



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2010

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

REPORT

Auditor-General

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report to parliament No. 6 for 2010: using student information to inform teaching and learning—a performance management systems audit*. I table the report for the information of all honourable members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to parliament No. 6 for 2010—Using student information to inform teaching and learning—A performance management systems audit [[2263](#)].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

P150 Celebrations

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as part of our 150th anniversary celebrations this week, a P150 Youth Parliament will be held here tomorrow. Also, at 5.45 pm tomorrow I will be joined by members of the Queensland Reds to launch the parliament's two new Queensland wines on the Speaker's Green. This launch will then lead to the P150 commemorative dinner. Saturday will mark the actual 150th anniversary of the first sitting of the Queensland parliament.

Conduct in the Chamber

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have noticed the re-emergence of disorderly conduct by honourable members. I remind all honourable members that the use of unparliamentary language is unacceptable. The failure to address remarks through the chair has unfortunately relapsed, often accompanied by personal reflections, including comments about the physical or other attributes of members.

Mr Rickuss: That's Schwarto!

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the honourable gentleman. Last night I warned the House about interjecting when I was speaking. It is precisely that type of conduct that I am warning against. Another infringement like that and, no matter where it comes from, I will have that member removed from the House. I warned about it last night. It is that type of conduct that we have to put a stop to. Furthermore, the word that all members are aware of that I dislike in the context of debate is the word 'you'. It has reappeared. It is simply because the use of that word is of a personal nature and raises the temperature of debate. Moderation of language is essential for the good conduct of debate in this House. In addition, as I have just said, I remind honourable members about interjecting on the chair. There are solid reasons for these rules. They assist us to find the fine balance between robust debate and disorder.

It is apposite in the context of both this issue of order and the week of celebration of the 150th year of this parliament that I conclude on the point by quoting from the words of the first Speaker of this House on the very first day of his election as Speaker almost 150 years ago—

Most of the members of this House are practically unacquainted with the forms and usages of Parliament, and liable in the heat of debate to make use of objectionable phrases. For that reason, I would urge on honourable members mutual forbearance and self-control, and the necessity of not taking exception to words and expressions which might bear a very different interpretation to that which at the time they might be disposed to attach to them. From such causes might arise long and angry discussions, which on the commencement of the legislative career of this colony it would be wise to avoid. On such occasions if they arise, I will endeavour to steer an impartial course, and I hope, with the assistance of hon. Members and firmness on my part, to uphold the dignity of the House ...

Honourable members, those words are as relevant today as when they were uttered 150 years ago, and I look for your cooperation particularly today as we head into Saturday's celebrations.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

APPOINTMENTS

Panel of Temporary Speakers

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise that I have appointed the honourable member for Glass House and the honourable member for Chatsworth to the panel of temporary chairs.

PETITIONS

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

Daylight Saving

Mr Foley, from 43 petitioners, requesting the House to discontinue any action towards implementing daylight savings throughout Queensland both now and in the future [\[2275\]](#).

Bribie Island, Desalination Plant

Mr Ryan, from 22 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that Bribie Island is removed permanently from the list of potential Desalination Plant sites in Queensland [\[2276\]](#).

Maryborough Hospital, Renal Unit

Mr Gibson, from 8,327 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently re-instate a renal unit in the Maryborough Hospital to service increasing demand [\[2277\]](#).

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

Gympie, Overhead Powerlines

Mr Gibson, from 31 petitioners, requesting the House to stop the installation of overhead high voltage power lines through residential Gympie and to investigate other options [\[2278\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER Tabled BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers)—

[2279](#) Response from the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers) to a paper petition (1412-10) presented by Mrs Menkens from 220 petitioners requesting the House to halt the current public housing proposal for Palm Cove and relocate the project to an area of demonstrated need, which also has appropriate infrastructure for the target population

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

People's Question Time

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): As I have raised in the House previously, people's question time is an Australian first, and next week's session will again give Queenslanders the opportunity to speak to their government. There will be no set topic for next week's session. Queenslanders will be free to ask questions on anything and everything—whether it is growth management, population, asset sales, health, law and order or indeed any other matter which they want to raise with government. The Deputy Premier, myself and the Treasurer will be fielding the questions from Queenslanders next Thursday between 12 and one o'clock. People's question time has already tackled issues around education and managing population growth, and those sessions were a great opportunity to get into the detail of specific important issues with the help of some experts sitting on the panel.

It is clear from many of the questions that have been raised in those first two people's question times that have not been related to those topics that people would welcome the opportunity to ask questions on any matter, as they do, for example, at community cabinet, and we are very pleased to provide that in next week's session. Our independent moderator will again choose the most interesting questions and the successful nominees will be invited to put their question at the session. All Queenslanders should take the opportunity to also go online. There are opportunities during the session for further questions to be raised and the moderator always gives the people who are online live the chance to ask some questions. I look forward to that session and hope that it does give some people an opportunity that they might not otherwise get. In particular, we have noticed some people coming online who are in quite remote places and for whom talking to a government minister is something they are unlikely to get to do.

Watson, Miss J

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): I am sure that all Queenslanders are very proud of the achievements of young Jessica Watson, but none more so than those who live on her home turf on the Sunshine Coast. I am very happy to advise the House today that the people of Jessica's home stretch will, along with other Queenslanders, be able to welcome their favourite daughter home in the next few weeks. Late yesterday our government agreed to provide support to the Sunshine Coast community to stage a homecoming event for Jessica, and I encourage all Sunshine Coast residents and others from other parts of Queensland to get out and cheer her home on 6 June. On that day Jessica will sail the last leg of her journey along the east coast from Sydney, and I expect the coastline from Caloundra to Mooloolaba will be crammed with well-wishers who want to witness her historic homecoming.

I anticipate that there will be scenes similar to those witnessed in Sydney last weekend when Jessica reached land after her remarkable 210-day solo sail around the world. I am advised that the best vantage points to witness her journey home will be Caloundra, Point Cartwright, Alexandra Headland and Mooloolaba, but as details are finalised organisers will release a list of locations.

The Mooloolaba Yacht Club was charged with organising Jessica's homecoming and over the past couple of days, through their local member, the member for Buderim, it has approached our government seeking help. Quite simply, after the spectacle of Sydney, this coming event is anticipated to grow significantly beyond the initial expectations and beyond the capacity of this local club. Our government has committed to providing event management support, advertising, security and other logistical staff such as traffic controllers to ensure that the event runs as smoothly as possible. We will be working with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to also ensure that we have a good partnership. I thank the member for Buderim for his efforts to ensure that this event has the appropriate support and goes well and smoothly.

Jessica's incredible solo voyage is an inspiration to all Queenslanders, particularly young Queenslanders, and they need an opportunity to welcome her home. This 17-year-old from Buderim is a great example to an entire generation of Queenslanders and I encourage them to get out on 6 June and provide her with a true Queensland homecoming. In fact, I encourage people to make a weekend of it. There is nothing better than a weekend on the Sunshine Coast. I am sure that many people will do exactly that and fill the hotels and fill some of the restaurants up there, which have done it a bit tough in some difficult tourism times in the past 12 months.

Biotech Industry

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): The biotech industry is a \$20 billion industry of the future and all of that means jobs for Queenslanders now and in the years to come. Recently, as part of my trade mission to North America, I attended the 2010 BIO conference in Chicago—the world's biggest biotechnology event represented by the Queensland government at the highest level every year for the past 12 years. I was pleased that the member for Clayfield could also join the delegation and I trust that he has come back a lot wiser and better informed about the importance of this industry. I know that the researchers on the delegation took every opportunity to make sure that he came away understanding the role that they play.

There is some extraordinary groundbreaking work underway by Queensland researchers and it deserves to be supported. On the mission I was pleased to announce \$3.5 million worth of programs in partnership with Canadian research organisations with whom we have entered into alliances. These will make real differences to people's lives in areas such as cardiovascular disease, prostate cancer and spinal injuries. A further \$13 million in funding went to support Queensland researchers in partnerships with other US companies, including a world-first new green jet fuel initiative involving researchers from the University of Queensland and aviation hard hitters like Boeing. Queensland is well placed to be a hub for biojet fuel in the southern Asian region. This is a project to watch in years to come.

We also secured, in partnership with the federal government, a major contract with international manufacturer DSM, which will help ensure that major research discoveries are taken from the lab to the local pharmacy shelf quicker and, most importantly, without our researchers having to take their intellectual property offshore to get the final stages of their drug manufactured and brought to market and thereby losing that intellectual property here in Queensland—and, indeed, to Australia. DSM will be the contracted manufacturing operator for the soon-to-be constructed translational research facility at the PA Hospital. This will be an Australian first and we will see researchers from around the country benefiting from this location here in Queensland.

This mission was a great opportunity to meet with some of the key players in the biotech industry. Today, I am very pleased to inform the House of another major coup for Queensland. After a number of months of discussions and negotiations, meetings that I held during the trade mission have secured an Australian-first bioventure capital fund based in Queensland, which will provide unprecedented

international backing to drive and fund ideas and innovation out of Queensland. The fund will be formed between the Queensland government, global industry leader Eli Lilly—one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world—and a number of other strategic US venture capital partners. We will create an investment fund of up to US\$250 million to back the expansion and development of the Queensland and Australian biotech industry. The Queensland government will invest \$25 million in the fund. This will come from the Future Growth Fund over the next three years. Eli Lilly will contribute up to 20 per cent of the total funding, while the other strategic partners are currently raising capital of up to \$250 million.

Today represents a turning point in support for home-grown ideas and innovation. Lack of access to venture capital has been one of the missing links in the development of a biotech industry in Australia. This fund will fill that gap. It is a huge opportunity to drive investment in this new area of the economy. Best of all, it will be headquartered in Brisbane. So we will have a US venture capital fund headquartered here, positioning Queensland as a leading biotech hub in Australia and in the region, bringing US venture capital expertise and capacity here. That goes right to the heart of our vision of having a strong Queensland economy powered by bright ideas. It is a giant step forward and, on its own, well worth the trip and sitting down with the companies and pulling the deal together. I lay upon the table of the House the report of my trade mission to Canada and the United States.

Tabled paper: Overseas travel report titled 'Queensland Trade Mission to Canada and the United States of America led by Hon. Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Arts, 28 April 2010 to 7 May 2010' [[2264](#)].

Liberal National Party

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.45 am): This morning, I think it is important for me to lay out my concerns and that of the government about some of the very serious revelations that have been made here in this House this week. First, we heard revelations that there have been a number of investigations conducted by the Liberal National Party party organisation into possible misuse of travel entitlements. The travel report that this allegation relates to was tabled in this parliament in October 2009. Some six months later, we still know nothing about the nature of the investigation, who undertook it, the authority by which it was undertaken and, if the investigation is complete, what was the finding and, if the findings raise any questions, whether those findings have or will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Secondly, we have seen allegations surfacing over months now about members of the Liberal National Party being asked to sign up to a \$12,000 cash deal with the party organisation. When the president of the Liberal National Party, Bruce McIver, was faced with allegations some weeks ago of this nature he said—

I've heard rumours about that suggestion but that suggestion has never had any authority.

This week we learned that it was much more than rumour or suggestion. It was, in fact, a legally binding contract and we now see that contract tabled in this parliament. These questions must be answered: what is the purpose of this contract? Much more importantly, who has signed it? The allegations that have been made are that any member of the Liberal National Party who holds their seat by five per cent or less has signed up to or has been lobbied or requested to sign up to these contracts. This allegation has not been denied and nor has it been defended.

Similarly, allegations have been made that members who have been outspoken or who have been critics have been asked to sign these contracts as a form of discipline or punishment. This has not been denied and it has not been defended. This means that members representing seats such as Redlands, Cleveland, Mirani, Gaven, Coomera, Burdekin, Mudgeeraba and Aspley all stand accused of signing these contracts and they are not telling the people of Queensland nor the people of their electorates whether they have done so and what they are getting in return for the contracts.

Finally, there have been serious allegations of bullying and fraud within the party in the Far North Queensland branch. We have heard allegations and seen documents tabled in the parliament of serious financial mismanagement involving the federal candidate for the seat of Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, and it has been signed not by one or two maybe malcontents, but by 15 senior members of the Far North Queensland executive of the Liberal National Party.

All of these issues raise deeply serious questions about the operation of the Queensland opposition. These are questions that demand public attention. They are questions that require media scrutiny and they are questions that demand answers from the Leader of the Opposition. The third day in a row is about to see the end of this week of parliament. We have heard nothing from the Leader of the Opposition on any of these allegations. I note that he has not denied any of them and I note that this morning no-one took any objection when I raised the allegations again.

Medical Research Funding; Queensland Health, Payroll System

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.50 am): Australians are living longer than ever before. In fact, we have the second-longest life expectancy in the world. This is a direct result of continued advances in health and medical research—with Queensland leading the way. The Bligh government is committed to growing Queensland's reputation as a world-class hub for excellence in science, research, development and innovation. We have a collection of world-renowned independent and university research institutes that every year attract millions of dollars in research funding and grants. We also have some of the best and the brightest researchers and scientists. All this is about building our intellectual capital and investing in our future. This investment is already evident. Queensland is making its mark on the world stage.

Already 2010 has been an exciting year for health and medical research in Queensland. In February, the Premier turned the first sod on the \$179 million extension to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. This new addition, to which the Bligh government has committed \$35 million, will house 400 more scientists within the next two years working in the areas of mental health research and Indigenous health.

The first round of Queensland Health Senior Clinical Research Fellowships have been awarded. This included \$17 million over five years for research into paediatric respiratory conditions, cardiovascular imaging and infectious diseases. These grants are in addition to the many hundreds of dedicated clinician researchers who allocate their valuable time and resources to not only treating the patients of today, but also researching the treatments and therapies of tomorrow.

While in Chicago the Premier announced that DSM Biologics will be the commercial partner to run the BioPharmaceuticals Australia facility. This facility will allow local companies to make biopharmaceuticals needed for early-stage clinical trials, previously something we have been forced to look overseas for. Currently an estimated \$60 million of contract manufacturing for small-scale drug and therapeutic compounds goes offshore. We can now manufacture these samples in Queensland. This is essential to supporting our Biotechnology Strategic Plan that aims to establish 16,000 jobs in the biotechnology sector by 2025.

While on the North American trade mission the Premier also announced \$10.6 million in funding for the National and International Research Alliances Program and the Research-Industry Partnership Program for projects from the health and medical sector. These projects include new funding for research into spinal cord injury and recovery, new and improved diagnostics and developing new pain killers with reduced side effects.

Just two weeks ago I announced that Watpac will build the \$354 million Translational Research Institute at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. This facility and the co-located BioPharmaceuticals Australia building will mean that Queensland research for the first time can truly progress from bench to bedside without leaving the state. Opening in 2012, this building will put 700 of our brightest clinical and biomedical researchers into one building. By putting this on the Princess Alexandra Hospital campus we are ensuring that these 700 minds have a greater opportunity to interact with the thousands of clinicians hard at work at the hospital each day.

I recently had the opportunity to see firsthand the real human benefit of Queensland's world-class research when I opened the new Friedreich's ataxia clinic at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. There I met a group of inspiring and courageous individuals who all suffer from this very rare disease. Friedreich's ataxia is an inherited neurological disorder that only affects about one in 50,000 people, but it is crippling and life threatening for sufferers. Queensland is paving the way for clinical care and research into this rare disease. This new clinic offers world-best care for patients suffering from this disease. In fact, patients from New Zealand previously receiving treatment in Melbourne, and our own patients from Queensland who previously had to go to Melbourne, are now coming to Brisbane to attend our new clinic. These are just some of our many research initiatives helping to improve lives. This government remains committed to furthering medical research and seeing Queensland cement its place as a world leader in medical research.

On another matter, we are into the next pay cycle for Queensland Health employees and I would like to again thank the hardworking Health staff and the payroll staff who are continuing to work through the implementation of the new system in difficult circumstances. Early indications are that this pay cycle is improving, but we know that there is a lot of work still to do. I do not want to sugarcoat this. This is a big challenge and we will continue to work tirelessly in getting this right. In addition to reducing the number of people who receive little or no pay, I am committed to reducing the inaccuracies for all staff and to reducing the workload on our unit managers and payroll staff in implementing the new system. I will continue to visit hospitals around the state to meet with frontline staff and hear their specific issues. I will continue to work with the project team, unions and our staff in this endeavour.

I also table two non-conforming petitions received in my electorate.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 784 petitioners opposing the Queensland government's decision to sell public assets [2265].

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 358 petitioners opposing the sale of public assets [2266].

Trade Mission, Latin America

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (9.54 am): Queensland's economy is inextricably linked to the global economy. Our longstanding engagement with Asia, with nations such as Japan and Korea, has stood us in good stead. These trading relationships provide the impetus for us to look for new opportunities and broaden our trading horizons.

The IMF last month issued new global growth forecasts in which it pointed to five-year growth of just two per cent per annum for the G7. In contrast, Australia is forecast to grow by 21 per cent over the next five years. However, growth in developing economies, such as those in Latin America, was forecast to be more than 30 per cent. Latin America is quickly becoming the new Asia with Brazil the powerhouse economy of the region. That is why the trade mission I led in April to Latin American nations Chile, Peru, Colombia and Brazil was an important one. It highlighted the enormous opportunities for Queensland and the growing significance of these markets to our state. I table the report into that mission.

Tabled paper: Overseas travel report titled 'Queensland Trade Mission to Latin America (with New Zealand stopover) led by Hon. Andrew Fraser MP, Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development, 22 April 2010 to 1 May 2010' [\[2267\]](#).

More than 30 senior business delegates from across Queensland joined the trade mission. Latin America is a vast region with unique requirements for doing business, not the least of which being the need for buyers and investors to have access to local contacts with strong language and business skills. That is why we have announced a redirection of resources from the LA trade office into Latin America. We have resolved to invest in in-market representation, firstly with a dedicated on-the-ground senior business development manager in Santiago, Chile, followed by a representative in Brazil next year. Both these officers will be host arrangements, with Austrade in Chile and another entity in Minas Gerais in Brazil. Permanent on-the-ground representation in Brazil will be the key to growing Queensland's trade investment links with Latin America.

On this mission I also signed three important agreements with the federal governments of Peru and Colombia and renewed Queensland's joint declaration with the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. It is a real coup for Queensland as a state to secure agreements with governments at the national level that will support growth in trade and investment. I acknowledge here the work of the trade commissioner to the Americas. I also met with senior mining ministers in Chile, Peru and Colombia to discuss opportunities for mining related exports, including those tied to education and training. Among the fastest growing countries in Latin America is Peru and my visit there was a first for a Queensland minister. In addition to mining, Peru is looking to develop its environmental tourism industry. When it comes to developing a vibrant tourism industry, in this regard there is no better partner than Queensland.

The Brazilian state of Minas Gerais is Queensland's longest and strongest relationship in Latin America. It literally means 'everything mining'. Like Queensland it is a mining state and offers strong business opportunities and potential for increased trade. During my visit there two major agreements were signed: a cooperation agreement between the University of Queensland signed by Vice-Chancellor Paul Greenfield and the Minas Gerais state agency for research at the Federal University of Minas Gerais; we also re-signed the statement of intent with the state of Minas Gerais that will continue to position Queensland companies as suppliers of choice. With Brazil set to host two of the largest sporting events in the world, the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, I was able to also explore potential opportunities for Queensland companies, including Populous, which has a global reputation in stadia design. We want to keep Queensland open for business. I look forward to reporting back with more success stories about more investment and more jobs for our state.

Warrego Highway

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (9.58 am): Tomorrow I will be heading to the south-west for top level talks on roads with local mayors and the member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine. On the agenda is the Warrego Highway, a vital road link right in the heart of the booming Surat Basin. The Bligh government is rising to meet the challenges of this rapidly growing region. That is why tomorrow's summit is so important. It comes hot on the heels of the Premier's own Queensland Growth Management Summit and our regional forums. With 2,000 people heading to Queensland each week, it is more important than ever to plan for our future growth.

The Bligh government's focus is firmly fixed on regional Queensland. Better roads and a better lifestyle will attract more people to settle in the region to encourage growth and strengthen local economies. The Warrego summit follows a successful roads summit I hosted in the north with mayors from Sarina to Cairns. Together we agreed on some urgent priorities for that stretch of the Bruce Highway. Tomorrow it is the Warrego. I commend the member for Toowoomba North for being the driving force behind it. He wants this important national road link high on the federal agenda. To this end, I will be leading the charge to Canberra with the member for Toowoomba North with a wish list of priority

roadworks. We have worked shoulder to shoulder with the Rudd government over the past few years to deliver some real achievements in roads. The federal government has already committed more than \$1 billion to the Bruce Highway north of Sarina. We want to maintain that momentum and the best way to keep the ball rolling is to involve all three tiers of government. This makes a welcome change after 11 years of neglect by the Howard government.

Our submission will focus on four key areas: easing traffic congestion, reducing flooding closures, improving road safety and investing in maintenance. And we want to generate more jobs into the bargain. Every \$1 million spent on road construction in Queensland creates more than seven jobs for local workers. We are building more than roads in regional Queensland; we are building a better, brighter future for the people who live and work there.

Bring Ellen to the Gold Coast Campaign

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.00 am): It is no secret that it has been a tough 18 months for tourism across the state, but tough times cannot stifle innovation and get-up-and-go. This week I have been made aware of some enterprising locals on the Gold Coast who will not take the global financial crisis lying down. They are calling on Ellen DeGeneres to bring her show to the Gold Coast for filming. They have set up a Facebook page for people to express support. They have created petitions. Tourism Queensland has lent a hand, with our US office contacting Ellen's producers in Los Angeles. I know the Premier strongly supports the Gold Coast push.

Gold Coast radio station Sea FM is promoting an Ellen dance party on Surfers Paradise beach on Friday from 7 am to 9 am. The organisers of the dance party want everyone to wear blue, which is Ellen's favourite colour. They will film the locals dancing—not this local; I dance something likely Elaine Benes from *Seinfeld*—and will send the film to Ellen. The other reason they do not want to film me is that they want to encourage her to come here, not chase her away. This all makes sense if you have seen the show. Ellen always does a little dance at the start of the show.

Mr Langbroek: Show us.

Mr LAWLOR: I hope the member will be there. It is in his electorate. Sea FM was over the moon when it contacted Ellen's producers this week and received a message back from Ellen herself, in which she said that she was aware of the campaign and she loved it. She said she would try to make it to the Gold Coast.

We cannot underestimate the value to the economy and to tourism of attracting productions such as this to the Gold Coast. In the United States alone, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* has an audience of about five million viewers, making it one of the highest viewed daytime shows. It airs in more than 30 countries around the world, including in some of Queensland's biggest international markets such as New Zealand, the UK and South-East Asia, as well as emerging markets such as India and the Middle East. If Ellen brought her show to the Gold Coast, millions of people would see all that the beautiful Gold Coast can offer. With such a large production on the Gold Coast, money would flow into the local economy from airline flights, accommodation bookings, hire car rentals, restaurant bookings and so on. I wish the Gold Coast good luck in its bid to lure Ellen down here and I congratulate the organisers on their grassroots campaign, which is good for the community and good for the economy.

Assistance Dogs

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.02 am): The Bligh government is committed to improving the lives of young Queenslanders living with a disability. Under the new Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009, all guide-dogs and assistance dogs will have access to public places and all public passenger vehicles. The aim of this new act is to ensure blind and vision impaired people and those with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities are able to access public places with their assistance dogs. This includes accessing taxis, buses, shopping centres and restaurants. To enforce this, penalties for discriminating against a person accompanied by a guide-dog or assistance dog have increased from \$100 up to \$10,000 for individuals, and up to \$50,000 for businesses.

Today I can announce the first two assistance dog owners have gained Handler Identity Cards and now have the same rights as owners of guide and hearing dogs. At 1.15 pm today, I will welcome into Parliament House Reilly Paterson and his assistance dog, Harry, and Luke Sharpe and his assistance dog, Jerry. I will present their handler cards to them. Reilly Paterson is an active five-year-old who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Before Reilly met his assistance dog, Harry, he found it difficult to be in a shopping centre as it would cause sensory overload, he had trouble communicating and low muscle tone. Reilly simply did not like walking. Now that he has Harry, Reilly's world is changing. He is walking from one end of the shopping centre to the other and talking with strangers about his dog. There is no doubt that this new legislation is helping to make a huge difference to the daily lives of Reilly and many others dependent on an assistance dog. Assistance dogs will be

identifiable by a badge on their coat or harness, just like guide or hearing dogs. The dogs visiting Parliament House today are the first assistance dogs certified through a public access test that has been approved by a certified trainer.

Queensland is leading the way. This law is an Australian first and it is changing people's lives. We are the first state to introduce these laws and we obviously need to make sure that people such as taxidriviers, restaurant owners and others are informed about them. We are committed to fighting discrimination and ensuring all Queenslanders with a disability play an active role in the community and can access public places, just like everyone else. I encourage members to welcome Reilly and Harry and Luke and Jerry to Parliament House by coming along at 1.15 this afternoon.

Jobs for Women

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.05 am): When it comes to jobs for Queensland women, the Bligh government is delivering plenty. Last week employment figures showed 2,600 more women have jobs in the Smart State than a month ago. However, there is still a way to go and the Bligh government is taking action every day. The Office for Women is driving programs such as the Women in Hard Hats initiative to increase the participation of women in industries typically dominated by men. The dedicated Women in Hard Hats website has received more than 14,000 hits since it was launched earlier this month. Just last week I attended the WorldSkills Expo and had the pleasure of launching the Women in Hard Hats DVD, which again shows strong role models for young women keen to try their hand at a trade. At that expo I was pleased to see that 21-year-old auto electrician Anita Boughen from Minden left the boys in her wake and was crowned Queensland's best young tradie.

Women deserve more than just job opportunities; we deserve equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities to work in senior positions. Not only is the Bligh government led by the first woman to be elected Premier, but the public service is also employing many more women in senior positions. In Queensland Health women work in 64 per cent of SES band positions, in the Queensland Police Service women work in 50 per cent of SES band positions, in Education and Training the figure is 49 per cent, and in my own Department of Communities the figure is 43 per cent. Women account for about 30 per cent of senior positions across all government departments, which is ahead of the private sector where women account for only 10 per cent of senior management positions nationally. Our Office for Women has already developed strong partnerships with the private sector, including the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, the Australian Institute of Management, the Queensland Resources Council and more to make it possible for women to choose the career they want, not the one other people may expect them to follow.

QBuild

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.07 am): Yesterday the member for Maryborough made serious allegations against QBuild and the amount of money charged for works carried out. Let me explain the facts of this matter. A search of QBuild records reflects that a request was received from the Maryborough electorate office on 14 November 2008 to repair a light and replace a faulty light switch—not just a fluoro tube and a light switch as the member stated yesterday. QBuild engaged a local electrical company, Pulse Electrical, to undertake the work under a standard offer agreement. A standard offer agreement sets down implicit hourly rates for tradesmen and apprentices.

Pulse Electrical, which is a local Maryborough company, had a tradesperson and an apprentice attend the site on 18 November for an hour and a half. The job was not to simply replace a fluoro, but to replace two lamp holders and a faulty switch mechanism. Parts were required to be ordered, which were subsequently installed on 10 December by a single tradesperson. In total the tradesperson was on-site for two and a half hours and the apprentice for one and a half hours. The cost, with labour and parts, came to \$229.53, excluding GST of \$22.95. Of this, QBuild received a grand total of \$16.01 and, apart from the GST, the remainder was paid to the local contractor engaged by QBuild. The sum of \$16.01 went to QBuild for guaranteeing the work and I submit that that is a very reasonable price.

A government member: A pretty good deal.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It was a very good deal. Apart from that, the money went to a local contractor who employs apprentices. No issues or concerns with the price or quality of work were raised with QBuild. Work was certified completed by the client's representative on 11 December. I table that document. I believe it is signed by the electorate officer at the honourable member's office.

Tabled paper: Copy of a QBuild job statement relating to the Maryborough electorate office [2268].

I do not dispute this figure of \$252.48. What I do dispute is the honourable member's allegation that QBuild 'turns up to replace the same light 16 months later on ... claiming that the first job was never done'. This is a ridiculous allegation against QBuild for a job which it did not do. I do not understand why the honourable member made this claim at all. Either the honourable member has no idea what is occurring in his office or he is deliberately misleading this parliament.

The two subsequent visits to the Maryborough electorate office on 5 January and 22 April by Pulse Electrical, not QBuild—Pulse Electrical is a local firm employing apprentices—were also at the request of his own office. Again, no issues or concerns were raised with the price or quality of the work with QBuild; nor were they raised with this parliament. I can only assume that the honourable member—

Mr FOLEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe the minister is misleading the House. They were acting as an agent for QBuild.

Mr SPEAKER: No. That is a debating point; it is not a point of order.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I just want to clarify that 60 per cent of the jobs done by QBuild are done by contractors under standing offer arrangements. The call-out fee is \$60. The honourable member made a claim yesterday that he could have changed the fluoro himself, and most householders do that. But if you call in an electrician off the street they will charge a call-out fee. We all know that. QBuild has engaged a local contractor who charges a call-out fee accordingly. This is a local contractor. The fees are established with QBuild. The honourable member needs to go and talk to his local contractor, because that is the fee that he has agreed to. This gentleman is obviously one of his electors, so I think he needs to explain that to him.

I table the last two documents which also bear the signature of his electorate office staff who ticked off the work. If they had a complaint, one would have expected them to raise it then.

Tabled paper: Copy of a QBuild Do & Charge Job Card, dated 5 January 2010, relating to the Maryborough electorate office [2269].

Tabled paper: Copy of a QBuild Do & Charge Job Card, dated 22 April 2010, relating to the Maryborough electorate office [2270].

I end on this note. Yesterday was a day dedicated to sufferers of irritable bowel disease, which is a debilitating disease that affects some 61,000 Australians. There is no known cause or cure for it. I am wearing a lapel badge, and I encourage people to go to the website of www.crohnsandcolitis.com.au.

Drink Driving Discussion Paper

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.12 am): Road accidents are a major public health risk and one in which good, evidence based policy does make a real difference. This year, since the announcement of a major road safety reform package, Queensland's road toll is tracking today at 50 fewer deaths than the same time last year. It is important, however, to keep and maintain a constant improvement agenda in this area.

I am pleased to report to the House that more than 1,000 Queenslanders have taken part in a Queensland government initiative to address drink driving. The drink driving discussion paper, released in March this year, invited community members to submit their opinions on a range of potential anti-drink-driving ideas. 1,073 people took the time to read the discussion paper and provide their views via an online survey. Sixty-five people made written submissions and many more took the opportunity to discuss issues face to face with the public at two community forums held in Townsville and Brisbane. There is clearly a high level of interest in road safety reform.

The next step following this discussion paper will be for the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety—Queensland, CARRS-Q, to conduct further research and collate the entire body of work. In the coming months, representatives from CARRS-Q will conduct focus group sessions and one-on-one interviews with drink-driving offenders to understand their views on potential drink-driving initiatives. CARRS-Q will combine these findings with its independent analysis of the community feedback on the discussion paper. A final report is expected to be released later in the year.

As well as outlining the alcohol ignition interlocks scheme for high-risk drink drivers, other key interventions proposed in the discussion paper included: enhancements to random breath testing; compulsory blood testing for all drivers who attend hospital for examination or treatment as a result of a motor vehicle crash; reviewing the general alcohol limit; further promotion of designated driver programs; compulsory carriage of licence; an examination of the future arrangements of restricted or 'work' licences; and tougher vehicle impoundment measures.

Potential interventions contained in the discussion paper have been adopted in other Australian states and overseas, while others are further enhancements to existing Queensland programs. The government will consider the CARRS-Q report, together with recognised best practice, during the development of future programs to tackle drink driving.

Literacy and Numeracy

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (10.15 am): Last week I had the pleasure of visiting Bundaberg West State School and Bundaberg Central State School to see the excellent work they are doing in raising school literacy and numeracy rates. I was also happy to announce the rollout of nine new school turnaround teams and the introduction of four-year plans to improve student outcomes in a further 20 Queensland state schools. This announcement is part of the Queensland government's commitment to ensuring every Queensland student receives a 'flying start' to their education. These strategies are designed to boost literacy and numeracy in schools that need it most so that every child in state schools across Queensland has access to a quality education.

There are various challenges confronting students in schools in some parts of Queensland. However, this should not come between them and the best possible education. From July this year 10 turnaround teams will be in place working with more than 100 schools across the state, with at least one team located and working within each of the seven education regions. The turnaround teams provide targeted specialist advice to school leaders, teachers and staff, students and parents to ensure that the whole school is adopting innovative and flexible ways to address important issues such as literacy and numeracy progress, student wellbeing and student performance.

The first turnaround was trialled and has already achieved positive outcomes within the Wide Bay region. The second team in the state-wide rollout will head into schools in the Darling Downs south-west region. The 20 new schools to receive specialist plans and assistance are in addition to the 26 schools that began implementing school plans from the beginning of term 1 of this year. The plans have been developed by the school principals in consultation with parents, community organisations, staff and students.

For example, Kingston State School's strategies include its partnership with Griffith University in the Literacy Lessons for Logan Learners program and its Sunrise Reading Program, which aims to boost students' reading levels before school tuition. Other school strategies include a science centre, a community liaison officer to reduce student absenteeism, a breakfast club and an after-school homework centre. There is no doubt that the Bligh government is committed to increasing and improving learning opportunities for Queensland children across the state.

Surrogacy Act

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.18 am): Following a lengthy debate earlier this year and a conscience vote that was only exercised by government members, the Surrogacy Bill was passed, marking a milestone for Queensland. This new law was based on the framework that was developed by an all-party parliamentary committee that conducted a detailed investigation into this issue in 2008.

Before passage of the bill, Queensland was the only state in Australia where altruistic surrogacy was a crime punishable by jail. As a result of that significant day in February, I am pleased to announce today that the Surrogacy Act 2010 will commence on 1 June this year. From that date, people who have been unable to start a family in the past will now have a chance to experience the joy of becoming parents without the fear of facing criminal sanction. Importantly, commercial surrogacy will continue to remain unlawful in Queensland, as will advertising for surrogacy and the payment or receipt of fees relating to making a surrogacy arrangement.

The Surrogacy Act 2010 also provides a legal mechanism that will allow the intended parents of a child born as a result of a surrogacy arrangement to be legally recognised. This means that any child born under a surrogacy arrangement will enjoy the same status, protection, privileges and support as other children irrespective of the circumstances of their birth or the status of the people who raise them.

This Labor government believes in equality. Our surrogacy laws do not discriminate and do not exclude people from becoming parents. It is not up to government to decide who will make good parents. We simply want every child—every child—to be raised in a loving, nurturing and supportive environment, and our laws allow that to happen.

With the pending start of our surrogacy laws, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is conducting some targeted communication activities to inform prospective parents about the new arrangements. Letters outlining details of the new law will be sent to key stakeholders such as the Queensland Law Society, the Australian and New Zealand Infertility Counsellors Association and the Queensland Fertility Group. Information materials have also been prepared for the department's website including links to forms that have been developed as part of the legislation.

1 June is a momentous day for Queenslanders who have been unable to have children of their own, and I am confident that the new surrogacy laws will bring them closer to experiencing the joys of parenthood.

Airport Link

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.20 am): The massive construction effort to build the Airport Link tunnel, the Northern Busway Windsor-Kedron section and upgrade the airport roundabout is now in full swing. I again thank residents living near the work sites, which stretch from Bowen Hills to Toombul, for their patience.

In March this year I began a process to ensure that people living near one of the biggest work sites, Kedron Brook, were given the opportunity to help plan for new retail and commercial facilities to be provided once construction is complete in mid-2012. At that time it is expected that several properties in the area currently required for construction will be freed up and ready for a new use.

Over the past few months Kedron and Gordon Park residents have been surveyed about the facilities they would like to see in their area. In late March a survey was distributed to 3,000 local residents and business owners to capture their views, and many other residents also attended seven focus groups held in April to have their say on this issue. In addition, 70 locals attended an information day last Saturday to learn about the project and voice their opinions.

Feedback from the community clearly identified a desire for new and upgraded footpaths and bikeways, cafes, restaurants, meeting places, boutique shops, fresh food shops, community facilities, more green space and off-leash dog areas. These suggestions will be considered and evaluated by the normal Brisbane City Council processes. As part of the project there will also be extensive rehabilitation of Kedron Brook. There will also be better pedestrian and cycleways and work on new gardens. Planning has already begun for a cafe on the edge of the brook. To ensure residents are kept informed, a newsletter providing details of the results of the survey, focus groups and the information day will be distributed in coming weeks. I would like to thank residents for their involvement in this vital planning process.

The combined Airport Link projects, which are currently employing around 3,000 workers with a total job creation figure of around 10,000, will deliver better roads and travel times, one million new plants and trees, 13 kilometres of new or improved cycleways and pathways and more than three hectares of new parkland. This project again highlights the Bligh government's commitment to creating jobs and building tomorrow's Queensland.

Year of Women in Local Government

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.23 am): The Australian local government sector has designated 2010 as the Year of Women in Local Government and I am, as the Queensland minister, sponsoring the Queensland Women in Local Government Strategy Group. Three Queensland champions have been named nationally as role models for women. They are Sharon Solyma from the Gold Coast City Council, Joyce Crombie from Diamantina Shire Council, and Michelle McFadyen from Longreach Regional Council.

Today I am pleased to announce new ambassadors for women in the local government sector. In a slight departure from the norm, I point out that these are all men working in senior roles across Queensland. They are Bryan Ottone from Central Highlands Regional Council, Mark Crawley from Isaac, Stephen Wilton from Cook, Desmond Tayley from Wujal Wujal, Stephen McCartney from Flinders, Gary Stevenson from Redland City, Councillor Bob Abbot from Sunshine Coast, Peter Byrne from Bundaberg Regional and Councillor Ray Brown from Western Downs—all mayors or CEOs and all absolutely committed to the important job of ensuring that women come from the front lines and move up through the senior echelons into management and leadership positions in the local governments of Queensland.

There are many activities to occur this year to promote the professional development of women in local government, and I look forward to supporting those activities. However, as I travel Queensland I am already seeing the benefits of designating 2010 the Year of Women in Local Government. I think every CEO of Queensland's 73 councils knows that women have not been promoted to management and senior positions as they should have been. They are already taking action to provide mentoring, career development and training opportunities for the good women who are right there under their noses and ready to take up these opportunities. I have no doubt that the ambassadors announced today will ensure that the systems are in place to ensure gender balance in the future workforces of Queensland's councils.

Creative Industry Exports

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.25 am): The Bligh government is committed to helping Queenslanders achieve their goals and to promoting our state in the global market. Trade Queensland plays an important role in supporting local companies to grow and achieve success overseas, whether they be energy companies or in technology, agriculture or creative industries. The reality is that some of our greatest exports here

in Queensland are our artists and musicians. Great performers such as Kate Miller-Heidke, the Middle East, Hungry Kids of Hungary, 26, Drawn from Bees and Grand Atlantic are all achieving success in taking their talents to the world.

As a group we are determined to help them showcase and perform their work overseas to create new export markets and global opportunities for our creative industries. The government's Contemporary Music Export Strategy, QMEx, provides support for Queensland artists and continues to deliver strong export outcomes. Since 2008 QMEx has assisted the Queensland music industry at international music events in the US and Europe, supporting our musicians to achieve more than \$4 million worth of export outcomes.

This year alone Queensland bands have taken centre stage at events including Canadian Music Week in Toronto, South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, Musexpo in Los Angeles, City Showcase in London, Coachella festival in Indio, California and the Great Escape in Brighton, England. Our bands are also set to perform at Music Matters in Hong Kong next week, at goNORTH and RockNess in Scotland as well as Musexpo Europe in the UK next month and at the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan this July.

As a government we are determined to give our artists the support they need to take their music to the world and get involved in key international music events. Performing at these industry events enables Queensland talent to get in front of the right music and media professionals. We are also a major supporter of Brisbane's Big Sound Music Industry Summit and Showcase, which attracts international music industry decision makers from global markets to Queensland each September. With our support many artists, including Pete Murray, Kate Miller-Heidke, the Middle East and Yves Klein Blue, have successfully secured international licensing deals, synchronisation deals for TV and advertising, record label deals and access to touring circuits.

There is no question that these talented musicians have the potential to achieve great success, and many already are. As a government we are proud to support them to see Queensland's creative industries going global.

Bushfire Preparedness

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.27 am): In August last year the interim findings of the Victorian bushfires royal commission were handed down. Major themes of the interim report included the use of warnings, the information provided to the public, community education, identifying bushfire risk and updating the stay-and-defend or go-early policy. While Queensland's natural disaster risk profile is very different to that of Victoria, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has taken proactive steps to address the commission's findings. Thirty-two of the 51 recommendations made in the interim report were identified as being relevant to Queensland, particularly in strengthening our bushfire preparation arrangements.

I am pleased to advise the House today of two new initiatives which will assist the community with preparedness for bushfires. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is developing a network of mitigation and education officers and volunteer community educators across the state. Seven new mitigation and education officers and 69 volunteer community educators have already been appointed. It is anticipated that up to 3,000 volunteer community educators will eventually be recruited to support local communities. A volunteer community educator is a non-operational role dedicated to providing bushfire and fire safety education through programs such as Bushfire Prepared Communities, bushfire action plans, the permit-to-light-fire system and other rural fire specific programs.

The seven mitigation and education officers are full-time employees of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. They will provide support to the volunteer community educators as well as participate in critical community mitigation and education activities. Central to the education role of these new positions is raising awareness within at-risk communities of the new 'prepare, act, survive' fire safety message which replaces the former stay-and-defend or go-early policy.

Last year Queenslanders saw just how dangerous bushfires could be with more than 4,000 vegetation fires igniting across the state—one of our worst bushfire seasons on record. Through these two new initiatives the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service continues its role of helping protect the community from the risk of bushfires.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Sale of Public Assets

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (10.30 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House:

Calls upon the Premier to delay the sales of state assets until after the next federal election so that rank-and-file Labor and union members can be given back a right that they have been denied; namely, a genuine debate on the sale of state assets at a special state ALP conference.

Mining Royalties

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—Ind) (10.30 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House:

Calls upon the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to support a policy of 'royalties for the regions' to ensure a fixed percentage of mining royalty revenues will be directed to rural and regional Queensland.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Visiting Parliament House today will be the Yeronga State High School, the Undurba State School, Somerville House and Bundaberg West State School. Question time will end at 11.31 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK (10.31 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to reports that the public servant in charge of the bungled Health payroll system has been moved on. I ask: when will the minister in charge of the bungled Health payroll system be moved on, or is this just another case of Labor blaming the public servants but never the minister?

Ms BLIGH: I do not intend to comment on the staffing of Queensland Health. That is a matter not only for the Minister for Health but much more appropriately for the director-general of Queensland Health. I do not think that this is a forum in which those things should be personalised or aired.

I am very happy though to talk about the actions of the Minister for Health and the achievements he has made to systematically improve the problems with Queensland Health's payroll system. What we saw yesterday was a quantum leap improvement in the number of pays that were correctly made to Queensland Health staff. As I understand it from the most recent briefing—and the minister might confirm this for me—out of approximately 72,000 staff there were only 29 no pays yesterday and they have all been rectified in the manner chosen by the staff members. When it comes to no pays that is a very significant improvement.

I understand that there may be some other matters brought to our attention today. But in terms of the quantum leap forward in improvement, that is very significant. I thank all of the staff in our payroll hubs for the work that they have done to make that happen.

I am very conscious, however, that one of the issues—and I know that the Queensland Nurses Union and others are concerned about it, and rightly so—is not so much people getting no pay but those who are getting paid but perhaps not paid their full entitlement. There are some backpay adjustments that are still being worked through. The Queensland Health payroll this week was \$9 million—

Mr Lucas: 219—it's normally 210.

Ms BLIGH: So it was about \$9 million more than it would normally be. What that indicates again is that the staff in our payroll hubs have made huge gains in the last fortnight in processing those adjustments and paying them.

There is more work to be done. There is a long way to go. I am very pleased to have the opportunity this morning to recognise the work that is being done and to make it clear that some of that is happening because of the leadership of the Minister for Health and his personal involvement. He has personally involved himself every step of the way in the department's restructuring of the project team and is ensuring that this sees quantum improvements every pay.

The real heroes here are the staff in our payroll hubs, many of them working very long shifts because they care.

Mr Springborg: 120 hours a week.

Ms BLIGH: I am very sorry the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy feel that way about the hardworking staff in payroll hubs. I take my hat off to them. They are the heroes here. I ask for their continued hard work and thank them for it.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Prince Charles Hospital, Protest

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. The Premier refused to front health workers at this year's Labour Day march and is today refusing to front health workers at a protest at the Prince Charles Hospital, claiming parliament is in session. I table a copy of the press release from the Queensland Nurses Union.

Tabled paper: Press release, dated 19 May 2010, by the Queensland Nurses Union, titled 'Queensland Health payroll system problems—update' [2271].

I ask: why is the Premier refusing to take leave from parliament to meet with unpaid workers and working families, yet only two nights ago she was able to take leave from parliament to attend a black tie ball with petroleum producers?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I am very happy to advise that my office has spoken to the Queensland Nurses Union. I will be meeting with a delegation from the Queensland Nurses Union this afternoon to talk directly to its members. I am very happy to talk to the Queensland Nurses Union and its members. I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon.

We see the rank hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition coming in here talking about who people should talk to. This is someone who has been hiding. He has been in the bunker for two days. He does not have the guts to stand up in front of a camera. This is a leader in hiding.

Honourable members interjected.

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

Ms BLIGH: This is a leader without the backbone to stand in front of a camera and explain what on earth is going on in his own party. The member for Surfers Paradise is in deep hiding. He has been hiding all week. I challenge—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides will come to order!

Ms BLIGH: I challenge the member for Surfers Paradise today to face the media, face the cameras and tell Queenslanders what is happening in his party. He does not want to tell Queenslanders that his party is falling apart. It is disintegrating from the centre. Bruce McIver, 'Uncle' Bruce, Bruce the bovver boy will not give permission for the Leader of the Opposition to stand in front of the cameras because he knows it would be a train wreck. He knows he does not have any answers to this. He knows he cannot possibly answer questions on the investigation into travel rorts. He knows he has no answer for the secret, shonky contracts. He does not want to talk about what is happening in Far North Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition—the spineless, weak—member for Surfers Paradise is in hiding. Today he has one decision. Does he have the ticker to face a camera? I will put money on him hiding under the bed. He will not face a camera today because his party, the Liberal National Party, is imploding. It is disintegrating from the centre. He has nothing. We will not see the Leader of the Opposition come out of hiding. I bet we do not see him come out of the bunker. He has nothing.

Mr Wallace: He got front-ended.

Ms BLIGH: He is not being mentored by the member for Southern Downs; he is being front-ended by him, and it is not pretty to watch.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, I refer the Premier to the language used then. I would appeal to all members to be moderate in their language. Language like 'spineless' I think is coming dangerously close to being unparliamentary. I call the honourable member for Yeerongpilly.

Paniyiri

Mr FINN: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House about the celebration of Greek culture Paniyiri that is occurring in South Brisbane this weekend?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question. The member for Yeerongpilly is known far and wide for his deep respect for all culture. He loves nothing more than a Greek festival.

This weekend we celebrate all things Greek at one of Queensland's signature multicultural events. We will see more than 30,000 people attend the 34th Paniyiri Greek Festival at Musgrave Park. We will see traditional dance and music and cultural events. Paniyiri means the coming together of people in festive spirits, and every single year this festival lives up to its name.

Mr Lucas: Is the member for western downs going this year and the member for mermaid waters?

Ms BLIGH: We might see a special appearance from the little mermaid, and the cowboy from Condamine might make a special appearance. The highlights this year include a Greek Dancing with the Stars, Greek Goddess Effie, Zorba Till You Drop—we might see the member for mermaid do that one—and the honey puff and olive eating competitions. Our government is very pleased to support this festival. It is a great opportunity to understand a little bit about the—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I am very happy to take the interjection and say to the member that the Italian festival in Ingham is fantastic, and I was very pleased to be there. What we see unfolding in the Liberal National Party is nothing short of a Greek tragedy. What do we see in a Greek tragedy?

Mr Cripps interjected.

Ms BLIGH: The member for Hinchinbrook will not tell us whether he signed the contract. He is under five per cent! Did you sign?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat, Premier. Stop the clock. I will wait for the interjections to stop so I can hear the discourse.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. What do we see in a Greek tragedy? Usually there are a few sacrifices to the gods, and we know who is being sacrificed in this tragedy—

Mr Lucas: Got a knife in the back.

Ms BLIGH: And we know who is being sacrificed in this tragedy with the knife in the back—the member for Redlands, the member for Cleveland, the member for Aspley, the members for Mudgeeraba and Gaven, all of them first-termers. Has their leader stood up and defended them? Has he given any explanation for the secret contracts they all signed? You would not want to back him in a fight! There is always a hero in a Greek tragedy who has a fatal flaw. The fatal flaw of this hero is his weakness. What we have here is a weak leader—a weak leader in hiding—who will not disclose what is happening in his party, he will not deny it and he will not defend it. In terms of the backbenchers over there who are under the gun, what are they going to say to their electorates about their signing up to these contracts, because you will have to answer to your electorates and your leader has not stood up and given you one defence. Not once has he stood by your side and explained why you have signed up to secret shonky contracts.

(Time expired)

Honourable members interjected.

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

Queensland Health, Industrial Relations

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Yesterday the minister revealed that his department had refused to investigate and prosecute Queensland Health for failing to properly pay entitlements to thousands of health workers. The minister claimed 'this government is doing everything it can to ensure they were getting paid adequately', and this morning we even heard the Premier admit that there are some outstanding entitlement issues. If investigations have not commenced, how does the minister know that this government is doing everything it can to address these outstanding issues?

Mr DICK: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raises serious matters, and I want to put some matters on the record. Industrial relations investigators have well-established processes for dealing with wage complaints, and those processes are being followed in relation to the Health payroll, as they should. I am advised that, in relation to wage complaints generally, in the first instance industrial relations investigators make contact with an organisation's local management in an attempt to sort out the matter as soon as possible. That makes sense—a sensible and practical approach to try to rectify the problem to ensure the worker receives their lawful pay and entitlement. That is what the department does. It works locally first with management to try to address the problem. Secondly, if that is unsuccessful in relation to a public sector entity, a formal approach is then made directly to the organisation's CEO. I have received advice on this matter and I am advised that in the past 10 years less than 10 wage complaints have needed to be referred to a chief executive officer of any alleged offending public sector agency. All have been resolved without the need for prosecution action, and that illustrates the independent process that is currently in place is effective.

Once again the member for Southern Downs has demonstrated his ignorance for the legal framework in this state. If the member for Southern Downs spent more time considering his shadow portfolio responsibilities rather than undermining the leader, he might come to this place better informed about his responsibilities as a member of the shadow cabinet. Let me put on record what has happened in the last 12 months. Let us remember what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has done in relation to my portfolio in the last 14 months. He has asked me to name someone who was possibly under witness

protection under the CMC. He has asked me to do that. He has asked me directly to contact the Police Commissioner in relation to a bail matter. He has asked me to interfere in independent prosecution matters relevant to the Director of Public Prosecutions. He has got it wrong again.

Industrial relations investigations and prosecutions are not determined by politicians, and nor should they be. Any decision to prosecute and investigate is made by the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. Labor does not interfere in independent processes. That is our history. That is our tradition. That is in complete contradistinction to all of those members of the old Country Party on the other side of the House. Unlike the LNP, we do not turn a blind eye while LNP members feather their own nests doing dirty deals with China using public resources. That is what members of the LNP do. Unlike the LNP, we have no intention of going back to the old days of the Bjelke-Petersen government when politicians interfered in policing and prosecution in this state.

(Time expired)

Flying Start Education Forums

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House of the importance of the government's Flying Start education forums that are being held across the state, including the recent one held in my electorate at Upper Coomera State College?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Albert for the question. It was a great pleasure to join with her and other members of her school communities at Upper Coomera State College—a wonderful college built by a Labor government—for a forum on our Flying Start green paper. I know the minister has been attending forums right across Queensland, and the one at Upper Coomera was very well attended with representatives from not only that college but also a number of other schools in the area. We are more than halfway through the consultation process and we have had 61 successful forums so far. I congratulate the almost 2,000 parents, carers and school community members who have so far come along to the forums. We will also be seeing a number of submissions from some of the major stakeholders in the education community.

I am very pleased to see the community coming out and talking to us about the appropriate educational setting and programs for our year 7 children, and this is something that people are interested in and do want to be part of. We are also very pleased to be joining with the Catholic and independent school sectors as part of stamping out bullying and violence in our schools. The task force that we set up has also been holding forums, particularly in a number of regional centres, and they have been very well attended and I look forward to seeing that very serious issue attended to and providing government with some recommendations.

But when it comes to the issue of bullying, unfortunately it is not only seen in our schools. What we are seeing in the Liberal National Party is an entrenched culture of bullying. Let us just go through what we are seeing. What will those opposite be doing? Friday night this week they will be looking at further discipline in relation to Brisbane city councillor Nicole Johnston. Nicole Johnston speaks up on behalf of her constituents and what happens? Retribution! You get pulled in front of the Star Chamber; the Inquisition comes out and you get retribution and punishment. What happened when the member for Beaudesert spoke out and said the bleeding obvious? What did he say? He said that you cannot win an election if you have no strategy and you have no policy. He backed John Howard, who said that you cannot fatten a pig on market day. And what happened? He got pulled in to speak to Barry O'Sullivan—'Pottymouth'—and then they tried to force him to sign a contract and, when he stood up to them, they tried to force him out of the party. Then there are the FNQ claims. Guess what happened yesterday afternoon? There was a press release from the Liberal Party which said—

The party members in Far North Queensland who raised the allegations were counselled and asked to stand aside from their positions.

All 15 of them!

It is a pogrom. That is what is going on. They are getting rid of the lot of them. As I said, when a party has to force people to do things, when a party has to use bullying and intimidation and fear, you know that it does not have much life left.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mrs STUCKEY: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. I table a CorpTech form that requested a change to the contract for the Queensland Health payroll project after it had been signed. In this case, the contract neglected to provide for one of the most basic worker's entitlements, nurse meal allowances. I ask: why did the minister, who touts himself as the worker's friend, allow a contract to deny nurses a basic meal allowance? Was it the minister's incompetence or is somewhat else to blame, as usual?

Tabled paper: Copy of a CorpTech Request for Change (RFC), dated 17 October 2008, titled 'Nurses Meal Allowance' [2272].

Mr SCHWARTEN: I always like to check these things. While I am doing it, the member might like to ask herself if she signed up for the 12 grand. The way I read this is that the people who put the contract together had decided there needed to be a variation made to it. This issue is just like the one that was raised yesterday, which was about a password. CorpTech decided that the new payroll system needed to conform to a standard across government. In other words, if it sat idle for 30 minutes, then you had to put the password in. They are normal contractual arrangements.

Let us use a building analogy. Does the honourable member seriously think that if she were the public works minister—

Mr Lucas: She would never sign a variation.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Not only would the member not ever condone a variation but would she sit down and draw up a contract to build the Gallery of Modern Art, for example? Would she personally sit down and design the footings of the Gallery of Modern Art? Of course she would not. She might—knowing the opposition's reputation in building, that is probably exactly what they would do. I remember when Ray Connor was in that position he was taking egg boxes full of signings home and authorising cordless drills for QBuild officers and things like that. That is the way the honourable members opposite would run government.

As ministers, we do not sit down and define every piece of contract because, if that were the case, we would not need public servants and ministers would do nothing else on this earth. Anybody who knows anything about contracts would have an insight into the way in which the members opposite would do business. They would interfere in the day-to-day running of the bureaucracy in areas in which they have no competency whatsoever and no knowledge. They would interfere in the personal running of the department.

We have heard how they asked the Attorney-General to personally interfere in the police. They have form on that. We know that the party interferes with their members, because we have not heard from one of those people under the five per cent margin. I thought my good friend from Mirani would have a bit of get up and go. I thought that he would be a bloke who I would take to Gallipoli with me but, sadly, no. Did he sign the \$12,000 scam with 'Uncle' Bruce? Did he get involved with 'Spivvy' Bruce to sign the 12 grand under the table out of the electorate allowance—taxpayers' money?

Mrs Stuckey: You didn't even feed the nurses.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Did the member who is screeching over there sign any such document? Has she asked any of her colleagues about that? She seems to be very interested in contracts. What about the contract that was signed with the—

(Time expired)

Health System

Mr RYAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Can the Deputy Premier advise the House of the benefits of proceeding full speed ahead on the Bligh government's commitment to reform our hospital system, build a world-class Queensland Children's Hospital, build a university hospital on the Sunshine Coast and get on with the job of delivering the biggest hospital building program in the nation?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Health is a complex area—the largest single item in the Queensland budget—with a staff of 75,000. Queensland has an ever-ageing population, notwithstanding the second longest life expectancy on earth. When you run Health you need to make sure that you are constantly at the forefront of policy innovation. We have in the LNP a party in disarray. It is a party that is incapable of injecting itself into the policy formulation process of Health because it has a leader gripped by fear, a leader who is so uncertain as to his own ability to formulate policy that he says nothing.

We have made our commitment very clear when it comes to health, education and roads. We have a \$6 billion capital works budget. The closest state to have such a budget is New South Wales, which has a \$2 billion budget. That is indicative of that ironclad commitment. On the Sunshine Coast we have the Nambour Hospital 96-bed block that is very well advanced and also, as I announced the other day, we have the further interventional cardiology and other medical services that are being rolled out there.

It is ironic that, when we talk about the significant number of people who are employed in Queensland Health, in the last election campaign we had the 'de-necessary' people. The opposition always asks questions about clerical people, when they are the people in Queensland Health who are working so hard to deliver the payroll. They are the very people who are being denigrated by the opposition.

When it comes to policy and health, the other day the member for Kawana asked a question about the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. What happened? I produced a newspaper article—the second of two—in which the Leader of the Opposition, frozen with fear, could not make an alternative

policy commitment. The member for Caloundra said he would can the Queensland Children's Hospital to fund the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, but still we have the Leader of the Opposition frozen with fear. He cannot make a commitment to a policy in relation to it. One wonders what the \$12,000 the members opposite signed up for got them.

Earlier this week we saw the most amazing performance from the Leader of the Opposition who, in my time, is certainly the weakest Leader of the Opposition I have seen. On Tuesday he was again frozen with fear. When you go doorknocking you might see a little yapping dog, terrified, jumping up and down, shrieking and shrill; that is what the Leader of the Opposition was like in his performance this week. He was too scared to go outside the gate to confront the media about the debacle in his party.

This morning we see in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* Dr Bulwinkel, the LNP's Senate candidate, indicating that the LNP is a policy-free zone. Dr Kim Bulwinkel, a Senate candidate and a representative of the AMA, is saying that the LNP is a policy-free zone. They are frozen with fear. They go to CEDA, they go to press clubs, they go to other functions and they have a Leader of the Opposition who cannot commit to a policy because he is frozen with fear.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. I table a form that makes a belated request for a change to the Queensland Health payroll system contract after it had been signed. The change was essential because the system overseen by the minister's department could not record a basic workers' entitlement, a day off in lieu of payment. I ask: how did the minister come to sign off on a contract that denied such an entitlement? Was it his usual incompetence or is someone else, as usual, to blame?

Tabled paper: Copies of a CorpTech Request for Change (RFC), dated 16 September 2008, titled 'Leave Balance for Day in Lieu and Time Code' [2273].

Mr SPEAKER: I would like to hear the question again. I want to hear whether there was a personal reflection on the honourable minister in that question. That is the bit I am after.

Mr Schwarten: I am happy with it. I am not objecting.

Mr SPEAKER: I am, because under the standing orders if there is a personal reflection you will withdraw that part of the question.

Mr McARDLE: I will withdraw that part of the question. I will repeat the question. I table a form that makes a belated request for a change to the Queensland Health payroll system contract after it had been signed. This change was essential because the system overseen by the minister's department could not record a basic entitlement of each worker within Queensland Health, a day off in lieu of payment. How did the minister come to sign off on a contract which denied such a paramount basic entitlement? Was it his incompetence or is someone else to blame, as usual?

Mr SPEAKER: I would claim that you are getting close to a personal reflection. Standing order 115 says you cannot have a personal reflection in the question. That is the bit that I am objecting to. You have asked it twice and you have included it twice. I would ask you to change it. The minister is happy to take the question, so I want you to rephrase it. The minister is happy to take it.

Mr McARDLE: How did the minister come to sign off on a contract that denied workers a day off in lieu, or is it somebody else's fault?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This is very rich coming from somebody who signed off on a scheme that turned pensioners into paupers.

Mr Fraser: That was someone else's fault!

Mr SCHWARTEN: Or was that somebody else's fault? All of these questions that have been raised go to the very heart of the lack of understanding of what a managing contractor does. They identify problems. What are the dates on these documents? They are in 2008. As this program was being developed that is exactly what should have been taking place; they should have been identifying what the issues were to make the system work and then carrying out variations to make sure that it worked. That is how a building contract works; that is how all contracts work. I would be most concerned if those things were left out of the contract. Someone has gone through and found that those things were left out. Meal allowances would not have been paid if it had gone live, other allowances would not be paid if it went live, so they methodically went through the system and said the system needed to be varied to make sure this happens. The variations reflect that.

Mr McArdle: What about the contracts?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The honourable member continues to bark but he has never, ever answered the question about his turning pensioners into paupers. His name was signed on the bottom.

Mr Lucas: In charge of compliance.

Mr SCHWARTEN: In charge of compliance, that is right. My signature does not appear on the bottom of these documents. But I am delighted that those things have occurred because it shows that those people who were working on that system were mindful of those things. What happened after that I cannot comment on because we are having an inquiry into it. On two occasions two honourable members opposite asked for the Auditor-General to look into the matter and then whinged about it yesterday. We referred it to KPMG. We are still awaiting advice from them. The Auditor-General has now volunteered to take the whole thing over. We are happy with all of that. No doubt some of these questions that both the health minister and I have will be answered. The health minister and I have actually been to the coal face and talked to the people who are implementing this—the health minister more so than I. He has been physically driving this through his department. There are questions to be answered. But these are two questions that do not need answering because it is clear that as part of the managing contract these were identified as variations to the contract and dealt with accordingly, just as they would be in a building contract. Those honourable members who showed their ignorance of how contract law works in this way on two occasions this morning and on the occasion yesterday will be the laughing stock of every contract management group in Queensland, and I will make sure that they know about it.

Exports

Mr WATT: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the House on any new economic data relating to the performance of Queensland's trading partners?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Everton for his question and for his commitment to ensuring that we as a government continue to grow the Queensland economy to generate jobs for the future benefit of Queenslanders. As both the Premier and I said this morning, our relationship with our trading partners is vital to supporting the Queensland economy, vital to supporting exports and vital to supporting jobs. We know that across 2009 our major trading partners contracted by 1.1 per cent. As a whole, those nations that we trade with were in a collective recession. Last month the Consensus Economics forecast for growth amongst our major trading partners moved up again. It moved up to be 4.3 per cent for 2010. This represents a recovery in our major trading partners and that is good for the recovery in our economy, it is good for the national economy and it is indeed a reflection of the recovery that is underway in the global economy.

But there are shadows that continue to be cast over the global economy, such as the issues in Greece at the moment. That is not as big as the shadow being cast by the president of the LNP, 'Uncle Bruce McIver', who continues to dominate from the shadows. The next sitting is the budget sitting. In three weeks from today the Leader of the Opposition will have another chance to tell us what it is that he stands for and what his alternative policies are. If he can get 'Uncle Bruce' to let him come out from behind the shadows and actually be able to say something—say anything—about what he stands for then it will be a revelation. What we see is a Leader of the Opposition paralysed behind 'Uncle Bruce'. What we see is a Leader of the Opposition frozen with fear. What we know about this Leader of the Opposition is that he cannot tell the truth. He will not tell the people of Queensland what he stands for. We know that that is because he is not running the show. 'Uncle Bruce' is running the show; the man in the shadows. How do we know he is the man in the shadows? Take a look at this quote from 'Uncle Bruce' the day before the last state election in the *Courier-Mail*—

I was one of the guys, like so many others, standing outside the fence throwing baseball bats outside of politics saying, 'Why don't you fellas get your act together.'

Have we not seen him get inside the fence with the baseball bat, swinging it around, going after all the members under five per cent and right up the tree? He has gone after members who we know have signed the contract such as the member for Clayfield, the member for Indooroopilly, the member for Kawana and the member for Buderim. Why would they sign up to the protection racket? Because they are part of a protected species: former Liberals. They need all the protection that they can get in this state. The test is coming in 21 days when the Leader of the Opposition will come in here and can finally tell the people of Queensland what he stands for and finally tell us what he really believes in. When he comes in here he has got some explaining to do about the contracts, too.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. The Queensland Nurses Union has issued a press release saying that after five payroll cycles nurses have had enough. Can the Premier confirm that she has received advice from the bosses of the Queensland Nurses Union that they are no longer funding or affiliating with the Labor Party or are the bosses of the nurses union telling their members one thing at today's protest meeting while continuing to bankroll the Labor Party?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Clayfield for the question. I can understand, as I think any reasonable person would understand, why many nurses and other Queensland Health staff are feeling very frustrated and angry. They are entitled to. They are also entitled to express that through a democratic process such as a protest. What I do know is that if the other side of politics was running the

show and something like this happened they would have special branch members down taking photographs of nurses who were taking part in the democratic process. If they kept it up they would take their superannuation off them. Their form on this gives them no credibility.

I look forward to meeting with nurses this afternoon. I can certainly understand their frustrations. Many of the improvements we have seen in the system over the last couple of pay cycles have been because people like the Deputy Premier and some of the senior staff of Queensland Health have been sitting down with the unions who have been able to give them some feedback from the front line that has assisted in identifying those parts of the system that most need attention. It is a good opportunity for me to hear from them and I welcome that.

Of course, it does not take much, when one scratches the surface, for the member for Clayfield to bash trade unions. Those opposite take the very first opportunity. They are not satisfied with taking the baseball bat to their own. Getting stuck into each other with the baseball bat only holds so much fun. Those opposite like to get out and put the baseball bat about to anybody else they do not like. Trade unions are entitled to make their own decisions, and their members are entitled to be part of those decisions under the democratic and electoral laws of Queensland about who they may donate money to, not only in the political sphere but also in any other organisation, and I defend their democratic right to do so.

One of the basic human rights is freedom of association. There was a time when Liberals stood up for freedom of association, when they believed in the human rights of people to enjoy freedom of association. But not any more. They have collapsed to the National Party. The question members just heard from the member for Clayfield confirms it. This is an organisation ruled by 'Bruce Almighty'—he who must be obeyed, he who will come after you and if you do not agree with him he will take your lunch money and he will have a baseball bat behind his back.

There was interesting scuttlebutt last year that the member for Clayfield was approached by 'Bruce Almighty' to hand over his electorate allowance to pay for the Caltabiano expenses. I thought that was too farfetched, but after what I have heard this week anything is possible.

Rural and Regional Roads

Ms NELSON-CARR: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. A safe and secure road network is vitally important to rural and remote communities and so too are jobs that keep our local communities thriving. Therefore, can the minister please advise the House what the Bligh government is doing to deliver better roads and to stimulate local economies with more jobs for Queenslanders?

Mr WALLACE: I thank the member for Mundingburra for her question. She certainly knows of the importance of roads in rural and regional Queensland. 2010 is shaping up as one of the most significant years in terms of delivering key infrastructure and managing growth. What we are delivering right across our great state will make a big difference to people's lives. We are rolling out a record road building program of \$18 billion over five years and we are generating important jobs for road workers. Eighteen billion dollars translates into 30,000 jobs per year. In the Far North, work on the southern approaches to Cairns on the Bruce Highway is creating more than 420 jobs. Work on the Flinders Highway and the Townsville access road project is creating more than 1,030 jobs. In the member for Mundingburra's own electorate, the Douglas Arterial Road duplication project is creating 448 jobs.

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the member's interjection. She was there for that important sod turning. We are delivering local jobs and better roads for Townsville. In Mackay, the Forgan Bridge project is creating more than 430 jobs.

Ms Jarratt interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. She knows the importance of local jobs in her community. Further south on the Leichhardt Highway, the Don River Bridges project is creating more than 530 jobs. Back to the Bruce Highway—no, not Bruce McIver—the Cooroy to Curra project will create 1,700 jobs. Regional Queensland has come out a winner. All up, around 12,000 jobs have been created in regional Queensland for regional Queenslanders. Here in the south-east our road building programs, like the Sir Leo Hielcher Bridges, are creating 18,000 jobs, delivering better roads and great upgrades.

The Bligh government is laying bitumen right across the state, but what do we get from those opposite? The only thing they are laying into is the blame game. They are laying into each other and digging a pretty deep hole. This week what we have seen in this House is nothing short of appalling. It looks like the LNP is being run by the Mafia, where members need to pay protection money to stay in the party. While we are laying bitumen, they are laying into each other. One has to ask the question: what did the Leader of the Opposition know about these backroom deals? Why did he turn a blind eye to them? Or is he simply in the dark? It is time to come clean. The people of Queensland deserve answers.

NAPLAN Tests

Dr FLEGG: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Will the minister tell the House why Queensland teachers marking NAPLAN tests are paid up to 25 per cent less than their counterparts marking the same tests in other states?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. With all things to do with NAPLAN and other new reforms that are being introduced, either federally or at a state level, what does the opposition do? Faced with a policy vacuum, it attacks what we are trying to do to reform the education system in Queensland. If the opposition—

Opposition members interjected.

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

Mr WILSON: Teachers and other professionals engaged for the purpose of marking the NAPLAN tests are employed by the Queensland Studies Authority. They are not employed by the department of education. They are not employed by the Catholic education system. They are not employed by independent schools. They are employed by the Queensland Studies Authority. Why? Because the Queensland Studies Authority is the state agency acting on behalf of ACARA, the national curriculum authority, for the purpose of implementing and conducting the NAPLAN tests. That is what is happening.

Despite the opposition's criticisms of our reforms and the federal reforms, these tests are vital for getting a snapshot of student progress. Why are we so focused on this? Because parents are entitled to know how their children are progressing in education, the improvements that can be made and how we can better target the education effort. The policy vacuum on the other side of this chamber means that they have no interest in those things. They are not concerned about any initiative that we might implement to improve the performance of both the schools and students.

We know they will not make proper inquiries into education, but why will they not make proper inquiries about these contracts? They attack the BER scheme, but why do they not apply value for money to the contracts that they have entered into with their party? Why do they not assess all of the contracts for \$12,000 and whether they are getting value for money? They could use the test that PricewaterhouseCoopers used on our building program. Are they getting best outcomes? Are they getting value for money? Are they ensuring integrity? Is there guidance on compliance? What are the risks?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. Both sides will come to order.

Mr WILSON: Are they identifying and dealing with all of the risks? What is their communication and consultation plan? What are the governance arrangements? Those are the tests that have been applied to the contracts that are rolling out the BER program in Queensland. The opposition would do well to look in its own backyard and check the contracts that the 12 people on the other side of this room have with their party.

(Time expired)

Planning for Life Forums

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Could the Attorney-General outline to the House the importance of planning for unexpected events in life?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for her question. Last week in Townsville I attended the first of a series of three forums held by the Queensland government state-wide to help Queenslanders plan for life's unexpected events. Those forums, known as Planning for Life forums, outline the importance of having wills, advance health directives and enduring powers of attorney in place in case of accidents, medical emergencies or other unforeseen events. There was a terrific response in Townsville, and I thank the honourable member for her support for the forum. More than 70 local members of the community attended. I thank the guests, who included the member for Townsville, and officers and staff from the Office of the Adult Guardian, the Public Trust Office, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Townsville Community Legal Service. Life's journey can present some unexpected twists and turns such as a sudden accident, a medical condition or mental illness. That is why it is so important to plan ahead. If something traumatic does happen, it is much easier for everyone to work through the situation if these important issues have been considered. The next two forums will be held in Toowoomba on 2 June and in the great Central Queensland city of Rockhampton on 13 July. I look forward to attending them.

I have drawn these matters to the attention of the House because it is obvious that some on the other side of the House might need to plan for life after politics. I am only here to help. One of those is probably the Leader of the Opposition. In a week when serious allegations have been made about impropriety and misconduct, and they have been raised in relation to his political party, the opposition

leader has gone missing. He has failed to explain those issues, he has failed to answer serious questions and he has shown zero leadership on the issue. Because of this failure of leadership, I predict that either more members of the LNP will split off and join the 'coalition of the unwilling' up the back or he will end his time as the Leader of the Opposition.

I may not have been a member in this House for long, but I have watched politics in this state for decades. The Leader of the Opposition would be the weakest leader of the opposition in living memory. He is the weakest opposition leader and the weakest member of the LNP. I suggest he contacts the Public Trust Office for his last political will and testament, because he will be leaving the position soon. An advance health directive could be useful, because the knives are being sharpened. However, there is good news—

Mr FOLEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are willing, not unwilling.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. But there is good news: he does not need to prepare an enduring power of attorney because he has already given up all power and authority to the president of the LNP, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and all the old hard heads of the Country Party. Let me say this to the Leader of the Opposition, and I have said it before this week: enjoy the time overseas, enjoy the holiday, enjoy the vacation because when you come back the leader's job and the party is over.

(Time expired)

Traffic Fines

Mr RICKUSS: My question is to the Premier. I asked the police minister a simple question on notice about traffic fines on the Toowoomba Range. The police minister denied responsibility and said to ask the transport minister. I asked the transport minister the same question and she also denied responsibility and said to go back and ask the police minister. I table the answers to the questions on notice.

Tabled paper: Copy of answers to questions on notice Nos 187 of 2010 and 672 of 2010 [\[2274\]](#).

I ask the Premier: which member of the duo is actually responsible for traffic fines and should answer my question?

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Give me a break. It is about a document. I want to make sure that I have the right document.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Just resume your seat, Premier. I will wait for the House to come to order. The honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. It is very straightforward. The Minister for Transport sets the rules and administers the act in relation to this and the Minister for Police and his portfolio enforce the rules. I think that is pretty straightforward. It is just like most of the other legislation. I do not know which part of it those opposite do not understand.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: It is no different to any other legislation and I do not know which part of it those opposite do not understand. I know that in the LNP they like the same person to do everything. Bruce McIver sets the rules and Bruce McIver enforces them and changes them to suit himself whenever he likes, and when things gets tough he brings Barry 'the hammer' O'Sullivan with him. I was very interested to hear the comments from the Minister for Education about value for money.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will wait for the House to come to order. It is impossible to hear the Premier's answer. The honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was interested to hear the education minister's views on value for money for contracts, and I share his views. As I said yesterday, one of the clauses of the contract provides that if you hand over the dough you get a shadow ministerial visit. I wonder how many of them are putting up their hands and saying, 'The benchmark value for money is if I get the member for Lockyer into my electorate.' I bet the member for Indooroopilly is dying to get the member for Lockyer to come and speak to some of the students in his electorate.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hinchinbrook, I cannot hear above your interjection. It is just noise. I just cannot hear it. The honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: The member for Hinchinbrook of course is known as the dark horse, and I think he is getting pretty excited about the events of this week. He might be an outsider but, as things continue to disintegrate, watch the odds shorten on the dark horse. You can see by his performance this morning that he is a stayer. Keep your eye on the dark horse. That is where the smart money will be.

Indigenous Community Mayors

Mr O'BRIEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Can the minister please advise the outcomes of the recent meeting in Bamaga with Queensland's Indigenous community mayors?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to inform the House that the last round table gathering of all of the mayors of the Aboriginal communities with me as minister was held for the first time in an Aboriginal community and that was in the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council town of Bamaga. It was a very good meeting in terms of the business which centred on financial sustainability and financial planning for Aboriginal councils but also on the development of community by community sport and recreation plans.

Probably just as important for the mayors was their opportunity to have a look at all of the good work being done by the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council on various elements of council operations. It was very instructive for them all. I am sure that they join me in saying a sincere thanks to the mayor, Joseph Elu, the CEO, Stuart Duncan, and the council for hosting us on the occasion of that meeting. They would be pleased too that Brisbane is hearing what happens in Far North Queensland, at Bamaga and elsewhere.

Members would know that I am very keen to get Cairns on the record. Though I have to say that I was not pleased in the way in which Cairns was mentioned in this parliament yesterday. In fact I was very embarrassed and dismayed by Mr Messenger's tabling of documents in relation to—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You will have to refer to the honourable member by his district.

Ms BOYLE: The honourable member's tabling of documents in relation to LNP goings on in the city of Cairns and the region of Far North Queensland. I am further alarmed this morning by the response of Warren Entsch, who has been implicated in the bullying and intimidation charges. There are also charges of financial mismanagement. We have got from Mr Entsch a 'don't you worry about that'. Good old Joh days are back again: 'It's all sorted out—no trouble.'

On behalf of the good people in the LNP up there, who might not be my voters but many of whom are friendly with me and are colleagues with me in my community organisations, I say that we will not have a reputation for bullying intimidation and financial mismanagement. I call on the Leader of the Opposition—because apparently there is an AGM for the LNP in Cairns this weekend—to get on a plane, hightail it up there and eyeball Warren Entsch and Mr McIver, if that is necessary, and stand up for the members of the party and call on them to come clean on the intimidation, the bullying and the financial mismanagement charges. We will not have it swept under the carpet. We want these matters dealt with.

Coal Seam Gas Industry

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. BP boss, Tony Hayward, when speaking of the massive oil spill from his company's US offshore well said, 'I think the environmental impact of this disaster is likely to have been very, very modest.' Today the minister has been quoted, when speaking of the proposed coal seam gas operation on the Downs, as saying, 'After a decade of production there was no evidence of significant environmental harm.' I ask: as CSG and UCG harvesting in Queensland is in its infancy, what would the minister class as significant environmental damage? Why won't the minister implement a moratorium until impacts on the aquifers are known? And should we expect a similar statement from the minister in the future?

Mr SPEAKER: That is a rather long preamble, the member for Nanango.

Mr ROBERTSON: Had the member been listening to the debate that was held in this chamber throughout most of yesterday, she would know that what we have in place across a range of portfolios in terms of the emerging coal seam gas industry—and it applies equally to the underground coal gasification industry—is quite a detailed set of protections to ensure that not only landholders' rights are recognised and protected but also proponents of these projects are subject to the most stringent environmental measures before they are given the necessary permits to go about extracting the coal seam gas, as they are seeking to do under their EIS proposals that they have submitted to the Coordinator-General.

The member would have been assured by now, had she, for example, taken the time to visit the Queensland government website, where there is an exhaustive series of documents and standards that have been put in place—I tabled one of these yesterday for the benefit of the member for Callide—on these matters designed to ensure the protection of the environment in terms of these particular projects.

As we come to the end of the third day's question time, can I say what an extraordinary week we have seen here in this parliament. What we have seen yet again is the opposition leader fail on the most fundamental aspect of leadership that one can think of. This is a repeat of that famous incident when he was asked by the media to say who attended that \$20,000-a-head dinner. What did he do? He ran a mile. He did not put up his hand for days on end, refusing to confront the media who quite legitimately had asked these questions. So he has reverted to type. When an issue gets a bit warm, where does he go? He heads for the hills. He refuses to appear in front of the cameras and answer the fundamental questions that are quite legitimate when it comes to politics and future leadership in this state.

Contrast that with the Premier, who stood up in front of the angry crowds of Traveston Dam for hours on end—fronting up to the community of Queensland. They would rather put the interests of Labour Day ahead of the interests of a biotechnology industry in this state. How extraordinary that they would choose Labour Day over the biggest biotech convention in the world that is delivering jobs for Queenslanders!

What an absolute spineless fraud the Leader of the Opposition has turned out to be this week—day in, day out refusing to front the media, refusing to front the people of Queensland on the most fundamental questions about future leadership in this state. You have failed.

(Time expired)

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 April (see p. 1258), on motion of Mr Lawlor—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.32 am): As the shadow minister for racing for the LNP, unlike the minister opposite, who tries to distance himself at every opportunity for the betterment of Queensland racing, I rise to speak on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. This is the most ill-conceived, illogical and deliberately destructive piece of legislation that I have seen come into this House during my time in this parliament. I am utterly disgusted at the introduction of this piece of legislation and extremely worried about how this repugnant and detached state Labor government is going to destroy the racing industry in Queensland through this legislation.

The legislation is an abomination in every way. The codes of racing will be the recipients of the deleterious implications of this disastrous piece of legislation until Queensland gets itself a new government. As the shadow minister for racing, I totally oppose this bill and, along with my Liberal National Party colleagues, I will be voting against this dreadful, policy-vacant and worthless amendment.

I would like to explain the genesis of this flawed legislation. It was born out of an attempt about two years ago by the current chairman of Queensland Racing to extend his unelected dictatorship over Queensland Racing until 2014. Mr Bentley asked the then Treasurer and minister responsible for racing, Andrew Fraser, to extend his appointed term without his having to face an election by the industry, mainly because he knew that the industry would reject his leadership. This undemocratic belligerency was too much even for the Labor Party hierarchy and the Labor Party's lackey, Bob Bentley, was thwarted in that attempt. He went back to the drawing board and came up with this ridiculous scheme to combine the three codes of racing into one and give himself another unelected term, with taxpayers throwing in a few dollars in wagering taxes forgone to justify the deal.

Peter Beattie's racing minister Merri Rose—we all remember Merri—sacked the previous racing control body in 2001 and then in March 2002 appointed Bob Bentley to the new Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board. From that time on he caused havoc across the racing community of Queensland. This appointment was not given due process, and the usual fair and equitable selection process was not adhered to. This is the person whom the Bligh Labor government wants as its puppet to control the entire racing industry in Queensland and absolve the Labor Party of all blame and all political fall-out from racing codes which collectively involve around 50,000 industry participants.

The Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 seeks to amend the Racing Act 2002 to establish one control body for the three codes of racing—the thoroughbred racing industry, the harness racing industry and the greyhound racing industry. This control body will make all financial and operational decisions for each code. The LNP will not agree to this as we believe that each racing code should have control over its own sector of the industry. There are vastly different skills and interests in the three codes that will be thrown together in a competitive board arrangement dominated by thoroughbred racing representatives. It should be a matter of codes controlling their own business. We believe that the greyhound industry representatives are the best to run the greyhound industry, the harness racing representatives are the best to run the trots and the thoroughbred industry representatives are the best to run the thoroughbred industry.

This is our guaranteed plan when we win the next election, when the people of Queensland vote this dreadfully arrogant government out of power. If this bill is passed, we commit to the overall racing industry that this legislation will be dismantled and control will be given back to each of the codes for a sustainable and secure racing industry into the future, run by industry participants for industry benefit rather than for the company profits of UNITAB shareholders, of which Bob Bentley is of course a beneficiary.

Another objective of the bill is to abolish entities established under the Racing Act that can be established administratively by the control board. This relates to country racing organisations and takes all statutory recognition through legislation away from country racing and hands power and responsibility over to Bob Bentley and Queensland Racing. To borrow some common racetrack slang, it is just like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank. This complete ransacking of country and provincial racing by the Bligh Labor government is a disgrace, and I am amazed that the minister has ignored any consultation with the large body of participants in country and provincial racing that this amendment affects. These rural racing organisations are the lifeblood of these local communities, and control by someone who sits in an office hundreds of kilometres away, let alone someone devoid of local knowledge of these organisations, is doomed to fail. The thousands of voluntary race club workers and supporters cannot have a dollar value put on their contribution, and I fear that these loyal racing industry participants will be lost to the industry if the main control body keeps bashing them around the head.

The Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 claims to introduce amendments to provide stability and reduce the administrative cost burden on the control body. I would ask the minister to explain what quantum of saving is envisaged to the three codes when there are no employees under \$100,000 to be sacked, no rental savings and obviously no promotional or operational savings identified by the three-code board amalgamation. This is just another red herring in the Labor Party manifesto on how to divest itself of any interest in racing, other than collecting taxes from the industry to prop up its profligate spending.

The bill does provide, however, an opportunity to achieve one positive measure in relation to clarifying provisions relating to taking and dealing with samples from licensed animals for analysis. This closes a loophole in regard to a technical breach in the analysis of samples taken from horses. This is the only piece of the legislation that we would agree with.

The Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill also seeks to amend four other pieces of legislation. The bill amends the Wagering Act 1998 and the Gaming Machine Act 1991 to allow for payment of moneys out of the Community Investment Fund to fund a new scheme with a new name to support and fund capital infrastructure for the racing industry. Again I ask the minister: in relation to this fraudulent piece of legislation, if the boards of the Gold Coast Turf Club, the board of the Townsville Turf Club, the board of the Brisbane Racing Club and several other racing clubs reject these slimy overtures of Racing Queensland for takeovers of their land and assets, where will the minister approve the spending of Queensland taxpayer dollars on racing infrastructure?

I am told that Treasury and the Treasurer are very keen on the upgrade of the facilities at the Gold Coast Turf Club to erase the possibility of the Magic Millions Sales company and the associated race leaving Queensland for better pastures. If this is the case then the Gold Coast Turf Club is in the box position, to borrow a greyhound term, to do a non-negotiable deal with Racing Queensland or RQ will have nowhere to spend its taxpayer funded dollars.

Surely this incompetent Labor government could not lose the Magic Millions from the Gold Coast as well as Indy within 18 months. The long-held animosity between the Labor Party and the Brisbane Racing Club will ensure that Racing Queensland will not invest in the upgrade of the assets of Queensland's premier racing facilities. The racing control board is running out of logical options to further the interests of Queensland Racing through appropriate capital investment that is worthwhile and relevant to a better racing industry product. In fact, this legislation inhibits the BRC proposal for its own capital investment program, as unveiled last year, to upgrade its own facilities. A matter that we will obviously take up in the consideration in detail stage is the seizure and grab of land assets by the new Racing Queensland body.

The bill will also make consequential amendments to the Racing Regulation 2003. These will enable changes that were made in the Racing Act 2002. The other subordinate piece of legislation to be amended in this bill is the Wagering Regulation 1999.

Racing in Queensland has grown considerably since its humble beginnings. It comprises three codes of racing—thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing. According to Queensland Racing's own issues paper, it was responsible for \$1.44 billion in economic spend. The thoroughbred industry alone employs 30,000 full-time, part-time and casual employees.

Why would those opposite jeopardise this industry with such a dictatorial piece of legislation? One would usually find amendments like these in the legislation of the parliament of Uganda, not in a democracy like ours. Terry Butts from the North Queensland register says it all. He states—

You really have to wonder about our Queensland government. From the very top, you have to wonder whether it still wants to govern, because with every day, it seems to enforce policies (racing at the top of the list) that are about destruction. And frankly, the feeling of discontent amongst the staunchest party members is turning to anger ...

This anger is about this legislation and is across the whole of the racing industry in Queensland.

Since the beginning of racing in Queensland, the industry, along with the corresponding legislation, has undergone huge transformation. From what used to be considered an amateur sport, racing in Queensland is now a huge industry in the state with many making a living from it as jockeys, trainers, bookies and industry workers. While the following historical amendments to the racing legislation were considerable, they are nothing compared to the current, dramatic and detrimental changes proposed by the Bligh Labor government.

The Racecourse Act 1923 was the first appearance racing made in legislation. Racing legislation stemmed initially from a desire to keep gambling under strict control, but, more importantly, to manage a developing industry that had great potential. This legislation was seen as the start of a new era for racing and was the first step in recognising racing as an industry rather than a sport. It introduced the registration of racing clubs and provided for the acknowledgement of unregistered racing clubs. Unregistered racing clubs consisted of mainly trotting clubs and dog racing clubs as registering a club was only open to gallopers. Racecourses could also be registered where registered racing clubs conducted their meetings. This legislation provided for the start of the regulation of the racing industry.

In 1929 a royal commission was established to inquire into and report on the control and management of horseracing and racecourses in and around Brisbane and Ipswich. Perhaps it is time for another royal commission to be held to flush out into the open the mismanagement and wasteful spending of valuable industry funds right across this industry.

Following the report provided, the Racing Regulation Amendment Act 1930 was established. The leading turf club at the time was the Queensland Turf Club. It was made responsible for allocating registered race meetings to certain clubs while the Queensland Treasurer managed the unregistered race meetings. The act provided for race meetings to be conducted on Saturdays, with the occasional meeting scheduled for a public holiday such as Easter Monday or Labour Day. The legislation also abolished proprietary racing for both galloping horses and harness racing. This was introduced again in the Racing Act 2002.

In a bid to regulate the industry more thoroughly, unregistered race meetings were to be phased out of the racing calendar by the end of 1931. The conditions at Kedron Park pushed the change to provide for safety measures for both horses or jockeys, although the changes only applied to gallopers. For instance, it was legislated that only 12 runners per race would be allowed to run on a racecourse less than a mile in circumference. That is very much in favour today. Nothing much changes over time.

Gallops and pony races were phased out at Coorparoo, with only trotting events now being allowed to race there. Provisions provided for on-course bookmakers to be able to sue and be sued for wages made on the racecourse. Jockey weight was regulated so only jockeys above seven stone were able to race. Any jockey weighing less than that amount would be prohibited from competing.

While these amendments may seem insignificant and minor, this was when the racing industry was much smaller and these particular provisions were necessary to regulate the gambling and organisational sides of the industry. The Racing Regulation Amendment Act 1931 was originally introduced by the government to set the number of allocated trotting events in the metropolitan area to six. This proved futile as the Governor in Council had the power to raise that number to 12. The Governor in Council did just this, but on the condition that the trotting event organisers find their own course on which to run their events. The bill did not end up passing through parliament as the opposition tried to amend the bill and the government was against the proposed changes. The opposition was concerned with the number of bookmakers escaping paying state taxes.

The Racing Regulation Amendment Act 1932 only made one significant change. It was simply to add to the existing rule about starting numbers for safety. Galloping races were limited to 16 starters where the distance was one mile or more. Also this legislation provided for the prohibition of trotting at the Coorparoo and Strathpine racecourses.

In 1946 the Racing Limitation Act was introduced to continue regulations provided under national security regulations. Wartime restrictions allowed for 59 racing days for horses per year, severely limiting midweek race days. The 59 day limit applied to the metropolitan area and in the cities of Bundaberg, Cairns, Charters Towers, Gympie, Mackay, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville and Warwick. These restrictions applied to both horseracing and dog racing.

The Racing and Betting Act 1954 introduced the concept of regulated and legalised race gambling. The legislation provided the Governor in Council with regulatory control over principal clubs. Racecourses, trotting grounds and coursing grounds now had to be licensed. The Governor in Council authorised 10 Saturday metropolitan meetings per year that could be extended to 12 by the Governor in Council. The ban on night coursing was continued and mechanical coursing was prohibited. The Governor in Council had to approve coursing clubs. Dividends were not to be paid to those other than those holding a winning ticket. A referendum poll would also be held for approval to allow off-the-course betting to be lawfully conducted.

This act essentially allocated a significant amount of power to the Governor in Council. A committee was established, made up of representatives from three metropolitan racing clubs that provide racecourses to determine the exact racing dates. This greater representation was seen as a step towards the better management of racing in Queensland. What is absurd is that this government is trying to change this concept of wider representation after the racing system has been run successfully this way for 87 years.

The first amendments to the Racing and Betting Act 1954 came in 1980 after the review of the Racing and Betting Act, and these amendments provided various changes to the legislation resulting from the recommendations. The legislation enacted even further representation on principal clubs by including a committee of up to 12 people as representatives from surrounding race clubs. Greater power was given to the official three separate control bodies. Galloping, trotting and greyhound racing control bodies could deal efficiently with the performance of their affiliated clubs. The three control bodies could now allocate their own race days—something that the government is attempting to take away with this new racing reform. Clubs would now be allowed to collect bets for postponed, abandoned or phantom meetings so as to mitigate the damage as a result of the loss of profits.

The legislation lifted restrictions in relation to the conduct of barrier trials. The Trotting Control Board was provided with an increase in board member numbers, but the majority of members of this board and the greyhound control board would now be regulated through ministerial appointments. This act dissolved the Racecourse Development and Assistance Fund and replaced it with the Racing Development Fund. This would be funded by unclaimed dividends and a levy totalised on the totaliser turnover. Unlawful betting was discouraged even further through increased penalties. Metropolitan, TAB and non-metropolitan oncourse totalisers were amalgamated into one pool from which common and stable dividends may be declared to enable greater disbursement to recipient racing clubs.

The Racing Venues Development Act 1982 came into effect to allow the Governor in Council to appoint trustees to control and develop lands acquired by the Racing Development Corporation for the purpose of racing. This recommendation came from the Racing Development Corporation established by the Racing and Betting Act. This legislation was created predominantly to target the Albion Park racecourse. Trustees were not given the power to sell the land, but their authority allowed them to lease the land or any building upon it so as to profit the development of the racing venues. The trustees were also able to mortgage land under their control for the purpose of raising money to spend on development of the land. All of these measures were about race clubs having control of their own destinies and having control of their own assets for the betterment of the particular racing code in which they were involved.

After the recommendations of the National Competition Policy review of the Racing and Betting Act 1980, the act was repealed and the Racing Act 2002 was introduced to parliament. The Hon. Merri Rose, the minister for racing at the time—although I do believe it is no longer ‘Hon.’ Merri Rose—

Mr Robertson: Oh, come on!

Mr STEVENS: I do believe that that is the case now; she was at that particular time. Merri Rose stated that one of the main catalysts behind this change in legislation was—

This bill places greater emphasis on government's role to ensure the probity and integrity of racing. The responsibility for the management of the industry rests in the rightful place—with the industry control bodies.

Mr Lawlor: That's right.

Mr STEVENS: We are getting rid of those today, Minister.

Mr Lawlor: And replaced with one body.

Mr STEVENS: What is strange is that throughout the history of legislation changes in racing, which I have given a brief overview of, Labor has continually preached the importance of keeping management of racing within the hands of the three control bodies—Queensland Racing, Harness Racing and Greyhound Racing. Now suddenly it wants to concentrate the power of all three codes into one control body—Racing Queensland. Why on earth would the government want to put all of the power and control of racing in Queensland into one body's hands when all along it has been spruiking the

benefit of wider industry representation and autonomous self-management? I will tell members why: the political agenda of this government is to ignore the racing industries at all costs to avoid fallout from Labor voters who are a large part of the racing industries and who are incensed at the Labor Party's abandonment of all three racing codes. It wants to push all of the blame for the racing industry's chronic underfunding across to an unelected, unanswerable administrator—in this case, named Bob Bentley—and plunder industry funds as much as possible to prop up its ailing and bankrupt financial incompetency.

The Racing Act 2002 established five regional racing associations consisting of representatives elected by clubs in the region as well as representatives elected by trainers, jockeys and bookmakers. Each chairperson represented their respective association on the Queensland Regional Racing Council. What the government is now proposing is that only one member from the harness and greyhound control body be present on the new Queensland Racing Board. And guess who the government consulted about whether this was an appropriate model for the future administration of the racing codes? The same seven people who were going to get a lucrative position as board directors of the new racing control board! I ask the minister when he sums up the debate to advise the House what remuneration the seven directors will receive in their new roles and what the remuneration to the chairman of the board will be.

What a ludicrous, improper and biased consultation process that only a corrupt Labor government, bereft of propriety and decency, could unashamedly call 'industry consultation'! Where is the representation from these regional racing clubs? The council provides the Queensland Racing Board with recommendations in relation to country racing. I guess this issue is less important now the government is attempting to wipe out country racing altogether. This legislation also established the Racing Animal Welfare and Integrity Board, replacing the Racing Codes Advisory Board, with provisions relating to drug control and animal management. Also established was the Racing Appeal Tribunal to hear and decide appeals from decisions made by control bodies of the codes.

The Racing Amendment Act 2004 took into account recommendations in relation to country or non-TAB thoroughbred racing. That was in 2004 when the government was getting a bit of heat from those in country racing areas. Seven per cent of the Thoroughbred Racing Board's net UNITAB profit fee was to be allocated to country clubs to use as prize money for their races. This new reform proposed by this government is going to abandon the guarantee of this prize money to country racing clubs, with the allocation of this funding being left to the discretion of the Chairman of Queensland Racing, Mr Bob Bentley. The previous five regional racing associations established under the previous act were replaced with eight country racing associations and relevant committees on the argument that it would better reflect community interests in country areas. I wonder if the government thinks that the abolition of all eight of these associations will better reflect community interests in country racing.

In 2006 more amendments to the racing legislation were introduced in the Racing Amendment Act 2006. This provided for Queensland Racing's move from a statutory body to a company limited by guarantee and to extend the Queensland Racing Harness Board and the Greyhound Racing Authority as statutory authorities pending their transition to company structures. This amending act provided for the Thoroughbred Racing Board to be recognised and Queensland Racing Ltd, and consequently all liabilities and assets were transferred in the change. The last amendment to Queensland racing legislation was in the Racing Amendment Act 2008. This act allowed, finally, for the Harness Racing Board and the Greyhound Racing Authority to transition from statutory authorities to companies. As with the thoroughbred transition, the assets, liabilities and employees were also transferred to the two new company entities.

Racing in Australia has become a major economic benefit to the Commonwealth as a whole with races like the Melbourne Cup, the biggest horserace that stops this nation. In this the 150th year celebration, the Melbourne Cup Carnival over four days in 2008 contributed \$366 million to the Victorian economy. The Spring Racing Carnival 50-day celebration generates \$600 million directly and indirectly for the state of Victoria. Racing is a very important industry. In Queensland, by far the biggest racing carnival and income-generating sports tourism economic event is the Magic Millions carnival at the Gold Coast Turf Club. This event has been building in stature since its inception in 1987 and now commands a position that is arguably Queensland's biggest internationally recognised event. As most people would know through the media, there has been much angst expressed by the current owners of the Magic Millions sales company that the facilities to run the Magic Millions race day are totally inadequate for their international clientele.

The owners have threatened to leave Queensland with their event on every second day of every second year when their contract with the Gold Coast Turf Club expires and it would be a catastrophic blow for the Queensland government and the Queensland Events Corporation to lose this event to a southern state such as Victoria. Consequently, I am sure that the promise of funding for the racing industry from the Treasurer is predicated on serious chunks of the taxpayer-funded package being spent on the Gold Coast Turf Club to avoid another major Queensland event disappearing off the tourism radar.

I urge the chairman of the Gold Coast Turf Club, Mr Andrew Eggleston, and his board to resist all attempts by Racing Queensland to take over the freehold of this member owned property—member owned property. I am sure that they will still reap the benefits of this financial package under the leasehold proposition that they have already presented to the Queensland Racing board. When you are dealing with an overbearing, intimidating bully, you have to have a steely resolve and in the end the good guys, with right on their side, invariably win.

Personally, I have been involved with racing for a very long time and I am very passionate about doing everything I possibly can to ensure that the industry grows from strength to strength. I have been an owner, a punter, a breeder, a committee member, a member of several clubs and I have never in my life seen such a despised control body as the one we have endured in the thoroughbred industry for the past eight years. This is the same control body that, through this legislation, will be inflicted upon all the codes and which will ensconce Mr Bob Bentley for at least another four years and possibly, under this ridiculous appointment model that becomes legislation if it is passed today, could make him a 20-year appointee as the controller of thoroughbred racing in Queensland. General Pinochet, eat your heart out.

As well as the insulting process that installed this flawed racing control body, the government has set in this legislation an embarrassing process for the re-election of board members whereby the chairman of the board, a Racing Queensland appointed HR company appointed in the same way that the court processes of Queensland rejected the recruitment process of Queensland Racing for their replacement of directors, and, of course, a director from the government make up the triumvirate to decide who will become a new director after 2014. That is akin to the member for Mermaid Beach choosing who should take his position as the member for Mermaid Beach after the 2012 state election and I can guarantee everybody that I would be recommending me. What a complete blight on this government's commitment to open, fair and accountable election processes. It echoes its hollow rhetoric on everything from secrecy in government to its promise that there will be no increase in fuel tax.

I believe that this legislation will not help the three codes of racing develop whatsoever. It will cause ructions and promote an atmosphere of discontent between the new Racing Queensland and each and every club across the state. Combining these three racing codes under the one control body creates confusion, power-play issues and communication issues and has the potential to become directionless for the outnumbered harness and greyhound racing representatives.

We see with this takeover that even the thoroughbred industry is vehemently opposed to this conquest by the new entity, Racing Queensland. Experts in their fields of any endeavour will fight to the end of the earth to highlight their plight and to promote the needs of their cause or industry for the betterment of their own business. This is exactly the reason that you must always position the experts in their field to be in charge of the decision making for their own industry. Major benefits include the use of corporate and industry knowledge, specific industry-focused decision making, the development of industry-focused policy and the delivery of outcomes.

The funding inducement made by Mr Bentley to the racing clubs across the state is basically a bribe in the form of 'if you don't play my game, you will cop a reduction in funding and prize money. You will have your race meetings cut back and in the meantime I am going to audit each club to expose their financial difficulty to justify my takeover position' when, in fact, it was Queensland Racing cutbacks on funding that got the same clubs into the position that they are in in the first place.

Even independent observers have come out on this issue. University of Southern Queensland academic Gerard Betros has questioned Queensland Racing's decision to call in auditors. He went on to say that Queensland Racing had been steadily increasing its influence over individual clubs and that it would be most interesting to see the terms of reference that Queensland Racing provided Deloitte for their audits of these certain clubs. Those comments highlight one of the fundamental flaws of Queensland Racing's administration techniques in that its dealings and its intentions are cloaked in secrecy and deception.

Fourteen months ago I asked the chairman of Queensland Racing to provide me with the strategic direction for the racing industry in Queensland. This is the so-called independent chairman of Queensland Racing. He told me that it was halfway finished, that it would take another two weeks to complete and then the minister would have to peruse it first. Naturally, I agreed with that course of action, having great respect for the role of the minister. Yet 14 months later, I have not seen hide nor hair of this so-called strategic plan and I doubt if one exists.

Mr Bentley has certainly not exposed his grand plans to the industry and has pursued a path of intimidation and coercion of race clubs throughout the state in what one can only deduce is his master plan for state controlled industry assets of all racing codes throughout Queensland. His weapons of mass destruction are prize money reductions; reductions in race dates; absolving his organisation from industry necessary costs, such as track maintenance; and also inflicting over-the-top workplace health and safety requirements for remote and occasionally used racetracks. The land grab by the Labor government's lackey, Mr Bentley, is to line Queensland Racing's coffers and make its balance sheet look good when it becomes the new entity, Racing Queensland.

The track record of Queensland Racing in industry improvement is not good. Under successive state Labor governments the three super tracks—the supposed solution to racing in Queensland—have been complete failures. Premier Beattie tried for a super track at Wacol—a lot of people love to go to Wacol in Brisbane's south-western suburbs—but ruled it out when he told parliament on 19 October 2004 in a ministerial statement that the proposal had a major funding shortfall of about \$150 million and that the Wacol super track option was dead. Then the government wanted to sell off Doomben for an upgrade of Eagle Farm, which did not go ahead. That was a dismal failure, costing hundreds of thousands of industry funds in investigating this proposal with consultants. Then the third policy collapse was the proposed move of the very valuable Gold Coast Turf Club to Palm Meadows, a flood hole on the Merrimac flood plain, to assist the Magic Millions company relocate from its shabby sales venue. That was strike 3 for Mr Bentley at a huge cost of industry funds. Some have said that as much as \$700,000 was spent on the Palm Meadows relocation alone, which should have seen him removed by the minister.

But the minister has been noticeable only by his absence in any matters relating to racing. The only time he has popped his head up on racing was to announce a good-news press release with the Treasurer in January that, if the racing industry signs over all of its very valuable land assets to Queensland Racing, the government would use \$20 million a year of taxpayer funds across all three codes for capital improvements for four years.

This means literally hundreds of millions of dollars of land assets into the balance sheet of the Queensland government with only a pittance for racing industry capital needs. Of major concern to North and Western Queensland is that this piece of legislation takes out all reference to country and provincial racing and gives the new entity, Racing Queensland, complete control over funding and organisational set-up for country and provincial racing.

Back in January I sent out a release saying that country and provincial racing was headed for extinction under Labor's direction. Look how right I was. Town by town the state government, under the guise of Racing Queensland, is disbanding each and every country and provincial racing club across Queensland. They are so up in arms about it that a petition was started a couple of weeks ago, getting thousands of signatures, which requested the House to immediately ensure that the Queensland Country Racing Committee and Queensland country racing associations are not dissolved and that this statute be incorporated into any new legislation.

Country and provincial racing is the fabric of local communities in these remote areas and they need to be preserved at every opportunity. The Townsville Turf Club, for instance, is at loggerheads with Queensland Racing with negotiations at a stalemate. Queensland Racing has come up with a take-all approach. There are some members from Townsville present in the House. I tell them to take good note of the ill feeling that this is creating in Townsville. The reason that the Townsville Turf Club was not allowed by Queensland Racing to sell off some of its unused land to help any financial difficulties it had was because Queensland Racing wants to get its hands on this valuable piece of land, which it can do under this new legislation coming into the House today, so it can sell it at a later date and put the profits into Racing Queensland. These financial difficulties were caused by Queensland Racing Ltd when two years ago, without any consultation or agreement, it reduced the TAB funding distribution to Townsville. The Townsville Turf Club had an unconditional contract for \$10 million to sell a parcel of vacant land but Queensland Racing would not allow them to go ahead with the sale to make the Townsville Turf Club viable. For the Townsville Amateurs, Queensland Racing has taken it upon itself to reduce the prize money from \$225,000 to \$120,000 and also reduce the racing carnival from two days to one day.

The debacle between Queensland Racing and the Gold Coast Turf Club over Magic Millions has been a complete fiasco. Queensland Racing has yet again tried to dictate to the Gold Coast Turf Club what the best way forward is. I am sorry, but I think the Gold Coast Turf Club, with 50 years of successful trading—the minister and I both know many people who have put a lot into making it a very successful club over the years—would better know the future directions the club should take than Racing Queensland. Magic Millions should remain on the Gold Coast working constructively with the Gold Coast Turf Club, and the minister should ensure that this happens.

The government did not engage in any worthwhile consultation with racing industry stakeholders. It was more of a 'let's keep these changes quiet' approach because of the discontent it would cop if the racing industry knew that the changes were going to be implemented. Where is the taxpayer funded package going to be spent to justify this enormous leap of faith to the one control body model under the direction of a leader who has enjoyed eight years of uninterrupted governance with no outward rewards from his direction and leadership visibly available? It is a case of 'sign here and trust us', when the form guide for this course of action is a litany of broken promises and a pathway to total subjugation.

The only consultation has been with Labor mates. The government has not been open or inclusive of all industry stakeholders—very few industry stakeholders to be exact—of what its intentions were for the industry. The Brisbane Racing Club has expressed its outrage at this legislation. I concur wholeheartedly with it and acknowledge that this piece of legislation needs to be reviewed urgently to ensure that the rights of racing clubs across Queensland are upheld. The Brisbane Racing Club also

believes that by stripping the power from racing clubs it places the power in the hands of people whose appointment is political and who are not representatives from the industry. Again I wholeheartedly agree.

I would now raise the issue that I have raised previously in a question on notice to the minister on 23 February 2010 and subsequently in a press release and a speech in parliament and that is the issue of Mr Bentley's integrity. In the annual report of Tatts Group Ltd 2009 Mr Bentley was not to be considered an independent, non-executive director on the board as he was also chairman of Queensland Racing Ltd which controls a material supplier to UNiTAB Ltd. The response I received from the Minister for Racing about the conflict of interest was that the Integrity Commissioner's advice had not been sought. This to me shows blatant disregard for the integrity of the overall racing industry in general and I urge the minister to seek the Integrity Commissioner's advice on this issue. I am sure that the minister is not seeking the advice of the Integrity Commissioner because he is frightened of what the Integrity Commissioner will say. There is clearly a conflict of interest and then up blows the plan for the one control body controlled by Mr Bob Bentley.

I have great concerns about the information that I have received regarding the availability of the draft constitution of the new control body. The racing industry is concerned that this has not been available to industry stakeholders. In parliament on 13 April in his second reading speech the minister said—

The constitution of Racing Queensland Ltd establishes advisory committees for non-TAB racing in all codes, so maintaining thoroughbred-specific bodies in legislation is now redundant.

This must mean that the minister has seen a copy and knows what is in the draft constitution of the proposed new entity, Racing Queensland. In the *Courier-Mail* on Friday, 14 May he said he had not seen a copy of the draft constitution. I ask the minister which one is correct. As there is a guarantee of savings in the minister's second reading speech with this new one control body model, can the minister quantify these savings that will be achieved by adopting this new one control body model?

In *Legislation Alert No. 6 2010* of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, the report on the Racing and Other Legislation Bill is damning. The first area affected is the rights and liberties of individuals in this proposed legislation and this is seen in clause 12 and clause 23 whereby there is insufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals currently employed as members of the Queensland Country Racing Committee or as a chairperson of a country racing association. A further issue with these clauses is that industry consultation was limited to chairs and chief executive officers of control bodies—the classic case of Caesar judging Caesar. This is another area where the rights and liberties of individuals have been affected. In relation to new sections 432 and 442 the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee notes that neither employees nor organisations representing employees appear to have been consulted on this legislation.

In conclusion, this is a classic example of a Labor government exploiting its power through its unmitigated front man and inflicting pain on each and every racegoer, industry stakeholder and industry worker. Section 444 of the bill ensures that changes are possible as it states—

The amendment of the Racing Regulation 2003 by the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010 does not affect the power of the Governor in Council to further amend the regulation or to repeal it.

The important part is, '... to repeal it'. This, I believe, will apply to the act itself. Industry stakeholders in each of the three racing codes are the ones best placed to be able to make the decisions needed for their code to develop. The government has let the whole of Queensland down in so many areas, such as asset sales, the economy, health and education, and now wants to do the same with the racing industry. If the Labor government had not sat on its hands for the past 12 years Queensland would have been reaping the rewards of 10 years of economic boom and could have funded the racing industry appropriately. Because the government squandered mining royalties and taxes that were rolling in over this period, when hard times came there were no reserves left to fund and protect Queensland properly. It is the responsibility of a state government to manage state finances, not squander them. In every area we see a grab for whatever it can sell off to manage the massive debt it has plunged this state into. This time it is the racing industry. The asset grab by Queensland Racing is the most disgusting and authoritarian action I have seen from an Australian state Labor government, and there have been plenty of rough actions it has issued in the past.

I make a commitment to the racing industry of Queensland that when the Liberal National Party wins government at the next state election we will immediately dismantle this flawed and undemocratic legislation, and we will put control of the three racing codes back into the hands of industry participants for the betterment and development of a fruitful racing industry into the future. Finally, I thank the minister for his inertia in the racing industry, as his failed strategy for passing the blame for industry woes onto the despised Mr Bob Bentley is the best thing that the Liberal National Party can take into the next election.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.20 pm): In rising to speak on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I want to say that I believe this bill is one of the greatest attacks, not only on thoroughbred racing but also on country racing, ever seen in Queensland's history. This bill gives supreme power to the man who has caused ultimate devastation for country racing right across Queensland. The obsession of one particular person to see the death knell of country racing is astronomical. Country clubs take pride in running race meetings of the highest quality. Those meetings have raised funds for charities, sporting clubs, local P&Cs and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. However, they have fallen on the sword as we have a chairman who is not interested in working in the best interests of country racing. His philosophy is to implement every impediment possible to make the lives of country clubs a misery and eventually see country racing eradicated from the rural calendar. If this legislation is passed, finally he will have supreme and unlimited power.

The explanatory notes state—

This amendment puts it beyond doubt that a control body has the power to make policies and give directions in relation to how a club is to deal with its assets, including its real property and intellectual property rights.

The notes also state that one of the objectives of the bill is to, 'abolish entities established under the Racing Act that can be established administratively by the control body'. That is what it is: a control body. The only thing that is beyond any doubt is that this legislation gives absolute control to a power-hungry individual and his henchmen.

This country is supposed to be a democracy, but what is the minister responsible for racing doing about this? He is washing his hands of it. He is removing any ministerial responsibility and handing country racing, on a silver platter, to an anti-rural racing chairman. The racing minister has promised that no club will be abolished because of the proposed changes, yet those two policy amendments give the controlling body the supreme power to appoint, abolish, close down, refuse funding and all the other laws that will kick country racing in the guts. While there are certain rules for some people, things can be different for others, especially if a person is a friend of the Labor Party and the chairman of Queensland Racing Ltd. Not only is Mr Bentley the chairman of Queensland Racing Ltd; he also has been the director of Tattersalls since his appointment in October 2006.

The Tattersalls 2007 annual report states that all members of the board were considered to be independent with the exception of Mr Bentley who, as chairman of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board, is directly associated with the material supply to UNITAB. Mr Bentley is in a position to improve the outcome for shareholders yet he remains the chairman of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board, which has a vendetta against non-profit TAB meetings such as those held by country race clubs. This is a monumental conflict of interest. It is appalling that this person is allowed to continue in his role as chairman of Queensland Racing Ltd while sitting on the board of Tattersalls. As the shadow minister for racing said, this needs to be referred to the Integrity Commission because it involves the integrity of the racing industry.

Clearly, Queensland Racing Ltd does not abide by the same ideals as country racing, and country racing is suffering. It is not being given a fair go and, consequently, the entire racing industry is suffering. Already there are fewer jockeys and trainers in country areas because of these astronomical cutbacks. People are travelling further and further to meetings because of the lack of support given to them by Bob Bentley who, with his anti-country, anti-racing and pro-profit making stance, is making things harder and harder for jockeys and trainers.

The government wants the three separate racing codes to be administered by a single body. Obviously, that has come about without any consultation with experts. The three codes are up in arms about the concept of a single governing body for all of them. It is puzzling how this government can claim to be qualified to determine if a club is able to be administered from a central governing body, particularly as it has displayed a complete disregard for the interests of those in the bush and a lack of willingness to engage in any consultation. As an example, all country race clubs have had to endure impediments such as cutbacks in funding, reduced race meetings and inflexible race dates. In addition, Queensland Racing Ltd has slammed country clubs with ridiculous laws, such as forcing them to erect inside and outside running rails at an extra cost of some \$70,000 and spending tens of thousands of dollars on special air-conditioned amenities for male and female jockeys, which is an overkill for the bush. The rules that apply down south do not fit country racing. It is a totally different environment. It is paramount that the minister for racing venture out of his subterranean existence and have a good look at the uniqueness of country racing and the differences between it and city racing.

Queensland Racing Ltd does not recognise or understand the importance of country race days, which are the lifeblood of small communities. Country clubs are continually being kicked in the guts by the hierarchy of Queensland Racing Ltd. Rural communities need to be allowed to stage these special events, which were a time honoured tradition for many years before Queensland Racing Ltd took control. I vehemently oppose this legislation.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (12.26 pm): This bill is presented as a *fait accompli*. We are getting it whether we like it or not. Nothing in this bill is progressive or enlightening for the future of racing in Queensland. Maybe it should have been called the 'day of the execution of racing as we know it'. The minister has claimed that he has not been provided with a copy of the draft constitution of QRL, yet he is pushing this bill through on a guillotine motion today. Such is life under Labor. Nothing is sacred, nothing is sentimental and the public will have to cop it because there is no alternative on offer.

In this legislation the minister proposes, firstly, increasing the tenure of directors of Queensland Racing Ltd up to 10 years with no industry input on director selection or appointment. Secondly, licensed clubs are prohibited from dealing with their own assets. Thirdly, these assets effectively become the assets of the control body for no cost, with an ability of the controlling body, Queensland Racing Ltd, to direct how those assets, tangible and intangible, will be used. Finally, the minister is proposing to abolish all country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee from legislative protection.

Other than QRL, everyone is a net loser. Horse racing is about winners and losers. Most participants are losers, but they dream big. This bill is about winners and losers, too. There are far too many losers. The minister will understand this: in betting terms, when nearly everyone is a loser there will be an adjustment that the winner might not like. Such will be the case here. Under the government proposal, the provincial and city clubs under the legislation are deemed irrelevant, their assets near worthless and their franchises up for grabs at the whim of an all-encompassing, all-powerful board of Labor appointees who have effectively voted themselves jobs for life. The country clubs are deemed finished, has-beens, washed up and are not even worthy of owning their own piece of real estate, and QRL ends up the majority owner of all club assets.

Far from being given any choices, this like-it-or-lump-it version of legislation has all the hallmarks of a draconian, out-of-touch government that merely sees this much loved spectacle or Australian folklore and dreams of it becoming another cog in the chain of state income from gambling and other vices. It does so on the basis that the government has sold its share of UNiTAB. Its own effective net take from horse racing, harness and greyhounds as a share of gaming revenue has fallen to five per cent of total gaming revenue. In 2009-10 total Queensland gaming revenue was estimated at \$1.006 billion, of which poker machines contributed \$550 million. The TAB contribution was only \$35 million and has been static for years. However, QRL is driven solely by TAB turnover and is short-term focused. In 2008-09, online betting saw Queenslanders lose \$1.83 billion, which is \$5 million a day. Poker machine revenue actually increased in an otherwise flat wagering year.

In this bill the government is actually saying that it has a lot in common with those often criticised for sending slow horses to the knackery, glue factory or an Eastern European dinner table. If it cannot make money out of it itself, it will kill it for everyone else, which is what this bill will achieve. This is the concept of loving nothing, standing for nothing and anything that the masses enjoy is merely allowed under the terms of the government's totalitarian ideals.

In the minister's second reading speech, he sums it all up in paragraph 1—

It is no secret that the racing industry's capital infrastructure has become run down and threatens the competitive ability of the industry going forward.

Do members know whose watch this occurred on? Labor's. Do members know where the money from racing went? It went on ridiculous schemes and bloated contracts to build nothing of any substance, things such as the takeover of the Caloundra racetrack. And do members know what this is really all about? Well, the minister does not really know either. He has told many in the industry at earlier times that 'this is not really necessary', yet the Leader of the House says that it is urgent legislation. So why is Labor doing anything at all?

Labor wants the assets of the racing clubs to appear on the ledger of its statement of assets and liabilities as it scrambles to prove to the bankers that it still has some family silver to sell. Queensland Racing Ltd has even set up a registered company called Queensland Racing Ltd Venue Management. But do members know who really owns these assets? The race club members do, and this bill takes their assets from them.

In the case of the Gold Coast, for allegedly investing \$60 million over four years—to be paid out of a levy on revenue raised—the Gold Coast Turf Club is to give up a majority of its equity in its own real estate. This is a property worth probably \$400 million, even in this market. The minister knows this number because he is a former board member of the Gold Coast Turf Club. This has occurred after the club's revenue from on-course TAB was reduced from 12 per cent to 4.9 per cent five years ago. Only a few days of the year does this revenue make racing at all possible. The balance sheets of all race clubs in Queensland since these changes have been under extreme pressure, whilst Queensland Racing Ltd's balance sheet should have improved from \$40 million to \$100 million cash at bank on close scrutiny. No other significant controlling racing body in Australia has more than \$10 million cash at bank.

Mr Hoolihan: How? You don't know.

Dr DOUGLAS: You obviously have not read anything, member for Keppel.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Gaven! The Speaker this morning issued a statement about referring to members by the word 'you', which you have just done. I would counsel you to read the Speaker's statement this morning and desist from that activity.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Yet QRL claim they only have \$32 million. Is their balance sheet incorrect? Is it under pressure? Why does Queensland Racing Ltd need to raid all of the clubs' balance sheets for money? Do they have undeclared losses? The minister ought to be ashamed of what he is trying to do to the clubs. He goes on to say in his second reading speech—

The current multiple control body structure results in duplication of effort and prevents decisions being made in the best interests of the entire Queensland racing industry.

How is signing over the ownership of race clubs to Queensland Racing Ltd in the best interests of the Queensland racing industry? One needs to look no closer than in Toowoomba, where there are now 250 horses in training, down from 750 following Queensland Racing Ltd's decision to mandate a new synthetic racetrack. There has been a massive, unprecedented increase in injuries to racehorses. Owners and trainers have been left with little alternative but to leave. Was that in the best interests of racing? Some facts might assist: grass grows on treated effluent throughout the country, and on the Gold Coast they treat the wash down water and they use the lake water on the grass, too. Toowoomba's only problem was that they were not using it. That is why the grass was not growing in a drought. It was a stupid, ill-conceived stopgap measure by Queensland Racing Ltd in Toowoomba that has had disastrous consequences. That is the track record of Queensland Racing Ltd in recent times.

The very clear assessment of most racing people is that the chair of Queensland Racing Ltd believes he knows more than everybody else when the reality is that he does not. Queensland Racing Ltd invested \$60 million in Caloundra for a zero result and then \$6 million in Rockhampton for a similar result. Racing in both of those areas has been significantly degraded. The chair of Queensland Racing Ltd should be known as the 'race club terminator' for what is occurring on his watch as the chairman of racing in Queensland.

Horsing is obviously not everyone's cup of tea. For some, it represents the worst of an admixture of horses, gambling and human entertainment. For others, it is about the love of horses, a mathematical challenge, and an afternoon with friends for many. For others, it is a job and, for a fortunate few, it is a very good living indeed. It is an Australian tradition, certainly one borrowed from others on foreign shores. The Italians, French and Chinese have embraced it and increasingly so have the Africans outside of South Africa, South Americans and those from the Middle East. For those who are not aware, Japan and the USA currently vie for the biggest prize money on offer which is four times that of the cumulative Australian sum, and both of those countries have the biggest amount of wagering revenue in the world. Gambling is a critical part of racing because the thrill of the win drives the competitive aspect. For the successful owner, breeder, trainer, jockey, strapper, stablehand and punter, this is everything. In the US, there is \$1.5 billion in prize money on offer, and that is a significant incentive alone.

This bill's purpose, as explained in the explanatory notes, is not reflected in the legislative changes. It is an embarrassing gloss on critical changes that diminish this great industry. It fails to state the obvious, and there are the critical changes to the board of Queensland Racing Ltd, the selection of the board, the powers of the board and the length of time board members' appointments are for. Really only one person is appointed—the chair—for he has all the power. When this is added to the fact that the industry does not have the capacity to place members on the board and country racing is all but decimated, this compounds the critical changes to Queensland racing forever under this Labor plan.

I put it both to government members and the board itself, who have put this forward as their best efforts, that not only will the board last merely seconds after the declaration of the poll result with a change of government but the changes bring great shame on the administration of horseracing in Queensland itself. I am not being so childish as to suggest anything political has to be completely bipartisan, but this bill is a nonsense. The 'take it or leave it' approach demands a serious step once a change of government ensues. Whilst I do not deny that some of the board members are keen horse people, by their actions they are not representing the diverse interests of all of those involved in racing, supporters of and those who derive their income either in full or in part from thoroughbred, harness and/or dog racing.

The actions of Queensland Racing Ltd alone are unconscionable and they demand serious action. This is a big call but, mark my words, the board are drawing a line in the sand via the government's legislation which they falsely believe there is no coming back from. I fully endorse the statement made by the member for Mermaid Beach, the shadow minister. They are seriously wrong and they need to re-examine their individual decisions to support actions of this incumbent government. The LNP will change this legislation and will resuscitate both country and provincial racing. Beyond change to the board itself and the decrees that board members will be in place for 10 years, they are dreaming.

Foolishly, the board members do not realise that, once they reach their use-by date, Labor will quickly give them the heave-ho well in advance of anything that the LNP may subsequently have to do. The retrospective elements in the bill absolutely demand this action by the LNP.

The critical change in the bill that unites trainers, owners and club members are the changes that decree that the clubs themselves are irrelevant—that is, they are not franchises as such anymore, and Queensland Racing Ltd is effectively the franchisee under this proposal. This franchisee, Queensland Racing Ltd—as the allocator of race scheduling, dates, types of races, prize money and distributor of funds—will determine where those races will be held. Queensland Racing Ltd is also the regulator-administrator of the integrity of racing. So, as a first, it is both the franchisee and the regulator. Does this not then raise the issue of Caesar judging Caesar, as has been raised already? The clubs are now entirely at the mercy of Queensland Racing Ltd. This is delivered by Queensland Racing Ltd demanding that the clubs will do what QRL says and will hold the sword of Damocles over their heads. Presently, clubs are dependent only in part on Queensland Racing Ltd. Thankfully this is the case because Queensland Racing Ltd is a hopelessly dysfunctional organisation and most clubs are not.

I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*, as agreed with the Speaker earlier.

Leave granted.

What is presently happening on the Gold Coast should be the best example in practical terms of what this might mean. This means a privately owned race club that is private property owned by a mutual of fee paying members of the Gold Coast Turf Club on receipt of a one page poorly drawn proposal regarding a realignment of the club's facilities and a vague announcement of \$60 million of a total of \$80 million available to the whole industry on offer from QRL over four years are to agree and hand over majority ownership of the club and all its assets to QRL. To intimidate, QRL's chair Bob Bentley has demanded an immediate forensic audit of the GCTC. This closely followed actions by the GCTC who dared to raise trainers' fees to ensure the club's own survival since the club is responsible for its own recurrent costs. QRL have said the \$80 million is for the whole industry, including trotting and greyhound racing. It also has to go to other clubs as well and the money is funded by the industry itself from a levy. The public statements of the chair of QRL and the Minister would lead everyone to believe the Gold Coast Turf Club is rejecting the \$60 million on offer. That's not true. These statements are misleading and border on fraudulent.

The resounding statements from the Minister, whose public utterances in recent weeks are meek and hollow, are that the board of the GCTC is recalcitrant and failing to progress forward by not agreeing to exchange over 50 percent equity in return for a vague promise of up to \$60 million for changes that are unclear. There would be a continuing obligation of the club to fund the running costs of the club under these new equity arrangements. Multiple press releases from QRL about Rockhampton and Caloundra repeatedly refer to the clubs having to manage these costs themselves. Honourable Members, the real estate of the GCTC alone is worth \$400 million in this market. Do you really think GCTC members are being offered a reasonable deal here? How would you react if, for example, Queensland Transport told property owners along the M1 that they must exchange over 50 percent of their property's equity in return for access not onto the M1 but onto surrounding parallel roads, they weren't going to be given any money but QT deemed that they might be allowed to have a minority share in their own property. Imagine if you were one of the owners, what would you do? Justifiably everyone rejects this nonsense. This is why resumptions are under the law mandated so as to secure property owners legitimate property rights. But this is what is occurring in racing on the Gold Coast because the government seeks to legislate changes that deny the legitimate property rights of a mutual ownership group, of their own property.

Do members think they won't stare down QR Ltd? Do members think racing people are not intelligent enough to look for alternatives? Do members think this won't go to the High Court just as the bikie consorting legislation is now in the High Court? I'll bet you five to one on that it will, the State Labor government loses every case and every appeal in the High Court on this issue. Remember, property rights under the Torrens title system are seriously protected under the constitution, as they should be.

There is a clear case in Townsville currently where a property that was surplus to the requirements of the race club was to be bought for \$10 million and QRL and the Minister sat on a decision for nearly two years. The chairman of QRL even apologised to the chair of the race club but do you know what is going to happen? Nothing, because the money under the new agreement goes to QRL for no net benefit to the club. The club needs that money and the members own the property. Every Labor Townsville and surrounding districts member needs to directly confront their own Labor minister and ask why is Townsville district racing been treated so badly.

Honourable Members, QRL needs the GCTC, Townsville Racing Club and all the other clubs more than they need QRL. This type of public grandstanding by QR Ltd via this legislation is non-productive. For a lazy government that pretends that horse racing is irrelevant, it needs to wake up to itself quickly and clean out the cobwebs. QR Ltd in this bill is not a partner with the clubs; it is delivered as a dictator, owner and vendor of sub franchises.

This Labor government falsely believes that the public attendance at race clubs is declining, that pub TAB is growing in revenue terms anecdotally. The Labor government that has shed its share of Unitab, now Tattersalls, leaves Labor as a winner and QRL as the nemesis. All pain and blame goes to the QRL which becomes a halfway entity between a GOC, a master football franchise and the fat controller.

I must correct some of the misinformation that Labor members have been fed either by their faction or the Labor machine itself. Racing has changed. Harness racing and greyhound racing have diminished due to lack of interest and availability of tracks. Horse racing of thoroughbreds continues to grow because of everyday racing, racing offshore, racing as an event—Golden Slipper/Melbourne Cup week, online gaming/sports betting, BetFair and the increased capacity for discretionary income spending by middle Australia. The TAB was introduced originally to weaken SP betting, deliver the government a return, weaken the power of bookmakers and stop people like John Wren who owned the racetracks.

Punters generally do care who owns the tracks nor who operates them. They also do care about their chances of fairly receiving their money wagered in return for risk. They do have interest in how races are run and who runs them to ensure that cheating does not occur. They also want good fields of horses so they can maximise their betting opportunities. The system we have developed over many years delivers these solutions. Pub TAB revenue is actually declining as online and telephone betting increases. Oncourse betting is declining as a proportion of overall betting that is \$200 million in Queensland of the \$1.87 billion wagered. Online wagering and cross-border wagering is increasing and may be 30 percent of total wagering. Wagering on racing has flattened during the economic downturn. The statistics are total wagering of \$1.78 billion in 2006/07, \$1.726 billion in 2007/08 and \$1.897 billion in 2008/09. Of this, \$1.1 billion accrues from thoroughbred wagering, harness, dog and sports betting yielded \$702 million in 2008/09.

But gambling, like alcohol consumption, increases in times of adversity and in recorded times has always done so. Horse racing is a big component of that gambling. The total wagering in Australia was \$21.94 billion in 2008/09, of which \$14.433 billion was wagered on horses in Australia. \$7 billion was wagered in New South Wales and Victoria alone. Horse racing fields in New South Wales and Victoria are better paying, more consistent and for punters better value for money. Of the \$14.2 billion, \$9 billion was wagered on the TAB, \$4.5 billion via bookmakers and 60 percent of the total amount came from NSW and Victoria alone.

Queensland risks becoming a back water for third rate runners and smaller fields with lower winning purses. The evidence for this is currently seen in the differences of the percentage increases of prize money between Queensland and the combined New South Wales-Victoria group. This decline in Queensland will continue until an external group such as a private equity group re-enters the field to offer a competitive package over and above that. The best example is set by the Magic Millions private company. This is what will happen under the plan of this Racing bill presented here today. This Labor government having sold Unitab don't care less what happens as long as some group ensures there is at least some racing, that income to it will continue and the public will shut up. So this is what will happen as a result of this near-sided bill. This is after denying property owners of their rights and being contemptuous of their rights to represent themselves in the administration of racing.

So if that is the impact of the bill, why is Labor proceeding in its present direction?

One, maybe it does not care. The minister, ex Gold Coast Turf Club board member, doesn't go to the races anymore and most Labor Government members have no interest in horse, harness or dog racing.

Two, maybe it does not understand. There will be job losses, there will be a lot of them. Most, not all of the clubs are going to be ruined forever.

Three, maybe it is bloody-minded, leaving a dictator in charge like the current chair of the QRL, maybe Labor feels that the race clubs deserve this.

Four, maybe it really wants to see the end of horse racing. In Queensland this would be a fairly good bet but one never knows what will happen when one group seeks to remove something of great pleasure from an aggrieved group for reasons associated with ideology.

Five, maybe Labor just thinks racing is like football and franchise controllers are the way of the future. They probably think a kind of nationally agreed salary cap will address everything. They have forgotten the lessons of super league. They also think the other states will play fair. I urge honourable members to grow up. Do members understand cross-border gaming?

Six, maybe Labor just does not think. I think that is the answer because this racing bill is not the answer to racing's real troubles at present.

The crux of those problems would sensibly be currently, there is miserable lowly percentage distribution back to the clubs by QRL for putting the races on week on week out. The clubs need to have their assets retained as their own and those funds withheld from 2005. Provincial tracks need to be supported for lesser quality horses. Industry representatives must by default be included in the management of racing. There must be an understanding that this is sport. It is a spectacle. People want to go to events, these are events. Jockeys are modern day superstar sportsmen, the horses are too. Trainers and their families are given star billing in newspapers. Just because a few journalists and some former jockeys want to see the end of race clubs, foolishly some believe this current bill will fix everything. Don't fool yourself, only the fool and his money are easily parted.

I want to spell out the implications to Labor members here today of this bill.

One, it will guarantee the end of race clubs as they are now and will ensure that future private clubs will arise and take away QRL's franchise as a legitimate competitor to that franchise.

Two, it will collapse provincial race clubs.

Three, it will collapse Queensland racing fields to metropolitan tracks with at best second-rate to third-rate horses—read slow horses. Only the trainers, owners and southern clubs will all be in the same place and it will not be in Queensland. Our major feature races of the winter carnival will become attractive only to group two and three horses. This is a great tragedy.

Four, the horse racing industry, stock suppliers, track staff, caterers, food suppliers, casual staff will all lose their jobs. I predict 50 percent will be gone within five years.

Five, QRL will not only be unable to maintain support costs, guaranteed prize money in line with other states, but it will be forced to ration what it has on offer already.

Six, punters will just bet on southern fields and increasingly online. If members think Sportsbet is big now, this is like giving it a hit of adrenaline, steroids and growth hormone as a super injection, all at once, for all online variations for it is the punters who really drive this industry. Cross-border gambling is already rising fast.

I have previously warned about online gambling and highlighted the interest of Labor Members and in particular the former Member for Greenslopes who was involved in Hippodrome and others in Gocorp. It would be unbelievable to assume they did not know what was to happen. Honourable Members need to stop fooling themselves and equating horse racing with poker machines. True gamblers chase odds that are in their favour or can be made so. Poker machines equate to anonymous gambling with no ability to shift odds in the favour of the wagering.

Within five years private equity will again own race tracks and will be allowed under competition rules. Most likely there will be more than one franchisee, obviously one being QRL, the other one private. The private one will have better fields, better facilities, be new, it will suck in both advertising spend and more importantly punter capital. The super league and NRL divide might, if members can recall those events, be the best example of why this will occur. These new entities will probably organise themselves in tracks that QRL ultimately abandon. There are a few of these and there's likely to be a few more. How do we know this? QRL is based at Deagon and it's a dead track with no racing. Look what Magic Millions has done in the last 12 months, they go where the money is, they take the lowest charges on offer and they give the most minimal return to the hosting club. What they do is to offer high prize money for horses linked to their sale where they derive commissions. They take a risk, they have paid equity for their franchise but in the case of the Magic Millions it is linked to the Gold Coast and may only work on the Gold Coast. There are plenty other examples that are not so lucky. We need to learn from what works and what doesn't work. The VRC earns \$20 million after everything, that is every possible cost over a full year, from the Melbourne Cup alone. At the Flemington track, which the VRC owns, it really doesn't have to have or make anything from racing for the whole year. But it does so as a service to members, trainers, owners and prepare the field for its huge spectacle. Every race club in Australia has Melbourne Cup as its biggest earning day and Flemington hosts two million people. All the gamblers largely lose but the income to the nation and states is huge. It is a good learning curve for everyone.

So what does Queensland Racing Ltd do under Labor? It attempts a backdoor change in control and gain ownership of at least one major club and probably all the other metropolitan clubs as well that have a future in a modern racing world. For a miserable 30 pieces of silver—read \$80 million—the public is supposed to think that QRL should be given the keys to the kingdom. Racing is truly biblical and the names of the horses, especially the best ones, are named in biblical terms. But there was only one true Judas and he was a slow runner and couldn't handle the barriers.

It would be too easy to lay all the blame of this debacle at the foot of the chair of QRL, Bob Bentley, and his QR Ltd board. No doubt this Labor Government strategy, especially if it all goes wrong, will blame someone else. I am sure we are going to hear that it was Bentley's dream and his failing, not the minister's, not Labor's for that matter.

This is cowardly, deceitful and grossly unsatisfactory, from a government that believes it is accountable. This sheer act of theft of the assets alone needs to be demonstrated as the work of the Queensland Labor Party who don't have the intestinal fortitude to fess up and admit their complicity at a time when their incompetent financial management of the state has led them to be at the mercy of their bankers. To destroy race clubs, club's ownerships of tracks and facilities and their right to exist after taking their assets is not even revolution. It is common theft. It is the lowest of lows. Sure Bob Bentley remains in charge but of what, really for how long and with bloodied hands. Most punters and many horse owners are average people, not millionaires as some honourable members may still believe. This is not a fair cop and they won't swallow it.

For the sport of kings there is nothing majestic about this legislation. It legitimizes common theft and disenfranchisement by an out of touch government. The bill is not supported—it is a disgrace.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (12.38 pm): In speaking to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I think it is time that many members in this House realised that they do not know as much as they think they do. As a matter of fact, some of them do not have too much knowledge of things at all. I would like to remind the member for Gaven that the last person who said 'such is life' was Ned Kelly as they put the noose around his neck. Then we have the arrogance of the member for Mermaid Beach standing in here—and it is becoming more and more evident—saying not 'if we win government' but 'when we win government'. He said it three times. Let me explain a few things for the shell-like ear of the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Gaven. This amending act is intended to amalgamate the three existing racing control bodies: Queensland Racing for gallops, Queensland Harness Racing for trots and Greyhounds Queensland.

For the benefit of those people who will stand up and say, as the member for Gaven just said, that the property of the race club is owned by the members of it, I say that that is not the case because race clubs are incorporated bodies and it is the property of the incorporated body. If people knew anything about the law they would realise that it is a separate legal entity. So much for that!

In 2004, 2005 and into 2006 I was on the backbench committee that originally made the report for the then minister in relation to the restructuring of racing in Queensland. There were 123 race clubs in Queensland which had been fostered by the National Party appointing their own sycophants and paying them money. Three race clubs did not even exist and they had received somewhere in the vicinity of \$100,000. No-one could ever say where that money went or where it was spent, but I will bet any money that the people on the committee were National Party appointees.

I come from the country and I saw the way the National Party tried to make it their own fiefdom. It treated anyone else—trainers, owners, jockeys—involved in the industry like dirt. It was fine as long as they could stand up there and say, 'I'm the chairman of a race club.' For 25 years I practised law. I had those sycophants sitting opposite me in appeals against suspensions of jockeys or trainers. Their attitude was, 'We are here to run the race club. We control the money. You just do what you're told. Get out of here.' I can even give you the names, but I would not—

Mr Stevens: You can vote them out.

Mr HOOLIHAN: You can be voted out, too, member for Mermaid Beach. Just remember that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Keppel, I would ask you not—

Mr HOOLIHAN: I retract the 'you'. The member for Mermaid Beach can be voted out also, as he was from the Gold Coast race club committee. All the National Party did was purchase their sycophancy, put them in place and give them enough money to make them think they were big people. That has not happened in recent times. Whilst I appreciate that people have criticism of the current chairman of Queensland Racing, at least there has been consistency about the way racing has been administered.

Putting the three bodies together does make sense. As the minister said in his second reading speech, it will avoid duplication of effort. I heard mention of the \$6 million that was spent by Queensland Racing in Rockhampton. What the member for Gaven did not bother to find out is that the members of the race club in Rockhampton voted—overwhelmingly, I might add, by in excess of 80 per cent—to go into partnership, because that was the problem for them. They did not have the money for their grounds, but they would administer it.

This will actually provide sufficient funding for Queensland Racing Ltd over four years. There will be an amendment to the Wagering Act and the Gaming Machine Act to fund that and to enable payment of moneys. I wish they would change the Racing Act and the Gaming Machine Act so that people who bet got more money back. I have a terrible tendency to put money on horses and people say to me, 'Do you follow the horses?' I answer, 'Yes, but the horses I follow like to follow other horses.' I do not think any rearrangement of Queensland Racing will make very much difference to that.

This bill protects employees earning under \$100,000 and transfers staff, assets and liabilities to the new control body from the harness and greyhound control bodies, which actually own those assets. They do not belong to the members, regardless of all the rubbish that is spouted here. It is a real problem.

We have heard about the retention of the current directors through to 2014—I had some concerns with that when I first heard the proposal—but after that time two directors will retire on a rotational basis and there will be a selection panel responsible for appointing new directors. It is common sense to anyone who stops and thinks about it that a guarantee of continuity in managerial direction has to come from people who have been there and have had the experience. There will be an increase in the number of directors. One from the harness racing control body and one from the greyhound control body will be added to the current five directors.

We do have in Australia an act called the Corporations Act, which is administered by ASIC. The Racing Act will also bind the directors of Queensland Racing. They will administer funding across the three codes. There is a seven per cent net UNiTAB product fee which will be used to provide prize money for non-TAB racing. We heard from the member for Dalrymple about this, but race clubs can still have their own meetings. The Yeppoon race club has three meetings a year. The number of people there probably exceeds the number of people who end up at the Gold Coast. They are massive meetings because the committee and the club work very hard, in conjunction with Queensland Racing, to provide a good day, to provide enjoyment for those people who enjoy racing.

I should say that I hold shares in Tattersall's, which bought out UNiTAB. It was the only way I could get any money back from the TAB! Seven per cent of the UNiTAB product fee will be returned to non-TAB racing. Those community organisations can still run their race meetings. They can still apply for those race meetings. Some organisations have not been able to continue, and that is for a variety of reasons—not always to do with whether it is a non-TAB meeting. One of the groups that has discontinued is the Mackenzie River amateur race club, which raised money at the Wilpeena races for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. That was purely and simply because there were not enough people on the committee to continue to operate that committee.

All in all, this legislation will create a new regime for Queensland. We heard from the member for Gaven—it is a really interesting proposal—that the Japanese and the American racing industries have the highest prize money, that they are just out of this world in terms of money. Well, he should look more closely. If he did, he would see that the government of neither country puts any money into racing. The industry itself controls and organises racing and deals with prize money. So he ought to put some thought into his own argument in relation to that.

I support, with some misgivings, the operation of the act and the legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (12.48 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The passing of this legislation will see the amalgamation of the three existing racing control bodies: Queensland Racing, Harness Racing Queensland and Greyhounds Queensland. The amalgamated body will become Queensland's single control body, Racing Queensland Ltd. There appears to have been a lot of scaremongering and misinformation circulating in the lead-up to this debate. In Townsville, most of the misinformation seems to be surrounding who will control the assets of the Townsville Turf Club into the future.

The amalgamation of the three control bodies will not in any way change the ownership or control that local turf clubs have over their assets. Should a club choose to dispose of any part of its assets, the current and future process will be the same. The club must first decide it wants to undertake this course of action. The next step in the process is that the racing control body will assess and approve or otherwise. Finally, if both of these processes occur, remembering that it is the club that first has to make the decision for itself, the minister responsible for racing will then make an assessment of the club's request.

This process is in place to allow the local clubs to have the autonomy to make decisions specific to their local communities whilst the extra steps involved allow for the protection of the industry assets broadly. In the case of the Townsville Turf Club, it was the recipient and beneficiary of the Queensland government's deed of grant in trust racecourse policy. In July 2005 the value of the asset transferred to them was \$7.9 million.

I cannot claim to be an expert in the racing industry. My only experience with the industry was my contact with communities and individuals I worked with during my time with Gambling Help. What I do know from the many reports in the media over recent months is that it is a fact that the racing industry is changing. With reducing club memberships and reducing patronage at race days, the structure of the industry needed to be reviewed.

I am advised that provisions are in place to provide for a smooth transition for staff. I am also advised that negotiations will occur between the respective unions and the three employers during that transition period. I support these provisions. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (12.50 pm): I rise to make my contribution to this very important debate on behalf of my electorate of Noosa, which I always regard as a privilege. I also regard it as a privilege to support the shadow minister and my good friend the member for Mermaid Beach as he strives, as shadow minister, to bring a little sanity and reason into the debate on the very important racing industry. I suggest that this is the lifeblood of an industry which we are debating. It is a sport. It is a leisure time activity. It is also an industry and a business and we should bear that in mind as we debate this industry-changing legislation.

When I was reading the explanatory notes on this legislation I was struck by the feeling that I had read it all before. Where had I seen the notion previously of mixing apples and pears? Where had I seen the notion of shrinking representation? Where had I seen the promise of cost efficiencies from a change in organisational arrangements? Where had I seen the promise of a stronger organisation resulting from change? Where had I seen the promise of more effective decision making? Then I had that 'aha' moment and I found the magic word in the explanatory notes. It was that word which is considered by those in my electorate to be infinitely worse than any four letter word—that is, amalgamation. Again with this legislation we have the same hollow and disingenuous promises that the now Treasurer made when he introduced that legislation to force local council amalgamations. That led to the amalgamation of Noosa, Caloundra and Maroochy into what we now call the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

A friend of mine was working at a major Australian university some years ago when management consultants were bought in to advise on organisational reform. His definition of a management consultant is one who borrows your watch to tell you the time. The consultants, the Boston Consulting Group, were known locally as the 'Boston Stranglers' because of the impact they have on staff. The university was highly administratively centralised at the time. What did the stranglers recommend? Surprise, surprise, they recommended decentralisation. In a quiet moment of reflection, the members of the consultancy team revealed that had the university been decentralised they would have recommended centralisation. This was the period when the organisational term 'change management' was born. It is a term I detest. Because it is value free it is never change which is required, simply change for change's sake. Change is always about improvement.

I get the strong feeling that this Labor government has been bitten by the organisational centralisation bug. It is illogical. There has never been or there never is any modelling, never any financial analysis and never any genuine consultation with communities or stakeholders. In fact, consultation has been redefined by this Labor government. Consultation now occurs after the decision has been taken and is in the form of a government simply telling stakeholders why the government's decision will be good for them. It is consultation with closed ears and even more tightly closed minds. It is spin at its most effective.

Mind you, the title Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading is offensive to all racing interests as it shows the government's sheer contempt for racing in this state by not recognising it formally in the minister's title. That is something the LNP will change in government.

The present Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading is not as convinced as was the then Treasurer when he became an apostle for amalgamation. Maybe that is because the minister only wants to be a disciple and not an apostle. Maybe it is because he is more mature than the young and inexperienced man which the then minister for local government was. Maybe it is because he is a bit more circumspect about overreaching, about stretching the truth when he promises. His expectations are more guarded. His explanatory notes state—

The establishment of one control body for thoroughbred, harness and greyhound codes of racing is expected to provide a unified commercial focus.

It then goes on—

The one control body is expected—

not will but is expected—

to significantly reduce control body administrative overheads and drive efficiencies.

Where is the business case which underpins the need and the logic for this change? Where is the administrative plan? Where is the financial analysis? Where is the modelling?

This bill also includes the other most abhorrent of all political acts and that is retrospectivity. We all loathe retrospectivity and avoid it at all costs. Not so this Labor government which slips into its legislation time and again the notion of the retrospective effect. This bill also proposes another of the democratic no-noes—that is, the reversal of the onus of proof. The only saving grace is that in this case they only apply in administrative proceedings and not in criminal matters.

The shadow minister has indicated already that we on this side of the House will oppose this legislation and in government repeal it. This is a position on which I agree with him 100 per cent. That is because I remember fondly my time working within the communities of regional Queensland in commercial broadcasting. I know from firsthand experience the damage that this legislation will do to country racing and by definition the revenues which country racing generates for regional communities.

This Labor government continues to be ignorant of the needs and aspirations of regional and country communities. This legislation will be a disaster for these smaller communities. It will be a disaster for country racing clubs. It will be a disaster for the regional businesses which are directly related to country racing. It will also devastate this form of entertainment for country communities.

It is about time that this Labor government woke up to the fact that there is a whole state outside of South-East Queensland crying out for good government. It is something that they are yet to find.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.57 pm): I rise to oppose the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. In commencing, I thank the minister for the briefing. I also thank Mike and Linda for their time yesterday afternoon. I appreciate that a lot. I am not a punter. The member for Keppel appears to have had some experience—

Mr Finn: We're all punters.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Let me rephrase that then. I am not a punter on the horses. I do go to the turf club in Gladstone when I am invited to hand out trophies or simply attend. It is a wonderful time. I commend David and the committee for the work that they have done. They have to try to gain revenue outside of racing with facilities that have limitations, to say the least. They have worked tirelessly over the last little while to upgrade the Gladstone Turf Club facilities. I commend the committee for their dedication. I also commend the owners, trainers, strappers, jockeys, bookies and workers who come out on race days and those who maintain the grounds on a volunteer basis. That facility is a credit to them.

Having said that, can I say that Racing Queensland has done little to enhance the ability of the Gladstone Turf Club to survive. It is on that basis and what I perceive as the implications of this bill that I oppose this bill.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Cunningham, adjourned.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

Order of Appointment

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.30 pm), without notice: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order 167(3), the order of appointment for 2010 Estimates Committees circulated in my name be agreed to.

2010 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES—ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

(1) The following estimates committees are appointed—

- Estimates Committee A
- Estimates Committee B
- Estimates Committee C
- Estimates Committee D
- Estimates Committee E
- Estimates Committee F
- Estimates Committee G

(2) The expenditures stated in the Appropriation Bill 2010 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2010, including unauthorised expenditures from previous years, are referred to the estimates committees immediately after each of the Bills has been read a second time.

- (3) Members are appointed to estimates committees as follows—
- Estimates Committee A—Mr Finn (Chair), Mr Choi, Mr Hoolihan, Mr Langbroek, Mr Nicholls, Mrs Stuckey and Mr Wendt
 - Estimates Committee B—Mr Shine (Chair), Mrs Attwood, Mrs Cunningham, Dr Flegg, Ms Jarratt, Mr McArdle and Ms Stone
 - Estimates Committee C—Mr O'Brien (Chair), Ms Farmer, Mr Moorhead, Mrs Pratt, Mr Seeneey, Ms Simpson and Ms van Litsenburg
 - Estimates Committee D—Ms Grace (Chair), Mr Cripps, Ms Male, Mr McLindon, Mr Ryan, Ms Simpson and Mr Wells
 - Estimates Committee E—Mrs Miller (Chair), Mr Gibson, Mr Hopper, Ms Nelson-Carr, Mrs Scott, Mr Springborg and Mr Watt
 - Estimates Committee F—Ms O'Neill (Chair), Mr Dempsey, Mr Hobbs, Mrs Kiernan, Mrs Menkens, Mrs Smith and Mr Wettenhall
 - Estimates Committee G—Ms Johnstone (Chair), Mr Elmes, Mr Johnson, Mr Kilburn, Mr Moorhead, Mr Stevens and Mrs Sullivan
- (4) Organisational units and portfolios are allocated to committees for examination as follows—
- Estimates Committee A—
- Office of the Governor
 - Legislative Assembly
- Organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers are also allocated to Estimates Committee A—
- Premier and Minister for the Arts
 - Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development
 - Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology
- Estimates Committee B—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Deputy Premier and Minister for Health
 - Minister for Education and Training
- Estimates Committee C—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade
 - Minister for Transport
- Estimates Committee D—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Minister for Main Roads
 - Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs
- Estimates Committee E—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland
 - Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations
 - Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
- Estimates Committee F—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
 - Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport
 - Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women
- Estimates Committee G—
- Organisational units within the portfolios of—
- Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services
 - Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading
 - Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability
- (5) The estimates committees are to meet to hear evidence in accordance with the following schedule—
- Estimates Committee A—Tuesday 13 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee B—Wednesday 14 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee C—Thursday 15 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee D—Friday 16 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee E—Tuesday 20 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee F—Wednesday 21 July 2010
 - Estimates Committee G—Thursday 22 July 2010
- (6) Estimates committees to report
- (a) Estimates Committees A to G are to examine and report by no later than Monday 2 August 2010 on the proposed expenditures for the organisational units allocated to them.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1756, on motion of Mr Lawlor—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (2.31 pm), continuing: I rise to speak to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I want to put on the record an article—and it is a sharp article—that was in the *Sunday Mail* on 18 April by Bart Sinclair. The article reads—

Be afraid Queenslanders. Be very afraid.

The Bligh Government has sent a terrible message to everyone in the state with the ridiculous provisions in the revised Racing And Betting Act to establish a new three-code control body.

Consultation, democracy and accountability are obviously words with which Racing Minister Peter Lawlor is not familiar.

The industry will have no future representation on the new private company set up to be the control body. Not a single person.

The only shareholders of this private company will be seven people who happen to be the same seven currently in power. That's the five members of the Queensland Racing Limited board plus the chairs of the greyhound and harness boards.

Obviously Lawlor—

and that should be Mr Lawlor—

considers the democratic vote would be—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! I would ask that you use the correct title for the minister, please.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I am quoting from an article.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you; I am sorry.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: It goes on—

Obviously Lawlor considers a democratic vote would be a tiresome exercise.

The shareholders are appointed for an initial period of four years, with two required to step down and stand for re-appointment every two years after that.

If you do the sums, two members get four years, two get six years, two get eight years and one gets 10 years.

Mind you the members would hardly be quaking in their boots at the prospect of seeking re-appointment.

A panel of three will choose who goes back on. Chairman Bob Bentley will be one of the selectors, along with a representative of the Department of Racing and, incredibly, a person to be chosen by the first two. The only criteria the third selector has to meet is to be a current member of the Institute of Company Directors. There's one on every street corner.

If misfortune or just tiredness overcomes a shareholder and he or she does not seek re-appointment, the trio of selectors will step up to the plate.

The State Government says its only involvement in racing now is in matters of probity and integrity. Really?

Lawlor claims there was consultation. The Minister says he consulted the three current control body chairs—all now shareholders of the company—and the three chief executives who work for those chairs.

In a previous life Lawlor was a long-serving member of the Gold Coast Turf Club board.

In his time of direct involvement in the racing industry he must have formed a firm view of the industry participants.

The proposals under this Racing And Betting Act give the private company real ability to assume ownership of racetracks or at least an avenue to take over assets and intellectual property of race clubs. What next? Rural properties, homes, commercial land?

Some of that article is extreme—and I am sure that the minister will respond to some of those allegations—but it does reflect the concern in the community.

My opposition to this control body is as it relates to country racing, and that is the only thing that I have any contact with, because there is no dog racing or harness racing in my electorate. Honestly, if Queensland Racing or the new entity, Racing Queensland Ltd, continues with its decision making that affects country racing, there will not be much left in Gladstone at all. My concern is that this new entity will have even less regard for country racing—the embryonic start for many owners, trainers, jockeys and horses. In the case of the horses they test them out in country racing to see if they have the capability and in the case of the jockeys country races give them the opportunity to get some well-deserved training or experience.

The new board will consist of the current Chair of Queensland Racing, Bob Bentley, deputy chair Tony Hanmer, Bill Ludwig, Brad Ryan and Wayne Milner. They are the current directors of the thoroughbred control body. It will also consist of Kerry Watson, the current chair of the greyhound control body, and Bob Lette, the current chair of the harness control body. I honestly do not know much about the gentlemen from the greyhound and harness racing industries. My contact with Queensland Racing has been predominantly with Mr Bentley and Mr Ludwig, but Mr Bentley in particular. I used to believe that he had a concern for country racing. I do not hold that view now.

It appears to me that even now the interests of Queensland Racing are with the TAB clubs, and the minister's advisers rightly provided me with the information that TAB clubs is where the revenue is generated and those clubs are Brisbane, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville. But I must advocate for country race clubs. I must represent the concerns that I believe the Gladstone Turf Club will have. It had concerns under the structure that is in existence now. I believe that it will be significantly disadvantaged by this new structure. This new structure will be dollar driven only and I have no confidence that the new entity will have any regard for country racing into the future. I do share concerns about the way that the board has been established for this new entity—Racing Queensland Ltd—and the very controlled nature of the tenure of both the chair and the board members. It will be very difficult for race clubs to be able to affect the people on that board. It will be very difficult, if possible at all.

I have to say that the minister's representatives in the briefing that we as Independents had were very clear and articulate in setting out what they believed the bill will achieve. They had a response to any of the concerns that we aired. I certainly do not cast aspersions on that response or on them in any way, shape or form. My experience with Queensland Racing and even in dealings once with the greyhound association when it took money off the North Queensland races is that their attention is on the south-east corner. I will give the minister one last example of what I mean before I close as time is limited, because debate on this bill, too, has been guillotined. As I said, my electorate has the wonderful and very active Gladstone Turf Club and a little race club in Calliope. It has only one race, and that is the Boxing Day race. That is a typical country race day and many people attend.

I went to a meeting in Rockhampton last year I think it was, although time does go quickly. Bob Bentley and Bill Ludwig were at that meeting explaining to country clubs that they were activating or applying workplace health and safety standards to those race clubs. I do not have a problem with safety standards—not at all. They said that clubs that did not comply would have to close and that there would have to be upgrades to most country clubs, and they outlined some of the issues that they had seen in inspections that they had undertaken. The people in attendance at that meeting whom I knew were shell-shocked because of the potential financial implications. Queensland Racing had starved many of these clubs of revenue because it had reduced their race meetings, it had cut them back or cut them off and therefore they would not necessarily have the financial ability to achieve those improvements, so the question was asked: would Queensland Racing help fund them? The answer was, 'No. You've got to comply, but we're not going to help you financially.'

As I say, in many instances the club's financial difficulties were because of reductions in the number of race meetings. That occurred before the minister's time, but it was certainly the source of much frustration in rural racing. I know there is a point of view that there are race clubs that cry poor but have significant resources. I am not referring to those. I know the Gladstone Turf Club is in a much better financial state than it used to be because the committee has worked tirelessly to ensure that. But not all small country racing clubs are like that. I cannot see that this bill will in any way enhance the viability and survival of country racing. I have to advocate for those clubs and I do not support the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (2.40 pm): I rise this afternoon to add my opposition to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which was introduced into the House by the Bligh government. The contents of my speech will be contained to a short period because, once again, as I said last night, democracy has been slapped in the face by the Bligh Labor government. Again, the people of the Kawana electorate say that the member for Kawana should have his right to stand up and speak for 20 minutes, but they have been guillotined. They have been cut down.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: To have government interjections when I am talking about the 20 minutes of time that members of this House get is completely frustrating. I look forward to the opportunity in 1½ years when we, the LNP, become the government. I say to the shadow minister that, on watching his performance and listening to the contents of his speech, I think he will make a tremendous minister for tourism and fair trading come the next election. I look forward to the member for Mermaid Beach becoming the minister for tourism and fair trading in 1½ years because no-one in this House knows the racing industry like the shadow minister knows the racing industry. I welcome the member for Everton on this side of the House. This is the good side of the House—

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is okay in opposition, but we would prefer to be on that side of the House. We look forward to that in 1½ years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Kawana. You have wasted two minutes. I would ask you to come to the clauses of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The bill before the House is poorly constructed legislation that clearly was rushed and reiterates my point that this government is a crisis government that makes policy on the run. It is continually short focused in that it reacts to issue after issue without long-term vision.

This bill amends the Racing Act 2002, the Racing Regulation 2003, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Wagering Act 1998 and the Wagering Regulation 1999. Firstly, I wish to concur with the statements made by the shadow minister and the member for Mermaid Beach that essentially this bill will destroy the racing industry in Queensland as we know it. Industry consultation for the bill has been extremely scarce and heavily criticised by the industry stakeholders.

The first thing that any government should do when attempting to reform or overhaul any area of interest or industry is to sit down with all the relevant stakeholders and openly discuss ways and means of simplifying the operation. In no way should any government reform undertaken lead to a worse model than was the case previously. This bill does that. This government is out of touch and rather than listening and discussing the issues and ideas with the people of Queensland, it continues to govern by some sense of dictatorship.

In correspondence that I received from the Chairman of the Brisbane Racing Club, Mr Kevin Dixon, he expresses his strong disappointment in the formulation process of this bill. Mr Dixon stated further—

... a vote in favour of the legislation will establish an unelected and unrepresentative Control Body to be given decision-making power over the three codes of racing.

He stated further—

... they are the hub of thousands of jobs in this state.

The establishment of one control body for the industry will be achieved by the amalgamation of the three existing bodies: Queensland Racing Ltd, Queensland Harness Racing Ltd and Greyhounds Queensland Ltd. I have to say that I am not an avid racing enthusiast or punter of any esteemed ilk but, from the outside, even I can see the difference that is required to manage each three entities under a much broader umbrella. I do not understand this government's fascination with amalgamation. We saw it with the forced council amalgamations in 2008 and those councils still struggle to provide solid local government representation in many areas of the state. Now we see the same principle applying to the racing industry. All that amalgamations seem to do is reduce services, increase regulatory provisions and administrative costs and ultimately spread the same resources across a larger area. Put quite simply: it is less bang for the ratepayers' buck.

The explanatory notes to this bill detail the reasons for the forced creation of a single racing control body in Queensland. Those reasons include reducing the duplication of effort, preventing coordinated decision making in the best interests of the entire racing industry. All this amalgamation seems to do is centralise control of the industry so that fewer people at the top have more power over the entire industry, all to the detriment of the three specialised areas of the industry: horseracing, harness racing and greyhound racing. The one-size-fits-all approach will not work in an industry that has been well established. The LNP believes that each sector should have its own control as part of the entire racing industry. Specialised people understand and know what is required to run their specialised sectors of the industry.

I am not sure of the government's reason for the big push against having specialised groups in the industry but, given its track record on centralising power, it is very concerning. The industry, which is being ransacked by the government, is responsible for generating upwards of \$855 million in economic spend and employs 30,000 full-time, part-time and casual employees. My concern is that the creation of this centralised body of control in the industry will lead to an overall downgrade in the industry and, as a result, jobs will be jeopardised. Too much power in one particular body in an industry as prosperous as the racing industry is extremely dangerous. As the British Lord Acton famously said—

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

All power to one body is extremely dangerous and the government's introduction of this legislation shows complete contempt for those bodies that are currently in existence.

This legislation is yet another backflip from the Bligh Labor government. Labor has consistently stressed the importance of keeping the management of the industry through the existing three bodies: Queensland Racing, Queensland Harness Racing and Greyhounds Queensland. What has happened to bring about the sudden change of heart? Wider industry representation is crucial to racing in Queensland, particularly to protect the industry and its many employers in rural and regional Queensland.

In my own electorate, the industry is not as prominent as it is in other parts of the Sunshine Coast region, but just on the border of the Caloundra and Kawana electorates is the location of the Sunshine Coast Turf Club, which is set to celebrate its 25th birthday in July this year. In its short existence, the club has grown to be a dominant regional club in Queensland. The club is now a first-class racing and training facility. The grass track is now accompanied by a synthetic cushion track which, I am told, is one of the first of its kind in Australia. Last year the club installed 40 light towers, with race meetings now able to be held at night as well as during the day, increasing the capacity of the club. My concern is that this dictatorial legislation will damage the regional clubs by reducing their representation and ability to be heard in the broader racing industry. It was through Queensland Racing that the Sunshine Coast Turf

Club was able to fund its new track and this new centralised body of power over the industry will ultimately affect the smaller regional clubs and those jobs linked to the industry across rural and regional Queensland.

The Racing Act 2002 contained significant measures to protect and enhance regional racing in Queensland through five separate regional racing associations consisting of elected members from regional clubs. Country racing will suffer the most from this bill, as the regional representation on the Queensland Regional Racing Council is reduced from five to one. But when has this government stood tall for rural and regional Queensland? Unless you live in the area that lies between Coolangatta north to Pine Rivers and west to the Lockyer Valley, the Bligh Labor government considers you to be a lesser part of Queensland. It has even looked at separate time zones for daylight saving that are intrastate rather than interstate, which was the case previously.

I support the comments of the shadow minister in relation to this bill and the LNP's support for the racing industry in Queensland as a whole rather than the Labor Party's position of centralisation of power and a reduction of rural representation in the industry.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.50 pm): I rise to support the amendments to the Racing Act 2002 which will amalgamate the three existing racing control bodies. I will restrict my comments to the racing industry in Townsville which has received a lot of publicity over the last few months. By way of example I will talk about run-down infrastructure or management issues which threaten the viability of the industry going forward.

This government has injected the largest financial contribution in its history into the Queensland racing industry. The way the industry operates now with multiple control bodies means that there is not only a duplication of effort but also a lack of bang for buck without achieving the best possible outcomes. This is clearly inefficient. With the three control bodies amalgamated there will be more strategic decision making as well as dollars for things like workplace health and safety considerations.

This also means that publicly owned land cannot be readily disposed of by clubs for their own benefit. It is on this point that I must reiterate that many of the concerns that have been raised in the media to date by various racing identities are very wrong. I assure punters out there that this is not some secret plan for the government to take over racecourses. It is just a scare tactic that has been used by people like Kevin Dixon from the BRC and many people from Townsville have bought into that argument. Cluden Park racecourse in Townsville is on public land that was owned by the state of Queensland. As the member for Townsville said earlier, in July 2005 it was transferred to the Townsville Turf Club at no cost under the government's deed of grant in trust racecourse policy. At the date of transfer the racecourse was valued at \$7.9 million, which is, let us face it, nearly \$8 million that was given by this government to the racing industry. That begs the question why, if the government wanted to own Cluden Park, would it have transferred it to the club in 2005? Well, it would not have. That is why the so-called concerns that have been raised by various citizens, such as Mr Alan Parry, would have been far better addressed to me instead of to Bob Katter, a man with even less understanding of this matter than anyone on the opposite side, if that is at all humanly possible.

While I have real concerns about the misinformation in regard to land ownership, let us not forget that it is not only fair and just that the industry and the government seek to protect the land at Cluden Park; it is sensible when one looks at the financial management of the club. Audit investigations revealed that the Townsville Turf Club had made a loss of \$359,000 up until the beginning of this year on top of successive losses: \$390,000 in 2008-09, \$100,000 in 2007-08 and a \$10,000 loss in 2006-07. The forecast loss for 2009-10 is between \$450,000 and \$500,000. This is unsustainable and it is a fact that the club is unable to survive without handouts from fellow members of the committee who have lent money to the club. The Townsville Turf Club has been offered a similar partnership to that offered and accepted by members of the Rockhampton Jockey Club and the Sunshine Coast Turf Club: Queensland Racing Ltd would take control of the loss-making part of the business that is required to conduct racing and training and allow the club to concentrate on attracting members and patrons.

Let us have a look at the efforts of the president of the Townsville Amateurs, Christina Rennie. I think she is a wonderful woman. Christina was not happy with the changes that the club faced, but once she was faced with no alternative but to accept those changes what she has agreed to do and what she will continue to do is to run the race day and make the event bigger and better than ever before. I admire this woman as a woman of substance.

Before I finish, I would just like to add that while I have no interest in racing, or indeed gambling in any form for that matter—and I could even go further by saying that I do not get any great thrill from watching small men—

Mr Shine: And small women.

Ms NELSON-CARR: And small women viciously beat the backsides of these magnificent animals when they probably should be attending anger management classes—I do concede that gambling per se is an accepted part of our culture and it has always been with us and it will continue to

be that way. Just because I do not gamble does not mean it does not exist, nor would I pull out of supporting various enterprises just because I do not enjoy them. The racing industry is a legitimate sport followed by millions of supporters.

Can I just take a moment to remind members that gambling costs, and it costs more than money. Gamblers in Australia spend—or lose, if you like—over \$18 billion per year. There are more than 300,000 moderate to problem gamblers already. The Bligh government constantly reiterates the mantra that if a person is going to gamble, gamble responsibly. We do have 24-hour gambling helplines, we have confidential face-to-face counselling and we have the Responsible Gambling Code of Practice. The last federal review of the Interactive Gambling Act 2001 indicated that the regulation of online betting exchanges should not be supported. This, of course, has opened the door to international and interstate betting agencies advertising their odds at will. This has meant, of course, the rapid growth of online gambling and wagering. So a person can now lose their house while they are actually living in it.

What makes this even more insidious is the constant bombardment on free-to-air sport where major sponsors like Centrebet have a captive audience. Panel members detail betting odds before any sports discussion occurs. It is every five minutes. It drives me absolutely crazy. Viewers are reminded of the live odds at five minute intervals. This is nothing more than a gamble-athon. It is a constant barrage urging people to pick up the phone; but, hey, gamble responsibly. How can we sit by and urge people who are hopelessly addicted, people who already know where to go to get their fix on machines, the TAB or poker, to gamble responsibly? Cigarettes cannot be advertised anymore. Remember the hullabaloo that was created when cigarette sponsorship was withdrawn? These people do not need this and neither do the rest of us.

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to speak on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Over my relatively short time as the state member for the seat of Mount Isa I have seen the seat grow and expand to the size of France. My electorate is home to the iconic Birdsville Races, Mount Isa's Mailman Express, the equally famous Boulia Camel Races and the Oak Park Races which have a history of over 200 years.

Mr Johnson: Don't forget McKinlay.

Mrs KIERNAN: I will mention that shortly, member for Gregory. My mission is to get in a bit of goat racing in the member for Gregory's electorate one day in the future in Barcaldine. Goat racing is the go. I certainly have little doubt that we are great supporters of racing in all forms.

Mr Johnson: What about camel racing?

Mrs KIERNAN: Camel racing I am not so good at, as we all know.

Mr Johnson: Tell us about the bruise that is bigger than Mount Isa.

Mrs KIERNAN: Thank you for sharing that with the House. I have had a very close call with a camel. I recently met that camel again in Richmond and we made up. I told him it was not his fault; I was a lousy jockey. One of the things that I am most certain of is that the Bligh government has been and continues to be a strong supporter of racing in Queensland's rural and regional areas. It is certainly not hard to be inspired by the many local people I have met and who have willingly given me their advice and at times frank and open and honest views along the way. I thank people like Cliff Fitchett, Angela Unsworth and Graham Saunders to name a few.

I have worked closely in the past with the current minister for racing, Minister Lawlor, and the previous minister for racing, the Treasurer, and I have found that they have always been approachable and willing to listen to the concerns of my region's racing fraternity. Likewise, the support and guidance provided to me by Bill Ludwig has been invaluable and I thank him for his patience and his contribution over many years to country racing.

As the local member, I have been very active in working within our government to ensure that the interests of country racing are protected and that the amendments proposed in the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill are no different. With the new amalgamated control body governance model proposed in this bill, it is no longer appropriate for the thoroughbred specific protections for country racing to remain fixed in legislation. It should be very clear that country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee will remain to provide advice and support at the grassroots level to the control body. Rather than being fixed in legislation, the country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee will now be enshrined in the constitution of Racing Queensland Ltd.

The minister must approve the constitution of Racing Queensland Ltd before it is issued a control body licence. It cannot then be changed without the approval of the chief executive of the department responsible for racing. The minister has told Racing Queensland Ltd that he will not consider any constitution that does not provide specific safeguards for country racing. Accordingly, many of the existing provisions in the act will be reflected in the constitution. The existing country racing associations will retain the current geographic boundaries, with each country race club to nominate a representative to the relevant country racing association. This is what happens now and will continue to happen in the

future. The Queensland branch of the Australian Trainers Association, the Queensland Jockeys Association, the Queensland Bookmakers Association and the Queensland Racehorse Owners Association may provide a representative of their respective association. The Country Racing Committee will be required to meet at least biannually, with additional meetings at the discretion of the committee. The chairperson of each of the eight country racing associations and a representative from Queensland Racing will make up the Country Racing Committee. This is what happens today and will continue to happen in the future.

As we know, race dates are always a matter of debate. However, it has always been a matter for the industry, not the government. It needs to be said, and said again, that no minister has ever been responsible for allocating race dates. There is a provision that Racing Queensland Ltd will be required to consult with the Country Racing Committee on the allocation of country race dates under Queensland Racing Ltd's constitution. Should Racing Queensland Ltd and the Country Racing Committee be unable to reach agreement on the number of days on which country race meetings are to be held, there is a safeguard. The number of country race meetings for the year under consideration must not be less than the number of days on which country race meetings were held in the previous racing season. This is consistent with the current requirements of the Racing Act and, again, I say that this is what happens today and will continue to happen in the future. There are many examples of fantastic country race clubs and races working with the control body for the betterment of country racing.

The Bligh government is committed to retaining racing in country areas. This is why we have maintained the guaranteed percentage of funds that is allocated to country racing. This happens today and, as I said, will happen in the future. The legislative requirement for the thoroughbred control body to pay seven per cent of its net UNiTAB product fee as prize money for country racing or for supporting country racing will be retained. The bill provides for an amendment to reflect that there is no longer a thoroughbred control body and amends the amount that the new control body must pay to 5.32 per cent. That sounds like a drop; however, it is the net UNiTAB product fee to support thoroughbred country racing. 5.32 per cent of the new amalgamated control body's net UNiTAB product is equivalent to seven per cent of the thoroughbred only control body's net fee. In fact, I think there is a point that is pretty well known within the industry. We were very protective of the seven per cent and now the amalgamated 5.32 per cent. I am one of those people who is very protective of those funds for country racing in particular. I have to say, though, that over the years the figure has actually been more. In some instances, my understanding is that it has reached up to 13 per cent. There has been a variance and we have done better than the seven per cent guaranteed. However, that guarantee is there, it will be there for the future and there is no reduction.

I know that there is also a concern in some country race clubs—in fact, I am certain that there is a concern—regarding the need to comply with the control body's minimum workplace health and safety requirements. Those minimum standards are about ensuring that whether the participants in the race meeting are a jockey, a trainer, a strapper or a racegoer, everyone should feel confident that the host club has minimised the risk of harm. This holds true whether you are visiting Eagle Farm, the Sunshine Coast or one of our fantastic race meetings—and where is the member for Gregory—such as the McKinlay Cup. What a day that is!

Mr Langbroek: But they can't afford it this year.

Mrs KIERNAN: I will not even comment. The honourable member should speak to the member for Gregory. He will clue up the opposition spokesman for racing. Last year Queensland Racing Ltd and the Queensland Country Racing Committee conducted a significant industry-wide consultation in the development of minimum workplace health and safety standards. I have worked very closely with my region's committee, my local clubs and councils so that they have every opportunity to race well into the future. The Bligh government has recognised that some of the smaller country clubs—and there are a couple in my electorate—have done all they can, but still find it difficult to fund the remedial work required to meet the minimum standard. Therefore, I am absolutely delighted that \$1 million from the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme will be set aside by the new amalgamated control body to help country clubs meet their workplace health and safety obligations. This bill is about ensuring the popularity of racing from the city to the bush, from the coast to the Outback, and I should say that in the vast seat of Mount Isa we really are the Outback.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (3.07 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that is before the House today. I commend the shadow minister's comments on this bill. He gave a very comprehensive summary of how the LNP sees the situation with racing. Numerous writers have offered strong opinions on this racing bill. In other words, there is third party endorsement for what we are saying. It seems as if the government and Queensland Racing are on one side, and everybody else is on the other side. That seems to be the way it is. I think it is important that we look in some detail at what industry writers and experts are saying.

First of all, from its inception the whole idea of 'hands off the racing industry' by the government and the minister has been wrong. In 1999 Merri Rose was the minister when this first came in, if I recall the year correctly; I could be wrong. I remind members of the controversy that erupted when the whole

concept of racing under Labor came into being. There was a break-in at the Attorney's office and documents were stolen. It had quite an extraordinary impact. The minister needed a heart starter to come into the House in the morning. It was quite an extraordinary time and it changed the structure of racing in this state. Basically, the minister has been neutered and one can imagine what has happened to the industry.

I do not think the government truly understands that racing is the second or third biggest industry in this country and this state, and the minister should be in charge of it, but he is not. The only time the minister is involved is when a racing bill is before the House, such as today, or when he goes to the races. I have heard that he has not even been going to the races lately. I am sure that cannot be true. He has been to my area. I welcomed him out there and I would welcome him out there again.

It is important that we understand the issue from the racing industry's point of view. Country racing has suffered and will suffer for quite a long time to come. The revenue from one-day race meetings is just not enough to pay for the upkeep of the assets that have been developed in those smaller communities. The locals have done a wonderful job in those smaller communities to bring the track, the stands and the facilities up to a certain standard and to keep them there. But often it is just for one race meeting a year. We need to give them at least two meetings where possible. I know that has happened a couple of times, but across the board racing has reduced in a lot of those areas and is being concentrated in the major towns. That raises the issue that in Queensland, which is such a vast state, a lot of the owners and trainers have to drive a long way to get a horse to a race meeting. They are burning out. I do not think it has really been the best for country racing here in this state.

The government talks about the fact that the Bligh government has committed the largest injection of capital from the government in the history of Queensland racing—\$80 million over four years. The government has creamed off over \$1 billion since this was first put into place, so I do not think \$80 million is a big contribution when it has so much money coming in from racing. I can recall when the then minister, Merri Rose, put this in place that it was estimated that within 12 years \$1 billion would come into Queensland Treasury from this, and we are roughly at about that time down the track. So \$80 million is welcome but it is certainly well overdue.

I read a very interesting article by Phillip Bate. He writes 'Down the Straight'. His article states—

... the constitution of the proposed new three-racing-code body, Racing Queensland Ltd, to be made public instead of being hidden from all industry stakeholders.

"Both the office of the Minister for Fair Trading and Tourism, Peter Lawlor MP and Queensland Racing Ltd (QRL) have confirmed, in writing, that a draft constitution of the new control body Racing Queensland Ltd exists, yet they have refused to release a draft of this most important document that will control the destiny of tens of thousands of Queensland jobs ... "QRL has taken the position that as race clubs will not be members of the new company it cannot release the documents. QRL has advised BRC—

the Brisbane Racing Club—

that when the constitution is finalised it will be lodged with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and BRC can then obtain a copy from there.

What are we trying to hide? Are we really trying to get the best for the industry or not? The article continues—

We suspect that this is setting the tone for the way this Government wants things run in the future. Minister Lawlor is obviously confident he and his handpicked few will get everything right, every time. He clearly believes he needs no industry input, and is willing to gamble the industry, the thousands of jobs it supports, and the millions of dollars of tax revenue it generates. For a State Government that says it prides itself on consultation, it is a particular concern that only those chosen few who stand to gain the most are involved. All other racing stakeholders, including those who put up the money and those who make industry work, are being left in the dark ... the Queensland situation was in stark contrast to that in Victoria, where the Victorian Government had mandated that the control body consult with the industry on a monthly basis. "In Queensland it is directed to have none. Minister Lawlor must be held to account for these monumental changes to the commercial and operational elements of every race club in Queensland."

It is essential that members opposite understand that this is not just the opposition with an opinion on racing; it is people in the racing industry who have these opinions. A while ago we heard a previous speaker talk about Bart Sinclair, who made quite a good contribution recently and summed up the situation. I will not go into it because it has already been said, but it is important that we understand that this is a serious situation. More public consultation needs to be undertaken. We need a more open and structured set-up so that racing in Queensland will be advanced rather than kept secret by this government.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to speak to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We have all heard this afternoon the shadow minister's contribution and that we will oppose this legislation. But there are aspects of this legislation that I do want to speak about. The minister says in his second reading speech that the racing industry's capital infrastructure has become run-down. The reason it has become run-down is the lip-service that has been paid to some of our racing instrumentalities around the state by the central body here in Brisbane. Whilst it does not have the power of the central body, the country racing board—which has been an integral part of country racing—has been a voice that has been able to bring to the fore the issues relevant to country racing and to stand up for the important industry that it is.

I hear members in the House today talking about racing in this state. This is a great industry. Somewhere in the vicinity of 22,000 to 24,000 people are directly and indirectly employed by racing in Queensland. That is a power of people from all walks of life doing different things. Whether they be feed merchants, farriers, vets, jockeys, stablehands, owners, trainers or work in administration, they are an integral part of this great operation—this iconic event of racing.

Racing is something of national pride and national importance in this country and it is integral to the social fabric of our communities too. I am not only talking about the high-class operations that we see at Doomben and Eagle Farm, Gold Coast or Corbould Park, or Toowoomba. We have iconic meetings, as the member for Mount Isa said in the House this afternoon, that draw crowds from right across Queensland, right across Australia and even from the international stage—meetings such as Birdsville, McKinlay and Corfield, which is also in the member for Mount Isa's electorate just out of Winton and is another great country race meeting.

On 8 May I had occasion to visit my home town of Quilpie and attend their annual race meeting. They had 74 horses on the card. It was a great effort for a \$45,000 program. Half of the money was raised by the local people to go towards the prize money, which made it a resounding success on the day. I say to Trevor Mead and his committee that it was a great effort. That is precisely what we do in country areas to maintain the social fabric and the integration of communities—we work together. When you see people bringing horses out to Quilpie from Oakey and further afield, it just goes to show the importance and the dynamics of country racing.

Mr Lawlor: So country racing is going well.

Mr JOHNSON: I am pleased to hear the minister say that. It is going well because the people are making it go well. I identify with people like Gary Peoples and his family from Aramac, the Banks family at Blackall, Charlie Prow, Todd Austin and Barry Eggerling at Longreach. The list goes on. These people are integral players. I do not like naming people because there is the risk of leaving a lot of good people out. But these people are those who continually race horses or train horses, are in the bookmaking industry or whatever. They are integral players in this great industry.

I hope that when this Queensland Racing Board is established we will see the likes of Gary Peoples or Paul Banks on that board because they will play an integral role in upholding the traditions of country racing. They know the ins and outs of country racing and the cost of operation. I heard my colleague the member for Warrego say here this afternoon that it costs a lot of money to haul horses those huge distances. To take horses from Longreach to Birdsville is 700 kilometres. It is the same from Mount Isa. When they get there, they might keep their horses in Birdsville for the week because they have a few days of racing—two days at Birdsville and the following week is at Bedourie and the following week at Betoota. Unfortunately, Windorah has lost its meeting now which was on the fourth Saturday in September. Quilpie had that meeting, and it is a great meeting.

For people who do not win events at those early meetings, their horses might come good by the time they get to the third meeting and they may pick up the prize money which pays their way, keeps them interested and keeps their heart in the industry. That is what it is about. People have to continually remember the vision and have an understanding of the complexities of country racing. It is an issue that will not die because we will not let it die.

At the same time, we see in this legislation that \$80 million will be injected into the industry over the next few years. As the member for Mount Isa correctly identified, there is \$1 million there to go into the maintenance and upgrade of country infrastructure. You could spend that amount of money at just one of those bigger courses. It depends where the demarcation is between coastal racing and country racing. Places like Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville, Roma and so on—they have significantly more races than some of the smaller centres—will probably get the lion's share of the money. This is a situation I can understand, but the smaller clubs deserve their share so that they can make the upgrades that are demanded by the racing industry.

We have to ensure that our industry is safe, that we do have the best outcomes for our jockeys and trainers. We have to ensure that the infrastructure is right for the jockeys because their lives are at stake if the job is not done right. That is something that Workplace Health and Safety has identified with over a long period of time.

A lot of people go to the races. I have been to race meetings all over this country. I have been to five or six Melbourne Cups and I have spoken to the minister about it. What a great event that is. Ninety per cent of people who go to the races go for the social outing. They do not go because they are interested in horses or racing; it is a social event. Racing impacts on business, industry and many other people in different ways. I think it is a beautiful thing that we have such a complex thread in the fabric in our communities as racing. The ladies get dressed up. The blokes will get dressed up. They might have a function afterwards. Oftentimes it is the one day of the year—I mention the Quilpie meeting held a couple of weeks ago—when everybody goes out to take their minds off whatever else is going on, have a good day out, have a few drinks, tell a few lies and get on with it. That is what it is all about.

It is very important that, while this rebirth of racing is going on in Queensland, we do not lose sight of the importance of racing not only here in the south-east or along the coastal strip but also across the great divide and in smaller areas.

This is a complex industry. The days are gone when single owners raced horses. Now, there is a syndicate of half a dozen or more ordinary people. This is what is keeping racing going. These people are instrumental in keeping this industry viable, alive and exciting, the way we know it. If we just rely on the big-money people to buy and race the horses then we will have only Doomben, Corbould Park, Eagle Farm, Gold Coast and maybe Bundamba and Toowoomba and will forget the rest. Let us spare a thought for the people who put their hands in their pockets every week to contribute to those syndicates that keep the racing industry going in rural and regional Queensland. They are the ones who make the difference.

Country racing has been disembowelled by this government allowing a dictatorial body to have total control of this unique industry. I know that a lot of criticism has been levelled at Bob Bentley. Bob Bentley comes from Western Queensland. I know that he is a very powerful man in the organisation of racing in this state. I have had different exchanges of dialogue with Mr Bentley over a period of time. I say to Mr Bentley, to the minister and to all administrators of racing in Queensland: please do not forget the uniqueness of country racing and its importance to the social fabric of western rural and regional Queensland. At the same time, do not underestimate the importance of racing to some small communities. It is one of the few things we have left in many of our regions. I use Charleville as an example. The Melbourne Cup day at Charleville is a magnificent meeting. I have seen 2,000 people at the races there on Melbourne Cup day.

Mr Lawlor: I was there.

Mr JOHNSON: You were, too. There is also the Newmarket meeting at Charleville on May Day, the Hall of Fame Cup in Longreach, the Birdsville Cup and the Tree of Knowledge Cup at Barcaldine. There were 3,000 people at the races in Barcaldine on Labour Day. That just goes to show just how committed people are to going there for an outing. A lot of those people would be tourists visiting for the Labour Day weekend and the events that are held then. These are things that are happening in rural and regional Queensland. They are part of the tourism calendar.

I salute former minister for racing the Hon. Bob Gibbs, who was one of the instigators of the Matilda Highway concept in early days of western racing when he created that western circuit. At that time we saw an injection of funds into some of those major events along the Matilda Highway. It created enthusiasm and it kept the operation going. That concept has dropped off somewhat.

I come back to Emerald and the Central Highlands. The Emerald 100 in October is a magnificent event—on a turf track at Emerald in country Queensland. Again, it draws people from a wide catchment.

I appeal to the minister to make sure, in his capacity as the minister responsible, that we do get our fair share, that those small clubs will survive and get an injection of extra funding through the TAB or from whatever coffers are available. At the moment it is difficult to find dollars out there. The flow-on of the benefits of racing are immense. I do not think the ordinary person in the street comprehends the importance of this great industry.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (3.27 pm): The Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will greatly affect the race clubs in my electorate and throughout Queensland. It needs to be acknowledged from the outset that this bill presented to the House has not withstood the rigours of robust consultation at the grassroots level. The industry consultation undertaken has at best been cursory in nature, which is of great concern given the widespread unrest evident in the industry. The credited industry consultation amounts only to that of liaison with the chairs and chief executive officers of the control bodies: Queensland Racing Ltd, Queensland Harness Racing Ltd and Greyhounds Queensland Ltd. With a broad industry such as racing, how can this legislation be advanced on the premise of not having any hint of industry support?

The reality is that turf clubs have in general been doing their level best to comply within the current flawed model. What this government also does not seem to appreciate is that the Queensland racing industry has a much wider impact than that of the various race clubs in isolation. These regional race clubs also support and are reliant on the network of trainers, jockeys, transporters, veterinarians, race callers, stockfeed outlets and a host of other retail outlets, to say nothing of the fashion industry. This is the unmentioned economic network that is feeling the flow-on pain. That is not to mention the social fabric that the sport of kings supports in the regional race areas.

This legislation is putting the last nail in the coffin for many of those unique race clubs that hold the once-a-year meets. The likes of Mount Garnet and Maxwelton are realistically saying that 2010 may be their last year. The Queensland Racing Ltd chairman, Bob Bentley, was stated in the *Townsville Bulletin* on 11 May as saying that turf clubs needed to embrace change and the reform process the industry is currently undertaking.

This statement is profound as in his position he has been the orchestrator and overseer of many of the changes of which he speaks. In order for the culture of change to be embraced there needs to be evidence of open and mutual consultation to plan for the future. There also needs to be an equitable return for both parties and an empathy and understanding that each club's situation is different.

The current model has not worked for the benefit of all clubs in Queensland. That fact needs to be acknowledged. The control body is effectively the puppet master that can and does control the effectiveness and capacity of race clubs. They dictate the racing calendar that has a bearing on crowd attendance.

Townsville Turf Club, within the Burdekin electorate, has been subject to an inordinate amount of scrutiny from Queensland Racing. I would like to quote from a recent media release from the Townsville Turf Club. The spokesman has said—

I am appalled at the latest Press Release to come out of Queensland Racing from its Chairman, Mr. Bentley, and the reference to the appointment of 'Forensic Accountants' to audit Turf Clubs and with the reference to the Melbourne Storm fiasco.

What is Mr. Bentley trying to infer—that Club Committees are rotting the system or running two sets of books. Turf Club committees comprise of hardworking people that give their time and expertise, freely and generously, for the betterment of racing in their respective areas and for Mr. Bentley to make these inferences is a hit below the belt particularly when Mr. Bentley is in a paid position as Chairman of Queensland Racing, Chairman of Australian Racing Board and member of the Unitab Board.

The media release then goes on to say—

The Bligh Government and its Ministers need to wake from their slumber and ask a few questions about what is really happening in the Racing Industry in Queensland. If they continue to back the strategic direction set by Queensland Racing and Mr. Bentley, they will not win the Racing Vote in any electorate in Queensland. In racing terms, they will have a big handicap.

These are comments coming from the industry. In the electorate of Burdekin there were five race clubs operating and there are now three—the Townsville Turf Club, the Burdekin Race Club and the Bowen Turf Club. Collinsville and Bowen River bit the dust some years ago. I certainly do not want to see any more go.

It is important that each member of parliament who has a turf club within their electorate appreciates the flow-on benefits that it brings on an employment, economic and social basis. There are much broader issues and questions to be asked than to simply look at their race club in isolation. I question whether the legislative framework put before us with the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 is anywhere near the panacea that the government or Queensland Racing would have us believe.

I was recently given a copy of a tenuous email statement circulated by the Queensland Country Racing Committee to country turf clubs in an attempt to quell the discontent of country race clubs. By admission, the statements made in that email smack of the hypocrisy that has occurred over recent years. The closure of country race club after country race club is a testament to the lack of care and attention dished out from Queensland Racing. To now come out and say that a monolithic control body will cater to every remaining country race club is a platitude that is seen as just that.

Queensland Racing has had the opportunity to harness the enthusiasm of all country and regional race clubs. All that has been achieved to date is alienation of the majority. Queensland Racing has proven that if you are not with them you are against them.

This has been the case at many venues with the haves and the have-nots. Some race clubs are the first to admit that they could operate better but there is no cohesive state-wide collaboration between the existing control body and that of the majority of clubs. A two-way working relationship is the only way to progress. This is certainly not evident in the current Queensland racing industry.

The culture will only manifest deeper as one control body of the three codes of racing—thoroughbred, harness and greyhound—has been charged with significantly reducing control body administrative overheads and driving efficiencies. This efficiency drive will no doubt see the demise of more of the smaller clubs and allow the control body to do as it sees fit with the remaining assets of the respective clubs. Because of the time constraints that have been put on us, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*. I would add that the Speaker has seen these notes.

Leave granted.

This leads on to one of the most contentious aspects of this Bill which is the insertion regarding control of club assets.

The comment made by a spokesman from a race club within my electorate was: "How can a body that does not own an asset, control the asset to such an extent that it can demand an unquantified proportion of the proceeds of disposal? The spokesman went on to say "We are afraid the legislation set out is open to abuse. They are saying they will form a constitution and they will look after us, but we don't get to see it until it's passed".

The explanatory notes relating to asset control states:

"A race club will be required to obtain the approval of its control body to deal with its assets. This amendment puts it beyond doubt that a control body has the power to make policies and give directions in relation to how a club is to deal with its assets, including its real property and intellectual property rights".

For a sustainable racing industry to be maintained and to flourish there has to be a healthy state-wide industry at all levels. To run counter to that threatens what has made Queensland a reputable racing state.

There needs to be the bush and smaller country race meets for town and country to cross pollinate and then also likewise up to and including the provincials to the Brisbane metropolitan meetings. After all this is how the likes of trainers such as Brian Mayfield-Smith and John O'Shea moved from North Queensland to work their way reaching national prominence.

If the Government or Queensland Racing were awaiting broader industry support then this has not been forthcoming. Instead there has been widespread condemnation at the heavy handed approach to date of Queensland Racing.

On April 27th 2010 in the Courier Mail Greg Hallam, Chief executive of the Local Government Association of Queensland spoke out strongly against the legislation—

"Where we do have a concern is if Queensland Racing took over all the assets. Councils spend millions of dollars on their racecourses and showgrounds. We want to know what their intentions are. We certainly won't be having other bodies dictate to councils about what we do in our land".

On April 29th 2010 in the North Queensland Register Racing Roundup in the Silks and Saddles section it is noted "And perhaps we now know why the \$11million block of land 'sold' by the Townsville Turf Club was blocked by QRL. What now? Is it still for sale now that the Queensland Government or QRL can share the spoils? What do you think?"

On May 13th in the Queensland Country Life, Down the Straight Section it is attributed, "However the Government and its Queensland Racing control body are getting a free go at enjoying the revenue without paying their share.

Queensland Racing alone has banked \$50 million in the last five years and spent another \$30 Million on its own pet projects." "Those getting the benefits—namely the Government and Queensland Racing Limited—are holding on to the cash, while trainers, owners and clubs are being asked to foot the bill.

One of many examples that encapsulate the plight within the racing industry, looking forward, is an article in the Townsville Bulletin relating to the bush races conducted this last weekend at Kooroorinya Races, south of Prairie. The race caller for the day was Josh Fleming. He got one of his first breaks calling the races at Kooroorinya in 1999 at the aged only 14. Mr Fleming has been based in Sydney for the past seven years. Now working for skyracing he is one of the up and coming race callers in Australia, I have been well informed he is purported to be one of the top ten in Australia.

"I owe so much to the tracks out here that gave me a go at such a young age", he said. He keeps coming back to Kooroorinya to repay the favour to the club for showing faith in him. He would love to be here next year to call the races again. "I think after 90 odd years for the hammer just to fall down overnight would be disappointing", he said.

The frustration and anger of rural Queenslanders is exemplified in the article on the front page of today's North Qld Register—titled Bush Breakaway. That country people are seriously considering their only alternative is to race their own station horses themselves shows just how far removed from the needs of country racing Qld Racing has gone.

This government has become more removed from the feeling and values of the mainstream populous. The Bill we have before us is yet another example of a Government that has not sought considered industry input. It is yet another example where a Minister is putting their trust in a small advisory pool. No doubt they have ticked the right boxes for the Minister however the Bill before us has wide ramifications.

To say that concerns are unfounded will be looked at with great scrutiny. The Queensland racing industry is being looked at in isolation by this Government. There is much more at stake here. Race clubs are not commodities in isolation they are part of the broad racing community. This fact appears lost on this insular Government.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.34 pm): I rise to make a very short contribution to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The amendments contained in this bill and the associated commitment of over \$80 million in funding over the next four years represent a once in a generation opportunity for the Queensland racing industry. With this in mind, the racing industry capital development scheme will be funded by the redirection of wagering tax back to the industry from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2014. As such, it is estimated that this will deliver over \$80 million in funding to the racing industry. It is no secret that the Queensland racing industry's capital stock has become rundown. This will continue to hold the industry back.

People are not going to attend race meetings in decaying grandstands. Queensland will struggle to attract quality horses and increase turnover on tracks that are substandard. We all know that the racing and gambling industries are very competitive and technology and consumer choices will ensure they remain so. For example, Sky Channel has only recently launched a third racing channel that will make race meetings around the world accessible to punters in their own homes each and every day. As such, it is an indisputable fact that for the racing industry in Queensland to be viable into the future it must present a product that someone would want to attend and have a bet on.

With this in mind, the amalgamation of the control bodies of the three codes—that is, thoroughbred, harness and greyhound—will ensure government funding is used in an efficient and effective way. I believe that industry cannot afford to waste this opportunity through petty squabbles over private fiefdoms between race clubs and codes. With that in mind, the new amalgamated control body, Racing Queensland Ltd, will be able to view the industry as a whole to better plan for the future rather than being captured by history. This will allow for the prioritisation of funding to achieve the very best possible results for the industry in the long term.

The Bligh government is committed to ensuring the most effective and efficient use of taxpayer funds to provide long-term sustainable benefit to the racing industry. As such, I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (3.36 pm): In rising to speak on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 I just want to own up to the fact that I am not a follower of racing, other than enjoying the harness racing at the Ekka, and my attendance at race meetings is limited to one race meeting in Happy Valley in Hong Kong on an official visit with a number of my colleagues while on a

trade delegation led by the Hon. Tony McGrady. However, I do admire those wonderful horses and brave jockeys. I particularly acknowledge the importance of this industry as a sport and recreation as well as the huge numbers employed in the many facets of the sport.

My interest has now been spiked because the greyhounds are coming to me. The site chosen for the new state-of-the-art greyhound track is within my seat of Woodridge—a very suitable site just a stone's throw from the M1. Many in my electorate, including the deputy mayor of Logan, will welcome the greyhounds and their devotees. Logan City is in the heart of South-East Queensland equidistant from Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Ipswich. This site will serve the needs of the greyhound community admirably.

But more than that, this facility will deliver jobs to people in my electorate, hopefully in the construction phase. Certainly when completed and functioning I would hope to see jobs and training opportunities, particularly for our young people, in such areas as hospitality and any other suitable areas. The facility itself will add much to our community infrastructure and offer another first-class venue for functions. Logan City is a very welcoming community and we will welcome this new sector to our business and sporting community.

The amalgamation of these three codes—the thoroughbred, harness and greyhounds—will strengthen and streamline the industry, cut out duplication in many areas of administration and ensure the future of the industry is not only viable but also strengthened into the future. The state government is making an initial grant in excess of \$80 million over four years from July 2010 which will be raised from a 50 per cent levy on the net wagering tax collected by the government.

I am advised that this may enable the greyhound track in Logan City to be established and completed by 2012 rather than being completed in stages as funds become available. This will be subject to decisions by the new control body, Racing Queensland Ltd, depending on other capital projects. I understand that the estimated cost of this new facility will be \$25 million. The details of amalgamation and governance I will leave to those far more versed in these matters, but I am happy to say, on behalf of Logan City, welcome to the greyhounds. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—Ind) (3.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. At the outset, the Beaudesert Race Club, as a country racing association, has a very proud history and I am very honoured to be the member representing its concerns in the parliament today. The history of the Beaudesert racecourse began with the first race meeting held on 16 April 1879 as the Logan and Albert Jockey Club. The present grandstand was built in 1912 and provided a grand viewing platform for racegoers of the day. At present, the grandstand has managed to retain its excellent vantage point for all guests of the race club. In 1927 the Duke and Duchess of York viewed the Bushmans Carnival at the course, with one of the biggest crowds ever seen in the district attending. In 1939 the Beaudesert District Amateur Race Club was formed and is still in operation as the Beaudesert Race Club, a non-profit organisation. During World War II in 1940 many of the troopers in the Light Horse Brigade found themselves camped at Beaudesert attending the race meetings as a welcome form of rest and relaxation.

In 2001 the track received a major upgrade with the inclusion of an all-weather track. It proved to be a good investment and is currently still being maintained to the highest of standards. The tradition lives on with the Beaudesert Race Club being utilised as a daily training facility and presently the club conducts over seven race meetings per year, with featured race days being Anzac Day, Melbourne Cup day and Beaudesert Cup day, just to name a few. This gives an appreciation of country racing associations and the importance they have in those communities outside of the CBD. I have heard some of the grievances from government members, and they made many valid points. There are probably some very valid reasons the government has introduced this bill and there may be issues of malpractice or moneys unaccounted for, and we would all agree that that is not good enough.

However, I cannot see the point in centralising the power to one control body. I have further concerns about the 10-year tenures with no democratic process of appointment. What is very important for any organisation is that it should be driven from the grassroots up. It should be like a pyramid—branch members on the way up to the very peak of that body. If it is done the other way around, then it sets itself up for a collapse. It is absolutely critical that we empower those local communities that spend an enormous amount of time in voluntary hours to ensure that races are successful in terms of the economic benefit they bring and also as entertainment for those local communities.

I refer to the member for Woodridge's statement that Logan is to be home to the new greyhound track. I could not think of a worse place to put it than in the heart of the Logan City Council area. That will have many social implications yet to come, and I have been against that proposal for many years now after being on the council. It is extremely irresponsible for that greyhound track to be in an area which has some of the highest unemployment levels which are no doubt a direct correlation to some of the problems we have seen there. Relationships Australia has said that gambling, including greyhound gambling, has huge impacts on the residents of Logan. I want to commend the mayor and the councillors for the tremendous job they do in ensuring that Logan is a city of liveability and a great place for families to live. I would hate to see that reputation tarnished, especially given the fact that the return

from gambling there, particularly from pokies, is higher than any other region of the state. I want to put on record my concern for the establishment of yet another gambling pavilion of sorts in an area such as Logan City.

I refer also to Kevin Dixon, the Chairman of the Brisbane Racing Club, and his two-page letter to most MPs. Certainly, the concerns that he raised are very valid. I think it certainly has been a very sloppy process in terms of the consultation—or the lack thereof—that should have taken place. What we are seeing here is the Bunnings model approach, which may very well work for hardware and making items cheaper but not when it comes to a decentralisation method. In recent months we have heard the Premier talk about decentralisation in terms of growth to ensure that our communities are viable. I certainly do not see any point in centralising all of that control to one body, particularly when those tenures are unlimited tenures without a democratic process of appointment. I note—a good man—that Bill Ludwig's name is mentioned, and no doubt he has contributed a lot to the racing industry. However, I am somewhat concerned that these appointments are made quite hastily.

Ms Grace: He's a good man.

Mr McLINDON: I take the member for Brisbane Central's interjection. I do not doubt that he is.

It is amusing to see that this is yet another bill that has been guillotined. Over the past couple of days I have been thinking about the guillotine approach. In particular with this bill, it is a wise time for the government, particularly the Leader of the House, to ensure that rather than guillotining every second or third bill before the House there be structural reform. I would suggest 10 minutes maximum for MPs to speak. Time limits for questions during debate on the clauses should be about two minutes and we should probably call it a day at 6.30 pm so we are fresh for the next day, and of course we would not have to then listen to the waffle. Changes such as these would indeed eradicate the need for guillotining debate and I am sure that we would all stay awake. We would make a valuable contribution and we would not have to go around in circles listening to each other's hot air. That is something I will raise every time debate on a bill is guillotined. We need to look at the core of the problem so that we can get on with it. I will be voting against the bill. It is disappointing that the consultation process has been fairly rushed and rather insignificant. I would hope that the implications are not going to be too onerous on the Beaudesert Race Club.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (3.46 pm): Clayfield is truly the electorate that represents racing. We have not only Eagle Farm and Doomben but Albion Park as well. Queensland's premier racing club, the Brisbane Racing Club, is headquartered just 100 metres away from my office in Racecourse Road. Very few people who live or visit my electorate are unaware of the importance of racing in Clayfield. The Eagle Farm racecourse is home to many classics including the Brisbane Cup, the Queensland Derby, the Sir Byrne Hart Stakes and the Stradbroke Cup. The Doomben racecourse is home to many races including the Doomben Cup, the Lord Mayor's Cup, the Premier's Cup and the Doomben 10000. In fact, this Saturday Doomben will play host to the Kirks Doomben 10000 and the Lord Mayor's Cup. Punters will miss the appearance of their best friend and hero of the last couple of years, Apache Cat, but many will be looking to the Kiwi runner Time Keeper to bring home the bacon on Saturday. But there are two horses who will not be running at Doomben on Saturday, and I can guarantee it! And those two old horses of the racing industry have been around the track a few times. The Fine Cottons—the ring-ins—of the racing industry are the current minister and the Queensland Racing Chairman, Mr Bob Bentley.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Please return to the bill.

Mr NICHOLLS: When I talk to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and I talk about Doomben and I talk about horses and I talk about the racing minister and also the chairman of Queensland Racing, I do not know how much more relevant to the bill I can be! But I certainly know that when we are out at the track on Saturday having a look around and, as I say, missing Apache Cat who brought home the bacon in the last couple of years, there are two people who will not be welcome there—and that is the minister and Mr Bob Bentley.

Many residents in and around Clayfield work in the racing industry. This includes the trainers, the jockeys, the strappers, the blacksmiths, the farriers, the vets, the feedstock suppliers and the owners and punters. They love their horses, and they love their racing. It is still the case that horses walk the streets in the suburb where I live in Hendra every afternoon at three o'clock. But like many businesses and industries in Queensland, the racing industry is under attack from the cold, dead hand of the socialist centralisers and haters of enterprise and achievement in the Labor Party. We have a minister who follows in the tradition of previous Labor ministers and who, like Pontius Pilate, attempts to destroy the industry by washing his hands of all responsibility. He hands over responsibility to an arrogant and uncontrolled board led by a chairman who rules supreme with no accountability to either the industry or, seemingly, the government.

He is truly a dictator in the mould of the old union bosses, who are still so much beloved by the Labor Party. Whenever anyone in the racing industry wants to get something done and goes to the minister—who is not actually a racing minister but who has some sort of control at the direction of the Treasury Department—and says, 'Can we have this sorted out, please?' He says, 'Not my responsibility. I can't fix this. This is not for me to intervene. It is not for me to protect an industry that is worth hundreds

of millions of dollars a year—the fifth largest industry in Queensland.’ He says, ‘I am sorry, I can’t do this. I don’t want to do this.’ So he hands over power, in the way of the union bosses, to someone else—someone in a smokey back room, unelected, someone who has not put his name up for re-election by the participants in the industry. He appoints a board full of mates and then goes to court to fight over it. We forgot the court battle over the appointment process, where the Supreme Court found that it was wrong—

An opposition member: Rorted!

Mr NICHOLLS: Rorted at the direction of the boss. That is the style of the Labor Party and the Labor Party bosses. The Labor Party has no love for metropolitan racing. No-one should be under that illusion. The Labor Party hates metropolitan racing in Queensland. The first attempt was in the good old days of ‘Bollinger’ Bob Gibbs. Didn’t he hate the Queensland Turf Club. Didn’t he hate metropolitan racing.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: He could not wait to get in there.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O’Neill): Order! Could the member please return to the bill and could we have fewer interjections.

Mr NICHOLLS: So we had ‘Bollinger’ Bob, who hated the Queensland Turf Club. Then when Queensland Racing was set up, there was a continual attempt to take control of metropolitan race clubs and their assets and to diminish the club’s capacities and responsibilities. Then only a little over six years ago Queensland Racing wanted to sell off Doomben in some meglomaniacal desire to establish a super track in Queensland. That proposal forced the then Premier of the day to come in here in 2004 and say, ‘There isn’t \$150 million’—because that is what it was going to cost—to rebuild a super track at Wacol.’ Then again in 2006 the same idea was floated and there was an attempt to sell off the Doomben Racecourse. There was a mass meeting at the Hamilton Town Hall to oppose the sale. Those who love the industry and who love racing stood up to the faceless, nameless men who were sent out by the Labor government to wreak havoc on the racing industry in the name of efficiency and economy but, in fact, in the grip of envy, fear and loathing.

Mr Shine: Who wrote that?

Mr NICHOLLS: You wish. They sent out their faceless men. We saw them in the audience, little secret squirrels at the side of the hall jotting down their little notes of who was saying what in the best traditions of the Gestapo and the KGB. They were taking down notes and names and making sure they knew who was opposing it.

Who was the architect of these grossly irresponsible policies aided and abetted by a board of directors, including the ALP boss of bosses Bill Ludwig? It was none other than the current chairman, Bob Bentley. The boss of bosses, Bill Ludwig. God forbid anyone who should run up against ‘Big’ Bill! We have Bob Bentley, who sees himself, Stalin like, rounding up all the little satellites into one big union of Soviet socialist racing clubs. He wants to bring them all together and anyone who dares to disagree gets sent off to Siberia for a period of re-education. Licences are suspended, the chairman conducts his own investigations, race meetings are cancelled, prize money is cut and controls are imposed. They are all the hallmarks of the dictatorship of racing that has emerged under Labor in recent times that have all been supported, aided and abetted by the Labor Party in Queensland.

The ALP is no friend of the racing industry, it is no friend of the punter and it is no friend of the thousands of people who are employed in the fifth largest industry in Queensland. What do we now see? We see the classic symptoms of the entrenching of a dictatorship. In this legislation we see an intent to guarantee jobs for life for both the control body, to be called Racing Queensland, and for the board members themselves. What will we have? We will have chairman for life ‘Papa Doc’, father of racing glorious leader ‘Baby Doc’, Bob Bentley in charge of the show for another 10 years after 10 years of dictatorship—the Hugo Chavez, the socialist dictator of Venezuela, moving to Queensland, aided and abetted by the Labor Party. What pathetic lame excuse for this entrenchment of dictatorial power do we have? None. All we have is a desire to entrench privilege and power among the existing board.

This is not the first time this move has been tried. This was tried two years ago and the Labor Party thought it might just slide under the radar screen, it might just slip in through the boards and there would be a vote and the change to the constitution of Queensland Racing would be passed without any problems and ‘Papa Doc’ chairman, ‘Baby Doc’ Bob would get re-elected for another five years without having to face the people who constitute the industry that he purports to represent and control. It was tried on then and it was an unjustified abuse of power two years ago. It is still an unjustified abuse of the legislative power of this chamber today.

What will we have? We will have a chairman who, under this legislation, may well be in place for 20 years and who will not face any reappointment process—limited as that process is under this legislation—ever. The only justification is for continuity of policies and experience. What a farce! If that were the case, why have elections for directors of companies? Why have elections for directors of

associations and incorporated associations? Why have elections for governments? Why have elections at all? What if the policies are bad, wrong or corrupt? What if the members of the industry want a change? Under this legislation, the answer is, 'Tough luck,' which is often the answer racing clubs in my electorate and throughout Queensland get from the current chairman.

The explanatory notes that we have here with this legislation are among the most feeble that have ever been presented in this House and, from this government, that is saying something. There is no clear explanation of what these changes mean for the industry in Queensland. The explanation given in the explanatory notes for new clause 430 is laughable. That new clause retrospectively changes the constitution of the three control bodies and effectively strips away the rights of shareholders. It removes from them the ability to say who should be a director and what those directors should do. It gives the directors power to dispose of the assets of each of those bodies without going to the members. It is a rip-off and a breach of democratic and corporate principles. The justification is to provide the directors with protection for doing something that they would otherwise have had to get their shareholders' authority to be able to do. There is no justification in terms of protecting the rights of the majority—the shareholders—but it is protection for the directors of the three control bodies that will now form the single control body. It gives the directors power to dispose of the assets of each body without going to the members.

When we look at the consultation, is it any wonder that the directors agreed to it? The legislation gives them a free ride to a secure job for the foreseeable future with no questions asked. They cannot be challenged for their decision, the participants cannot take up the fight, no-one can ask, 'Is this the right thing to do for our industry?' and the people who make that decision will have a job on the new racing control board for the foreseeable future. This is an undemocratic and appalling misuse of the retrospective powers of this place in order to cement in place a dictator for the racing industry for another 10 years. It is a disgrace. We have heard some of the comments from respected racing journalist, Bart Sinclair. Some of those were read into the record by the member for Gladstone.

Mr Lawlor: The voice of the QTC.

Mr NICHOLLS: I heard the minister say a supporter of the QTC. If ever there was a sign that the minister hates the QTC or the Brisbane Racing Club it was that comment he just made. That was a clear sign that he does not like the Brisbane Racing Club, Queensland's premier racing club, the club that organises and holds some of the premier race meetings in this state with other clubs. The minister says Mr Sinclair is a supporter of the QTC so he cannot be believed. It is the BRC these days, in case the minister was wondering.

Mr Lawlor: Same thing.

Mr NICHOLLS: QTC is the same thing as the BRC now?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Will members please desist from interjecting.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Gladstone read some comments from Bart Sinclair into the record today and was actually more generous to the minister than I am going to be. The member for Gladstone picked up the sense of what was going on, but there are some more comments that were made in terms of what is going on. Here is a comment from the website, *Let's Go Horseracing*—

It's 'Groundhog Day' for Queensland racing—just when the horses and the people who race, train and ride them should be the focus of attention during the Winter Carnival it is the politics that has stolen the spotlight.

Once again Queensland racing is the butt of many interstate jokes but sadly from a domestic perspective many have given up on the industry in the north. They've had a gutful of a Labor Government, a non-event Premier and an 'I see nothing' Racing Minister who are not prepared to rein in an out-of-control administration and its chairman.

For the fifth time in a fortnight a major newspaper columnist or editorialist has criticized the Government and Queensland Racing for allowing legislation and a new constitution to be introduced without consultation or without even revealing some of the 'devil in the detail' which it is feared will totally remove the rights of clubs and industry stakeholders.

Then Mr Sinclair, in an article in Saturday's *Courier-Mail*, comments—

The Government and Queensland Racing Limited continues to treat industry participants like dills.

In a week of many low points in the debate over centralising control of three codes under one private company, Racing Minister Peter 'Sergeant Schultz' Lawlor declared race clubs had nothing to fear in the legislation close to being introduced into Parliament.

He asked, very reasonably, the question—

If clubs should not fear QRL selling their assets and taking the money, why have the provision in the Act?

There are many questions that are raised by this legislation. Mr Sinclair is spot on in raising many of those issues. In terms of the power given to the new racing control identity, in effect what we are having is an expropriation of the club members' assets. I heard some of the earlier speakers, such as the member for Townsville, say that land was granted to those clubs in the first place.

Mr Lawlor: Which it was.

Mr NICHOLLS: I hear the minister say that, but he forgets that Doomben was never granted by the government; Doomben was always private property. Gold Coast was private property and the Eagle Farm racecourse, which has been in existence since Queensland was a state, has had its developments funded by its members and by the racing revenue that it has earned over 150 years of operation. If that logic was to apply then there would be ample justification for the stealing of private property throughout Queensland by a government that wanted to do what it wants, whenever it wants. That is no justification; that is simply sophistry of the worst possible kind.

What will also happen is that the clubs will actually lose the ability, through their elected boards of directors, to be able to make decisions about their own future. In my electorate of Clayfield that is vitally important. We are looking at the redevelopment of the racing precinct in order to open it up to the public—as the minister well knows because he was there at the launch—and to reinvest capital to improve the facilities and grandstands without a cent being sought from the government. When they tried to start down this process they needed to sell some excess houses that were built onto the back of the track that used to be used for groundspeople and are now no longer required. There were six houses in Mein Street and they were not allowed to sell them because Bob Bentley did not like the idea. A decision of the duly elected board was overturned because Bob Bentley did not like the idea.

This is a disgraceful piece of legislation. It is a disgraceful indictment on this government that it chooses to wash its hands of the racing industry. It is a disgraceful indictment of the abandonment of the democratic principles that this government supposedly stands for. It is an entrenchment of power. It is an appalling abuse of an industry that is the fifth largest in Queensland. I will be making sure that every person involved in the racing industry who does not already know about it will know more about it. Every one of them comes up to me and says, 'You have to do something about this government. You have to do something to get rid of Bob Bentley. You have to make racing what it once was: the pride and joy of so many thousands of people who live, work and invest in the Queensland racing industry.'

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (4.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I wish to restrict my remarks specifically to country racing. I note that our shadow minister has given an outstanding overview of the full content of the bill and whilst there are many, many concerns that we have heard from speakers in regard to this flawed piece of legislation and the disgraceful way in which the explanatory notes have been provided, my issue is in relation to country racing.

The Gympie Turf Club has been operating in Gympie for over 100 years. It is a small turf club but one which is an integral part of our community. From a social perspective, it brings great events to our community. Race days are not just an opportunity for gambling; they are an opportunity for the community to get together, for local charities to have fundraisers and for organisations like P&Cs to have a day out. It is a great opportunity for the community to connect, for people to take time away from their work, their activities, and to catch up with friends and family in the region. That is the great strength of country race days.

Under this Labor government we have seen a reduction in the number of those race days. Each time we lose a race day, we lose that opportunity for the community to get together, it is a tragic loss. The sense of community is what is attacked by this. A great example we have in the Gympie region is the Little Haven Palliative Care organisation, a fantastic organisation that does great work. My family personally benefited from it with the passing of my father-in-law a couple of years ago through cancer. It is an organisation that has worked with the Gympie Turf Club. Because of the loss of race days it has actually started a charity event where there is no racing of horses, and that is the camel race day meeting that happens on Melbourne Cup day in the Gympie area. That race event, in conjunction with the Gympie Turf Club, has become an outstanding event and a great fundraiser. Again, it is not about the gambling—of course those who are there on the day will have a flutter on the Melbourne Cup—but it is more about the community getting together and the community being able to raise funds for a very important cause.

Gympie and other country race clubs benefit from those regular race days where hundreds of people gather to be able to enjoy the event. It is attended by a broad range of people in the community. It is one of those few events that we get in our community that draws children through to young adults right through to the more senior members of our community—all of them having a great day out and working together in many ways. Volunteers are an essential part of country racing. They do it because of their love for racing, their love for their community and their desire to ensure that we continue to have country racing.

It is my fear that this piece of legislation, with the removal of protection of country racing and without due consideration for rural areas, could potentially have long-lasting and detrimental effects on scheduled race days and charity events. When we lose one race day, we do not just lose money through the lack of betting; there is loss to the community, which does not come together and work together.

Much has been said about the abolishment of the three control bodies and their implementation into one. All I would add is that bigger is not necessarily better. We have seen that in so many other areas. In fact, we are now seeing a trend where the private sector is coming back to smaller

arrangements. Banks are reopening small branches as they realise that they can service their areas better by taking a smaller approach rather than having one large centre. Branches are opening up in smaller centres, allowing the community to have that opportunity.

We have heard much concern expressed about the safeguards for country racing and what is being removed if this bill passes. That is of great concern. In our discussions with those interested in racing in my area, the major concern that is expressed is: what is the risk that comes should this bill pass? We have heard much about the players in this industry and, to be frank, we do not have confidence in them. The name 'Bob Bentley' does not inspire confidence. It does not give us the confidence that this industry is going to prosper and do well in country racing. For that reason I will be opposing the bill.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (4.11 pm): Before I contribute to the debate this afternoon, I would like to comment on the extraordinary diatribe from the would-be-if-he-could-be Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield. I believe his attacks on Bob Bentley are absolutely disgraceful.

Today I want to talk about the reckless misinformation spread about the powers the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 confer on the new amalgamated control body, Racing Queensland Ltd. This is particularly so with regard to the amendment of section 34, which clarifies that a control body may impose conditions on any funding that it allocates for venue development and other infrastructure relevant to the code. Section 113 clarifies that a control body has the power to impose conditions on any approval it grants to a race club to dispose of an interest in real property. These amendments do not change what actually happens now. What they do is clarify the powers of the control body and reflect how the industry currently operates. It is only fair and just that the industry and the government seek to protect their investment in these tracks and race clubs by ensuring that they are not sold off by a few people without some benefit returning to the wider industry.

It should also be recognised that less than one dozen of the approximately 130 racecourses in the state are held freehold and most of those have received recent freehold title as a result of a transfer from government ownership. The government is not and will not be entitled to the proceeds of any disposal of land that is currently held as freehold. The process that currently exists for the disposal of racing land involves a three-step process. Firstly, the club and its members need to agree; secondly, the control body needs to approve the sale; and thirdly, the minister needs to sign off. This three-step process has existed for many years and will continue into the future.

Race clubs do not exist in a vacuum, but are part of a wider racing industry system. Race clubs, other than the handful of very small picnic race clubs, do not provide the bulk of the prize money for their race meetings. The industry, through the control body, provides the major portion of the prize money that keeps participants viable. All of the major clubs across all three codes also receive substantial operating funding from the control bodies. The vast majority of race clubs would not be in the financial position they are today without financial assistance from the industry. For example, the Sunshine Coast has been the recipient of approximately \$30 million in investment from the industry and has subsequently entered into a partnership with the thoroughbred control body. This model is working well and has provided benefits for both partners, and it protects the investment that the club and the industry have made in Corbould Park Racecourse. In letters to members, the Sunshine Coast Turf Club Chairman Don Jackson has declared the partnership to be 'a great outcome for our club'.

I believe that the Ipswich Turf Club is indeed the premier racing club of Queensland, not, as the member for Clayfield says, the Brisbane Racing Club. The Ipswich Turf Club has been racing for over 150 years. It started off in 1861 carrying more prize money than the first Melbourne Cup, which also ran that year. The Ipswich Turf Club has been in revival over the past few years. Last year the Ipswich Cup had over 22,000 revellers on track. In fact, it had the largest number of people in attendance of any race meeting held in Queensland last year. Our Labour Day race day was put together by myself, Andrew Vickers of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division, and all of the trade unions that are really active in Ipswich. Some four years ago we took the Labour Day race day off the Brisbane club. This year, our major race had prize money of \$150,000. It is the second biggest race day in Ipswich. This year it attracted over 4,000 revellers and it has only been going just over four years.

The Ipswich Turf Club has reported a profit for each of the past five years only because it has been willing to adapt to change. Ipswich has tripled the number of non-racing functions. For example, as the good working-class club that it is, it has held many Your Rights at Work rallies. Also it is the venue for wedding ceremonies and receptions. Last year at the Ipswich Labour Day race day, a wedding was held on track in between the races. It was a great honour for our trade unionists to be there to witness that wonderful wedding on track. It also hosts birthday and engagement parties, school reunions and Christmas functions. In fact, every year the Ipswich CIB Christmas party is looked forward to by many people in Ipswich. The club also hosts classic car club shows.

Ms Stone interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, member for Springwood, sometimes the club also hosts hen's parties. Brett Kitching, Wayne Patch and Wayne Wilson, our wonderful race caller, and the community all work together to make sure that, in my view, the Ipswich Turf Club is the premier race club in Queensland. The industry has to move with the times and in Ipswich we have.

I turn to greyhound racing. My good friend Kieron Butler is a stalwart of the Goodna community and has been involved in Ipswich greyhound racing for many decades. Many people in Ipswich are involved in greyhound racing. However, there is much controversy in relation to the finish on lure. I believe that the finish on lure should be thoroughly reviewed by the new body and that a poll or a ballot should be conducted with appropriate stakeholders in the greyhound racing industry. I have confidence that that will occur over the next few months.

In conclusion, I am very concerned at the shocking personal attacks by the opposition on Bob Bentley. I believe that that is very undeserved. However, what can you say when the toffs from Clayfield come in here and talk about racing as if they own it for themselves? Let me tell the House that the toffs from Clayfield could learn a lot from the workers of Ipswich. We know how to make racing great. The chardonnay swillers from Ascot and Clayfield could learn a lot from the XXXX Gold drinkers of Bundamba. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (4.18 pm): The Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 is about ensuring the long-term viability of the Queensland racing industry, not only in the city but also in the country. We recognise the important contribution that country racing makes to many of our regional towns across Queensland. It is not only a race; often race day is the most important date on the social calendar, when friends and family across far-flung regions gather together. That is why for more than a decade the Bligh government has been assisting the racing industry to cope with the changing wagering and racing landscape. We are committed to ensuring the survival of the racing industry across all three codes of racing. From the start of the Queensland TAB in 1999, the government provided the lowest wagering tax and the highest return on wagering turnover of any jurisdiction in Australia. This provided a commercial basis and revenue stream for the industry and has allowed it the flexibility to determine its own future.

Queensland was also the first state to move to an independent, skills based governance model rather than a control body, with its members chosen as direct representatives of stakeholder groups and with a requirement for minimum skills set out in the Racing Act. This model has subsequently been followed by other jurisdictions around Australia. This has allowed commercial decision making, rather than the petty politicking that was the feature of control bodies made up of representatives of industry stakeholders, particularly race clubs. The government has also provided tens of millions of dollars worth of freehold land to major race clubs to give the industry control of its assets and provide a strengthened financial position on which the industry can leverage strategies for enhancing its future market position.

In addition, the Bligh government has created a Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme that will provide more than \$80 million in funding over the next four years to the racing industry to redevelop its ageing infrastructure. The scheme is the largest taxpayer funded financial assistance package in the history of the racing industry in this state. It is an opportunity for the industry to renew itself to a generation of people who have been lost by the industry, which has for too long been focused on itself rather than on its customers. It is clear that putting on high-quality events, such as the Winter Racing Carnival and Magic Millions, is not enough to attract and retain the industry's customers. People demand modern facilities that will enhance their experience before they choose to go out and spend their dollars.

We only have to look at the success of Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba and Skilled Park, which are all testament to the need for quality, modern facilities to attract people to leave the comfort of their lounges and attend sporting events. The new amalgamated industry control body, Racing Queensland Ltd, will have the once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalise the industry in this state. Having a single body looking at all the industry's needs will allow for a proper planning process to ensure that the industry's priorities into the future are met.

Some country race clubs are concerned about their ability to meet minimum workplace health and safety standards. But the new racing control body is set to create a funding stream specifically targeted at small country clubs that have limited financial options and have done all they can themselves to bring their facilities up to scratch. This funding will certainly provide a helping hand for those smaller clubs experiencing these financial difficulties. This bill and the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme will give the racing industry its best chance of prosperity. Queensland has a proud history of leading and implementing much needed reform in the racing industry, and this bill is part of that continuing tradition.

We have reason to be very optimistic about the future. Let me give an example of that in the context of Cairns. Last Saturday, 15 May, 61 horses started in six races in Cairns. In previous years, the corresponding race meetings have only attracted around 40 starters. The total prize money for the day amounted to \$40,000—made up of \$30,000 from Queensland Racing Ltd and \$10,000 from the club—and a little over \$7,000 in incentive bonuses. Good racing brings good crowds, and more than 1,100 patrons enjoyed the day at the Cairns Jockey Club last Saturday. That is an indication of the

confidence that we can have in country racing and regional racing. Country racing certainly has had a rich history in this state. This bill will go a long way to ensuring it has a rich future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (4.23 pm): I am delighted to speak on this bill. I declare that I am a member of the Toowoomba Turf Club and what is now known as the Brisbane Racing Club. I must confess that I do not have an intricate knowledge of the industry in any shape or form. But I do recognise its intrinsic worth particularly to the city of Toowoomba, where racing has been part of the social, sporting and business calendar, if you like, since its inception. Therefore, it is important for me to make a short contribution to this bill.

I was interested to hear the history, as he saw it, of the racecourses and the various aspects of racing, as described by the shadow minister. He referred to that 1929 royal commission. I think that was more of a royal commission into the activities of John Wren, who owned either Albion Park or Doomben at the time—I think it might have been Albion Park. Like the other royal commission into the Mungana mines, it was a politically motivated one by the Moore government rather than motivated by any genuine interest in reforming the racing industry. That was typical of Tories then and, we would submit, typical of them now, particularly when we take into account recent events made public this week about the activities of the powerbrokers who run the LNP in Queensland.

As I mentioned before, I am delighted to say a few words about this bill, which amalgamates the three strands of racing, if you like, in Queensland—horse racing under Queensland Racing, harness racing and greyhound racing under Greyhounds Queensland—into one control body. The aim is to protect the competitive ability of the industry into the future. It is important, as I understand it, that such protection and support be given. Racing is not just something that we might have been content to organise in this state, involving numerous country locations at regional and metropolitan racing centres, over the years and that only concerned us within the state. Nowadays it is highly competitive with not just interstate activities but international activities—for example, activities in Hong Kong. So it has to be first class. It has to be a first-class business. It has to be up there with international competitors. That is why, as I understand it, this reform is necessary. It is the basis for these reforms.

The bill is designed to avoid the duplication of effort to give control to a single body in a coordinated approach. Of course the result will be stability of management. That is why there is the provision with respect to the directors staying in place until 2014 and then a rotation of directors after that. That all seems to me to make sense, particularly where it is important for knowledge to be retained and relied upon into the future. As I said, this is a 21st century mechanism, enabling the industry to exist as best it can and indeed to prosper into the future in a highly competitive atmosphere, in a rapidly changing wagering environment and in a rapidly changing racing environment as well.

It would be remiss of me not to make some mention of the Toowoomba Turf Club, which conducts its activities at Hursley Road and has done so for about 140 or 150 years. I pay particular tribute to the recently retired president of the Toowoomba Turf Club, Mr Neville Stewart. He was the president of that club for 21 years. He had the ability to work with governments of whatever ilk were in power. He had very good relationships with racing ministers—such as the former National Party Premier and member for Crows Nest, Russell Cooper, along with the list of Labor racing ministers, including the present minister. Neville had that ability to work with all governments for the betterment of the sport and the betterment of the industry that he represented, which was a very sensible approach. He showed strong leadership during those 21 years. He was a highly capable and a forthright person.

One of his achievements was the introduction of twilight and night racing as a first in Queensland. This proved to be highly successful and remains the envy of other centres, as I understand it, particularly in South-East Queensland. He also saw the introduction of one of the first synthetic training tracks in the construction of the Velvetrack training track in Toowoomba in 1994. Of course, only 12 months ago, at the end of his rein, we saw the installation in 2009 of the synthetic surface to the racing track itself. This was highly controversial. He showed strong leadership and determination. This has been an enormous success, I am led to believe. It was reported to the AGM of the turf club that the trainers have displayed their absolute confidence in the cushion track surface. That is a matter of delight to me and to other people who are keen to see that the industry does prosper in Toowoomba. The synthetic surfacing of the Toowoomba Turf Club track was supported not only by Queensland Racing but indeed by the Queensland government itself. Between them, those two bodies contributed between \$10,000 million and \$12,000 million, which covered the track, extra lighting, horse walkways and renovations to two dams.

I also acknowledge the efforts of and work done over many, many years by the late deputy president, Linsley Thorpe. Linsley, whom I knew from cricket—he was a trustee of the cricket association and a wicketkeeper for Queensland—died last year. His contribution to racing and to sport generally in Toowoomba it is appropriate to acknowledge.

I also acknowledge the work done by the recent deputy president, Ray Anderson, who has announced his retirement. I also acknowledge the work over the past 12 months of the new chair, who has been a longstanding member of the committee, Mr Col Zeller, along with Ray Anderson, Tom

Warren, Norm Pankhurst, Kim McCasker, Ken Gordon, Dr John Morgan and Anthony Burke, all of whom have made an enormous contribution to the success of that sport in Toowoomba. That success, as I keep repeating, has been in the main due to the ability of the Toowoomba Turf Club to work constructively with Queensland Racing and with the Queensland government, and I commend them for it.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The bill serves to amend the Racing Act 2002, the Wagering Act 1998, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Racing Regulation Act 2003 and the Wagering Regulation 1999. From the outset, the Liberal National Party will be opposing this bill.

The bill is the most dramatic legislative reform that racing has ever had. This comes after years of this Labor government doing its utmost to not support the racing industry. It is nothing more than a takeover, with the usual Labor standover tactics, and it effectively ends any protection of country racing clubs. All three racing codes are opposed to this takeover, so why is the Bligh government not listening? This bill further centralises the power for racing in Queensland. It is to be handed lock, stock and barrel over to Bob Bentley.

The government says that the amendments to the Racing Act are necessary. The premise is that the current multiple control body structure duplicates efforts and therefore prevents the coordination of decision making and that this can only be achieved by the establishment of one control body for the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound codes of racing. It is also assumed that a unified commercial focus will facilitate more effective decision making and assist in the commercial development of the Queensland racing industry as a whole. The bill will also facilitate the transfer of state assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the current control bodies into the hands of one person. The bill omits provisions that establish country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee.

Residents in Carrara and Merrimac have been closely watching the much talked about move of the Gold Coast Turf Club to a new site at Palm Meadows. Whilst the Liberal National Party is pro development, development has to be appropriate and involve high-level community consultation. There has been none for local residents. In fact, the first the residents heard about it was when I doorknocked them back in the 2006 election campaign. I quote from an article in the *Gold Coast Sun* of 9 May 2007. It states—

Flooding threats have Palm Meadows residents dreading the proposed relocation of Gold Coast Turf Club.

Robina MP Ray Stevens said filling in the floodplain to stop the track flooding would divert the water to neighbouring properties.

He said the club should take the cheaper option for redevelopment and expand its existing site at Bundall.

Local resident Adrienne Bright said residents were against any development that affected drainage.

"Two years ago this area was completely under water and it took four or five days for it to drain," she said.

"The train line that runs through here has reduced the amount of drainage already, and a second line has been approved.

"Where is the water going to go if the turf club is developed as well?"

Mrs. Bright said locals would prefer the area to be made into parkland with barbecues and tracks for bikes.

Mudgeeraba Action Group spokeswoman Ros Bates said residents wanted an appropriate development in addition to flood mitigation.

"The residents are worried because they don't know what's going on," she said.

"There needs to be a high-level community consultation before any development goes ahead."

Mrs. Bright said noise and traffic would be an issue if the move went ahead.

Not only has this government completely ignored the concerns of residents on any future development of the Gold Coast Turf Club at either the Bundall Road site or the Palm Meadows site; now this government plans to shut down all country race meetings and put the power of racing in Queensland into the hands of one man. The Liberal National Party will not support this legislation.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.35 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The stated objectives of this bill as outlined in the explanatory notes are to amend the Racing Act to establish one control body for the three codes of racing, being thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing; ensure that the control body has the necessary powers to manage the three codes of racing; abolish entities established under the Racing Act that can be established administratively by the control body; and provide stability and reduce the administrative burden and costs to a control body.

Those might be the stated objectives in the bill proposed by the Bligh Labor government, but the real objectives of this bill are the sinister plans to centralise power in the hands of Bob Bentley, the chairman of Queensland Racing who is the Labor Party's agent, and to destroy country racing clubs in regional and rural areas of Queensland. This is evidenced best by the abolition in this bill of provisions for country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee. These organisations will no longer have any legislative basis or protection from the Bligh Labor government or its agent, Bob Bentley, the chairman of Queensland Racing, and will lead to the removal of any direct input that country racing will have into the management and development of the racing industry in Queensland. This is

bad news for racing clubs in regional towns and communities throughout the state. The Labor Party and Bob Bentley for many years now have been ruthlessly persecuting and targeting country racing clubs, and their agenda has driven many country racing clubs to the brink of folding.

The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state that these entities are unique to the thoroughbred code and have an advisory role, providing advice and recommendations to the current thoroughbred control body on non-TABQ racing matters. The explanatory notes go on to claim that, in the context of an amalgamated control body, it is inconsistent to have non-TABQ entities for only one code of racing established by legislation and that the new control body will have the power to establish advisory committees for non-TABQ racing. What an absurd proposition for the Bligh Labor government to put forward in the explanatory notes accompanying a bill before the Queensland parliament! Everybody knows that, of the three racing codes, the thoroughbred code has the most extensive network of clubs across the state and the most investment by individual clubs in local infrastructure.

The excuse offered by the Bligh Labor government, that country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee should be abolished because none of the other racing codes have developed similar representative structures for rural and regional racing, is completely ridiculous. The minister responsible for racing—not the racing minister but the minister responsible for racing—in the Bligh Labor government, Minister Lawlor, should be thoroughly embarrassed that a load of utter nonsense has been served up in this bill. Local racing clubs in regional and rural areas ought to have a strong voice in the administration of the racing industry in this state because of their historical significance. The LNP is committed to that. Obviously the Labor Party is not committed to that.

I want to talk briefly about the racing clubs servicing my electorate of Hinchinbrook. They are the Herbert River Jockey Club and the Innisfail Turf Club and two smaller clubs run by volunteers. In the case of the Innisfail Turf Club, it is what is known as a strategic club and currently has about nine race dates a year, including two major race meets—the Innisfail Annuals and the Banana Industry Race Day which are always very successful events for the Innisfail district.

Although strategic clubs in regional towns like the Innisfail Turf Club, with more than one or two dates a year, are perhaps currently in better shape than smaller rural race clubs with only one or two race dates a year, there is real concern that this bill which amalgamates the boards of the three existing racing codes—thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing—will result in a staged withdrawal of many race dates from their calendar to support TABQ events in larger provincial cities like Cairns and Townsville.

The concerns of strategic clubs like the Innisfail Turf Club are well founded in view of the provisions of this bill which propose to remove provisions for country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee which have traditionally advocated on behalf of the interests of country racing and Queensland regional and rural communities and attempted, in more recent years, to protect them from the persecution of Bob Bentley and the state Labor government.

In contrast, the Herbert River Jockey Club is one of those small rural race clubs with only one or two race dates a year. The Herbert River Jockey Club has one race meet each year held over two days. It is a fantastic event. Like many annual race meets in other small rural communities, this event is a highlight of the social calendar for the Herbert River district. The ruthless persecution by Bob Bentley and his Labor mates in recent years has been doled out primarily through the stripping away of race dates and bringing in new regulations forcing small race clubs like the Herbert River Jockey Club to jump over higher and higher hurdles every year to comply.

This is a bullying strategy that has been designed to try to make small race clubs unviable. It is a deliberate strategy to sabotage the viability of small race clubs by driving up the cost of compliance year after year. The small clubs in my electorate, Herbert River and Innisfail, struggle to deal with the ever-increasing regulations. They struggle to deal with the uncertainty and the arbitrary nature of regulations that are imposed by Bob Bentley, under instruction from the Bligh Labor government, every year to make it harder for these smaller clubs. Smaller clubs such as the Herbert River Jockey Club and the Innisfail Turf Club are run by volunteers who work hard to provide a high standard of infrastructure and facilities. But they have been treated very poorly indeed by Mr Bentley and the Bligh Labor government.

Constituents in my electorate also enjoy racing events hosted by the Townsville Turf Club, the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club and the Cairns Jockey Club. The Townsville Turf Club is located in the electorate of my good friend the member for Burdekin. I support her contribution and the contribution earlier by the shadow minister, the member for Mermaid Beach, in respect of the concerns of the Townsville Turf Club regarding this bill. While I am primarily concerned about the small country racing clubs in my electorate, it is clear that race dates for provincial cities such as Cairns and Townsville will also be poached, under threat by Mr Bentley and the state Labor government when he tightens his grip over the racing industry in Queensland.

Minister Lawlor is overseeing a whitewash of the racing industry in Queensland, and for that he should be condemned along with the Bligh Labor government. The shadow minister responsible for racing, the member for Mermaid Beach, has set out very clearly the insidious arrangements proposed in

this bill in terms of the new appointments to the new control body, Racing Queensland Ltd. The member for Mermaid Beach also outlined the self-interest that has been exercised by those going onto the board of the new control body and the lack of transparency and accountability involved in the proposed tenure of their appointments.

I welcome the very clear commitment by the shadow minister, the member for Mermaid Beach, that an LNP government in Queensland will be much more inclusive of the genuine participants in the racing industry, particularly regional and rural stakeholders, in contrast to the current closed shop arrangements that are being created and overseen by the minister run for the benefit of Labor mates.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.45 pm): As the shadow minister pointed out, the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which is before the House this evening, is one of the most appalling bills to ever come before this place. In Queensland we have had a long history of a great racing industry—not only thoroughbred racing but also harness and greyhound racing—which has contributed so much to our state. In my own town of Toowoomba, for example, which has been a centre of thoroughbred racing, we have seen some 600 horses in work for many years. That has provided a lot of work not only for those directly associated with racing but also those indirectly associated with it in terms of transport, hay supply, produce and so forth.

What we have seen over the last decade or so is one of the most amazing exercises in developing a virtual dictatorship when it comes to racing in Queensland. We have transitioned from a system of the Queensland principal club to a board. We then transitioned, in a very dubious process, from that board to a private company. That private company, Queensland Racing, then attempted to extend its tenure through another very dubious process and sought to gain total control. Fortunately, due to pressure from the industry and the opposition in 2008 the then racing minister, Mr Fraser, was forced to stop that process. Not to be deterred, the government has pursued another scheme which will give it the totality of control that is being sought.

Times can change, but one of the most important things to do when putting in place structures is to put in place structures that are enduring in terms of accountability—that is, structures that make people accountable to the industry or the shareholders that they serve. With this legislation tonight we will be moving away from a company that, as I said, came together as a result of very dubious processes but at least had shareholders. It had A class and B class shareholders. One of those classes of shareholders represented, to a substantial extent, the industry through the major provincial clubs, the Queensland Country Racing Association and the kindred organisations like those representing jockeys, trainers and breeders.

The system was not perfect. Some of those kindred organisations may not have been extremely well organised. When decisions were being made people would wonder whether it was the organisation putting forward the view or whether it was one or two people in the organisation putting forward the view and should they vote for it or not. Be that as it may, there at least was representation from the industry—from the associated major clubs, the country organisations and the kindred organisations involved in the industry for their livelihood and interest.

We are now moving to a system where there are basically no shareholders. We have to ask the question: who on earth owns this company? Is it owned by those people who have been able to put themselves in the position where they are going to be the board of this company? Who are these board members answerable to? Is there going to be an annual system where a certain number come up for re-election? Who is going to be re-electing these people? Is there proper accountability with a proper structure, if you like, of shareholders and bona fide interested people with an involvement in that industry? With exception, many other sporting and major organisations have structure. They have the structure of their juniors. They have the structure of their seniors. They have the structure of other kindred people who may be involved in that particular sport so they belong to the sport and belong to the industry. There is a system of renewal every year where there is a genuine renewal by people at the grassroots or people who are selected for their expertise in particular areas. These are genuine organisations that can then use people who might have expertise in marketing, finance, law and those sorts of things. Those issues are becoming increasingly important in any industry, particularly any sports based industry.

However, they are accountable to their grassroots. Once you lose that, you have nothing. If you are not accountable to your juniors or your country or regional areas and if you are not accountable to the sport or the industry itself, that is a very dangerous position. This situation is also putting this major industry into this almost unaccountable position where these board members put themselves in positions on the board and renew those positions. Who on earth are they accountable to? Who are they working for and are they working in the best interests of the people involved in that industry, right from the outback race clubs through to the provincial race clubs in our great decentralised state to the major near-metropolitan race clubs to the major metropolitan race clubs?

We have to add into that mix the harness racing and the greyhound racing industries—industries that are competitive. Putting these three industries together is like putting Australian Rules, rugby union and rugby league into one organisation and saying, ‘You’ll have nothing to do with your juniors and nothing to do with anybody else. Just run this board for some high-powered financial reason,’ or whatever. How on earth would those three competing organisations ever work together for their own separate interests? I believe that the harness racing industry and greyhound racing industry in particular will get subsumed. Instead of being able to go their own way and develop a second-tier circuit that can flow in to make the capital city circuit work and instead of developing grassroots people who would be interested in greyhounds or harness racing so that some people actually read the paper to see what is on and follow it, it will just coalesce down into one or two major venues without the grassroots. This will end up in the demise and the overtaking of those two industries.

This is an appalling thing to do, because those three industries—thoroughbreds, harness racing or greyhound racing—all have outstanding people in them who can drive their industry if there was a proper system of selection, appointment and management—not the systems that we have seen in the last decade of putting on such boards Labor mates or others who do not have expertise in getting people to come through the gates and through the turnstiles to make the tracks vibrant places again. Instead, they have almost turned into virtual graveyards with only 200 or 300 people turning up to capital city meetings. That is as a result of having people on these boards who do not have the expertise or the knowledge of how to build their industry and having taken away from those industries the ability to have some self-determination.

The contribution of the three codes of racing to our state economy is vitally important. It is often said that much of the funding for these industries comes from the money that flows through the TAB by way of Product Co., the company that is owned by the three codes of racing, and then distributed on the basis of approximately 76 per cent, I think it is from memory, to thoroughbreds, about 14.5 per cent to harness racing and about 9.5 per cent to greyhound racing. That was to have come up for review shortly and is based on how each of the codes is going in terms of turnover.

This is not an industry where all we should worry about are the TAB clubs and just concentrate on them. As I said, if you do not have the grassroots you do not have anything flowing through. The thoroughbred breeding industry, which is very strong on the Darling Downs and in the Beaudesert area and other parts of Queensland and is building up in Central Queensland, does not just rely on trying to get a price for the horse at the Magic Millions sales. If the horse turns out to be moderately successful or not too successful, it would be nice to have another market other than \$500 for some sort of a hack for trail rides after all of the money it takes to produce these animals.

I am sorry that the member for Rockhampton, the former racing minister, has just left the chamber, because I wanted to say this when I noticed he was in the chamber. He and Mr Pat Purcell, the former member for Bulimba, specifically went around regional and rural Queensland looking at this industry. I believed that they were very genuine in their inquiries in looking into country and regional racing. As a result, they put together the Queensland Country Racing Association which, as I said, had two shares in the arrangement of shareholders. That gave some form of recognition, some form of influence and some form of input to that vast area of Queensland that supports racing and which is so important not only to the economy but also to the social structure of our state.

We are a great big decentralised state. It is important that we have sport. It is important that we have culture. It is important that we have music. It is important that we have racing and all of those sorts of things that make us the most decentralised and the most successfully decentralised state in the world bar none—better than Texas—because spread up the coast we have cities, inland cities and country towns and all of those places have these particular things, most of which are supported by the locals with sponsorships, contributions and so forth.

It is important that this be part of the social structure of our state. We do not want mining or rural communities in Queensland to be bereft of anything so that they merely become fly-in, fly-out centres. It is hard for a country race club to run one race meeting a year and to keep the committee and the community involved and interested, to maintain the track, to maintain the facilities and everything else when they have only one meeting a year. If you have two, three or four meetings a year you have something decent. Then you can work into a bit of a circuit and then you start to get some trainers. But it is getting to the point in rural Queensland where there is nowhere for the trainers to go.

I ask members to just look at the Gympie and Bundaberg areas. If you are a trainer there, from memory I think you have only 12 meetings in Gympie, when once you used to have 56—every Saturday plus four public holidays. Up in Bundaberg there are only something like 12 meetings left. So you do not even have half a year of racing between the two centres. Then there are about one or two race meetings at Eidsvold, Wondai and a couple of other country areas. You are flat out getting a proper circuit. So how are people going to stay as trainers in a city like Bundaberg when the circuit is just not there? That is the pressure that is coming from Queensland Racing to push them all down to the Sunshine Coast Turf Club, which is owned in a trust arrangement by Queensland Racing, and to use the stable facilities there and all the rest where the self-interest of the governing body is overall on that Sunshine Coast Turf Club.

I understand that some clubs have made a loss. I see in the report that one was the Toowoomba Turf Club. Over the past few years the Toowoomba Turf Club has made a very substantial profit. According to the newspaper report I read about an audit of different clubs, something like \$200,000 was mentioned. Off the top of my head, if you went back about five years the Toowoomba Turf Club would be in front by well over a million dollars over that period. Of course, one of the problems is the cost of the maintenance of the new artificial track, which they have to pay to Queensland Racing. That has gone out of their control in terms of managing costs.

The point I want to make is that we are seeing in Queensland an absolute obsession of control and domination by Queensland Racing, which is snipping off one club after another. The Sunshine Coast Turf Club has been taken over—and I will not go into the way it happened with the trust that was formed and the moneys that were paid and the moneys that were then used to buy shares and so on. So there they are, part-owned by the governing body that is supposed to be overseeing everything else absolutely fairly. So they get the bigger share of things. And guess what? They make a profit. All of the clubs now rely on Queensland Racing for their subsidies, for their administration, for their capital works—for everything. The power that has been vested in Queensland Racing has become unbelievable. It is an absolute domination, an absolute control and an absolute dictatorship.

I first said in my speech that there was a lack of a proper system of shareholder control and grassroots involvement and influence in being able to have a vote and to have a change of directors on a regular basis if required or if decided by the shareholders. All of that has gone. I keep using this word 'appalling'. I think that we have come to a most appalling situation. We have a government that has deliberately wanted to divorce itself from the racing industry. It has been doing that deliberately ever since the member for Mount Coot-tha was put in charge of racing and he did not know the front gate from the back gate of a racecourse. I do not blame him for that. Not everybody knows about racing. But he could have become involved. He could have got to know and understand the industry—because ministers have to do that. They can be put in charge of a portfolio and have to learn it from the ground up. But they do not want to be involved in this great industry that is so important to the economy and the social structure of our state. They want to walk away from it and just leave it to this almost unelected private company to run.

I ask members to bear in mind that the government should have a strong involvement because of what it gets from racing in terms of taxes and creaming off what it got when it sold off the TAB. It is a system that requires great integrity. In the previous Racing Act the minister had certain powers to direct, to discipline and to even sack particular people on the board. We are seeing a diminution or removal of all of those powers. We are seeing a stripping away from racing of all of the influence that the regional and the country tracks may have had, which was put in place by the member for Rockhampton, that at least gave a vestige of influence and involvement. Everybody is left at the whim of this unelected board. That is what is happening. Not only that, this unelected board is going to be running the three codes, which are supposed to be in healthy competition.

This whole bill is an absolute disgrace. I know that our shadow minister will come to the next election with a policy that will be just right.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: We are not going to put it out when they want us to; we will put it out when we want to. I have absolutely no doubt that it will be an absolute winner. The people of Queensland are sick and tired of this moribund Labor government. They are sick and tired of the debt and the rise in the cost of living for working class and low-income people all over the state who bear the brunt and the pain of the government's interest costs and its debt.

The people in the racing industry, whether they are the people associated with greyhounds, or the people involved in harness racing, or the people involved in thoroughbred racing right from the track work riders and the people growing the hay and selling the horses through to those who go to the races, are sick and tired of the Labor government. They are yearning to move away and to come over to the LNP. I know that this is one of the most important issues in the next election. You had the chance to fix it up and you have absolutely ruined it. You have gone the wrong way. You have left this great industry in the hands of a total dictatorship. You walked away. You did not have the guts as minister to stand up to what was happening and to do something in the best interests of the industry and—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Toowoomba South, you have been warned by the Speaker. You will refer to the members by their title.

Mr HORAN: I am sorry; I meant the minister. The minister has not had the intestinal fortitude to do that. What has happened with this legislation will be the downfall of the Labor government. I look forward to the people of Queensland speaking about the dreadful things that the government has done to the three codes of racing in our state.

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Before calling the member for Morayfield, I would remind members that if a ruling is made it is not open to comment.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (5.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have a strong interest and attachment to the racing industry. My grandfather was a bookie and during my time at university I worked as a tote operator at Corbould Park racecourse at Caloundra. Many other members of my extended family continue to work in the racing industry and they have strong connections with the industry. What is more, my father and I responsibly enjoy a punt down at the local TAB at Burpengary.

All of those people involved with or connected to the industry would agree that the Queensland racing industry has a history of continual reform. All of those people would also agree that the industry needs further reform to address the challenges presented by a changing wagering landscape driven in part by the advent of online wagering, changing customer preferences and other technological developments. Unfortunately, the one constant in the reform of the racing industry has been the scaremongering and misinformation perpetuated by opponents. Unfortunately, today we have heard the rot of dissent continue from members of the opposition. These opponents have opposed every reform in the industry and they have always done their best to undermine any initiatives that benefit rank and file industry participants.

Despite the squawking and the exaggeration by opposition members, this bill will ensure the long-term future of the racing industry in Queensland. This bill favours the entire industry over the self-interest of one specific individual race club. This bill is about the longevity and viability of the whole industry, not just the interests of one specific individual race club. Reform of the industry is essential so that the industry as a whole can plan its future from a single viewpoint rather than the fractured and piecemeal approaches that have operated in the past. To say that reform is not essential is to deny the realities and challenges faced by the industry today and into the future. To say that reform is not essential is to condemn the industry to a void of uncertainty and instability.

Some opponents have been responsible for much of the scaremongering and deliberate misrepresentation about the provisions in this bill that clarify the control body's power to impose conditions on any approval it grants to an individual race club to dispose of an interest in real property. Those opponents may be surprised to hear that that power has always existed. The control body's approval to dispose of real property has always been required and the control body has always had the power to impose conditions on any approval given. All that the amendments in this bill do is clarify that existing power. All that the amendments in this bill do is provide certainty for the racing industry.

Some opponents also deny the fact that over many years the state government has transferred freehold land worth many tens of millions of dollars to individual race clubs. These contributions, combined with the additional public money and control body money, have been invested in improvements in the land owned by those individual race clubs all around Queensland. An amendment in this bill ensures that if any race club decides to dispose of any race club a proportion of any proceeds received from the sale may be used for the benefit of the whole Queensland racing industry. It cannot be any fairer than that. The people of Queensland, through public moneys, and the control body, through control body moneys, have made significant contributions to these race clubs. It is only fair that some portion of the proceeds of land sales be returned to the industry for future development and growth.

We have heard some wild allegations from opposition members about the lack of support for individual race clubs. This could be no further from the truth. The fact is that in the past decade the state government has transferred much freehold ownership of racecourse property to many individual race clubs. What is more, the industry, through the control body, provides significant funds for prize money, capital development and the day-to-day operations of individual race clubs. Surely, with this information in mind it is impossible to say that there is a lack of assistance for the racing industry in regional, provincial and metropolitan areas. This bill provides a framework for a strong, vibrant and stable racing industry into the future. This bill is about the longevity and viability of the racing industry as a whole. I take this opportunity to commend the minister, his staff and departmental staff on their hard work in respect of the bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (5.10 pm), in reply: I would like to commend my staff and the departmental people who have put such effort into this bill. I ask for some leniency here to mention Bill Lenehan, a legendary punter and racehorse owner in Queensland, known as the 'Milkman' because he used to be a milkman at one time. His son was a friend of mine who I went to boarding school with. Bill died recently and was buried on Tuesday. I would like to pass on my condolences, those of the Minister for Public Works and everyone here to his family.

Mr Schwarten: Great old bloke.

Mr LAWLOR: He was a great bloke. I expected to hear 15 speeches from opposition members but, in fact, I have heard one speech 15 times. Fancy the LNP being against amalgamation! Here we have the Liberals and the Nationals espousing the virtues of combining two organisations but they are against this. All I can say is that it is very difficult to give away \$80 million.

I will give members a bit of history and put things into perspective because some members of the opposition were not here in 2002. I would just like everyone to understand the situation as it exists now and as it will remain after the bill is passed: the industry wanted to be independent of the government. The industry demanded independence. In 2000 to 2002 there were many deputations to the government wanting governance reform to ensure that the industry ran itself free from interference from ministers. The Racing Act 2002 specifies the minister's powers of intervention in the industry. The legislation was unanimously passed by parliament—that is, everyone from the other side as well. The minister only has power to issue directions on limited grounds of probity and integrity. The government does not fund race clubs, allocate race meetings or set training fees. That is the business of race clubs and the control bodies. They must operate in a commercial world, notwithstanding that some of them, when they do not get the decisions that they want, demand that the minister intervene. That is something that the shadow minister has been demanding. He is obviously not familiar with the act. In fact, if I did intervene I would be reported to the CMC, with justification.

Let us get to the bottom of some of the things that have been said. There was a lot of store put in Bart Sinclair's articles. As we know, Bart Sinclair is nothing but a spokesman for the QTC and now the BRC. His article in the *Courier-Mail* on 10 May this year is headed 'NSW plan highlights the crisis in Queensland industry.' Just consider this: Racing New South Wales' strategic plan recognises that Queensland already has the most generous tax regime and urged New South Wales to adopt the same. The New South Wales plan calls for greater professionalism amongst clubs, noting that representative race club committees do not act for the overall betterment of racing, an issue addressed by Queensland with the establishment of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board in 2002. The New South Wales plan also advises that the New South Wales control body will pursue the securing of freehold title for racecourses from the state government. That is something that was done in Queensland years ago when the government transferred freehold title worth \$60 million to the racing industry. In the past decade alone the government has transferred freehold ownership of racecourses to the Ipswich Turf Club, Toowoomba, Dalby, Northern Downs, Lockyer Turf Club, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Albion Park Raceway. The titles were all transferred to the industry. Yet we still have this furphy about the government wanting to get its hands on the land. What a load of rubbish!

Except for the equine influenza crisis a couple of years ago, Queensland's wagering turnover has increased every year since the privatisation of the TAB. Last year the turnover was a record \$1.617 billion. Let me tell members that the industry is not in a crisis. We hear the continual comments from Bart Sinclair but why is it only the media in Queensland that ever criticises the Queensland industry? For example, Craig Young in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 March last year said that Bob Bentley is the man to lead racing to salvation. He is a New South Wales racing journalist. He went on to say that Bentley is willing to take on politicians, the doomsayers and vested interest groups and has a desire to make racing profitable. Bentley, he said, 'found millions squandered under the old race club system and poured it into prize money.' Young correctly recognises that self-interest is the only sure thing in racing. Perhaps those constantly criticising Bentley have some self-interest. On 10 July last year Max Presnell, a well-known and respected racing journalist in Sydney, quoting Robert Heathcote, one of the more prominent trainers in Queensland, said, 'Bentley has been running the show for seven good years and it will only get better.' Presnell also describes New South Wales racing as 'languishing like a rudderless boat'. On 15 December 2008 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the elevation of Bentley to the position of chairman of the Australian Racing Board he said that it was the best news to come out of a week that promised to lead to massive and, in most instances, necessary change to the industry.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mr LAWLOR: Hear, hear! That is right. Bob Bentley has no power and nor has Queensland Racing. Even at the moment Queensland Racing consists of five members. Bob Bentley cannot sell any race club land without the approval of the race club itself, the control body itself and also without ministerial approval. The chairman of the BRC, Mr Dixon, is quoted in the *Courier Mail* on 11 May 2010 as accusing Mr Bentley of typical bullyboy tactics. How hypocritical can the BRC possibly get? They were the original bullyboys. Anyone involved in the Gold Coast Turf Club, as the shadow minister was, the Ipswich Turf Club or the Sunshine Coast Turf Club or even Toowoomba would know that. The BRC and its main predecessor, the QTC, opposed any progressive initiatives over many decades. How many years did it take for Doomben and Eagle Farm to get together, for instance? They opposed the granting of stand-alone race days for the Magic Millions, the Ipswich Turf Club and the Sunshine Coast Turf Club. They opposed it. At every turn they opposed it. The QTC and the BTC combined to form the BRC but nothing else changed. Their antiquated attitudes and policies are continually promoted by the pimps and apologists who pass themselves off as journalists. They are not prepared to present any alternative argument to the BRC line. But why should we be surprised at this? It has been that way for decades. They deal in baseless allegations, scaremongering and hysterical statements. Talking about hysterical statements, what about Bart Sinclair in the *Sunday Mail* on 18 April where he said government control bodies are able to assume ownership of race tracks? He goes on and says, 'What next? Rural properties, homes, commercial land?' Fair dinkum! What would a racing writer like Jim Anderson make of that? It is no wonder that today for racing stories one has to look in the lost and found section of the paper.

Mr Stevens: Not one of your best.

Mr LAWLOR: Listen to who is talking! He is going to come up with a policy for the next election. Can you believe that?

Government members: No!

Mr LAWLOR: Rather than the untruths being peddled by Kevin Dixon, it is about time that the facts about the land at Eagle Farm were put before the House. Eagle Farm was public land allocated to the QTC and it is accountable to the wider racing industry for how it deals with it. Eagle Farm Racecourse was established in 1863 when the QTC was granted 320 acres of crown land. It did not buy it; it was public land given to it. In 1875 the land was transferred to trustees appointed by the QTC. During a parliamentary debate in 1875, the then Attorney-General, Sir Samuel Griffith, made the following insightful observations—

The QTC has no more right to the land than any other turf club or society of gentlemen who might use it for racing purposes.

He went on—

The QTC were entitled to public praise for their exertions, but they could not be recognised in the House as anything more than a private society.

All went reasonably well until 1992, when the then government modernised the legislation to ensure independent trustees were appointed and not hand-picked by the QTC, as has been the case for 100 years. What happened? Not surprisingly, the QTC went berserk. How dare anyone insist on independence and accountability! Why such opposition? Because the QTC objected to having to deal with trustees it did not pick itself. Despite the name change to the Brisbane Race Club, it continues in the great tradition of opposition to anything that ensures accountability. In 1997 the Eagle Farm Racecourse Bill provided that freehold title of Eagle Farm be given to the QTC and it was debated at that time. The then minister for racing, Russell Cooper—an old National Party person—

Mr Stevens: A good bloke.

Mr LAWLOR: Yes, of course he is a good bloke. When he was speaking on the issue of Eagle Farm land he said, 'The State Government recognises the importance of protecting the interests of the wider racing industry and although the freehold will be transferred ... to the QTC' it would not be able to sell it without the consent of the minister. I repeat, it would not be able to sell it without the consent of the minister. Of course, since then a further level has been put in there. Neither the QTC nor anyone else can sell Eagle Farm or any other club owned racecourse without the approval of the club, the approval of the control body and the approval of the minister.

The newly amalgamated control body will have the power to place conditions on the sale of BRC land because it is an asset of the entire racing industry, as acknowledged by people such as Russell Cooper right back to Sir Samuel Griffith. The government is not going to allow assets to be sold or dealt with without some benefit accruing to the wider racing industry. Governments of all persuasions know that racing land is whole-of-industry land and has been whole-of-industry land since 1863.

I turn to directions to the control body. It does not matter how often I say this—I suppose they are slow learners—the opposition has no understanding of how the racing industry operates in Australia. This is clear from the rubbish its members continue to peddle, like saying that as minister I should be issuing directions, intervening in this or that decision, sacking Bob Bentley, increasing prize money and so on. I had my department write to the Australian Racing Board in order to clarify the Australian Racing Board's position should I do what the opposition wants. The Australian Racing Board sent back a letter, which I table.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 7 May 2010, to Mr Mike Kelly, Executive Director—Office of Racing from Andrew Harding, Chief Executive—Australian Racing Board Limited, in relation to the scheme of the Australian Rules of Racing [2280].

Mr Stevens: Who is the chairman? Bob Bentley!

Mr LAWLOR: It is the Australian Racing Board.

Mr Stevens: Who is the chairman?

Mr LAWLOR: So what? That is recognition of Queensland racing if ever I—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Minister, shadow minister and Minister for Public Works! Minister, please continue with your speech. Shadow minister, please keep your comments to yourself.

Mr LAWLOR: In short, the opposition's approach would jeopardise Queensland Racing's continued recognition as the principal racing authority and its membership of the Australian Racing Board. This is all new ground to the opposition so, for their benefit, I will explain what possible consequences would flow: loss of black type in group 1 races; Stradbroke, gone; Queensland Derby and Doomben Cup, gone; participation of Queensland licensees in other jurisdiction, gone; recognition

of Queensland on the national and international racing stage, gone. That is what the opposition wants. Overnight we would go from a first-world racing jurisdiction, recognised as one of the leading racing jurisdictions, to a pariah. That is what the opposition would deliver if, God help us, it ever ended up over here. However, I think we are pretty safe.

Instead of playing politics, the opposition should be more concerned about the thousands of battlers who rely on racing for a living. The focus should be on safeguarding their employment and not on the vested interests of Saturday afternoon race club members and the property developers who have them in their pockets. Put simply, the opposition has no idea. If this was not so serious, it would be a joke.

I am aware that some country race clubs are having difficulty complying with the minimum standards set by Queensland Racing. Workplace health and safety is a requirement placed on all businesses, and not just race clubs. Some small clubs are concerned, but so are the families of people who have to work at some of those unsafe clubs and unsafe workplaces generally. Unfortunately, a few race clubs have gone that way. Queensland Racing has a legal responsibility to ensure that the facilities of all clubs meet minimum safety standards. I have spoken to Queensland Racing about this issue and it will assist. In fact, I table a letter from Queensland Racing that specifies, as the member for Mount Isa mentioned, that the new amalgamated control body will make available \$300,000 per annum for three years, which is basically \$1 million, to target small country clubs that have had limited financial resources available internally to address necessary workplace health and safety issues.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 14 May 2010, to Hon. Peter Lawlor, Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading from RG Bentley, Chairman of Queensland Racing, in relation to minimum standards for country race meetings [2281].

This is not a bottomless pit of money but will provide some help for clubs that have done all they can to help themselves and have no other option available. All this depends on the new legislation being passed. That is why I cannot understand the opposition being so against what basically will be a boost for country racing.

Mr Moorhead: Why do they hate country racing?

Mr LAWLOR: I do not know why they hate country racing. It is a mystery to me.

Mr Stevens: You should go out there, Sunshine, and see how popular you are.

Mr LAWLOR: I do go out there sometimes. The member ought to hear the stories I am told. It is quite interesting. Not everyone is on his side. Fortunately, many of them are not. I will not say any more now about the QTC and the BRC. Maybe at the end I will tell the House some more horror stories about how they oppose anything mildly progressive and have done so for over about a century.

There is something that was pointed out to me by the Deputy Speaker. I had noticed it as well but did not get a chance to mention it before he did. The shadow minister continually talks about 'when' they win government. There is no show of modesty. He does not talk about 'if'; he talks about 'when'. He takes the people of Queensland for granted.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr LAWLOR: He is not even going to produce policy. They have no policies whatsoever. They are saying 'when we win the election'. They are talking in terms of 'when', not 'if'. Firstly, the Magic Millions is not lost to Queensland.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Mermaid Beach, keep your comments to yourself, as will everyone else.

Mr Wettenhall interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Barron River, are you aware of standing order 244? Thank you.

Mr LAWLOR: The Magic Millions is not lost to Queensland, as we know. It is a big industry—over \$1.6 billion in turnover and something like 27,000 employees. It is quite big. I doubt that it is the fifth biggest, as someone mentioned. But it is a big industry and it is an important industry.

The shadow minister wants it run by amateurs and part-time volunteers. He also called for a royal commission—another one. We have already had two. The rumours that the opposition has repeated in parliament, defaming Bentley, Lindsay Gallagher and Wayne Wood, were shown to be baseless. It was a waste of \$4 million of public money and millions of industry money. They were absolutely baseless.

We used to have the representative model. Every government in Australia has made changes to ensure independence. This is also something the member for Toowoomba South referred to. Every government in Australia has made changes to ensure independence. Even the old QTC wanted the representative model abolished. Of course, when they did not get their way they were not happy about that either. The LNP has promised, through the shadow minister, a return to the sixties and seventies.

There was the contention that Labor ignores the industry. How ridiculous is that? We have given them \$60 million worth of assets in the last decade alone. This bill will deliver another \$80 million for capital development. We are guaranteeing funding for country racing. We are the only state that guarantees funding for country racing.

Mr Stevens: No, you're not. I will deal with that in the clauses.

Mr LAWLOR: Have a look at it. Unbelievable. The industry wanted self-governance and they have now got it. In relation to the issue of remuneration of directors, if this bill is passed, the proposed control body will submit a remuneration report, which will be done by an independent consultancy company, to the government. The director-general is responsible for assessing this report and deciding and approving. This is not a political decision; it is one for my director-general. I will not be making the decision.

In relation to adding assets to the government balance sheet, that is ridiculous. We have given \$60 million already. By the way, we gave \$7.9 million worth of assets to Townsville in 2005 and from the phone calls that I have had they owe money all around town. Apparently they even owe the race caller money, so that is how good they are going. Now they want to sell it off, and people like the shadow minister are defending their right to sell off the land—the land that they were given only five years ago. What sort of a start was that? To be given \$8 million worth of public land and they still run the business into the ground. And the shadow minister is defending that. What a joke!

There has been issue made of the constitution, which is quite pedantic. I do know things that are going to be in the constitution because I have demanded that they be in there—that is, the protection—

Mr Stevens: So you've seen the constitution.

Mr LAWLOR: I have not seen a draft of the constitution.

Mr Stevens: How do you know it is in there?

Mr LAWLOR: Because I have spoken to the department and have said that I want this in there.

Mr Stevens: Just because you want it in there—

Mr LAWLOR: I have to approve it.

Mr Stevens: So you've seen it.

Mr LAWLOR: No, I have not. I have said I have not seen it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Minister and shadow minister, you will refer your comments through the chair and you will desist from the cross-chamber conversation.

Mr LAWLOR: There will be protection for country racing associations in the constitution of this company. Otherwise it will not be approved.

The member for Dalrymple—well there is not much to say there. He talked about the death knell of racing, as many others did. This is the only government in Australia to guarantee, as I said, base funding for country racing. In fact, as the member for Mount Isa pointed out, the present Queensland Racing is spending almost twice what it is obliged to spend. It is not like 1900 anymore. The racing industry is a big business and not a hobby or a charity.

The member for Gaven gave the game right up. Talking about this bill, he said, 'Such is life under Labor. We have to cop it as there is no alternative available.' How well said. That is beautiful. That sums up the LNP by one of its own.

In relation to giving assets—I am only repeating myself here about giving assets to the industry. In relation to the signing over of race clubs, both the Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton support the joint management model, for instance. He mentioned cash reserves but perhaps he should also look at racing in New South Wales, which has about \$40 million. Why? Because it is money from corporate bookmakers payable under the race field legislation which is now being challenged in court. It would be quite ridiculous if they did not make provision for the fact that they might have to pay that back. That is why there is so much money held by various control bodies. Noosa does not support it. That is interesting. Don Jackson thinks the arrangement of the Sunshine Coast Turf Club is good. I will table a letter from him which says that it is a great arrangement and it gives them the freedom to run the business as they see they should and promote racing in that area.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, dated 21 April 2010, to members of the Sunshine Coast Turf Club Inc. from Don Jackson, Chairman, in relation to the Sunshine Coast Racing Unit Trust and the purchase of freehold land at Corbould Park [2282].

It is surprising to see the member for Noosa against this particular business model, certainly the business model that exists at Caloundra. He referred to a business case. You do not need a business case to put three control bodies into one. Of course it will generate savings.

Mr Stevens: Identify them.

Mr LAWLOR: I will. Firstly, there is one lot of directors. I will go into that in a minute, since you have asked. There is one board and so on. I will go through the rest of these first because I have not got much time left.

The member for Kawana thinks that the Caloundra turf club is fantastic—probably because it works cooperatively with Queensland Racing. As I said, that is verified by the letter from the chairman of the Sunshine Coast Turf Club. Even the member for Kawana thinks it is a good idea.

The member for Warrego was the shadow spokesman for racing in 2002 when the act came into force.

An honourable member: He supported it.

Mr LAWLOR: No. As a matter of fact he did not support it because during the debate he left parliament and it was left to Jeff Seeney, the member for Callide, to do his job. So he was actually not here when that 2002 bill was passed.

At least the member for Gregory was constructive in what he had to say. I know that he has a genuine concern, as I know most people have, for country racing—and as I have. But he did refer to the rebirth of racing. I agree with him. I think racing has a great future following its rebirth.

The member for Beaudesert was concerned with other gambling issues in his area, but he did refer to listening to a lot of hot air. I presume he was referring to the people who have just treated him so well. He did make a good suggestion. Notwithstanding the ranting and raving about the guillotine, he said 10 minutes should be ample time to speak in a debate. If you cannot say what you want to say in 10 minutes—

Mr Stevens: You have just taken 27.

Mr LAWLOR: Yes, because I have to respond to everyone. That is why. If you had cut it down a bit, we might have all been home by this.

The member for Clayfield went on again about washing hands. I have already been down that track. If I were to intervene in the manner that he suggests, I suggest that I would be reported to the CMC because it is not provided for in the act. Whether I like it or not and whether he likes it or not, that is the situation. He went through the amalgamation. He also referred to clause 430. He has it wrong. This is to protect the old directors. In other words, some will not be going on to the new control body. This is to give them the protection they need in relation to the Corporations Act because we asked them to decide on the amalgamation. They are not on the new body, so it affords them some level of protection.

In relation to country racing safeguards not being in the bill, the country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee are unique to the thoroughbred code. In an amalgamated control body structure, having thoroughbred-specific bodies set up under the legislation is not appropriate. We have a combined control body and it must operate as such. Under its constitution, Racing Queensland Ltd will establish a country racing association and a country racing committee which will be advisory committees for non-TAB thoroughbred racing. The constitution will also provide that, should the company and the country racing committee be unable to reach agreement on the number of days in which the country race meetings are to be held, the number of country race meetings for the year under consideration must not be fewer than the number of days on which the country race meetings were held in the previous season. They cannot be reduced.

Mr Stevens: Can they be increased?

Mr LAWLOR: Of course they can. They cannot be reduced; they can be increased by agreement.

There is no change to the requirement to provide a minimum percentage of the net UNiTAB product fee as prize money for country racing or supporting racing industries. The amendments have been made to reflect that there is no longer a thoroughbred control committee. Accordingly, Racing Queensland Ltd must pay 5.32 per cent of its net UNiTAB product fee in supporting non-TAB thoroughbred racing. The figure of 5.32 per cent is the new control body's net UNiTAB product fee. It is exactly the same amount as seven per cent of the current thoroughbred control body's net UNiTAB product fee.

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

AYES, 48—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, 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, 36—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, 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. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr STEVENS (5.48 pm): Clause 4 seeks to amend section 7, contained in chapter 2, 'Control bodies to manage codes of racing', of the Racing Act 2002. I refer the minister to section 7(1)(a), which states—

(1) The main purposes of this chapter are—

(a) to establish a process by which an eligible corporation may be approved as the control body for a code of racing with responsibility for managing the code, including the involvement of animals, clubs, participants and venues;

If the minister turns to section 45 in part 4, he will understand that this hiding under the rock—

Mr Lawlor: What page is this?

Mr STEVENS: Page 45, part 4, division 1, section 45.

Mr Lawlor: Section 45?

Mr STEVENS: Racing Act 2002, page 45, 'Actions relating to control bodies and codes of racing'. The minister has on numerous occasions stood in this House and said, 'It's nothing to do with me. The CMC will get called if I'm involved with this matter. I see nothing; I know nothing.' In his rant the minister talked about *Courier-Mail* journalists and other journalists involved that have made poor comment on his keeping well and truly away from racing industry matters and saying that it is all over to the control body—in this case Queensland Racing but from tonight possibly Racing Queensland, if this legislation is passed. However, section 45 contains a division headed 'Ministerial directions to control bodies'. It quite clearly states 'Minister may give a direction to control body about its policies or rules'. It is very clear what the minister may do.

More importantly, section 45 states—

This section applies if the Minister believes that, for 1 or more of the following reasons, it is necessary to give a control body a direction under this section—

(a) to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the Queensland racing industry;

If the minister believes that in country and provincial areas there is public confidence in what Queensland Racing has done or what Racing Queensland will do then he has not visited those areas. They are absolutely shattered by the proposals put forward and the reduction in their race meetings. Quite clearly, the minister's assertion at every opportunity that he has nothing to do with racing is not correct. It is in the statutes. It states—

(b) to ensure the control body is managing its code of racing in the interests of the code;

Many in the code of thoroughbred racing would say that their interests have not been considered in this matter.

Quite clearly, when it comes to the minister writing to the Australian Racing Board he would say, 'Dear chairman of the Australian Racing Board'—who happens to be Mr Bob Bentley; he would probably say 'Dear Bob' as they are probably on a first name basis—'Could you tell me what you feel about the Queensland Racing board,' which, by the way, is run by chairman Bob Bentley? He would ask what the Australian Racing Board thinks about the way Mr Bentley is running racing in Queensland. The answer probably would be, 'Yes, Minister, I do believe Queensland Racing, under Bob Bentley, is being run really well.' It would be signed Bob Bentley, Australian Racing Board. The minister has put on the best comedy act I have ever seen. He is trying to justify this unjustifiable legislation which seeks to amalgamate these three separate codes into one code.

I will return to the main point I have in relation to clause 4. Clause 4 says to omit 'each control body' and insert 'the control body'. That will obviously be Racing Queensland. To assist the minister in his drafting of proper legislation, it says at section 7(1)(a) of the existing act, which is not amended at clause 4—

(1) The main purposes of this chapter are—

(a) to establish a process by which an eligible corporation may be approved as the control body for a code of racing ...

We are not approving a control body for a code; we are approving a control body for the codes of racing—all three codes—which are recognised in this legislation as being separate identifiable codes of racing.

Mr LAWLOR: With regard to the point that the member has just made, this drafting is done by parliamentary draftsmen. Plurals and singulars are dealt with under the Acts Interpretation Act. There is no point there.

In relation to the other issue that the member raised, it is a simple point which I will repeat and which has been repeated ad nauseam by previous racing ministers and which is based on legal advice. Any interference or instruction by a minister must be in relation to integrity, the welfare of animals, probity and so on. These are serious integrity issues—not race dates, how much car parks cost and so on. There are limited areas where a minister can intervene in the operations of a control body. That has been the way since the 2002 act, which the opposition supported.

Mr STEVENS: The minister is again walking away and hiding under a rock and saying, 'It has nothing to do with me.' If the minister refers to section 45(b) he will find it says—

(b) to ensure the control body is managing its code of racing in the interests of the code;

Quite clearly, if the minister does not feel that it is in the interests of the code, that is not a corruption matter, that is not a matter to go to the CMC; that is a matter of the minister doing what he is paid to do, and that is to ensure that the control body is managing its code of racing in the interests of the code. If the minister felt, for instance, that country racing was not receiving its fair share of funding or its fair share of dates or was being treated in some unfair and unjust manner, then it would be the minister who should raise the matter and give a direction to the control body. Quite simply, that is not a corruption matter. That is not a CMC matter. It is not a matter that can be taken off to court. It is quite clearly a case of the minister's intuition when it comes to what is fair and just. It is what the minister believes is in the best interests of the code, whether it be dogs, thoroughbreds or trots. It would be something that the minister could do, would do, should do if he believed in the interests of the codes being protected.

Mr LAWLOR: I would certainly rely on the crown law advice that has been received by previous ministers and not on the member's advice. The member referred to race dates. As far as I know it has never been the situation that governments anywhere in Australia, and ministers particularly, have set race dates. How ridiculous would that be. That is exactly what the racing industry wanted. It wanted independence from the interference of ministers.

Mr Stevens: I said numbers, not race dates.

Mr LAWLOR: And that is what they have got. There is protection there anyway. There is protection that the number of race dates for country racing will not be reduced.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Interruption.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.59 pm): I advise honourable members that the House can continue to meet past 7.30 pm today. The House can break for dinner at 6.30 pm and resume its sitting at 7.30 pm. The order of business shall then be government business followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Detail

Resumed.

Clauses 5 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr STEVENS (6.00 pm): I move amendment No. 1—

1 Clause 11 (Insertion of new s 60B)

Page 9, lines 28 to 30 and page 10, lines 1 to 5—

omit.

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

Tabled paper: Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes for Mr Stevens's amendments to be moved during consideration in detail [[2283](#)].

Clause 11 states—

Insertion of new s 60B

Chapter 2, part 4, division 4—

insert—

'60B Payment of share of net UNiTAB product fee as prize money

This goes to the very core of what the minister has been espousing—that is, there is no detriment to the prize money that will be paid to country and provincial racing and non-TAB Queensland thoroughbred racing. The clause clearly states—

'60B Payment of share of net UNITAB product fee as prize money

'(1) A control body must pay 5.32% of its net UNITAB product fee for a year as prize money for non-TABQ thoroughbred races conducted by non-TABQ thoroughbred clubs in the year.

Minister, as we both realise and as the member for Keppel mentioned earlier, that equates to the current seven per cent under the existing formula. I have no problem with that conversion, and that is consistent with the commitment in the 2008 amendments to racing that enshrined the commitment to prize money in those non-TAB areas. Quite clearly, subsection 60B(2) states—

If, at the end of a year, a control body has not paid 5.32%—

which contradicts subsection (1)—

of its net UNITAB product fee for the year as prize money as required under subsection (1), the control body must use the remaining amount of the 5.32% for supporting non-TABQ thoroughbred racing.

This is a ridiculous subsection (2) which, in terms of the operational tactics of intimidation and threats by, currently, Queensland Racing to become Racing Queensland, will not be transferred as a direct result of the control body paying 5.32 per cent.

Subsection (1) correctly says 'must pay'. Subsection (2) says, 'Oh, you don't have to pay. You can, if you want to, put it into funding for upgrades of non-TABQ funding,' which might be a running rail, it might be carrying out maintenance and it may well be kept back as prize money from clubs. If somebody on the board or the chairman of Racing Queensland does not particularly like a particular club's acquiescence of subjugation being forced on them, they can say, 'There goes your prize money, country racing, for the year. We're going to put it into X club which is a big supporter of Racing Queensland. We'll put it into the capital improvements of X club so that we have then completed our commitment to the prize money allocation by putting it into a running rail, maintenance of a track, a new toilet block,' or whatever their favoured X club would want. It is absolutely ludicrous to suggest 'must pay 5.32 per cent' and then say that, yes, it is a natural transformation of the seven per cent that must be paid now across to the 5.3 per cent. It just does not make any logical sense and will be used by an unfriendly or unhelpful control body to threaten and get its own way with clubs that do not agree with its direction.

Mr JOHNSON: This is a very valid point that the shadow minister is raising. In the old legislation we were talking about seven per cent and in this legislation we are talking about 5.32 per cent. The fact is that these non-TAB clubs are certainly going to be the losers in this unless there is somebody who will really oversee the process. The bill itself says—

Example of use of remaining amount of the 5.32% for supporting non-TABQ thoroughbred racing—

carrying out maintenance at a non-TABQ thoroughbred club'.

This is of real concern to me. As I see it, there is going to be less money with the 5.32 per cent, and I refer to the country clubs here. I am not talking about the big metropolitan clubs. I do not have a problem with the upgrade of facilities anywhere. I am also not talking about the really small clubs either, because I think they might be struggling under this legislation, and I refer to clubs like McKinlay and those types of clubs that only race once a year.

Mr Schwarten: Not anymore. McKinlay couldn't get it off the ground.

Mr JOHNSON: I take the interjection from the Minister for Public Works; that is their bad management. The point I make is that these country clubs that have to find that sort of money will not be able to. I can see what is going to happen as a result of this—that is, there will be regionalisation of country racing. What I mean by that is that the larger centres will be the centres of racing and the smaller clubs will go by the wayside, and that is an unfortunate situation. I ask the minister to pay credence to what the shadow minister said, especially his amendment. I think it is one that is sacred to the survival of country racing and we should be very concerned that we get this mix right now. This is the opportunity to get it right before it is set in granite.

Mr LAWLOR: It is simple. This is not change. This is the same provision that was in the act in 2005, and it is put in there for a very good reason. Since then, for instance, with equine influenza there was a year when the seven per cent—I will get on to the other issue in a minute—simply could not be paid. What is the member saying? That we have another outbreak of—God help us—equine influenza where there is no money paid? What is the member saying should happen to the money? That is what that is put there for, and that is what it was used for. This has been there since 2005, so the member is worrying about something that is never going to happen.

Mr Schwarten: They opposed it then.

Mr LAWLOR: And they opposed it then, I might add too; that is also correct. Getting back to the issue that the member for Gregory raised, the seven per cent that is in the legislation now is seven per cent of the thoroughbred turnover with UNiTAB. It is a simple mathematical calculation. Of the total turnover—that is, thoroughbred, harness racing and greyhounds—the 5.32 per cent is the same as seven per cent. So that remains the same.

The total dollars as of right now remain the same and it will remain the same just as if it were seven per cent of the thoroughbred turnover; 5.32 per cent of the total turnover is the same. The other thing about it, which I have mentioned before, is that at the moment country racing gets 13 per cent of the thoroughbred turnover. So for everyone who thinks that Bob Bentley is the boogiemanager, I point out that he is spending almost twice as much. It does not get back to Bentley all the time, anyway. There are five people on that board at the moment. There will be seven. But is anyone going to suggest that Bob Bentley is going to tell Bill Ludwig what to do? Fair dinkum. The mind boggles. It is the same provision that has been there since 2005. It is there for a good reason. That is all I can say.

Mr STEVENS: The wording certainly still concerns me. The clause states that the control body must pay that 5.32 per cent into prize money. Surely, if we have an outbreak of equine influenza, as the minister says—and we dread the fact that equine influenza may come back to us—then that prize money should still be kept as the allocation for the owners of horses and the operators in the industry who put their sweat into the racing—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Correct. If the racing shuts down for some reason, then it is only appropriate that those moneys carry over for the next season. I have no problems with the mathematical change of the seven per cent to the 5.32 per cent but, quite clearly, non-TAB meetings are an important part of the fabric of these remote and isolated communities. They are a major part of the tapestry of the social environment. It is not just all about the success of UNiTAB. I understand more than most the success of UNiTAB. I can assure members that over the years I have contributed a fair bit to it. I understand completely that wagering funds racing. But that does not mean that, because we have one focus in our racing industry, we abandon all of those smaller areas that use it as a cottage industry for entertainment—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Exactly, and a business and all of those people who are employed in these areas. It is just as important for them to have their meetings in these areas as it is for the major cities and the major areas to have their UNiTAB race meetings. We would hate to see the situation where there is a reduction in the number of clubs because they do not get this 5.32 per cent funding.

My amendment is to delete part 2, which ensures that that prize money stays as prize money. If the prize money is not distributed in one year for any particular reason, that money will be in the prize money bag for the following year so that those people in those areas will have more funds to expend in the following years. The same thing occurs in the country if you have a drought. If you have a bad year then you can look forward to rain and a good season the following year. So that is why my amendment is to remove part 2. It also takes out any possibility that that money will be taken away as prize money and put into those clubs that are favourable to the racing control body for an upgrade of facilities. That is my main concern about part 2 of this clause. I believe that this amendment is valid and that the minister should not object to the removal of that part of the clause. He should support prize money for country racing. I look forward to the deletion of part 2 from clause 11.

Mr JOHNSON: The shadow minister has made a very valid point. I will be a devil's advocate in the case of something unforeseen happening. Unfortunately, a couple of years ago we had that awful equine influenza, which shut down our racing industry and every other equine industry in this state. I hear the hum around the House tonight that there is a detection of Hendra virus again somewhere in our state. These events are certainly going to cripple the racing industry or any other horse industry without a moment's notice if we do not have the protocols right. We have to get our biosecurity put in place.

As the shadow minister said, with that type of scenario we are not going to have the TAB funding. Certainly, the money is not going to be forthcoming from there. As I see it, country racing is going to be the ultimate loser in this scenario. We saw the panic a couple of years ago because of the equine influenza. I remember that at the time of that outbreak the Bedourie race club was on the eve of its race meeting. That club is located 1,000 kilometres from anywhere. But because of the criteria that was set in place by the Australian thoroughbred industry and the Queensland industry, we all adhered to the rules and the regulations. Who paid the supreme price? It was country racing. There was no need to suspend that race meeting at Bedourie and the same could apply to a lot of other areas. In that situation, the small country clubs are the ultimate losers. That is why I appeal to the minister to look at this amendment that was moved by the shadow minister because I think it is a protection for those clubs.

Mr LAWLOR: This clause is designed to protect small country racing clubs. It gives them the protection because, in the event that we have just discussed, it prescribes the following—

The control body must use the remaining amount of the 5.32% for supporting non-TABQ thoroughbred racing.

What happens if a club comes along and says, 'Sorry, we don't want the prize money; we want it spent on infrastructure,' or, 'We want it spent on something else.' That is a possibility.

Mr Stevens: We don't want that. We want the prize money.

Mr LAWLOR: I know the member does not want it but the club might. That gives them that flexibility if they want the money spent on something else. This provision has been in legislation since 2005.

Mr Stevens: But it is using prize money for capital works.

Mr LAWLOR: This gives the clubs the protection that they want. It provides for unforeseen events like equine influenza and it allows the funds to be spent in a manner in which the club might prefer. We will not be supporting the amendment.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Could I seek a clarification? Does the provision also allow for the control body—the new racing entity—to not allocate racing funds and use what should be prize money for maintenance, thus avoiding them allocating maintenance or capital money for country racing clubs?

Mr LAWLOR: It does not.

Mr Stevens: It can.

Mr LAWLOR: No, it cannot. It must be used for prize money. In the event of, say, equine influenza it must be spent on those clubs. Unfortunately, I think as the member for Gladstone alluded to before, a lot of these country clubs have difficulty keeping up with the maintenance of the infrastructure and so on.

Mr Johnson: The requisitions that are set down. With those modern-day requisitions you have to have an inside and outside track.

Mr LAWLOR: They have. That gets back to workplace health and safety issues, anyway. That is not provided for by Queensland Racing. There is provision in this agreement, I suppose you would call it, where the racing board has agreed to provide a million dollars over three years—roughly about \$300,000—to cover the issues associated with workplace health and safety. Other than that, it is up to the club and the councils—and in most cases the councils maintain the clubs. So this provision gives the clubs discretion. The money is not going to be lost to the industry. It gives clubs the discretion to say, 'We don't want it spent on prize money; we want it to do A, B and C.' That is in the unexpected situation where there is money left over.

Division: Question put—That the member for Mermaid Beach's amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 35—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

NOES, 46—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Stevens) negatived.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Mr STEVENS (6.26 pm): This clause relates to the provisions regarding entities involved in thoroughbred racing and recognises all of the country racing associations. Quite clearly, this is in line with the government's intention to remove the statutory recognition of country racing and country clubs from this legislation. The intention is to leave them at the whim, leave them at the discretion completely, of this new board and a constitution that the minister has not seen. It will be at the discretion of the new racing board, chaired by Mr Bob Bentley, that will put in a constitution that will suit the intent of Racing Queensland and will not recognise the major issues that country racing associations have to deal with, such as prize money, regularity of meetings, workplace health and safety issues. Country racing needed to be recognised in statutory form to protect it from an overbearing, threatening and intimidating racing board and a minister who refuses to step in at any stage and give any direction to that board. Quite clearly, the LNP is opposed to the omission from this new legislation of the recognition of these country racing entities. It also encompasses recognition later in clause 23 of country racing which will also be omitted.

Country racing and its recognition in these areas is the lifeblood of these communities. When living in Richmond, McKinlay, Julia Creek or any one of these remote areas there is no McDonald's to go to. I think even the old Richmond Theatre is gone these days.

Mr Johnson: I bet you got up to some tricks there.

Mr STEVENS: What happens on tour stays on tour. The opportunities for these folk to enjoy social interaction is not the same as we enjoy in the major cities and in South-East Queensland. Country racing is quite clearly the focus of these communities. This bill and the amendment to this bill takes the recognition of country racing away from the statutes. This is an intention that has been thwarting the current Queensland Racing board and its chairman, Mr Bentley, in moves that he has tried to put on country racing because it has been protected by the statutes.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr STEVENS: To continue, it is important that country racing maintains its protection and presence through statutory recognition, which this clause seeks to omit. It is vital for country racing associations to understand that their future is not at the whim and the will of this new entity, Racing Queensland. We understand now that Racing Queensland has happened. It will take place from 1 July. Quite clearly, all the issues in relation to country racing, the hurdles and stumbling blocks that Mr Bentley as chairman of Queensland Racing ran into, have been incorporated in this legislation. Quite clearly, any hurdles that he had with country racing and any difficulty he had in terms of directions for country racing, prize money, race dates, amendments and property issues will continue because Mr Bentley and Racing Queensland will be in charge of the constitution.

In the main, country racing associations are run with an enormous amount of voluntary labour. In country areas, people involved in the industry earn only a meagre amount of money from it. Certainly they are not doing it for the money. They are doing it to be part of an industry that they love and they enjoy. Countless hours of voluntary work go into those clubs. Many years ago I was a member of the Richmond Diggers Race Club so I know how hard the volunteers work. They feel they need protection, and I do not blame them.

If country racing groups are not recognised and protected—and I fear omitting that recognition in the legislation will lead eventually to their abolition—we will lose the grassroots of racing. We would not have a successful NRL State of Origin if junior and country rugby league was not played. It supports the main game. The main game in racing is UNiTAB and city racing and the funding that comes from those powerful areas. If we did not have any junior players and the second tier supporting that, interest in the main game in town would be lost, just like with the NRL. Quite clearly, for the breeding industry it is very important that we keep the country race meetings and organisations going because there are second-tier horses that cannot win in the main clubs of the south-east corner. They need an area that is promoted and protected, and that is why it is important that we keep the recognition of provincial and country racing areas in the legislation.

Quite clearly, under this constitution once it goes it is gone, because there is no capacity to change the process. It has been set in stone for a lot of years, unless there is a change of government. There is no way that those people can change the constitution or the recognition that Mr Bentley gives them. The election process that we have in this legislation is no election process. Board members will be appointed for at least another four years. That will take Mr Bentley's term to 12 years all up, unelected. If he works his numbers correctly—and he is very good at working numbers; I can assure the House that there is no-one better—he could take his term out to an unelected 20 years. As I said earlier, it is a ridiculous state of affairs.

Country people will have no capacity whatsoever to do anything other than walk away from racing. My great concern is that, if you take the grassroots out of country and remote areas, you take the heart and soul out of racing. That will impact greatly on the success of racing in the big cities. Many of us learned to love racing, betting and going to the track from our time in country areas. Most of the trainers and jockeys started in remote areas as apprentices. They learned their trade in that process.

Mr Johnson: Peter Moody.

Mr STEVENS: An absolute classic example is Peter Moody. If we take country racing out of the equation, we will lose the big city attraction, which will impact on the final product—that is, the UNiTAB distribution for racing in Queensland. I am very disappointed to see this taken out. The LNP will be opposing the omitting of country racing associations in this legislation.

Mr RICKUSS: I rise to support what the shadow spokesman for racing has just said. This is about country racing, which needs to be supported. On the weekend I happened to be at the Lockyer Race Club where over 500 people and five bookmakers participated in the day. I imagine that would be twice as many people as attended at Toowoomba and Ipswich put together. This is not just about racing. Crime Stoppers, the Toowoomba under 15s football club and other groups were there, all raising funds for different things. As the shadow minister has reiterated, this is also about the social aspect of racing. Race day is a lovely social day. The younger demographic—

Mr Shine: That's not going to change.

Mr RICKUSS: I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba North, who is assuring us that it will not change. It has changed. The Lockyer Race Club used to hold 12 meetings a year and now it has six. It has changed from Friday to Saturday. It is harder to get sponsorship on a Saturday. It was easier on a Friday because businesses used to use it as a team-building process. The whole office would go to the races. Unfortunately, on Saturday they are in competition with rugby, kids' sports and so on. Country racing really is important from a social aspect. I support what the shadow minister has said.

Mr LAWLOR: I might deal with the last point first, if that is okay. I read about the statements that the member for Lockyer made in the *Gatton, Lockyer and Brisbane Valley Star*. All the member is doing is demonstrating his ignorance. The member for Lockyer's recent statements in that paper demonstrate that he has no understanding of the Corporations Law, the Racing Act or, indeed, how the thoroughbred industry operates. Under the Australian rules of racing, the control body for thoroughbred racing in each state or territory is the only body with the power to allocate race dates. I do not know how many times I have to say it, but I am saying it again. That is the only body that can allocate race dates. No racing minister in this state or other states or territories has or has ever had the power to allocate race dates. I am guaranteeing the safeguards for country and regional thoroughbred racing in the legislation. That will be replicated in the constitution of Racing Queensland Ltd.

Country racing associations and the Queensland Country Racing Committee must be replicated in the Racing Queensland Ltd constitution before I will give approval for Racing Queensland to become the control body. The proposed board of racing, as I understand it through the department, has enthusiastically embraced these requirements and they will be part of that constitution. Another part of the constitution will be the requirement that the chairman resign and put himself up for reappointment at the first opportunity, which from my recollection is 2014. That will be another requirement of the control body and I think it will give some security for country racing.

This is an amalgamated control body structure, and having thoroughbred specific bodies specifically set up under the legislation is not appropriate. When we have a combined controlled body it must operate as such. These organisations were put in place by the former minister for racing, Minister Schwarten. Under the constitution of Racing Queensland Ltd, we will re-establish the country racing associations and the Country Racing Committee which are advisory bodies for non-TAB thoroughbred racing. The constitution will also provide that, should the company and Country Racing Committee be unable to reach agreement on the number of days in which country racing is to be held, the number of country race meetings for the year under consideration will not be fewer than the number of days on which country race meetings were held in the previous racing season. The safeguards are there. They will be incorporated into the constitution.

The current members of the Queensland Country Racing Committee were briefed on the new arrangements on 25 April by the department. At that time, seven out of eight supported the new arrangements. I am not saying that with all the scaremongering that has gone on some of them may have changed their opinion. But certainly when they were given that briefing, all except Gary Peoples, my instructions are, accepted the situation. So seven out of eight accepted it. There is no change to the requirement, as I said, with the minimum percentage—we have been down that track. I will not go on with that. The protection for country racing associations is still there.

Mr STEVENS: The minister keeps prattling on about the constitution: 'It will be protected in their constitution. Do not worry. Trust the matter.' We hear 'constitution, constitution, constitution'. We might not be arguing about these matters if someone on our side could see the constitution, if the industry had seen the constitution. But, oh no, this cloak and dagger approach to keep the constitution hidden is one of the problems that we have had with Queensland Racing and it looks quite clear to us that it will go forward to Racing Queensland.

Minister, I hope you listened today when I explained to you that the chairman of Queensland Racing promised me that he would give me his strategic plan, which he was halfway through and would finish within two weeks. He would give it to you—and I do not know whether you ever saw a strategic plan—and then he would give it to me. That did not happen. Why do we not trust the promises and all the matters we hear from Queensland Racing and from the mouth of Mr Bentley? Why? Because we do not see it come to fruition.

You tell us there is a constitution that protects us: 'Don't worry about it, Ray. Country racing is protected in the constitution.' If that is the case, why can't we see the constitution? Does the constitution not exist? If we saw the constitution that had all of these matters protected, as you say they are—and you told me earlier that you have not seen the constitution; you told the House that you have not seen the constitution but you are telling me it exists—

Mr Lawlor: No, I'm not.

Mr STEVENS: So there is no constitution.

Mr Lawlor: I don't know.

Mr STEVENS: What we are saying and what country racing is saying is that there is an amount of trust that they have to put into this legislation, into your government, into the old racing control body—and the new body will be virtually the same as the old one, with five out of the seven members on the old body being on the new body. In terms of counting numbers, five out of seven wins every time in a democratic vote. If there is a constitution that covers all of these matters, why is it being hidden from the industry? Why was it not part of the documents that said, 'This is how we are going forward with this new legislation.'? You have had this for quite a long time, yet this magical constitution has failed to come to light. Of all the interested racing participants, to bag particular media people I think is absolutely woeful and a coward's way out. The media is entitled to ask questions of the industry leaders.

Mr Lawlor: They are normally required to put both sides of an argument, too.

Mr STEVENS: What they are hearing is one side of an argument.

Mr Lawlor: Yes, yours and the QDC and the BRC's.

Mr STEVENS: They are hearing not my side of the argument; they are hearing the government's side—'Thou shall. Thou will. There will be this legislation. There is a constitution.' Unfortunately, with that cloak and dagger secrecy, you are going to find that people get suspicious. Their track record—with the promises, the super tracks, the buyouts, the wheeling and dealing by Queensland Racing, which will be the same as the new board of Racing Queensland—tells everyone in the industry that they are in for a rocky road. Unfortunately if you want to hide all of these matters then we will keep asking the questions. We will be keeping the government honest. We will want to see the constitution that the minister tells me is exactly the same as the current organisational arrangements for country racing and that they are totally protected in this new constitution. If they are not, Minister, I will bring it to your attention in this House and ask you to explain.

Mr LAWLOR: I will be happy for you to bring that to my attention, but I am quite confident that you will not be getting the opportunity. The trigger for the constitution is this bill passing. This legislation puts in place the structure of the organisation. The aims and objectives and so on are incorporated in the constitution, as with any company.

Mr Stevens: The board has been in place before the legislation.

Mr LAWLOR: That is not right. The point is that when this legislation takes effect that is when the board will be in place. The constitution will then be submitted to me for approval. If it does not have those protections for the country racing associations and so on, then it simply will not be approved and this organisation will not commence until that is resolved.

There are things that I expect to see in this constitution. The first and the most important thing is the protection of country racing. Indeed, down the track, the dogs or the trots or someone else may want some sort of similar advisory body, in which case it will essentially mean an application has to go to the chief executive and if it is acceptable then that is what will happen—instead of coming the long way around, coming in here and amending the legislation and so on. It will be a much easier process to include those things. Indeed, a country racing association might find it is too big and wants to be split in two. So instead of eight associations there may be nine or 12 or some other number down the track. For that reason, I cannot really add much more to that.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, I appreciate your answer being full and frank. I do believe that you are going forward with the best of intent and believing a lot of the matters that are being put to you by Queensland Racing in the preparation. You tell me that the board has not been in place. Can you explain to me how two months ago in a publication of Queensland Racing they said, 'These are the new board members.' They gave examples.

Mr Lawlor: Yes, when the legislation is passed.

Mr STEVENS: It never mentioned that. It says categorically, 'These are the new board members.' That is Mr Bentley's methodology. Could you also advise, as I asked earlier in my speech, the remuneration of the new directors of the board and the chairman's remuneration?

Mr LAWLOR: Firstly, this organisation does not exist as a legal entity until this legislation is passed and until the constitution is approved. At that point the seven directors become part of the company. So far as the remuneration goes, that will be submitted to the chief executive. When this bill passes there will be a report from a consultant that will recommend the remuneration for directors. The director-general must consider the recommendation. If he approves the level of directors fees, they cannot be changed without his approval. I actually went through this in my speech in reply to the second reading debate. That is exactly the process. There are other companies that use these sorts of processes, too.

Division: Question put—That clause 12, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 45—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, 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, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 33—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

Mr STEVENS (7.58 pm): The LNP will be opposing this clause. This clause seeks to amend the section headed 'Prohibition of disposal of assets etc. of non-proprietary entity'. Clause 19 seeks to insert—

- (5) A relevant control body may grant an approval mentioned in subsection (4)(b) on conditions the control body considers appropriate including a condition requiring a stated portion of the proceeds of the disposal of the asset to be paid to the control body for use by the control body for the benefit of its code of racing.

This is probably one of the most frightening clauses in the whole bill. I think it has been introduced purposely by the drafter of this legislation, Mr Bob Bentley, to overcome the fact that he has been thwarted on every occasion in his attempt to bring about his supertrack answer to Queensland racing. We have had three goes at a supertrack and they have all been thwarted. This legislation will give him the capacity, particularly if he holds the funding sword of Damocles over the heads of the race club, to coerce the race club into a relationship in which he becomes the majority shareholder of the race club in some arrangement, such as some shareholding company to operate the relevant race track. Then he will be able to agree to the sale of an asset, particularly a racecourse or a portion of a racecourse. And then he will be able to take those funds gained from the sale of that asset—it does not matter whether it is from Townsville, the Gold Coast or the Brisbane Racing Club—and utilise those in any way he sees fit.

Dr Douglas: He won't take it from Ipswich!

Mr STEVENS: No. Ipswich Turf Club basically has no training facilities for horses and has very little interest in people turning up to the Ipswich track. Yet for some strange reason Ipswich has never been the subject of Mr Bentley's direction in terms of the strategic plan for the future of racing. I am sure it has nothing to do with the fact that he used to be the chairman of Ipswich Turf Club. I am sure that Ipswich being part of a rusted-on ironclad Labor electorate has nothing to do with the fact that he has never looked at Ipswich for moving on, for sale or for being taken away from the good people of Ipswich.

But it does raise the question: where do the allegiances of the chairman of Queensland Racing, and now Racing Queensland, lie when he looks at selling off all of these other properties—from Doomben racecourse to fund Wacol or to fund an upgrade of Eagle Farm—or getting a lot of work done on the proposal to sell the Gold Coast Turf Club and move it over to Palm Meadows, which was a flood hole in the Merrimac flood plain? Quite clearly, a lot of good racing industry funds were expended in this area and wasted in pursuit of achieving the aims of the chairman of Queensland Racing.

Carefully drafted clause 19 inserts proposed subsection (5). It gives the chairman of Racing Queensland the power to go forward and negotiate. In particular it puts a heavy burden on those good race clubs that have negotiated an opportunity to proceed with funded upgrades to their properties. The minister attended one such property last year—the Brisbane Racing Club. The major development of their property will be impacted by this provision. There is no way in the world that all the high-rises that I saw on that plan will be built by anyone other than private enterprise. There is no way in the world—and the minister, as a former solicitor, would know this—that people will not go into those high-rise developments without some assurances. These developments will have to be passed by the new chairman of Racing Queensland who will then have the capacity to take some of those funds into his control body for use as he sees fit. It is quite clear in the legislation that that is possible. Whether or not he does that is another thing. Whether or not he wants to stymie development of the premier racing club in Queensland—where the group 1 racing—

Mr Lawlor: That's all you're worried about.

Mr STEVENS: I'm very worried, Minister, because in the city capitals—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I have already explained to the minister about country racing. He rejected my explanation outright and voted against the improvements. Now we are moving on to the major club—the club that holds all the group 1 races in Queensland and is a major part of racing in Australia—and the

minister wants to pooh-pooh them at every opportunity. He wants to disregard them and carry on the Bob Gibbs Bolshevik stance—that is, that everything is terrible at Eagle Farm and Doomben. They hate the Labor Party. Shame—a lot of other people do too.

The fact of the matter is that it is our premier club. It should be addressed, looked after and promoted. Without group 1 racing—and even their mate Bob Bentley will tell them this—and black type racing and given all the fillies in this state, racing will go backwards faster than the last horse I backed at Eagle Farm.

This clause gives the new chairman the capacity to squeeze the operational funding of all clubs—clubs such as Townsville Turf Club. Good luck, fellas. The same will happen with Rockhampton. They could not afford to maintain their brand-new \$6½ million track so he will say, 'Good on you, fellas. I will take over ownership of your track.'

What is wrong with the proposal by the Gold Coast Turf Club for Racing Queensland to, in the interests of racing, take over the asset by lease? It could be a peppercorn lease over 99 years. So then the guy who supposedly has the interests of racing at heart in Queensland could maintain the Gold Coast Turf Club track and do improvements depending on what he wanted to spend. Some \$20 million could be spent down there in one fell swoop if there was a 99-year lease. He could do up the stables. He could do whatever he wants to those facilities without taking ownership of the facility. It gives him the capacity to sell it if he deems fit.

His proposal, as the minister well knows, at this point in time is majority ownership of the Gold Coast Turf Club. He has not given up on his Palm Meadows proposal. The chairman got thwarted left, right and centre after the change in board membership. They were totally opposed to his direction. This amendment gives him the opportunity through funding, a reduction in race dates—the same old weapons of mass destruction that I mentioned earlier—to do what he wants to race clubs. He can say, 'Okay, fellas, you look after a racecourse that supports 700 to 800 Queensland horses.' They are not Gold Coast horses, they are Queensland horses. Most of the horses that run in the metropolitan area are trained down on the Gold Coast, as the minister well knows. Instead of putting in \$800,000 per annum he gives them about \$270,000 and says, 'You go and fund that.'

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr STEVENS: That is absolutely correct. I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba South because he did the same thing at Toowoomba. The same thing happened in terms of the installation of their track. Their numbers are down in Toowoomba as well. I digress. I am sure this legislation will be abused on Toowoomba. When they run into the same difficulties maintaining that expensive track that the chairman put in he will make an offer to take over their track as well. That is what this clause is all about, and we reject it completely.

Mr LAWLOR: It is interesting that the shadow minister is so interested in group 1 racing. If I did what he suggested I should, as is evidenced by the letter that I tabled today, group 1 racing would be lost. Black type racing would be lost. We cannot interfere in the day-to-day running of racing. I have said that 20 times now, but it still does not seem to get through.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr LAWLOR: You mentioned group 1 racing. You said that it is all held at Eagle Farm.

Mr Stevens: It is.

Mr LAWLOR: Fair enough. I will repeat what I said before about the history of Eagle Farm racecourse so there is no misunderstanding. The Eagle Farm racecourse was established in 1863 when the QTC was granted 320 acres of crown land. They did not buy it. It was public land given to them. In 1875 the land was transferred to trustees appointed by the QTC. During the parliamentary debate in 1875, then Attorney-General, Sir Samuel Griffith, made the following observations—

The QTC has no more right to the land than any other turf club or society of gentlemen who might use it for racing purposes.

Mr Stevens: That's right; it's used for racing purposes, not—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order!

Mr LAWLOR: He continues—

Further, the QTC were entitled to public approaches for their exertions but they could not be recognised in the House as anything more than a private society.

That is the answer. Further, when it was transferred, the 1997 Eagle Farm Racecourse Bill provided freehold title to Eagle Farm. It was debated in here. Then Minister Russell Cooper when speaking on the issue of Eagle Farm said—

The State Government recognises the importance of protecting the interests of the wider racing industry and although the freehold will be transferred ... to the QTC ... the incorporated club will not be able to sell the land without the ... consent of the Minister ...

There is a further check in there—that is, land cannot be sold without the consent of the club, the control body and then the minister, and they are the three steps. That is the simple answer. There are 130 race clubs in Queensland. This provision applies to 10 that own their own racecourses.

It is interesting that the member gives the example of Townsville in that it was not allowed to sell off some land. That land was given to it in 2005. In 2005 it was given \$8 million worth of land freehold. It has run the joint into the ground. Apparently it still owes the race caller and the person who runs the photo finish. It cannot pay them. So what is its solution? To sell off a couple of acres, and you want to support that? You have got to be joking! We are not supporting it, and that is the end of it.

Division: Question put—That clause 19, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 44—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—

Mr STEVENS (8.18 pm): I move the following amendments—

4 Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 10, pt 6))

Page 14, lines 23 to 32 and page 15, lines 1 to 6—
omit.

5 Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 10, pt 6))

Page 19, lines 23 to 29 and page 20, lines 1 and 2—
omit.

Proposed section 430 under clause 23 is 'Provision taken to be included in constitutions of former control bodies' and proposed section 441 is 'Dissolution of Queensland Country Racing Committee and country racing associations'. Those issues were covered fairly extensively in clause 12, but it had to be included as part of the discussions. Therefore, I personally will not be discussing in much great depth proposed section 441 because we have been over the matter and the government has made its determination on that particular issue.

New clause 430, titled 'Provision taken to be included in constitutions of former control bodies' states—

Each former control body's constitution is taken to include, and to have always included, a provision allowing a director of the former control body to give the former control body's agreement to the enactment of provisions having the effect of provisions set out in this part, in particular, provisions—

- (a) cancelling the former control body's approval and giving, to the new control body, an approval as the control body for all codes of racing.

Quite clearly, this is one of the problems that Mr Bentley, as the former chairman of Queensland Racing, ran into when he was drafting this legislation. He said, 'Hey, we have to put in a clause that gives me the power to go and talk to two people only out of the trotting and greyhound industries—the two chairpersons of those trotting and greyhound industries. I want the power to be able to talk to them and let them make a decision that I am sure will not be influenced by the fact that I am going to give them a board position on the new racing board.' As the minister said earlier, we do not know what that remuneration will be, but there is one particular member of that board who is out spruiking how the amount of money is going to escalate drastically. That comes not from the horse's mouth but perhaps the dog's mouth. They are already spruiking how they have had a big win for their particular code of racing.

Even the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee had great concerns about this retrospective legislation. I have addressed the shareholders of the harness industry who, to a man, were quite happy to oppose this move of putting three codes into one. But were they asked? No. The one person who was going to get a gig on the new board—the new board—was the only person who was asked by the future chairman of Racing Queensland, 'If you come on board with me, you will be the director and I will put in legislation that protects you from any action by any of the harness industry, or greyhound industry, or thoroughbred industry former directors.' The new section states 'a director' but it could well have said 'mates of mine', 'future board directors of Racing Queensland', or 'people who agree with me.'

This new section is typical of this legislation. It is the worst drafted, worst directed, worst intended legislation that I have seen come into this House. It is an absolutely abhorrent aberration of justice and fair principles. Yet the minister is quite happy to stand there and protect all of the nefarious clauses of this legislation that absolutely detract from and debilitate the racing codes that have been affected.

As I said, the consultation was with one member of the trotting industry and with one member of the greyhound industry. The minister finds that acceptable. I do not think that the Integrity Commissioner would find that acceptable—‘We are not going to him. We do not want to ask the Integrity Commissioner about anything to do with racing because it stinks.’

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Absolutely. There is no capacity. I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba South. That is what you do in dictatorships. It is the power of one. That is what it is all about. Again, I come back to that Labor Party philosophy of letting the chairman of Racing Queensland take all the blame for their inaction, underfunding and thoroughbred racing, harness racing and greyhound racing woes.

Just on the subject of greyhound racing, might I say a classic example is this Labor government taking away the lands of the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club and saying, ‘We will give you \$10 million in compensation.’ The Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club said, ‘That’s fair enough. We are prepared to work with the government for a new hospital to go on our greyhound track site.’ But what happened? The money does not go to the Gold Coast Greyhound Racing Club. In fact, the Gold Coast—

Mr Lawlor: It was never supposed to. It went to the board. It did not go to the club at all.

Mr STEVENS: That is not what they tell me was told to them. I ask the minister to tell me the logic of that club giving up their track to give \$10 million to Logan City, or to—

Mr Lawlor: Because it is an industry asset. The \$10 million has gone to the board—

Mr STEVENS: I understand that it has gone there, but the minister should tell me the logic of anybody giving up their asset and saying, ‘Go and give it to Townsville’, ‘Go and give it to the Burdekin, Mackay and Rockhampton.’ It would not have happened. They tell me that they were told that they were getting \$10 million. Of course, the minister is Sergeant Schultz. It is nothing to do with him. He was not involved in the negotiations. Yet that club has disappeared off the face of this earth and, unfortunately, under this particular Labor government it will not be resurrected.

This retrospectivity is totally unacceptable. We will be voting for the deletion of these two particular clauses and we will be supporting the amendment that I have moved.

Mr JOHNSON: I will not go over the ground that the shadow minister has just canvassed. In relation to new section 441, what guarantee can the minister give that there is going to be country racing representation on that board? This legislation gives the impression that it is Big Brother legislation. There is going to be a centralised board that will not have any consideration at all for those smaller clubs outside the south-east corner. I appreciate the needs of the south-east corner clubs. They are an integral part of Queensland racing. But it is also important to know the make-up of that board.

Mr RICKUSS: All I would like to say is that I support the amendment that the shadow minister has moved. I support country racing and I support country racing for the Lockyer.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Under the provisions of the resolution agreed to by the House and the time limit for the consideration of the bill having expired, the question is that clauses 23 to 34, as read, be agreed to.

Division: Question put—That clauses 23 to 34, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 44—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O’Brien, O’Neill, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Douglas, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seene, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Third Reading

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

That the bill be now read a third time

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

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.

BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 April (see p. 1466), on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (8.34 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, but it is with a sense of disappointment that we find ourselves on a Thursday evening with a guillotine hanging over our heads, literally, on this bill. It is unfortunate because this minister has, during his time, had four bills presented to this House and three of them have been guillotined. Each of them has involved important pieces of legislation.

Mr Hinchliffe: You agreed to this.

Mr GIBSON: This government is arrogant.

Mr Hinchliffe: You agreed to do this.

Mr GIBSON: I take the interjections from the minister. The standing orders of this House provide the government with control over much of the agenda of the Queensland parliament. Whilst it is acknowledged that what is contained within this bill is important—pool safety is important—and needs to be implemented so that the training can be commenced, we find the control by this Labor government in determining what the House debates and for how long and in what manner the parliament is able to scrutinise the executive a source of frustration for many and it affects the public's confidence in the work of this parliament. The increasing tendency by this government to use guillotine motions to manage government business raises questions that go to the very role of parliament and its members. We have seen from this government an arrogance when it comes to the parliament performing its duties. I acknowledge the fact that we have agreed to the guillotine.

Mr Hinchliffe: You acknowledge that!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Infrastructure, please.

Mr GIBSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, your protection is appreciated. It has been done because this bill is important and we need to address it. There are two reasons we have been faced with this guillotine: either the government is incompetent in managing the business of this parliament or the government does not wish to have the bill fully examined.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gympie, this House is not considering the guillotine motion. That motion has already been agreed to by everybody in this House.

Mr GIBSON: There was a division.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Everybody in this House agreed to the changes that were put forward by the Leader of the House. What I ask you to do now is to move towards the provisions of the bill that are currently before the House, not towards a motion that has already been agreed to.

Mr GIBSON: Thank you for your guidance. The bill that is before the House, the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, has its genesis in some elements in the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2009. However, we note that this bill is focusing on pool safety improvements. From 1 December 2009 the first stage of the swimming pool safety improvement strategy was implemented under the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation No. 3 2009. Those changes within the regulation included a simplification of fencing laws for outdoor swimming pools constructed after 1 December 2009 pursuant to the new MP3.4 swimming pool barriers of the Queensland Development Code. It also allowed for compliant temporary pool fencing during pool construction provided the temporary fencing is inspected by a building certifier before the pool is filled with more than 300 millimetres of water; that new pools undergo final inspection by building certifiers before the building approval lapse date; and mandatory display of CPR signage that reflects the current CPR method adopted by the Australian Resuscitation Council.

This bill is the second stage of that swimming pool safety improvement strategy. We understand, from the advice of the government, that it is expected to take effect on 1 December 2010, and will be achieved mainly by encouraging and requiring greater compliance with pool fencing requirements, reducing the confusion and complexity that is currently associated with those requirements, and extending the requirement to pools that are currently exempted such as portable pools that are more than 300 millimetres deep.

I seek the indulgence of the House, in light of the fact that we have limited time in consideration in detail, to pose questions to the minister that I ask that he address in his summing-up. If I could be allowed that latitude.

One of the areas that we would be looking at relates to portable pools. Many of them are premanufactured. There is a question as to whether the 300 millimetres relates to the total capacity of the pool or is it okay if the pool is only filled to a depth of 300 millimetres of water? It would be of assistance if that clarification could be provided. If it is the case that it refers to pools with a depth of only 300 millimetres of water in them, there may be a need for manufacturers selling those portable pools in Queensland to indicate on the pools a line that clearly shows the 300 millimetre depth, so that the owner understands not to fill above that level.

The new legislation will create a number of obligations for swimming pool owners, such as requiring pools to be registered; obtaining a pool safety inspection and a certificate before selling or leasing the property; complying with the safety requirements of the newly constructed pools, regardless of when the pools were originally constructed; upgrading pools to whatever safety requirements are current at the point of sale or lease of that property; and properties with pools are to be subject to greater rights of entry by local government inspectors. The LNP supports progress in the swimming pool safety improvement strategy. We note that it is tragic that approximately half of the child drownings that occur in this state happen in pools with known fencing defects. We commend the government for the initiative that will require these changes at the time of the sale or lease of a property, hopefully providing a safer environment for families that move into new homes with unfamiliar pools.

It is noted that some existing homeowners will face hugely increased costs as a result of this legislation. In particular, those homes that have been given approvals prior to 1991 that allowed such things as self-closing doors and safety glass as appropriate barriers for pools will face that extra burden. It is acknowledged that for some owners of homes with such pools this can mean a substantial burden. However, child safety is the core issue. Our understanding is that there is a requirement for them to obtain a pool safety certificate within a five-year period, so there would be an opportunity within that five years to bring the pool up to the appropriate standard, or at the time of sale or lease of that property.

Also I note that this bill establishes the framework for the swimming pool inspector licensing system. Of course, some concerns have been raised. Very recently within the federal sphere with the insulation debacle, we saw what happens when you take a good idea and poorly implement it. We hope that there is a strong focus on the proper training of pool inspectors and that there will be vigilance within the legislation—we acknowledge what is written there, but are concerned about the application of it—to ensure that we do not have shonky operators coming into the market and setting up business as pool inspectors, but finding that they have not had the appropriate training or that they are not adhering to the requirements that are contained within this bill. Of course, as set out in the bill the responsibility of that will lie with the newly created independent body, the Pool Safety Council, to oversee the operation of the swimming pool safety inspector licensing system. Again with your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Maybe the indulgence is getting lower.

Mr GIBSON: I pose a question to the minister about the membership of the Pool Safety Council. I note that it will consist of a representative from the department, a representative from the LGAQ and other members as the minister sees fit. We have no desire to move a motion on this, but we feel that it would be appropriate to have a required representative from the Swimming Pool & Spa Association or another peak body. I am sure that was considered and I would be interested to hear from the minister whether there is an intention to ensure, in some way, that there is always a representative from the industry on that council.

The bill allows trained and licensed swimming pool safety inspectors to conduct pool safety inspections and to issue pool safety certificates, if all prescribed requirements are met. An accredited pool inspector will inspect the pool and issue a compliance certificate. I note from the RIS the suggested cost is between \$10 and \$30 per certificate. Whilst that cost will be passed on to pool owners, there is the additional cost that the inspector may charge as an inspection fee, which is likely to be between \$90 and \$130. It is acknowledged that these are not large amounts of money, but for some homeowners an additional \$100 to \$160 is an extra impost to be paid in difficult financial times. We have seen a fuel tax imposed, registration costs go up, there will be an increase in driver's licence charges and this will be another burden placed on families. Whilst it is acknowledged that there must be a payment for these activities, we want to ensure that those fees and charges do not climb out of control.

The approval process for swimming pool safety inspector training courses and the regulation of training for pool safety inspectors is a very important element in this bill. From my perspective, it is probably going to be the element that makes or breaks the implementation of this legislation. If we can get the training right and we can ensure that that training is controlled and regulated, we will be confident in what is being rolled out across the state. If we fail in the area of the training courses, I fear that all the best intentions of this bill to reduce the incidence of child drownings in swimming pools may be for naught. I stress to the minister the importance of ensuring that the training courses are of an appropriate standard.

There are questions about the implementation of the state based swimming pool register. Homeowners with pools may assume that their council is aware of the pool and may assume that the council will place it onto the register. There is a three-month period for councils to do that. If householders have not been picked up by councils within six months, they must indicate themselves. I put it to the minister that at the three-month mark or shortly after, homeowners need to be able to check the register. I note that the register will be online. I would hope that they will be able to do that in the interim three-month period, at no cost. They need to be confident that, if the council has not placed their swimming pool onto the register, they can act. Of course, that will go with the requirement for education and an advertising campaign at the three-month point. I am sure the department is reviewing its education strategy on this, but there are some key time lines involved and, in my opinion, that is one of them. That needs to be made very clear.

Of course, we are concerned about the burden that will be placed on local councils with regards to the enforcement of various activities that are occurring. We note that the LGAQ has a representative on the Pool Safety Council and we wish to ensure that we do not place an unrealistic burden on local government to undertake these activities.

My whip has advised that the time is getting on, so I will touch on a few of the other elements contained within this bill. I cannot help but make the comparison to *Groundhog Day*. When it comes to 'ban the banners', we find ourselves addressing this issue like the Pittsburgh TV weatherman played by Bill Murray: we are living through it all over again. It is unfortunate because, if we look back to the original 'ban the banners' legislation that came through, we indicated at that point that, whilst we supported the principle, our biggest concern was the unintended consequences. What we are finding here is a government that is saying, 'Whoops, we made a mistake. We're going to have to go back and fix it up.' If the government were not so arrogant and if it actually respected the parliament, then at the time the original bill was being debated we could have moved amendments. If we did not have a guillotine put on that original bill, we would have had an opportunity to discuss those things.

I cannot help but reflect upon that original bill because contained within it was the sustainability declaration. We raised concerns and what did we find? The good comrades of the Labor Party stood up one after another and read their prepared speeches and they all said how good it was and how they did not have any trouble determining the energy efficiency rating of their homes. But now the government, after listening to the real concerns in the community, is on version 3—the third incarnation of the sustainability declaration. It comes back to the very important point that this parliament, with regard to bills, is about debating. It is about listening and making changes. And where there are unintended consequences, we need to act upon them at the time, not force them through. The government should not be so arrogant to assume that it has got it right, but rather should listen and make the changes.

We note that there is a legitimate aim in increasing sustainability, but we have to do that not just in a token way but in a productive way. The changes that have been brought about move away from being purely aesthetic changes to those that are able to be delivered. The question has to be asked: why did these changes occur now and not at the time when the government said they had widely consulted? The obvious answer to that question is that it was all about shoring themselves up with the Greens. They found themselves in such a difficult position. Their reputation was in tatters after Traveston. So they pandered to the Greens. They pandered to them in bringing about components within 'ban the banners' that clearly were not of benefit to the state. Now we find ourselves in a position where the government has admitted it is wrong. We are now getting sensible provisions brought in and we are supportive of those.

With regard to the RNA amendments, for all Queenslanders the Ekka and the RNA are institutions that are integral to their lives. They have grown up with them. The Ekka is a part of the very fabric of Queensland. The LNP supports the future viability of the RNA in order to ensure that future generations of Queenslanders are able to enjoy this great event and this great area. It is acknowledged that the RNA's redevelopment is a 15-year program of enhancement. It will see some changes to the traditional vistas of the Ekka, but it will also ensure its long-term economic viability. To allow this development, the LNP recognises that the RNA has to partner with the private sector. At the time when the RNA act was brought in there was probably never any consideration that the RNA would be partnering with the private sector. But, as is the case today, that is required and the private sector needs some surety when raising finances over these developments. This amendment is an avenue to allow this investment to occur. I note that, in effect, the Governor in Council can approve the future sale of the results of the development.

I do have some concerns with the RNA area. The explanatory notes, in the first paragraph under clause 25, state, '... for the Governor in Council to attach conditions on any such approval.' But in the third paragraph it states, 'The insertion of new section 13(2A) provides that the Governor in Council may attach conditions to an approval.' I ask the minister to clarify that for the record. We believe quite strongly that obviously any sale needs to be conditional so that it is linked to the purposes for which the redevelopment of the RNA precinct is occurring. Whilst there is no imputation that either the RNA or its private sector partners would be acting inappropriately, we do believe, as we are acting on behalf of the people of Queensland, that there needs to be clarity.

With regard to the amendments for the ULDA, it is acknowledged that they are minor amendments. Currently the ULDA cannot approve a development that is inconsistent with existing preliminary approval or the ULDA land use plan. This amendment allows the ULDA to approve development consistent with either preliminary approval or the land use plan. This is a small change but it will enable the ULDA to move forward and continue the work that it is tasked to do within this state.

We are looking at amendments to the Building Act 1975, the Land Title Act 1994, the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Act 1971 and the Urban Land Development Act 2007. By far the most important element contained within the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 is the element of pool safety. Whilst it is, I am sure, the wish of every member of this parliament that as a result of this bill there would not be another child drowning within this state, we need to be pragmatic enough to say that unfortunately there will still be accidents. There will still be occasions when tragedy will occur. But it is sincerely hoped that the amendments and the implementation that is occurring with the pool safety program will go a long way to protecting the lives of children within the state of Queensland and making pools a much safer experience.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (8.56 pm): I rise to speak to the debate on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which seeks to make amendments to the Building Act 1975 to implement the legislative and administrative requirements for the second stage of the government's pool safety strategy; also to the 'ban the banners' provisions of the Building Act 1975 to remove or modify some prohibitions relating to covenants and body corporate by-laws which impose certain building restrictions; and to the Urban Land Development Act 2007 to provide certainty to the Urban Land Development Authority in relation to sealing plans and development approvals.

In addressing the pool safety aspects of this bill, I wish to place on record that, as a former paediatric nurse, I am well aware of the irreversible impact that immersions and drownings of young people have on families. I nursed many children who were left in a vegetative state as a result of being found unconscious in swimming pools and dams, and I can tell honourable members that to this day, some 30 years since I cared for those children, I am still moved by their images and those of their parents—perfectly formed children who, through an avoidable tragedy, could no longer communicate and parents filled with grief and often guilt, praying for a miracle each time they visited.

Despite this government's legitimate attempts to improve pool safety in Queensland, there can be no legislation or regulation that dilutes the responsibility of parents and guardians to supervise children in and around the pool or any watercourse.

Mr Hinchliffe: Hear, hear.

Mrs STUCKEY: I acknowledge the minister agreeing. While these laws may strengthen regulations for pool fencing, it is critically important that safety messages are drilled into adults and children alike. On a broader scale, this government also has a responsibility to actively promote water safety around dams and other open water spaces and at the beach. Despite the tragic drownings of tourists that mark our state every summer, many hotels and accommodation outlets on the Gold Coast are still not displaying the surf safety message.

Swim coach and pool safety advocate Laurie Lawrence, who resides in my electorate of Currumbin, should be praised for his dogged efforts in promoting the swim safety message to all Australians. 'Kids Alive—Do the Five' has been one of the most successful safety campaigns in educating the public about child drownings and five preventative steps that should be observed stringently. A new pool fence inspector licensing system is being proposed under the provisions of this bill and a Pool Safety Council formed to oversee the system and its training requirements. I spoke recently with an experienced building certifier who confirmed that there are simply not enough qualified individuals in Queensland to certify the existing number and future growth of pools with fences. These comments are contrary to what the government claimed was ensured through consultation with key industry stakeholders for the bill.

This expert has warned that there will be an enormous uptake of inspector licences to gain access to the booming industry. It is imperative that the Blich government control the resulting situation more thoroughly and efficiently than their federal counterpart in the failed insulation and green loans schemes and this government's own solar plans. The immediate safety of children's lives is at stake. The legislation must not give rise to an influx of shonky training academies and a boom of inexperienced pool fencers and inspectors, trying to cash in on another poorly planned Labor government scheme.

In light of the fact that this bill was subject to some guillotining earlier, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I have passed it by Mr Speaker today and he has approved it.

Leave granted.

This Bill also provides the authority for the Government to create and maintain a State-based swimming pool register.

According to the Government's Swimming Pool Safety Improvement Strategy: Regulatory Impact Statement released for comment regarding the stage 2 recommendations of the pool safety law reform, 2009 projections from ABS data estimate some 300,000 homes in Queensland have an in or above-ground swimming pool. This figure I expect is an understatement as no accurate data has been collected.

Pool ownership is undoubtedly a popular trend in Queensland, accompanying our booming population in South East Queensland, and the Gold Coast in particular.

Concerns have been aired that owners of soon-to-be non-compliant pools may risk not registering their pool to avoid facing the large costs involved in reaching compliance. What will the Minister do—send out swimming pool police in helicopters to count the pools? Only one problem: we don't have a police helicopter.

While uniform pool safety measures are paramount, it is equally important to afford home owners and body corporate managers enough time to implement the new requirements without being penalised. If the subsequent regulation is adopted later this year, pool owners will be required to register their pool within 6 months, or face 20 penalty units (\$2,000).

The timeframe for meeting the new safety standards is 5 years, however the Government is proposing that by 1 December 2010, a person will be unable to sell or lease their property until the pool safety barrier has been inspected and a compliance certificate issued—that's only 6 months away. The Government have had years to act on this issue but left it until April 2010 to bring in this legislation and then force people to comply in a matter of months.

This is certainly not enough time to allow all owners wanting to sell their property to bring their pool fences up to the proposed regulated standard, and could impose severe financial consequences. Non-compliance penalties are tipped to range from \$500 on the spot, to a \$16,500 court penalty (GCB 1/05/10). Many home-owners are finding their mortgage repayments prohibitive with other costs such as fuel, electricity, licences, and water rising and are having to sell their properties. How will they manage to find extra funds to properly fence their pools before they put their home on the market? What measures will be introduced for families and individuals suffering hardship?

Current pool fence exemptions have been operating for years and many homeowners, particularly on the Gold Coast, will be affected by the proposed strategy. It was originally intended for these exemptions to only span the period of time the occupier remained living at the property. However, it can be assumed that this has not been strictly regulated over the years, with owners who gained exemptions selling and moving on, leaving the new home-owner to inherit the situation.

The average cost to individual householders to upgrade their pool fences to the required safety standard is estimated at \$430, and the cost of installing a new fence estimated at \$3000-5000 according to publications by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning. However, as many pools on the Gold Coast have been designed with lake, canal or beach views in mind, many pool owners would be seeking a glass fence that would not obstruct their views rather than the cheaper aluminium alternative. Costs could reach up to \$20,000 which is a hefty impost, particularly for home owners whose exemptions will be removed without consideration.

The Departmental fact sheet on these stage two reforms says the proposed measures are to "remove pool barrier exemptions and variations granted by local governments so that all pools meet the same safety standards".

Whilst preventative measures to improve pool safety are meritorious I do ask the Government to show some consideration towards those who will be severely compromised by these new laws and also offer some protection to them from unscrupulous contractors.

Will the Minister clarify that this exemption will continue to be granted for people with disabilities if the proposed second stage of the pool safety strategy comes into action later this year?

Moving now to the amendments relating to the Building Act 1975, I note the "Ban the banners" provisions which were rushed through Parliament last November, are already up for amendment a mere 6 months later. As was the case with the embarrassing Sustainability Declaration Form, subsequent industry consultation that had been previously ignored revealed that, once again, the Government got it wrong with this policy. As my colleagues and I reiterated in the debate last November on amendments to this Act, we whole-heartedly support the delivery of more sustainable housing in Queensland.

However the government's November amendments went too far and the Government has been forced to backtrack on its restrictive and counter-productive laws.

I recall the introduction of the hastily prepared sustainability declaration, which saw my electorate office staff printing out new copies of revised forms just about every week as concerned constituents requested information!

I wish to turn now to the amendments to the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 contained within this bill. According to the explanatory notes, amendments to Section 56 of the ULDA Act are needed to remove the barriers that inconsistencies with land use plans are presenting to the delivery of the significant developments.

Also stated in the explanatory notes are the aims of the Authority: to bring housing and land supply to the market quickly and, by and large, to assist with improving housing affordability in Queensland. Three years have now passed since the ULDA was established in 2007, albeit under a cloud of controversy, and neither of these goals is closer to being achieved.

Local governments cried foul at the blatant power grab that was established with the ULDA. The Authority can override local governments, local communities and well-established local planning procedures, all at the behest of the responsible Minister.

The handover of the final parcel of land to the ULDA was delayed by this Labor Government until April this year, making a mockery of the swift land to market concept underpinning the Authority's purpose (CM).

The reality of owning one's home is merely a distant afterthought for many Queenslanders while Premier Bligh and Labor are in Government. Applications for social housing in my electorate, totalling 803 applications as of April 2010, reflect the desperation of far too many people struggling to make ends meet week after week. The current financial demands facing the average Queenslanders are crippling, imposed by a Government that cannot keep utility prices down and cannot keep housing affordable.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.00 pm): I, too, rise to speak on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I would like to focus initially on the amendments to the Building Act 1975. I, too, understand that this is stage 2 of a legislative implementation process that began late last year and that it is in response to the review announced on 14 December 2008. These amendments will establish the pool inspector licensing system framework, create the Pool Safety Council, allow inspectors to conduct inspections and issue certificates, set up approval processes for inspector training courses and establish the state based swimming pool register.

As both of the speakers before me have said, the death of one child in a pool drowning is one death too many. If these amendments make that death less likely, they have my support. But I must comment briefly on the original review and ask on behalf of a constituent, Mr Harry Wrangle of Elimbah, why his individual submission was not even acknowledged? Harry is passionate about pool safety and believes that greater safety lies in pool gate design. I understand that Harry provided the swimming pool safety review committee with several design improvements. Unfortunately, his submission appears to have been neglected completely. In the interests of keeping our children safe around pools, I would ask that the government leaves no stone unturned when it comes to exploring all of the options, and I ask that it not be another 20 years before this legislation is reviewed again so that people like Harry can contribute their knowledge and skills.

This bill also makes amendments to the ULDA Act and the RNA Act, both of which the member for Gympie has commented on at some length in outlining the LNP's position.

Let me conclude by making brief comments on the amendments to the Building Act commonly referred to as the 'ban the banners' provisions. I am beginning to wonder if the Australian Labor Party should actually be renamed the 'Australian Backflippers Party'. It appears the Queensland division has been taking lessons from its federal counterpart and has begun backflipping of its own accord. Yet again we are amending legislation that, if the government had consulted on properly in the first place, would have been right the first time. I must confess that it was rather comical to hear in our opposition briefing the comment that these amendments bring the legislation closer to the original election commitment. It does make you wonder, as the shadow minister has noted, if the original legislation was more about appeasing the Greens and not about the ALP election platform, let alone the wishes of the broader electorate. Perhaps we will get there in the end.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (9.02 pm): I rise in support of the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I thank brave parents Katherine and Andrew Plint, who have taken part in the Queensland government pool safety awareness campaign. I thank them for their dedication and commitment to reduce pool deaths and incidents in Queensland. I cannot begin to imagine how difficult it must be for them, every time they try to raise awareness of parents and children, that they have to relive their trauma at the loss of their young daughter, Hannah. It took their daughter, Hannah, less than three minutes to get into the pool—the same time it took Katherine to change her son's nappy. Hannah grabbed a chair and opened the gate. That was all it took.

In 2008-09 eight children died in Queensland pools. It is estimated that around 50 young children attend emergency departments following immersion incidents annually. Some of these children will suffer permanent brain damage. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death in children aged under five in this state. There are many factors that contribute to children drowning in residential swimming pools, for example inadequate fencing or in fact no fencing at all, lack of gate security, lack of effective water safety skills, inadequate supervision and a lack of knowledge on how to administer CPR.

The Queensland state government asked an expert committee including Kidsafe, the Royal Life Saving Society and the Local Government Association to review Queensland pool laws. As a result of the review we are introducing tough new pool safety standards. The committee released a consensus report with 23 findings, all of which will be implemented. To allow pool owners and local government time to adjust, the government has adopted a two-stage swimming pool safety improvement strategy to implement these recommendations. Last year the government rolled out the first stage and today we are discussing the rollout of stage 2.

The measures in this bill making changes to the Building Act 1975 include implementation of a new swimming pool safety inspector licensing system. They also create a new class of licensed pool safety inspectors. Licensed swimming pool safety inspectors will be empowered to conduct pool safety inspections on swimming pools controlled by state law. They also allow the establishment of a Pool Safety Council to oversee the administration of the new licensing system.

The timing of this bill is of utmost importance. This bill has been precisely timed so that stage 2 of our pool safety initiative can be operational by December this year, at the beginning of the 2011 summer season. The Royal Life Saving Society and the Swimming Pool & Spa Association of Queensland agree that this legislation must pass by mid-2010 to provide sufficient time for the new pool safety system to be established.

Another important measure that hinges on the passage of this bill is the state based swimming pool register. Delaying this bill would not only delay the establishment of the register; it would also significantly decrease the time afforded to local governments to populate the register with comprehensive and accurate information. The bill currently provides three months for local governments to populate the database. This is an important task and local governments should be given a reasonable time to do their work.

In closing, pool safety is not just for government and not just for pool owners; it is a community responsibility. To increase community awareness, the government has more than tripled funding for the 2009-10 summer safety pool campaign. We encourage all pool owners and the broader community to in fact learn CPR. Free CPR signs endorsed by the Queensland Ambulance Service are available from my electorate office.

I finish by saying that I know the importance of CPR. When she was six my youngest daughter, Claudia, almost drowned at the pool at home. In fact, she was technically drowned when she was fished out of the swimming pool. In the barbecue area there were at least six or seven adults around the pool at the time and no-one noticed that she was actually on the bottom of the pool. My brother-in-law jumped into the pool and rescued her. She had no vital signs at the time. Only after the administration of CPR did she come back. Can I say that I was a lucky parent on that day.

Ms Nelson-Carr: She was a lucky girl.

Mr CHOI: And she was a lucky girl. I hope that this bill will help prevent other parents from experiencing an incident like that. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (9.08 pm): I rise to contribute to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill introduces the second stage of the Queensland government's swimming pool safety improvement strategy. The bill outlines a suite of new measures to improve pool safety for children across Queensland. Stage 1 of the strategy was implemented on 1 December 2009 and focused on applying the latest Australian standards to new residential swimming pools. The bill will put in place key measures for the second stage of the Queensland government's swimming pool safety improvement strategy.

These measures need to be in place by mid-2010 to ensure a smooth transition of the proposed mandatory point of sale and lease inspection system for pools later this year. While the focus of this bill is on the inspection and licensing framework, a number of other measures are also dealt with. Key policies include the rationalisation of the 11 current pool fencing standards to just one standard for all pools, both new and existing. Currently, owners and inspectors struggle with determining what standard must be complied with so rationalising these standards to a single standard will provide a more transparent and understandable benchmark.

The new standard, which will be phased in over five years, will simplify pool safety. The new pool laws will include indoor pools, pools associated with hotels, motels, caretaker residences and caravan parks as well as outdoor residential pools. This will align Queensland pool laws with those of other states and territories providing better consistency across the nation.

These amendments to the Building Act 1975 will establish a new swimming pool safety inspector licensing system and a Pool Safety Council to administer that system. The mandatory inspection system will take effect from 1 December 2010 and will be conducted at the point of sale or lease of a home.

Coronial inquests into swimming pool immersion involving young children have found defective fences are frequently at fault. Children who walk into a fenced pool area through a defective or poorly maintained gate or door are an accident that this legislation aims to avoid. Coronial inquests also indicate a correlation between families moving into new homes and immersion incidents involving young children. The government's mandatory point of sale and lease inspection system has been designed to reduce these incidents.

If homeowners wish to sell or lease a property with a pool they will be required to obtain a pool safety certificate. The mandatory pool compliance provisions will also reduce the burden on local governments of pool inspections. The bill provides for the establishment of an inspection and licensing framework which creates a new class of licensed pool safety inspectors and an inspector licensing system.

Under the proposed amendments, licensed swimming pool safety inspectors will be empowered to conduct pool safety inspections on swimming pools regulated by state law. Inspectors will also issue a pool safety certificate if a pool complies with the standards. To ensure that the system is practical, licensed pool safety inspectors will be able to carry out minor repairs to be prescribed under the building regulation. This is expected to assist in reducing costs for pool owners by reducing multiple inspections. Organisations such as the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Royal Life Saving Society support these provisions.

The bill will also establish a new independent body to oversee the swimming pool safety licensing system known as the Pool Safety Council. The functions of this council will include approving pool safety inspector training courses, licensing inspectors, responding to complaints and imposing disciplinary sanctions on inspectors. To ensure pool safety inspectors receive high-quality and relevant training, amendments under the bill provide that only registered training organisations and other approved training organisations may deliver the approved courses. Guidelines to specify the required content of these courses will be published in the near future.

The bill also provides for the creation of a state swimming pool register. All pool owners will be required to register their pools. Failing to do so will be an offence. This register will contain information gathered by licensed swimming pool safety inspectors, building certifiers and local governments. The register can also be used by local governments to rollout their inspection programs.

The result of these amendments will be a greater safety net for young Queenslanders and a decreased number of immersions in a wide range of pools. I congratulate the minister for his commitment to crafting this legislation which will ensure the safety of our children. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (9.14 pm): There are several provisions within the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, but I would like to speak briefly about just one. I am interested in the workings of the Urban Land Development Authority, the ULDA, as the Oonoonba urban development area was declared by the minister on 23 April this year. The Oonoonba UDA falls within the Burdekin electorate. Whilst I have not been afforded a meeting with representatives of the ULDA, they have written to me outlining their function and giving a precis of the intention within the Oonoonba urban development area.

Several constituents have contacted me to voice their initial concern with the processes involved and the potential types of dwellings that will be contained within the UDA, but more specifically those that will adjoin the existing housing. I support the program of affordable housing.

I am mindful that, by its nature, there will be a diversity of housing types. I have expressed a view to the ULDA in relation to the buffer area that adjoins the existing houses to the south. I put a suggestion to them for their consideration that any adjoining dwellings be of a similar block size and of a similar build and design quality. These existing adjoining dwellings to the south were part of a mainstream development process. Due process and costs have seen property owners invest quite heavily to settle in the area. Historically, these dwellings would have backed on to vacant crown land in perpetuity or alternatively, if this was sold, would have a new subdivision backing on to it with like housing. Of course this would attract a similarly proportioned investment outlay at some future point in time.

I appreciate that this dwelling within the UDA framework may now be purchased at some cost reduction. If these dwellings were of a similar housing type this would create a more seamless transition from the existing housing into the Oonoonba UDA which would be, I am sure, very acceptable to those in adjoining dwellings. I also expressed an interest in knowing whether there is a requirement or safeguard for a property buyer to hold this property for a minimum time to ensure that there is less potential for opportunistic purchasers to make a potential quick return of profit in the short term.

To be frank, several constituents are concerned about the consultation process that is said to be involved. In recent times, with ongoing scrutiny of public housing developments occurring, the lack of consultation evident in some of this is causing some anguish. The buffer and the consultation requests should be given consideration. I realise that these are consistent with the ULDA interim land use plan 2010. Should there be adherence to these requirements I believe it would go a long way towards the workable integration of the Oonoonba urban development area into the current Fairfield Waters development.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (9.17 pm): Anyone who has felt or seen the grief and the loss experienced by family members who have seen their children die would want all members of this place to take every step possible to reduce the risk of children drowning. This legislation certainly has honourable intent and has a lot of work behind it. However, there are few concerns that I would like to touch on briefly over the next few minutes.

As we saw with the home insulation scheme managed by the federal government, there was a possibility and a risk that fly-by-nighters could be established in that particular program. I have a fear that fly-by-nighters could establish themselves in this scheme. I would ask the minister to address this issue and assuage those fears. At page 33 of the bill it outlines who may apply for and obtain a licence. My question is: are there requirements for criminal history checks of licence holders?

When one goes through all of the conditions under division 2 as to who may apply, there is not any particular provision for criminal history checks. The reason I bring that to the attention of members is that people are allowing these inspectors to go on to their property and check pools. After conversations with the minister and after reading the bill, I understand that there are two classifications or categories of people who can go on to a property. The first one is of course the council officer, and of course we would

not describe council officers as fly-by-nighters. They are responsible members of the community with attachment to that community. However, what I fear is that private pool licensing people may only have to do a minimal \$90 course over less than a day and then they are qualified to go on to a person's property. That then leads to the question: can the minister give a guarantee that private pool safety inspectors do not have the same rights of entry as council officers? That is an important point. Page 29 of the bill states—

Pool safety inspector's duty to act in public interest in performing pool safety inspection function

'(1) A pool safety inspector must, in performing pool safety inspection functions, always act in the public interest.

Could that actually justify a non-council officer going on to a property if they suspected that a pool fence was not—

Mr Hinchliffe: In case we don't get back to that later, to clarify that, that makes it very clear that, despite the fact they are engaged by the homeowner, their obligation is to the public. That is what that is to clarify and there is no power for those inspectors to go directly on to a property without permission.

Mr MESSENGER: I thank the minister for his interjection. In terms of a code of conduct for pool safety inspectors, what is the intention of the minister? Will there be a code of conduct? I know that it said that there may be a code of conduct established. I was wondering why the legislation does not have 'there must be a code of conduct established'? Is there going to be a code of conduct? Has it been established? Page 32 of the bill states that a pool safety inspector can go ahead and carry out a minor repair and then also have the ability to inspect that work themselves and sign off on those repairs. Is it appropriate for people to be able to carry out work and then check and certify their own work? Is it creating a situation where perhaps roting or lesser safety standards could occur because of that particular provision of the legislation?

Page 27 of the bill says that a person must not perform pool safety inspection functions without a licence. I note that the maximum penalty is \$16,500. Is that fine great enough when we are talking about children's lives? This government has passed legislation with a maximum penalty of \$100,000 for people found guilty of scaring a flying fox out of its roost. There is a lack of balance in maximum fines. I believe that children's lives are far more important than the discomfort of flying foxes, and this legislation should reflect that fact.

In closing, this is a suggestion that I possibly think we could lobby our federal government with, because it is up to the federal government to do this. However, I note that there is a \$5,000 baby bonus and the federal government is tightening up on the way that it dispenses that money. Unfortunately, if more money was spent on the babies and a little less was spent on the widescreen TVs I think we would have a better society. If we really wanted to reduce the number of deaths and injuries, we might lobby our federal politicians to ensure that part of the \$5,000 was spent on swimming lessons for babies and young children.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (9.23 pm): I rise tonight to make a brief contribution to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The bill amends the Building Act 1975, the Urban Land Development Act 2007, the Land Title Act 1994 and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Act 1971. My first comments are in relation to the amendments to the ULDA Act. The Urban Land Development Authority was established in 2007 to assist with the delivery of housing in growth areas quickly through planning, coordination and developmental control. Currently, the ULDA cannot approve development within an urban development area where the development applied for is inconsistent with an existing preliminary approval but consistent with the ULDA land use plan. I understand that this has had implications for development investment and delivery within various urban development areas and is preventing the progression of significant developments.

To address this situation, the bill amends the ULDA Act to enable the ULDA to approve development where the development applied for is consistent with either a previous preliminary approval or ULDA land use plan. Whilst I understand that these changes are minor and will streamline development approvals, I think it is important that the ULDA be ever mindful of the concerns of locals before giving developments the tick. Members of this House will have heard me raise concerns about the Carseldine Urban Village, a significant ULDA development which forms part of the Fitzgibbon UDA. Popular local green space—the playing fields on the QUT Carseldine campus—will be developed and replaced with high-rise, mixed-use development in a suburb where, as far as the eye can see, housing is primarily low-set homes. It is quite unbelievable that this government is taking away local community green space on an educational site on the one hand and on the other hand puts out media releases trumpeting a grand plan to open up school ovals for community use because of low levels of green space. The people of Carseldine, who are not opposed to affordable housing, will continue to make noise about this development, which is proposed without any confirmed scheduled upgrade of local infrastructure to support the planned 1,800 residents who will call this precinct their home.

The next part of the bill that I want to speak to is the provisions in relation to pool safety laws. The bill will amend the Building Act 1975 in order to implement the legislative and administrative arrangements for a pool safety inspector licensing system and a state based pool register. These arrangements need to be in place when the proposed mandatory point of sale and lease inspection system is introduced later in 2010. As the minister stated in his second reading speech—

... the bill creates a swimming pool inspector licensing system and a new class of licensed pool safety inspectors. Under the amendments, licensed swimming pool safety inspectors will be empowered to conduct pool safety inspections on swimming pools controlled by state law. Inspectors will issue a pool safety certificate only if a pool meets the prescribed standard.

There are obligations placed on the new inspectors in terms of time frames for the issuing of these certificates or a non-conformity notice. The explanatory notes advise that the intention of proposed new section 246AB regarding non-conformity notices is to oblige pool safety inspectors to notify owners precisely, and in a standard way, how a regulated pool does not comply and what needs to be done to make it comply with the pool safety standard.

These new inspectors will be licensed under the new Pool Safety Council which will approve pool safety inspectors' training courses, licence the inspectors, respond to complaints, and impose disciplinary actions against inspectors. Furthermore, proposed new section 246AS establishes a state based swimming pool register which will contain information sourced from inspectors, building certifiers and local governments. I note that there has been consultation with a number of organisations such as Kidsafe Australia, the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association and the Swimming Pool & Spa Association in relation to this legislation. I am confident that Queenslanders would always support genuine measures that seek to increase the safety of our children, and I believe that this is the intent of the amendment and is therefore worthy of our support.

I am pleased to see changes to the 'ban the banners' provisions under the Building Act that were introduced and passed in this House with much fanfare in 2009. The explanatory notes state that the purpose of the amendments is to repeal aspects of the government's 'ban the banners' policy that relate to amenity issues while retaining those provisions that relate to environmental issues. Last year in this House concern was raised in relation to the 'ban the banners' legislation as it was then presented. The LNP highlighted issues in relation to a relevant instrument imposing amenity related prohibitions and requirements. The LNP position was that, whilst energy efficiency in housing is important, there would be unintended consequences, as covenants and by-laws are put in place for reasons. At that time the LNP was concerned about how the competing interests of bodies corporate, developers and owners would be managed. We also rightly questioned the processes for the monitoring of sustainability and affordability. Clearly, industry and homeowners shared our view and this government has had to make these amendments as a direct result of the concerns that were raised and prosecuted by the LNP.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (9.29 pm): I rise to speak briefly to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Data from the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian shows that many more children drown in pools than die in transport accidents. Parents in the Bulimba electorate have reacted strongly to this issue. They are very supportive of this bill. My electorate has a high proportion of young families and measures that are uncompromising in protecting children are always going to be popular. I congratulate the minister on bringing this bill forward to the House and commend the bill.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (9.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of these measures to minimise the risk for children, particularly young children, in the pools in our suburbs. The one point that I wanted to make in the short time that I have available was to give my support for the creation and maintenance of a state based swimming pool register. Over the past 15 years my electorate has been represented by three councils: the Albert shire, the Gold Coast and now the Logan council. That has meant that the pool inspection records are held across those councils. The move to having a state based register with one clear standard will mean that people who purchase homes will clearly understand whether their pool complies with the requirements or not. I have had residents in my electorate who have received show cause notices from councils and they have had to search back through the records of two councils to determine whether their pool fences are compliant or not.

The inclusion of pool inspections as part of the sale conveyance process is a simple process. It occurs at a time when people are going through other sorts of inspections. With a greater onus being put on sellers to provide this type of information, I think we will eventually move to a point at which we have compulsory building inspections to be provided by sellers. We are one of the few jurisdictions in the world where people sign a contract for the purchase of a house and then undertake an inspection as to whether the house meets the requirements of the contract that they have signed. That means that a lot of contracts fall over when subsequent building, pest or finance requirements are not met. That is a cost to real estate agents, it is a cost to sellers and it is a cost to buyers who have to pay for those inspections. Putting more onus on the seller of the home to make these inspections, I think, has the potential to reduce costs for people involved in real estate transactions in this state. The maintenance of a swimming pool register creates greater certainty, particularly in areas where traditionally those registers and that information has been the responsibility of local government. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (9.32 pm): It is fair to say that every member in the House supports doing everything possible to prevent children drowning. The Royal Life Saving Society reports that in the 12 months to 30 June last year there were 302 drowning deaths in Australia. That is truly a horrific total, as that number rose by 41 people on the previous 12 months. Between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009 Queensland reported 82 drowning deaths.

Queensland is indeed the sunshine state and our great weather and the fact that we have very amicable conditions for swimming activities should not be to the detriment of our youth who participate in such great activities. It is also fair to say that drowning in Queensland is a significant issue that needs to be addressed properly. Having well-maintained pool fences is one step in the right direction. But this is only one part of the solution. Although 60 per cent of children who drown are under the age of five, they do so in family pools. That leaves 40 per cent of those children drowning in baths, spas, dams, rivers, lakes, in the ocean and at other places.

It does not matter if the drowning occurs in a pool, a bath, a river, or a dam, the majority of those drowning deaths are preventable if children learn to swim. That is especially true for children aged five and above. For children between the ages of five and nine, the family pool accounted for 20 per cent of deaths in 2008-09. They were far more likely to drown in a river, which accounted for about 40 per cent of drownings in that age group. The facts become more chilling when we look at the statistics for children aged between 10 and 14. In that age group there was not even one drowning in a swimming pool. All the needless drowning deaths in that age group occurred in rivers, dams, lakes, bathtubs and spas. The CEO of the Royal Life Saving Society stated the following in his *The national drowning report*—

In older children aged between 5 and 14, more than half of all drowning deaths occurred in rivers and almost three-quarters of those who died were boys. Too many children aren't being given the information and skills to accurately judge the risks posed by natural waterways.

Once children are aged over 15 we see a big jump in drowning deaths which we believe is attributable to the collision of two factors: the fact that water safety skills haven't been drilled into them earlier and the sharp decline in direct supervision as children become more independent.

Our children need to be better educated about water safety and they need to be able to swim confidently. I believe that better laws regulating the maintenance and standards of pool safety fences can stop drownings of children under the age of five. I have some concerns about the difficulties in regulating this new law and the time frames. However, I believe that it is one step and that this parliament will take other steps to reduce the number of drowning deaths in our society, because it is incumbent on this parliament to protect all Queenslanders.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet one of our great Queenslanders, Laurie Lawrence, who is a passionate advocate for learn-to-swim lessons. He believes that every child drowning death is preventable and he has devoted his life to teaching children how to swim. I, like a number of other people in this House, have copies of Laurie's DVD titled *Teach Your Baby to Swim* and I would recommend that every other member of this parliament obtain copies of this DVD to hand out to their community. I know that Mr Lawrence is more than willing to assist in any way, shape or form.

In closing, although I support the pool safety standards, I sincerely hope that parliament considers this bill as just one step towards the hopes and dreams of having no deaths in pools or watercourses throughout Australia. We should not just be reducing the number of child drownings; we should be stopping them altogether. As Laurie Lawrence said, every single child drowning is preventable. I call on all members of the parliament and all Queenslanders to rise up to the challenge and to make a commitment to educating Queenslanders in relation to swimming safety.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (9.37 pm): I would like to contribute briefly to tonight's debate on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, because it is very important to many constituents in the electorate of Bundamba. The bill establishes a framework for the swimming pool inspector licensing system, which I think is a very good amendment to the building legislation. It also creates an independent body, the Pool Safety Council, to oversee this licensing system. The bill also allows trained and licensed swimming pool safety inspectors to conduct these inspections and issue pool safety certificates if all the prescribed requirements are met. I think that all of these amendments to the Building Act 1975 are extremely good.

I also share the views of all the other members in this parliament. I believe that children who are drowning in pools in their backyards or in their neighbours' yards is a great shame for our society. That is one of the reasons I so strongly supported the advocacy for the Goodna Aquatic Centre in my electorate. I was very concerned that my electorate of Bundamba did not have a public pool where kids, particularly young kids, could be taught to swim and to become active in our community. In fact, I can remember when the Goodna Catholic Church, many people in my local community and I supported the view that we should have our own pool at Goodna. I was very pleased that we were able to work with the council to get this pool built. It was jointly funded by the department of housing's community renewal program through the department of sport when Terry Mackenroth was the minister for sport, and the Ipswich City Council also contributed some of the funding to the Goodna Aquatic Centre.

This, combined with the work that has been undertaken in our community over many years by the Woogaroo Swimming Club, has meant that many of our local younger people have learnt to swim. In fact, prior to the Goodna Aquatic Centre being built and opened, the Woogaroo Swimming Club had its base at the Goodna State School. The Goodna State School had its pool built many, many years ago and the Woogaroo Swimming Club was, in fact, outgrowing the pool there because it had so many young children who wanted to learn to swim and be involved in club activities and also interclub activities.

Judy Van Wyk and some of her friends at the Woogaroo Swimming Club have, over many decades, put in a magnificent effort in having our children learn to swim and also participate in their own competitions. In fact, I am a sponsor of the Woogaroo Swimming Club and have been for many years. I always go out of my way to make sure that I am there at their presentation evenings each and every year so that people in my electorate know that I am very supportive of swimming in our community and particularly safe swimming for our younger children.

I am also concerned about deaths and drownings in public pools. I know that in Goodna we do have people on duty employed to look after our children in the public pool. However, no matter how many people may be on duty it is always a parent or an adult's responsibility to make sure that children, no matter where they are in or around pools—whether they be home pools or public pools—are always supervised. It is very important to know that if you take your eye off them, even for a split second, an accident may occur. That is certainly a great shame. In our Goodna public pool community we have had a couple of families that have gone through dreadful grieving when they have lost their children. It has been awful for our community generally.

I thank the minister for bringing this legislation into the House. The people in my electorate support this legislation and we hope that in future there will be fewer drownings in our areas. I pay tribute to Laurie Lawrence for his work right across Australia in getting the message out to everyone in their communities.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.42 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contribution to the debate tonight on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I particularly acknowledge the Plints from Hannah's Foundation in the gallery tonight. This bill includes four important reforms that will require amendments to a number of different pieces of legislation, including the Building Act 1975, the Urban Land Development Act 2007, the Land Title Act 1994 and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Act 1971. The first and most significant reform involves furthering key aspects of the second stage of the government's swimming pool safety improvement strategy. The remainder of stage 2 provisions are expected to be brought before the House later this year.

Last year eight children under the age of four drowned in residential pools in Queensland—more than in any other state or territory. Statistics indicate that an estimated 50 children will present to emergency departments this year following life-threatening immersion incidents. I acknowledge the comments from the member for Currumbin and her experience as a paediatric nurse in that context. These statistics indicate that increased pool protection is very much needed not only for backyard pools but also while Queensland families are on holiday. As part of these amendments the state government is committed to extending pool safety laws beyond their current scope to include hotel, motel, hostel and caravan park pools. It is important to note that these safety measures do not apply solely to pool owners and their families but to those who live next door or nearby.

Let me come to the heart of some of the issues that have been raised by members, including the shadow minister, in relation to the legislation that is before us. There was an issue about portable pools. That will be addressed in the legislation that is scheduled to come before the parliament later this year. I can advise that I have already written to the Minister for Fair Trading on raising awareness of the mandatory fencing requirements for certain portable pools and he has advised that this matter is being dealt with on a national level as part of a national standard that is being adopted. I can also advise that I have written to the Minister for Fair Trading in regard to strategies to assist in raising consumer and industry awareness on that issue as well. Declarations in simple, plain language in relation to those products might be part of that solution.

In relation to the issue of self-closing doors that has been raised in a couple of different contexts, the costs associated with replacing existing self-closing doors with fencing has been costed through the RIS with a likely maximum figure of \$1,000 for particularly complex rebuilds. If there is an instance where there is a set of circumstances that is really hard for people to get past, that will be dealt with through an appeal process. In relation to the Pool Safety Council membership, certainly I will consider SPASA as well as consumer advocates. The high quality of pool safety training courses is absolute.

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 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

Mr GIBSON (9.46 pm): I appreciate that time is brief. With regard to clause 10, I have questions on 246AF in relation to the cancellation of a pool safety certificate after inspection. I am fairly clear on what those steps are, but then it leaves the question of what then. If there is a home that has a pool which has had its pool safety certificate cancelled, what is the next step? On looking at 246AL, the term of the pool safety certificate, acknowledging that it is one year for a shared pool or two years for a home pool, what will be the renewal process? Will there be a reminder or something sent out to the homeowner? Or is the onus resting upon the homeowner to circle a date two years out and remember to ensure that they have a current pool safety certificate?

I also would not mind just touching on 246AR, because I am not sure that the minister had the opportunity to, and that relates to the owner's obligation to give notice of an existing regulated pool and that period between the three-month mark councils have identified and the six-month mark where the homeowner is then required to have registered their existing regulated pool, and the opportunity after the three months for them to access the pool safety register at no cost.

Mrs PRATT: I have a couple of concerns and, because of the guillotine, I did not get a chance to speak at all in the second reading debate. I want to ask a couple of questions. Following on from the comments of the member for Gympie, in relation to older people, because their pools were approved quite some time ago and they may not necessarily come up to the standard that will be required, if they do not have the finances to bring it up to scratch, will there be a ruling to say they have to remove or empty the pool, and who will bear the cost of that if they cannot afford to do it? With regard to registration, many older people do not have the internet and may not necessarily have family members to help them access the internet. Will they get an opportunity to make a phone call to register or will there be paperwork that is sent out that informs them that they have to be registered, and enclosed with that an application form for registration?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In relation to the questions from the member for Gympie about 246AF, a cancellation only applies where local government finds that a pool does not comply. Local government will need to issue a show cause notice to give the owner a chance to comply and respond. That is a natural process. This simply means that owners will not be able to lawfully sell or lease the property until that pool safety barrier complies and they are issued with a certificate. If the owner continues to refuse to comply, the local government's normal enforcement powers would kick in. Those powers would be available.

In relation to the questions pertaining to 246AL, the pool safety certificate is intended to enable the pool owner to buy, sell or lease their home. The detail of how that obligation operates will be considered in the next pool safety bill. The basic principle is that certificates will be valid for two years for non-shared properties and one year for shared properties. After the five-year phase-in period, homeowners will be required by law to ensure that their pool is up to standard. It is in that phase-in period that we see that come into place. Just as they have the ability to do now, local governments will be able to perform inspection programs as they so choose. If a pool owner wishes to sell or lease a home once the safety certificate has expired, the owner is required to have a reinspection and get a new certificate issued.

The member asked whether they will be sent a reminder. Basically, the answer is no. It is their obligation to be aware of their requirements under the law as a pool owner. Certainly, I acknowledge there are issues around making sure that there is a strong education campaign directed at pool owners. That is where the register of pool owners will be a key tool in maintaining that education process. To answer the question asked by the member for Gympie and the member for Nanango, people will be able to check the register online and that will be free. Also, people who might not have access to the internet will be able to contact the department via the telephone to ask for the register to be checked. Those options will be available so that the broader community can access the register.

I understand the questions that the member for Nanango raises around the ultimate issue of a noncomplying pool, where someone might not be in a financial position to make the remedies that are required. As I outlined earlier in relation to 246AL, and as is the case now, councils will be able to take action. It would be in the council's court as to what action it would pursue.

Mr GIBSON: I thank the minister for that. I wish to be clear in my mind about what the minister just said in relation to the pool safety certificate. Say a person is not selling or leasing their home. They have a pool safety certificate. Two years has passed and they have not renewed it. Assuming that there is no problem with their pool or fencing, they are not in breach of anything because they have not renewed their pool safety certificate.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is right. Their obligation is to have a complying fence, not to have a certificate. The certificate is for the purposes of the sale or lease of the property.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—

Mr GIBSON (9.53 pm): This clause relates to the RNA. The explanatory notes talk about conditions being applied and then refer to 'may be'. I would appreciate it if the minister could clarify that.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Gympie for his question. To make it very clear, the addition of conditions by the Governor in Council where the sale is approved is not mandatory. The conditions may be imposed by the Governor in Council if they elect to do so. To make it clear, that 'may' means that it is not mandatory.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 30, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.54 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.54 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.55 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 8 June 2010.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.55 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Government Departments

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.55 pm): It appears that one government department does not know what another government department is doing. I refer to a letter from the Department of Communities to Hervey Bay resident Mr Bell dated 23 April 2010 and received by Mr Bell on 27 April about a proposed social housing development at 525 Boat Harbour Drive, Torquay, Hervey Bay. The letter clearly states that Mr Bell has the right to put in a submission about the proposed development and it would be considered. The letter states—

The project at 525 Boat Harbour Drive, Torquay is currently being assessed in accordance with these provisions and was recently publicly notified from 4 March to 24 March 2010.

All submissions received during this time will be carefully considered before a final decision is made whether to proceed with the project, to proceed with some design changes or to not proceed. The department will advise you in writing of the decision in relation to the project.

Lo and behold, Mr Bell received another letter from a different department, the Department of Public Works. That letter was written on 27 April 2010, the very next working day after the Anzac Day long weekend. Mr Bell received that letter on 28 April 2010, one day after the first letter was received. Surprise, surprise! The letter clearly states that the Bells do not have the right to make a submission under chapter 9, part 5 of the act. I also have a copy of that letter. It states in part—

I note that the appeal rights available to submitters in s462 of the Act do not apply to the submitters under Chapter 9, part 5 of the Act. Should you have any further queries related to this matter—

And a phone number is listed. I would like to know why someone would go to all the bother of putting out a public notification of this project when people do not have the right to submit in the first place? It seems a total waste of time and a waste of money. It makes the government look totally incompetent when it comes to this sort of situation. When we are sitting in our offices trying to explain this to people, it is humiliating.

David, Mr JD

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.59 pm): I rise in the House to speak about a very special constituent of the Greenslopes electorate, Mr John 'Daniel' David, known by the Greenslopes community as Danny David, who sadly passed away recently. Danny was a unique man who made it his life's purpose to help others, particularly those less fortunate than himself.

Throughout his life, Danny was the founding member of many community organisations in Brisbane and was heavily involved in many voluntary activities. He was a man of great foresight and was a pioneer in bringing Asia and Australia together in this state. Danny first arrived in Australia from Sri Lanka in 1956 to study social studies at the University of Queensland, supported by a grant from the Asia Foundation. He graduated in 1961 and thereafter returned to Sri Lanka, before returning to Australia in 1975 to work as a social worker.

In a radio broadcast in 1959, our state's centenary year, Danny appealed to Asian countries to send their children to Australia to undertake higher education because, as Danny saw it, every opportunity was provided for students in this country as Australia was democratic, tolerant, hospitable and realistic. In a broadcast on Radio Australia in 1960, Danny said that 'the destiny of Australia is intimately linked with that of Asian countries'.

Other highlights of Danny's activities throughout his career included launching the International House Project, as well as holding office as president of the Overseas Student Association. Danny was the president of the Brisbane Council for International Students. He also produced the first magazine for the overseas students of Queensland and was chosen as the spokesman for Ceylonese students in Australia.

Sir Raphael Cilento, President of the Australian Asian Society and former Director of United Nations Social Affairs, referred to Danny as 'an apostle of international goodwill'. Danny was also the founding member of the 139 Club, which was a centre for homeless people. He was the secretary for two years and helped in its numerous activities. When Danny worked as a social worker at the Alcohol and Drug Dependent Service, he felt the need for an accommodation quarters to be set up for people whose lives had been blighted by substance abuse, so he bought a property which could house 19 people where assistance was provided to them, and no bond required.

During his lifetime, Danny David was guest of honour at numerous functions attended by civic leaders, members of parliament, businessmen, churchmen and hundreds of Australian friends from all walks of life. Despite numerous articles written about Danny over the years praising his amazing selfless generosity for those in need, irrespective of race, creed or social standing, Danny shied away from publicity. As a result of all of Danny's voluntary activities, he was awarded the Premier's Multicultural Service Award in 1997 and the Centenary of Federation Medal for 40 years of distinguished voluntary service.

While I cannot sum up Danny's life in three minutes, I can say he certainly epitomised what it means to be a volunteer, as he devoted countless hours of his own time to improve opportunities not only for Queenslanders but people from other nations as well. Danny's story is truly inspiring. While the Sri Lankan lion is a symbol of that nation, Danny David was, in Queensland, a lion of volunteerism, compassion, tolerance, service to others and understanding across all manner of boundaries and borders. Danny's passion for justice and a fair go for all remain an example to all of us.

My sincere condolences go out to Danny's wife, Bridget, and his children, Alex, Anne and Emmanuel. While words cannot ease the pain of Danny's passing, I hope that they are able to take comfort in knowing that Danny touched and changed the life of many, many people during his lifetime.

Liberal National Party, Far North Queensland Branch

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.02 pm): Yesterday in typical fashion the member for Burnett rose in this place and asserted that serious matters which had been raised about the LNP's Far North Queensland region on 21 September 2009 in a letter signed by 15 signatories had not been investigated. No-one should be surprised that that assertion is totally incorrect. The member for Burnett has never let the truth get in the way of a good story, so why would he start now? Members will recall that in a speech during the last sitting week the member for Burnett accused a doctor of serious negligence. It turned out to be the wrong doctor, and I table proof.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health media response, dated 16 April 2010, in relation to a doctor named in parliament by the member for Burnett [\[2284\]](#).

The member for Burnett had no consideration for the reputation of that person or the impact on his family and friends. To date, no apology or correction has come from the member.

In relation to the letter, a thorough investigation was conducted and a 12-page report dated 16 October 2009 was sent to the president of the LNP in response to the concerns raised in the letter. Amongst its comprehensive conclusions, it found (1) three of the 18 invited signatories did not sign; (2) seven of the signatories indicated that they have no direct or material contribution to make to the complaint and only signed the document because of what they determined was widespread concern expressed by other party members and honorary office-bearers; (3) of the remaining nine, one signatory indicated that they did not think that they could make a material contribution to the facts upon which the complaint was based but would confirm that fact at a later time—however, as at the date of this report, that advice was not to hand; (4) of the remaining eight signatories, we would report that despite some effort we have been able to speak with two; and (5) on the aforementioned basis, there are potentially eight signatories who are essentially responsible for the material assertions made in the complaint. However, despite numerous invitations and with only two exceptions, the remaining complainants have not been prepared to identify themselves with any particular aspects of the complaint.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand these matters have been referred by the Minister for Police to the Commissioner for Police for investigation, and I seek your ruling as to whether these comments by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are in order.

Mr SPEAKER: I will hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The report, however, did find a number of breaches of processes and procedures by five individuals, including Wendy Richardson. The report to the president recommended procedural training in governance and record keeping for these individuals.

These breaches included failures in due party process, record keeping, communications, a demonstration of a commercial understanding in the operation of the business aspect associated with their relevant LNP unit, a failure to comply with regulatory and compliance guidelines, and actively disregarding basic governance provisions associated with the fiduciary duties of office-bearers in an unincorporated association. This is hardly the actions of a party that fails to respond to serious complaints.

The people of Cairns had a right to know that when Wendy Richardson resigned from the LNP she had been found to have been unprofessional in her position and had resigned those positions as a consequence and had been offered training in professional governance. The next question that should be answered is: did the member for Burnett know that when he raised the matter and, if so, why did he not disclose that fact at the time?

Logan-Beaudesert Child and Youth Mental Health Service

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (10.05 pm): Those who suffer from mental illness are often shunned by society, misunderstood, even feared, stigmatised and at times hide their condition rather than seek help. This can be so, particularly in young people, and often family members can find it difficult to discern whether a withdrawn teenager who grunts a greeting to them is simply going through that common phase of adolescence or has a far more serious condition such as depression. Mental illness is complex in nature and takes many forms, but early intervention can make a world of difference to managing the illness and to bringing about more positive outcomes, as well as helping family members understand and be able to support in the best possible way their son or daughter.

I believe the performing arts, with its many facets, can convey a message far more powerfully than any other medium. As a unique feature of National Youth Week in Logan City, the Logan-Beaudesert Child and Youth Mental Health Service presented a superb multimedia performance over two nights at the Kingston Butter Factory. Written and directed by Peta-anne Burns, early intervention

acting Ed-LinQ officer, in conjunction with an inspiring group of young people, and supported by team leader Raymond Ho, this performance was a collaborative project, with many partners and many young people taking an active role—some with a mental illness, others who simply wished to be involved in such a worthwhile project.

The play was titled (*Just a Little*) *Unwell*. The performers both on stage and on film were simply sensational, skilfully depicting the issues of depression, anxiety and psychotic and eating disorders. I and so many others in the audience expressed the desire to see this presentation performed more widely due to its very powerful message.

The cast—Jessica, Alistair, Katie, Marshall, April, Samantha, Shane, Megan, Zoe, Talia, Robert, Lidija and Peta-anne doing the voice-overs and Kate—dedicated many hours in rehearsal, and we need to thank their families for their support in transporting them to those rehearsals. No performance is possible without the support crew. Tracy, Jasmin, Adam and Matt comprised the backstage crew; lighting and sound—Jimmy, Kerione and Anton; front of house—Linda and Lidija; and Pandora puppeteers—Mamie, Leah and Peta-anne. Other assistance was given by BoysTown, Sergeant Mel Cowie from the PCYC, technical assistance from Darren McBride, Craig Martin, Mark Middleton and Jimmy Keane, and many other people and organisations, including many of the staff at the Child and Youth Mental Health Service.

Finally, Logan City Council, through its National Youth Week funding, provided the intimate Butter Box Theatre for the performance. I give my heartfelt congratulations to all. Statistics tell us that 14 per cent of young people will have a diagnosable mental illness, but only 25 per cent of those needing help will receive it.

(Time expired)

Gibbs, Mr I and Mrs D

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (10.08 pm): I ask all members to join with me in congratulating retired MP the Hon. Ivan Gibbs and his darling wife, Doris, who today celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. Ivan served in this place for 15 years from 7 December 1974 and resigned as minister for health on 7 December 1989.

My wife, Pauline, and I had the great pleasure of joining Doris and Ivan, together with their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other extended family members and friends, last Sunday when this wonderful couple celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary. Ivan and Doris have been and continue to be pillars of our community, having been married in Victoria on 20 May 1950, moving to Queensland in December 1956 and raising their five children here.

Last Sunday we enjoyed hours of stories from the Gibbs clan and other guests whom Ivan and Doris have befriended over the decades. We heard of the softness of Ivan, known as 'the quiet achiever', from one of his sons who told the 'broken toilet' story, with the truth finally being revealed as to how it happened and the way Ivan tried to protect the culprits. We heard from friends who talked about the persuasiveness of Doris when something was needed for one of the many charities Ivan and Doris support. Even today the call to a friend starts with such words as 'Hello, beautiful'. Then you know that help is needed.

We also heard of some sad times. Sadly, Ivan and Doris lost a beloved son in a tragic accident but, as one of their children said, the tragedy brought the family even closer together. It was obvious from the stories that embraced the whole of their lives that they are loved by all who know them.

In the beginning of his term Ivan was a member of parliament and deputy mayor of the Gold Coast at the same time for a period. During the early years, Ivan and Doris built up a business on the Gold Coast in car and truck wrecking. At one point Ivan was unkindly referred to as 'the Gold Coast Steptoe'. Ivan said in his memoirs, 'It didn't even put a dent in me.' Proudly for both Ivan and Doris, the business continues today and is being ably managed by their children. Indeed, over more than half a century the Gibbs business empire has gone from strength to strength.

During his time in this place Ivan diligently represented the people of Albert, which stretched from Slacks Creek and Kingston in the north down to Southport and Nerang in the south. Even then, at the beginning of the 41st Parliament, the area was known to be one of the fastest growing areas in Australia, with Ivan stating in his maiden speech that the Albert had the greatest potential for development. In addition, Ivan held many ministerial portfolios.

Leading up to my election in March 2009 both Ivan and Doris were of immense support to me and Pauline. Their enthusiasm and sheer ability to muster the troops was amazing, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. But the friendship and affection Pauline and I have experienced from Ivan and

Doris are things that surpass anything we expected. I value the advice that Ivan has given to me and the support both Ivan and Doris gave to both Pauline and me at a very low and stressful time in our lives. We knew that they were special people from those experiences and, having witnessed their affection last Sunday, I see that they have spread their love far and wide. Congratulations, Doris and Ivan, on a full, rich and loving life together. Long may you both live.

Rowe, Mr W

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (10.12 pm): I rise tonight to mark the passing of a stalwart of the Dayboro community, Mr William Rowe, who was born on 16 June 1926 and passed away on 5 May 2010. His funeral was attended by hundreds of people in the community who wanted to pay their last respects to a man who was heavily involved in his community and the dairy industry and was a well-loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Bill's daughter, Sandra Martin, and son, Niel Rowe, delivered the eulogies about his life, his family, his war service and his farming capabilities. Pat Rowley, whom all members here would know was an institution within the Queensland dairy industry, spoke about Bill's over 40-year involvement in the dairy industry. He said that there are few dairy farmers in South-East Queensland who have not received some benefit from Bill's involvement.

Bill was on the board of the Dayboro Cooperative Dairy Association and was deputy chairman. He advanced the transition from the local factory to setting up a new direct supply committee looking after the affairs of 531 members which became the Metropolitan Milk Producers Co-op. Bill Rowe became the secretary of that group and assumed the responsibility of administering the quota supply and the quality requirements of each producer. He continued with the newly formed Premium Milk Producers Co-op and was also involved in the formation of the Dayboro Milk Transport Co-op. Pat described Bill Rowe as quiet, unassuming, forward thinking, honest, fair and operating with absolute integrity in his business dealings.

Richard Hawkins spoke on behalf of the Dayboro War Memorial Association. Richard outlined Bill's war service—enlisting in the Navy in 1944 at only 17, his posting to a Fairmile patrol boat in the Pacific waters around New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, patrolling and undertaking various operations to assist the war effort in supporting the AIF.

Bill had been the chairman of the war memorial association for many years, and some of the very successful events and projects undertaken under his leadership were the Victory in the Pacific anniversary celebrations, the Australia Remembers celebrations, the Return of the Unknown Soldier ceremony, the 90th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing and, of course, Anzac and Remembrance days.

The construction of the new memorial in the Dayboro Showgrounds was undertaken under Bill's stewardship and, helped by his ever-loyal wife, Jean, they put in hours and hours of work ensuring that no names were left off the monument. It was fitting that he attended Anzac Day at Dayboro this year and read the names of the fallen. Everyone was grateful that he was still with them.

Glenn Bell, who is chairman of Dayboro and District Rural Fire Brigade, spoke about Bill's involvement in establishing and running the RFB from 1960 to 2001—a 42-year commitment. The Dayboro Bush Fire Brigade was re-established as Dayboro and District Rural Fire Brigade and Bill was elected to the position of chairman. He was also nominated and elected to the position of fire warden for the Dayboro district, which included Dayboro, Armstrong Creek, Rush Creek, King Scrub and parts of Samsonvale. Locals would obtain their permits to light a fire from Bill. They would ring him for advice on the best time to light their fire, or if they saw or smelled smoke, or to report bushfires or structural fires. On numerous occasions Bill would organise his men, their tractors or bulldozers, trucks and knapsacks and off they would go to confront the advancing flames, sometimes staying away for days at a time.

From all accounts it would appear that Bill Rowe led an ordinary life in the most extraordinary manner. His family, his community and his country were things that mattered most. He was a family man, a returned serviceman, a farmer and a volunteer and he will never be forgotten in Dayboro.

(Time expired)

Currimundi Creek, Bank Stabilisation

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (10.15 pm): I rise this evening in relation to three bank stabilisation projects in the Currimundi Creek south arm to save three mature red bloodwood trees. The three red bloodwood trees are indigenous to Currimundi and are considered as icons of nature in an area where urbanisation is rapidly stripping away the natural environment. They provide the essential tall canopy, are an annual nesting site for birds and give shade to the path and waterways, and local residents value them highly as beautiful and irreplaceable old-growth trees. Unless a solid supportive bank stabilisation strategy is installed to strengthen the bank and retain the existing trees, these trees will fall into the creek and the local community will lose these three local icons that they strongly identify with.

The Currimundi Catchment Care Group is an active group of local residents formed in 2001 with the aims of limiting erosion, improving water quality and improving the environment of Currimundi lakes, creeks and canals. The Currimundi Catchment Care Group has worked with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council with respect to these particular bloodwood trees for many years now, especially in relation to the detrimental impact the bank erosion has had on their sustainability.

In November 2009 the Sunshine Coast Regional Council completed a study of bank erosion in Lake Currimundi and its creeks titled *Currimundi Lake risk based shoreline erosion assessment*. This study identified the banks around the three bloodwood trees as highly at risk of loss and listed these sites as a high priority for remedial stabilisation works. Several stabilisation strategies were considered, ranging from coir log walls to rock walls. Council allocated \$40,000 to undertake rock-walling as a bank stabilisation strategy, to strengthen the banks around the trees and support the tree roots.

The installation of the rock walls is subject to approval by none other than the Department of Environment and Resource Management and was due to commence in March, earlier this year. On 11 March 2010 council officers met with departmental officers who advised that the department does not support the rock-walling of banks near the trees and required further information to convince the department of the necessity prior to giving approval to undertake the rock-walling of the bloodwood trees. I lay upon the table of the House some copies of photographs.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs of trees [\[2285\]](#).

I cannot see that the department of environment will need any more proof of why these rock walls are required for these trees. It is all to do with stabilisation.

If the department does not give its approval to these projects then the funds will be redirected towards other projects, the trees will be lost, there will be further loss of the creek bank through erosion and the riparian zones will become narrower. I will hold this government accountable for the loss of those trees and so will the residents. Residents are demanding that those trees be saved and the banks be stabilised against further erosion and native wildlife be protected.

Time is running out to save these local icons. On behalf of the members of the Currimundi Catchment Care Group and the residents surrounding Lake Currimundi, I urge the acting minister and her department to urgently consider these projects to deliver a positive outcome in the interests of the environment and the retention of significant green infrastructure for future generations to enjoy.

(Time expired)

Narangba Valley State High School

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (10.18 pm): Earlier this month I was pleased to welcome the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Geoff Wilson, to the Morayfield state electorate. As part of this visit, the minister and I visited Narangba Valley State High School to inspect the new art classrooms and art gallery. Members may recall that, sadly, the art classrooms were destroyed by arsonists at the end of last year.

Mrs Keech interjected.

Mr RYAN: Very sad. Thank you, member for Albert. As part of our inspection, the minister and I handed over the first pieces of artwork for the school's new art gallery. The minister presented an art piece which was previously selected for a minister's award for excellence in art. The painting is an oil painting in the cubist style called *Manual* and it was created by Joshua Head, who was a student at Barcaldine State School. I presented a painting by local painter Peter Bashir. This painting is a watercolour painting of the Caboolture Railway Station from the 1950s.

The new art rooms look great. Each room has a data projector and the latest in ICT technology. I would like to congratulate all members of the school community for converting this negative experience into a positive facility for their school.

The minister and I also visited the Kidz Rock Educational Centre, which is on Oakey Flat Road at Morayfield. Kidz Rock is one of the first long-day-care centres selected to participate in a government funded kindergarten pilot program. We were particularly impressed by the high-quality learning program offered to the kindergarten kids and the overall positive attitude displayed by staff.

Karen Butters is the licensee of the Kidz Rock Educational Centre. Along with her family she has invested significant time, effort and funds into this program. Both the minister and I were extremely impressed by the facilities and the program offered at Kidz Rock. Kidz Rock is a great centre servicing our local community. Families in the Morayfield state electorate are generally excited about this kindergarten program.

I would also like to thank the minister for his support of the Narangba Station Kindy. The Narangba Station Kindy has recently gone through some tough times and was in urgent need of financial assistance. I was pleased to hear that both the local business community and the government were able to assist. The Moreton Bay Central Commerce and its representatives—Michael from Kennedys Timbers, Barbara from Cetera Media and Robert from the Bank of Queensland—were able to raise \$5,500 for this worthy cause. The state government chipped in \$5,000 and LJ Hooker will be hosting a charity auction later this month. The state member for Kallangur has also provided significant moral support. Narangba Station Kindy is providing a valuable service for our community. I am very pleased that both business and government have been able to work together to support their good work.

Prostate Checks

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.21 pm): We have many declared days in our calendar. We have Daffodil Day, Breast Cancer Awareness Week and Jeans for Genes day. I wish to speak tonight to all the men in this chamber, the parliamentary precinct and beyond. Guys, fear not the chilling snap of the surgical glove. That rubber glove test could save your life. Do not defer the PSA check. A bit of blood is a small price to pay. Whether you have a history of prostate problems in your family or not, get a check-up. Elevated PSA levels ring alarm bells but so should fluctuating but lower PSA levels.

With all the ribbons and badges that come across our desks it is easy to be complacent. While I would not, for one moment, speak negatively of Red Nose Day—some people here look very attractive in a red nose—Pink Ribbon Day or Shave for a Cure, each and every one highlights a vitally important issue. We need to wear the ribbon and shave our heads but take action and access those checks available to us.

For women it includes mammograms and pap smears, neither of which are very comfortable. To allow our fellas to better empathise with us ladies having mammograms I actually developed a ‘manogram’. It involved a jaffle iron and a bucket of ice. That is perhaps a topic for another time. Wives and girlfriends, we need to unite and nag our guys until they go for the test. No test is foolproof and no doctor is infallible. However, guys, get to your doctor, man up for a blood test, a glove test or a biopsy—it could save your life.

Festival of Lights

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (10.23 pm): On 17 April 2010 I had the great pleasure to officially open the Festival of Lights at the Oxenford and Coomera Community Youth Centre. My thanks go to the leadership of the chairman of the board, Inspector Des Lacy, and the festival’s creative producer, Min Collie-Holmes, who, together with the centre’s team of staff and volunteers, worked so hard to make the exciting festival very successful. From the family fun day during the afternoon to the spectacular lantern parade around the lake by night and culminating in the fireworks in the middle of the lake, the Festival of Lights was a huge success.

For months, a group of young people from seven northern Gold Coast schools met fortnightly to assist with the planning and direction of the festival. From fundraising, learning circus skills, lantern making, working the canteen and even operating the sound system, this event gave the students an opportunity to learn leadership skills but also to do more—that is, to get to know their peers from other schools and to develop important community networks.

The theme for this year’s parade was ‘Riding the wave’. It was designed to recognise that young people can actively choose to ride the waves of change as the Oxenford and Upper Coomera community, the fastest growing in Australia, continues to grow. The festival theme and the leadership activities encouraged the youth to be aware that, by contributing to their community in a rich, positive and meaningful way, they can help to shape their very own futures.

On behalf of the community I thank Min Collie-Holmes and youth mentor, Louise Moriatry, for their outstanding dedication and support for the youth leadership team of Kai Duffey, Jesse and Brielle Forde, Sam Rogers, Nathan Creenaune, Liana Simonite, Tia Gala, Angela Damene, Octavia Gold, Charlotte Mullin, Abbey Brennock and Jen Priestly.

The highlight of the festival was the evening lantern parade around the large lake, with the children proudly holding high the colourfully decorated lanterns they had made earlier that afternoon. What a wonderful sight to see, with the sun setting over the hills, hundreds of children walking carefully with their parents around the lake to make a long and winding trail of glow worm flickering lights to celebrate all that is great and wonderful about community life in Oxenford. Congratulations to the youth of the northern Gold Coast; I am so proud of you and am already looking forward to next year’s festival.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.26 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