesian basin, something that is sacred to the needs of Australians and Queenslanders in particular, is made sacrosanct for all time. I hope we are not going to breach the need of that great icon just for the sake of 30 or 40 years of extraction of gas and at the end of the day find we lose our pressure, our water and the whole lot.

I finish with those few words. I know other people want to speak to this bill. This is a serious issue and one that is not going to go away until we get the policy mix right.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (7.52 pm): I rise to speak to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. In doing so, I recognise that the water infrastructure part of this bill deals with the south-east corner and the establishment in previous legislation of the three distributor-retailers—Queensland Urban Utilities, Allconnex and Unitywater. However, I have had conversations in my electorate. The Gladstone Area Water Board supplies both domestic and industry water to my electorate and it has done a wonderful job over many years. It is a joint water board set up to assist the Gladstone city council and the Calliope shire council and also had other representatives on the board. Now it has representatives of the Gladstone Regional Council. The CEO is Jim Grayson, who is a very competent and nice man to deal with. When I have had questions about water supply it has been a pleasure to talk to Jim and get information or, indeed, talk to other appropriate people. I have found Jim to be a really good representative of the executive side of the water board and his dealings with me as the local member have been very professional.

Residents have raised some concerns with me and I just seek the assurance of the minister. These bills provide for a lot of restructuring in the south-east corner. I would like the minister's assurance that there is no intention to restructure or subsume the Gladstone Area Water Board into some other water board entity, whether it is SunWater or one of these other utilities that has been established. I would seek his assurance of that for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Gladstone Area Water Board has worked very well for our region. There have been blues every now and again about the price of water and that has involved at times the review by the Queensland Competition Authority. However, in the main, the water board has been a good entity for industry to deal with, to ensure security of supply and to ensure the availability of the necessary quantum of supply. It would be disappointing for the board, the staff and members of my community to see that change. I just seek the minister's confirmation that there is no intention to alter the structure of the Gladstone Area Water Board.

Another concern that I want to raise—and I am conscious of time because this debate has been guillotined and we all need an opportunity to speak—is obviously the water issues relating to the LNG industry. We are not on the end of the industry that will be mainly affected in relation to water supply. Certainly the greatest impact will be in the gas fields. There have been a lot of conversations about the amount of water that the LNG industry will pump from the gas seams and how that water will be dealt

with. In my electorate whenever questions have been raised about the impact on the aquifers, the response both from the companies and from government representatives is that the aquifers that will be affected by this depletion are deep aquifers, certainly not those that are accessed by farmers for irrigation, stock or domestic use. However, from my simple perspective, if we remove water from a lower aquifer and if the ground type—the soil type, the rock foundation—is of a sort that will allow for coning of the upper water streams, then there is a real risk that the accessible aquifers that farmers, graziers and irrigators currently access in the Surat Basin will cone down to the lower empty aquifers. Therefore, it will be either impossible or incredibly expensive for farmers to access or to drill new bores.

So there are still a lot of unanswered questions in relation to the impact of draining those aquifers to the extent that the LNG industry will do. There are also questions—and these were raised in my electorate only this week—in relation to water quality. The water that is pumped is not potable. At the moment the companies that are operating out west have reverse osmosis plants—quite small by industry standards. They are actually treating water to a standard; elements have to be added because in its ultra purified state it also is not fit for human consumption. So there is all this water. I know that farmers are looking at the water as an option for supply and I guess the companies are looking for sustainable processes to be able to use or reuse that water. As the member for Gregory said, it is in this planning stage—and I hope I am not putting words in his mouth—where the right decisions and the right balances have to be achieved because if farmers lose access to water their farms are useless. If, on the other hand, the water is made available and it is of a good quality, then it can bloom an area and that area can become even more productive.

That grazing and horticultural band where the coal seam gas is coming from has been the lifeblood of this state and the great food bowl for a great many years. Those landowners and producers certainly deserve respect in relation to the development of the LNG industry. Having made what some would regard as critical comments about the LNG, I say now that there is a lot of optimism in my electorate in relation to the jobs that that industry will create. There are also concerns that the LNG industry not interfere with recreational and commercial fishing, about ecological sustainability in the harbour and about the impact on Curtis Island.

Equally, there are people in the electorate who are well informed, articulate and deserving of respect for their concerns. Both at the retrieval end, which is where the gas will be collected, and at the delivery and processing end in Gladstone there is a great deal of importance in getting this right because it has the potential for enormous good but it also has the potential for enormous harm.

I would be interested in the minister's response. I believe the companies are wanting to listen to the community, are wanting to be responsive, are wanting to contribute to the infrastructure that is necessary for the industry and the population to flourish in Gladstone but it must be done fairly, respectfully and equitably.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (8.00 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As the minister said in his second reading speech, this bill is the latest step in the Bligh government's delivery of better water services in South-East Queensland.

In the Morayfield-Caboolture region there has been some major change to the structure of the local water businesses over the last few years. The Caboolture water business or CabWater, as it was more endearingly known, was merged into a new water business called Moreton Bay Water in March 2008. Now a new water business called Unitywater will service water users in the Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast regional council areas and will be jointly owned by the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

I acknowledge that this has been a somewhat disruptive time for employees of the respective water businesses. I would like to put on record my appreciation of their understanding, patience and hard work in relation to these restructuring strategies. Also I would like to convey to Mr John Black, the new chief executive officer of Unitywater, and all employees of Unitywater my best wishes for what promises to be an exciting and dynamic time for water services in our local area.

Importantly, this latest reform delivers what all Queenslanders want from their water suppliers. Queenslanders want security of supply. Queenslanders want infrastructure and supply founded in long-term future demand planning. Queenslanders want a water supply network which anticipates population growth rather than one that follows that growth. Queenslanders want certainty of pricing. Queenslanders want and expect high standards of customer service delivery in respect of water supply providers.

I would like to spend a few moments discussing this bill's strong focus on high-quality customer service delivery and the inclusion of key customer protection provisions. As we have heard during this debate, a key feature of the South-East Queensland water reform program was the creation of three separate distributor-retailer businesses for South-East Queensland. These businesses would be responsible for improving the coordination and management of the water supply, delivering improved and more efficient water and wastewater services to customers and improving the management of water and wastewater infrastructure. Already the state owned water grid is delivering bulk water supply security for the Queensland of today and the Queensland of tomorrow.

The further reforms ultimately mean that customers will enjoy a better and more reliable water supply now and into the future. Specifically, this bill requires each distributor-retailer to develop a customer service charter which clearly defines a water customer's rights and obligations. This is a critically important matter because distributor-retailers will now be the main interface point with customers through the issuance of wastewater and water bills and the delivery of water services.

Importantly, an independent dispute resolution service and guaranteed service level standards will be established and will ensure customers are provided with the assurances they need in respect of water supply. These amendments deliver improved access to information for customers and provide critical tools for the assessment and review of the distributor-retailer performance.

This bill also establishes an important hardship policy to assist those customers who may be experiencing circumstances which make it difficult for them to pay their water and wastewater bills. Provisions in this bill relating to the minimum supply of water for health and sanitation purposes, instalment payments and adequate notice requirements mean that those customers are supported in such circumstances.

The amendments in this bill are good amendments which continue the good work of this government in providing water supply for Queenslanders both now and into the future. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the minister, his staff, the departmental staff and the Parliamentary Counsel for their hard work in respect of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (8.05 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the government's South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I note that the government's bill amends 11 pieces of legislation that have already been read out so I will not read them out again.

I note that the stated aims of the legislation are: to improve regional coordination and the management of water supplies due to the reduced number of entities; to establish a more regional rather than localised basis for water and wastewater service provision, thereby refocusing the industry on more consistent customer service; to create significant economies of scale; to provide for efficiency in service provision at the distribution and retail level; to enhance customer service and improve employee skills through the amalgamation of technical skill sets and clearly focused entities; and to improve asset management and service delivery objectives through the establishment of stand-alone entities with responsibility for clearly identified elements of the supply chain.

I wish to commend the shadow minister for natural resources, mines and energy, Jeff Seeney, on his most significant contribution to the discussion of this bill and for his efforts to prosecute the government for its failure to efficiently manage our precious water resource. My contribution to the debate will have to be short due to the government's guillotining of the debate. My contribution builds on the contribution of the shadow minister and other opposition members in specific areas and local application. As such, I commend the shadow minister's speech to those desiring a more in-depth understanding of the bill.

While I support the general aims of the bill and accept that some aspects of the legislation are needed to progress South-East Queensland water management from its low level, I do so with great reservation about some parts of the bill and with the overall sense that the majority of residents of Cleveland and the broader Redlands continue to be angry about the way this government took control of what once was Redland Water and drove up the price of water in doing so.

On previous occasions I have spoken on matters pertaining to water in the Redlands. Tonight I continue to air my concerns on behalf of my electorate. I will make several points. Firstly, Redlands City is a water rich area of South-East Queensland and contributes water to the South-East Queensland water grid. Water supply and security have been a high priority for successive Redland councils, long before the area reached city status. Water has been like liquid gold to the people of this region and they are fiercely parochial about this precious resource. It is acknowledged that long-term drought conditions and a growing population put water resources under pressure. However, the foresight of previous councils ensured the Redlands had sufficient water to provide for its community and to do so at a modest cost to consumers.

Secondly, Redlanders are fair-minded people and willing to share their resources. One region sharing its resources with another is understandable—whether it be water, agricultural products or mineral wealth. We are first Queenslanders after all. Thirdly, Redlanders are careful users of water as a precious commodity. Fourthly, Redlanders want to contribute to drought-proofing South-East Queensland but are tired of this government's politicising of water.

Fifthly, Redlanders are angry at the government for taking control for Redlands water from the council and for not adequately compensating them. Former mayor Councillor Seccombe represented the vast majority of residents in the Cleveland electorate when he stated—

All the investment this Council has made over decades to secure water supply have been stripped from us. Redlands has planned ahead and paid for its water security over the years and now we are being penalised.

Residents were incensed by the takeover of Redland Water by the state government. The well-managed Redland Water has been replaced by an inferior management system, and it appears to be getting worse with the new structures in this legislation.

Sixthly and finally, Redlanders feel that the new structures may not deliver a fair share of equity for the Redlands community and as a result they fear they will pay more for their water than they otherwise would have. I continue to condemn the government for its failed management of water in South-East Queensland—for its wastage, its overcharging for water, its roughshod attitude to the local councils and its contempt of local residents in the delivery of water services.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (8.10 pm): Tonight I am pleased to rise to speak to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill covers many areas including bulk water, which is very important in South-East Queensland, and I want to make a few comments about that. I also want to cover the changes contained in this legislation in relation to the coal seam gas industry, which is very big in my electorate. First of all, let us look at where we were with water here in Queensland. We had a very adequate water supply. This government decided not to build the Wolffdene Dam for political purposes and—

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! The House will come to order!

Mr HOBBS: As minister for natural resources I put together the Water Infrastructure Task Force which identified dams throughout the state, yet this government has ignored that report. Had it taken a look at that report, things would have been vastly different across the length and breadth of this state. Premier Beattie took over the water supply. He wanted to acquire it so he could sell it. That was the main reason he did it. Do members remember that squiggly map that he had with which he tried to show how disjointed the system was? The reality was that bulk water in Brisbane was about 30c a megalitre and now it has gone to \$1.16 a megalitre. It will go to \$2.46 a megalitre in 2015-16. We know what everything this government touches turns to. It is disgraceful! Everything it has touched—water infrastructure and road infrastructure—has just been a mess, and this is another example of that. The true cost of bulk water in this state is about 20c a megalitre, yet within one year there has been a 900 per cent increase over the base cost. Bulk water in New South Wales and Victoria costs 30 per cent less than it does in Queensland. We will now have the dearest water in Australia thanks to the Labor Party in this state. As I said, we will have the dearest water in Australia because of the way those opposite have handled it. It has been an absolute disgrace!

I turn now to the LNG industry, and there are many very serious concerns about that industry. One concern is that about 350,000 megalitres a year, which is a third the size of the Fairbairn Dam, will be extracted by the coal seam gas industry. That is taken from water below the surface and that water will then be used for various purposes—mostly it has been used for evaporation at this stage! This bill puts in place some mechanisms to improve that process. However, the real concern here is this: the fact is that once that water is taken out of the underground supply—that is, 350,000 megs a year—there will be a vacuum. Therefore, there will be leakages from the other aquifer that this state and this nation rely upon—the GAB, the Great Artesian Basin. Toowoomba recently got itself out of trouble because it went into the GAB to get water. Probably 60 per cent of Dalby's town supply is underground water. In Chinchilla it is 10 per cent, in Roma it is 100 per cent, in Mitchell it is 100 per cent, as it is in towns like the Tambos, the Blackalls, the Wintons and the Longreaches. Water supply for those towns' livelihoods is based on the GAB. We should also not forget the landholders who use the GAB.

The reality is that this government has allowed an industry to get going without the proper checks and balances. We do welcome the development of this industry, but we have to ensure, as does the industry, that it is doing the right thing by the environment and by the people so that the longevity of that project will in fact benefit everybody. So what is happening? The government is allowing drilling on prime agricultural irrigation land. What an absolute disgrace! I was at Cecil Plains where the rally was today with 350 people in attendance. This place was the most beautiful black soil country you would ever see in your life and it is proposed that six wells be put on this irrigation farmland. There is also going to be an evaporation pond put right next to the Condamine River at the headwaters of the Murray-Darling Basin, and that will be a contaminated site forever.

The site where the evaporation pond is to go is covered by about three feet of water—nearly a metre of water—when it floods. Therefore, there is going to be contamination for a start. Why are you allowing this to happen? You should not be able to do that, but you are doing it! You have allowed it, because you are so slack! You have no idea about running a business and no idea about trying to run the finances of this state, and it is an absolute disgrace! I heard a story from a landholder—this is really serious—whose property is three kilometres away from a well that is being drilled. At three o'clock in the morning she went outside because of the noise, and do you know what? There was a glass of water on her freezer and the glass of water shook and she had to grab it before it fell off the freezer. The bore collapsed. The ceiling popped. The gapping in the ceiling basically moved. That is happening out there now because you have not regulated the industry. You have no idea what you are doing!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to direct his comments through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: I am happy to speak through the chair. We have to understand that there are some good companies out there. In my electorate Santos and Origin are good companies that respond very quickly to issues, and they did. I rang up the person involved at Santos and the next day they were on the job talking to people. We appreciate that, and we are not blaming them. We blame the government because it has not put the regulations in place to manage this industry. It has not managed this industry at all! Those opposites could not even run a chook raffle. That is the problem. With regard to some of those bores that never before produced gas, you can light them up! You can turn your taps on and strike a match and they light up!

Government members interjected.

Mr HOBBS: Go out and have a look! All you have to do is listen. I am telling you what is happening.

Mr Finn: Where have you seen that?

Mr HOBBS: It is happening now in Chinchilla and it never happened before. You have to go and have a look. Let me tell you that this is happening because you have not managed the whole process.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to direct his comments through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: The pipelines are going in and 30,000 more wells will be drilled throughout the Surat Basin. We are looking at pipelines going everywhere. It seems as if freehold tenure does not have any precedent in relation to a mining tenure. I ask the minister to please consider very carefully the importance of everyone having an equal say—an equal share—in terms of giving an opinion in relation to their tenure as to where a pipeline goes. It appears as if the mining companies have more say where a pipeline goes than in fact a freehold landholder does, so I ask the minister to look at that issue.

In 2007 the department of infrastructure commissioned a report titled *Liquefied natural gas whole of state environmental impacts study* and you have absolutely ignored it. All the reports are in there of what is likely to happen—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Will the member remember that this is the third time that I have had to ask him to speak through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: I will speak through the chair. It is important that the government members understand that this report was done for them and they ignored it. Billions of dollars are being spent out there on the industry and they do not know how to manage it. They have the situation whereby they may end up with all of those towns out there running out of water. It may take five, 10, 20 or 30 years but those towns may run out of water. Does the government know what it was like during the drought to try to cart water to those towns and there were trucks and trains going through? It was very difficult. I ask the government to just think of what it is going to have to do if it has to do that for the whole of western Queensland.

The legislation contains make-good provisions. The company has to make good, but how can it make good if there is no water left, how can it make good if it cannot get water and how can it make good when it is gone? These wells last about 30 years. A hole is drilled and the water comes up with the gas. Then the coal is fractured so that the gas can come out. About 100,000 litres of fracturing material goes into those holes. I understand from talking to the companies that they use organic stuff. That is great. The reality is that we have not seen exactly what it is that goes down those holes. They are pouring this stuff into that coal seam area, which eventually goes into all the aquifers, and we do not know what it is. You cannot go to Bunnings and buy certain chemicals for your garden, because the government put in place regulations. But you can go out and pollute the Great Artesian Basin because you do not have the brains to know what to do.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the member speak through the chair. This will be his last warning.

Mr HOBBS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sorry. I am doing my best. I am being provoked. This is particularly important. I refer members to the recommendations in this report. I will not go through them tonight because I do not have the time to do it, but those recommendations were made in 2007. If the government had read that report and carried out its recommendations it would not have the problem that it has now. But the government is just too lazy to go out there and do the job that it is supposed to do. It cannot run anything at all.

There are something like 30,000 or 40,000 more of these wells to go out there and some properties will have 10, 50 or 70 wells. I know one person who reckons that he will have 100 wells on his place. Can members just imagine, on an irrigation farm, for instance, when you have five wells they have to put in a gravel road to get there and they then have to put a fence around the well to keep it secure. You lose all of that.

A government member interjected.

Mr HOBBS: There are no trees there because it is irrigated. There is an enormous cost involved and the compensation that is paid is virtually nothing in comparison. Although we want to have this development—and I say that we want the development out there, we want those towns to prosper and for this industry to survive—we have to get the state, the industry and the landholders to work cooperatively. Let me tell members that there is a firestorm coming out there and there will be civil disorder out there. I give members a fair warning. There will be civil disorder out there unless this matter is addressed properly.

This bill covers a few of the things that should be done. For instance, the bill talks about the environmental risk of coal seam gas water. There is nothing about the Great Artesian Basin. What about the water supply itself? You cannot even use a dinghy with a motor on Wivenhoe Dam, but you can go out and pollute the Great Artesian Basin. For heaven's sake, is nobody taking any notice of what is going on? I ask members opposite to just think about what they are doing and the cost of the future environmental impact that is likely to occur through their inaction. That is what they have to do. All I am doing is asking the members opposite to think before they put in place legislation that is going to severely harm the environment. You cannot even cut down a mangrove tree when you come down here to the coastal areas, but you can go out and potentially pollute the Great Artesian Basin, which is one of the wonders of the world.

The other day a ship was stuck on the Great Barrier Reef, which was a tragedy. But at the end of the day, the water rose and the ship came off the reef. There was a lot of drama. The Premier and the Prime Minister flew over it and, yes, there was some paint left on the reef, and that is a shame. But the reality is that there are a dozen such ships out there heading for our Barrier Reef and nobody is listening. That is important. I think we need to be serious about this, because we are talking about the sustainability of this state and this nation.

I ask the members opposite once again to think about how they are going to provide water to those towns if there is no water there. How are they going to do that? Do they want to pollute the Great Artesian Basin? Or do they want to sit there and do what they have done for years, which is nothing?

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (8.26 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Traveston Dam: what did we have there? Nothing but waste—a waste of \$500 million or thereabouts. We had \$2.5 billion for the water recycling debacle. The water grid was built on a cost-plus basis. It is going to cost you a couple of thousand dollars to employ somebody and you just whack on another 20 per cent for yourself, no problem at all. So what happened? The cost blew out to about double what it should have cost to bring that water grid to fruition. Billions have been spent on a desalination plant that is just ticking over.

What is the result of all of this? Very little in real terms except for one thing: price rises for water for my constituents as well as for everyone else in South-East Queensland. I am told that the cost will be up from around the \$506 per household that it was last year to \$747 per household in 2012-13—a 50 per cent increase. That increase is on top of price rises in electricity, fuel, and on and on it goes. The big sleeper in all of this is the fluoride issue. That debacle is not over yet. In that regard, there is more pain to come. That is all just further confirmation of the mismanagement and incompetence of this government. When will it stop? When this government is voted out of office. That is when it will stop. The people of Queensland have had enough.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—Ind) (8.29 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. Whilst I served my five years on the Logan City Council I witnessed firsthand the implications restructuring had for the council and, more importantly, for the ratepayers of Logan City. It has had even more of an impact on the Scenic Rim Regional Council in terms of its doubling in size while its ratepayer base has halved. The debacle of taking the water asset over and then giving it back cost the Logan City Council some \$120 million. Unfortunately, that equates to about \$1,100 per rateable household in Logan City which is almost equivalent to the average rates for one year.

More concerning was the fact that many of the staff were left in limbo in terms of where they had to set up their futures and where their jobs lay. I recall vividly a distraught staff member coming in to my office and asking what the future held for them. Unfortunately, as an elected representative for the Logan City Council I was none the wiser. We found out through the media. There was no consultation. It was very similar to the forced sale of assets, only here it was the forced taking of the assets.

The reality is that the ratepayers of the Scenic Rim Regional Council and Logan City Council have spent years and years putting billions of dollars into this infrastructure. As we know, through the forced council amalgamations key assets such as water and sewerage were the places councils could turn to ensure their financial viability and future. Unfortunately that was not the case and it was a double whammy. Those councils had to seek funds elsewhere.

I understand that the water entities of the 10 South-East Queensland regional councils will now form into three entities. It actually centralises water management and the economies of scale are drastically disproportionate now, particularly in relation to the Scenic Rim Regional Council. The water consumers in these two council areas will end up paying more. It has been projected that costs will more than double in five years from now, as we have seen with electricity. Unfortunately this will hit the bottom line of the ratepayer.

More importantly, it has set a dangerous precedent for councils when they formulate their budgets in relation to where they should and should not put that revenue. Unfortunately, now that the state government has said that it can take their assets as it pleases and whenever it pleases, it makes it very difficult to formulate a sensible council budget for the future because they do not know whether or not an entity will be taken over. It will make it that much harder for councils to formulate their four-year corporate plans for the future.

It is very concerning. It has dealt such a blow to local councils. They are on the verge of becoming completely irrelevant. The question now is whether or not we empower them. It is absolutely critical that councils, now more than ever, are empowered. They are becoming more and more irrelevant yet they have more and more responsibilities. It is a double-edged sword, unfortunately, with very few streams of revenue coming into local governments and mayors who have largely become figureheads for their communities with very little say in where the very little money that comes in is spent. We have seen much of that money going into administration and logistics rather than rubber on the road.

It is very concerning for the Scenic Rim Regional Council in particular in the Beaudesert electorate. Unfortunately, as I said, this has set a precedent and the councils are unsure where to put that money. I think it is time the government had a good look at itself and was honest with the people. Is it the intention to fold councils? If so, do it. If it is not then empower them, because the slow death of local governments in Queensland is costing the ratepayer an enormous amount of money. It is about time we had a round table to work out whether local councils are going to be viable and relevant into the future or whether the intention is to actually fold them.

How this water debacle has unfolded in recent years has been fairly ad hoc and irresponsible. I hope that, if nothing else, all of us can learn from those mistakes and make sure that this approach is not taken again.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (8.33 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. This evening I would like to address the benefits of the distributor-retailers taking over water and wastewater infrastructure planning in South-East Queensland. This bill requires the distributor-retailers to strategically plan for the long-term supply of water and wastewater services for customers within their area. Stage 2 of the South-East Queensland water reform required the creation of three distributor-retailer water businesses for the South-East Queensland region to, firstly, improve the coordination and management of water supply; secondly, deliver improved and more efficient water and wastewater services to customers; and, thirdly, improve the management of water and wastewater infrastructure.

Giving distributor-retailers the responsibility for planning for the supply of water and wastewater infrastructure ensures a broader geographic application than planning by individual local governments. This allows greater efficiency to be achieved in all aspects of planning including assessment of demand, determination of acquired assets, network planning and design and the timing of delivery. When preparing their individual network and services plans, each distributor-retailer will also be required to consult with the neighbouring distributor-retailer to achieve any possible efficiency in supplying infrastructure across their boundaries.

The three distributor-retailers will be required to prepare a single manual which sets out the design and construction standards for water and wastewater infrastructure which will apply across the South-East Queensland region. These standards are currently contained in the separate planning schemes of the individual local governments. A single comprehensive manual will have significant benefits for developers in knowing what standards can be expected to apply in their proposed development wherever they operate in the South-East Queensland region and also will meet a long-term call for greater consistency of standards across the region. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.36 pm). I rise to participate in the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I note that this bill proposes significant amendments to the Environmental Protection Act, the Sustainable Planning Act, the Sustainable Planning Regulation, the Water Act, the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation.

In speaking to this bill and the range of amendments to those various acts of parliament, I table for the benefit of the minister and other members a letter dated 13 May 2010 from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to me. I table a further letter dated 19 March 2010 from environment and resource management department project officer Wade Rogers to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. I table a further letter dated 19 March 2010 from the Department of Environment and Resource Management under the hand of Wade Rogers to some of my constituents. I propose to touch on that

letter briefly in relation to the impact of this proposed legislation. Those constituents are Noel and Liz Caffery, who reside at 107 Bli Bli Road, Bli Bli. I table a fourth letter dated 23 April 2010 from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade, the minister who has carriage of the bill before us, the Hon. Stephen Robertson, to me. I table a final email dated 18 May 2010 from my constituents Mr and Mrs Noel Caffery.

Tabled paper: Copies of five letters regarding the designation of a stormwater drainage feature on private property at Bli Bli [2258].

The reason for tabling those letters is that this bill deals with issues involving the coordination and management of wastewater plans. What we see on the Sunshine Coast is a major conflict between our local regional council and our local constituents in the area of Bli Bli in relation to the management of storm water. We have seen this council, and the previous Maroochy Shire Council, approve successive developments without proper management of stormwater run-off. We have seen the council rely on the assumption that a former sugarcane drain was a watercourse, yet department advice after department advice has been categorical that the former sugarcane drain is not a watercourse. What we see is a council walking away from its responsibilities to provide proper management and approvals for the development applications which in the past have been submitted to the Maroochy Shire Council and the current Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

I ask the minister to please intervene and assist my constituents in applying pressure to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to have appropriate funds allocated in this year's budget to resolve the former council's failings to provide proper management of the stormwater run-off from these developments which former councils have successively approved.

The issue is very clear: there is no watercourse; it is a former sugarcane drain that former councils have been able to claim as a watercourse so that they do not have to take responsibility for it. They should have passed the responsibility on to the developers to make sure there is proper management of the stormwater run-off from the proposed developments. Now we see landowners significantly affected by flooding, because this council and former councils were not prepared to take advice from the proper state government department, which made it very clear that there was no watercourse involved. Instead, it was a former sugarcane drain.

I take this opportunity to thank the minister for his tolerance, I thank him for the advice from his departmental staff and I thank him for the briefing I had this afternoon with his departmental officers. I urge the minister to try to apply some pressure to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to allocate appropriate funds in this year's budget to resolve this problem. I thank the minister for his support.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (8.40 pm): I rise to support the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. In the interests of time I will restrict my comments to the proposed amendments to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. The water supply act was established to further strengthen the safety and reliability of Queensland water supplies. Among other things, the water supply act established frameworks to regulate drinking water and recycled water supplies to protect public health. The water supply act also relocated the dam safety regulatory framework from the Water Act 2000 to continue the regulation of referable dams.

In general terms, the amendments contained in this bill are as a result of ongoing evaluations and the implementation of the water supply act over the past two years. Those evaluations have highlighted the need for refinements to ensure drinking water service provider and recycled water provider reporting obligations are adequate for the protection of public health. Also, the changes ensure that the regulatory burden on water supply dam owners is not unnecessarily onerous and the dam safety regulator has significant powers to protect lives in case of emergency. The frequency of failure impact assessments of large water dams will be determined by the dam safety regulator to ensure the regulatory burden is appropriately balanced with the risk to persons living downstream of a referable dam. This is a change from the current arrangements that require certain dams to undergo a failure impact assessment every five years, regardless of the dam's remoteness or development within the failure impact zone.

Now it will be clear that dams containing dangerous waste and other dams used for containing waste or preventing contamination of the environment are regulated under the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The safety of water dams will be regulated under the water supply act. All water dams that meet the eight-metre height and storage capacity criteria in the water supply act will be subjected to a failure impact assessment, including dams that incrementally increase in size. The dam safety regulator's powers to take action and recover expenses in an emergency involving a potential dam failure have been broadened to avoid delays when the dam owner does not have the capacity to take action. The dam safety regulator will also be able to make a determination as to whether there is a population at risk from dam failure when a dam has not had a formal failure impact assessment or a previous assessment has not found persons at risk and give appropriate direction to the dam owner in an emergency.

Other measures in the bill will continue to strengthen requirements on water service providers to have strategies in place to assist in managing water security in times of drought. Relevant water service providers that have not prepared a draft management plan and are not exempt from doing so could face a penalty of up to 200 penalty units. Public safety will be better protected in this bill by ensuring timely reporting by drinking water and recycled water providers of any noncompliance with regulated water quality criteria and the occurrence of any prescribed incident that is likely to have an adverse effect on water quality, such as a bushfire in a catchment. This bill also extends reporting obligations to include information on corrective and preventative actions taken or proposed to be taken by the relevant providers in relation to water quality noncompliances and prescribed incidents. Annual reporting requirements for both drinking water and recycled water providers have been broadened to ensure full public disclosure—which is very important for confidence in our water supply—of these matters in the providers' annual reports, which are available to the public.

Since the establishment of the water supply act, recycling schemes sourcing water from large treatment plants have needed approval under both the water supply act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. Evaluation of these arrangements has determined that all greywater used can be adequately regulated under the Plumbing and Drainage Act only. This bill provides for the transfer of the greywater regulation from the water supply act to the Plumbing and Drainage Act and makes necessary transitional arrangements for the two greywater recycling schemes approved under the water supply act.

The dam safety regulator will also be expressly authorised to provide information about dams, their location and owners' details, and persons at risk, to entities responsible for dealing with disasters and emergencies. This bill will extend authorisation to the regulator to disclose water quality data to a limited number of entities including, of course, Queensland Health. This is a necessary amendment to safeguard public health and this change overcomes the limitation in the current law by allowing data to be disclosed in its original form. Collectively, the amendments to the water supply act will improve the framework for the delivery of safe and reliable water supplies for Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (8.46 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. My first comments relate to the provisions surrounding the water distribution and retailing services in South-East Queensland. The bill seeks to provide a regulatory framework for the new distributor-retailers to deliver from 1 July 2010 water and wastewater services to the south-east as part of stage 2 of the South-East Queensland water reform program. Stage 1 of the water reform program commenced on 1 July 2008, with the establishment of four state owned bulk water entities solely responsible for ensuring water security and safe water supplies across the South-East Queensland region. Those entities own south-east Queensland's bulk supply, bulk transport and manufactured water infrastructure and businesses. The fourth entity, the South East Queensland Water Grid Manager, operates as the single purchaser of bulk water services and the single seller of bulk water in the south-east and operates the South-East Queensland water grid.

Commencing on 1 July 2010, stage 2 will see the separation of the distribution and retail functions for water and waste water from what were, prior to amalgamation, council entities and transfer them to three separate distribution retail businesses. This legislation provides the framework to achieve the objective. From the minister's second reading speech I note that these distributor-retailers will not only have a role in development approvals and asset management but will also take over frontline customer service interfaces from the councils. I am hopeful that these transitions are better executed than the Health pay system transition. Probably they will be, given that they are being administered by local governments rather than this incompetent state government.

I also hope that the retailers are adequately staffed for customer inquiries, for, as sure as night follows day, the number of inquiries will skyrocket when customers start to question the massive increase in their water bills. Projections point to increases of nearly 50 per cent by 2012-13 from 2009 levels. On the back of other utility price rises, this indicates to me that the proposed efficiency objectives, as mentioned on page 2 of the explanatory notes, might be mere fluff words from a government that has let ordinary Queenslanders foot the bill for its continued economic mismanagement. Planning and asset management are all important in improving our methods of water business management, but it is at the hip-pocket where residents of the Aspley electorate will notice the impact of the new systems. It has been the incompetent administration of planning and asset management by this state government that has left Queensland residents footing the bill for unnecessarily expensive bulk water systems. Because of those past failures, it is important that we closely monitor the reforms to ensure that consumers are truly delivered better water services in the south-east.

Now I would like to direct my comments to the provisions surrounding coal seam gas water. Queensland is highly prospective for coal seam gas due to a combination of favourable geology and extensive coal resources. Current projects indicate that, in 2009-10, 130 petajoules can be expected to be produced in Queensland and the department's website states that by 2010 about 70 per cent of Queensland's gas market will be supplied from coal seam gas.

But of course there are challenges that exist as a result of Queensland's increasing reliance on CSG—not least of which are the environmental issues that are dealt with in this legislation as it seeks to amend the Environment Protection Act 1994. The legislation would enhance the requirements for environmental management plans in relation to CSG water; establish criteria and an evaluation process for assessing the effectiveness of the management of CSG water; and prohibit the use of evaporation dams except where there is no other feasible alternatives.

We are all aware of recent media reports in relation to concerns regarding the variable salinity concentrations in CSG water, the issues surrounding other possible contaminants and the effect that the removal of CSG water has on the artesian supplies. These are controversial and complex issues and the LNP takes them very seriously. That is why we have committed to the establishment of a rural water advisory panel to look at the impacts of the CSG and underground coal gasification industries on water resources and also the opportunities for the economic use of ponded CSG water.

LNG projects, as the minister states, have 'huge potential to generate jobs and investment in Queensland'. I know the vast majority of Queenslanders recognise the importance of the mining and energy resource sector to the Queensland economy. That is why I think there has been such a strident opposition to the federal Labor Party's policy of a resources super tax that potentially stifles investment and sends our jobs offshore. This state government should stand up to its federal counterparts and stop this latest attempt by Mr Rudd to stick another great big new tax on Australians to support his reckless spending.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (8.51 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 before the House this evening. It is no secret that the south-east corner has struggled to have an adequate water supply in the last decade. But the real concern is why South-East Queensland continues to struggle with its water supply. Is it right to blame the drought experienced across our country? Is it right to blame an unlucky stretch of poor rainfall? Is it right to blame climate change? No. All of these statements are excuses trotted out by a Labor government that has failed to provide working infrastructure for the most densely populated region of our state.

This Labor government has had 12 years in this House and rivers of income from the resources sector, yet it has failed to secure an adequate water supply for South-East Queensland. This Labor government has governed Queensland during a resources boom that flooded its Treasury with hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, yet it has not used those funds to provide real solutions to the water problems of the south-east corner. The full credit of surviving the last near disaster was obviously the resilience of the people of South-East Queensland, who stood shoulder to shoulder and conserved their water because they knew of the dire straits that were facing them.

The Bligh government planned to destroy the Mary River valley in the name of political spin. It planned to plunder regional Queensland again to appease the voters in Brisbane with untrue PR, and that cost Queensland taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and will add to the future financial burden of this state. After 12 years the Bligh government has failed to secure the water supply for the current population of the south-east corner, let alone the future population growth it will experience. The bill before the House is merely a bandaid solution to the problem. Like a bandaid, it is only a temporary solution that will get dirty and slowly peel off to reveal the problems of the south-east corner that still exist. While this bill is a small step, it is a far cry from a solution to the water problems of South-East Queensland that we still face.

As the member for Bundaberg, I speak on this bill affecting South-East Queensland because I have real concern that this state government's incompetence in managing the South-East Queensland water supply may extend to the Bundaberg region. The bill before the parliament today is inadequate to solve the water problems of the south-east corner, and I have concerns that this state government will repeat the Traveston Crossing Dam debacle in an effort to solve the water problems of the south-east corner into the future. Specifically, in relation to the Bundaberg electorate, I refer to the plans the Labor government has regarding Paradise Dam.

In a letter to the Premier, Bundaberg Regional Council, Bundaberg Canegrowers, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Isis Canegrowers inquired whether this state government planned to divert water from Paradise Dam to other areas including the south-east corner. It took the Premier several months to respond to this letter and gave no guarantee that water from Paradise Dam would remain in the Bundaberg region. The reply merely stated that the dam was not required to supply South-East Queensland at this time. It did not make any guarantees that it would not be required into the future. It also did not mention whether water would be piped out of the region to Hervey Bay or to

Maryborough. Paradise Dam is vital to the Bundaberg region, and this dam was built to be the major provider of water to our agricultural and horticultural industries, as well as supplementing our domestic supply.

Water is important not just for the livelihoods of the people of the Burnett region but for the future economic stability of the region. Water cannot be currently pumped out of the Bundaberg region, yet the Bligh government will not give a guarantee that it will not happen in future. With responses such as the Premier's to the letter sent by the Bundaberg stakeholders, I have some very real concerns about the Bligh government's plans for Paradise Dam. I ask the government: what will it do to secure water supply that will cope with the future growth of the south-east corner?

Finally, I ask the government to guarantee that it will not pump water out of the Bundaberg region. To date, we have not had any firm commitment, and I believe that the people of the Bundaberg region deserve to have confidence going forward because they need to plan for their businesses, they need to plan for their family and they need to plan for the future of their children and their children's children. If the region is to expand, it needs a constant supply of water to be able to grow crops and also to stimulate industry which will benefit the whole area. If we are able to do that, then we will have a much more viable industry than we already have.

We currently have a horticultural industry that produces approximately \$400 million at the farm gate, which equates to approximately \$1.5 billion going out from there. It is a diverse industry, along with other agricultural industries, which is its strength. But the source of all of that is water, and water is gold. We need to have the comforting thought in our mind that water will be there for the future, not just for the Bundaberg region but for the surrounding areas.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—LNP) (8.57 pm): The debate on this bill is somewhat restricted because of the guillotine that has been put on it, but I do thank colleagues on this side of the House for sacrificing time and in some cases incorporating their speeches in *Hansard*. It looks like we are running on time. There will be enough time left for the minister to reply and then to move on to the committee stage.

I want to speak about two issues—the water supply to Toowoomba which is now hooked in by pipeline to the South-East Queensland water grid and also the growing concerns about coal seam methane gas water and the need to find a balance between the exciting mining natural resource opportunities of the Surat Basin and agriculture in that area. We should remember that the Great Artesian Basin is one of the great wonders of the world. Whilst you cannot see it, it covers an unbelievably massive area of Australia. If it were not for that, there would be virtually no life west of about Dalby simply because there would be no water.

Toowoomba is unique in that it is an inland city. It sits at about 2,000 feet altitude on top of a range. We are one of the few cities that are not able to locate dams in higher areas to allow the water to flow to the city as happens in almost every other part of Australia. As a consequence, Toowoomba has three main dams to the north of the city: one based on the western fall of the Great Divide and two on the eastern fall of the Great Divide. The water from those dams has to be lifted vertically about 468 metres by a series of 600 horsepower electric motors to the treatment point at Mount Lofty and then to the city.

Unfortunately, in recent years there has been unbelievably low rainfall just in the area of those dams. They have a massive catchment, but they have a good catchment if there are reasonable storm rains. Whilst there has been rain in the last couple of summers all around, it just seems to miss that area. There are all sorts of interesting hypotheses as to why it is not raining in that area, including the fact that a very high-tech military establishment is located in that area. It is just a freak of nature. There will be another year when there will be a lot of rain in that area.

As a consequence, the water levels in those three dams fell to about eight per cent. Only a few years ago we had a major debate in the city—it was a very divisive debate that broke up friendships and split the community right down the middle—about treating sewage and converting it to potable water. A vote was held and it was lost by a very big margin and that plan did not go ahead. At the time the cost of that project was quoted as being about \$43 million. Those who were in the know knew that it would have cost far more than that. The early estimates then were at least \$83 million, but it could have cost a lot more. Regardless of that, people did not want to drink treated sewage and that was what it came down to.

As a consequence, a water task force was put together and a number of people were on it. At the same time submissions were called for. I did put a submission in to that task force and I also went to see the Premier and the Deputy Premier with a number of particular proposals. I will not go into them tonight, but I believe they were very pragmatic and practical. In the meantime the task force decided to propose that a water pipeline be built from Wivenhoe Dam. That proposal was successful and had a total cost of approximately \$187 million. The Toowoomba council has to pay \$112 million towards the cost of that pipeline. The balance, which is approximately 40 per cent, is being put in by the government. As a city we are certainly appreciative of that amount of money that has been put in, and I give the

government credit for it. However, at the same time it has left a huge amount of money—\$112 million—to be found by the council in order to provide a secure supply of water for the city. That pipeline will provide water to the city for 30 years or more at the rate of approximately 15,000 megalitres a year or a bit more.

During the drought the city had the lowest water consumption of any city in Australia. It was an unbelievable effort by the people in the city. From memory the people in the city of Toowoomba used about 120 litres of water per head per day. Many people put in tanks. People learnt to have different systems of gardening. It is amazing what people can do when they have to do it.

There are a lot of bores in Toowoomba. There are a lot of private bores that have been there since olden times and also some others have been put down. In this time of great difficulty the city council put down a number of bores into the basalt and some bores into the eastern edge of the Great Artesian Basin. It was those bores that, once linked up, gave the city enough water to get it through until that pipeline was completed.

Whilst the city is now linked into the South-East Queensland water grid and has to pay the \$112 million contribution to the capital cost of that pipeline, another serious issue has made the payment of that money extremely difficult. All water users in Toowoomba have had their access fee doubled, from \$320 per household to \$640 per household, and all the costs of water have doubled, from approximately 80c a kilolitre to approximately \$1.60. That has come about partly because of the cost to the council of funding the capital component of that pipeline. But at the same time the \$6 million a year that the city was receiving from government infrastructure grants was cut out at the last state budget right across the state. I will give honourable members an example of how it has affected our city. It would have been great to put that \$6 million towards some of the costs to the city. It would have made it easier for the city to meet the interest costs of that pipeline. However, because it is not there, it has had to double the water access fee and increase the water charge.

At a time when everybody is talking about getting people out into the regions, the loss of this \$6 million a year infrastructure charge, which was mainly helping with water supply, sewerage systems and various headworks charges, has been massive. This council has been trying to bring together eight separate councils into one, which is a massive job and is one of the biggest amalgamations in the state. It has been a devastating blow for a council that has been trying to find these savings from amalgamation, refocusing of infrastructure and bringing infrastructure together to then find that \$6 million a year that was always there in infrastructure grants and subsidies, particularly for water and sewerage, has been taken away. Again, it is the people who are hit with increased costs. Electricity has increased by 54 per cent, gas has increased by 350 per cent and now there has been a doubling of water costs. It is massive. Old people and people on fixed incomes just cannot find the money. They can find four or five per cent, but they cannot find increases of this particular amount.

The member for Warrego mentioned a little bit of the history of water in our state. We should never, ever forget the fact that the Wolffdene Dam was canned for a political reason. The important thing about water supply in South-East Queensland is that dams need to be located where there is heavy rainfall. There is heavy rainfall all through the back of that Tamborine area. That area has some of the heaviest rainfall in South-East Queensland. The dam site was ideal. It was deep so that there would not be evaporation, as was the case with Traveston, which was going to be very wide and very shallow. There would have been deep, cold water right where the population of Brisbane and South-East Queensland was expanding. It was one of the biggest logistical and infrastructure mistakes ever made in this state and we should never, never forget that.

One of the other issues that this bill touches on is coal seam methane gas extraction and the water that comes out with that gas. This bill amends the Environmental Protection Act in relation to preventing the evaporation of this water in the big evaporation ponds that have been built. They are similar to the irrigation ring tanks on the Darling Downs although they are probably not quite as big. Eventually, they will have to cover many tens of thousands of hectares if they are to continue to be used. I have looked at some of these. In a nation that is so short of water and an area of Australia that is as short of water as the western Darling Downs we have to wonder about the sheer waste of this water which comes out and is then blown into the area with snow-making type machines or put into these great big ponds to be evaporated. Of course the real problem is the saltiness of it. A small amount of it can be used for stock, and stock can tolerate up to about 3,000 milligrams per litre of water. The salt content of this water is around about that—about 2,500 milligrams. Interestingly, this salt is not NaCl; it has a lot of other nasties such as fluoride and other chemical compounds in it that make up the various salt compounds within this water that is brought up. It comes up as a natural process of extracting the gas from within the fractured seams of the coal. It is attached to the gas and it comes up and is separated at the well head.

If you worked on an average of 2,500 milligrams of salt per litre, about 25 gegalitres of this water is going to be produced during normal times per year. That means 62,500 tonnes of salt per year will be brought out. If honourable members wonder how much that is, they can look at it in terms of the B-doubles that trundle through Toowoomba carrying grain, coal and so forth. They carry about 32 tonnes.

By my calculation, the amount of salt created would be equivalent to about eight of those B-doubles per day. How do they shift that amount of salt? What do they do with it? Where does it go? Do they dump it in the sea? No, they probably could not do that because of the environmental considerations and so on.

I think a lot of research is needed into what to do with this water, how to evaporate it and what to do with the by-product after the salt is taken out. It is hoped we can get the salt out economically. Meandering through the coal seam methane gas field is the second longest river system in the world—that is, the Condamine-Balonne-Darling-Murray river system. Whilst that river system is the second longest river system in the world, it is basically a drain. It goes through low-rainfall areas. It does not have a water shed at the headwaters. It does not have a rainforest near it. It does not have snow-capped mountains to put water into it. It only has a couple of little springs that feed into it at the back of Killarney. Unless it rains heavily and floods, that river does not get a very big flow. It would be wonderful if a method were found to extract the salt or use the salt and then we could put some of that water, in a purified fashion, into the Condamine to maintain the environmental flow, to use for irrigation purposes or to flow down towards southern Australia.

The member for Warrego spoke passionately about the Great Artesian Basin. He represents an electorate that depends almost wholly on that. Almost everything in the city of Toowoomba depends on what happens in the towns to the west of us. We rely on agriculture and mining. Without the water of the Great Artesian Basin those towns out there would not exist. There would be no water for sheep or cattle to drink. There would not be work for our medical services, the boarding schools, the accountants, the lawyers, the machinery salespeople, the car salespeople or the workshops in Toowoomba if we did not have people out in these towns. It is the Great Artesian Basin that sustains those towns and sustains those enterprises.

It is one of the great wonders of the world. No-one really knows where the water comes from. They say it may come from the highlands of New Guinea and seep through under the geographic plates. It is the only reason that in this arid area of the world we can have people, livestock and industries. People could never exist out there with rainwater tanks. They have to have bore water from the Great Artesian Basin.

I can understand the concern that is arising now. On the one hand we have this great opportunity—the coal seam methane gas industry—but it is unknown technology. We in the city of Toowoomba are excited about it. On top of our diversification we now also have the mining and coal seam methane gas industries to the west of our city. We have an unemployment rate of about 1.8 per cent. It is putting the icing on the cake, we might say. Young men are able to work as contractors or drivers of four-wheel drives or machinery. Everybody is making money out of the mining industry. That will continue provided it does not get hit with this 40 per cent super tax.

That is what is sustaining my area. The benefits flow into South-East Queensland and Australia and provide us with a strong economy. The people who work in the agricultural areas are really concerned. No-one really knows about this. There are tens of thousands of drills being put down in a grid pattern. The minister might know, but I think they put one down about every 600 or 800 metres. They are put down in a grid pattern. It provides logistical problems for people on the land such as contractors accessing their land and putting down a bore in the middle of an irrigation field or in the middle of an area where they plough. The furrows have to then be changed. They have to go around the bore instead of going straight up and down. They have problems with cattle and all the rest of it. This has to be sorted out, too. I think that is the subject of another bill that was brought into the House this week. I am pleased that that has been brought in.

We have to take very seriously the concerns of the people out there with regard to the drilling of these tens of thousands of holes. They go down through the strata to the coal. The fracturing process has to break up the coal and free up the gas and water to come out of all those seams. What will that do to the Great Artesian Basin? Something like 350,000 megalitres of water will come out of the underground. It is almost unknown what is going to happen. We would not want to get 10, 15 or 20 years down the track and find that we have one of the most horrifying and terrible disasters to hit Australia.

I would encourage the government of the day to take great care with this. Yes, we need the mining industry. It has been wonderful for the economy of that area. We need to have a balance between mining and environmental issues. We should never forget the importance of the Great Artesian Basin. We need to make sure that the things we do today are well managed, well researched and well checked. There has to be cooperation to ensure that we overcome any problems and do not destroy this magnificent asset.

People would never allow and Australians have never wanted drilling on the Great Barrier Reef. If we drilled down through the coral we would be appalled. Here is one of the wonders of the world and we are drilling down through it with, in many cases, unknown results in the end. I am saying in a rational way that it is so important that we make sure that no mistakes are made. Everyone is excited about the economic prospects. I hope we can be sure that, given the importance of the Great Artesian Basin to Australia but particularly Queensland, it is safeguarded and preserved in the future.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.15 pm), in reply: First, I thank all honourable members for their participation in the debate, including members opposite. I thank all members for meeting the time frames that have been set down for consideration of this bill.

It has taken leadership to deliver the South-East Queensland water grid and we are proud to have delivered an unprecedented level of water security for South-East Queensland. For this reason, I am pleased to be completing the reform process through this bill. While it is important to build infrastructure, it is just as important to ensure it is managed efficiently.

The establishment of the three new council owned distributor-retailers will increase both the quality and the efficiency of water and wastewater services in South-East Queensland. They will save on operating costs, result in improved coordination and water supply management and create a clearer accountability framework. They will deliver regionally consistent and guaranteed service standards, consistent billing and improved complaints handling.

For the first time there will be consistent and high standards for customer service, infrastructure and planning right across the South-East Queensland region. For the first time, water and wastewater distribution infrastructure will be aligned with the South-East Queensland Regional Plan and council plans.

The distributor-retailers will also be responsible for setting retail water and wastewater prices. This is in much the same way as their council owners currently set retail prices. On this point, I would like to offer some clarity in light of what some members opposite have said. The state is not going to set retail water and wastewater prices. The Queensland Competition Authority will monitor the prices charged by distributor-retailers. Over time there will be full regulatory oversight of prices by the QCA. This is a significantly more rigorous oversight than has previously occurred.

The government has been fully transparent about bulk water prices. We have announced a 10-year bulk water price path. We have also sought to minimise the impacts on customers by only seeking a cost-of-debt return on drought infrastructure and by establishing a pensioner rebate scheme. I urge the distributor-retailers and their council owners to implement similar measures.

I would also like to clarify that under the new arrangements councils will continue to have the latitude to offer the kinds of concessions they presently do. I encourage councils to continue to offer these concessions through the council owned distributor-retailers.

The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act further strengthen the management of coal seam gas water. They implement the government's policy announced in the blueprint for Queensland's LNG industry. The phasing out of evaporation dams as the primary way of disposing of coal seam gas water supports the already strict rehabilitation requirements which require land to be returned to pre mining use. Phasing out the evaporation dams is necessary to prevent large amounts of salt waste from accumulating in the environment. This is an important reform in anticipation of this industry's continued expansion. Additionally, it will encourage water to be treated and used for other beneficial purposes such as crop irrigation, watering stock and industrial purposes, a point acknowledged by many members from both the government and the opposition.

While I note that the opposition is in support of these amendments, I want to provide comment on a number of points. The member for Callide and others have raised concerns about the monitoring of water in the Great Artesian Basin and the impacts of coal seam gas extraction. Whilst there is an existing program of groundwater monitoring in the GAB, monitoring will increase in line with CSG activities. Importantly, this additional monitoring will be assessed yearly and, if impacts on groundwater are detected, CSG operators will be required to rectify them.

Can I just say at this point in reflecting on some of the contributions of members opposite that, given the importance of the issues that we will all have to face, I think it is fair to say that what we need more so than anything else at this point in time is cool heads. There are important questions to answer. The government has indicated its commitment to ensuring that impacts on the GAB do not occur. We share the same recognition and passion for the sustainability of the GAB. More work has to occur. But I do note and I record my appreciation for the member for Callide approaching me to organise appropriate briefings from the experts for the opposition on a range of important issues which the member has highlighted during this debate. This is in fact in many respects the start of an ongoing process to increase regulatory and environmental oversight of the activities of this industry. I have indicated to the member for Callide my preparedness to make appropriate officers available maybe during the next sitting week or another suitable time to ensure that as many members as possible have access to the best information so they can not only build up their own knowledge but also impart that knowledge into the communities in which they operate. We will make sure that that happens in a timely way.

In response to comments made by the members opposite about the government's decision to transfer category 2 water authorities to local government or independent institutional structures, I wish to point out that the government has been consulting widely with category 2 water authorities, local

governments and other stakeholders. Most importantly, the way these changes are being managed put water authorities in control of the transfer options being pursued and the department will continue to address operational concerns as they arise. The amendments to the dam safety framework in the water supply act reduce the regulatory burden and cost on owners of large farm dams. These amendments also clarify that the water supply act's regulatory framework does not regulate dams containing hazardous waste. These will continue to be regulated under the Environmental Protection Act. The amendments to the recycled water and drinking water regulatory frameworks under the water supply act are targeted to enhance and clarify reporting obligations and reduce risk.

In conclusion, I turn to some amendments to be moved during consideration of the bill in detail. In respect of the amendments to section 27(2)(b) of the Nature Conservation Act 1992, this technical amendment seeks to correct an omission following the passage of the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill in 2007 to include the new form of tenure created by that act—that is, a national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). I now formally table the explanatory notes to the amendments that will be moved during the consideration in detail stage.

Tabled paper: Explanatory notes for amendments to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to be moved during consideration in detail by Hon. Robertson MP [\[2260\]](#).

In commending the bill to the House, I want to acknowledge the officers of the Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Queensland Water Commission who have worked so hard and diligently in the preparation of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 35, as read, agreed to.

Clause 36—

Mr SEENEY (9.24 pm): Clause 36 deals with the requirement for an environmental management plan for coal seam water or water that is a by-product of the production of coal seam gas. As the minister indicated in his second reading speech, this was an issue that occupied a considerable amount of attention from members in the House during this debate. As the minister indicated, it is an emotive issue. It is an issue that inspires a certain amount of passion, and that was obvious here in the House in contributions from members and is also very obvious in the communities that are affected by it. There is no doubt that the whole issue of water, reliable water supplies and the continuation of reliable water supplies engenders that sort of passion in landholders and that sort of concern in landholders, and the concerns that have been expressed are understandable.

Through the provisions of this clause this bill seeks to begin to address that issue of the vast quantities of coal seam gas water or water that is produced as a by-product of the extraction of coal seam gas. As was indicated during some of the second reading contributions, the solution up until now has been to see evaporation ponds as a solution for the disposal of that water. This clause ensures that an application for a coal seam gas environmental authority must have a management plan for the beneficial re-use of coal seam gas water and must have a management plan that looks at how much water is likely to be produced and provide some solution or some beneficial re-use for that water. Minister, in view of the importance that this issue was to some members in the debate, it is worthwhile exploring some of the provisions of this clause.

The clause proposes in paragraph (d) that the environmental management plan has to establish the proposed management of the water, including the use, treatment, storage or disposal of the water. There is nothing in the clause that indicates what will or will not be considered by the government to be an acceptable use or an acceptable solution, if you like, within that environmental management plan. As I indicated in my contribution to the second reading debate, there are already a number of very admirable uses that I am aware of. In the time that I have spent in the areas where these gas fields exist, I have been lucky enough to see some of the uses that this water is being put to. Some of the gas companies have invested considerable amounts of money in reverse osmosis desalination plants and water treatment plants of different types to ensure that they do have water that is of a quality that can be used for irrigation, for urban use and for stock use. However, it is an expensive business and there is no doubt that it is a lot easier to achieve that beneficial re-use in some areas rather than in others. There will continue to be questions about what the government is going to consider to be an appropriate use or what is going to be acceptable in these environmental management plans that are required by clause 36. There are a number of options which have been put to me at various times—things like artificial wetlands, which I personally think are not a bad idea. I think that a properly managed wetland is not going to be a problem in the areas of Central Queensland that I represent.

It will add certain environmental benefits to some of the areas that I represent. I know one particular case where coal seam gas water is currently being discharged into the environment—into the headwaters of a stream. When I look at the results from that and the fact that the stream runs more than it probably would do in a natural state, to my eye at least I can see that there are some environmental benefits in that, too. But it represents a change to the natural situation.

Certainly, I think the use of things such as artificial wetlands should also be considered alongside the other options, such as extensive irrigation operations. I believe there is some validity in a statement that was made to me a couple of weeks ago when I was in Taroom by one of the local identities who is well known for his involvement in the conservation movement. He is a bit of an enigma in Taroom, having a background in the conservation movement. He said to me—quite rightly, I think—that a good artificial wetland is better than a bad irrigation scheme any day. I think that is right. If we are going to force the coal seam gas companies, through these environmental management plans, to establish irrigation schemes simply to get rid of the water and to produce a bad outcome, or a less than average irrigation scheme, then a good artificial wetland is a better outcome for everybody.

I would like the minister to give some indication of how these environmental management plans are going to be assessed by the government—whether the government has processes in place towards forming a view as to what will or will not be acceptable in terms of management regimes for the water that is produced and what sort of process is going to be involved in approving the environmental management plans that are required by clause 36.

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for his contribution. I think it is fair to say that, in our view, it would not be appropriate to list in legislation what we consider to be appropriate means of disposing of this water. Rather, we would want to see the industry really apply itself—as the member has witnessed and as I have witnessed—to finding innovative solutions as to how this water can be used beneficially. However, they need to meet appropriate outcomes. This legislation gives guidelines that have already been and will continue to be put in place that will guide companies in the outcomes that they have to achieve through whatever means they come up with.

At this stage I thought it might be useful to point out that I was handed by my advisers the guideline that is currently in place, the Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000 'Approval of coal seam gas water for beneficial use'. On just flicking through that document I think the member will find it a very useful document to understand the outcomes that companies will have to achieve in terms of the technologies that they will apply for dealing with this coal seam gas water. It notes that the coal seam gas industry has been underway in a number of countries in the world and that there are plenty of experiences out there already that we can draw on as to what appropriate standards should be applied. I will table this guideline as part of a better means of communicating our thoughts and the regulations that we are currently implementing in this place and which we will continue to implement in the future.

Tabled paper: Copy of a document by the Department of Environment and Resource Management titled 'Guideline—Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000: Approval of coal seam gas water for beneficial use' [2259].

Mr SEENEY: I thank the minister for tabling that document. I have read it, but I will commend it to members of the House who have an interest. I think the minister would agree that it is very broad in terms of specifics. I take the minister's point to some extent in that it is a difficult area in which to define acceptable outcomes. I think there is some validity in what the minister says in that the industry needs to work on these solutions.

In addressing the issue in broad terms, I would like to get some indication from the minister as to whether anything has been ruled out in relation to being an acceptable solution. A number of things are always talked about when this issue is discussed. There is the issue of evaporation ponds, which are obviously ruled out by this legislation except in what are described as extraordinary circumstances. That is understandable and I would suggest that is a reasonable position.

The other issue that is quite often talked about is somehow reinjecting the water back into some sort of underground aquifer, given that the coal seams from which it comes are very low transmissive coal seams and it would be very difficult to do that. Some of the more permeable aquifers would suggest themselves to be options for reinjection. I think anybody who has looked at the available information on this issue would very quickly come to understand that the sandstone aquifers upon which things such as the Great Artesian Basin are based—in that case the precipice sandstone or even the Hutton sandstone which overlays it—have a much greater permeability than the coal seams from which the water is taken. That is why the whole fracturing process is necessary to remove the water from the coal seams in the first place. So to put the water back into the coal seams—at first glance at least—appears to be very difficult. But the option exists to use the water as a recharge option for other aquifers that members have expressed some concern about and which are relied upon by different types of industries as an ongoing water supply.

Are any of those options ruled out? Obviously, the legislation rules out evaporation ponds. Does the government have a particular position on reinjection? Does the government have a particular position on release into the environment—for example, in response to the point that I made earlier that a

good wetland is a much better option than a poor irrigation scheme? Does the government have a position on releasing this water into the environment as a long-term solution? Does the government have a position on reinjection? Or does the government have an open mind on all of those options?

Mr ROBERTSON: I think it is fair to say that we have an open mind. No, we have not ruled anything out in addition to the simple use of evaporation ponds. But in saying that I think it is important to apply the caveat that all of the consortiums that are currently going through the process to achieve their environmental licences are going through the Coordinator-General with, as the member has seen, quite detailed environmental impact assessments. That gets back to my earlier comment that you do not want to stifle innovation in terms of all of the ideas that the member has mentioned, but you want to make sure that whatever innovation is put in place meets particular performance requirements. That is the critical thing. As the member knows, the Coordinator-General operates at arm's length from government. So there is that level of independence. Again, one of the messages that I think we need to reinforce with landholders in this whole process is that the ideas that are put forward go through a rigorous process to ensure that, as much as we can guarantee, detrimental impacts do not occur or accrue over time. That is the benefit of the Coordinator-General process.

Again I get back to what I said earlier, and that is that we believe that the appropriate thing to do is to set performance standards rather than at this stage rule things in or out, reflecting the fact, of course, that we are operating across a very diverse landscape. Wetlands, et cetera, may work well in some places but may cause waterlogging in another place. Again that is where the performance requirement is probably most relevant as the safeguard for an appropriate technology or appropriate solution to the issue.

Mr SEENEY: To conclude the discussion, I take the opportunity to put on record my agreement with the minister in his recognition of the fact that we are dealing with a very diverse range of environments here. If one looks at the environments that are involved in the northern end of the gas area, which is in my electorate, they are very different from the environments that we are talking about where the concern is currently being expressed on the central and southern Darling Downs.

The point that I was trying to drive at is that that is why it is important for the government to keep an open mind. I accept the points that the minister has made about achieving acceptable outcomes, but I take the opportunity in the consideration of this clause to urge the minister and the government to keep a very open mind about what are acceptable solutions in the wide range of environments and situations that we are dealing with.

Clause 36, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 37 to 41, as read, agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (9.41 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Insertion of new clauses—

Mr ROBERTSON: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 41

Page 133, after line 15—

insert—

'Part 4A Amendment of Nature Conservation Act 1992

'41A Act amended

'This part amends the Nature Conservation Act 1992.

'41B Amendment of s 27 (Prohibition on mining and GHG storage activities)

'Section 27(2)(b)—

omit, insert—

'(b) an authority under section 34, 35, 42AD or 42AE has been granted, made, issued or given for the licence.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 42 to 104, as read, agreed to.

Clause 105—

Mr CRIPPS (9.42 pm): Clause 105 proposes to amend section 692 of the Water Act which requires a public notice of a proposal to amalgamate or dissolve a class 2 statutory water authority. The amendment proposes to dispense with the requirement if in respect of the proposed amalgamation or dissolution the chief executive is satisfied that in section 2 of the clause (a) the ratepayers in each authority area to which the proposed amalgamation or dissolution relates have been informed about the

proposal by the water authority for the area; (b) the proposed amalgamation or dissolution is because of action taken by the state in response to the Webbe-Weller review; and (c) the publication of the notice is not appropriate, having regard to the public interest. This is the clause that will facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Webbe-Weller review that proposes to abolish class 2 statutory water authorities. This clause proposes to remove a safeguard that would ordinarily be in place involving the requirement for a public notice to be issued to alert the community of this particular proposal.

Just because the Webbe-Weller review recommends that class 2 water authorities be abolished does not necessarily mean that the process set out in the Water Act should be put to one side. I think that the public notice ought to stay in place. In my view the reasons class 2 water authorities should be abolished have not been made effectively enough either by the minister in his second reading speech, the explanatory notes accompanying this bill or by DERM in its consultation with class 2 statutory water authorities.

Certainly the class 2 statutory water authorities in my electorate of Hinchinbrook are far from convinced that they ought to be abolished. Indeed, both I and the board of the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority have approached the minister about the inadequacies of the alternative arrangements for the management of drainage systems in North Queensland, being the transfer of powers, functions and responsibilities to local government authorities or to a non-statutory authority. As I pointed out in my second reading contribution to this debate, local councils have indicated that they are not enthusiastic at all about taking over the responsibilities of class 2 statutory water authorities and non-statutory entities will be at a distinct disadvantage in terms of raising funds and exercising powers of entry to undertake works because they no longer have those statutory powers. The representations I made and the representations the board of the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority have made to the minister have not really been answered satisfactorily. The replies just sort of batted away the points that were made and the minister's replies stuck to those two alternatives that I mentioned earlier.

I ask the minister to explain how class 2 water authorities have failed to such a degree that they ought to be abolished? I ask the minister to explain why we should agree to the recommendations of the Webbe-Weller review because I am far from convinced, and the class 2 water boards in my electorate are far from convinced, that they are not effectively carrying out the management of drainage systems in my electorate.

Mr ROBERTSON: This has been a debate that has been going on for some time since the publication of the Webbe-Weller review. What we have put in place is a process to determine whether category 2 water boards in various parts of the state have retained their function and relevance and that process continues. Whilst I appreciate that the member's role as a local member is to advocate for his local boards and, as I said, that is quite appropriate and understandable, it would be wrong of me to make determinations prior to the completion of the work undertaken by my department. One could well imagine the situation that would arise if I started giving guarantees to this water board or that category 2 water board. I would find myself in great difficulty with other boards that I had not made a determination on. It would become unmanageable.

I retain an open mind on these issues, but I want the work that has been undertaken by my department to be completed before I make a final determination or a recommendation to the Premier on where we will go with this matter. I can understand where the member for Hinchinbrook is coming from, but I would urge patience while we complete that process.

Mr CRIPPS: I appreciate the answer that the minister has provided and that he intends to keep an open mind about the future of class 2 statutory water authorities and particularly those in my electorate. I feel that the minister's second reading speech and the consultation between his department and the boards of these statutory authorities themselves have certainly not demonstrated that the statutory water authorities have failed in their remit to effectively manage the drainage systems in North Queensland, in particular those in my electorate.

I suppose why I am so concerned is that several sets of representations have been made by the statutory water authorities themselves and by me as a local member, and what we have tried to establish is that at present neither of the options that has been presented to us, either the transfer of the powers, functions and responsibilities of class 2 water authorities to local councils or to some sort of non-statutory entity, have presented themselves as acceptable alternatives. I suppose what I am saying to the minister in posing a question in relation to this particular clause is that at the moment it appears that the state government is not giving consideration to the status quo as a viable option for the continuation of the management of drainage systems. I would be very interested to know specifically whether or not a third option—that is, the status quo—is part of the minister's open mind?

Mr Seeney: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Hang on. The question has been asked of the minister and the minister has the right to answer. You can have a turn in a minute.

Mr ROBERTSON: Again I understand where the member for Hinchinbrook is coming from. In respect to that question I will say that a process was embarked upon and I want to see that process exhaust itself. I have been informed that that process is not that far away from being completed. I have heard the member's plea. It is a plea that has been made to me from other parts of the state as well. When I give consideration to the report that will be provided to me by my department, I will reflect on that plea.

Mr Cripps: I thank the minister—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am sorry, member for Hinchinbrook, but you have had your time. You have asked your two—

Mr Cripps: I have only had two.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is right. That is all you get. Undoubtedly they were good questions, but now the member for Callide has the call. I am sure all are eternally grateful for that.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Yes. I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook and observe that it is very true. It would be remiss of me to allow this clause to stand as part of the bill without taking the opportunity, as shadow minister, to reinforce the points put by the member for Hinchinbrook. There are two clauses in this bill, as I see it, that relate to the Weller review and the changes that the government is intent on making to the class 2 statutory water boards. I suggest to the minister that while it is a small issue in this bill and it is a small issue for the government, it is a big issue for a small number of people in this state. The same passions and emotions that I spoke about earlier in the consideration of the coal seam gas water provisions apply to class 2 water boards, because they provide a water supply to a small number of people without which they would face financial ruin and all of the problems that anybody would face if they lose the supply of domestic water. As the member for Hinchinbrook indicates, in his area where it rains a heck of a lot more than it does in my area, the issues extend to drainage boards.

In my area there are an extraordinary number of water boards. My area was characterised by closer settlement schemes that set up a whole lot of very small landholdings. In quite a number of instances, those small landholders came together to set up water boards, which were given statutory powers at that time. That is the important part. That is the point that I think the member for Hinchinbrook was trying to make, but which I fear the minister has not fully comprehended. It is the exercise of those statutory powers under the new model that concerns people. While it is quite conceivable that the role of the water boards can be undertaken by another entity or another structure, be it a cooperative, a limited liability company or some such model set up for the purpose, it is puzzling as to how the statutory powers that are required can be exercised by those new entities. That is the issue, because without the statutory powers that those boards have enjoyed since they were set up, it is very difficult to see their operations continuing in the same way as they have. Those statutory powers are not overwhelming or earth-shattering powers, but they are necessary. They are the powers to set levies, the powers to gain entry to properties where there is infrastructure, be it pipelines, pumps or whatever, and the powers to carry out emergency works to ensure that the majority of people who depend on the system are not denied the service because of the attitude of one particular person. It is the exercise of those statutory powers that is important and that issue is concerning people.

It is important that in the consideration of the government's final position on this issue, the minister, his parliamentary secretary—who I know has been involved in this issue because he has responded to a couple of letters that I have written on behalf of my constituents—and the department understand the importance of those statutory powers and the importance of ensuring that whatever entity eventually takes over from the current class 2 water boards is able to exercise those statutory powers to continue to provide the services that are currently provided to the small number of people for whom this is a very big issue.

Mr ROBERTSON: I assure the member for Callide that I do have a full appreciation of that issue about statutory powers. It is something that not only members of the opposition but also members of the government have made representations about. In particular, I note the representations made by the member for Ipswich West on behalf of Glenmorgan in his electorate. He has been putting that argument to me with the same amount of vigour that both the member for Callide and the member for Hinchinbrook have shown.

Clause 105, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 106 to 183, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.57 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.58 pm): Whilst I do not want to delay proceedings any further, I must move—

2 Amendment of long title

Page 21, long title, after 'Environmental Protection Act 1994,'—

insert—

'Nature Conservation Act 1992.'

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.59 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Charters Towers, Dental Services

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (9.59 pm): Today I tabled a petition of 1,294 signatures regarding the lack of public dental care in Charters Towers and the surrounding district. The petition calls upon the government to provide permanent public dental care for residents of the Charters Towers district and to reinstate the school dental van, which is inoperative because of a lack of qualified staff.

Mr Lucas: What have you done about taking the petition up with the federal opposition? Nothing.

Mr KNUTH: The Charters Towers district covers an area of 60,000 square kilometres. It has a massive ageing population. It thrives on the back of the education industry, with three long-established private colleges, school of distance education, three state primary schools, a state high school and four other primary schools throughout the greater Charters Towers region. It is paramount to reinstate the school dental van, which should cater for thousands of waiting students requiring access to dental care. I suppose we should call on Tony Abbott to provide that.

It should never have got to this situation where now residents who need dental treatment are forced to wait months for an appointment with local private dentists or attend clinics in other major cities. At this point I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the private dentists in Charters Towers who accommodate significantly large numbers of public dental patients who require emergency dental treatment. These private dentists are doing an amazing job under very stressful circumstances, without any support from the present state government.

Many patients are forced to travel a round trip of 260 kilometres, with patients in the greater Charters Towers area requiring an overnight stay in Townsville just to get a tooth fixed. Coupled with the absence of the patient travel subsidy, the lack of public dental care in Charters Towers and beyond has become a cause of immense frustration, suffering and financial strain to residents who need public dental treatment.

Charters Towers is a city, and it is unacceptable that residents and school students do not have access to public dental care and a school dental van. We call on the minister to take action, heed the petitioners and provide appropriate public dental care that the community deserves.

Relay for Life

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (10.01 pm): Each year more than 6,000 Queenslanders die from cancer and another 14,000 are newly diagnosed with the disease. These are alarming statistics, and there are not many Queenslanders who remain unaffected by cancer either directly or indirectly by knowing somebody or being related to somebody who has been affected by cancer.

Cancer Council Queensland is a great supporter of people whose lives have been impacted by this terrible disease. It uses its funds to eliminate cancer and diminish suffering through research, cancer support, prevention and early detection. Cancer Council Queensland uses events like Relay for Life and the hard work of its volunteers to give hope to cancer sufferers and their families.

Relay for Life is an event in which teams of 10 to 15 friends, families or colleagues challenge themselves to take turns to keep a baton moving in a relay style walk or run overnight. Our Redlands Relay for Life 2010 was able to return to the Cleveland Showgrounds. Last year, due to bad weather, we were lucky enough to be accommodated inside Ormiston College. This year with the relay happening over the Mother's Day weekend there was a special focus on mums. There is nothing like the smell of a hot breakfast, and the Lions Club did a great job cooking on Sunday morning for all mums and their families at the relay.

I was privileged to be part of the Melanoma Awareness Foundation team, the 'Purple Butterflies', who walked in support of the Melanoma Awareness Foundation, notwithstanding the jokes made at my expense—being a politician, walking in circles, wearing a purple wig; it is just asking for trouble. MAF is a wonderful organisation set up by local mum Tracy Eather—our team captain—dedicated to her daughter, Amanda, who lost her battle with melanoma at only 25 years of age. Amanda's wish and Tracy's promise to her before she passed away was that melanoma awareness and education be promoted.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair of the event, Councillor Wendy Boglary, for her team, for her commitment and for her hard work, as well as Michael Ellis and Pam and all the many other volunteers who spent countless hours making sure that this event was as successful as it can be. The Redlands is full of people with big hearts, and events like this remind me of the spirit of the people who live in the area—how generous and giving they are of their time and their energy to help others in need.

Indooroopilly Railway Station

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.04 pm): Tonight I wish to detail Queensland Rail's disgraceful disregard for the safety of its passengers and a transport minister unwilling to take responsibility for her department. In August last year I wrote to Transport Minister Rachel Nolan raising concerns about passengers being injured at Indooroopilly Railway Station because of the 40-centimetre gap between the platform and the train. The letter followed the case of an 85-year-old woman, Hilda Brooks, who badly injured her legs while trying to board the train earlier that month. In another case that month, a 14-year-old disabled boy, Regan Hill, fell into the gap and, if it were not for a passing stranger pulling him up, who knows what tragic consequences could have resulted.

When I failed to receive a response from the minister to my letter, I raised the issue in parliament. In a speech on 2 September I said—

For the sake of the safety of passengers using Indooroopilly Railway Station, I call on the transport minister to urgently fix this problem.

Finally, on 22 September, the transport minister responded to my concerns, writing to me that nothing could be done about the gap and attributed it to the curvature of the track. Later that month, Queensland Rail executives also publicly denied anything could be done to fix the problem, again blaming the curved track.

In a series of speeches and questions, I continued to raise my concerns about the safety of passengers using the Indooroopilly Railway Station, the danger posed by this 40-centimetre gap and that people were continuing to be injured. On 25 February, the transport minister attacked me over this issue, telling parliament—

The member for Indooroopilly has run a campaign over a period of time now to argue that there is a problem with the gap between the platform and the train at the Indooroopilly Railway Station. The member for Indooroopilly has been told over and over again that that is ... inevitable ...

Well, late last month, the truth finally came out. And the truth was that, shortly before the injuries began occurring at Indooroopilly Railway Station, bungled re-sleeper work had raised the height of the track and created the 40-centimetre gap. Interim Queensland Rail CEO Paul Scurrah has now admitted QR staff knew in August last year that bungled maintenance work had created the 40-centimetre gap—that QR staff knew even when QR was claiming publicly that nothing could be done to fix the problem; that QR knew even when the minister was repeatedly claiming the gap was inevitable and attacking me in parliament for raising my concerns; and, most disgracefully, that QR knew of the bungled work creating the 40-centimetre gap even as passengers continued to be injured.

Earlier this month repair work was carried out at Indooroopilly Railway Station, lowering the track and closing the gap. And all we heard from Transport Minister Rachel Nolan was that the incident highlighted poor communication within QR. There has been no apology to Regan Hill or his family. There has been no apology to Hilda Brooks. What a disgraceful performance from Queensland Rail and the transport minister.

Rosedale Homelessness Forum; Buddha Birth Day Festival

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (10.07 pm): I recently attended and spoke at the St Peter's Social Justice Group Rosedale Homelessness Forum. I am pleased to say that quite a number of local residents from Logan and Brisbane attended the forum and demonstrated their desire to help alleviate this problem.

A key speaker was Father Wally Dethlefs, who had many stories from his work with youth homelessness. He spoke of a nine-year-old boy whose parents had moved and there was not enough room in the car for him to go with them. Then there was the 11-year-old girl who regularly missed school due to having tried to keep the home going while taking care of her mum's baby as her mother is an alcoholic. These stories certainly do not reflect the picture that many of us have in our minds of homeless people. In fact, I hope these stories help those who have very negative images of homeless people to stop and think about their attitude to the homeless.

What I found alarming was the figures Father Dethlefs spoke of. In 104 Catholic primary schools in and around Brisbane, 14 students per 1,000 were in out-of-home care or homeless and 79 students per 1,000 were marginalised. In secondary schools, the figures are 14 students per 1,000 in out-of-home care or homeless and 129 students per 1,000 were marginalised. The Beenleigh-Logan figure was around 25 per 1,000 in out-of-home care or homeless. Father Dethlefs said that children in care and refugees were more at risk of becoming homeless. Young refugees are six to 10 times more likely to become homeless. What this demonstrates is that it is not a problem for some other area to care about; it is a problem in our backyard. Father Dethlefs said on a positive note that community awareness was on the increase, and with this awareness local communities were setting up local programs to address the issue.

Federal member for Bonner, Kerry Rea, spoke of the federal government initiatives and the partnership with state government to tackle the problem. In Logan I am pleased that there are several projects underway, with 24 units being built in Woodridge for homeless young men. They will have live-in support, and the units will be used as transition housing until a more permanent home is found. Twenty emergency units are being built in Kingston, and near these emergency units a housing development is being planned with a mix of houses that should provide housing for those in transitional units awaiting a permanent home.

While the federal and state governments are working together, they cannot do it without the support of the local community. I thank all those who organised this forum and all the members of the St Peter's Social Justice Group for becoming active in this area and also for caring. I look forward to continuing to work with them on this issue and in our local community.

I want to take the time tonight to congratulate members of the Chung Tian Temple and the Buddha's Light International Association for another hugely successful Buddha Birth Day Festival. I want to thank the 700 volunteers for all their hard work to make the event enjoyable and successful. I also acknowledge the donations and charitable work of the BLIA Queensland. At the festival they handed over cheques to the RSPCA, MontroseAccess, Griffith University Institute for Health and Medical Research and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I look forward to more visits to Chung Tian Temple in my electorate and to the Buddha Birth Day Festival in 2011.

Colburn Avenue Intersection; School Zone; Meehan, Mr M

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (10.10 pm): Tonight I rise to touch on three issues: two are road issues and one is recognition of a local resident who passed away. The first relates to the quality of information that is coming out of the minister's office. I refer to correspondence that I sent to the manager of traffic engineering and road safety in which I raised a road safety issue. It relates to an intersection 200 metres east of the Colburn Avenue and Cleveland-Redland Bay Road intersection. I received a kind of vague response to that correspondence of August 2009. I then ramped up my correspondence and I wrote to the minister, the Hon. Craig Wallace MP. I table both letters.

Again I raised the issue and referenced the details of the response that we received. It relates to a control arrow at the intersection of Colburn Avenue and the entrance to a Bunnings site and a shopping precinct. This arrow has a fundamental flaw. This intersection is the scene of a number of accidents and the road design nearby seems to trigger it. The local police are forever attending accidents there.

The response we received from the minister, signed by him, used the wrong intersection—the intersection that is referenced in the letter is some 200 metres away—and actually did not address the question that was asked. I am concerned about the quality of information flowing to the minister from his advisers. I would ask the minister to revisit these issues.

The second issue I raise relates to correspondence we sent asking for the consideration of a school zone. We wrote again dutifully to the minister and to the various departments. In the response that we got back a number of issues were put to us. One was that it was a dual-lane road and a four-lane carriageway and, therefore, school zones would not be declared. That was wrong. They said that the entrance to the school was on the side street—they got that right—and that the drop-off zone was on the side street. However, those circumstances were completely different to a second school not a kilometre away. When we started to drill down we discovered that the information was flawed. We contacted the author of the letter and asked, 'Did you honestly go out there?' to which the person replied, 'I haven't been in that department for three months and did not write the letter.' I table that correspondence and hope that the minister can follow it up.

Tabled paper: Copies of correspondence regarding traffic at the intersection of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road and Colburn Avenue [2261].

The third and final issue relates to the loss of a top citizen. I do this on behalf of not only me but also the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi, and the member for Cleveland, Mark Robinson. Redlands 2010 Citizen of the Year Mick Meehan passed away over the weekend. Mick Meehan was awarded Redlands Citizen of the Year in January this year at the Redlands Australia Day Awards. In 2008 Mick was awarded a Queensland Local Hero in the Australia Day Awards for his work with helping children, youth and veterans. I table the balance of this article as part of the eulogy to the late Mick Meehan and recognise his passing.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 17 May 2010, titled '2010 Redland Citizen of the Year, Mick Meehan, died on the weekend' [2262].
(Time expired)

Hampden Cemetery

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (10.13 pm): On 24 April this year I had the honour to launch a book titled *Hampden Cemetery Uncovered*. The author was not a famous fiction writer but the students of Hampden State School and their teachers. It seems that some years ago Hampden State School teacher Sue Wales went in search of an old cemetery that she believed lay on land adjacent to the school grounds. What she found was an overgrown and inaccessible area that seemed reluctant to give up its secrets.

In collaboration with student teacher Amanda Moloney, Mrs Wales conceived a cunning plot to take her years 4 and 5 students on a journey of discovery while exploring the history of the Hampden community. They began by obtaining official maps of the area and confirming the cemetery boundary. An interview with elderly resident Mr Monty Edmonds, who has relatives buried in the cemetery, gave students a first glimpse into the lives of the district's pioneers and the history of their own school. It emerged that Hampden Provisional School was opened in May 1887 by Isabella Henderson. In 1907 Mr William Menzies Kippen became headmaster and it was he who recommended land be set aside for a cemetery.

The first burial in the Hampden cemetery occurred in January 1912. In July of the same year one Heinrich Brischke was also laid to rest. Heinrich was born in Germany and came to Australia at about 20 years of age and eventually took up sugarcane farming in the Hampden district. He was 68 years old when he was tragically killed in an accident when his sulky wheel hit a rock and it overturned, pinning Heinrich to the ground. He bled to death before help could arrive. This is but one of the many fascinating stories uncovered by the students as they studied and explored their community history.

It is particularly sad that a number of those interred in the cemetery took their own lives, perhaps as a result of the hardships they endured. Research also revealed that a number of infants and children lie buried in the cemetery. Some of these unfortunates died of conditions that today are easily remedied and rarely led to death in Western society.

The students not only uncovered the stories of those buried at Hampden cemetery; they also literally uncovered the grave sites. With the help of the Kuttabul rural fire brigade and Mackay council, the site was cleared of lantana and other rampant weed growth and the job of finding and identifying gravestones and grave markers and restoring the cemetery began. Today it is far from the place it was just a few years ago. It has been very tastefully restored as a place of reflection, with a road sign from the highway indicating the cemetery's existence.

Along the way in this project, local historians were enlisted to assist the students and local media covered the unfolding events. I am pleased to say that an application to the government's Q150 program secured the funding to formally document the journey and the history in a book and website which have been titled *Hampden Cemetery Uncovered*.

Although I will not table the book—it is a bit of a precious possession of mine—I have brought the book with me should any of my colleagues wish to have a look at some of the really interesting history that the students have uncovered.

It is quite an amazing effort and an amazing educational achievement that just goes on giving to the students and the community. So I record my congratulations to all involved including Principal Howard Frost, teachers Sue Wales, Carol Crozier and Helen Taylor and all the wonderful students who have contributed to this piece of living history.

Springbrook National Park

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.17 pm): I rise tonight in response to the answers to two questions on notice I received this week from Kate Jones, Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, that were lodged in April 2010. The minister states in both responses that she offers to meet with me to discuss any issues I have regarding Springbrook National Park. Just to remind honourable members, the minister was quoted in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 6 May 2010 that she would 'organise a meeting between Ms Bates and senior government officials involved in the acquisitions'. The reporter also mentioned that this would occur within 24 hours. Luckily I did not hold my breath as I am still waiting to hear from the minister's office.

It is also interesting to note in the response that the steering committee consists of two members from the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society and three members from the Department of Environment and Resource Management. What happened to the 'broad based reference group to keep the community informed of purchases and the program', as stated by the then Deputy Premier, Anna Bligh, in response to a question without notice by the previous member for Mudgeeraba on 6 September 2007? Like everything else with this whole buy-back process, it was swept out of the public eye and covered in a cloud of secrecy.

Can the minister and her department advise why the current steering committee does not include representatives from community groups, as outlined by the then Deputy Premier, Anna Bligh, in 2007? In that answer she stated—

The first meeting will be held on 12 September and will be chaired by a senior department of environment official and comprise representatives of the EPA, Springbrook Landcare ... the Springbrook and Wunburra Progress Association—

which, by the way, is defunct—

the Springbrook Mountain Community Association, the Springbrook Chamber of Commerce, Gecko, ACRS, the Gold Coast City Council and local businessman Colin Greatorix.

That is from *Hansard* of 6 September 2007. The minister stated in her response that she would be happy to provide any interested party with a copy of the minutes from the steering committee meetings which are publicly available upon request.

Since 2007, Springbrook residents and I have been asking this government, among many things, where the management plans are. Our requests for information have been met with a deafening silence. One would also question why the first meeting was not held on 12 September 2007, but nearly a year later on 24 July 2008? Was more time needed so residents would forget exactly who was supposed to be on the steering committee?

How very kind of the minister to offer to come to Springbrook and host a community forum to address residents' concerns. This is something they have been seeking for a long time. Previous ministers have, true to form, ignored their requests. I can only hope that the minister or her department will follow through with this offer. This whole process, and the way this government has handled it from the very beginning, has divided the community. It is time for all of the facts to come out so the healing can begin. I call on the minister to stop the petulant point scoring and for her and the Labor state government to come clean with the residents of Springbrook. I look forward to working with the acting minister in the meantime.

Seven Hills State School

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (10.20 pm): It was a wonderful experience to attend last weekend the jubilee celebrations for Seven Hills State School. This school is very important in our local community. It has always been quite small, but in recent years has shown a steady growth—so much so that it has an enrolment management plan to make sure it is catering to the increasing numbers from all over the Bulimba electorate, and not just in the catchment area, who recognise that it has something special to offer. That special thing is the strong sense of community which envelops the school—whether it be the community care group that makes sure the local families are all looked out for, the adopt-a-farmer program that makes sure the students understand where their food comes from or the

bushcare group, run by Eris and Reiner, which aligns the students to their local bushland and the ways in which they can care for their environment. There are so many ways in which the school community is encouraged to connect. It is certainly no accident that all of this has happened under the stewardship of the wise and warm principal, Michelle Morrissey.

Last Saturday afternoon was even more special as it signified the 50th anniversary of the school. The event was celebrated with a wine and cheese function to which all past and present students and their families were invited. No-one was quite sure how many people would turn up, but, at last count, it bordered on around 500. When I left in the late afternoon, it did not look like anyone was going to leave for quite some time as they were all having so much fun catching up on their past, seeing their childhood friends and reminiscing about this most important time of their lives.

The anniversary would not have been the same event without the dedication of the wonderful Eris Jolly and her husband, Norm. Eris knows Seven Hills like the back of her hand and has written the book *Seven Hills of Brisbane*, which is still sold at the local newsagent and at several other local venues. For the jubilee celebrations, Eris curated a photographic history of Seven Hills and its school which had all enthralled. I was fortunate to have Eris spend quite some time talking me through all the photos, showing me views from some of the streets I know so well, like D'Arcy Road, Oateson-Skyline Drive, Foxton Street, the Corso, Paramount Drive—which looked so different in the photos.

Fifty years ago the suburb was only just being developed. Young families would traverse goat tracks to get to the houses that were slowly being built. Many of the families there on Saturday were telling me just those sorts of stories—Ron and Paula Burns, Eris and Norm and their son Paul and daughter-in-law Lesley, the Lanes. It was wonderful to get a sense of the community at that point 50 years ago.

Some 84 students were enrolled at Seven Hills State School on the first day, 25 January 1960. The enrolments reached 141 by the end of the year. Now the school has around 300 students. Past students also at the event, among many, many others, were Val Cassidy, the Baumgartners, the Lindsays and their sons, Colin Kemp with his daughter Pam and son Greg, Val Cassidy, Joanne Gill, Anne Orth and Ben Giorgio-Bellotti. It was a privilege to be at this event. I enjoy every moment I spend at the school. I was honoured to be included in the celebration of both its past and present.

Ingham Bypass, Petition

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.22 pm): This morning I lodged a petition signed by 1,599 constituents of my electorate, predominantly from the Herbert River district, in relation to the proposal by the department of main roads to upgrade the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range. The proposal involves a bypass of the township of Ingham. The alignment of the proposed bypass is not yet finalised and is the subject of ongoing consultation with the local community, businesses and industry. The petitioners are concerned the proposed bypass will have a negative impact on Ingham's economy and employment opportunities for local residents.

The upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range is designed to achieve an enhanced level of flood immunity during flood events. This section of highway is notorious for flooding, particularly at Palm Creek in Ingham itself, at the Gairloch washaway north of Ingham and at the Seymour River and Arnot Creek near the base of the Cardwell Range.

Another goal associated with the upgrade includes road safety and removing heavy vehicles from Lannercost Street and Herbert Street in Ingham. Main Roads has undertaken an extensive consultation process, involving regular community newsletters and face-to-face meetings with landowners, community groups, businesses, industry stakeholders, the Hinchinbrook Shire Council and me. The consultation process has been phased. Firstly, it has sought feedback on several wide corridors of interest and, more recently, on more defined draft alignments. All of these draft alignments involve a bypass of the township of Ingham.

The petition also raises the issue of the potential for the bypass to impact on local farming properties and community infrastructure. When Main Roads first advised me of its plans to upgrade the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range, I immediately raised the issue of the possible impact on community infrastructure and stressed to Main Roads that community organisations must not be disadvantaged in terms of their facilities. I am pleased to say that Main Roads has advised many of these issues can be addressed.

Although there has been active consultation with local stakeholder groups, this consultation needs to be ongoing. Main Roads has recently released an economic impact study undertaken after direct consultation with more than 100 businesses in Ingham. While during the construction phase local businesses have an opportunity to benefit, a long-term loss in annual turnover has been identified. This means Main Roads needs to support strategies that will minimise these losses, including the development of economic development plans for Ingham and the Herbert River district.

As such, the request from the petitioners that alternative options be explored for mitigating the impact of flooding on the Bruce Highway to minimise any detrimental economic impact on communities in the Herbert River district is a reasonable and legitimate one. I recognise federal funding for this project is linked to national guidelines, but I will continue to respond to requests from local landowners, community groups, businesses and industry stakeholders to facilitate consultation with Main Roads on the upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range, which includes the proposed bypass.

Brisbane Central Electorate, Cochlear Facility

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (10.25 pm): Members interested in visiting a world-leading firm helping millions to hear, employing world-leading, value added manufacturing and start-of-the-art technology need only travel about 10 minutes from Parliament House to the Cochlear facilities in Teneriffe in the heart of my electorate. This manufacturer is developing cutting-edge cochlear implants to allow millions of people around the world to hear.

Together with the Treasurer, I recently visited the Cochlear plant where they are about to invest up to \$3.6 million to expand their Queensland facility. This is great news for Queensland as this investment will mean a ramping up of production, an increase in staff numbers and a strengthening of ties with the state's top research institutes. Cochlear is one of the world's most successful manufacturers of hearing devices and is providing the gift of being able to hear to people across the globe. It was wonderful to see their products up close, walk through their high-tech plant and see their trained staff and modern manufacturing production machines in operation.

The fact is that this is a highly successful Australian company. Through the support of the Queensland government, Cochlear has set up a facility right here in the electorate of Brisbane Central. The fact that it is about to ramp up its production is also a real coup for the state. Cochlear already exports cochlear implants to more than 100 countries and demand for its product continues to grow. Already it is exporting approximately 95 per cent of production. This is yet another success story of a company Invest Queensland has attracted to the state which will boost the economy and create jobs. Around an additional 50 staff will be employed over the next five years, taking the Brisbane plant to a total of approximately 230 staff.

Cochlear also has an international reputation for its research and development in the medical devices field. A stronger Queensland presence will mean the organisation will have greater access to collaborations with our leading research institutes as well as greater links to industry stakeholders like our Hear and Say Centre.

For those who do not know, Cochlear has been operating from Helen Street, Teneriffe, since 2006. Its decision to expand this facility has come about after 18 months of consultation with and support from the Queensland government. Cochlear's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Chris Roberts, said over 278 million people suffer from moderate to profound hearing loss globally and ongoing investment in technology is critical.

I take this opportunity to thank the CEO and all staff at the Teneriffe plant for their warm welcome and for giving the Treasurer and I the opportunity to view inside their factory and office facilities. It was truly eye opening and extremely interesting and great talking to the staff whose main complaint was the cost of parking, particularly following the recent installation of parking meters throughout the area by the Lord Mayor. This cost is proving to be prohibitive for many of the process workers. I wish the company well and look forward to its involvement in the soon to be held Teneriffe Festival.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.29 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, 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, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson