



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2010

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

For the sitting week, Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable R.J. Mickel, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 20 September 2010

"A Bill for An Act to provide for the employment and conduct of staff of Ministers and other particular members of Parliament"

"A Bill for An Act to facilitate the disclosure, in the public interest, of information about wrongdoing in the public sector, to provide protection for those who make disclosures and to make minor or consequential amendments of the legislation stated in schedule 3"

"A Bill for An Act about land values for particular other Acts and related purposes, to make consequential and minor amendments to the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 and to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Land Act 1994, the Land Tax Act 2010 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Auditor-General Act 2009, the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993, the Integrity Act 2009, the Ombudsman Act 2001, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, the Public Service Act 2008, the Public Service Regulation 2008, the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Building Act 1975, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Act 1971 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 for particular purposes"

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

21 September 2010

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 21 September 2010, from Her Excellency the Governor advising of assent to bills [\[3230\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (9.31 am): I table documents that I will refer to in this matter of privilege.

Tabled paper: Annotated copy of register of interest of the Hon. Stephen Robertson MP [\[3231\]](#).

Tabled paper: Annotated copy of register of interest of Mr Michael Wai-Man Choi MP [\[3232\]](#).

Tabled paper: Copy of page 55 of the standing orders [\[3233\]](#).

I refer to the Land Valuation Bill debated during the last sittings. In the course of the minister's response, the minister attacked me and the member for Moggill. In essence, the minister made frivolous accusations and inferred that as an owner of property that that fact should be disclosed. Should you find any substance in this accusation—

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek your ruling in relation to this matter. I have referred both the member for Coomera and the member for Moggill to the privileges committee. We obviously await the findings of that committee. I respectfully request your ruling in relation to that matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Certainly. In answer to the honourable member, the matters can be raised by the honourable member for Coomera because I have not made a decision yet to send it to the committee. I call the honourable member for Coomera.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Speaker, should you find any substance in these accusations, I note that the minister himself has substantial property ownership, including an investment property in Caloundra and a 40-hectare investment property.

In thinking about this matter, it should be noted that the minister has a special relationship to the bill as the introducing minister and did not disclose that fact in the debate. I further contend that the minister misled the House in the debate. The minister stated that he is a man of modest means. I would argue that, on balance, an average person would not regard the minister as a man of modest means. I also note that the minister congratulated the member for Capalaba for his deep involvement—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The House will come to order! Honourable member, you are starting to debate the matter. I would ask you to make the matter of privilege and wind it up pretty quickly.

Mr CRANDON: In considering the matter, I point out that the member for Capalaba did not disclose his significant interest in the property industry. With respect to the fact that he has property interests, I point out the added obligation on members to disclose in their representations to the minister their pecuniary interests under standing order 262.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the standing orders, the honourable member can put that in writing to me.

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade

Mr SPEAKER: In calling the honourable member to Moggill, I will say please do not debate the issue. I have previously ruled that in the case of the honourable member for Coomera.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (9.33 am): During debate on the Land Valuation Bill in the last sittings the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade accused myself and the member for Coomera of a breach of standing order 260 in relation to an alleged pecuniary interest in the bill arising from ownership of some investment property. I would ask the question: does a pecuniary interest arise? The minister in his letter to the Speaker states—

... both members hold substantial property holdings which has land tax implications and therefore means they had a direct and material interest in speaking against the bill ...

However, in the minister's second reading speech he asserted that this 'is not a revenue-raising measure'. During the debate he claimed that for about 95 per cent of properties in Queensland there will be little or no impact. How is it that now he has suddenly changed his story that ownership of predominantly residential property creates a direct—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is debating the issue. These are matters that the honourable minister has written to me about for my determination. I would like to hear what the honourable member is putting to me that is now a matter of privilege.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister! I want to hear the honourable member for Moggill or wrap it up.

Dr FLEGG: Standing order 260 requires that such pecuniary interests not be held in common with other subjects of the Crown or members of the House. Yet the members for Mount Ommaney and Pine Rivers who spoke on the bill and the member for Capalaba who was thanked by the minister for his contribution in framing the bill all hold interests in investment property.

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

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, the referral to you for your consideration of referral to the privileges committee does not relate to individual members' property ownership but the fact that the debate centred around the payment of land tax for which certain members in this place would benefit from in terms of any reduction or change to that land tax. That does not apply in my circumstances and I submit that it does not apply for the vast majority of members in this place except for the member for Moggill and the member for Coomera.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable minister is now debating the proposition. I would ask the member for Moggill to quickly round it up.

Dr FLEGG: In winding up on this matter, I would maintain that such was nothing other than an interest in common.

On a separate issue, but related matter of privilege, during the minister's personal attack on members opposite he told parliament that he was a man of modest means. I have written to you and I believe that this was a deliberate misleading of the House in relation to the level of payments to him by the taxpayers of Queensland. Not only is the minister a property investor but he has a salary over \$200,000—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Moggill, I have heard enough. Put it in writing to me and I will make a determination.

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. 9 for 2010: Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas—A performance management systems audit*. I table the report for the information of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Report to Parliament No. 9 for 2010: Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas—A performance management systems audit [3234].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Audit Office

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on Monday last week, along with a number of honourable members, including the honourable the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I attended a function at Parliament House to mark the 150th anniversary of the appointment of Queensland's first Auditor-General. For the purpose of that occasion the Queensland Audit Office put together a display which I have arranged to have displayed for this week's sitting on level 3. I do commend the display to all honourable members. I take the opportunity to congratulate the Auditor-General and the Audit Office on the occasion of their 150th anniversary.

Parliamentary Reform

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, there has been considerable public debate about and examination of the so-called 'Agreement for a better Parliament' parliamentary reform document for the Commonwealth parliament. I am supportive of discourse about parliamentary reform and caused a comparison between the agreement at the Commonwealth level and our procedures in the Legislative Assembly. I table for the benefit of all honourable members a schedule that compares each item in the agreement at the Commonwealth level and the Legislative Assembly's current procedures.

Tabled paper: Schedule comparing 'Agreement for a Better Parliament' parliamentary reform document for the Commonwealth parliament and the current procedures of the Queensland Legislative Assembly [3235].

The comparison reveals that many of the matters in the Commonwealth agreement are either already in place in Queensland or under active consideration by the Committee System Review Committee. For example, there have been time limits on answers to questions without notice in this House and opportunities to introduce and debate private members bills since 1998. The schedule highlights not only where the procedures of this assembly benchmark well against the agreement at the Commonwealth level but also highlights matters that are at odds.

I trust that members find the matters contained in the schedule informative and that it is constructive of further reflection and debate on parliamentary reform. I also undertake to the House to monitor the practical implementation of the agreement in the House of Representatives and draw to the attention of the Standing Orders Committee any matters that I believe are meritorious reforms.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 19 August this year the Treasurer wrote to me alleging that the Leader of the Opposition had misled the House in a question without notice. The Treasurer alleged that the Leader of the Opposition in asking the Premier a question on 17 August had informed the House of cost-of-living increases as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that were incorrect and deliberately misleading. In accordance with standing order 269(5), on 23 August I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition, enclosing a copy of the Treasurer's allegations and requested a response. On 22 September the Leader of the Opposition provided a response. That response explains that the statistical information provided in the question to the Premier was based on ABS statistics. He stresses that in his question he used the terminology 'under Labor, recent cost-of-living increases' and he did not specify the cost-of-living increases for the year to the June quarter 2010 which were cited by the Treasurer. For the benefit of the House I table a copy of all correspondence in this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, received on 19 August 2010, from the Treasurer to the Speaker requesting a referral to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee [3236].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 September 2010, from the Leader of the Opposition in response to the Treasurer's allegations [3237].

It is well established there are three elements to be established: firstly, the statement must in fact have been misleading; secondly, it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time the statement was made that it was incorrect; and, thirdly, the member must have intended to mislead the House. Mark Twain popularised a phrase that would be unparliamentary to use in this chamber as regards statistics and their various usages. That phrase is often employed to describe how the same statistics are used both to bolster and disparage the same argument. I am not prepared to either accept that the statistics used are correct or incorrect in the context of the question, but I am far from convinced that it has been established that there was an intent to mislead. I have therefore decided not to refer the matter to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Record of Proceedings, Correction

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to advise that there was an error in the *Record of Proceedings* in relation to the names of members recorded as voting in the division on the cognate motion moved by the Leader of the House on 14 September 2010. The member for Hinchinbrook was incorrectly recorded as voting in the ayes. However, he was attending a CPA conference and did not attend the sittings that week. The member for Gregory should have been recorded as voting with the ayes instead. There was no change in the result of the division. Unfortunately, this error was noted after the weekly record of *Hansard* was printed.

Absence of Mr Speaker

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I seek your indulgence and apologise for the fact that very shortly I will have to leave for a funeral and will not be back until later this morning. The Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Cook, will be in the chair.

PETITIONS

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

Sunshine Coast University Hospital

Mr Bleijie, from 101 petitioners, requesting the House to adhere to the original promise that stage one of the Sunshine Coast Hospital project be completed by 2014 [3238].

Southern Downs Regional Council

Mr Springborg, from 2,175 petitioners, requesting the House to remove the existing Mayor, Councillors and CEO of the Southern Downs Regional Council; appoint auditors to review the financial statements of the council; and appoint administrators to manage the council until new council elections are held [3239].

Eagleby, Bus Service

Mr Crandon, from 335 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider extending the existing bus services in the Eagleby area in the interests of the many residents of Lakeview, Pinetree and Palm Lake Over 50's Lifestyle Resort [3240].

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

Sunshine Coast hinterland, Cycling Routes

Mr Powell, from 160 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the Government to abide by its own policy and actively develop dedicated cycling routes in the Sunshine Coast hinterland as the major lines between our communities are State controlled roads [3241].

Logan River and Camp Cable Road, Powerlines

Mr Mickel, from 374 petitioners, requesting the House to direct Energex to place underground the proposed 110kv overhead powerline along the Logan River and Camp Cable Road koala corridor [3242].

Centenary Highway, Traffic Congestion

Mrs Attwood, from 354 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately plan and publicly consult for sustainable transport solutions which will address traffic congestion on the Centenary Highway in a way which minimises further harmful air and carbon pollution [3243].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

17 September 2010—

[3001](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Ms Boyle) to a paper petition (1510-10) presented by Mr Foley, from 3,921 petitioners, requesting the House to dissolve the Fraser Coast Regional Council and call for a by-election and the appointment of an Administrator.

[3002](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Training (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1517-10) presented by Mr Hobbs, from 761 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the South-West Priority Country Area Program's music program in its current form.

[3003](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1511-10) presented by Mr Seeney, from 240 petitioners, requesting the House to return administrative control for Taroom Hospital to the Darling Downs-West Moreton Health Service District and realign the Taroom Health Service with other Queensland State Government Department boundaries in Taroom.

[3004](#) Trade Practices Amendment (Australian Consumer Law) Bill (No. 2) 2010 (Commonwealth)

[3005](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1509-10) presented by Dr Robinson, from 282 petitioners, requesting the House to initiate the establishment of a palliative care unit within the precinct of the Redland Hospital and Redland Residential Care Facility.

20 September 2010—

[3006](#) Response from the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) to an ePetition (1427-10) sponsored by Mr Gibson, from 379 petitioners, requesting the House to reverse the decision to remove \$10M from the Gambling Community Benefits Fund to subsidise the floundering solar rebate scheme.

21 September 2010—

[3007](#) Response from the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Ms Jones) to an ePetition (1480-10) sponsored by Mr Gibson, from 669 petitioners, requesting the House to make strong representations to the Federal Government and the Federal Environment Minister to make no further closure of fishing areas as threatened in the 'Fraser Area for Further Assessment' until the affected communities concerns are addressed and an economic and scientific assessment of the impacts of any closures has been undertaken and publicly released for comment.

[3008](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) to an ePetition (1459-10) sponsored by Mr Dickson, from 234 petitioners, requesting the House to instruct Energex to place their energy corridor in the Sunshine Coast underground.

[3009](#) Letter, dated 14 September 2010, from the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to Mr Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament relating to an error in the report for Estimates Committee D: Report 2010.

[3010](#) Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board—Annual Report 2009-10

[3011](#) Review of the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

22 September 2010—

[3012](#) Annual Report on administration of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988

[3013](#) Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill 2010: Erratum to Explanatory Notes

23 September 2010—

[3014](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1416-10) presented by Mr O'Brien, from 6,292 petitioners, requesting the House to substantially increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme accommodation allowance.

[3015](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1361-09) sponsored by Mr O'Brien, from 3,892 petitioners, requesting the House to substantially increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme accommodation allowance.

[3016](#) Banana Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09

[3017](#) Bayside Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09

- [3018](#) Bowen Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3019](#) Bundaberg Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3020](#) Cairns Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3021](#) Cape York Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3022](#) Central Highlands Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3023](#) Central West Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3024](#) Charleville Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3025](#) Charters Towers Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3026](#) Fraser Coast Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3027](#) Gladstone Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
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- [3036](#) Princess Alexandra Hospital Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3037](#) Queen Elizabeth Hospital Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3038](#) Redcliffe-Caboolture Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
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- [3041](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3042](#) Royal Children's Hospital Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
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- [3048](#) Toowoomba Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
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- [3050](#) Townsville Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3051](#) West Moreton Health Community Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [3052](#) Health Community Councils—Annual Report Highlights 2008-09
- [3053](#) Professional Standards Councils—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3054](#) Professional Standards Councils—Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2010
- [3055](#) Trust Company Limited—Consolidated Financial Report for the financial year ended 28 February 2010
- 24 September 2010—
- [3056](#) Queensland Audit Office—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3057](#) Addendum—Queensland Audit Office—Annual Report 2009-10
- 27 September 2010—
- [3058](#) Health Quality and Complaints Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3059](#) Ipswich Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3060](#) Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3061](#) Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—Financial Report 2009-10
- [3062](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (Mr Lucas), pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 and the Health Regulation 1996
- 28 September 2010—
- [3063](#) WorkCover Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3064](#) WorkCover Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3065](#) QLeave—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3066](#) QLeave—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum

- [3067](#) Contract Cleaning Industry—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3068](#) Contract Cleaning Industry—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3069](#) Legal Practitioners Admissions Board—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3070](#) Legal Practitioners Admissions Board—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3071](#) Q-COMP—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3072](#) Q-COMP—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3073](#) Queensland Parliamentary Service—Annual Report 2009-10
- 29 September 2010—
- [3074](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Education and Training (Mr Wilson), pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 regarding the Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 1998
- [3075](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Education and Training (Mr Wilson), pursuant to section 56A(2) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 regarding the University of Queensland Statute No. 4 (Student Discipline and Misconduct) 1999
- [3076](#) Response from the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (Mr Mulherin) to an ePetition (1480-10) sponsored by Mr Gibson, from 669 petitioners, requesting the House to make strong representations to the Federal Government and the Federal Environment Minister to make no further closure of fishing areas as threatened in the 'Fraser Area for Further Assessment' until the affected communities concerns are addressed and an economic and scientific assessment of the impacts of any closures has been undertaken and publicly released for comment.
- [3077](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for the Arts (Ms Bligh) to an ePetition (1487-10) sponsored by Mr Langbroek, from 14 petitioners, requesting the House to require Mrs Betty Kiernan MP to explain to the House whether she made any complaint to Xstrata about an employee of Xstrata, Mrs Wendy Christie.
- [3078](#) Queensland Building Services Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3079](#) Queensland Building Services Authority—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3080](#) Building and Construction Industry Payments Agency—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3081](#) Department of Public Works—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3082](#) Department of Public Works—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3083](#) Board of Professional Engineers—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3084](#) Board of Professional Engineers—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3085](#) Board of Architects of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3086](#) Board of Architects of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3087](#) Queensland State Archives—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3088](#) Queensland State Archives—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- 30 September 2010—
- [3089](#) Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3090](#) Queensland Law Society—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3091](#) Queensland Law Society—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3092](#) Queensland Ombudsman—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3093](#) Queensland Ombudsman—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3094](#) Crime and Misconduct Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3095](#) Crime and Misconduct Commission—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3096](#) The Public Trustee—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3097](#) The Public Trustee—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3098](#) Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3099](#) Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3100](#) Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3101](#) Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3102](#) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3103](#) Department of Community Safety—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3104](#) Queensland Treasury—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3105](#) Motor Accident Insurance Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3106](#) Queensland Treasury Corporation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3107](#) QSuper Board of Trustees—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3108](#) Queensland Future Growth Corporation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3109](#) Office of the Governor—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3110](#) Department of Education and Training—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3111](#) Training Ombudsman—Annual Report 2009-10

- [3112](#) Training and Employment Recognition Council—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3113](#) Queensland Studies Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3114](#) Southbank Institute of Technology—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3115](#) Non-State Schools Accreditation Board—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3116](#) Gold Coast Institute of TAFE—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3117](#) Department of Communities—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3118](#) WaterSecure—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3119](#) Residential Tenancies Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3120](#) Residential Tenancies Authority—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3121](#) SEQ Water Grid Manager—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3122](#) SEQ Water Grid Manager—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3123](#) Valuers Registration Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3124](#) Valuers Registration Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3125](#) Queensland Gaming Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3126](#) Tourism Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3127](#) Gladstone Area Water Board—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3128](#) Gladstone Area Water Board—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3129](#) SunWater—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3130](#) SunWater—State of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3131](#) LinkWater—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3132](#) Department of Infrastructure and Planning—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3133](#) Community Futures Task Force—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3134](#) Urban Land Development Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3135](#) Gladstone Economic and Industry Development Board—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3136](#) Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3137](#) Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3138](#) Medical Radiation Technologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3139](#) Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3140](#) Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3141](#) Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3142](#) Queensland Health—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3143](#) Bundaberg Health Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3144](#) Office of the Information Commissioner—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3145](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2009-10 [Volume 1 of 2]
- [3146](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2009-10 [Volume 2 of 2]
- [3147](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3148](#) Translink Transit Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3149](#) Department of Infrastructure and Planning—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3150](#) Urban Land Development Authority—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3151](#) Gladstone Economic and Industry Development Board—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3152](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3153](#) Mining Safety and Health Advisory Council—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3154](#) Board of Examiners (Statutory certificates of competency for safe mine management)—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3155](#) Energy Ombudsman—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3156](#) Energy Ombudsman—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3157](#) Port of Brisbane—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3158](#) Port of Brisbane—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3159](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3160](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3161](#) Ports North—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3162](#) Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3163](#) North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3164](#) North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10

- [3165](#) Port of Townsville Limited—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3166](#) Port of Townsville Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3167](#) Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3168](#) Townsville Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3169](#) National Trust of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3170](#) National Trust of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3171](#) Queensland Institute of Medical Research—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3172](#) Queensland Institute of Medical Research—Financial Report 2009-10
- [3173](#) QIC—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3174](#) QIC—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3175](#) Consolidated Fund Financial Report 2009-10
- [3176](#) Department of Environment and Resource Management—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3177](#) Department of Environment and Resource Management—Annual Report 2009-10—Annex
- [3178](#) CS Energy—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3179](#) CS Energy—Corporate Governance Report and Financial Report 2009-10
- [3180](#) CS Energy—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3181](#) Energex—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3182](#) Energex—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3183](#) Ergon Energy—Annual Stakeholder Report 2009-10
- [3184](#) Ergon Energy—Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2010
- [3185](#) Ergon Energy—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3186](#) Powerlink Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3187](#) Powerlink Queensland—Annual Financial Report 2009-10
- [3188](#) Powerlink Queensland—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3189](#) Stanwell Corporation Limited—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3190](#) Stanwell Corporation Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3191](#) Tarong Energy—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3192](#) Tarong Energy—Statement of Corporate Intent 2009-10
- [3193](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3194](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation—Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2010
- [3195](#) Department of the Premier and Cabinet—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3196](#) Department of the Premier and Cabinet—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3197](#) Public Service Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3198](#) Queensland Competition Authority—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3199](#) South Bank Corporation—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3200](#) Library Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3201](#) Library Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3202](#) Queensland Art Gallery—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3203](#) Queensland Art Gallery—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3204](#) Queensland Museum—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3205](#) Queensland Museum—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3206](#) Queensland Performing Arts Centre—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3207](#) Queensland Performing Arts Centre—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3208](#) Surveyors Board Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3209](#) Stadiums Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3210](#) Queensland Water Commission—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3211](#) Queensland Water Commission—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3212](#) SEQWater—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3213](#) SEQWater—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum

1 October 2010—

- [3214](#) Response from the Minister for Transport (Ms Nolan) to a paper petition (1518-10) presented by Ms Farmer, from 90 petitioners, requesting the House to install a lift at the Morningside Railway Station on the Wynnum Road side of the station as a matter of priority.

4 October 2010—

- [3215](#) Response from the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Ms Jones) to a paper petition (1515-10) sponsored by Mr Knuth, from 3864 petitioners, requesting the House to keep open the existing public access trails used by horse riders in State forests in the event these State forests are transferred into National Parks.
- [3216](#) Extract from Queensland Government Gazette No. 35, dated 1 October 2010: Department of Infrastructure and Planning Notice—Statement giving reasons why the Governor in Council approved by Gazette Notice on 1 October 2010 the Hancock Coal Pty Ltd Alpha Coal Project Rail Corridor Facility as an infrastructure facility that is of significance, pursuant to section 125(1)(f) of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971.
- [3217](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr C R Dick) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Trust Accounts Regulation 1999 and the Criminal Code (Animal Valuers) Regulation 1999.
- [3218](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Ms Jones) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Nature Conservation (Whales and Dolphins) Conservation Plan 1997.
- [3219](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Ms Jones) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Nature Conservation (Dugong) Conservation Plan 1999.
- [3220](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the River Improvement Trust Regulation 1998.
- [3221](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Aboriginal Land Regulation 1991.
- [3222](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Torres Strait Islander Land Regulation 1991.
- [3223](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Soil Conservation Regulation 1998.
- [3224](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (Mr Mulherin) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Regulation 1998, Agricultural Standards Regulation 1997, Apiaries Regulation 1998, Brands Regulation 1998, the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Regulation 1999, Diseases in Timber Regulation 1997, Exotic Diseases in Animals Regulation 1998, Stock Regulation 1988, Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 1999, Fisheries (Gulf of Carpentaria Inshore Fin Fish) Management Plan 1999, Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2000 and the Timber Utilisation and Marketing Regulation 1998.
- [3225](#) Safe Food Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3226](#) Safe Food Queensland—Annual Report 2009-10—Addendum
- [3227](#) QRAA—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3228](#) Office of the Integrity Commissioner—Annual Report 2009-10
- [3229](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Forestry Regulation 1998.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004—

- [3244](#) Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2010, No. 248

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008—

- [3245](#) Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2010, No. 249

City of Brisbane Act 2010—

- [3246](#) City of Brisbane (Transitional) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 250

Local Government Act 2009—

- [3247](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 251
- [3248](#) Local Government (Transitional) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 252

Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2009—

- [3249](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 253

Gaming Machine Act 1991—

- [3250](#) Gaming Machine Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2010, No. 254

Liquor Act 1992—

- [3251](#) Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 255

Recreation Areas Management Act 2006—

- [3252](#) Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 256
- [3253](#) Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 256—Regulatory Impact Statement
- [3254](#) Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 256—Explanatory Note

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[3255](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2010, No. 257

[3256](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 258

Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004—

[3257](#) Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2010, No. 259

Private Health Facilities Act 1999—

[3258](#) Private Health Facilities Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 260

Water Act 2000—

[3259](#) Water Resource (Burdekin Basin) Amendment Plan (No. 1) 2010, No. 261

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—

[3260](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 262

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, Explosives Act 1999, Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999—

[3261](#) Mining and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 263

Mineral Resources Act 1989—

[3262](#) Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2010, No. 264

Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002—

[3263](#) Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2010, No. 265

[3264](#) Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2010, No. 265—Explanatory Note

[3265](#) Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2010, No. 265—Regulatory Impact Statement

Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004—

[3266](#) Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 266

Geothermal Energy Act 2010—

[3267](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 267

Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988, Drugs Misuse Act 1986, Fisheries Act 1994, Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936—

[3268](#) Primary Industries and Fisheries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 268

Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988—

[3269](#) Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 269

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[3270](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2010, No. 270

Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982—

[3271](#) Funeral Benefit Business Regulation 2010, No. 271

Child Protection and Other Acts Amendment Act 2010—

[3272](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 272

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

[3273](#) Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 273

Electrical Safety Act 2002, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

[3274](#) Electrical Safety and Other Regulation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 274

[3275](#) Electrical Safety and Other Regulation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2010, No. 274—Explanatory Note

Private Health Facilities Act 1999—

[3276](#) Private Health Facilities (Standards) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2010, No. 275

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

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

[3277](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts), pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Police Service Administration Regulation 1990, Police Service Administration (Review of Decisions) Regulation 1990, Police Service (Discipline) Regulations 1990, Police Service (Ranks) Regulation 1991, Weapons Regulation 1996, Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2000 and Prostitution Regulation 2000.

[3278](#) Prostitution Licensing Authority—Annual Report 2009-10

Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor)—

[3280](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Casino Control Regulation 1999.

[3281](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Regulation 1998.

- [3282](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Wagering Regulation 1999.
- [3283](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999.
- [3284](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Regulation 1999.
- [3285](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Business Names Regulation 1998.
- [3286](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading (Mr Lawlor) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Liens on Crops of Sugar Cane Regulation 1999

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following report—

- [3279](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 158 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010—

Amendment made to Bill

Clause 14 (Replacement of ch 8, pt 2)

At page 27, line 12, 'exemption'

Omit, Insert—

'exemption.'

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Audit Office; Commonwealth Games

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.43 am): Mr Speaker, before making my ministerial statements this morning, I endorse your recommendations of the display of the material by the Queensland Audit Office. I was very pleased to be able to join with Mr Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition recently to recognise the 150 years of the Audit Office's work. There is some very interesting material on display, including a book of the history of the office that, if one looks closely at it, includes a photo of a very young Leo Hielscher in the 1950s stuck in Townsville because the Burdekin River was in flood as well as old saddlebags from auditors past who would go out on horseback to do the auditing. I take this moment to commend the Audit Office for the great work that it does.

This morning I have returned from New Delhi where, along with our government's team charged with getting the Commonwealth Games to Queensland in 2018, I have had an opportunity to showcase the Gold Coast to the world. I take a moment to congratulate our athletes who have gotten off to a fantastic start at the Commonwealth Games. After the first day of competition, Australia tops the medal tally with four gold and two silver. Our next closest rival is Canada with one gold and three bronze. We can all be very proud of our Queensland athletes, with Brisbane's Kylie Palmer winning gold in the 200-metre freestyle—the first medal for Australia at these games. That was just before Alicia Coutts and Emily Seebohm claimed a Queensland first and second in the 200-metre individual medley. The men's four by 100 freestyle relay team took the other gold in the pool. Let us hope the winning streak continues today and for the duration of the games.

Over the past three days the bid committee and I have met with delegates of the Commonwealth Games Federation and outlined in the clearest possible detail why our coastal strip is the right fit as host city for the 2018 games and why the time is right for Queensland to take on an international event of this magnitude. All of us here know what the Commonwealth Games did for Brisbane in 1982—it heralded a city's coming of age. It put us on the national and international map as a modern, cosmopolitan city capable of successfully pulling off one of the biggest events in the global sporting calendar. It was a true turning point in our modern history. Now it is time for the Gold Coast to have the chance to step up to the plate and be the focal point of another moment in our history.

Our government is committed to staging a bid for the 2018 Commonwealth Games and getting that bid right. That is why I travelled to Delhi along with the federal sports minister, Mark Arbib, and our bid chairman, Mark Stockwell. That is why we appeared before all 71 of the federation's delegates, representing each Commonwealth country, at its annual general assembly to lay out our case. This is the first step in what will be a 15-month marathon for countries wishing to host the 2018 games, and I have to say that I believe we are off to a flying start. The delegates were impressed with our presentation, not the least of which included a moving video message from Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke, who everyone here knows is a Commonwealth and Olympic Games legend. The Gold Coast's qualities as a natural fit for these games speak for themselves, but Mayor Clarke, considering his international reputation and profile and the respect he is afforded throughout Commonwealth countries as a result, could be fairly described I believe as a secret weapon in our bid.

This is an opportunity to build the Gold Coast to an even further degree on an international level. We are not only talking about building new sporting venues and upgrading existing ones; we are talking about committing to and creating new infrastructure in the housing sector, in public transport as well as in sporting infrastructure that will serve this community for many years to come. Should our bid be successful, we have committed to building a games village that can then be sold into the market as new housing for this rapidly growing area. We are now building a world-class light rail system, the Gold Coast rapid transit network, and a new AFL stadium at the Gold Coast in partnership with the federal government.

It is no secret that Queensland has just one competitor for the 2018 event—the city of Hambantota in Sri Lanka. Similarly, it is no secret that, despite being invited to present in Delhi over the weekend, Sri Lanka declined the invitation. I have to say that was disappointing not only to the Commonwealth delegates but to our bid team because we were keen to see what the competition was like and what it had in its back pocket. Nonetheless, this decision by Sri Lanka not to present an initial bid should not be read the wrong way. It would be wrong in my view to interpret this as a free kick for the Gold Coast's bid, and make no mistake: this weekend's presentation by our government is only the beginning of the race. The starter's gun has only just been fired. By May next year Queensland must present an official bid book to the federation for consideration. Senior Sri Lanka officials in Delhi remained adamant that Sri Lanka intends to present its bid at the same time. In November the federation will vote and make its announcement with regard to the successful bidder. So the hard work has only just begun.

The Gold Coast needs to achieve at least 36 Commonwealth country votes if we are to be successful in hosting these games. Mark Stockwell and his highly professional and tireless team will be working around the clock throughout the Commonwealth Games and beyond, making every effort to see that we can achieve just that.

Tourism Queensland, Rebranding

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.49 am): Last week I was very pleased to be involved in unveiling Tourism Queensland's new brand—Queensland, Where Australia Shines. The new brand tells the world what we Queenslanders have always known: this is where Australia shines. If you are coming to Australia, you would be mad to miss us. Where Australia Shines captures the essence of Queensland—the Australian holiday destination where our visitors can escape the pressures of everyday life and create their own shining moment. This is a once-in-a-decade rebranding and it is a multimillion-dollar investment in Queensland's tourism future.

The campaign also includes the development of new regional marketing brands for Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, the Whitsundays and tropical North Queensland. The first area for these regional marketing brands will be the Gold Coast, which will be unveiled later this week.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms BLIGH: We will see. The launch of Queensland, Where Australia Shines has caused quite a buzz over the last week. For example, there have been more than 12,600 views of the new brand video on YouTube as of 3 October. On the day it launched, Queensland, Where Australia Shines was the second most viewed travel and events YouTube video in the world. Already, the launch of the brand has recorded more than \$3.7 million in publicity value for Queensland as at 1 October. Additionally, the Queensland Holidays website recorded more than 23,000 visits on the day that the new brand was launched.

Industry, media and public support for the new brand has been overwhelming and public support for the campaign has been encouraging, I think, for tourism operators. As Tourism and Transport Forum head Chris Brown said last week after the launch—

Today marks the start of the Queensland tourism fight-back ... The new campaign is a bright, dynamic vision of Queensland, designed to showcase Queensland as Australia's holiday home.

Members will be aware that tourism is a serious business in Queensland and behind the fun of an energetic new brand there are 122,000 Queenslanders directly employed in the industry and a further 100,000 indirectly employed. By way of example, that is four times the number of people employed in mining in this state. Tourism contributes more than \$9 billion to Queensland's economy each year, making it our second largest export earner after coal.

I congratulate Tourism Queensland and the Queensland tourism industry. I think that the partnership that they have had has developed very well over the past couple of years. This new brand builds on the great success of the Best Job in the World campaign and that fantastic job will see this new brand really take hold.

'Walk a day in my shoes' Program

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.52 am): Last Wednesday I spent a day walking in the shoes of Christine Howcroft. Christine is a busy mum of four who also works as a checkout operator at Coles, Marsden. I was introduced to Christine by Brisbane radio station 97.3 and it was wonderful to meet with her and walk a day in her shoes. As I have said before, our 'Walk a day in my shoes' program is not simply about tagging along and observing; it is about connecting in a genuine way and truly experiencing a day in the life of a fellow Queenslander who lives a very different life from many of us. Walking a day in Christine's shoes was not just about taking over her job at the checkout; it was about working with her to understand more of the other parts of her life, particularly as the mother of a son with a disability and facing firsthand the many and varied challenges that her life brings.

My day with Christine started at 7 am when I arrived at her house to begin the day. The first thing on the to-do list was to help Christine's son Scott get ready for his day at the Keystone agency. Scott, who has Angelman syndrome, goes to Keystone, which is a fantastic organisation that engages and supports people with a disability through work. At Keystone I had the chance to meet some truly inspiring people—clients and staff and family members—who all contribute to a very positive and enjoyable workplace. Then it was off to Coles with Christine to start my day on the checkouts. Working behind the register offered me a great opportunity to speak to locals one on one about many of the issues they face on a daily basis. I certainly left with a new appreciation for the work that Christine and her colleagues do. As well as scanning groceries, Christine is a friendly face and voice to her customers, many of whom are regulars. This walk in Christine's shoes also gave me a genuine insight into the demands that many working parents just like Christine have to cope with in caring for a child, and particularly a young adult, with a disability.

My day with Christine was very worthwhile and also very enjoyable. I would like to say a big thankyou to Christine and her family, to Coles and to 97.3 and the other staff members at Coles, in particular Robyn Bailey and the morning crew. The program has been an extraordinarily useful exercise for our government and it will continue over the coming months. It complements the other sources of advice that we receive and the other public consultation activities that we are active in. I am pleased to report that all 51 government MPs have either taken part in their first outing, confirmed their first 'Walk a day in my shoes' of someone else or submitted options for their first job under the program.

A number of ministers have already undertaken their program. I give one example of the Minister for Main Roads, Craig Wallace, who swapped his cabinet bag for a shovel to join about 20 road builders on one of Townsville's biggest road-building projects, the \$110 million Douglas Arterial duplication. Mr Wallace met up with earthworks leading hand Paul Alexander at his home at Bushland Beach just after 5 am. The weather took a turn for the worse and after a few hours on the job the minister and the work site were a muddy mess. One of the issues that the minister has indicated to me that certainly is of concern to these workers are drivers who speed through roadworks and who endanger the lives of other workers. He is determined to do something about that and I look forward to discussing his ideas on this issue in the near future.

I make no excuses for finding new ways to listen to the electorate. While the media interest may subside, the 'Walk a day in my shoes' program will continue over coming months. I congratulate all of those members who have been part of the program and I have had very positive feedback from everyone.

Caloundra South Development; Urban Land Development Authority

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.56 am): On 2 September the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, Stirling Hinchliffe, announced that he would consider using call-in powers to progress the Caloundra South Structure Plan if council continued to refuse to meet statutory deadlines. After careful consideration of this urgent issue, my government has decided to take a new path to progress this important development. Today I can advise the House that it is our intention to declare a new urban development area at Caloundra South on the Sunshine Coast.

Caloundra South has been identified for development for many years. Most recently, our greenfields strategy nominated it as a priority site for delivery. But more than two years later, it continues to languish. That means that we are not only missing the opportunity to create an exciting new community—and a very well planned one—it also means the Sunshine Coast is missing out on much needed jobs and housing. Unemployment on the Sunshine Coast at 6.4 per cent remains higher than the state average of 5.7 per cent and there are now more than 10,000 people on the Sunshine Coast who are unemployed. Every day that Caloundra South sits in a planning in-tray is a day without construction jobs on the Sunshine Coast.

There is also a significant housing affordability issue emerging on the Sunshine Coast that can be addressed only through increasing the supply of housing and doing that in a well-planned, well-structured way. The council's own housing affordability strategy shows that housing stress impacts on

one in three households on the Sunshine Coast council's area and BankWest's *First Time Home Buyer Report* from July this year states that Sunshine Coast homes are now the most expensive in Queensland. Similarly, the most recent Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey in 2009 rated the Sunshine Coast as the third most unaffordable housing market in the world behind Vancouver and Sydney.

Our government does not want to see young families on the Sunshine Coast being priced out of a home and miss out on jobs. The Sunshine Coast is a fantastic place to live and we want it to stay that way. But it cannot and should not be a region where only the wealthy can afford to live and our government does not want to see it become a place of high unemployment because the construction industry has been strangled by planning delays.

The Urban Land Development Authority is already delivering major new satellite communities south of the river at Ripley Valley, Yarrabilba and Flagstone to help us manage growth in the SEQ. Today we add Caloundra South to that list. Caloundra South has the potential to provide 22,000 homes for more than 45,000 people over coming years. This development will create thousands of new jobs. Proper planning can protect the precious Pumicestone Passage and deliver hundreds of hectares of new parkland and sporting fields.

Overall, the government wants to see more than a third of the total site delegated as non-urban open space primarily for environmental protection and enhancement. The ULDA will be tasked with making rapid progress on this site. I want to see early construction works in the first quarter of next year and planning for the entire site completed within 12 months.

Last week cabinet endorsed the next step for the three satellite cities being planned through the ULDA at Ripley Valley, Greater Flagstone and Yarrabilba. The ULDA has been working in partnership with the Logan and Ipswich councils in which these developments are located. In response to the cabinet decision last week, Mayor of Logan, Pam Parker, said the ULDA's involvement was a turning point in Logan's history and that she looked forward to a strong working relationship with the state government and the ULDA as we develop these model cities. Similarly, Deputy Mayor of Ipswich, Victor Attwood, said it was great to be in partnership with the state government and the ULDA to deliver the Ripley Valley development, which he confidently predicted would be one of the best places to live in South-East Queensland.

I know that the members in the Logan and the Ripley area are supportive of this activity and understand what it means, particularly to young families wanting to live and work in the area. I hope that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council will view this opportunity in the same way as the mayors and councils of Logan and Ipswich and work with the ULDA to make this exciting and sustainable development a reality.

Nursing

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (10.00 am): Nurses are the backbone of our healthcare system. Over 100 years ago about 128 nurses worked in Queensland hospitals. Now there are 60,000 Queensland nurses and midwives working across various clinical settings, with almost 30,500 working in Queensland Health. Nurses comprise 65 per cent of our clinical workforce. The nursing role has come a long way since the early days of medical subservience where the nursing role resembled more that of domestic duties at a doctor's direction. Today nurses are taking on more technologically challenging roles than at any other point in history. Nursing today encompasses diverse clinical skill with varied career point entries and extended clinical career pathways. Nurses can now set a career focused on increasing clinical expertise with the addition of the nurse practitioner role. It is not just about reaching seniority at management level. Nurse practitioners are highly respected and experienced clinicians with specialist skills and qualifications to meet the healthcare needs of Queenslanders.

There are currently 67 nurse practitioners working in priority areas such as emergency, aged care, paediatrics, mental health, rural and remote, and chronic disease. Nurse practitioners provide improved clinical outcomes, better access to healthcare provision, better patient outcomes and improved departmental performance and educational resources. The introduction of the nurse practitioner role to the Queensland Health system has had a dramatic impact on service delivery. The Redlands Hospital department was the first hospital to introduce nurse practitioners which resulted in the 'did not wait' category for patients dropping from 11 per cent to below four per cent consistently for 12 months. This innovation and investment by the Queensland government exemplifies that a multidisciplinary approach and innovative thinking has contributed to improved outcomes for patients. The introduction of nurse practitioners, a new model of care and a purpose-built area within the Redlands ED has led to a significant increase in service efficiency.

We are delivering on our election commitment to invest \$7.8 million over three years to train and recruit 30 nurse practitioners in the busiest emergency departments across Queensland by 2012. Fourteen of the 30 have already started work and are improving patient care across EDs at Logan, Redlands, Redcliffe, Ipswich and Cairns hospitals. An additional eight positions are being recruited for

EDs at QEII, Gold Coast, Robina, Nambour, Toowoomba and Townsville hospitals. The Bligh government is committed to investing in the future of nurse practitioners through \$34.5 million of recurrent funding for a long-term program for nurse practitioners from 2008-12. Further, we allocate \$160,000 annually in scholarships to enable registered nurses to complete nurse practitioner master level qualifications.

Nurses at whatever stage they are at in their career path are vital for our hospitals. Barriers to getting more nurses working in our hospitals are unacceptable. That is why I have put on record my concerns about registration requirements for English tests for native English speaking nurses. I will be raising this issue at the next meeting of health ministers. I have spoken to affected nurses personally and I want to thank the Queensland Nurses Union for arranging this meeting. This group of young international nurses and nursing students had completed some, if not all, of their training at bachelor degree level at our Queensland universities. These students have all demonstrated the clinical skills and competencies required to graduate successfully from our Queensland nursing courses. Now they find themselves prevented from commencing work because they have no other way to demonstrate their English language proficiency than by completing this exam. Having an overseas accent should be no barrier to working in this country. As a kid I can remember plenty of Italian, Greek and Irish accents from people who are great contributors to this society.

All national boards set their standards of registration independent of government, yet this issue is one that I am compelled to raise with the nursing board and my interstate and Commonwealth counterparts as it has serious implications for our nursing and midwifery workforce. The national nurses body is the only body that does not allow exemptions in this regard. This is in contrast to every other registration body. I strongly support standards that maximise patient care. However, streamlining the registration process must be a priority. We do not want to see this issue undermine the very considerable benefits of national registration.

Queensland Ballet

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (10.05 am): On Saturday evening in my capacity as Acting Minister for the Arts I was privileged to attend a world premiere performance here in Queensland at QPAC at Southbank. *Fonteyn Remembered*, a fusion of drama and dance, is a fitting work to celebrate the Queensland Ballet Company's 50th year and also to commemorate the career of famous ballet dancer Dame Margot Fonteyn. This wonderful ballet was conceived by Queensland's Des Power and directed and choreographed by our own Francois Klaus, artistic director of the Queensland Ballet. It is performed by members of the company with friends Bille Browne, Carol Burns and Eugene Gilfedder and, of course, supported by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. The season will run until 16 October.

It was Dame Margot Fonteyn who said, 'Genius is another word for magic, and the whole point of magic is that it is inexplicable.' Her own career was an example of such magic and of beauty and tragedy that enchanted and enthralled the world. Born in 1919, her career as a dancer bloomed at a time when most would be considering retirement. At age 43 she first danced with the legendary Rudolf Nureyev, commencing a partnership that took the world by storm. This was a most worthy story and one worth telling. Des Power has written a gripping dramatisation of her life. Here in Queensland our Gallery of Modern Art brings world-class exhibitions to our state. Often these are exclusive to Queensland. But we can conceive, create, design and perform the best here on a home-grown basis as well. Of this the Queensland Ballet should be justifiably proud.

I would also like to pay tribute to Queensland Ballet General Manager Judith Anderson who has decided to retire. I noted Judith's outstanding contribution to the development of the company on Saturday evening, but I think it only right to mention it in this House and to also welcome her successor, Anna Marsden.

QR National

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (10.06 am): Markets have all but factored it in and homeowners are hoping against hope with the Reserve Bank expected to raise the official interest rate later today. For Queensland businesses an interest rate rise will not be welcome. Demand in some sectors still remains fragile and the re-pricing of credit continues to weigh on investment. Our housing market is a case in point, underscoring the importance of the government's announcement this morning to progress the Caloundra South development. However, one thing is inescapable: rising interest rates mean the Reserve Bank believes the economy is growing strongly—at least in key sectors. As I have said before, growth is not yet completely broad based and it is very definitely being led by the resources recovery. A move by the central bank today does not provide cover for banks to utilise the opportunity to lift above any rate rise determined by the Reserve today. The banks make the case that their funding costs move independently of the official cash rate, but on that basis a movement by the Reserve does not justify the banks taking unilateral action to opportunistically raise rates above the tote.

As the Governor of the Reserve Bank has said in the past, interest rates are a blunt tool. There remains in my view a very strong case for the Reserve to remain cautious. The Queensland economy could do without being clubbed by a blunt tool this afternoon. Nevertheless, we can all take heart from one angle: a tightening bias from the bank underscores the view that a recovery is well underway—a recovery that is being led by our resources and a recovery that has seen the All Ordinaries index increase by 45 per cent since March 2009.

The government has now opened the opportunity for investors to participate in the chance to leverage into this upswing through the opening of the QR National float. Pre-registration for the float was launched two weeks ago and closes this Friday ahead of the formal offer document being released on Sunday. I advise the House that the government has confirmed that incentives will be in place for retail—that is, mum and dad—investors. This includes access to shares at a price discounted to the institutional offering, a loyalty bonus share offering and guaranteed price cap for retail investors. Retail incentives of this type are a regular feature of such transactions. They existed in the Qantas sale, the separate Telstra sales and the TAB sale, to name just a few. Queenslanders will be given priority in these arrangements.

Let us be clear: not only does low-rent criticism of these arrangements show an appalling lack of knowledge of the way in which the market operates but also it is an argument against the interests of Queensland mum and dad investors. It should be called for what it is. The fact is that QR National is a great Queensland company with a national footprint and it is poised to be a great Australian company with its exposure to long-term resource demand out of the booming economies of Asia. That is why, despite the concerted political campaign of negativity, investors are demonstrating very strong demand for this unique opportunity. At last I can agree with at least some members opposite that the debate does need to move on. The formal opening on Sunday is much anticipated and I anticipate a very strong result for the taxpayer. After all, it is the interests of the taxpayer that remain our focus. It is time for the opposition to get on board.

Sale of Public Assets; Building Services Authority

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.10 am): This government is building new assets that will benefit all Queenslanders under our record \$17 billion infrastructure program. We are firmly focused on Queensland's future and new public assets that will benefit Queenslanders for generations to come. To finance these new assets, we are selling other assets that have a less direct benefit to Queenslanders than new hospitals, roads and science precincts. The new assets include the Carrara stadium, the Brisbane Supreme and District Courts, William McCormack Place stage 2 in Cairns, the Queensland Police Academy and the Ecosciences Precinct at Boggo Road. We also have the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast university hospitals, the Queensland Children's Hospital and hospital extensions in Rockhampton, Robina, Townsville, Nambour, Cairns and Mackay, not to mention educational infrastructure, social housing, police stations and so on. Recently I spoke to construction workers on a number of building sites and they understand the need to sell assets that are soaking up space on our ledger to build new and better assets.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: My word I have; don't worry about that. On those sites throughout Queensland there are thousands of ETU members who do not quite share Comrade Simpson's view of the world and of the 300-odd people who work in Queensland Rail, who are his members. In the current climate those people are very vulnerable and under threat from those who sit opposite. I will continue those visits to ensure that the message of how we can finance those important new assets is fully understood by workers.

Unfortunately, the construction industry found out by accident what is LNP policy on infrastructure, and it is not good news for those working in that area. It has been 39 days since the member for Clayfield accidentally let drop on radio that he would reassess our infrastructure projects, and still he has not explained exactly what that means. Recently I wrote to large Queensland building companies to inform them about the member for Clayfield's reassessment plans. I have since been told that concerned builders are contacting LNP backbenchers to ask them what reassessment means, but nobody can tell them. Surprise, surprise! Recently the opposition submitted an RFI request for my letter to building companies. It is not entitled to it because I sent it from my electorate office, but I am very happy to table it. I hope that it is published in every newspaper in this state.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 3 September 2010, from the Hon. Robert Swarten MP regarding expenditure on infrastructure [\[3287\]](#).

Now I intend to write to level 2 builders advising them accordingly, because there is a lot of interest in our campaign to deliver to Queensland quality assets into the future.

On another matter, it has come to my attention that Ms Pauline Wilson has recently emailed many electorate offices throughout Queensland, accusing the Queensland Building Services Authority of corruption and fraud—and myself, accordingly—and labelling the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme a scam. I take this opportunity to set the record straight.

Ms Wilson entered into two contracts consecutively with licensees that subsequently became insolvent. She has been fully compensated to the amount of \$95,380—so much for a scam—in line with the terms and conditions of her insurance policy. That is what the insurance policy says and that is what she was granted. Ms Wilson remains dissatisfied and is seeking further compensation from taxpayers for losses that are not covered under the scheme, such as the difference in the price of building her house under her original contract and the final contract price. I am sure that at some stage every member of this parliament has received submissions from a home owner who has found themselves in that position. However, the payout can only be what the insurance policy says. Unless we change that policy and force up the costs, we have to stick with what we have.

Having failed to persuade this government to make her an ex gratia payment—in other words, a taxpayer subsidy—at the expense of people who stack shelves in Woolworths, for example, she continues in her efforts to extort payment. Ms Wilson has been advised to contact the CMC but has been unable to provide evidence to support her allegations. The statements she is making could be construed as defamation, but I will not be going down that path, of course. That is something that, as politicians, we have to wear on the chin. The BSA has fully compensated Ms Wilson for her loss under the policy and has extended every courtesy towards her, but it is unable to assist her further. I will neither receive nor answer any correspondence or contact from Ms Wilson again.

Wild Rivers Legislation

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.15 am): The government's wild rivers legislation is protecting the environment of Cape York whilst allowing for sustainable economic development. We stand proudly by our legislation and last week I travelled to Canberra to brief members of both houses of federal parliament on our wild river laws.

Mr Horan: How is the second-hand Cortina going?

Mr ROBERTSON: With 440 horse speed, it was a beauty. I am happy to report that these briefings were positive and constructive. I thank the members involved for their time and interest. My trip to Canberra was necessary because of the misinformation about Queensland's wild rivers legislation being deliberately spread by the leader of the federal opposition, Tony Abbott. Clearly not content with using Indigenous communities as political pawns, Mr Abbott wants to override states' rights through a private member's bill seeking to overturn Queensland's wild rivers legislation.

As most in this House will be aware, Prime Minister Julia Gillard has since referred our wild rivers issues to a House of Representatives committee for further examination. I welcome the Prime Minister's initiative, as it provides an opportunity for all members of the federal parliament to receive a balanced view on our wild rivers legislation. I believe that it will also help to finally put pay to the hypocritical stance and gross mistruths being pedalled by Tony Abbott. Of course, what is worse is the blind support that the opposition is now giving him. Let us not forget that it was this opposition, the LNP, that voted for our wild rivers legislation in 2005 when it was first introduced. It was not pushed through parliament as claimed only last week by the Leader the Opposition. It went through with consent.

Mr Horan: You didn't tell us the truth about it.

Mr ROBERTSON: You voted for it. In a week when the LNP excelled itself in releasing various jokes for the people of Queensland, this is just another joke that shows up its hypocritical stance. I could not believe that media release. Does the Leader of the Opposition read them before they are sent out? Clearly not, because no Leader of the Opposition who put his hand up to support our wild rivers legislation in 2005, with consent, would allow a media release to go out last week saying that those laws were pushed through the parliament. Once again, they have demonstrated that they are prepared to roll over any time Tony Abbott whistles a tune for them. That is hardly surprising given that they have no interest in preserving our environment and no policies of their own.

Many traditional owners and community leaders of groups like the Wik and Carpentaria Land Council have publicly endorsed our wild rivers legislation. They say Mr Abbott and his prime supporter, Noel Pearson, do not speak for them on wild rivers and they want Mr Abbott to abandon his bid to overturn our wild river laws. I commend them for taking their strong stand and for going to Canberra last week to meet with various members of parliament, indicating that, as Indigenous leaders and traditional owners on the Cape York, they too have a voice and that voice should be listened to with as much respect as that of Noel Pearson.

Whilst I commend them for the strong stand they have taken, I cannot say the same about Mr Abbott, who has indicated that he will not participate in this new inquiry by the House of Representatives. Isn't this just the height of hypocrisy and an insult to all communities on Cape York? It also proves the point that I made to numerous people in Canberra last week, and I make that point again here: Tony Abbott has no mandate on wild rivers and has no right to interfere with the laws of this parliament.

Long-Day-Care Services, Kindergarten Program

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (10.19 am): More Queensland children will get a flying start to learning in life thanks to a new round of funding to help long-day-care services deliver kindergarten programs. The Bligh government is investing up to \$6.5 million in another 201 long-day-care services throughout the state to provide early education programs by qualified teachers.

Around 29,000 Queensland children attended long day care in 2009, but only about seven per cent of those children accessed an education program delivered by a qualified teacher in long day care. This funding will give families more options and greater access to quality kindergarten programs for their children. It means that another 5,800 Queensland children will be able to access a quality kindergarten program in the year before prep. This is on top of the 3,900 extra places created in 138 long-day-care services already delivering kindergarten programs after this year's highly successful pilot program.

This latest funding round builds on that success and is an important step on the road towards providing universal access to kindergarten for every Queensland child. Some services will begin delivering a kindergarten program immediately, while others will start their programs early next year. Children who are at least four years old by 30 June can participate in a kindergarten program from the start of that year.

The funding was designed to help long-day-care services minimise the cost of providing a teacher-led approved kindergarten program for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. The sector has responded strongly to the invitation for funding and we will continue to encourage even more services to deliver kindergarten programs into the future. This funding for kindergarten programs in long-day-care services is in addition to the Queensland government's \$321 million investment to establish up to 240 extra kindergarten services around the state.

1 Million Women Campaign

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.21 am): Our government is committed to tackling climate change head-on. That is why we are investing \$196 million in our ClimateQ program to deliver a range of major initiatives to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our environment. To encourage more Queensland women to make a difference, our government is continuing its support of the 1 Million Women campaign, which aims to collectively cut one million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions over three years.

I am pleased to announce that tonight a new 1 Million Women community service announcement will commence on Channel 9, as a call to action for more Queenslanders to sign up. The announcement features our Premier, Channel 9's Melissa Downes and Robyn Bailey from 97.3FM. This is about encouraging more Queensland women to take up the challenge and join the fight against climate change.

National Parks

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.22 am): On another matter, the Auditor-General has today tabled a report titled *Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas*. The audit has provided a constructive review that complements and builds on the work already undertaken to improve how we manage Queensland's protected areas.

One point the report rightly highlights is the time-consuming and resource intensive process involved in developing a formal park management plan under the Nature Conservation Act, including the requirement for the department to seek the minister's input or approval five times prior to its completion. The Auditor-General also made reference to the fact that this process is in addition to the significant operational plans which are already used on a daily basis to manage our national parks. He stated—

The department has operational systems in place to deliver these services, including thematic management strategies such as pest management and infrastructure plans, as well as a robust system of work activities schedules. Annual business plans are in place and assist in identifying and prioritising resources and strategies for the short to medium-term.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management's director-general has advised the Auditor-General that to implement the formal plans for every national park under the process provided for in legislation will cost up to \$60 million and take more than 30 years. I do not believe that this is the best use of taxpayers' money or the expertise and resources of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. There are more efficient ways to achieve good park management outcomes without undue bureaucracy. We want our rangers on the ground, not sitting behind desks doing paperwork.

Our government's focus will continue to be delivering on front-line services and managing our day-to-day responsibilities such as pest, weed and fire management, as well as protecting the unique biodiversity of our parks. As I said, we are already reviewing the current management planning

frameworks for national parks with a new master plan being developed to streamline our bureaucratic processes. And we are also developing a new Queensland Biodiversity Strategy—a Bligh government election commitment which will provide a state-wide conservation strategy. Our government is determined to ensure the best and smartest use of resources to continue to protect and manage our diverse range of parks across the state into the future.

LNG Industry; Gladstone Foundation

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.25 am): One of the key planks of the Bligh government's jobs strategy is the attraction and development of new industries. One of these new lead industries is the liquefied natural gas industry, representing an enormous jobs opportunity for Queensland. Queensland's vast coal seam gas reserves and the industry's potential have attracted phenomenal overseas interest, with major international companies fighting to secure interests in coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas projects. The Bligh government is committed to the communities that will underpin this development.

As part of this commitment, the government joined with the Gladstone Regional Council in January 2009 to develop a strategic social study for Gladstone. I would like to thank former mayor George Creed, who tendered his resignation last week on medical grounds, for his involvement and contribution to the development of this study—and for 30 years of service to local government.

Mrs Cunningham: A great bloke.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Gladstone. That study, the Gladstone Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan, was completed some weeks ago and since then the government has been considering its response. I can now announce the release of the Draft Voluntary Industry Contributions Framework as an outcome of this study. The primary purpose of this draft document is to propose, in partnership with the Gladstone Regional Council, the Gladstone community and industry, to establish a perpetual trust to be known as the Gladstone Foundation.

It is proposed that the Gladstone Foundation will operate for the long term as a mechanism for managing and allocating industry contributions for the community. It will regularly consider the voluntary industry framework for investment in the Draft Voluntary Industry Contributions Framework on criteria based on viability, demonstrated need and compatibility with industry requirements.

The foundation will be governed by a board including community, industry and government representatives, and contributions will be managed by the Queensland Public Trustee. The foundation offers industry and the community of Gladstone the very best return on contributions and investment in social infrastructure. The establishment of the foundation will be supported by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, and we will now consult stakeholders in relation to the detail of the foundation's creation, board and membership.

The secondary purpose of this framework is to give clear direction to major project proponents planning to establish large scale development in the region, to ensure these companies invest funds in social infrastructure that benefits the community. The Draft Voluntary Industry Contributions Framework provides the private sector with a broad range of social infrastructure projects for possible investment—projects which have been identified by the local community.

The Bligh government is committed to building tomorrow's Queensland and to strengthening our regions. This plan puts the future of Gladstone in the hands of local people so that investment from industry reflects their needs.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (10.28 am): I table the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Legislation Alert No. 12 of 2010*.

Tabled paper: Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, Legislation Alert No. 12 of 2010 [[3288](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (10.28 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes that:

1. A Bundaberg businessman John Greenalsh, who pleaded guilty to two charges of sexually assaulting a teenage boy was only given 10 months probation, a two-month suspended prison sentence, ordered to pay \$500 compensation to his victim, while still being allowed to keep a blue card.

2. Greenalsh's victim's mother writes: 'My son will have to live with what has happened to him for the rest of his life, John on the other hand just has to keep his head down for 12 months and he can continue to live his life. What John did was not a one off, he has been abusing young boys for a very long time, I believe he will continue to abuse.'
3. The Attorney-General in response to a call for an appeal, is reported as saying that 'questions about a possible appeal should be referred to the Police Commissioner'.

And calls on the Attorney-General to be proactive, and refer the call for an appeal to the sentence against Greenalsh to the QPS, and support a parliamentary committee study which is commissioned to examine the sentencing of child sex offenders for the last five years, in order to determine if those penalties are in keeping with community expectations and standards.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. Yesterday a serial paedophile who was convicted of 10 counts of rape and 33 counts of indecent treatment of a child was sentenced to 10 years in jail of which he is likely to serve only six years, less than 12 months for every child he molested or raped. Has the child safety minister made any representations to the Attorney-General about strengthening Labor's weak sentencing laws or is the minister satisfied that the sentence provides adequate protection to children?

Mr REEVES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I obviously will not talk about the specific case because it may come up for appeal. Most of the matters that the member referred to are matters for the Attorney-General.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is to the Minister for Education. Yesterday a serial paedophile who was convicted of 10 counts of rape and 33 counts of indecent treatment of a child was sentenced to 10 years in jail of which he is likely to serve only six years, less than 12 months for every child he molested or raped. Given the offender was a student protection officer and given the minister is responsible for the care of children with education providers, has the minister made any representations to the Attorney-General about strengthening Labor's weak sentencing laws? If so, will the minister release that?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is an extremely serious issue. This government takes absolutely seriously the safety of children in any setting, not just in a school setting. We will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that we keep students and children safe.

I will not comment specifically about the particular matter that has been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He ought to know better. This matter is subject to the legal process. There is a 28-day appeal option available, I am advised, to the Attorney-General. That is the member of government who has that appeal power. Whilst legal proceedings may be contemplated it would be improper and inappropriate for me or any other minister to respond to that question. More particularly, it is utterly irresponsible of the Leader of the Opposition—the most unpredictable Leader of the Opposition that we have seen in this House—utterly disrespectful of this House, utterly in defiance of what the law and proper practice would require for you—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Clayfield.

Mr WILSON: For the Leader of the Opposition, whilst legal process is open to relevant parties in relation to particular criminal matters—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WILSON: This is irresponsible. I continue to assert that the Leader of the Opposition, who cannot take it when it gets dished out to him—he is happy to dish it but cannot cope—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

Mr WILSON: The Leader of the Opposition is as bad as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when it comes to following proper legal process in this state. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is happy to ask the Attorney-General to direct the CMC or the Police Commissioner to undertake certain investigations. The opposition has learnt nothing in 20 years.

There is proper legal process to be gone through with this particular court case as there is with court cases generally. There is an appeal open to the Attorney-General within 28 days. It would be improper to not only ask the question but also respond to the question in that setting.

Jobs

Ms FARMER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what the government is doing to build a strong economic future and create jobs for Queenslanders?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for her question and particularly for her support of the government's jobs programs. This government stands for a modern Queensland economy—an economy that will support new and emerging industries. The continued growth of Queensland's modern, diversified economy will rely on us taking every possible measure to avoid future skill shortages.

We are already starting to see reports in the media of skill shortages emerging among some industries, particularly the mining industry. That is why we have launched the opportunities campaign. We want to give every Queenslanders the opportunity to be part of what is happening here in the Queensland economy by gaining the skills that our new and emerging industries need.

While there may be 53,800 more Queenslanders employed now than there were in March 2009, it is clear that there will be skills in demand in critical sectors. One example is in the Darling Downs and the south-west where the unemployment rate is now the lowest in the state, and has been for a number of months, at 3.8 per cent. With LNG as a new industry just around the corner, through the opportunities campaign we want to make sure that locals can be part of the 18,000 jobs on offer and create those opportunities for workers right across Queensland.

Speaking of opportunities, I note that a number of opportunities are opening up on the other side of the House. There is an opportunity for a new frontbench position. There is potentially an opportunity in the seat of Lockyer. There is an opportunity for a new leadership team including a leader and a deputy leader. When they have all that opportunity they need a vessel to harness it.

I was very interested to read in the *Courier-Mail* yesterday of the new Liberal Club. The Liberal Club is being led by former Howard government minister Gary Hardgrave and Geoff Greene, the former Liberal Party secretary. What do they have in common? They have both been suspended from the LNP. But they are joined with those great power brokers Santo Santoro and Bob Carroll.

Mr Lucas: Is this the little Democratic Liberal Party?

Ms BLIGH: It has a little bit of the DLP about it. We have the gang of four leading it—Hardgrave, Greene, Carroll and Santoro. The kingmakers are now setting themselves up in opposition to McIver and Jake Smith. What this has is all the hallmarks of the support base for the Nicholls move. That is what is going on here.

What did Gary Hardgrave say? 'It is not about causing trouble or embarrassment.' When we have Gary Hardgrave and Santo Santoro saying, 'We don't want to cause any trouble,' we know that mischief is afoot. There is nothing to see here. So the Liberal Club is meeting in the Brisbane Club to deliver to the Clayfield Club. That is what we have.

(Time expired)

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier. Yesterday a serial paedophile was sentenced to 10 years in jail of which he is likely to serve only six years, less than 12 months for every child he molested or raped. Does the Premier finally understand the community's disgust at this inadequate sentence, the latest example of Labor's weak sentencing policies?

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right. I call the Premier.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister for Education!

Ms BLIGH: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the question. As the previous two speakers on this question have noted, this matter is now a question for the Attorney-General to consider in relation to a possible appeal. I have no intention of discussing this case in any detail other than to note that, as a result of the conviction yesterday and the sentence, the offender has been automatically declared a serious violent offender and will have to serve at least 80 per cent of the sentence.

On my maths, that is a minimum of eight years—not six, as put forward by the person who proposes to be the Attorney-General of Queensland. Of course—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock please. The Premier has the call.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I noted, the Attorney-General is now in a position to consider whether or not to seek an appeal in relation to this matter and I certainly do not intend to interfere with the rights of the Attorney-General in meeting his obligations. What I will say though is that this government has a proud record when it comes to protecting children. It was this government that put in place the blue card system. We lead Australia in that regard. Every state is now following in our lead in relation to that, and it is this government that successfully put in place new sentencing provisions that mean that people who commit these sorts of crimes against children can be kept in prison indefinitely in certain circumstances and can be subject to supervision beyond their sentence. No other state was successful in that regard until Queensland led the way.

On our record we have the toughest sex offending laws in Australia. The Queensland government has put in place the toughest sex offending laws in Australia that withstood a High Court challenge where other states had failed. We have a record here of protecting children. We intend to keep building on it, as we have year after year, whether it is in the prison system, the justice system, the education system or any other part of government and community activity. I well recall the days when members opposite, particularly the deputy leader, were in the cabinet that had a revolving door policy in our prisons. They could not keep prisoners in prison! I join with the Minister for Education in saying that this line of questioning delivers no credit whatsoever to those who purport to leadership in this state.

Jobs

Mr WETTENHALL: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on the government's efforts to drive and create jobs for Queenslanders and deliver record infrastructure investment?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. We have a strong economic plan. We are sticking to that plan. We are delivering it, and it is making a difference to Queenslanders. We are now more than halfway towards meeting our 100,000 jobs target. Our latest target is 46,100 new jobs to be gained by the end of this term, after 13 months of straight jobs creation. We are maintaining our record building program and, where possible, we are now able to add to it with new initiatives such as the Redcliffe rail line. Our Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative has helped more than 42,000 Queenslanders get into a position where they can then get full-time jobs. Our Green Army initiative has put in place more than 1,400 work placements and 473 traineeships. In the toughest of economic times we have maintained the lowest payroll tax rate in Australia and put in place a new payroll tax rebate for employers of apprentices and trainees that is delivering to many businesses.

Members have heard a number of times our side of politics complain about the lack of policy that we see from those opposite. We have seen in recent times—and I give credit where credit is due—the emergence of an economic policy from the shadow Treasurer. What he has indicated publicly and is yet to walk away from is that under his economic policy he would reassess projects. What does that mean? It means cut the building program. What would that mean? It would be catastrophic for the Queensland economy. We would see jobs cut, we would see productivity fall and we would see growth delayed.

Those opposite have been very busy, though. That was one policy. They have doubled their policy, because we have also seen the beginnings of an education policy—the tasers for teachers program! After waiting 18 months for a policy, what do we get? A plan to shoot high-voltage charges into your six-year-old! That is what they have delivered. The same policy powerhouse that gave us the mental health facilities staffed by volunteers has given us two policies—one to collapse the Queensland economy and the other to assault your children.

This morning those opposite have asked three questions about protecting children, but they did not stand up and say that their plan is to put tasers in those children's classrooms. Of course we saw the Leader of the Opposition—who lacks the fibre to stand up for anything—sack a staffer over it and then say that it was just a joke. That is totally implausible. This was not a one-off email between staffers mucking around; it was a six-page PowerPoint. And what did the member for Clayfield, the shadow Treasurer, know about it? Was he involved in the policy? Either he was involved in developing it or they are developing policy without reference to the shadow Treasurer, so the costings have not even been thought through! The shadow minister for education did not know, so what is going on in the opposition office? We are sacking people because they are asleep and people are playing solitaire. When they put their minds to it, this is what they come up with!

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr HORAN: My question is directed to the Premier. Premier, yesterday a serial paedophile was sentenced to 10 years in jail of which he is likely to now serve six—

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: Yesterday a serial paedophile was sentenced to 10 years in jail of which he is likely to now serve six—less than 12 months for every child he molested or raped. As I am the local member for the devastated Toowoomba community I ask: will the Premier finally support the LNP's policy to create an independent judicial commission that would ensure education, training and discipline for judges?

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier and member for Toowoomba South!

Ms BLIGH: These are the sorts of crimes that horrify every member of the community and every parent. That is why these matters were taken so seriously by the education system, why the matters were brought to the police, why the police brought a prosecution and why that was managed through our courts and secured a conviction. There is a debate about the sentence. That debate will be fully resolved when the first law officer, the Attorney-General, has had an opportunity to consider the material appropriately, rigorously and thoughtfully and make a decision in relation to it. I do not intend to interfere with that and I do not intend to comment on this individual case in this parliament. It is further evidence of the unreadiness for government of those opposite that they seek to use this forum to try to prosecute this individual case.

Mr Horan interjected.

Ms BLIGH: In fact, in doing so they run the risk of jeopardising the opportunity the Attorney-General has—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left!

Ms BLIGH: In doing so they run the risk of jeopardising the case that the Attorney-General may want to consider, and I do not intend to do that.

Mr Springborg: How?

Mr Horan interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Of course, 'Chief Justice' Springborg over here has a different view, but I put my faith in the judicial system.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South, that is enough. The Premier will refer to the member by his correct title.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Again I simply ask: when those opposite, including the honourable member who asked the question, were members of the cabinet in this state, did they do anything on these issues? No! They let prisoners go through revolving doors in their high-security prisons. They took no action in relation to increasing penalties for sex offenders. What have we done? We have systematically made the law tougher—among the toughest laws in Australia for sex offenders—and put in place a safety net through the blue card system that protects children in non-government agencies, in their sporting clubs and in their schools from people just like this.

Mr Horan interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Is there a system in the world where these sorts of people do not sometimes slip through? I do not know of any, but we will keep looking and we will continue to upgrade our system wherever possible. These are the sorts of things that are becoming less and less regular in our schools because of that safety net system that we have had.

Mr Horan: Walk in the shoes of the parents.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba South, I understand that you are the local member but I have warned you three times this morning already to bring yourself to order and I now warn you under standing order 253A.

Ms BLIGH: Every parent finds these sorts of crimes horrifying. Every parent can understand what this entire school community must be going through. All I want to make clear is that the justice system will continue to work in this case and the processes are yet to be finalised.

Health Services

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Could the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health outline how the government's infrastructure program is delivering better health services for rural and regional Queenslanders?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. We are the most decentralised mainland state in Australia, with over 150 hospitals throughout this great state. Delivering remote services is really a challenge in Queensland. We have so many people in so many places. But there are a number of things that governments can do. First of all, there is technology and our telehealth network is forever growing. I have talked in this House before about the increased use of telehealth. For example, a burns victim in Cairns can be seen by our best specialists in Brisbane without actually having to leave Far North Queensland in certain cases. We will work in lock step with the NBN to further roll that out to communities in Queensland.

But infrastructure is also important. As each of our major hospital redevelopments take place, and with population growth, it means that in many instances we can provide services in communities which those new redevelopments will allow. For example, in Cairns, in most cases a woman with breast cancer will no longer need to leave her family and travel to get treatment as a result of radiation treatment being available there. In most cases, a very sick baby in Townsville will not have to be transferred to Brisbane for complex care. In Mackay, in most cases a patient recovering from a heart attack will be treated in the new dedicated coronary care unit.

But they are major regional hospitals. It is not just them that are important. Our smaller regional health services also have an important job to play when it comes to our health network. In the north, a helipad is currently being constructed on Thursday Island to make emergency retrievals safer. In Mount Isa, construction has commenced on blocks B and D, which will deliver a significant expansion, including a bigger emergency department and more patient beds. In Winton, the tender has been let for the construction of a new multipurpose health service and tenders have closed in Central Queensland for MPHs in Mount Morgan and Baralaba. We are focused on service delivery not just in the big centres but also in those smaller centres right throughout Queensland, and we will work cooperatively with the federal government to do that.

Our action and policies are in direct contrast to, of course, what is happening in the opposition. Who could forget that last week in the *Sunday Mail* we saw the airbrushed photograph. The airhead from Burnett was airbrushed out and replaced with the member for Bundaberg.

Mr MESSENGER: I find the comments by the so-called health minister—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MESSENGER: By the health minister offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr LUCAS: I withdraw. I then had a think about the history of these matters. I note that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is famous for his love of matters Soviet and his wonderful mouse mat that he prepared. Of course, we know where the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition got their idea about the former LNP members—and, of course, the member for Gympie will be joining them soon as will the member for Gregory. On 20 May 1920 in Sverdlov Square in the Soviet Union we saw that wonderful picture of Lenin and in the corner we had Trotsky. What happened after Trotsky was no longer of any use to the Soviet Union? He got airbrushed out. So Lawrence, true to form, has taken his old mates out of the LNP out of this one, following in the footsteps of Lenin. Well done, comrade! The takeover is complete.

Tabled paper: Photograph of Lenin and Trotsky [\[3289\]](#).

Tabled paper: Photograph of Lenin with Trotsky's image removed [\[3289A\]](#).

Tabled paper: Photograph of LNP parliamentary team and same photograph with Messrs McLindon's and Messenger's images removed [\[3290\]](#).

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, a serial paedophile was sentenced to 10 years in jail for which he is likely to serve only six, less than 12 months for every child he molested or raped. Will the Premier finally support the LNP's policy to give juries the power to advise a judge on what the community expects are the appropriate parameters for a sentence?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I do not intend to make any further comments on the case being referred to. We have in the Attorney-General of Queensland someone who is dedicated to the issue of law reform. As is publicly known, he has, in fact, been working on a proposal to bring a sentencing advisory council into Queensland. I commend him on that work and I believe it will make a very important difference in our courts.

We will continue to have a judicial system in this state—while we are in government—that is conducted within the framework of the separation of powers, but where there are initiatives like a sentencing advisory council then we will very actively pursue that. I commend the work of the Attorney-General in that regard to the House. Given the policy that we have seen developed by the LNP in the last couple of weeks, if I were any member of that party I would not be standing up here recommending it to anyone.

Compulsory Third-Party Insurance Premiums

Mr KILBURN: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Could the Treasurer update the House on the implementation of the government's budget commitment to compulsory third-party insurance premiums?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question and for his advocacy on behalf of constituents in his electorate to ensure that the rising cost of living is met with real action, not just with platitudes. The real action that this government has delivered is a cut to CTP insurance, which means that all Queenslanders, as of last Friday—as of 1 October—now pay less for their car registration, pay less for the CTP insurance component of that, because of the decision that this government put in place in its budget: lowering the ceiling by \$24 because of the outlawing of commissions, lowering the ceiling because we abolished the HIH levy and reintroducing competition, which means that those people who shop around can now get a saving of up to \$29 because of the reforms that this government put in place.

That is the contrast: this government in action, addressing the cost of living while keeping a building program going, while we see from those opposite an opposition that is pointless and leaderless. So debased is the Leader of the Opposition by the henchman who put him there that this forlorn creature does not even know why he is there anymore. He does not know what to do with the job and he does not want it anymore. The reality is that if the member for Gregory came across such a forlorn and wounded creature on his property he would do the right thing and would not let it see sundown. He would put it out of its misery. The people of Queensland, and indeed the vast majority of LNP members, want to see him put out of his misery. Do the parliament a favour and actually bring it on and put him out of his misery.

Let us end this forlorn chapter in the history of this parliament for what has likely been the worst Leader of the Opposition. He is so debased and clueless, so incapable and so weak that he cannot even appoint a replacement for the shadow minister who rolled out of the way. He does not want a vote in the party room, because what will happen? The whole house of cards will finally come undone. But who needs a shadow infrastructure minister if you do not believe in the building program? Of course you can do without it.

The reality is that we know that the shadow Treasurer wants it. He is fangling for it. He said last week that he wants it. He has had two goes at it. But twice bitten and now shy. We know that he has 18 rock-solid votes and he is across the line, but there he is, sitting on his hands, waiting for the leadership spoon to be inserted in his mouth, just doing an impression of the Peter Costello lite of the Queensland parliament—waiting for it all to be handed on a platter. Let us end this farce. Let us end this chapter. Bring on the real debate. Put the shadow Treasurer in the leadership position and let us have a debate based on policy. Let us have a debate about our building program and your cuts to it, our cuts to the cost of living and your commitments to raise taxes. Let us have a debate about the policies that the people of Queensland deserve to hear. End the farce. Put out the policies, have the debate, bring it on and let us have it done by sundown.

Corrective Services, Maryborough

Mr JOHNSON: I will ask a serious question now. My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. With prisoners freely shooting up in the Maryborough prison, with a violent prisoner assaulting a female nurse and remaining in the same unit where the victim continues to work and with numerous reports of serious breaches of discipline in this jail, I ask the minister: why is Labor letting the criminals run the prisons?

Mr ROBERTS: This question from a party when in its last year of office 13 people escaped from high-security prisons! Since Labor has been in government not one person has escaped from a high-security prison. Where 28 people walked off low-security prisons, where drug use in prisons was rampant—

Mr Johnson: Still is!

Mr ROBERTS: Twelve per cent of random drug tests in prisons were positive when this member sat around the cabinet table. That is down to two per cent.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, you have asked your question. It is now the minister's opportunity to answer it. I ask you to afford him that opportunity.

Mr ROBERTS: Drug use was rampant and 12 per cent of random tests were positive when the member for Gregory sat around the cabinet table. It is now down to two per cent and going down. When sex offenders finished their term they were let free by the National Party government. It did nothing about them, despite all the tough talk.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr ROBERTS: When you sat around the cabinet table you let the sex offenders go free.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat. You will refer to the member by his proper title. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERTS: When the member for Southern Downs sat around the cabinet table he let sex offenders go free at the end of their term. There was no supervision, no monitoring. That is the legacy that this government inherited from the National Party.

There have been a number of issues raised about the Maryborough Correctional Centre. The media have reported on a number of them. Can I say that a lot of them are rubbish. If I talk to the issue of assault, an allegation has been made about a sexual assault of a prison officer in the education block. That matter has been thoroughly investigated. Corrective Services have appropriately responded to that and are dealing with that issue.

Let us look at the other claims that have been made about Maryborough and the level of assaults. Let us look at the facts because they get blurred in the debate here. If we compare the first half of 2009-10 with the second half in terms of assaults—this is one of the issues that has been raised by someone in the Maryborough precinct—we see that the number of minor assaults on prisoners is down 11 per cent. The number of minor assaults on staff is down 83 per cent. The rate of major assaults on staff and prisoners is the same. Another allegation is that there is rampant drug use in the prison. A review of random drug testing shows that the number of positive tests has decreased by 85 per cent in the last four years.

This government has put in place professional management of our prisons. They are not the holiday camps that were in existence when the member for Gregory, the member for Southern Downs and the member for Toowoomba South sat around the cabinet table and did nothing about the escapes from prisons, rampant drug use—

(Time expired)

Infrastructure Projects

Mr WENDT: My question is for the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. Can the minister advise what government projects he has inspected recently and the views of workers on asset building?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, I can. I want to thank the honourable member for accompanying me to the Gatton prison precinct last week, when we took a deputation of local councillors and the mayor through the Gatton prison. I want to pass on the regards of the mayor to the Leader of the House. He was very forthright in his praise of the way she negotiated what has been a very successful package for that particular council, with the aquatic centre and so on. I notice that he has made it very clear in the media that the council has done very well through the global financial crisis as a result of that construction.

It is little wonder that the member for Lockyer—if I remember correctly, he was opposed to prison in the first place—was absent from that visit last week because it is, after all, good news. But I was not surprised when he telegraphed his punches recently by saying that he supported the asset sales and that we should get on with the job of it. What I was surprised about was that he was not disciplined for it, that he did not have to make the grovelling apology that the poor old member for Gregory did in order to keep his position on the frontbench.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: 'I didn't say it', just like you didn't support it. You didn't make any reference whatsoever to the asset sales, is that right? I don't think so. But the fact is that, as you are Tim's right-hand man, they did not have the guts to do anything about you. Unlike Mr Gibson, you lacked the moral fibre to go and sit on the backbench.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, refer your comments through the chair and refer to the member by his correct title.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member for Lockyer, who defies physiological science by being able to stand up without a backbone. It is clear to me that he will not go and sit on the backbench and really take the team on here, unlike the member for Gympie. Last week he did not front in his own electorate, where there is one of the biggest jobs in Queensland and where the mayor, who knows the need for us to sell, is onside with us. When I and the member for Ipswich West explained to the councillors and the

workers who were there that we need to allow Queensland Rail to go off and borrow on its own account, not bludge on the public account, and that we need to invest money in a project like that, everybody put a tick in the box—workers, the lot. I was over at Kedron Park recently, in front of the ETU organiser—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: No, you weren't there. You're like the man who fell out of the plane: you are not in it. The truth is that the honourable member wants to squark in here but he is silent out there. He had a little bit to say, got pulled back into gear—

(Time expired)

Department of Public Works, Job Losses

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. The answer to question on notice No. 1322 revealed that in the month following the release of the budget the Department of Public Works cut 293 staff—nearly a four per cent decrease—between June and July this year. I ask: will the five-star Aria-dining minister explain how 293 workers have lost their jobs in his own department?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You will refer to the minister by his correct title.

Mrs STUCKEY: Will the minister explain how 293 workers have lost their jobs in his own public works department?

Mr SCHWARTEN: As we advised at the estimates hearing—and the honourable member was not paying attention at that; I know that by the comments she made afterwards—that was explained by the deputy director Max Smith at the time. These are not figures that are at my disposal. I do not run the department in that regard.

Opposition members: Oh! Ha, ha!

Mr SCHWARTEN: Well may you laugh, because let me say that that is exactly how you would run it. The hiring and firing of people is exactly what you are up to. That is exactly what the story is.

Mr Springborg: Old 'Sacker' Schwarten!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have warned you on three occasions this morning. I now warn you under standing order 253A. The minister has the call.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I have never sacked anybody in my life and I have never been in a position—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left will come to order.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I have never been sacked, either—unlike the honourable member was by the electorate of Queensland on three occasions. The fact of the matter is that this matter was answered during estimates. There is a toing and froing of numbers in the Department of Public Works, but there has certainly never, ever been a target set that was going to be set by those opposite at the last election to iron out the day labour in Queensland through QBuild, SDS, Goprint. Each one of those was targeted by those opposite and each of those has survived as a result of this. As I said, the running of the department and the management of the resources of the department are matters for the department. It should run a shiver up every public servant's back to think that those opposite would want to run government and have the right to hire and fire individuals, because that is what you are saying I have. I do not have that right and I do not have that power, and this government will not make predictions about not replacing people when they leave their positions.

What do we see from those opposite? They do not want to sell assets that are bludging on the taxpayer of Queensland and they do not want to reinvest in capital works, but they do want the right to hire and fire public servants. It is quite clear to me that they are unprepared for government. I hope that in the next 12 months they will be tested, through the Queensland media, in a fair dinkum policy fight across the chamber. Today we see a continued attack upon the public works department. We know that they would get rid of QBuild. That is on their policy books. At every estimates hearing they have attacked Goprint. I am dying to hear what they really intend to do about reassessing jobs in the building industry.

Education

Mrs SCOTT: My question is for the Minister for Education and Training. Can the minister please update the House on what the Bligh government is doing to ensure young Queenslanders are getting a world-class education?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. We are very concerned that all possible steps are taken to ensure the safety of staff and students within Queensland schools, especially Queensland state schools. We are dedicated to that, especially around issues of misbehaviour and bullying. That is why we set up the alliance between the three education sectors,

which is working on a number of initiatives. It is why we commissioned Dr Michael Carr-Gregg to put 34 forums into the Queensland community for teachers, parents and principals around issues of bullying and violence in schools. That is how seriously we treat this.

Finally, we have an education and training policy from the Liberals and the Nationals who sit on the other side of this chamber. It is their first policy initiative. What is their policy initiative? Teachers will be given taser guns to use against students in state schools. That is their policy. That is the policy that was published last week. After an 18-month vacuum in education and training policy, we have that policy plonked into the vacuum. Whilst the Queensland Bligh government is working to reduce violence in state schools, the Liberals and the Nationals want to increase violence in state schools. They want to give 40,000 taser guns to teachers. They want to spend \$70-odd million to do that. They would push to one side the building of about four primary schools, which is what that money could provide, to give 40,000 taser guns to teachers to use on Queensland state school students aged between six and 18. In a short period many thousands of volts of electricity would impact upon and totally immobilise a young student.

The Opposition says that it is not a serious policy, that it is a joke. If it is not a serious policy but is a joke, the Leader of the Opposition is a joke. If the Leader of the Opposition says that this is not a serious policy, he is treating the parents of Queensland state school students as a joke. More importantly, he is doing that at the expense of students in our state schools. I defend the students in our state schools and the teachers in our state schools and the parents who choose to send their kids to our state schools. I will not support such a terrible and ridiculous policy. If it is a joke, the Leader of the Opposition is a joke and he is treating Queenslanders as a joke.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Gaven and while we are talking about students from state schools, I acknowledge in the public gallery students from the Wynnum North State School in the electorate of Lytton, represented in this parliament by the Honourable Paul Lucas.

WorkCover

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister explain why WorkCover is refusing to pay for services performed by small business owners by leaving some with bills for physiotherapy services unpaid? In one case, there was a \$30,000 bill for one business alone. Is the refusal to pay those bills a desperate effort to avoid WorkCover plummeting into the red again under Labor?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for his question. Of course, it is the first time that the honourable member has sought to raise the matter. He has not approached me about a problem that may be a significant issue for one of his constituents. Of course he has not sought to raise that with me in any capacity outside this chamber, but has done so during question time. That is the modus operandi—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr DICK: That is the modus operandi of members opposite. They are not genuinely worried or concerned about their constituents. If they had a problem, they would come to me directly. We know that because we can look at the debate on the reforms to WorkCover, which this government put through. Reforms that would allow workers to continue to have unfettered access to common law claims were opposed by those members opposite. Why? What is their answer to issues relating to WorkCover? Their answer is to cut the rights and entitlements of workers and to cut the rights of workers to go to a Queensland court and seek unfettered access to common law damage. That is why they opposed the reforms put through by this government. That was a very significant policy reform to ensure the most financially stable and secure workers compensation scheme in the nation would continue to be that way. That is what this government did and they opposed it. They opposed having the lowest premiums for any employer in the nation. We have the lowest premiums in the nation for any employer subject to a state workers compensation scheme.

We have ensured a continuation of unfettered access by injured workers to Queensland courts for common law claims, and we will continue to ensure that the Queensland workers compensation system, which is the best in the nation, continues to be that way. Our workers compensation scheme has assets in excess of liabilities of approximately \$300 million and a solvency ratio of 114 per cent. It is better than any other scheme in the nation. What have we done in relation to workers compensation? We have engaged with every medium sized business in Queensland to assist them in workers compensation and occupational health and safety. We have gone to every one of those businesses to provide them with assistance. Today, we have heard no acknowledgement from the member for Gaven for those sorts of initiatives to try to reduce workplace deaths and injuries, to ensure workers remain safe and protected and can return home to their families and loved ones every night. That is what this Labor government stands for.

I will not be subject to this sort of criticism. I am happy to investigate the matter. If there are things that need to be done to improve the system, we will do that. I have said publicly that there is no finish line. I have put a laser on the workers compensation scheme; I have put a target on it. We will continue to ensure it operates as the best scheme in the nation. There are more reforms to come to ensure the scheme continues to deliver for workers and employers in this state.

Road Infrastructure

Mr PITT: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. A safe and secure road network is vitally important for people who live and work in regional areas of Queensland, such as Far North Queensland, as are jobs to keep our local economies strong. Will the minister advise the House what the Bligh government is doing to deliver more jobs and even better roads for Queenslanders?

Mr WALLACE: I thank the member for Mulgrave for the question. He is an advocate for better roads in regional Queensland. He sees just what we are doing in Far North Queensland to deliver better roads. For most of last week I was out on the road in the great electorate of Mount Isa. I thank the member for Mount Isa for a great trip. Our record \$3.3 billion roads budget is building better roads right across Queensland. We are spending more than three times what the Tories spent when last they sat on the treasury benches. Not only are we delivering better roads, but also we are delivering jobs. We have delivered 30,000 jobs this year alone. There is a place up in the gulf, in the electorate of the member for Mount Isa, on the Gulf Developmental Road called Halfway Creek. The member knows it well. As we hit the halfway mark of this term, it is timely to look to the future, which is as bright as the headlights of a B-double at night. What will we be working towards in the next 18 months? Our projects include \$1.9 billion on the Ipswich Motorway and 4,200 jobs; \$414 million on the Centenary Highway and more than 1,000 jobs; \$613 million on the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and Gympie, and 1,650 jobs.

I want to thank the member for Gympie. He has been a vocal advocate for those upgrades on that very, very dangerous section of the Bruce Highway. He is a man of principle, fighting for his electorate. I am disappointed, though, that there are some other members in this place who I know do not have those principles. There are other members in this place who rolled over. I am really disappointed that my good mate the member for Gregory had to grovel. I am really disappointed you had to grovel, brother—very disappointed.

Other projects include \$150 million more for the Bruce Highway between Innisfail and Cairns, generating 424 jobs—the member for Mulgrave, who asked the question, knows just how important they are; \$65 million on the Leichhardt Highway, generating more than 500 jobs; \$23 million on the Kennedy Developmental Road, south of Hughenden, going to Winton. The member for Mount Isa and I drove that road last month and we know just how important that is. Let us keep going. Other projects include \$2.5 million on the Captain Cook Highway between Cairns and Mossman—Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, you know just how important that is; and \$1.8 million on the Moonie Highway. All of these projects are delivering better roads and generating jobs.

Under the LNP, these new projects would go. They will not be air brushed into oblivion like old 'Aidan and abetting' across the chamber. Those opposite will apply the blowtorch next time to these record jobs programs. Those opposite will put 30,000 jobs under the blowtorch. I will not stand for it and neither will this side.

Nambour-Landsborough Rail Line

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport. With respect to the current indicative date for the construction of the additional railway line linking Nambour to Landsborough being still 15 to 20 years away, I ask: what can the Minister for Transport do to bring forward the indicative construction date of this important railway line?

Ms NOLAN: I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for the question. Before answering it, I want to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the member for Yeerongpilly's father, David Finn, and his partner, Ann.

In relation to the question, the Labor government has preserved a corridor in order to further duplicate the line. Last year at Easter time we finished the first stage of this project, with the straightening and duplication of the line from Caboolture to Beerburrum. We have now preserved the corridor to run from Beerburrum further up to Nambour, so that corridor is there. As the member for Nicklin rightly indicates, the project is currently indicated to be undertaken between 2026 and 2031 through the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program.

To cut to the member's question, though, about what this government can do to build that project sooner, the answer quite simply is that we can follow through on our economic strategy. Unlike members opposite, this government has a clear economic strategy that is allowing us to improve the state's finances so that we can build infrastructure for now and for the future.

This is a government that has made tough decisions and that has the runs on the board around infrastructure delivery. In that regard, we stand in stark contrast to members opposite, who front up here a year and a half after we announced this economic strategy with no particular cogent position on asset sales but over and over again indicating to the House that they can somehow build more infrastructure more quickly. What all members know is that this state needs infrastructure, like the public transport infrastructure to which the member refers, and that to deliver it there has to be a clear economic strategy. We the Labor government are the only side of the House that can present such a plan to the people of Queensland.

So I can say to the member, yes, this project is a priority. That is why we have built the first stage of it and that is why we have preserved a corridor so that the second stage is ready.

Mr Lucas: With lukewarm support from the member for Maroochydore.

Ms NOLAN: That is right. We have also bought out a number of the properties, through our generous hardship provisions, so that people are able to move on with their lives. We are the side of politics that has an economic strategy and a proven record on infrastructure delivery in very stark contrast to those opposite.

Buy Smart

Mr WELLS: My question is to the honourable the Minister for Fair Trading. I ask: in reference to the need to teach school students to be more consumer wise, will he advise the House with regard to the annual Buy Smart competition?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the honourable member for the question and for his interest in this important subject. At a time when national credit card debt is topping \$46 billion, it is important to ensure that our young people leave school consumer wise and financially savvy. Young people do not always realise that excessive spending and bad debts can lead to problems later in life that can affect applications for homes or cars and many other purchases.

Each year the Office of Fair Trading runs the Buy Smart competition to increase knowledge of consumer issues and financial literacy amongst school-age children. The Buy Smart campaign challenges school students to create fun and innovative ways to spread important financial and consumer messages to other young people. This year 679 students from 42 schools participated. That is almost double the number that participated last year.

The Office of Fair Trading received a wide variety of entries such as board games, videos, songs, websites and even an iPhone application—the first for the competition. This year's entrants have displayed an excellent grasp of financial literacy principles and a passion for communicating them to their peers. I would like to heartily congratulate the students from the following schools for being shortlisted as finalists: Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Brisbane School of Distance Education, Citipointe Christian College, Dundula State School, Indooroopilly State High School, Kurwongbah State School, Mary MacKillop College, Northside Christian College, Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology, Sheldon College and St Hilda's at Southport. This is one of the many ways the Bligh government is committed to protecting our children in giving them a flying start in education.

How does the LNP, on the other hand, do the same? By tasing them—by issuing teachers with tasers. At Fair Trading they say 'buyer beware'. With the LNP, you just have to beware. Instead of getting stung with high fees, under the LNP what they are proposing is that you just get stung, even if you are a kid at school. It is not just a pain in the hip pocket but a pain all over your body, especially if you are a student at school. The LNP says that the policy was a joke. I do not think it is that funny, really. Six pages of a joke? Why would you go that far? Fake policies, doctored emails and the latest airbrushed photos; that is what the LNP stands for.

ClimateSmart Home Service

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I ask the minister to please advise why a constituent at Dalby, within my electorate of Condamine, still has not received his ClimateSmart Home Service visit given that he requested the service in January 2010—10 months ago.

Ms JONES: I have obviously been in parliament long enough to see the biggest climate change sceptic in the House start to believe in climate change. Congratulations, Ray Hopper!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister will refer to the member by his correct title.

Mr Fraser: He's well known for changing teams—swapped again.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right. The minister has the call.

Ms JONES: We know the member for Condamine is happy to swap around whenever it suits him. I am glad that in this case it means that he does support climate change. I thank the member for Condamine. I look forward to working with him closely to ensure—and I will—that Queensland is protected from the impacts of climate change. I think this also means that the member for Condamine understands that Queensland is the state which is most at risk from the causes of climate change. That is why this side of politics has not only put policies in place but put our money where our mouth is with ClimateQ, which is over \$196 million worth of investment.

The ClimateSmart Home Service has become a roaring success right across Queensland—not only in South-East Queensland but right across our state—with over 200,000 Queenslanders signing up to do what they can to reduce their carbon emissions. We have seen an over 95 per cent satisfaction rating with this service. That gives me a real indication that not only are we spending this money wisely but also people are taking on board the suggestions that our ClimateSmart Home Service qualified electricians make when they go into people's homes.

When rolling out this program we have ensured that we provide the best value for taxpayers. This means that when delivering this service in regional Queensland—as I think I have answered not only in terms of the question on notice asked by the member for Condamine but also for other members both from our side of politics and those opposite—we make sure that we have a set number of clients. We then roll out the program in that area.

I will always make sure that we provide value for the taxpayer when we engage a program such as this. I will investigate the situation with regard to the member's particular constituent. I understand why they would be frustrated after 10 months. What I will say, as I think I said in answer to the question on notice, is that this has been designed in a way to ensure value for the taxpayer.

We actually have a qualified electrician go into everybody's home. We do not do it on a one-off basis in the vast areas of Queensland. We make sure that there is a critical mass in any small town. That ensures we get value for money. That also means that we can spread the service right across Queensland and ensure more people get access to the successful ClimateSmart Home Service. I also want to put on the record the support of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, who is using this as part of his EzyGreen program.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Time for question time has expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Child Sex Offenders, Sentencing

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): I rise to lament Labor's derisive sentencing record. This morning in question time we saw the child safety minister and the education minister prove that they have not made any representation and are unwilling to confirm that they have made any representations on behalf of the children in the organisations of the department that they represent. We have even had an election about the protection of children and child safety issues in 2004. Labor has a deplorable history of failing Queenslanders. In fact, it preselects sex offenders and puts them into this House. Keith Wright and Bill D'Arcy are examples. I say to the Premier, 'Walk in the shoes of the parents of the children in Toowoomba who have to put up with the sentence handed down yesterday.'

The crimes of Gerard Vincent Byrnes make it clear that Labor's weak justice system is failing Queenslanders and failing Queensland children. It was acknowledged by the Premier today that she is considering the LNP policy of a sentencing advisory council. That shows that she and the government are unhappy with the sentencing principles exemplified in yesterday's case. We had the charming example this morning of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health blaming the school authorities under his breath saying it was the principal who was responsible for the actions of that teacher, Gerard Vincent Byrnes.

This despicable Toowoomba teacher raped and abused 13 young girls aged between nine and 10—some 44 offences. There were 10 counts of rape and 33 counts of indecent treatment of a child. These are reprehensible crimes against 13 innocent Toowoomba children. These are the most vile of acts committed by a person who held a position of trust. In fact, he was the school's student protection officer, as we pointed out in question time this morning. He was the very person who these girls were told they could trust to report such matters.

The prosecution in this case sought a sentence of between—

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Caloundra, your leader is on his feet. The House will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr LANGBROEK: The prosecution in this case sought a sentence of between 18 and 20 years yet the judge in question thought it appropriate to only sentence this serial paedophile to 10 years jail of which he is likely to serve only six years. He has already served two years.

This is a weak, inadequate and pathetic sentence in my view. It is a weak, inadequate and pathetic sentence in the view of the Toowoomba community. It is a weak, inadequate and pathetic sentence in the view of the people of Queensland. What do we get from the Premier and those opposite? We get platitudes about the process and that they will have to look into it and that they may do it within a month. Ask those parents whether they consider this to be a weak, inadequate and pathetic sentence.

In sentencing this serial sexual offender to 10 years jail it was alleged by his defence lawyer that the offender had no explanation for his behaviour and no expert had been able to find one and he did not think it was causing harm. Throughout all this ordeal it has to be asked—what about the 13 victims? The sentence reflects less than one year for each child's life this sex predator has destroyed and less than three months for each offence. How could a sentencing system use a prior good teaching record to provide some level of discount in this sentence? Is this not a system that would have any right-minded person scratching their head that these are the sorts of questions that can be raised and that leniency can be given in the case of examples such as these?

This is not an isolated case under Labor's criminal sentencing system. Let us look at a few examples. The first is Matthew Charles Baxter. On Christmas Day 2008 he had only been on parole from prison for six days when he attacked and raped a 16-year-old girl in a public park. He was on parole after serving time for armed robbery. Later that day he car-jacked a woman in the same area, pretending he was armed with a gun. He was sentenced to six years jail.

On 3 September 2010 he successfully appealed against this sentence on the grounds that it was manifestly excessive and that the judge had erred in finding that six years was the bottom of the range. The Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the appeal and reduced the sentence to five years with a parole eligibility date of 14 October 2011. A man already on parole commits violent acts, including rape of a 16-year-old girl, and the courts find that the sentence is excessive. Justice Debbie Mullins said that, when applying the totality principle in sentencing, the original sentence had been too high.

I want to look at the case of Robert John Fardon whose case is so graphic that the act had to be altered. Robert John Fardon was classified as a dangerous offender. When under stringent supervision and lifestyle controls he raped a woman at Palm Beach in April 2008. He raped while under supervision after a previous offence for which he was sentenced to 14 years. The government held him in for longer and amended the act. He raped again and he was sentenced to less time than the original offence. That is less time for a subsequent offence. He was originally charged for 14 years. He was then sentenced by the Southport District Court to 10 years for raping a woman on the Gold Coast in 2008.

This is the very man who prompted the government to change the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act. Clearly this government does not get the message that Queenslanders want a change in sentencing. It is very obviously acknowledging now that there needs to be a change.

Let us look at Luke Colless, the bikeway rapist. That is a very graphic example over the last couple of years in Brisbane. On appeal he gained a one-third reduction in his 25-year sentence handed down to him. The Court of Appeal found that 18 planned sexually related offences against 11 females had mitigating circumstances. This is a man who held Brisbane women in terror yet the courts decided that his sentence should be reduced. The Attorney-General refused to appeal against this decision. The community needs to know that if a person is found guilty of such heinous crimes they will face the full extent of the law.

Now let us look at the Aurukun nine. The victim was a 10-year-old girl. Her nine offenders were originally sentenced in August 2007 for six counts of rape which occurred in 2006. It was reported during the appeal—

Chief Justice Paul De Jersey set aside all of Judge Bradley's sentences, finding she made a number of errors leading to a miscarriage of justice.

The three oldest offenders were given six-year jail terms, and will be eligible for parole on June 13, 2010.

This was the most lenient sentence possible in the case of the rape of a 10-year-old girl, Chief Justice De Jersey said. He went on to say that while the prosecution in the District Court case must bear some responsibility for the errors made, imposing a proper sentence is ultimately the responsibility of the judge.

This is not the only time this judge has failed to adequately deal with sex offenders. In August this year a 12-year-old boy who broke into a girl's room at night and raped her was given probation. In April the boy held the 17-year-old girl down while he sexually assaulted her and despite her pleas for him to stop. This is despite pleading guilty to assault occasioning bodily harm, four charges of stealing, common assault, two charges of burglary and stealing, receiving tainted property, burglary and possessing tainted property. The same judge responsible for the Aurukun nine miscarriage of justice sentenced this violent young rapist to three years probation with no conviction recorded. He was ordered to do a youth sexual offender program.

This is also the same judge responsible for yesterday's pathetic sentence of a serial paedophile. We need to start asking ourselves this question: is it time Queensland introduced an independent judicial commission that deals with the proper education and discipline of wayward judges? Such a commission has been successfully in operation in New South Wales and, given the absolute mess that Labor and many of its appointments have left the sentencing system in, it is a very real position that we on this side of the House will consider supporting and will pursue without the support of this long-term, out-of-touch government.

Regardless of the issue—whether it relates to matters of the judiciary and sentencing or whether it relates to issues we have seen over the last few weeks such as pay disputes or cost-of-living issues or council issues or Ombudsman issues—this government is out of touch with the populace of Queensland. Very clearly there are people working for this government who are frustrated with its inability to see what the real issues are for the people of Queensland. Ambulance workers, police workers and health workers are frustrated by bureaucracy giving them regulations and rules that are impossible to apply properly and by cost-of-living issues that are affecting all Queenslanders. When it comes to the point that we are talking about here today in terms of Labor's justice system, I just say this: Labor's justice system is flawed. Labor's justice system is weak. Labor's justice system is out of step with community standards. But, worst of all, Labor's justice system has failed 13 girls and their families, and that is the worst indictment of all!

Deaths of Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.40 am): In August 1991 the bodies of best friends Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy were found in bushland at Cherry Tree Creek near Atherton. They had gone missing two weeks earlier in strange circumstances. Police were confronted with a chilling scene. Julie-Anne Leahy was in the driver's seat of her Nissan Patrol, propped up by a tightly-wrapped seatbelt around her neck. She had been bashed with a large rock, shot twice in the head and her throat slashed. Beside her, Vicki Arnold was sprawled across the passenger side floor, her hand resting on a sawn-off .22. She had been shot in the thigh, upwards through her chin and fatally behind her right ear.

Despite the convoluted and bizarre scene they faced and with only an obligatory examination of the vehicle and bodies, senior police declared the deaths a murder-suicide. The vehicle was moved within hours and left in the open for almost three days before it was again examined. Scientific officers found no fingerprints. The first police officers to arrive at the scene believed they were seeing the result of a double murder and that experienced homicide detectives from Brisbane should be called in. It is contended that they were overruled by a senior officer and told in no uncertain terms to 'keep their mouths shut'. Nineteen years later, people in Far North Queensland and indeed the whole nation—this is a widely-known case—still talk about these events and most are still convinced that both women were murdered.

During that time, media and public disquiet have led to seven separate investigations into the case. The most recent, by the Brisbane homicide group, concluded late last year and is now before the Attorney-General for his consideration. In January 1998 Carl Mengler and Frank O'Gorman were commissioned to independently reinvestigate the case. In their report they said—

There remain features surrounding these two deaths that are almost impossible to comprehend or explain. Significant evidence available in 1998 was not available to the Coroner in 1992 and, in the view of the Ministerial Investigators, should these inquests be reopened an 'open finding' might well result concerning each death.

A second inquest followed but, despite revealing evidence from witnesses, the result was the same as the first. Respected Cairns lawyer Philip Bovey, who spoke out after the inquest, said—

For a myriad of reasons it could not be safely concluded that it was a murder-suicide. In fact the preponderance of the evidence supported a third party's involvement.

This view is shared by at least one of the officers first on the scene—my uncle Bill Hendrikse, who famously made his concerns public on *60 Minutes* in September 2005. Like many locals, I am acutely aware of the emotion and frustration evident whenever this case is being discussed. Certainly, I am yet to hear from a single person who believes Vicki Arnold committed a murder. The families of both women have been steadfast in their belief that the two friends were murdered. They have never wavered in their defence of Vicki's innocence. They are as committed today as they were 19 years ago. This is a case that simply will not go away. Vicki Arnold has been written off as a murderer with no opportunity to defend herself. Her mother, Vida, now 85 years old and frail, has never given up hope that one day her daughter's name will be cleared. Another family member, Vicki's cousin Sandra Charlton, is adamant Vicki was not capable of such brutality. Sandra's late mother, Janice, was the first to raise concerns about this case soon after the two women were found.

This crime remains unsolved due to an unwillingness to acknowledge that it was virtually impossible for Vicki Arnold to have killed her friend in such strange circumstances and then take her own life. That this case has attracted so much attention is due to one simple factor: there was no initial murder investigation. Vital evidence was contaminated, lost or, at worst, possibly ignored. There is a strong chance that the family may refer this matter to the Crime and Misconduct Commission in the very

near future to pursue their concerns regarding the initial police investigation, which they continue to argue was incompetent. As I indicated earlier, the outcomes of the most recent investigation are with the Attorney-General for his consideration. I believe that a third inquest into this matter is warranted to make sense out of long-time confusion and to seek answers for a family still grieving. A third inquest would have matters to consider that the previous two did not address—complex and diverse issues that need to be brought into the open.

Given the initial investigation and the evidence available, it may not be possible to ever conclusively prove that a double murder took place. This would be for the coroner to determine. However, it is my view that an open finding by the coroner would at least remove the stigma of murder-suicide—a label that I believe has been unfairly applied to Vicki Arnold for almost two decades. The passage of time does not lessen the power of the truth, and the truth in this case is surely that Vicki Arnold did not kill her best friend and then take her own life.

Pearson, Mr N

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.45 am): Aboriginal activist Noel Pearson is well known for his outspoken views about politics in Australia. He has often lamented what he considers to be the low standards of politicians in this country and how politics is just horse-trading on a bigger scale. However, he has taken political horse-trading to a whole new level and is guilty of the same base approach to politics that he has often criticised. He recently wrote an article in the *Australian* about the perils of poker machines and the adverse effects they can have on problem gamblers and their families.

While there is no dispute about how harmful easy access to gambling can be for some people and why there is a need to have gambling closely regulated, the article he wrote should be read in its true context. It was nothing more than a shallow but blatant attempt to curry support from anti-pokies senator Nick Xenophon, who holds the balance of power in the federal Senate until June next year. Opposition leader Tony Abbott needs the support of Senator Xenophon in order for his bill to abolish the Queensland wild rivers legislation to pass the Senate, and Pearson has obviously taken on the role as Abbott's numbers man and chief lobbyist. I would be hopeful that Senator Xenophon has the opportunity to do his own research and speak to traditional owners in the cape about the importance of the protection of the environment in the cape and the irrelevance of Abbott's interfering and the contrariness of Noel Pearson, who has previously supported parts of the wild rivers legislation.

During his comprehensive press conference a few weeks ago, Independent Rob Oakeshott made a couple of important and telling comments. One of these was that he had spoken to Noel Pearson and that Noel Pearson is not the only voice for Aboriginal people in Australia. That is dead right: Pearson does not speak for all Aboriginal people. In fact, he speaks for only a select few. His rabid and unfounded opposition to the wild rivers legislation is at odds with the views of many other Aboriginal leaders. As reported in the *Courier-Mail* this week, there has been a number of leaders, including Wik elder Gina Castelain, supporting the wild rivers legislation and saying that it is an important step for the future of Aboriginal people in Cape York.

I had the opportunity two years ago to visit the cape and to speak to local people who left me in no doubt about the importance of preserving this unique part of the country while at the same time progressing with environmentally sustainable developments and opportunities. Putting aside the obvious need to protect pristine environments like the Wenlock River, the legislation does allow Aboriginal people to be involved in developments on the cape.

I want to put on record a few facts about the wild rivers legislation and point out how far Pearson is out of touch with other leaders who are directly affected by this legislation. Wild rivers legislation does not impact on native title under state and Commonwealth law. Traditional activities such as fishing and hunting and cultural activities can take place and developments such as agriculture and mining can occur in wild rivers areas. Of course, in the sensitive high-protection areas like the bauxite springs on the Wenlock River, high-impact developments such as mining are not permitted and should never be permitted.

Despite Pearson's claims to the contrary, no development application has been refused in a wild rivers area and over 100 have been approved, and Aboriginal people are the main driving force behind many of these developments. So why is Pearson in completely opposite camps to other Aboriginal leaders? Is he just after the short-term jobs and income from mining companies no matter the cost to the environment, or is it something personally beneficial for him? The best example of the short-term jobs that mining companies offer is the disgraceful proposal by Cape Alumina to mine the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve—to destroy the land, destroy the perched springs and destroy the delicate ecosystem—for short-term gains for its company and its shareholders.

True custodians of the land know the real worth of preserving natural habitats for future generations. Once all the minerals across the cape are removed, the mining companies will take their healthy profits and move on to the next deposit, and where will that leave the Cape York Aboriginal people? It will leave them in a barren landscape without any source of income—no doubt a situation people like Pearson would use to attack the state government for allowing it to happen.

Pearson's hypocrisy on this issue knows no bounds and, through his article in the *Australian*, he has shown that he would stoop to the lowest political levels in order to get his way. Thankfully, there are Aboriginal leaders across the cape who can put aside the lure of temporary mining jobs in favour of sustainable economic developments on Cape York that will guarantee a real future for Aboriginal people. The wild rivers legislation is a major plank in creating this future for Aboriginal people and will allow unique parts of Queensland to be maintained and conserved for everyone to enjoy.

Cougar Energy

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.49 am): I rise to once again talk about Cougar Energy and the site at Kingaroy. Recently, the minister forwarded to me a report to the Department of Environment and Resource Management supplied by Cougar Energy. Since that report has been forwarded to me, I have had a lot of people come forward and question what has been written in this report. I know the government was not satisfied with the report and asked a lot more questions. But the report has also raised a lot of questions within my community, especially from the people who worked at the site.

Today, I would like to bring to the attention of the House some of the questions that have been raised. I might point out that the people who worked for Cougar Energy are bound by confidentiality agreements and were asked to never take any photos. So these people are quite concerned not only because they believe that they owe it to the community to speak up about what has occurred but also about breaking this confidentiality agreement. So I would ask the parliament to be mindful that I will not be divulging any names at this point, if ever.

Some of the questions that have been asked—and I know that I have mentioned this matter to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability—related to the orange-yellow flame. We were always told that it had to be blue. But what raises a concern is that one particular employee has said that the gas was vented into the air, not burnt at all. So questions arise as to exactly for how many days did that occur. I have an indication that at least five days were noted, but I would like the government to find out exactly for how many days was the gas vented without being burnt and for how many days did it burn at all with a blue or orange flame. We know that one particular employee raised concerns about the gas but another person who worked in the area as a harvesting contractor for a number of days said that it was one of the strongest smells of gas that he had known in any place in which he has ever worked. Again, that smell was present over that particular period. So those questions need to be answered.

Another employee came forward and spoke about the holding ponds on the site of Cougar Energy. The report states that Cougar Energy tested a lot of areas excluding any contamination that was on the actual Cougar Energy site. I have paraphrased those words. But we were also informed that the holding tanks were designed to hold any extreme amount of water that may come down in a deluge, or whatever. But after the blockage occurred at the Cougar Energy site, contaminated water was held in these ponds. There are three ponds and the water is pumped from one pond to another. But in the largest holding pond the water was actually pumped over the side. I would ask the government if they have tested this particular area for contaminants. As we all know, this site is on a hill. The water that had been pumped out from up on the hill would have gravitated downwards into Goodger Gully, which then leads to Barkers Creek. The water would also gravitate to Kingaroy Creek, which flows into the Stuart River. People access these watercourses and so do the people of the town of Kingaroy. So there are a lot of questions to be answered and I have a lot more questions to be asked.

Does the minister have the concrete log from Halliburton that did the concreting? Do they have the drilling log, the gas pressure graphs and the camera log for the camera that went down into the bore? I would ask that all of these logs be tabled, not copies from Cougar Energy but from the people who did the work. It is believed by some that there may be discrepancies in these logs. The report actually reflects badly on the concreter. They need to be aware that they have been implicated in this way and they need to be able to protect their reputation. So I would ask the minister to make available to all and sundry these reports from the companies that did the work.

Population Growth and Sustainability

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (11.54 am): Queensland has the largest population growth of any Australian state or territory. Our current population is forecast to double by 2049 and around 70 per cent of that population growth is forecast to occur in South-East Queensland. The population of South-East Queensland, where almost 70 per cent of all Queenslanders live, is currently almost three million and there are over 2,000 people a week moving to the region.

The state government cannot control population increases. After all, who can blame anyone for wanting to move here? But we can manage the impacts of population growth. As the state's population grows, so too will demand for infrastructure, competition for land, the need for innovative responses to affordability and sustainability and for regionalisation. Pressure will be particularly felt on the coastline, in emerging resource communities and in South-East Queensland. For instance, just in terms of housing alone, South-East Queensland will need 754,000 more dwellings by 2031. Well-managed

population growth can bring significant benefits to Queensland through jobs, skills development, cultural opportunities, economic prosperity and more and better services. But managing change and balancing growth development and infrastructure provision is complex.

I am pleased to say that the Bligh Labor government is absolutely doing the managing that will be required to deal with these challenges. Following hot on the heels of the successful Growth Management Summit earlier this year, the government has established a range of initiatives that will take us into the future. Growth Management Queensland will oversee and ensure these initiatives. Through this body, the government will lead the way with a focused approach to growth management to guarantee that Queensland remains the best place in Australia to live for our children and for future generations.

What else? A Queensland Regionalisation Strategy, an \$11,000 Regional First Home Owner Grant, a Queensland infrastructure plan, an Infrastructure Charges Task Force, a long-term strategy to transform the inter-urban breaks in South-East Queensland into major new green space and outdoor recreation opportunities and the delivery of major new satellite communities. However, there are several initiatives instigated by the Bligh Labor government that are particularly close to my own heart. One of these is the Greenspace Strategy. Queensland is renowned for its outdoor lifestyle and landscapes, but our environment and lifestyles are under increasing pressure from our growing population. The government's draft Greenspace Strategy supports the delivery of its commitment to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020. Through the strategy, we will ensure that Queenslanders always have enough green space to kick a ball, walk the dog, go fishing, climb a mountain or roll out a picnic blanket.

What other major planning initiatives is the government undertaking? There is planning for the transport needs of the future. For instance, the \$123 billion SEQ Integrated Regional Transport Plan recognises that the population growth in the region will place pressure on our existing transport system. The new plan will have a huge impact on public transport provision in the future. For the Bulimba electorate alone, there are major benefits, with a possible subway station for the suburb of Bulimba, cycle paths along the length of Wynnum Road and high-speed services on the Cleveland rail line.

Another planning process that will support the needs of my local area is the River City Blueprint, which will be released for consultation at the end of this year. This process recognises the impact of rapid population growth on communities within a five-kilometre radius of the city and the planning for that. I know that residents of the Bulimba electorate very much appreciated the visit by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning last week to talk about the blueprint, because they care about what is going to happen in the future. They want to protect their strong local community and they like to have a say in that. I thank the minister for his enthusiasm to hear the local views of the people of my electorate.

What are the key words in all of this? They are leadership, planning, management and policy. What do the people of Queensland expect from their government? They expect leadership, planning, management and policy. These four words are the reason the LNP is a joke. Queensland is facing huge challenges. If we do not take the time now to think through and put in place the right measures, we will be in real trouble down the track. What does the LNP have to offer? It has one sort of a policy to look at all the infrastructure that the Bligh government is putting in place with the view of knocking some of it off along with all the jobs that go with it and then it has one actual policy that gives teachers tasers so that they can take care of naughty kids. What sophistication! What foresight! What direction and comfort this must give to the people of Queensland!

When people from my local area ask me how we can protect our lifestyle and the strong local community we have into the future they want answers. They might not necessarily like some of the answers I give, but I can tell members that they are happy that I and this Labor government are about developing solutions. I am proud of what this government is doing to position Queensland for the future and I look forward to being part of those plans as they roll out.

Violence in Hospitals

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (11.59 am): In January 2010 an article appeared in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing* entitled 'Examining the characteristics of workplace violence in one non-tertiary hospital', which was to determine the prevalence and characteristics of workplace violence directed at a volunteer sample of nurses at one non-tertiary hospital. The survey was given to 322 nurses in different areas of one hospital in Western Australia to determine their experiences of workplace violence over a 12-month period. There were 113 nurses who agreed to undertake the survey, with 75 per cent reporting workplace violence in the previous 12 months. When dealing with the most recent incident, one half of the nurses said they reported verbally to senior staff but only 16 per cent completed an official incident report. Reasons for not reporting included that workplace violence is just part of the job and the perception that management would not be responsive.

When one considers the report one finds that in the 12-month period there were 2,354 self-reported incidents. The data showed that 75 per cent of nurses had experienced one or more incidents in that 12 months. Twenty-five per cent reported they had experienced workplace violence weekly; 27 per cent monthly; 25 per cent once every six months; and 23 per cent had never suffered such an event. In particular, staff in the ED and the mental health unit reported the highest number of incidents. Data further indicated that 92 per cent of the nurses reported verbal abuse; 69 per cent had been physically threatened; and 52 per cent had been physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey. When asked to provide reasons for not reporting, 30 per cent stated that workplace violence is part of the job and that it happens all the time. Further, when they did report it, one-half thought that hospital management failed to act on it.

I now take members to a report in the *Townsville Bulletin* that appeared last week. The article in part reads—

More than a third of staff at Townsville Hospital have experienced violence, harassment or bullying at work, with more than 65 per cent claiming it was at the hands of supervisors and co-workers.

The article, of which I table a copy, in some way mirrors the study in Western Australia.

Tabled paper: Copy of article, dated 27 September 2010, from the *Townsville Bulletin* titled 'Staff fear for their safety' [3291].

The article stated that an alarming 37 per cent of staff in Townsville Hospital were considering leaving their jobs, whilst 36 per cent of people reported harmful behaviours in the workplace. It must be clearly understood that under no circumstances can workplace bullying or workplace violence be tolerated in any government department or at any workplace. It is disturbing to see that Queensland Health has acknowledged that the problem in Townsville was so bad that it required the hospital to appoint a new full-time position dedicated to combating on-the-job violence. Whilst I agree with the Townsville Health Service District chief executive officer, Mary Bonner, when she says that harmful behaviours will be found at any large organisation, it is critical that the protection of nurses be a priority for any government. Ask any person in Queensland who is the front-line provider of medical services in the public health system and the answer will come back 'our nurses'. Our nurses are the front-line providers of medical services in this state and that is without dispute.

It is deeply concerning that the matter has now reached such a point within Queensland Health. The article has highlighted the issue at Townsville Hospital, but it appears that we are not dealing with this issue. The minister stood in this House today rightfully praising our nurses as the backbone of our health system. He cannot in one breath make this statement and then ignore the need to protect nurses from workplace violence as highlighted by the report in the newspaper. Workplace violence must never be accepted as a part of any job. It is not enough just to praise; we must protect. This is an issue that the LNP will be taking further. Without nurses we have no public health system of note in this state.

Crime Prevention Month

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (12.04 pm): I have often said that governments cannot act alone; we need to work together with the community. This could not be more true than when it comes to tackling crime. This month is Crime Prevention Month. The month highlights the need for everybody to work together to help to make our communities safer. This year's theme is especially relevant: 'Crime prevention—be a part of it'. Now, we do not want Queenslanders acting out a part from a superhero movie and I am certainly not encouraging taking the law into our own hands. What we need in our community is for everybody to be a little bit more aware of what they can do to prevent crime. That means small things like keeping valuables out of sight and making sure that property is secure. Across the state of Queensland the Police Service is running events in local areas to help us keep our communities safe. There is a range of activities, from crime prevention information sessions and property identification barbecues, where people can have their property engraved, to crime prevention displays in shopping centres. I encourage everybody to have a look at the QPS website to see what is happening in their own local area.

As part of Crime Prevention Month, I encourage residents to make the most of the Queensland government's new Policelink phone service. The Policelink service was introduced to receive and manage calls about incidents that are not life threatening or immediately occurring but do need to be brought to the attention of police. The Queensland government has invested \$54 million in this service and it is estimated that Policelink will handle more than two million calls per year. That would free up 260,000 police hours, or the equivalent of more than 130 full-time police officers.

During Crime Prevention Month in my electorate and across the Redlands, police will be educating the public on safety on our railway corridor, and QPS volunteers and police will be conducting a 'lock it or lose it' campaign. As part of the campaign they will be checking that people's vehicles are secure and valuables hidden from view to help prevent theft. In Capalaba we are fortunate to have a Tactical Crime Squad to help tackle property crimes like theft from vehicles. Local police have been targeting hot spots to prevent crime. The Tactical Crime Squad has had successes across the state, and I am sure that their work has contributed to the Crime and Misconduct Commission's ability to recover the proceeds of crime.

Fighting crime is multifaceted, and Labor's approach to law and order—a combination of tougher penalties for a range of offences and a vastly improved police-to-population ratio—is an effective strategy for improving community safety. It is a pity the opposition do not see it that way. Their approach lies in the misguided attempt to introduce mandatory sentencing. Their most recent contribution, the opposition's private member's bill, undermines the foundation of the state's criminal justice system including the independence of the judiciary. That bill is clearly based on bad politics rather than good policy. All credible research and evidence shows that mandatory sentencing does not work. Mandatory minimum sentences do not act as deterrents for criminal behaviour.

This morning, one after the other, opposition members asked the government questions in relation to the horrific crime committed by a teacher in Toowoomba who raped and molested 13 students in a classroom. Everybody in this House should be disgusted and horrified by this crime. It is one thing to be horrified; it is quite another to promote interference with the judicial system for political expediency and point scoring. I am sure the Attorney-General will take all matters into consideration to determine whether he will lodge an appeal on behalf of the people of Queensland.

The opposition asked that we walk a day in the shoes of those affected by this crime. This is a nice throwaway line, but every sound-minded person knows that justice will not be served fairly this way. As a father of three daughters I want to lock up sexual offenders for good on a remote island and give them no food. Left to my own devices, if anyone hurt my girls I would be quite capable of inflicting great pain and suffering on them and I probably would. That is why I should not be involved in the sentencing of offenders—because my emotion and anger would be the dominant consideration.

Unlike the opposition, who plan to fight crime with bad policy and for political gain, this government has a plan to increase police resources for a safe and secure Queensland. This year's budget is a testament to that, with an increase of \$110 million last year made possible by this Labor government. The number of police has increased by more than 4,000 to more than 10,000 officers with more being recruited each year. While the opposition continues to prove that it is a policy vacuum, this government will continue to work to get the job done. We will continue to build partnerships with the community to tackle crime and the causes of crime.

Child Sex Offenders

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (12.09 pm): Every child has the right to our protection, regardless of whose child they are. Paedophilia cannot be condoned in our society. This depravity must be treated with harshness by the justice system. It must be the highest priority of this government to make absolutely certain that those evil predators are given penalties that act as deterrents rather than allow them to continue their evil and despicable practice against the most vulnerable and innocent in our society, our most important natural resource, our children. Our children are not negotiable; they are sacred. They must be protected by the law. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure this most paramount duty.

The Premier advocates her government's blue card concept, but I believe it is a disguise that cunning and evil predators can hide behind to avoid detection. It is the good people who are falling by the way. Taskforce Argos constantly monitors all aspects of this element. Paedophiles use the Internet as a constant and dangerous tool that can violate the innocent minds of our children. Hetty Johnston's Bravehearts organisation policy of 'two strikes and you are out' demonstrates what the great majority of Queenslanders wants, which is that once culprits are brought to justice they are made an example of.

How do members of the Queensland police feel about this subject? A couple of years ago at an estimates committee hearing I asked Commissioner Bob Atkinson about it. He said the fallout of police from Taskforce Argos and other child protection units was enormous. Those police officers are subjected to this on a daily basis. Do we ever spare a thought for the scars on the minds of our police caused by people such as Catholic priest Father Peter Chalk, who fled to Japan and changed his name to hide? I call on all churches to expose such people for the evil that they do. I am a Catholic and I am not proud of the behaviour of some, regardless of their religious faith.

I mention the case of a pilot who was exonerated by a Queensland court. On Australia Day at South Bank Parklands he was arrested after being spotted taking photos of a three-year-old boy being changed by his parents. Armstrong's barrister, Peter Kelly, said his client had a passionate interest in photography, but was also obsessed with circumcision due to his body dysmorphic disorder. The court was told a psychologist had also confirmed Armstrong's obsession with circumcision was anatomical and not sexual. Mr Kelly urged Judge Kerry O'Brien to exercise his discretion in not recording a conviction. How do the parents feel about the court system when it was their child who was exposed? Judge O'Brien said he was satisfied that it was an exceptional case that did not warrant a conviction. That bloke was allowed to go back to work. People who work within the justice system in this state have told me that 80 per cent of those people do reoffend and are brought before the courts as paedophiles.

This Labor government has protected members of its own party who were ultimately proven to be paedophiles. Indeed, one such person kept the party in power and another was a former leader. What a set of credentials that would be to become a premier of this state. When we look at the situations with both Keith Wright and Bill D'Arcy, Labor members who think their policies of justice are working should hang their heads in shame. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to read the documentation in relation to treatment programs to ensure that paedophiles do not reoffend.

Ms Darling interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I take the interjection about knowing where they are. The paedophiles know where our kids are, but our kids do not know where they are. That is absolutely disturbing and will continue to be until we have a justice system in this state that will bring those grubs to justice and lock them away for 20 years. That will be a great day for Queensland kids.

(Time expired)

Victoria Cross Recipients

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (12.14 pm): To be awarded a Victoria Cross medal is a rare honour. This highest form of recognition for a soldier is awarded for extraordinary deeds of bravery when the nation is at war or facing great tests of national commitment. Ninety-seven Australians have been awarded a Victoria Cross, including six from the Boer War, 64 from the First World War, two from battle in North Russia, 20 from the Second World War, four from Vietnam and one from Afghanistan. Those soldiers are respected amongst their comrades across the defence services and in the Australian community for their leadership, and serve as icons of inspiration and pride for current and former serving men and women.

Last week at the Queensland Museum I had the honour of opening an exhibition titled *This company of brave men—nine heroes, nine stories, one rare honour*. This exhibition brings to Brisbane the nine Victoria Cross medals awarded to soldiers at Gallipoli. The nine special soldiers recognised are Corporal Alexander Burton, Corporal William Dunstan, Private John Hamilton, Lance Corporal Albert Jacka, Lance Corporal Leonard Keysor, Captain Alfred Shout, Lieutenant William Symons, Second Lieutenant Hugo Throssell and Lieutenant Frederick Tubb. The medals awarded to those soldiers are now the property of the Australian War Museum, with the exhibition currently travelling to major capital cities while the War Museum revamps its Hall of Valour.

The complete collection of the nine Gallipoli crosses includes five awarded for acts of bravery in one single battle, the Battle of Lone Pine. That fierce battle lasted a mere four days of the eight months the Anzacs were at Gallipoli, but saw an estimated 2,277 Australian casualties. Amongst the terrible casualty cost were some incredible acts of bravery and courage that limited further tragedy on the Lone Pine battlefield. Sadly, two of the soldiers awarded with the Victoria Cross arising from the Lone Pine battle paid the supreme sacrifice during that battle.

Captain Alfred Shout, a carpenter and joiner from Sydney, joined the AIF as soon as war was declared and was a foundation officer of the 1st Battalion. On the morning of 9 August 1915, this soldier charged down trenches occupied by the enemy, engaged in close-range bombing and captured lengths of trench from the enemy under heavy fire. In his last charge forward, Captain Shout lit three bombs, but the third one exploded prematurely, severely wounding him. Captain Shout succumbed to his injuries two days later and was buried at sea.

Corporal Alexander Burton was an ironmonger born in Kyneton, Victoria. He landed on the shores of Gallipoli in his 22nd year. In the early hours of 9 August, Corporal Burton, along with comrades Dunstan, Tubb and others, defended a newly captured trench under heavy attack. Three times the trench barricade was bombed and destroyed, and each time the enemy was repulsed and the barricade rebuilt by Burton and the other men. During the battle over this trench, and under a hail of bombs, Tubb was injured and Corporal Burton was killed. With no known grave for Corporal Burton, today he is recognised on a plaque at Lone Pine and by an oak tree and bridge in the Victorian town of Euroa.

In this debate there is not enough time to do justice to the stories of the nine soldiers recognised in the brave men exhibition. Each of those men have special stories, and not just battle stories. Each of them has a character of his own, each was directly affected by war in a different way and each has his own pre and post war family story.

It is easy to get lost in the statistics of Australia's involvement in World War I. In 1914, Australia's population was four million and yet 417,000 men enlisted for service, which was almost 39 per cent of the nation's male population aged between 18 and 44. At Gallipoli, 8,709 Australians lost their lives and 59,000 Australians were killed during the war. We must remember that each of those Australians has their own story.

It is a commitment to remembering our wartime stories that underpins the commitment of this government to the recent successful search for the hospital ship *Centaur*, which was torpedoed off Brisbane. Following the location of the wreck and the publication of the stories of that wartime tragedy, recently we arranged for family members to pay tribute to their loved ones in a service on site and to build on the memories of those men and women lost as a result of war. In this place whenever we consider the acts of war, whether they be acts of great bravery and courage or memories of those lost, including civilian casualties, we must acknowledge that it is elected representatives who make decisions to commit our men and women to war, and that those men and women fight and often lose their lives to provide the democracy, freedoms and peace that we enjoy today. In my mind, the overarching tragedy of the First World War was its failure to be the war to end all wars.

IDES Project

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (12.19 pm): On 28 November 2007 a presentation was given by senior CITEC staff to announce the IDES vision of a whole-of-government email, identity management and directory service to facilitate secure access to data and applications from anywhere on the government network. IDES is meant to enable the management of user identities consolidated within a single system. The government acknowledged they were facing challenges with high costs to develop and support applications and services and also wastage of intellectual property as solutions were constantly being reinvented.

First announced by Minister Schwarten in October 2006, the project promised to see some 80,000 email accounts and up to 250,000 identities migrated to new systems by June 2010. But like just about every other IT project promised by this long-term Labor government, it is a promise that has not been delivered.

Funding for the program's costs of \$252 million was sourced via CITEC fees to agencies from using the new service and a loan of \$45 million to cover shortfalls in the first three years of the program. During the 2009 estimates hearings, when I asked why the IDES project had been delayed, the minister handed over to his director-general to answer for him, as he so frequently tends to do. I was told that IDES was a very complex system. Excuses given for the delays were the state election and a reduction of 23 agencies to 13. In the minister's tabled response to my statement of reservations last year, he said with regard to the IDES project—

While the tender process is six months behind schedule it will not impact on the completion date of 2010. The significant attention being dedicated to the probity and governance of the project will ensure a successful outcome for Government.

Like almost every other IT project promised by this long-term Labor government, the minister's promise is far from reality. Again in this year's estimates I tried to find out when the IDES project would be implemented. I asked the minister if he could guarantee the new late schedule of June 2011. Once again the minister proved he was out of his depth and deferred to his staff, who told me that contract negotiations were delayed because they were having discussions with IBM and the Health payroll. Shamefully, not only did the minister not answer my question about whether he could guarantee the IDES project would commence in June 2011—yet another pushed-out completion date—but he admitted he could not reach the December deadline. There was no mention of June 2011. You cannot trust a word this man says.

The Auditor-General, in report No. 7 of 2010, found fault with information technology governance frameworks, practices and risk management processes. Delays were common in the three Department of Public Works projects that were audited, and all had changed direction, scope and methods of delivery since inception. No inclusion of stakeholder representatives with authority and responsibility to drive the program forward meant that only CITEC was involved in decisions regarding the program's schedule. So much for the minister's boast of a December 2010 deadline and probity and good governance!

Just like the bungled Queensland Health payroll system, the ID management system that the IDES whole-of-government email project relies upon also requires heavy modification to allow the basic functionality of verifying a user's identity. CorpTech, under this minister's direction, has an unenviable track record of failing to manage these heavy modifications. What steps has the minister taken to ensure this already late project will not have the same result as the bungled payroll system—a \$900 million bungle that cast a cloud over Queensland's proud and progressive ICT industry?

Why can the minister not give us a guarantee of a start date? Is it too complex? We have heard that word many times before a disaster looms. Is it not integrating properly? Are there too many compatibility issues to interface effectively? When will the identity management system be available so people can exchange emails? Will it be 2011, or not until 2012 or just vanish like Project Vista? These are questions deserving of answers.

A reply to a question asked on 5 August revealed that not all agencies have signed up for IDES. Queensland Treasury has not signed up for this program, amongst others. Perhaps Treasury's refusal has more to do with the fact CorpTech was lumped onto Public Works by Treasury in 2008 when it became a financial cot case, and now Treasury will not be a part of the IDES program fearing it will turn out the same.

We have also learned that John Parker, the IDES program director, who presented the 2007 information session, is leaving before completion of this project and his job has been advertised. Did he jump ship or was he pushed, like the other 293 staff in the Department of Public Works who were told their duties and services were no longer required earlier this year?

Miners Memorial Day

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (12.24 pm): On Sunday, 19 September I had the sombre honour of representing the Premier and the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations at the third Miners Memorial Day. As a nation we have long paid tribute to our fallen soldiers. I was very pleased to hear the member for Yeerongpilly talk about the Australian hospital ship the *Centaur*. In my electorate, the Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE, Loganlea campus, has its *Centaur* wing of the health facilities training precinct which allows the memory of the *Centaur* to continue.

Miners Memorial Day is the chance for Queenslanders to pay tribute to our lost miners—workers who have died suddenly and tragically while working an extremely difficult job to feed their families and to fuel our state. A Queensland government initiative commenced in 2008, Miners Memorial Day recognises that mineworkers perform a dangerous yet crucial role in Queensland's development, extracting the natural resources to build the robust economy we boast about today.

This year's service was the first time Miners Memorial Day was held outside Brisbane. It is entirely appropriate that Miners Memorial Day be held in one of Queensland's great coalmining towns, Blackwater—home to Blackwater, Curragh and Cook collieries and thousands of mineworkers.

The Blackwater service has allowed almost 200 Blackwater locals to attend this year's miners memorial. Tragically, the Blackwater community had recently seen the loss of a local mineworker. For the people of Blackwater, Miners Memorial Day was accompanied by the grief of this tragic loss and a stark reminder that mining is still one of the most dangerous industries in our state. I would like to put on the record of the House my condolences to the family and friends of the deceased worker and the people of Blackwater for their tragic loss.

The workers of our mining industries performed a dangerous yet crucial role in Queensland's development, extracting natural resources to build the robust economy we boast about today. In the dust and the darkness they went about securing our future but in doing so they paid the ultimate price. The 19th day of September is the day in 1921 that 75 workers were killed by an explosion in the Mount Mulligan mine in Far North Queensland, leaving a small town shattered. That was a catastrophe of heart-wrenching proportions—the third worst mining disaster in Australia's history.

This year, Miners Memorial Day was particularly meaningful to the mineworkers of Moura. The 20th day of September 2010 is the 35th anniversary of the Kiangra No. 1 mine disaster, where 13 mineworkers died when an explosion occurred in the underground workings. AMWU Moura shop steward John Hempseed brought to the service the banner of those workers, commemorating the tragic history of mining in Moura.

The Queensland government has assured mineworkers and their families that their legacy will live on. Their passing will continue to bring about a greater level of diligence amongst our miners and improved safety measures within the industry. The Queensland government, along with our entire resources sector, is doing everything in its power to keep our miners safe.

Miners Memorial Day has the strong support of the mining industry, as well as the unions that represent mineworkers—the CFMEU, the AMWU, the ETU and the AWU. These unions have a proud history of championing safety for mineworkers and are continually lobbying state and federal governments for improvements in mine safety regulation and enforcement.

Together, government, industry, workers and their unions can limit the likelihood of the people of Blackwater and other mining communities ever having to experience this kind of agony again. This government has worked hard to protect mineworkers, with increased enforcement in the Mines Inspectorate and new safety regulations for workers in small mines, as well as protecting a mining specific safety regime with the harmonisation of national workplace health and safety laws.

I hope all members of this House can take a moment to remember the 1,450 workers who have perished at the coalface over the course of our state's 150-year history. The miners memorial service is now an annual event, to ensure that we never forget these 1,450 workers. Next year's memorial service will be held in Mount Isa, recognising the importance of metalliferous mining to our state's economy and history. This will give the people of Mount Isa the chance to participate in Miners Memorial Day, as the people of Blackwater and surrounding communities have had this year.

As well, a permanent miners memorial is to be constructed in Redbank by 2012, in the electorate of the member for Bundamba, a member who has been a long-time advocate for mineworkers in Queensland and, I am sure, a proud host to this memorial.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

POLICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (12.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Police Service Administration Act 1990, Prostitution Act 1999 and Prostitution Regulation 2000 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Police Legislation Amendment Bill [\[3292\]](#).

Tabled paper: Police Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[3293\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (12.29 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I introduce a bill into the House which amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Prostitution Act 1999 for a variety of purposes. On 15 June 2010, the Premier and I announced that police state-wide will be given the power to issue on-the-spot fines for public nuisance, public urination and associated offences. This followed a 12-month trial by the Queensland Police Service in 2009 of issuing infringement notices for public nuisance, public urination and associated offences in the Townsville and South Brisbane police districts. The trial was initiated by the Bligh government in direct response to recommendations contained in the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report *Policing public order: a review of the public nuisance offence*, which identified ticketing as a viable option for dealing with public nuisance behaviour.

Griffith University evaluated the 12-month trial and its report concluded that infringement notices are a cost-effective means of dealing with public nuisance offences. The report found that during the trial period 46 per cent of all persons ticketed had no previous criminal history—consistent with the CMC report findings that policing of public nuisance offending is primarily focused on managing 'party people' in response to public concerns. For this group of people, ticketing for public nuisance offending has the potential to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system.

The ability for police to issue infringement notices will be in addition to current actions available to police, including diversion, cautions, issue of move-on directions, issue of notices to appear, and arrest and charge. The issuing of infringement notices will reduce the need for offenders to be taken into police custody for relatively minor offences and enable police to spend less time on paperwork for public nuisance offenders and be available to perform operational duties.

In implementing state-wide public nuisance ticketing, the Queensland Police Service will maximise the use of alternatives to enforcement action, where appropriate, to ensure ticketing does not unreasonably impact on vulnerable social groups. This includes conducting ongoing evaluation through an operational performance review on public order offending 12 months after state-wide implementation.

The bill also amends the Police Service Administration Act 1999 to enable the electronic assessment of criminal history records for employment screening purposes. Currently, section 10.2A of the Police Service Administration Act authorises the Commissioner of Police to disclose criminal history records, with the consent of the person, to third parties for employment screening purposes via CrimTrac or another police service. The disclosure is subject to the non-disclosure provisions of other acts. Currently, the assessment of the suitability and vetting of criminal history records for disclosure, including the revival of spent convictions, is a manual process requiring the faxing or couriering of criminal history information to CrimTrac and other police services.

The bill enables the Queensland Police Service to use the full criminal history information of a person, which is currently electronically provided to CrimTrac under the National Police Reference System, to assess the suitability of records for release, including the revival of spent convictions for criminal history employment screening purposes under CrimTrac's National Police Checking Service Support System. However, these amendments do not extend the nature of the criminal history information which is subsequently released to third parties for employment screening purposes, which is limited to current adult convictions. Nor do the amendments change the requirement that the release of criminal history information to a third party can only be undertaken with the written consent of the person.

The bill amends the Prostitution Act 1999 to provide for the automatic suspension and cancellation of a licensee's licence or an approved manager's certificate on the nonpayment of annual fees. Brothel licences and approved manager's certificates are valid for a period of three years, with an annual licence fee and an annual licence return fee or an annual certificate fee and an annual return fee payable. Some licensees and approved managers were of the view that because they had a three-year licence or certificate they should not be required to pay annual fees.

This bill will allow for the automatic 28-day suspension of a licence or an approved manager's certificate on the nonpayment of the annual fees. The suspension may be lifted when the licensee or approved manager pays the fees during the suspension period or, in exceptional circumstances, a licensee or approved manager has entered into an outstanding fees payment plan with the Prostitution Licensing Authority. If the licensee or approved manager fails to pay the outstanding fees within the suspension period or in accordance with a payment plan their licence or certificate is cancelled.

The bill also amends the Prostitution Act to provide a clear framework for the Prostitution Licensing Authority to undertake disciplinary inquiries into a licensee or approved manager. Currently the Prostitution Act provides the Prostitution Licensing Authority with some disciplinary powers but little direction in the way it can conduct a disciplinary inquiry and limited powers to require persons to answer questions or produce documents.

The amendments allow the Prostitution Licensing Authority to hold a disciplinary inquiry by way of a hearing or correspondence. If the licensee or approved manager fails to attend or fails to make a submission where the inquiry is conducted by correspondence, the Prostitution Licensing Authority will be empowered to continue with the disciplinary inquiry and make a determination about whether a ground for disciplinary action is established.

The Prostitution Licensing Authority will also have the power to compel attendance of witnesses and require a witness or the licensee or approved manager to answer questions, produce documents or give information. If they fail to comply, they commit an offence with a maximum penalty of 60 penalty units. No offence is committed where the answering of the question or production of the documents or information would self-incriminate.

Finally, the bill amends the Prostitution Act to provide for extended criminal history checking of persons appointed to, or seeking appointment as a member of, the Prostitution Licensing Authority or executive director or persons employed or seeking employment as a staff member of the Prostitution Licensing Authority. The extended probity checking is reflective of the integrity benchmarks required for such appointments or employment. Criminal history checks can only be undertaken with the consent of the applicant.

This legislation balances the rights of individuals and the rights of the community to a safe and fair society by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service and the Prostitution Licensing Authority. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Malone, adjourned.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 September (see p. 3149), on motion of Mr Roberts—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (12.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. These amendments clarify the objectives of the disaster management system, clarify the roles of state and local governments in relation to the State Emergency Service, reallocate roles and create new roles in disaster management groups, amend the processes and requirements for declaring a disaster situation, establish temporary disaster districts and create new roles of State Disaster Coordinator and State Recovery Coordinator.

In the electorate of Bundamba we have a strong and proud tradition of supporting our local ambulance service. Last Friday I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister for Emergency Services, Neil Roberts, to the official opening of our brand-new ambulance station in Springfield. Our Labor government expended \$2.4 million on building this brand-new ambulance station in Springfield. It will provide a 24-hour service to the local community. It will accommodate four ambulance vehicles and 18 staff. Whilst it was \$2.4 million in terms of capital costs, I estimate the recurrent costs—that is, the salaries of our ambulance officers and other staff—to be around \$8 million a year.

Our new ambulance station is equipped with rest areas, training facilities and fantastic staff amenities. Our local ambulance men and women have world-class facilities. I believe they are second to none not only in Australia but also in the world. Our new Springfield Ambulance Station will service Springfield, Springfield Lakes, Augustine Heights, Brookwater, Gailes, Redbank Plains and Bellbird Park.

The Redbank Local Ambulance Committee has been operating in our community for many decades. I have been on this committee for a number of years with people like Aaron Broad, who is the president; Steve Axe, the secretary; Graham Kaatz, the treasurer; Colleen Kaatz; Clem Knight; and Teresa and Greg Broad. Our fantastic LAC has been devoted to assisting our ambulance service. We will be expanding the Redbank LAC to include our new Springfield station.

The latest purchase by the local ambulance committee has been recliner chairs for our ambulance officers, and a little while ago our local LAC bought a new TV for our ambulance officers. At this stage I would like to place on record my appreciation to RT Edwards and Sons, which is an Ipswich based electrical retailer, for providing this particular TV at cost price to the LAC.

The opening of our new ambulance station at Springfield completes the delivery of emergency services facilities in the eastern suburbs of Ipswich. A few years ago we opened the fire station at Camira. Earlier this year we opened the police station at Augustine Heights and last Friday we opened the ambulance station as well. The police station and ambulance station were both built ahead of time. I would like to place on record my appreciation to Peter Dennis and all of the ambulance officers who have played their part in the planning for the new station. I would also like to thank Jan, who is our new officer in charge at the Springfield Ambulance Station, and all of the team who will be working at the Springfield station for providing what I know to be a first-class service to our local people.

I would like to inform our minister today that I am very closely connected to everybody in our community. Last night when I returned home from parliament at my front door was a lady called Rosa, who actually lives at Springfield Lakes. Rosa came to my home last night to tell me that last Thursday night she called out the ambulance officers at Springfield because she had severe pains in her chest. They arrived three minutes later and she was very pleased that they attended to her. Her treating doctor, Matilda, was also very impressed with the fast service provided, as was her family. When MPs know that something is working very well in their community and people come to our homes to say thank you so much for providing this service, we know that we have been very good in delivering this service to our local area and we also know that our ambos are top class.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our Labor government for providing these services in our community. I would like to thank it for the completion of the emergency services rollout in the eastern suburbs of Ipswich. I would like to particularly say to our ambulance officers: thank you for being our angels in our community.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.42 pm): In speaking to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I welcome any opportunity to congratulate and publicly acknowledge emergency services workers and volunteers for their hard work and selfless dedication. These people rose to the occasion when Cyclone Larry tore through Far North Queensland and, likewise, during many other recent disasters. They have always demonstrated qualities of which we are all proud. It is a credit to the emergency services response team in Queensland that they have been able to coordinate disaster management time and time again coherently and efficiently. These amendments seek to enshrine the current good practice of the SES and state emergency departments in legislation.

The bill implements the recommendations made by the independent review in 2009 and serves to strengthen and support the proven success of existing structures of the Queensland disaster management system. The independent review recommended that the role of the emergency services workers be further defined and sought to facilitate cooperation between all levels of government, emergency services workers and volunteers involved in disaster management. It is good to see that the proposed amendments seek to implement those recommendations. The further definition of state and local government roles in disaster management seeks to resolve inconsistencies and better facilitate cooperation between all levels of government. This should ensure responses are better coordinated and specifically targeted to achieve maximum efficiency in response coordination.

I am very glad that this legislation has come before the House. At times there has not been consistency and coordination between government departments and local governments. This was especially so during the 2008-09 flood when the Burdekin River flowed over the bridge for more than a week. In the communities of Charters Towers and Homestead there was very little food in the

supermarkets, in the local shopping centres and in the stores. We had asked Queensland Rail to provide a freight service. I think this is very important. A new company called ARG, which Queensland Rail had bought from Western Australia, took over rail freight services from Townsville to Mount Isa. It then closed down all the freight services as there was no longer a responsibility to provide a freight service. So when we needed a service during a time of emergency, ARG reneged on that. It was not until we got on to the minister—and this was at the end of the week when we were virtually out of food—that we were able to get that freight in. I really believe that this has to be dealt with in the future. I do not want to see Queensland Rail sold. We need a coordinated approach because in times of emergency such as this, when our bridges are impassable and the only access is by rail, we need to get freight in by rail.

The proposed combination of existing districts allows for streamlined access to regional resources which can mean rapid and efficient emergency response at a regional level. I have been advised by senior SES members that this amendment is a significant improvement on the current arrangements, which require the state to arrange resources for emergency response once resources have been exhausted in an affected district.

I would like to emphasise the importance of expediency in the implementation of this legislation. In a few months it will be cyclone season and the proposed amendments will require administration adjustments across all departments and agencies involved in disaster management. The combining of districts will require coordination and communication. The sooner departments are able to act on the new legislation, the more prepared they will be for the cyclone season. The inclusion of Local Government Association representatives is an acknowledgement of the importance of communication with local government when coordinating disaster management, as is the greater role of police in developing a disaster management strategy, as district and state coordinators recognise that police are best placed to assume command and control of disaster events at a state level.

An area identified in the independent review addressed IT systems. It is my understanding that SES 'request for assistance' data is being integrated into local government Guardian software. Does the government have a time line for completion of these upgrades and is any further system development planned to improve communications and data gathering for those involved in disaster management? I bring that to the attention of the House.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (12.47 pm): I rise to speak today on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. A major attraction of Queensland is its subtropical climate. This both benefits the state's residents directly and forms the basis of a thriving tourism industry. A less welcome side to this subtropical climate is that the state needs to be well prepared for emergencies caused by natural events such as flooding, high winds and bushfires.

Perhaps because of Australia's challenging natural environment, the tradition of mateship, of helping others, is an integral part of our country and its culture. Private citizens selflessly put themselves at risk, volunteering for organisations such as the SES, rural fire brigade and Volunteer Coast Guard. Others donate millions of dollars annually to relief funds to help those unfortunate enough to have suffered in an emergency.

The presence of these people—volunteers and donors—makes possible the depth of response necessary in dealing with the widespread devastation resulting from natural events. However, it is government that is responsible for the big picture to ensure that the resources available, both professional and volunteer, are deployed in the most effective way. By amending the Disaster Management Act 2003 and Public Safety Preservation Act 1986, this bill seeks to improve the quality of disaster management in Queensland by clarifying objectives and locating responsibility more clearly within the disaster management hierarchy. It is an important initiative. Its success, however, can be judged only on the practical results achieved.

As an example of what can be achieved, members will remember the serious damage caused by a single storm that ripped through The Gap and surrounding areas in 2008. The handling of this was a tribute to all involved. Clean-up crews, emergency services, council workers and community services were all on the scene quickly and did a wonderful job. It was in every sense an example of how it should be done and demonstrated the skill and dedication of our professional and volunteer emergency services, their ability to work together and the effectiveness of the overall command and control structure.

This bill is designed to enhance disaster management planning across all four phases of disaster management—prevention, preparation, response and recovery. Particularly important is to prevent or limit damage, if at all possible. For this, bureaucratic cooperation and foresight, as well as a timely response, are absolutely essential. One need only think back to the *Pacific Adventurer* oil spill off Moreton Island to find an event which not only should never have occurred but which was very badly handled when it did. Poor systems to control coastal shipping and a slow initial response combined to ensure that just 270 tonnes of oil caused far more damage than should have been the case, with the clean-up taking around 16 months to complete.

Since then a coal ship, the *Shen Neng 1*, again vividly demonstrated the need for effective control of coastal shipping by running aground attempting to take a short cut through the Barrier Reef. More recently still, a wood carrier, the *Zhong Xing*, has run aground in the Torres Strait off Cape York. That these two latter incidents did not develop into something more serious was due as much to luck as to good management. Evidently, there is still a shortfall in the interagency cooperation required to prevent avoidable mishaps in coastal shipping. As I noted earlier, the ultimate success or otherwise of this bill can only be judged on results. Merely to facilitate recovery from a preventable disaster could itself be viewed as a disaster. Just as prior planning helps initiation of a disaster response with the minimum delay, prior preparation on the ground will always improve the outcomes of an event.

As a legacy of their history, rural Queenslanders are generally aware of what to do in disaster circumstances. Storm seasons, bushfire dangers, floods, impending cyclones—none of these are in any sense new. All have preparation procedures well understood by the wider community and which minimise needless loss. With increasing urbanisation of the Australian population, it is very probable that this knowledge will now have to be passed on by community education programs rather than by word of mouth. A real danger in this area is that well-proven methods are rejected on theoretical grounds without adequate practical evidence. For example, it has been suggested that the destructiveness of the recent Victorian bushfires was at least partly attributable to allowing fuel to accumulate rather than performing controlled burning at regular intervals, this accumulation being mandated on environmental grounds.

This bill clarifies and strengthens methods for dealing with response and recovery, including spelling out in legislation the objectives of disaster management, the roles of different representatives and the creation of the new roles of State Disaster Coordinator and State Recovery Coordinator, with the responsibilities such a role implies. An independent review of current legislation led by Jim O'Sullivan reported in August 2009 and forms the basis of this bill. It is good to see adoption of the recommendations of the report in formalising the roles of agencies and representatives. The report largely applauded the existing approach to disaster management. The improvements it proposed were sensible and bring our legislative response to the standards of other jurisdictions. Queensland will now no longer be the only state without a comprehensive disaster management structure. The biggest gap identified by the review, and one which should have led to significant consequences, was that disaster management information and communication systems were not yet sufficiently integrated or compatible. However, it also stated—

The review's overall conclusion is that Queensland's Disaster Management arrangements are soundly based. All stakeholders interviewed, and previous evaluation reports, confirm the very high levels of commitment, enormous effort and goodwill on the part of individuals displayed during response and early recovery stages of disaster events in the State.

This is a sentiment I must echo. Emergency Services across our state repeatedly demonstrate their skill and dedication. Whether it be a storm in The Gap, an oil spill off Moreton Island or even an event on the scale of Black Saturday, their tenacity and determination seem boundless, and that is of great comfort to all Queenslanders.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (12.54 pm): I am pleased to support the amendments proposed in the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. There are a number of important amendments in this bill which have resulted from an independent review of disaster management arrangements in Queensland. The constant challenge for our disaster management system is that Queensland's natural environment is so diverse. Queensland's disaster management arrangements have already been tested many times by a variety of events—floods, cyclones, oil spills and so on. Just this year the northern part of the state experienced two tropical cyclones in severe Tropical Cyclone Ului and Tropical Cyclone Olga. These two cyclones demonstrate what we all know—that disasters do not necessarily occur or restrict themselves to one jurisdiction or region. For example, the erratic nature and unpredictability of cyclones mean that often a number of communities need to prepare for cyclone impacts and damage. Not only do coastal communities need to prepare for the impact of damaging winds and rains; as the storms cross the coast and move inland, whilst the severity of the winds often diminishes quickly, cyclones can quickly turn into severe rain depressions which can cause disastrous floods and subsequent personal and property damage. Whilst our people and our plans have held up well in the face of these significant disaster events, there is always room for improvements to enhance the way we prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster events, whether natural or human caused.

All participants in the Queensland disaster management framework—from state government agencies such as the Queensland Police Service and Emergency Management Queensland to local governments and to the many staff and volunteers involved—have learned from the variety of challenges that our system has faced in recent years. At this point I want to acknowledge the great work of EMQ staff in North Queensland. In particular, I acknowledge Warren Brisdon and Wayne Preedy, local regional director and area director respectively. Warren and Wayne work diligently with the local SES units in Townsville and surrounds. The high standard, quality and availability of training afforded to local SES volunteers from EMQ is to be commended. My husband, Carl, is a volunteer with the local SES and, as such, I can attest to the many and regular EMQ and SES training opportunities that are available to our local volunteers. Recently I attended the local emergency challenge event which gave

SES units from Townsville and Charters Towers an opportunity to practise their disaster response skills in simulated situations. Set up in the old Queensland Rail North Yards, several scenarios were replicated, including a severe storm event, vertical rescue, a field search and a road accident. Participants were observed and marked and provided with feedback on where improvements are needed and of course where they did well and met the high standards expected of our SES volunteers.

It is a constant focus of the Queensland government to ensure that our disaster management arrangements are both robust and agile and are able to cope with whatever disasters we may face. In other words, the systems need to be flexible. Anyone who takes the drive from Townsville to the Tablelands can still today follow the path of devastation that was caused by severe Tropical Cyclone Larry in 2006. Some 10,000 houses were damaged and there was over \$500 million in damage to houses, infrastructure and crops. All of us in the north are aware of the preparations that need to be taken by all jurisdictions up and down the coast as cyclones such as Larry approach land.

This bill includes a number of initiatives designed to improve the flexibility of the Queensland disaster management framework. It removes or reduces the hurdles that may hinder the most effective, most rapid response to an event. It allows for the establishment of temporary disaster districts where the effects of a particular event are spread over more than one disaster district. When it is more appropriate to manage a disaster through one district disaster management group and one district disaster coordinator, the chairperson of the State Disaster Management Group may establish a temporary disaster district for the relevant localities. Where a temporary district disaster management group is established, it must include representatives from all affected local governments as well as state government agencies and other entities that contribute to the effective management of the disaster. In this way, the temporary disaster district does not take away from the importance of local response but rather avoids lines on a map restricting the most appropriate response from occurring.

The amendments proposed to the Disaster Management Act increase the duration of an initial disaster declaration from seven to 14 days. Our more recent experiences with disasters tell us that seven days is rarely enough time to respond to a disaster and to start the process of recovery. Increasing the initial duration of a disaster declaration to 14 days removes the need to make a regulation to seek an extension beyond seven days. A similar change has been made to second and further extensions of disaster declarations, increasing the allowable extension from seven to 14 days. The bill also seeks to take away some of the stringent requirements to have matters recorded in writing before they take effect. Most notably, when circumstances do not allow for a disaster to be declared in writing, an oral declaration may be made. This will ensure that, when authorities need to respond rapidly to an event, there is no need to wait while the approved forms are completed and signed. It also takes away the risk that a disaster cannot be declared because the person making the declaration does not have the requisite communications equipment available. Of course, any oral declaration must be committed to writing as soon as practicable, which is an appropriate safeguard.

Finally, the bill makes provision for disasters to be declared proactively where there is reasonable likelihood that the powers provided during a disaster will be necessary. This will allow our police and emergency services personnel to stay ahead of the game when a disaster is pending. The collective effect of these amendments will be to further improve the agility of our system in responding to disasters. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Messenger, adjourned.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Alcan Queensland Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1965, the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Holidays Act 1983, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Water Act 2000, for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) [3294].

Tabled paper: Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), explanatory notes [3295].

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (2.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is the latest step in the Bligh government's delivery of a smart regulatory environment in Queensland. Environmental regulation for landholders in Queensland has become increasingly complex, often requiring multiple approvals under different pieces of legislation for undertaking land management activities. This bill will make it easier for Queenslanders to undertake land management activities without compromising the existing standards of environmental regulation.

This bill harmonises the requirements for clearing native vegetation under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999. This will simplify regulatory processes and increase compliance under the acts while preserving the rigour of existing nature conservation objectives. Importantly, this bill amends the Nature Conservation Act to reflect considerations of public safety by enabling clearing of protected plants in response to an imminent risk of danger, such as the threat of fire.

This bill also amends the Vegetation Management Act to create an alternative regulatory framework which will streamline approval processes and facilitate holistic resource management planning. The framework will enable entities, such as natural resource management groups, to prepare area management plans which cover multiple properties. Individual landholders will be able to undertake certain low-risk land management activities in accordance with a plan without the need for a separate individual approval. Under the framework, landholders who are parties to existing regulatory stewardship agreements will also be able to undertake certain land management activities without the need for a separate approval. This will support the uptake of land stewardship agreements with the government. This framework will provide the foundation for progressing further regulatory reform to achieve efficiencies for landholders and deliver positive environmental outcomes for Queensland.

In August of this year, I announced the government's move to ban petroleum compounds containing benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene or xylene, commonly referred to as B-TEX, from use in coal seam gas operations or stimulation—or fracking—activities. This bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to give effect to this government commitment. Although I acknowledge that industry has assured me that these chemicals are not currently used, this amendment ensures the protection of the community and the environment by legislating to ban B-TEX from ever being used in Queensland.

Further amendments to the Environmental Protection Act will improve notification where there is an incident that causes serious or material environmental harm, requiring the responsible person to notify both the Department of Environment and Resource Management and all affected occupiers of land within 24 hours of an incident. In recognition of the potentially serious consequences where notification is not given, the penalty is being increased from 100 penalty units to 500 penalty units.

Also, this bill amends the Petroleum and Gas (Safety and Production) Act 2004 and the Petroleum Act 1923. To improve transparency for landholders about fracking and other activities on their properties, the notice requirements will be extended, requiring prior notification to be given to landholders.

The bill also amends the Water Act 2000, the Alcan Queensland Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1965 and the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957 to provide for the relocation and defining of Rio Tinto Aluminium Ltd's water rights from the agreement acts to the Water Act. Rio Tinto Aluminium Ltd has agreed to reduce the authorised take of water from the Wenlock wild river area. The authorised take of water will be reduced from a potential theoretical volume of 2,952,000 megalitres per annum to a maximum volume of 90,000 megalitres per annum. This is a reduction from approximately 80 per cent of the Wenlock Basin's mean annual flow down to 2.45 per cent of the mean annual flow. This will provide certainty for future allocation of water within the Wenlock wild river area.

This bill proposes a number of legislative amendments to facilitate the internal restructure of Rio Tinto Ltd. These amendments clarify the processes and requirements for amending the agreements under the agreement acts. Additionally, the amendments ensure transitional authorities for agreement act mines can be transferred to wholly owned subsidiaries without the transitional authority ending. The amendments will ensure all references to Comalco Ltd in the Holidays Act 1983 extend to that company's successors and permitted assigns.

This bill will also amend the Geothermal Energy Act 2010 and ultimately the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to ensure consistency with all other resource acts in terms of the new land access framework. Transitional provisions will be introduced for the mineral and coal exploration sectors, extending the time period allowed for negotiating conduct and compensation agreements with relevant landholders. The transitional arrangements will ease the impact of the reforms on a majority of junior and small industry players in the mineral and coal exploration sector.

Finally, this bill will amend the South Bank Corporation Act 1989 to include within the commercial precinct at South Bank two parcels of land on the corner of Grey and Vulture streets which are intended to be included in the South Point development between Tribune, Grey and Vulture streets. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Sorensen, adjourned.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3520, on motion of Mr Roberts—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (2.36 pm): I rise to speak to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. Queensland is susceptible to many forms of disasters—bushfires, floods, tropical cyclones, storms—and therefore it is important that effective disaster management systems are in place to prepare us for the worst and to ensure an increase in community safety and a reduction in the impact of those particular disasters. The *Australian Journal of Emergency Management Volume 24 No. 1* of February 2009 estimates that disasters cause more than \$1.4 billion worth of damage every year throughout Australia to homes, businesses and our nation's infrastructure along with disruption to communities.

The strategic objectives of this bill are to amend the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986 to clarify the objectives of the disaster management system, clarify the roles of state and local governments in relation to the SES, reallocate roles and create new roles in disaster management groups, amend the processes and requirements for declaring a disaster situation, establish temporary disaster districts and create the new roles of state disaster coordinator and state recovery coordinator.

Overall, this bill will increase the capacity of our communities to respond to a disaster and for that reason I will be supporting it. In doing so, I would like to pay tribute to the State Emergency Service, the volunteers of the SES and the firefighters—both the rural firefighters and the urban firefighters—who these days are working together more and more. We saw that cooperation at Gaeta—the fire in the Burnett. I would also like to acknowledge the first responders and, of course, the ambulance officers. In doing so, I would also like to extend the tribute to the surf-lifesavers who are not traditionally thought of as part of the official response but who certainly now are. When you think about how well trained those particular volunteers are—their ability to operate rubber duckies in fast water, their resuscitation skills and their organisational skills—it has been a long time coming. We should have invited the surf-lifesavers to be a more official part of the response to state emergencies. During disasters in previous years surf-lifesavers were not being consulted and their skills not utilised. I am glad that this bill will enable that to occur in future.

I think some communities have become complacent about the destructive nature of fire, floods and cyclones—even tidal waves. I bring to the chamber today examples from Cyclone Larry—which many members have spoken about—and Cyclone Hamish. In fact, we absolutely dodged a bullet in relation to Cyclone Hamish. During the last state election I remember speaking to some people who had relocated to the Burnett-Bundaberg region from North Queensland. I talked to them about their experiences and why they decided to move south. The predominant reason they moved south was they had been stuck in two cyclones, one of which was Larry. They told me of their horrific experience of being stuck in the middle of a cyclone with gale force winds. They said that they never wanted to experience that again and so moved to Bundaberg. Of course, a few months later we had the prospect of Cyclone Hamish hitting. I was thinking about those people when Hamish was bearing down on our coast. During the last election campaign there was a 24-hour or 48-hour period during which Cyclone Hamish was going to cross the coastline somewhere between 1770 and Bundaberg. Luckily it moved a little south of that. Moving up and down the coast, I remember there were many people wondering if they should evacuate. People were saying, especially on the coast, 'It is only a category 5 and it has been downgraded to a category 4. Maybe we can ride this one out.' I have to emphasise that the only possible response to the threat of a category 5 cyclone touching down on any coastal community is evacuation.

One of the failings of the state emergency system during Cyclone Hamish was that not all communities were prepared to evacuate. It was a tale of almost two cities, really, when one compares different communities on the Burnett Coast. A good community—I will not mention the other one—that had an absolutely brilliant disaster management plan in place was the Woodgate community led by community volunteer, Hank Ropard. They had a magnificent response plan. They had marked every house in that community that had an elderly, frail or disabled person who needed evacuation. They knew that if the cyclone turned towards the coast they would have a team of volunteers—first responders, SES and rural fire brigades—working cooperatively to go out into the community and get

those people out of their house, put them on a bus and evacuate them. Those coastal communities can be cut off very, very quickly when we get the torrential rain that is traditionally associated with cyclones and so the decision to evacuate has to be made early. We were blessed with Cyclone Hamish in that it was a dry cyclone and the diameter of rain around the cyclone centre did not actually extend too much, but we knew that once the torrential rain had come communities such as Agnes Water right through to Rosedale, and especially near Woodgate, would only have a certain amount of time to evacuate. If they did not evacuate straightaway they would be cut off by rising floodwaters.

One of the problems that we have, as we are such a great tourism area with more and more overseas tourists coming and visiting our areas, is getting the message through to non-English speaking people that there is a natural disaster coming our way. That is why I think that it is worthwhile including in a disaster management plan strategies such as those quoted to me from people who have lived up in the Northern Territory. I think they have flags that are raised in their communities that indicate a cyclone is on its way. They also have loudspeakers. I remember speaking to a German backpacker who said that he was going to ride out the cyclone inside his kombi van. He said, 'Ja, it's just a cyclone. Vat's that? It's just a little bit of wind, ja?' I had to take the time to explain to him that a cyclone was more than just a little bit of wind and the difference literally between life and death could be a matter of metres; whether you had a strong wall surrounding you or you were in a Kombi van.

A brutal lesson that we learnt from Cyclone Hamish and other cyclones, which not many politicians want to try to fix, is the infighting that occurs between volunteer community groups. This can cost lives when disaster hits. Most politicians want to run a mile when, as invariably happens, there is some sort of personal conflict between the volunteers. What tends to happen in this situation is that the capacity for that community group to respond to a disaster deteriorates significantly. Plans are not put in place, equipment is not maintained and the volunteer base dwindles away because people do not want to go along and participate in a group that has infighting.

I have made it my goal to get involved if there is any infighting in my community groups. As politicians we are bound to upset someone. It is not a nice thing. We do not really want to upset someone. But we have to get in there and make sure that people are working in a cooperative and harmonious way or lives will be lost when the cyclone or the tidal wave hits. If one wanted to trace the root cause of those lives being lost one could look back and see those little infights that happened during those times, so it is important that everyone remembers that lesson and tries to sort out the squabbles in the early stages.

I would like to suggest a structural change. This bill does bring about a structural change. I think that the structural change should start from the top and I think that we should have an emergency services minister who should be a stand-alone minister. That is not taking away from the capacity of this police minister who seems to be the go-to guy. I understand that he is handling his portfolios in a reasonable way.

Government members interjected.

Mr MESSENGER: That is as good as I can go at the moment. I believe that the state would respond better if we had a stand-alone emergency services minister, and that structural reform should start from the top. The other issue that I would like to raise is that I do not think elections should be allowed during the Queensland cyclone season. It is probably not a lesson that South-East Queenslanders appreciate, but anyone north of Caboolture would understand that having a cyclone during an election is a fairly harrowing experience and it also undermines the community's capacity to respond in an effective way to that disaster. I would like to think that whoever is the Premier next year would think about calling an election between June and December because I honestly believe that holding an election in the cyclone season is madness. Having said that, I have been told by people much smarter than me that there has been in Queensland's recorded history a cyclone in every month of the year. I stand to be corrected on that, and I am sure I will be.

In the last federal election there was an interesting initiative to credit HECS fees \$10 for every hour that a university student works for a volunteer organisation. I think that we should revisit that idea. It is a great idea. I think that we can look at boosting the numbers in our volunteer organisations and our emergency services by grabbing hold of that policy initiative. I do not think it should die now. I think that both sides of politics should look at that—especially if the feds are paying. That would be fantastic.

I have spoken with many members of the rural fire brigades in my area, such as the one at Buxton. They would like the funding structure of Queensland rural fire brigades to be re-evaluated. Indeed, they highlight the funding model in New South Wales. The suggestion is that the state government should provide more funding to rural fire brigades, because there is a lot of inequity in the way that the system is funded at the moment. Some brigades have a small number of people in their fire ground area and the amount of money they receive to operate the fire brigade could be as little as below \$1,000. Fire brigades that service areas with large populations, situated perhaps in a small village on the coast, could receive upwards of \$30,000 to run the fire brigade. The volunteers do the same amount of work, but the amount of money that they get to do that can be hugely disproportionate. That needs to be addressed and possibly—a word I love—harmonised.

There is other funding. New South Wales rural fire brigades do not have to fundraise to keep brigades going, as do a lot of brigades in Queensland. Their trucks are serviced and they do not have to fork out for tyres and fuel, as do our volunteer rural fire brigades. In Queensland all we can expect is subsidised equipment. Our brigades still have to buy a lot of equipment, which comes out of the funds the brigade receives from the community. Applying for grants involves cost. We need to look at how we fund our brigades. The funding needs to be restructured fundamentally, because currently a lot of brigades are finding things very difficult. A lot of their time is spent fundraising rather than training to fight the disasters that we are talking about here today.

I acknowledge Marilyn King from the rural fire brigade section. She states that there are 2,500 firefighters and 242 fire wardens. She would like us to think about this question: what is the cost to the community of maintaining an RFS? They have to fundraise to buy half the vehicles, they have to fundraise to build the sheds, they have to fundraise to put diesel in the trucks, they have to fundraise to carry out annual inspections on the vehicles, they have to fundraise to fix up the vehicles and pay for maintenance costs and they have to fundraise for grants to assist them. Once the vehicles have become an asset of the QFS, it is up to the volunteers to pay all the bills. That is unfair and, once again, it undermines the community's capacity to respond to disaster. For example, the Windfield fire brigade often helps out in the central area around Baffle Creek. Is it fair that the small community at Windfield has to put on another ham wheel to raise funds to pay for the fuel the brigade uses to help its neighbours? I do not believe so. I think more funding should come from the state government.

Mrs King wants the state government to take responsibility for paying for the roadworthy certificates for the appliances. The cost is only \$96. I think that is a fair enough ask, because right now the volunteers have to pay for the certificates. The federal government should make volunteers who fight fires eligible for a tax break. That would be another great policy initiative. It would be easy to calculate the amount of total time because it is logged with Firecom. The rural fire brigade knows exactly how much time each firefighter spends fighting fires. The suggestion given to me is \$10,000 for a first officer, \$7,000 for junior officers and \$5,000 for all other firefighters, depending on the hours worked. I would like an acknowledgement that small business volunteers are losing money by fighting fires. It costs them money to leave their businesses to be on the fire front. Many of those small business volunteers do not actually fight fires in their own community; they volunteer their time to fight in other communities as well.

It is legal to clear 1½ times the height of the nearest tree to your house, which would be around 20 metres or less. I believe that in Queensland we should increase that distance to at least 50 metres. Then we could start properly learning the lessons of the Victorian royal commission. I believe that the greens have not accepted their fair share of the responsibility for causing those fires. A lot of property owners are scared of chopping trees down around their houses because they do not want to transgress our laws.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Burnett, can you explain to me, please, how what you are speaking about relates to the bill? We have been talking about rural fires for some time now. Can you point it out to me?

Mr MESSENGER: Rural fire brigades are part of the whole infrastructure of responding to disasters.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burnett, nothing you have been talking about in the last few minutes has been in relation to that. I ask you to come back to the purposes of this bill.

Mr MESSENGER: I am happy to do that, Mr Deputy Speaker. In his second reading speech the minister stated that 'Queensland communities need to be resilient in the face of natural hazards'. One of the ways our communities can become resilient is to promote first responder groups. First responder units comprise volunteers trained in life support skills. They respond to community accidents or medical emergencies to render first aid until medical care arrives. If there is a natural disaster, communities will have to rely on their own means until emergency medicine or emergency personnel can reach the community. A gentleman by the name of Mr Bridge has estimated that it would cost \$12,700 to set up a group and \$5,000 annually to continue the service. That is a very small price to pay for someone's life. I pay tribute to the Bundaberg first aid instructor, Mike Bridge, who has led a campaign to see life-saving first responder units set up in regional areas. In the Burnett and Bundaberg region he helped to set up the first responder group in Woodgate.

One of the basic principles we need to always work on is to find ways to build our communities' capacity to respond to natural disasters. First responder groups, surf-lifesaving groups, the SES and rural fire brigades are all part of that suite of response groups. This legislation enhances that capacity. For those reasons, I support the bill.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (2.56 pm): I would like to relate a few experiences I have had with disaster management. We have failed to mention some of the people who do a lot of work in disaster areas, especially after disasters happen. I have had the experience of sitting in the council chambers with about 60 people from different organisations to ensure that everything went to plan. Most

of the recommendations in the legislation before us today come from such debriefs following disasters. It is good to see some of the changes that have been proposed. Regardless of whether you change the deck chairs at the top, in a disaster the most important people you will have are those on the ground. You have to make sure that everyone knows what they are doing. Most people achieve that by undertaking exercises. The most important part of anything like this is running exercises prior to a disaster happening so that everyone knows what will happen, who is going where and who is doing what.

During the meeting that I mentioned, the police officers were the first people there. In those days if a disaster was called the police officers would straightaway take over from the mayor of the city. The SES was always there to help and they do a fantastic job. Even on weekends, they help out at community events to make sure that they have the finances and the equipment that they need. There are other departments that are needed. People from Telstra ensure that some sort of communications come in and out of the chambers. Council workers and outdoor work staff have to be lined up to carry out duties, especially when storms bring down trees and so on. It is pretty important that we ensure that the water and sewerage systems are working properly. For that to happen, you have to have electricity. The people at Ergon Energy and other electricity companies are very important. You have to make sure that they are on board in state of emergency exercises. They are the ones who will fix any electricity issues. You have to make sure that they know where to go to ensure electricity supply to water, sewerage and the like.

Then there is the fire department and the Ambulance Service, and we also have to think about the doctors and the nurses. They need to be on board as well so that if anybody is injured they know the capacity at the hospitals or they know whether you are going to evacuate people and all those types of things.

There are also the service clubs such as Rotary, Lions and Apex. I have been in situations where these people have come on board and have made sandwiches for people out on the front line. They have kept the food and water up to the people fighting fires. It is a whole community effort in any emergency or disaster. It is all about the community and the exercises that you have done previously so that it all comes together. On the day you just to have pray to God that everything comes together. I can tell the House that there were a few in the council chamber that day who did pray to God that the cyclone did not come our way.

There are other disasters that happen out at sea. We have the volunteer marine rescue service who attend to those. They have to keep the boats operational and all those types of things. Without those guys, there would be a lot of people who would be lost at sea. I know that they go out and rescue a lot of smaller boats before anything dangerous happens to them. At the end of the day when somebody does get into trouble in rough water, they are the guys who leave home, hop in their boats and risk their lives to rescue other people. I have to admire those guys for doing that.

Even at airports, especially regional airports, you have to do an emergency exercise every two years and then a benchmarking exercise every two years. For those types of exercises, we use kids from the high school to come along and be the injured passengers. It is a real community effort. It is great to see this all happening. At the end of the day it comes down to the people on the ground and the exercises that you carry out throughout the year to make sure that everyone knows what they are doing. If you are prepared for any emergency, it makes it a lot easier when it happens.

There are a couple of other things I would like to mention. The Rural Fire Service does a fantastic job. We have had a couple of bad fires around Hervey Bay and the service clubs have joined in and helped out, and the police and the SES stop traffic from going down roads where they should not go. After every disaster and after every exercise you should have a debrief because that tells you where you have gone wrong. We learnt some hints when people were evacuated from Fraser Island. They just moved a heap of people out to River Heads, but what were we going to do with them when they got to River Heads? It is all about cooperation. Politics should not enter into disaster management. It is a community effort at the end of the day, because when the incident is happening in your community the community has to pull together. If you have a well-organised community, things will go a lot smoother at the end of the day.

I would like to thank all of those community groups, especially the police force, the council workers, Ergon Energy, the fire department, the ambulances, the doctors and nurses, marine rescue and all of those volunteer groups out there who pull together when there is a disaster. That is what community is all about. At the end of the day, it is the community that looks after itself when the disaster is happening. Then after the disaster it is always good when we have gone from seven days to 14 days and so on. I will leave it there.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (3.04 pm): I rise today to speak to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is interesting that this bill has come out of a review by the Department of Community Safety, and the recommendations are quite straightforward. It is a great opportunity, as many members have taken, to thank the work of the many volunteers and the many people who work within the emergency services arena. I note the comments in the minister's second

reading speech where he says that the review concluded that Queensland's disaster management is in reasonable shape, and I would echo those sentiments. It is in good shape. The review was really tweaking, for want of a better word. It was a comprehensive review and it is good to see those recommendations come on board.

I have been fairly fortunate over many years to live in communities at Mount Tamborine and the Redlands where, more particularly, the SES has had a strong involvement. It is during that time in the Redlands, and nine years on council I hasten to add, when I came into very close personal contact with the SES members. The four key principles of disaster management that are required—which were borne out of the review and which the minister made comment on during his second reading speech—are prevention, preparation, response and recovery. We have seen around the world that often the response and the recovery are the two areas that are lacking significantly. I think this started probably about five or six years ago, if memory serves me correctly. During that period of time we have had the fifth anniversary of the New Orleans incident in America. It is rather fitting to look back and learn from those tragedies that occurred around the world. I am pleased to say that here in Queensland I doubt very much that we would end up in the same circumstances, so that is very pleasing.

It is important that we recognise the types of disasters that we could have here in Queensland. Many have been mentioned—we have flood, fire and storm obviously. They are probably the three primary incidents that we have, to which all of our emergency services respond, be they fire, rural fire, police, ambos or of course the SES. Then there is the maritime rescue service who get involved in certain circumstances.

The review basically recommended a bottom-up approach and, again, that is very significant. When you come from a council background, you get an understanding of how important the grassroots response and support is from council. Certainly local government is pivotal in the support that they deliver to, through, and with the SES services and the rural fire services in many communities. It is also important that they are supported at that district and state level as well and through the various disaster management groups.

It is very pleasing to see the way those groups do work together quite often. I heard in the member for Burnett's contribution about issues of personalities and divisions within those emergency responses. I suggest that that is the exception rather than the rule. While things can always be improved—that is true—in most instances it has been my experience that these groups work very, very well together. They work together quite often through training regimes et cetera, and it is important that those partnerships are encouraged, supported and developed, and through these mechanisms I am sure that it is the case.

I also take the opportunity to compliment the Redland City Council on their commitment over many, many years to the SES, not only their financial commitment, which in itself is significant, but also their social commitment—the dedication of its members, many of them council employees who respond to the call whenever the call is sent out. In particular, there is one member I would like to point out and that is Tom Short, now ESM. He was the proud recipient only last week of the Emergency Services Medal. It shows the level of commitment that not only Tom but also the people around him have to the role of the SES. During the presentation of the medal, it was highlighted that he had been a member for over 20 years at the SES branch at Redlands. He had served—and is still serving I hasten to add—with distinction as a training officer, group leader, deputy local controller and local controller. In addition to those leadership roles, Mr Short has a passion for training, and for many years has assisted with training at area and regional levels, so he is well known to many in the emergency services arena.

He has also been out around the state. He has been part of the support and response crew for the New South Wales floods, Cyclone Larry and the Innisfail floods, violent storms and the storms on the north side of Brisbane. He has also been used as a state rescue competition judge. That shows the level of respect that he has within his community and the level of support that he gives to the community.

During his time as the local controller we have seen the number of SES volunteers grow. It is an exciting time to be involved in the Redlands SES because they are looking at an exciting program of expansion. They are looking at trying to set up an outpost or another branch in the southern part of Redland City and to have a response capability on the bay islands.

The bay islands are a challenge in themselves. I am sure the minister is only too well aware of that in terms of law and order and the emergency services capability out on the islands. The Redland City Council and the SES had a fairly significant joint training program about three years ago which involved a mock fire. It was designed to see whether they could evacuate the islands in the event of a disaster. Fire is quite possibly the most significant disaster for the islands. That training really highlighted and honed the capability of the Redlands SES. It is a very exciting time to be involved in the Redlands SES.

Fire is one of the big issues we have in the Redlands. Stradbroke Island falls within that jurisdiction. Quite often the island has a fire situation. Not only is it an exciting time to be involved in the SES down in my part of the world; it is something that has been recognised by others. This is not only

through Tom Short being the recipient of an Emergency Services Medal but also because last year, in 2009-10, the Redlands SES was actually named unit of the year. That is certainly something to be very proud of. The work that they are doing is something that many emergency services units would envy.

It is all about readiness and storm damage in our region. Being a coastal community, there are times when they may be called upon to help with maritime incidents in the bay. We also get called upon occasionally to help find lost walkers at Mount Cotton and Daisy Hill or on Stradbroke Island or to find people who have wandered away from the hospitals which have extensive bush areas around them.

We see the SES people helping out with traffic management. They are very much the lifeblood of our community. I recognise the work that they do. It is not uncommon to see our boys and girls in orange at the Relay for Life event, boaties markets, festivals, shows and events right across the city. They are equally supported by the men and women in blue—that is, the ambos, the fires and the police—and the ambos in white. I commend this bill to the House. I recognise again in closing the work of the Redlands SES.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (3.13 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill being debated in the House today. The bill amends the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986 to enhance the disaster management arrangements for emergency events in the state. For a state as large and diverse as Queensland, a rigid, thorough and efficient disaster management plan to respond to the range of natural disasters that could and do happen without notice is fundamentally paramount. Whether it is in the form of cyclones, tropical thunderstorms, swift localised flooding or bushfires, Queenslanders face threats from Mother Nature of varying manner across all of Queensland at all times throughout the year. Members would be fully aware of the man-made disasters that we occasionally face such as oil spills.

The bill before the House adopts recommendations from an independent review of Queensland's disaster management plans which was required following two significant events which took place in the last 18 months. Although my electorate is predominantly coastal, we do not face the annual cyclone watches as my northern colleagues do. However, we are not immune to disaster. No country or state ever is.

One disaster that I wanted to discuss within the parameters of the bill was not a natural disaster but, in fact, human induced and affected the pristine coastline of my electorate early last year. On 11 March 2009 an oil spill occurred off the South-East Queensland coast that devastated beaches from the Sunshine Coast through to Moreton Bay and down to the Gold Coast, including the pristine beaches in the Kawana electorate.

Some 230 tonnes of fuel oil, 30 tonnes of other oil and 31 shipping containers—that is, 620 tonnes—of ammonium nitrate spilled into the Coral Sea north of Moreton Bay during Cyclone Hamish after unsecured cargo on the container ship *MV Pacific Adventurer* damaged other cargo, causing the spillage. In late July 2010 the clean-up effort was declared complete. It took 1,425 personnel 16 months to clean up 155 hectares of coastal area. This included 21,220 plants and 2.6 kilometres of fencing to protect recovering vegetation.

The government's response to that situation, I have to say, was slow and inefficient. In the end, the government panicked and threw money at the problem, hoping it would go away in a hurry. After all, it was in the midst of the state election 2009. Some reports estimate that the clean-up efforts for the spill cost taxpayers up to \$100,000 per day.

There was not a well-structured plan in place that responded to the disaster in an appropriate manner. I had a call the morning of 11 March 2009 from the general manager of the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club. I was there first thing in the morning on 11 March on the beach. I remember parking at the surf club. The Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club had been commandeered by Maritime Safety Queensland as one of the headquarters for the oil clean-up recovery. I got out of my car and the stench from the oil was poisoning. When I reached the beach I could not believe it. The beaches we love, the Currimundi beaches where our turtle lay, were covered in this black, thick sludge.

Council responded immediately to the oil spill. Volunteers were not allowed on the beach but the council had its workers on the beach with its machinery. After some time council was ordered to take its people and machines off the beach. Council's priority was to get the oil off the beaches. In my view, that was the right approach at the time. Council was first to respond, not the state. Congratulations should go to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for its prompt response. Good on it for not sitting around waiting for the government to make up its mind what it was going to do in the situation. The prompt response from the council could not have been achieved without the first-class assistance of the local Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club. As I said, the surf club became an operation hub for the clean-up effort, and not just for a day but for weeks at a time.

While I have this opportunity, I would like to congratulate Ian Waller, the general manager of the surf club at the time, and the staff for their willingness to cooperate during the oil spill clean-up last year. Their community-minded spirit took precedent when something needed to be done to prevent any

further environmental degradation from occurring. I also pay tribute to John Thorpe, the president of the surf-lifesaving club at the time of the oil spill. Considering the circumstances, it would have been difficult for any community executive to carry out what the surf club actually did.

However, as a result of the surf club being commandeered for operational HQ it actually lost a whole week of trade. Some 18 months later, it is still in negotiations with the government to gain compensation for the loss of trade. It should be compensated. It was not only the loss of trade; there was equipment broken in the winds. Its quad bikes and four-wheel drives were driven through the oil. Now that the Premier has started to listen to the community, I ask the Premier and the government to stop wasting everyone's time and adequately compensate these community groups and the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club. It did everything it could to assist the government in the clean-up operation.

It was noted in today's *Sunshine Coast Daily* with respect to this man-made disaster—

One of the hardest hit was the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club, which was forced to shut its doors for 16 days after the March 11 spill, while it was transformed into Emergency Services Queensland's incident control headquarters.

...

However, the body dealing with compensation claims, consisting of representatives from Swire Shipping and Federal Government appointed experts, is refusing to pay up.

Mr Waller said an "unacceptable" compensation offer was made and declined.

Out of \$100,000 required for the compensation some \$3,000 was offered to the local surf club. It continues—

'The club was shut down so the clean-up could be properly coordinated. We did the right thing and did everything we were told to do,' Mr Waller said.

'During the 16 days the club was used for incident control, more than \$100,000 in revenue was lost, a devastating amount for a medium-sized club.

Further, the club has gone on the record today—and bear in mind, this is a local community club that was commandeered for the operational clean-up of a man-made catastrophe—as saying that, first and foremost, this compensation claim is about ensuring that the club can continue operating to the best of its abilities servicing the local community, particularly now as we enter surf life-saving season. Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club is disappointed at the outcome of today's negotiations that occurred some two hours ago as it has advanced only slightly further in its claim.

When our community clubs are commandeered in the case of environmental disasters we cannot treat them like this. We cannot let one and a half years go by without resolving an issue involving a community club of volunteer men and women upon whom we in this parliament rely to go and risk their lives by saving the lives of those in the surf. To turn around some 18 months later and say, 'We used your facilities. We had use of your bikes, your trucks, your four-wheel drives throughout the man-made disaster, being an oil spill, so here is \$3,000 out of the \$100,000 you lost,' is a slap in the face for community organisations and this surf club. We should not be treating our community clubs in this way. After all, this is an important community organisation.

I believe that the bill before the House will ensure that, should any such spill occur again, our coastline and marine wildlife would be sufficiently protected by a disaster management plan that acts swiftly and precisely to halt the spread of any oil. The three-tiered structure of the disaster management plan clearly did not work well when the oil spill struck the coast last year. I am pleased to see that the government has adopted the key recommendations from an independent review that the structure of the plan be amended. I believe the legislation before the House addresses those inconsistencies identified by the review. The biggest change in the structure of response lies with the role of the Queensland Police Service. The Police Service was identified as the most capable state authority to assume command and control of disaster events at a state level. The current structure plan involves a three-tiered system of local government and local disaster management capability supported by district capability that is supported by state capability. The system relies on a bottom-up escalation from local levels of response and four phases of disaster management, which are of course prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The independent review found that Queensland was the only state in Australia where the legislation in relation to disaster management does not specify that an individual be appointed as the state controller in any such emergency. The bill before the House now clears up this confusion with the creation of the state disaster coordinator, the state recovery coordinator and the local disaster coordinator. This now provides a clear chain of command, which is vital for a swift and efficient response to any emergency event. In relation to the oil spill of March 2009, that was one of the things that slowed down the response. There was a breakdown in communication between the local government and the state government responses and this inhibited the response to clean up the mess and halt any further environmental degradation. The creation of these three coordinators will create greater accountability and ensure that Queenslanders do not have any confusion between local and state responses to a disaster situation.

The initiation of the independent review was a significant step for disaster response in Queensland as a number of flaws were identified and remedied in the legislation before the House today. Some of the flaws can, of course, be amended without legislation. I would like to reiterate the points outlined by the shadow minister, the member for Mirani, in his contribution.

Can the minister provide some undertakings that the government will adhere to the recommendations of the review in relation to the flaws which could be rectified through non-legislative means? They are, for example, the disaster management information and communication systems, which are not yet sufficiently integrated or compatible; the disaster management plans and planning initiatives at state, district and local levels, which need significant involvement in disaster management arrangements; and the key stakeholders who need to be involved in planning processes in exercises at local, district and state levels but who were not always available for these purposes. I understand that some arrangements are to be put in place before the summer's peak storm season. I would appreciate any information the minister can provide on these arrangements and the anticipated time frame of release.

I have many constituents in my electorate—as do all members of this House—who serve in a voluntary capacity in the State Emergency Services branches on the Sunshine Coast and in other voluntary roles and are often called upon in times of disasters. I want to place on the record my public gratitude to the volunteers of the SES and the members of our emergency services for the invaluable role that they play for the community when disaster strikes.

In conclusion, I reiterate that in relation to the oil spill last year, the man-made disaster, the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club was commandeered—its whole club was taken over by Maritime Safety Queensland and the fire department for weeks at a time. The surf club fed all the state response units and managed it quite successfully. I congratulate Ian Waller, the manager of the surf club, and John Thorpe, who was the president at the time. Again, I reiterate to the minister that it is now 18 months since that community club was commandeered. It has lost some \$100,000 in revenue because of that operation over which they had no control. To have been offered \$3,000 to cover a loss of \$100,000 is really a joke considering that what happened and what took place was out of their control. In the negotiations it had today with government representatives, they said, 'Provide us with some more details and we will assess it again next week.' However, those details that the government and the investigators require have been provided three times previously to that department. To now come back to the surf club in Kawana again two hours ago and say, 'We need some further information. Get it to us by next week,' is a joke because the details have been provided on many occasions by the surf club. I submit to the minister that he needs to look at the situation, he needs to talk to the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club. If it cannot get adequate compensation to recover this \$100,000, it will be in dire straits as we head into the peak surf season.

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (3.27 pm): It is with pleasure I rise to speak to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The disaster management bill covers a number of important amendments which members have spoken of during this debate. It covers the role of local government, which I would like to focus on shortly, the new coordinator roles, the recovery from disaster, new more responsive approvals procedure, the role of the Queensland Police Service and Emergency Management Queensland, and support for the SES.

We are pretty familiar with disasters in the Mount Isa electorate. We are very conscious and, indeed, empathetic when disaster besets other communities in our state and nation. As we know, our system of disaster management in Queensland is predicated first and foremost on local response capability. The system makes it clear that local response, primarily led by local government, is at the heart and is the cornerstone of effective disaster management.

I would have to say that councils in my electorate operate like well-oiled machines. Great examples are the Burke Shire Council and Carpentaria shire. The Carpentaria shire was isolated for some 12 weeks in early 2009 and again after a fairly extensive wet season early this year. In 2009 Deputy Mayor Joyce Zahner took control and Mayor Fred Pascoe again this year demonstrated the resilience and drive of our communities in the north-western gulf. We also know that our communities are reliant on all levels of government providing services during times of disaster. The Commonwealth, the state and local governments all have a role to play in ensuring that our communities are best able to withstand the effects of a disaster.

At this point I want to acknowledge the great work of Emergency Management Queensland and in particular Mr Elliott Dunn, our regional director. I know that Elliott is greatly admired right across the region, and the leadership and support he provides across every agency in our communities are of the highest quality. I know that it has been said many times and in so many ways that facing adversity together brings out the best in all of us. I have seen this played out over and over again in my electorate, and I feel sure that every member of this House would attest to the same.

While we know and believe that our communities are resilient and strong in times of disaster, it is also vital to review our systems after the storm has passed. Key components are to deal with the immediate event, work during the recovery and then assess how we did. The Department of Community

Safety was commissioned to undertake such a review of the disaster management legislation and policy in Queensland and completed this task in 2009. The review identified and confirmed that local community response should remain the foundation of the disaster management framework. Local people know local issues and local challenges. They understand what their local communities need when faced with a disaster. They know what planning is required in order to ensure that the community can effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from the effects of a disaster.

In addition, it is our local people who volunteer for the local State Emergency Service, which is generally among the first to respond to requests for help during an emergency or disaster. Having met many of the coordinators and members of the SES across my electorate, I know that we are in excellent hands. I have also had the great pleasure of meeting the dedicated members of the SES and the volunteers not only in my own electorate but just last week I was in Georgetown to open a new training room for a fantastic team led by controller Julie. Last night I had the pleasure of meeting my first metropolitan unit, the Brisbane SES unit, which was in the process of inducting 15 new recruits. After interacting and spending time with those recruits, it was interesting to find out the incredibly different walks of life that our SES volunteers come from. Also, a couple of weeks ago I was with the SES unit of Mission Beach. I think I can speak fairly confidently when I say that a vast majority of our communities are very proficient in helping themselves at a local level and resilient in the face of whatever challenge and disaster is brought upon them. Most importantly, the recovery of communities is vital and, as we know, when the event is over the local community rallies and picks up the pieces and gets on with living.

The bill specifically states that local governments should be primarily responsible for managing events in their local government area, and I understand that when consulted on the changes to the state's disaster management arrangements local governments welcomed their continued role as the foundation of the disaster management framework, with appropriate support provided at district and state levels. I am also aware that the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Hon. Neil Roberts, has already entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Local Government Association of Queensland to strengthen community resilience through supporting local councils to build self-reliant, disaster-resilient communities.

As we know, local governments are already responsible under the Disaster Management Act for establishing local disaster management groups in their area. The changes to the Disaster Management Act will enhance this local response capability. This by no means suggests that they have to do it on their own and there certainly is a need for other levels within the disaster management system to contribute to ensuring the effectiveness of operations at a local level. From my perspective, I am very pleased to now be able to look at disaster management from both sides—as a local member with 14 local government authorities and covering a third of the state and having participated in the odd disaster to now being the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Emergency Services. It is very clear from both sides of my fence that the Queensland government plays a significant role in establishing, maintaining and continually improving our disaster management system.

This bill seeks to incorporate a new guiding principle into disaster management—namely, that district and state disaster management groups should provide appropriate resources and support to help local governments carry out disaster operations. Over the coming months I will work closely with Minister Roberts and also our local councils right across the state to strengthen our partnership and to hear from them how the partnership is working.

Today I was also delighted to meet, along with the minister, the new Keeping our Mob Safe EMQ officers—Tanya Davies, Daniel Mosby, Harry Tamwoy and Mark Sarago. I wish them all well and thank them for the work that they will be doing across all of our Indigenous councils and communities.

There are many people ultimately involved in any natural disaster—the people and property affected and the people who step up and step in to carry the load. Many people deserve to be recognised, and I do acknowledge and thank all of our local SES heroes and their families and also extend that recognition and thanks right across our services such as the SES, rural fire brigades, ambulance, police, fire services and our Emergency Services and Department of Communities staff right across the Mount Isa electorate and many of the other areas that I have visited.

In closing, I want to wish my colleague the honourable member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine, a very happy birthday. All the best! On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and at the same time wish to offer all employees and volunteers involved in disaster management praise and thanks on behalf of the Queensland community. From time to time there are natural disasters here in Queensland and it is imperative that we have a well-developed and effective system that ensures coordination capabilities at all levels of government.

We do not have to look back far to see just how susceptible to disaster Queensland can be. In March this year we saw the extent of Mother Nature unleashing her fury. On 5 March the Bureau of Meteorology issued a special statement on the rainfall which had flooded an area of Queensland larger than the entire state of Victoria. The rain event broke all Australian records for the total area which received 100 millimetres or more of rain. In Queensland daily totals exceeded 100 millimetres in over

1.9 per cent of the Australian land mass, breaking the previous record of 1.7 per cent set in December 1956. The bureau stated that over the 10-day period an estimated 403 cubic millimetres—or 403,000 giganlitres—of rain fell across Queensland and the Northern Territory. Again, the staff who make up the Queensland system dealing with disasters stepped up to the plate. Thousands of emergency workers started moving people from their homes, sandbagging and providing food, water, financial and welfare support. We saw the true Australian spirit once more.

Whilst I do not wish to foster any alarmist thoughts, we must be vigilant of not only natural disasters but also the possible likelihood of an act of terrorism within our community. A recent Australian government white paper stated that the threat of terrorism to Australia is real and enduring. It has become a persistent and permanent feature in the Australian security environment. Dealing with any natural disaster or non-natural disaster requires a well thought out, efficient and effective system of disaster management. To date, Queensland disaster management has been a multitiered system of communities and coordination centres at local, district and state levels that has, in partnership, ensured a coordinated and effective capability to help prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster in Queensland.

The Department of Community Safety commissioned an independent review of disaster management arrangements in Queensland to analyse the practice of disaster management in Queensland to determine whether any policy or legislative changes were required. I will go into some detail regarding the major findings of that review. It identified that the state's disaster management plans and planning initiatives at state, district and local levels needed significant further enhancement to ensure that they are comprehensive, interlinking, up to date and provide clarity of action for all those involved in disaster management arrangements.

Key stakeholders who need to be involved in planning processes and in exercises at local, district and state levels were not always available for those purposes. That could compromise the quality of plans and the levels of preparedness of the system. The review also found that the act could strengthen the obligations of all relevant organisations to participate at all three levels in both planning and exercise functions as well as during response and recovery phases. Also, the state's disaster management framework could cater effectively for all hazards. All types of disasters can be accommodated within one disaster management framework and set of arrangements.

National plans, which have counterpart state response plans with lead agencies or personnel assigned in controlling or coordinating roles, could be formally linked with the state's disaster management arrangements. In this way, the response to all disasters, both natural and non-natural, including the impact of terrorist related events, will utilise a single proven state disaster management arrangement and framework to coordinate and organise effective responses—an all-hazard approach.

The review found further that the escalating trigger points needed to be agreed to between the three levels of the disaster management framework. The state's disaster management information and communications systems were not yet sufficiently integrated or compatible. That was identified as a major weakness. Priority should be given to enhance these essential communication arrangements with built-in capabilities to accommodate power and telecommunication failures in times of disaster.

With respect to the recovery phase, the state's strong commitment to community and social recovery through the Department of Community Safety received widespread positive comment. A recurring request from the local level was that valued infrastructure, environment, industry and economic recovery tasks and issues needed to be more prominently supported through dedicated leadership at a state level with dedicated resources provided at district and local levels.

A formal handover of leadership from the response to recovery phases and the appointment of a recovery task force was positively endorsed at all levels. Disaster recovery arrangements need to be outlined more fully in legislation and applied to support local communities so that they are not left struggling to recover long after the disaster response phase has ceased.

The explanatory notes to the bill state—

There are no anticipated additional costs for Government arising from the amendments.

I would offer the following words of caution. As the people of Queensland are finding on a daily basis, this current Labor state government, led by Premier Anna Bligh, seems almost incapable of delivering any type of reform or amendment without additional costs or the blow-out of existing costs. With that in mind, I encourage all members of this House to monitor exactly where this bill takes the taxpayer financially. Finally, as we know, weeks ago a major earthquake occurred on the south island of New Zealand. There has been significant damage but, thankfully, no loss of life. However, arising out of the disaster is a very disturbing statistic. Christchurch police data shows that in the week immediately subsequent to the earthquake reports of domestic violence had jumped dramatically by 53 per cent. The stress of the situation is believed to be the catalyst for this spike in domestic violence. I encourage all government and non-government agencies involved in disaster response planning to be mindful of this vital information coming from New Zealand. We must also plan a response for such an increase in domestic violence in the event of a similar disaster that could possibly occur here in Queensland.

I think many members of this House have probably received a briefing from the Insurance Council of Australia—I know I did. The council made me very well aware that the east coast of Australia could very easily be hit by two category 5 cyclones this year. I think we really need to look at the possible impact of a disaster on our coastal regions. In the event of such cyclones hitting the east coast, roofs are going to be taken off. I do not know whether the solar hot-water systems that are going to be put on roofs are designed to withstand the sorts of winds that would come from a category 4 or category 5 cyclone. I hope that people are taking the effect of the wind generated by such cyclones into account because, when a disaster happens, it is too late to respond. You can only help people out. I think we need to be a little bit more proactive in terms of the design of buildings and where we allow development to occur in the future. The ex-mayor of the Sunshine Coast, Fred Murray, who was a surveyor, wrote in his autobiography that in 1957 and 1958 the waves were going over the top of the sand dunes at Kawana and Warana seven metres high and breaking 600 metres inland. At the time Kawana was under water for three months. We need to be aware that the past has a habit of repeating itself. We need to make sure that we get the planning right for the future.

I appreciate what the emergency services minister and his staff have done with this document. I endorse it. I think it is a great step, but I think we need to work harder. We need to look at what can happen to people in the future, particularly with regard to planning. We should not be allowing developments on flood plains, because I think there will be a hefty price to pay. I think people will be held accountable for those types of developments.

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (3.45 pm): This bill reflects the recommendations arising out of a recent review of Queensland's disaster management and response arrangements. The review looked at the management and accountability issues related to the State Emergency Service. Recently, on a Monday night I had the opportunity to visit my local Western Group SES at Toowong. While many of us on that Monday night were at home having our dinner, spending time with our families or watching TV, these men and women were volunteering their time, training in preparation to serve their community in time of disaster. Many would recognise these local SES volunteers from The Gap storm disaster in 2008 and we may see them in our suburbs again if we have a bad storm season this year, as my colleague from Buderim just indicated.

On the day of The Gap storm, 23,000 affected residents called the SES hotline seeking assistance, which stretched the SES to capacity. Additional volunteers had to be called in to help with the clean-up. Organising emergency response teams is crucial for the effective management of local disasters. The Gap storms highlighted that the recruitment of a new generation of young and enthusiastic emergency service volunteers is vital. As many know, the SES is a volunteer organisation and is designed to help Queensland communities in times of emergencies and disaster. Each year, the SES receives thousands of calls for assistance. SES volunteers care about their communities and are not paid for the great work they do. They help a huge number of people when emergency strikes.

Within my community, the members of the Western Group SES, along with their leader, Peter Healey, are on call 24/7. Peter runs a group of over 60 trained and qualified members. They are trained in all aspects of emergency services and give up an enormous amount of time for skills training and maintenance. As one of the members of the Western Group SES, Brad Robson, said to me, no heart beats more true than that of a volunteer. I believe this is especially true with the group at Toowong.

As I mentioned earlier, Peter Healey is a leader of the Western Group SES. Such has been the outstanding work of Peter that he recently was the subject of ABC Radio's *Conversation Hour*. As Peter told the program, he was 18 years old and not doing very much when his dad showed him an advertisement in the local paper asking for SES volunteers. Peter did not know much about the SES, but he went along to the information night and was hooked. He has now been an SES volunteer for over 30 years, on call day and night to attend to major storms and floods, helping traumatised people who, in some cases, have lost everything they own. Peter's SES work also includes helping the police with forensic searches.

In his downtime, Peter has been busy inventing a new response vehicle for the SES. I had the chance to view the prototype of this vehicle shortly after I was elected to parliament and I am pleased to say that the first of these vehicles is already on the road, with seven more to follow. Congratulations to Peter and his great team of volunteers.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. In so doing, I add my voice to the many in this chamber today who have commended our volunteers and our paid personnel in the emergency services area. Disaster management is as much about preparedness as it is about response. I commend local governments—there is only one in my electorate now; we used to have two local government areas—who are pivotal in that response to disasters. I also acknowledge the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police Service and the Ambulance Service, who are first responders also, and, of course, the State Emergency Service volunteers and the rural fire brigade volunteers—all of those in areas of service that are pivotal in situations of great need. I also put on the record my appreciation of not only the wives, husbands and

families of the paid people in fire, ambulance, police and local government but also the families of the State Emergency Service and rural fire brigade volunteers who share the responsibility and cost of that volunteering.

The response in a disaster is ramped up from the local area to the state and to the federal sphere as the extent of the disaster increases. There is a lot of work currently done in preparing for disasters in terms of having contingency plans in place. I know that some of those plans have gone from being quite modest documents to being doorstopper documents which cover every possible detail in a potential disaster: the acquisition and storage of food, the resumption of power, disease control, the respectful dealing of deceased persons and the ability of a community to rebuild. It is necessary for all of those things to be considered and planned for.

The minister's second reading speech dealt with our natural hazards—cyclones, bushfires, floods and storm surges. I note that there is a prediction for a very active cyclone season this year. It will be important for local councils and community members—those of us with properties—to be prepared to respond to those potential circumstances. With the good rain that we have had this year, the risk of bushfire will build up over the year ahead as the fuel load increases. We are very thankful for the rain, but it does bring with it over time additional risk factors.

My electorate is one of heavy industry. We saw the impact last year of the *Shen Neng 1* grounding and the vessel potentially being towed back to Gladstone for recovery. Whilst that is a more controlled event in the sense of moving the vessel back to port for repairs, it nonetheless brings with it risks that have to be managed. As I said, we have in my electorate heavy industry and it is critically important that all emergency services are able to respond to circumstances that they could face.

I would have to say that there is some work to be done by our fire services in terms of their familiarisation with the large industries to the north of the council area because they are outside of their fire brigade line on a map and the level of familiarisation is not what it should be. I believe that the firefighters on the ground understand that, but the theory has not caught up to the practicality and there really does need to be more familiarisation work done to provide cover for those heavy industry areas. New issues will arise in relation to human caused events with the LNG industry on Curtis Island. There will be no bridge, and the ability to respond in an emergency will be much more protracted and will have to be developed before the industry is commissioned.

This bill does intend to streamline some of the processes for emergency services by establishing a new coordinating committee. I commend that, but I do hope that, along with the overarching new committee that is being established, there remains a very practical, hands-on approach to disaster response. That is essential because it is on the ground in those first few hours of a disaster that the decisions have to be made. That will be the framework for the effectiveness of recovery as well. The volunteers and paid employees who work for the community must be given appropriate and sufficient resources and the respect that they deserve. I commend all of our emergency services workers, both paid and volunteer. I thank them for their commitment to our community. I hope that they have an incredibly boring year with nothing to do, but if they do not I thank them on behalf of the community for their selfless concern and work for the community at large. Thank you.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (3.55 pm): I rise to support the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. Over a year ago, on 31 August 2009, independent consultants completed their review of Queensland's disaster management arrangements. This bill implements their recommendations for legislative amendments, together with other amendments identified by the Department of Community Safety and the Queensland Police Service.

This bill provides vital amendments to the Disaster Management Act 2003 to deal with disasters before, during and after the event and it will establish guiding principles for effective disaster management and ongoing maintenance of these responses to empower local, district and state authorities to implement disaster management at their particular level, also with a clearer understanding of the relationship and communication that exists between those three levels of authority. It also gives responsibility to Emergency Management Queensland for developing, maintaining and continually improving our state's disaster management framework and its effectiveness. It also enables a minister, the Premier or a district disaster coordinator to proactively declare a disaster verbally. It allows appointment of an officer as a state disaster coordinator to better coordinate a response and to appoint also a state recovery coordinator to improve recovery coordination.

These amendments are essential to enable our comprehensive response to disasters at a local, district and state level. For most of us, it may well be an emergency situation at our local level that impacts on us most. Trees fall on houses, floods threaten homes and lives, and serious road accidents endanger property and lives. In these circumstances it is often the local response that is first on the spot. Very often local State Emergency Service personnel will turn up to deal with the crisis and restore order to chaos in concert with the police and other emergency personnel.

I think two of the saddest words in the English language must be 'if only': if only we had planned ahead; if only we were better prepared; if only we had the right contact details in place then this might not have happened. Local governments across the state have indicated strong support for the amendments in this bill after detailed consultations with the Department of Community Safety and the Queensland Police Service. Probably none has been more supportive over the years than the Redland City Council, which holds an annual State Emergency Service expo to highlight the need to answer these local 'if only' possibilities, to honour the dedicated team of volunteers of the SES and to engage new volunteers to join and train for future services. The expo also serves as a vehicle to encourage residents to protect themselves—to get better prepared and to learn what might endanger their homes, their families and, most importantly, their lives. This approach has been very successful, and the Redland State Emergency Service team has exhibited a highly energetic and effective level of response to emergency events in the Redlands in the past.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Redland SES team was named as the top team in Queensland. In the Queen's Birthday honours list their leader, Mr Tom Short, was awarded the Emergency Services Medal for his extraordinary level of commitment over a good period of 20 years. I applaud the training provided by Queensland's SES teams. The Redland SES is a nationally accredited registered training organisation. It provides a certificate of achievement at the end of training that covers a range of emergency skills such as first aid, land search, flood boat operations, leadership skills, running the emergency operations centre, effective communications and generator operation to provide emergency power.

The Redland City Council offers a huge level of support to our local SES. In fact, Tom Short and some eight to 10 other team members employed at the council are given time off from their normal jobs to work for the SES, at full pay. Not all SES teams enjoy such a close and productive relationship with their employer. I encourage all employers, including those in the private sector, to allow time off for their staff to engage in meaningful activities such as the SES and other community building organisations. I believe that through building stronger communities stronger businesses will exist. I applaud the work of all SES workers and I support their efforts. I thank them on behalf of my community. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (4.00 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I congratulate the minister for introducing this very important legislation, which has developed from a range of meetings with a range of stakeholders, most importantly including not just state government officers but also the very important local government associations and local councils throughout Queensland. In Queensland, no matter where we live, our homes are prone to be part of a disaster area. Whether we live in a coastal area, the hinterland or Central Queensland we could be threatened by disaster from fire, flood, storm or who knows what. A number of members have spoken about the pending cyclone season and concerns about its possible impact on coastal areas of Queensland. At the outset I acknowledge the great work of our police, fire and ambulance officers, hospital workers, SES, Rural Fire Brigade officers, first responders and volunteers in all of our respective communities to ensure that we are as safe as possible.

A number of previous speakers have spoken about how locals know best and need to be listened to. Unfortunately, my experience is that often the powers that be do not want to listen to the locals. I am reflecting on my time in the former Maroochy shire council. I had the privilege of being the chairman of the local SES organisation, which gave me the chance to meet many local SES groups throughout the former Maroochy shire. In my time in the former Maroochy council, one of the issues that I was very concerned about was inappropriate development on the flood plains and in the hinterland of the former Maroochy shire. My actions led to the former Maroochy council developing a new planning policy that required new residential estates developed in high-prone fire areas to always have both an entry and an exit. In that way, people in a new residential estate in a fire-prone area had two access points. I have always been concerned that, while some of the new estates have a lovely entrance, if a fire flared up the residents would be locked in. I believe that issue was canvassed in the recent inquiry into the devastating Victorian fires.

Throughout Queensland people face real issues with potential disasters. I am concerned that local and state government planning departments are locked into proceeding with significant developments in very sensitive areas. I am particularly concerned about the development that we have seen in recent years on the flood plains of the coastal areas. My port of call is the Sunshine Coast and many locals have shared their experiences with me, other councillors, former councillors, former state government members and officers about the significant flooding that happens in the Kawana area and on the flood plains in the former Maroochy shire in the Sunshine Coast area. But, alas, what has happened? The powers that be have not listened to the locals. They have ignored their advice and their recollections of the significant floods that have happened on the flood plains. Today, when you drive down there you see residential estates containing very expensive houses. I feel very sorry for the new residents living in low-lying areas of the Sunshine Coast and residents living in other low-lying areas of

Queensland. We are a growth area. People travel to our region from interstate and overseas. They come for a visit and see all the lovely estates. They say, 'It must be safe because other people have built and developed in those areas.' However, I believe that many of those developments should never have happened. My conscience is clear, because I have always taken the stance that we need to be more selective in where we allow residential developments, especially on the flood plains of the Sunshine Coast. The mere fact that land is available does not mean it is suitable for development.

That leads me to the issue that the government and the Liberals and Nationals, the alternative government, are locked into the proposed Kawana regional hospital. I realise we need a regional hospital and I am on the record saying that I support it, but I also put on the record my belief that we should not be building major infrastructure facilities on flood-prone land. When you travel to Kawana, you drive past the site of the proposed Kawana hospital and the water is just there. It is just down there. Whole new estates are awaiting development and you can see the water just down there. However, the wheels are turning and the developers are locked in. I suppose that so much private investment has been locked in to the planning schemes that, unfortunately, the government does not have the will to turn the clock back. The local council does not have the will to turn the clock back because the state government will take it out of its hands. I put on the record my genuine and serious concern about the continued development of our flood plains.

SES volunteers do a wonderful job in our communities and many members have spoken about that. I use this opportunity to again bring to the minister's attention the fact that in my area of the Sunshine Coast the SES is calling to have on their vehicles flashing lights and warning devices similar to those of their colleagues over the border. All our SES officers are asking for is that, in addition to the orange flashing lights, they have a red flashing light. That is all they are asking for. In the past the minister has provided me with the advice that, unfortunately, in Queensland the legislation states that this is a matter to be decided by the Police Commissioner of the state of Queensland. I believe it is time we took this matter out of the Police Commissioner's hands and put it back into the hands of the parliament. I say: let us follow the lead of those interstate. I will be keen to hear the minister's reply. During the consideration stage of the debate on this bill, I would be more than happy to move an amendment to give back to the minister and the government the necessary power, so that Queensland SES operators and volunteers can drive vehicles with flashing lights just like those of our colleagues over the border, that is, not just orange flashing lights but red flashing lights as well.

This morning as I travelled to parliament, I saw a whole range of private vehicles with orange flashing lights, just like our SES vehicles. A number of those indicated wide loads. What are they transporting? Private pilot vehicles had lights flashing as they led vehicles transporting massive pipes for part of the northern network interconnector pipeline, which in my view was originally going to be for the proposed Traveston Dam, which did not happen. All sorts of private vehicles, such as pilot vehicles, use orange flashing lights. People may not distinguish them from SES vehicles. We see orange flashing lights on vehicles on work sites. Sometimes at night we see police vehicles indicating their presence with blue flashing lights, but I reiterate that we are not talking about blue flashing lights as an additional mode of warning. I am echoing the views of many SES volunteers in the Sunshine Coast hinterland and the Noosa area who want, in addition to the orange lights, red flashing lights.

If the minister is prepared to take back that power from the Police Commissioner—and I mean no disrespect to the Police Commissioner—certainly I would be very keen to move an amendment to give the minister and the government that power. I believe that is a reasonable request. If it is good enough for the SES vehicles and operators over the border, why is it not good enough in Queensland? Why are we so different? Today there are many private vehicles travelling the roads with flashing lights similar to that allowed on our State Emergency Service vehicles.

I also need to recognise other great volunteers such as our first responder units. We have some great volunteers working in the Mary Valley. We are certainly very keen to pursue the issue of getting another ambulance station in the Mary Valley. I thank the minister.

Mr Robertson: Two.

Mr WELLINGTON: We could have two. I may take that to the budget review committee; no, I cannot. So I ask the minister for an ambulance station to relieve the pressure on the first responders who do great work in the Mary Valley.

Mr Robertson: What about the poor fires?

Mr WELLINGTON: The fires do a great job. I thank the minister and the previous minister and the government for their support in purchasing the new site for the Nambour Fire Station. I thank the minister for lobbying the Treasurer and the Premier in the budget review committee to get the funding so our new Nambour Fire Station could operate. The fires are very happy. They are very relaxed, although they are still using the old station because there is still important computer equipment there. I understand that once that equipment has been relocated the plan is for that site to be placed on the market for sale. I congratulate the minister on the bill. I will be very keen to hear in his reply whether he would be prepared to consider my suggestion to give red flashing lights to SES workers in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.10 pm): This particular bill that we are discussing here today, which amends the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Public Safety Preservation Act 1986, is all about improving the management arrangements in disasters, both major state-wide disasters and local disasters, and comes as a result of an independent review.

I want to speak today about some of the services in Toowoomba, firstly the fire service. Over recent years the breadth and scope of the fire service has increased dramatically from basically attending fires to becoming a fire and rescue service. Subsequently, an enormous amount of training has had to be undertaken. It has meant that those working in the Fire and Rescue Service now attend many major traffic incidents, which can be distressing. That has always been one of the difficult things that ambulance officers have had to cope with—fatalities, major injuries and so forth. But now the fire service has for some time had this particular task to undertake. Those in the fire service do a great job. In particular, training is provided and they enter competitions as part of their training. They are trained to use the jaws of life and to be able to open up the crushed vehicles and assist the ambos in extracting people.

It is particularly significant in Toowoomba because we are on top of the Great Dividing Range. It is the heaviest freight-carrying road in Australia. In the order of anywhere from 4,000 to 5,000 B-doubles a day climb the range and traverse the city. Because of the height of the range and the topography, unfortunately not so much occasionally but quite often there are accidents, particularly on the downside of the range where, despite the trucks' brakes—J-brakes and everything else—they can easily lose control and get away, particularly if they do not stop at the top to change into low gear and they try to change into gear on the way down, cannot find the gear and the next thing away they go.

There have been some quite horrific rollovers, fatalities and smashes that the fire service has had to attend. Sometimes the overturned B-doubles are livestock trucks and involve animals. Often they are grain trucks. There is a variety of heavy trucks. Many of them carry coal down the range. There is a lot of work and it is extremely difficult work on the shoulders of the Fire and Rescue Service because of the fact that the fire service is in Toowoomba on top of the Great Dividing Range, particularly on the eastern side and the down road. There is a billboard on the side of the road that was put up by the council some years ago which listed the number of accidents, the number of fatalities, the number of rollovers and the number of times that the four lanes—

Mr ROBERTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Obviously accidents on the highway are a serious issue, but I would question what relevance this matter has to the bill before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): I will ask the member for Toowoomba South to confine his comments to the bill.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was just getting around to saying that some of these are in fact disasters. These accidents often close the four lanes and access to the city. As a result, major operations have to take place. Traffic has to be diverted through Murphys Creek, up a high, winding, single-lane road. So there is a lot of work involved. I take the minister's point of order, but I wanted to make that point about the fires and the work that they do. These disasters can cut the city off and for a long time. It involves police, ambulance and many other people in handling those isolated disasters.

Mr Malone: The SES would be conducting the traffic.

Mr HORAN: I want to get to that point eventually when I come to the SES. Like others here who have thanked the SES for what they do throughout their area, I similarly want to do the same. The SES attend not only disasters like those I have just been speaking about on the Warrego Highway, the many fires and so forth but also major community events. It is probably part of their overall training but it is also part of their community response. Whether it is the Toowoomba Royal Show or the Carnival of Flowers, the SES are always there, and I think the whole community is grateful for what they do.

The sorts of disasters faced by various areas vary. I have just detailed the problems that we have with the number of times the Warrego Highway and access to the city has been closed. But also, being on the edge of the range, one of our big issues has been fires. There was a major fire I think in October 2003 that went for days and days. The conditions were just right, being extremely dry at the time and with very low moisture content in the air. It was a major local disaster. There was a need for a major coordinating group to oversee it, because it involved the metropolitan fire services in Toowoomba and below the range it involved the rural fire services, and they came from all over the state. The police and SES were heavily involved. It eventually involved the bringing in of crop dusters from the St George area to attack the fire early in the morning and late in the evening when they could provide some relief to the Fire and Rescue Service. Out of that came some good lessons.

I recently had a briefing in Toowoomba at the headquarters of the Fire and Rescue Service. I was very appreciative of the briefing that I got about the range, the risk of fires and what the Fire and Rescue Service is doing about prevention and working in with the community. It is important that we have chequerboard or mosaic burning throughout that area, particularly in late winter. There needs to be some areas where the massive growth of lantana or other species, even grass, is controlled so that if a

fire does occur then at least either the rural fires who fight fires at the bottom of the range or the ones who fight fires up on the top, who are trying to protect the houses, have an opportunity to get on top of it when the intensity of the fire diminishes somewhat as it hits those areas that have been burnt previously. Disaster prevention is just as important as disaster management.

Last Sunday the Fire and Rescue Service held a public meeting which was attended by some people. I commend them for their efforts to get the people along the edge of the range to understand what they are attempting to do in terms of burns. This year, for example, they were not able to burn because it has been too wet. You cannot light a fire. It has been too green, too wet. There are some people who get concerned about asthma and so forth with all the smoke when the burn-offs are occurring, but it is important that these burns happen so that people can be protected, particularly the front-line firefighting services.

Our fire service, with all the rescues that it has to undertake, has a rescue truck. This matter has been brought up here before. They have had serious problems with the truck breaking down. They have had to transfer their gear and equipment from the specialised truck to other vehicles. It is just not good enough when you have a Fire and Rescue Service based on the busiest, heaviest freight-carrying road in Australia to have a specialised truck like this that keeps breaking down, waiting on parts from overseas. It needs to be replaced and is supposed to be replaced in this financial year.

I thank the minister for his response to a question on notice that I asked about the Toowoomba Fire Station. There were concerns expressed by some fires with regard to the demolition and rebuilding of that station and its size. They were concerned whether enough staff could be located at that station to handle say two incidents in the city. I know that we have the fire station on the western side of town at Anzac Avenue and that we can get support from Oakey but they are a long way away—

Mr Shine: There is one at Highfields.

Mr HORAN: I will get to that. There is one at Highfields. They have to call men in to man that station. When time is of the essence they are not immediately on the spot or able to respond to the same extent as those at the two stations in Toowoomba. The minister has provided some explanation about that. From the briefing that I had last week I think the view of the Fire and Rescue Service is that rather than having a massively big station that we have stations spread around so that when time is of the essence they can get to where they need to.

During the big bushfires that occurred on the range a few years back I remember attending some of the meetings. We had parliament that week so it was later in the week that the member for Toowoomba North and I were able to attend those meetings. There were a huge number of people at those meetings. Everybody was doing their absolute best and should be commended for what they did. I did wonder at the time who was actually in charge. I think that is what this legislation is endeavouring to address.

I have a question for the minister which I hope he can answer in his summing-up. It deals with two issues of management. One is state-wide management and the other is local management. The bill says that a local controller will be appointed. I think that is important. When there is a major incident or a major disaster we need one boss who can make the decisions and have people around who can be delegated particular tasks. We need to know who that person would be and how that person would be appointed. Say we had a repeat of the range fires, who would be the director of the local disaster committee in Toowoomba? Would the person be a police officer? Would the person be from local government? Would the person be from the Fire and Rescue Service? I think that is important to know—

Mr Roberts: I can answer it now. It would normally be the CEO. It would be a person appointed by the local mayor.

Mr HORAN: The answer is the CEO or a person appointed by the local mayor.

Mr Roberts: In that position as the local disaster coordinator. That would normally be the case.

Mr HORAN: So I think what the minister is saying is that it would be the CEO of the Toowoomba council.

Mr Roberts: That would normally be the case but ultimately it is up to the local mayor to make that determination.

Mr HORAN: So the local mayor could appoint himself or herself or anyone? I think it is important to understand that process. Probably local government needs to know that. They probably will be aware of that after this bill is passed and have people in mind for quick decision-making purposes. Sometimes these things happen very quickly.

It is all very well in hindsight but when those fires were raging in Toowoomba there were concerns raised. It looked like they were going to have difficulty putting them out if the weather conditions had not changed. There were mass evacuations undertaken a number of blocks back from the edge of the range. It probably needs to be considered in the future whether evacuations to that extent are absolutely

necessary. On the day it comes down to the decisions of the person in charge and the people who they have advising them from the various emergency services. One of the issues during those bushfires was the different radio frequencies of the two fire services. I understand from my briefing recently that that has been fixed.

Along with other members of parliament, I certainly hope that these new arrangements can bring greater certainty to the management and direction of these situations. Very often it is the front-line people who have to go in and do the difficult work—that is, those from the Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service, the Police Service and the SES. It is important that they know with great certainty the chain of command and who is in charge. These are very often multiple agency issues. People from so many different areas, including local government, are involved.

There is a need for certainty and clarity so that the orders are coming down and things are not done in a panic fashion. Everybody needs to know and have rehearsed how this information will be provided. If we have any more disasters in Queensland, which no doubt we will, I hope that they are well managed and that there is a structure that gives certainty of direction.

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (4.25 pm), in reply: I will answer the question that the member for Toowoomba South asked a moment ago. It can in fact be either the CEO or another employee of the relevant local authority who can be appointed as the local disaster coordinator. It cannot be the mayor. The mayor will be the chair of the local disaster group. The local disaster coordinator will be an appointee.

At the outset, I thank all members for their support of this bill. I think universally on both sides of the House there has been significant support not only for the changes which are proposed in the bill but also for the great work of our emergency services personnel and the volunteers in the various agencies and community organisations who provide support during a disaster.

The review of the legislation and policy which was commissioned by the Department of Community Safety did highlight some areas where our already robust disaster management arrangements could be strengthened. This bill provides amendments which were recommended in the review. It ensures that all levels of disaster management, including at state and local government level, are more strongly positioned to support Queenslanders in a time of need, whether or not the disaster is natural or human caused.

Importantly, the bill enshrines local government and the local response as the cornerstone of effective disaster management in Queensland. That has been a feature which I have seen firsthand. A number of members have referred to that during this debate. That is absolutely enshrined in the principles of the act through this bill and through many comments that I have made. We must always retain and recognise that the foundation of disaster response in Queensland is provided through our local governments.

The bill provides for clear role identification between the various participants. It does introduce some new roles to further clarify lines of accountability within the system. It also allows for flexibility in terms of our response to disasters. A number of members have talked about the ability to proactively respond to disasters with verbal declarations of disaster situations and also the need or the ability to put in place temporary disaster districts to respond to incidents which might occur across a range of local government boundaries.

Finally, the bill ensures that our SES volunteers can continue to provide valuable support to the community in times of need. As many members have indicated, this bill does represent another important step in the continuous improvement of our disaster management arrangements in Queensland.

I want to now move to a number of issues raised by members during the course of the debate. With respect to our emergency service workers, whether they be the full-time or permanent staff employed in the Police Service, Emergency Management Queensland, the Department of Community Safety, fires or ambos or our volunteers, I join with members in commending their tireless work and their dedication and commitment to keeping our community safe and, particularly, to supporting communities in times of need.

We are very fortunate to have, across all of our emergency services agencies, people who make a conscious commitment to public service, particularly public service which is there to help people in need. It is commendable. That is something that members on both sides of this House have recognised, and I thank them for that. Of course, I again thank our emergency services workers and the volunteers for their time and effort in supporting their local communities.

I want to thank the member for Mirani for his support of the bill and his acknowledgement that this bill is a sensible next step in continuing the development and strengthening of our disaster management arrangements. The member mentioned in his speech that it is important that disaster management plans are kept current. As an outcome of the independent review, Emergency Management Queensland

will be responsible for reviewing and improving disaster management plans and arrangements in Queensland. One of the key changes or, indeed, emphasis in this new bill is to clearly establish that EMQ will play a more focused support role for local government and agencies in developing their capacity to respond.

I would also like to assure the member that work has already begun on reviewing the disaster management information and communication systems and to explore possibilities for integration across the state. A couple of members have mentioned that that was a significant matter which was raised during the review. The existing information systems have been continuously improved and are proving successful and effective in many disaster events. Of course, upgrading and improving that is always something which can be beneficial to our capacity to respond.

I concur with the member for Mudgeeraba in advising the community to ensure that they are prepared for emergencies. She particularly referenced this year's bushfire season. Since the member spoke we have in fact had a significant amount of rainfall across many parts of Queensland which has dampened the risk. There is still risk there. Over the last few weeks we have seen that there will still be communities which are at risk of significant bushfire activity, but in the main the rain has certainly lessened the risk, for which we are thankful. Whether it be bushfires or other disasters, certainly early preparation is the key, and I thank the member for reinforcing that.

I thank the member for Glass House for his comments, and I agree that the creation of temporary disaster districts is an important and sensible amendment. Currently, disaster districts are basically fixed lines on a map based on police districts. We all know that disasters do not respect lines on maps and often cross local government boundaries and affect many local governments. The ability to create a temporary disaster district, in effect a single district-level response, will certainly maximise the effectiveness and coordination of resources in a particular area.

Again I acknowledge the personal experience of the member for Chatsworth as a firefighter in responding to major disasters such as Cyclone Larry. He brings to this House firsthand and reasonably recent experience in the Fire and Rescue Service and was recognised for that. He mentioned the usage of the Australasian Interservice Incident Management System, or AIIMS. The AIIMS system is used by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and EMQ, and the ICS system is used by QPS for incident management. However, they employ the same fundamental principles. At a national level, the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council are working together to develop a common incident management system across police, fire and emergency services. Hopefully that will address the particular issues that the member has raised. I can also advise the member that the Queensland Police Service is well practised in the use of AIIMS. All senior police filling the role of state disaster coordinator will be officers who are experienced in incident command, who have completed the QPS incident command course and who will be well practised in coordinating multiagency response to incidents.

I agree with the member for Mulgrave that, in determining the functions of an SES, the needs of local communities must be considered and that that must occur in consultation with local government. That already occurs. However, as I have indicated, local government is given prominence in this legislation and the various skill sets that are required for SES groups across the state will differ according to the risk profile of those communities. Of course, that must occur through strong consultation among EMQ, local governments and, indeed, the SES units themselves. This bill in reality enhances the cooperation between the state and local governments in our disaster response arrangements.

The member for Woodridge expressed sympathy for the people in Pakistan who recently experienced significant disasters in terms of flooding. I join with her in acknowledging the suffering which is ongoing in that community in Pakistan. I can also assure the member that our emergency services organisations regularly review interstate and overseas events such as Hurricane Katrina to ensure that our practices remain sound. No matter where the disaster is in the world, there is something that disaster management agencies can learn, and Queensland is no different.

I support the comments of the member for Gaven that disasters often unite all levels of government and political parties. Responding to his concerns about the declaration of disasters, I point out that disaster declarations for a disaster district—that is down at the local level, effectively—will remain the responsibility of the relevant district coordinator, who will make a decision based on operational requirements, not on political considerations. That has always been the case and always will be the case, and that is strengthened through the arrangements put in place under this bill where the local district coordinator or disaster coordinator can pre-emptively declare a disaster situation without direct reference to me initially. Ultimately, those approvals need to be signed off on. However, it provides the flexibility to respond immediately to disasters at the local level, taking into account the needs of that local community. As I indicated, only once a disaster has been declared does the district coordinator need to seek my approval as minister. The safety of a community is, has been and always will be the primary consideration in the declaration of disasters. I acknowledge the member's comments about

integration of state arrangements with national plans. I can assure the House that Emergency Management Queensland has already commenced work to prevent overlap, duplication or omission with national plans.

I thank the member for Beaudesert for his support and agree that the bill will enable enhanced cooperation between state and local governments. Again, I reiterate that in this bill local government is really given prominence in terms of the important role it plays as the primary agency of response at the local level, obviously with the support of EMQ and other agencies. I thank the member for Burdekin for her positive comments concerning the consultation undertaken with local governments and state government agencies regarding the bill.

I thank the member for Mundingburra for her interest in the bill and acknowledge the history of natural disasters that her electorate has endured and overcome. Those communities particularly in North Queensland are well practised at implementing their natural disaster arrangements—probably more so than any other place in the country. They are regularly required to put in place the arrangements which work so well because of that local knowledge, local capacity and cooperation.

I thank the member for Springwood for her comments, particularly in relation to the way the bill supports the fundraising and profile-raising activities of the SES. Again, I acknowledge and thank her for the support—and, indeed, that of other members—that she gives to her local SES group.

The member for Hinchinbrook raised issues, firstly in relation to the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. I note that that is a Commonwealth scheme administered by the state. Both the state and the Commonwealth provide funding for that. The state administers the grant of relief and assistance in accordance with the terms and conditions set out by the Commonwealth. In terms of the particular issue that the member raised affecting his constituents—and he referred to a Mr and Mrs Thomson and Mr Seri—the NDRRA funding was administered by QRAA, the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. If the member has any particular matters he wishes to raise, I refer him to the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland, to whom that body is accountable.

With regard to the member's comments about the role of the Australian Defence Force, I point out that the bill makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the chief executive of the Department of Community Safety to establish and maintain arrangements between the state and Commonwealth about matters affecting disaster management. That would include arrangements with the Defence Force in terms of supporting disaster response and recovery.

There are already established protocols in existence when requests are to be put through to the Defence Force for assistance, and we have seen that in play in a number of recent disasters. In fact, Defence Force personnel sit around the table with EMQ and other agencies—QFRS, ambulance and police—at the Kedron disaster management centre during the time of state-level disasters. Therefore, it gets firsthand knowledge and information about disaster needs. As I have said, protocols are well established about when requests and what types of requests can be put through to the Defence Force for assistance. The most notable example over the last couple of years was the transportation of the flood barriers to Charleville where, from a local meeting in Charleville in the morning until late that night, Defence Force Hercules aircraft were delivering flood barriers to Charleville. That is a clear demonstration that those protocols and arrangements work in times of need. I take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge the Defence Force for the significant support it has provided to Queensland communities in recent disasters.

On the topic of cyclone shelters, the Beattie government committed to the Safeguarding Cyclone Communities initiative in 2006 to better safeguard communities in coastal Queensland from the impact of cyclones. Cyclone shelters are buildings built out of storm surge range which comply with shelter design building standards and are used to house people safely for a few hours during the danger period of a cyclone event.

Ms Boyle: We're pretty nervous up north, Minister, about the number of cyclones this year.

Mr ROBERTS: Absolutely. Yesterday the Bureau of Meteorology indicated that we are likely to have more active cyclones in the north this year with up to six. To answer that question from the member earlier, there are three or so that have been built in terms of schools and working with communities across Queensland. The member has previously asked questions about that matter and I have responded to them. There are other issues of course, because there are two different centres that we are talking about here. Obviously it is absolutely impractical to build shelters which will house all of the local populations. It is simply a nonsense to suggest that cyclone shelters are going to house entire cities or entire towns. In terms of safety during cyclones, the safest place for the overwhelming majority of people is in the strongest room in their own home. There is a different issue of course in relation to evacuation shelters. There are many instances where evacuation shelters—and the member referred to that in his speech—are established post or leading up to disasters, and they are basically there to provide support to local communities after the impact of a natural disaster. They are temporary gathering points usually identified or predominantly identified by local governments through their local disaster management plans to provide that support to communities after the event.

The member for Hinchinbrook also raised the Ingham Fire Station as an issue. While not relevant to this bill, which deals with disaster management arrangements, I can advise that QFRS is examining options for future delivery of fire services in Ingham. The Department of Community Safety is in the process of identifying a suitable site for a new station. However, no commitment or decision has been made with regard to when that would occur. I thank the member for Lockyer for his comments and note that his electorate has had to remain resilient in the face of more than its fair share of disasters and emergencies in recent years. The member for Coomera raised an issue regarding the training of our volunteers. I can assure him that training for our SES volunteers, including our blue-water rescue organisations, is a clear priority of the government. The government provides grants to support operations of the VMR and the Australian Coast Guard in the amounts of \$1.123 million and \$1.008 million respectively. Additionally, in 2009-10 an additional \$135,000 was provided to each of those organisations to assist with the delivery of training programs and to purchase equipment. I want to make it clear that those organisations are not directly dealt with under this particular act because they are independent organisations that receive ongoing support from this government, through their membership and indeed through other contributions of the community.

I thank the member for Bundamba for her support. I joined her recently for the opening of the Springfield Ambulance Station, and she also outlined the other significant emergency services facilities which are part of the integrated response to individual emergencies and disasters in her area. I thank the member for Dalrymple for his comments and assure him that the improvements to the disaster management system do allow for better coordination of all resources, both the government and the private sectors. As I indicated earlier, there is also a significant body of work underway to review information and communications systems which will soon be considered by the State Disaster Management Group. While some councils have acquired the Guardian software system which helps local councils to manage information during a disaster, it is a matter for individual councils to determine what software they support. Local governments are able to apply for funding to purchase the necessary software through the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, and Emergency Management Queensland obviously provides support to local authorities that choose to use that software.

I thank the member for Aspley for her support and agree with her that we should work to minimise the gap between a disaster event and response, and this bill includes a range of measures to assist our emergency services personnel to respond proactively and rapidly to a pending disaster. The member for Townsville spoke about the risks in her area and said that a key benefit of the bill is the range of amendments designed to improve the agility of our disaster management system. Again, she is a member from an area with a significant level of experience in responding to disasters, and we of course recognise the local council and emergency services personnel and volunteers who work so well in those northern communities year after year.

The member for Burnett spoke about surf-lifesaving and marine rescue associations and said that they are an important part of emergency services. I advise the member, if he is not aware, that Emergency Management Queensland has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Surf Life Saving Queensland to facilitate the engagement and involvement of surf-lifesaving volunteers in helping support the SES in times of need. He also mentioned the rural fire levy. I note that the decision to impose a rural fire levy is a voluntary decision of local councils. They are not compelled to do it. Many do; others provide support to their local rural fire brigades through direct financial and in-kind contributions. Ultimately, it is a decision which the act allows the local council to make a decision on. There is also an inquiry before the Public Accounts and Public Works Committee to look at issues involving funding for rural fire services that receive support from a range of sources, including the state government, local government and the community.

The member for Hervey Bay talked about his experience in council. Again, I recognise the significant support that local councils provide to their communities in times of need. They are the foundation of the system and will remain so through this bill. The member for Redlands talked about the grassroots local approach—similar to the member for Hervey Bay—and reiterated the importance of local government response. The member for Kawana spoke about the *Pacific Adventurer* oil spill. That was an unprecedented event in Queensland. As everyone is aware, the early information available concerning the extent of the oil spill was not accurate. Ultimately, once the extent of the spill was known, the response was appropriate given the circumstances. As with all events, whether it be a local flood in a local community or a major state-wide event, there are always valuable lessons learned which will help shape future responses. In terms of the Kawana Surf Club, I express my thanks to the club and its members for allowing their facilities to be used in response to the oil spill. As I understand it, the matter in terms of the claim is subject to ongoing discussions. The member appeared to indicate that there was a meeting earlier today between the club and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, which has lead agency responsibility on that issue.

I thank the member for Mount Isa for her significant contributions. The member is of course my Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, and I acknowledge the great work that she is doing in engaging with communities across Queensland, both local councils and volunteer agencies, in terms of their role. She referred to the impacts of floods in the north-west and again the strong role played by local government in responding to these disasters.

The member praised EMQ for its leadership and support of local communities and the SES. Of course, the member has particular experience with devastating floods in the north-west over the past 12 months. She also mentioned the MOU with local government to help build community resilience. That document was signed by me in June and is the Disaster Management Alliance agreement. The member also spoke about the important role that she is playing and will be playing in actively engaging with local government, particularly through the mayors and the leadership of councils, to help build and strengthen the relationship between the Department of Community Safety and local authorities.

The member for Buderim talked about the all-hazards approach of the disaster management system. I can advise the House that the Queensland government has already commenced its storm season campaign to provide communities with the information they need to respond to disasters. I thank the member for Indooroopilly for his support and concur that we need to keep recruiting young and enthusiastic volunteers to our emergency services.

The member for Gladstone talked about the local focus—the importance of the local response—and I thank her for that. I also thank the member for Capalaba for his comments and join with him in encouraging employers to continue to support their employees who wish to volunteer. The state government provides leave for employees who wish to volunteer in emergency services situations and we hope that many private sector organisations—indeed many do—also make it easy for their employees to involve themselves in local disaster responses.

I thank the member for Nicklin for his support. He raised the issue of land use planning and the fact that we have many communities, through probably questionable and bad planning decisions going back many years, in flood-prone areas where the design of the community makes the people there more vulnerable to the risks of bushfire and the like. Certainly, that is an issue that governments of all levels—local, state and federal—are now very conscious of. I acknowledge the direct experience that the member has had in trying to address that issue in his local community.

With respect to flashing lights on vehicles for the SES, I acknowledge the member's strong advocacy on behalf of the SES on this issue. He has raised the matter on a number of occasions and has met with me and, as he did in the House today, very strongly advocated on this issue. He has a genuine desire to support his SES—I recognise that—but, as has been indicated, approval for what types of flashing lights can be used by these agencies is appropriately the responsibility of the Commissioner for Police under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. The commissioner has had a number of approaches about this issue and has rejected the applications on the grounds that it may dilute the impact that red-and-blue lights currently have for police, fire and ambulance vehicles as the first responders in emergency incidents. The commissioner has held that view and I support the view that he has expressed. But while the commissioner has rejected those applications, he has advised that he is prepared to consider other combinations of coloured flashing lights for these SES vehicles. I encourage the member to keep discussing that matter with him.

I thank the member for Toowoomba South for his comments and concur that prevention and mitigation are a vital component of disaster management. The mayor cannot be the local disaster coordinator, but that role can be filled by either the CEO or another employee who has the skills and expertise. That is a matter that is entirely within the hands of local government. That person would then obviously be under the direction of, or under the policy guidelines or the strategies put in place by, the local disaster management group. So it is either the CEO or another employee.

I again thank all members who participated in this debate. It has been a very constructive and positive debate. Universally across the House, members recognise that our emergency services workers do a fantastic job, whether they are paid to do it or they are volunteers, but we particularly recognise and thank the volunteers. All of us have met our local SES rural fire volunteers, honorary ambulance officers and LAC members. All of those people play a significant role and it is important that we recognise them.

I also want to recognise that, in addition to those people who are directly associated with the Department of Community Safety, there are many other volunteer organisations that provide fantastic support. The Red Cross is an integral part of our disaster management arrangements. We have an MOU with Clubs Queensland. There is also Surf Life Saving and the Salvos. I could go on listing them, but they all come to the fore with support in times of need and we certainly recognise them.

In conclusion, I want to thank all of the staff of the Department of Community Safety who put a lot of time and effort into the preparation of this bill. This is a significant reform. It is a significant strengthening of our disaster management arrangements. The staff of the department have put their hearts and souls into something that they strongly believe in. We have a good disaster management system but, through this bill, we have the capacity to strengthen it. To the staff who are here and to those who are not, I sincerely thank them for their genuine and committed effort in the preparation of this bill.

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 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—

Mr ROBERTS (4.56 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 14 (Amendment of s 27 (Executive officer of district group))

Page 15, lines 18 to 21—

omit, insert—

'(1) Section 27(1) and (2)—

omit, insert—

'(1) The commissioner of the police service is to appoint a person as the executive officer of the district group.

'(2) The commissioner of the police service may appoint a person under subsection (1) only if satisfied the person has the necessary expertise or experience to perform the functions of the executive officer of the district group.'.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Explanatory notes for Hon. Roberts's amendments to the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[3296\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Mr ROBERTS (4.57 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 16 (Insertion of new pt 2, div 2, sdiv 3)

Page 16, line 12, 'is happening,'—

omit, insert—

'has happened, is happening'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 46, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (4.58 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (4.58 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.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEGISLATION (SKILLS QUEENSLAND) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 31 August (see p. 2885), on motion of Mr Wilson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (4.58 pm): ‘Today, many companies are reporting that their number one constraint on growth is the inability to hire workers with necessary skills’. Members might think that that is a quote from Queensland but, in fact, it is a quote from former US president Bill Clinton. If this quote is relevant in the case of America with its anaemic economy, it is much more so the case for Queensland companies. This has come through very strongly in the stakeholder consultation on this bill that I have conducted on behalf of the LNP opposition.

Skills are one of the crucial issues facing the Queensland economy. The provision of a locally based skilled workforce is one of the most critical microeconomic reforms necessary to lift some of the shackles off Queensland business and promote more highly paid jobs and economic prosperity in this state. It is not surprising that this bill introduces yet another approach from this government in relation to how it proposes to deal with skills. The approaches in the past have performed dismally. I table a small table of performance in the area of training that shows commencements for apprenticeships and trainees aged 15 to 17 declined from 19,000-20,000 in 2007-08 to 16,000 in 2008-09 and to only 14,700 in 2009-10.

Tabled paper: Table of skills training measures [\[3297\]](#).

Similarly, the number of apprentices and trainees actually in training was 93,000 in 2007-08 and is now only 92,500 in 2009-10. It also shows that the total number of VET students in TAFE has plummeted alarmingly from 241,100 in 2007-08 to 194,800 in 2008-09 and only 183,700 in 2009-10. The total number of VET students aged 15 to 17 has also declined from 48,000 in 2007-08 to 46,300 in 2009-10.

These numbers add up to one simple fact and that is that the government has done something horribly wrong in the area of training. It is a sad record of underperformance that we do not see brought up in this House in ministerial statements and yet for the Queensland economy it is perhaps one of the most telling figures in this government's record. In fact, the government has had many goes at reorganising training and it is vital that it finally gets this one right. The first question that was raised with me in relation to a skills commission is why do we need one. I guess that question is largely answered by the figures showing the disappointing decline in our performance in training. We previously had under this government a training recognition council with its secretariat provided by the department. We also used to have a training board to provide strategic advice of the type being considered under this act, but that board was abandoned by the government. Now roles similar to those previously performed by TERC and other bodies are to be moved to Skills Queensland.

A couple of questions that the minister might consider answering in his summing-up would be whether roles that are currently filled by his department but which are to be filled by Skills Queensland will duplicate the bureaucratic positions that are available. Will staff be moved across from his department or will we simply see a duplication into a new bureaucracy? The other question that has to be asked is whether the decision to move to a skills commission is an admission that the merger of Training into Education has been a failure and the only way Training can be given the necessary focus is to remove it from Education once again.

Let us have a look at the new body that is set up under this bill. The functions of Skills Queensland in the bill are essentially sixfold: to make recommendations to the minister about skills and workforce development, skilled migration and any other matters referred to it by the minister; to develop a skills and workforce development investment plan; to take action approved by the minister under the plan; to promote and encourage industry investment in training; to undertake and promote research on matters relating to its function; and to inform the public about matters relating to its function. I have already drawn attention to the fact that there is a layer of bureaucracy existing already in the department and it is a concern to the opposition if these roles are to be simply duplicated in a new bureaucracy.

Within the bill there is no funding currently attached to the establishment of Skills Queensland. I think the planned funding and budget is a vital consideration as to whether this new commission will be able to fulfil the roles that I have just listed. What reference there is to funding indicates that initial funding will be small and would be expected to grow over time. The bill also indicates that industry will be expected to foot a higher proportion of the bill for the commission in relation to training.

Whilst in principle industry subscribing to increased funds for training is both desirable and necessary in Queensland, I think there is some real concern that the government will simply shift funding for already inadequate training onto industry. Industry involvement in the funding of training is only likely to be workable and, in fact, to even occur, if the training is of a high quality and is highly relevant to the needs of particular industries.

Another area of importance is the appointment of the board. It is my understanding that all appointments will be made by the minister and that the board will include the directors-general of the departments of education and employment and economic development and that there will be seven appointments of people with direct experience in industry, training or education. But it is my clear understanding that these appointments are at the discretion of the minister. The areas of concern raised by stakeholders in the training industry revolve around whether the appointments will be genuinely the strong industry voices that are needed to get Queensland's struggling training system back on track or whether the minister will be picking board appointments with whom he is comfortable.

Industry bodies raised the concern that the new Skills Queensland would have no real power and would be little more than an incarnation of other advisory bodies. I sincerely hope that the minister provides some clarity and reassurance in relation to the powers that Skills Queensland will have to make a difference in training. I note remuneration and allowances for board members are not contained in the bill and will be determined later. Once again I would challenge the government not to use yet another publicly funded board to appoint people who are close to the government or with whom the government is comfortable. I am sure the minister can see what I am getting at in that there is concern that creation of highly paid jobs by ministerial appointment could end up just another highly paid advisory body with appointments that the government is comfortable with rather than the genuine, independent, senior and strong industry voices that are necessary if this reform is to bear fruit.

There is a whole array of respected industry bodies that would be hoping to get some representation on such a body, for example, NECA, the National Electrical and Communications Association, which deals, among things, with the area of communications, which is an area of intense debate at the national policy level. It is planned that Skills Queensland would devise a five-year skills plan and then drill down to a 12-month view of the skills plan. It will draw from industry engagement, and therefore there is a transfer of responsibility that currently rests with DET to Skills Queensland.

The skills and workforce development investment plan must identify priorities for government investment in skills, qualifications and workforce development. This can include recommendations about the delivery of training and can lead to Skills Queensland acting on the recommendations, such as delivering an identified skills priority. The bill allows for direct intervention by Skills Queensland where there is a 'market failure' in training, and it foreshadows that there will be funds available to invest in such programs where there is a perceived market failure. The commission will be able to purchase only in areas of market failure and will be required to have a whole-of-market and whole-of-economy view when purchasing. Skills Queensland will be able to enter into contracts; acquire, hold or dispose of property; engage consultants; fix charges for its services; and have other powers that are necessary to fulfil its function.

The first skills and workforce development plan is to be given to the minister no later than 30 November 2011—I repeat, 30 November 2011—which is over one year away. The proposed Queensland skills commission was first mooted by the Queensland Resources Council in January 2009. Therefore, we are looking at a period of almost three years to see a skills plan produced. That causes me considerable concern as Queensland really is confronting a skills crisis now. If the process of shifting from DET the responsibilities for setting up Skills Queensland and creating the skills plan that needs to be delivered to the minister by November next year detracts from the current management of skills in the state, that would be significantly to the state's detriment given that, as we stand today, we are in a genuine skills crisis. Industries such as liquefied natural gas are already indicating that they will have to bring in most of their specific skills from overseas because of a lack of forethought in planning and skilling our workforce. If the period it takes to set up Skills Queensland and to lead to the creation of the first skills and workforce development plan results in the government taking its eye even further off the ball on training, leaving us in limbo in terms of decisive directions for training until the release of that plan just before Christmas 2011, then the preoccupation with the preparation for Skills Queensland and its first plan may well prove to be a very costly distraction.

I have expressed my concerns about whether this will result in the government attempting to whittle back its commitment to training, whether the body will have the necessary clout and independence, and whether the budget, when it is finally released, will be adequate. In Queensland, skills training has been nothing short of abysmal and there have been serious costs to our economy, which is heavily reliant on skills that we have produced far too few of. The LNP supports investment in the skills sector to ensure the viability of our industry, to increase employment and the ability to harness growing industries and technological and industrial change. Like industry, we have hopes that the government will ensure that Skills Queensland performs the necessary functions that have been so

badly carried out up to this point in time. Like industry stakeholders, we have reservations about aspects of the implementation but we are not opposing the concept of Skills Queensland, and we hope that by raising our concerns we can assist the government in ensuring that it meets genuine needs and that we do see the sort of improvement to training that the state requires.

The bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act. The amendments close some loopholes in the treatment of teachers who have disqualifying convictions. They also close some loopholes where not all such convictions were required to be reported to the Queensland College of Teachers. They do perhaps display some of the sloppy drafting of previous legislation, but clearly the measures to close those loopholes meet with our support.

In the time available to me I will refer to some of the feedback that I have received from industry stakeholders in relation to Skills Queensland. Interestingly, the CCIQ felt that the government had not been effective in reaching stakeholders and that most stakeholders were unaware of the majority of the Queensland government's engagement strategies and activities.

Mr Wilson: Who was that, Bruce?

Dr FLEGG: CCIQ.

Mr Wilson: Do you know the full name of that?

Dr FLEGG: It is Commerce Queensland. Of eight Queensland government engagement strategies that CCIQ asked its members about in the 2010 CCIQ skills and training survey, respondents indicated that only around 10 per cent had engaged or participated in those strategies while well over 50 per cent of respondents were completely unaware of each of the strategies. In the same survey, the majority of businesses that provided feedback raised issues with the Queensland government that they did not believe their concerns were addressed in the past: 36.5 per cent did not believe that their concerns had been addressed and over 50 per cent were unsure if the feedback they provided to the government influenced program development. Only 8.3 per cent of respondents indicated that the concerns they had raised with government were addressed and/or feedback taken on board.

There are some quite serious lessons to be learnt from that extensive survey of the state's business as to how well, or in this case how poorly, the government has communicated at the coalface with stakeholders in Queensland business. For the skills commission to succeed, it will need to have a far more effective communication strategy than we have seen to date in relation to skills promotion programs and engagement strategies with business. This is a grassroots industry survey that says that this government is not listening. The greatest fear is that, if Skills Queensland is not set up with sufficient independence and sufficient power to be heard, the complete lack of engagement between industry and skills training involvement of the government will continue.

As I said before, the LNP is broadly supportive of Skills Queensland if it is set up in an appropriately funded and appropriately independent and effective way. CCIQ was also supportive but urged the government to ensure that Skills Queensland develops its profile among industry participants and communicates its role and function. I remember some years ago in this place when we set up the health commission and I made a similar comment that part of its responsibility was to make sure its role was effectively communicated to the participants at the grassroots. Certainly that will apply to Skills Queensland. It was also suggested that, as there is more integration between VET and higher education, Skills Queensland should take an increasing role in advising on higher education.

The Queensland Resources Council, which was mentioned by the minister as being the origin of the concept of the Skills Queensland proposal, also made some interesting contributions. The Queensland Resources Council submitted that—

... the system has failed to deliver the skills Queensland needs, continuing with the same planning and investment approaches would only guarantee ongoing failure to resolve chronic skills shortages within and across industries.

That is quite a damning indictment of where skills training stands in Queensland at this point. It is no surprise that a body such as the QRC would be supportive of major reforms within the area. It urged that industry needed to be a real player and not merely consulted at arm's length and that Skills Queensland needed to be a strong, independent strategy body. It stated that suitable aims of its proposal, which were put forward in January 2009 at the height of the economic downturn, were to align the state's training system, higher education strategies, innovations and employment programs and state migration strategies with the needs of the economy and the priority industries underpinning it.

They saw industries including construction, tourism, manufacturing, mining and energy, community and health services driving the skills commission, which they felt should have planning and investment powers, be outcomes focused, have strong relationships directly with executive levels of all industries through topnotch appointments, capabilities and industry experience and not simply be populated by the current training bureaucracy. They said that it should have real teeth through planning and managing government skills funding and investment, leveraging industry investments and

capacities and driving innovations, delivering more skilled people in numbers and qualifications required by our industries and economy, and accountable directly through the chair of the board to the minister of the day.

They expressed concern that the board should be captains of industry with 'skin in the game' and that it not be intended to be a consultative or advisory body. The QRC raised similar concerns to those that I have raised here today in saying—

The bill before the House today is 'soft' in specific language beyond the planning and advisory functions and it is the implementation of the Commission arising from the legislation that will be crucial ...

They went on to say—

If the Skills Commission is hobbled in any way eg through "usual suspects" appointments to the Board or becomes merely a glorified industry advisory committee, it will no longer enjoy continuing QRC support or participation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think you will agree that they are even more strongly worded statements than my own statements in relation to the importance of getting the board of Skills Queensland right. This is the real challenge that is before the minister. I understand that there is a temptation for governments to deal where they can with people who they know well, who are close to government or who they are comfortable with. But in this case, for Skills Queensland to have the effective role that everybody hopes that it does—everybody including the opposition, the government and the stakeholders that we have both spoken to—then that board appointment needs to be of the highest calibre and not necessarily confined to people with whom the government is comfortable.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.22 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. As outlined in the explanatory notes, the primary objectives of the bill are to establish an industry led skills commission in Queensland to be known as Skills Queensland and to strengthen the child protection measures within teaching environments in Queensland. I will refer my comments to the skills commission portion of the bill which seeks to establish a board which will be responsible for the development of a five-year plan to be reviewed annually in order to dictate the direction of skills and training in Queensland.

The functions under the bill of Skills Queensland are to make recommendations to the minister about skills and workforce development, skilled migration and any other matters referred to it by the minister. These functions purport to promote and encourage industry investment in training. However, the minister's statement that 'employers must take responsibility for skilling their workforce' could take industry involvement to the extreme and put the financial burden of the state training system on industry. This could mean that businesses are lumped with the burden of the cost of the state training system. The minister needs to come clean and guarantee to the small businesses throughout Queensland that they will not be left with the financial burden of what is a government responsibility.

Another concern with the concept that the skills commission be partly funded by government and partly funded by industry will be yet another excuse for the government to maybe cut its own commitment to training and to try to push more expenses onto that industry. If industry faces increased financial involvement, it is essential that training quality meets the needs of industry.

The bill also purports to develop a skills and workforce development investment plan and to take action approved by the minister under the plan. The bill followed the recommendation of the Queensland Resources Council and increases industry involvement in the way the skills system in Queensland operates. A further aim of the bill is to establish a board that is 'industry focused'. The board will include the directors-general of education, employment and economic development plus seven other people with direct involvement in industry training.

The limitation of board members to ministerial appointment based on direct experience in industry, training or employment sectors could lead to political appointments that will serve no purpose in furthering skills and training to the needs of industry. There is no detail as yet as to how these people will be appointed. They will be appointed by the minister for a maximum of four years. Are Queenslanders going to see more Labor recommendations wrapped up in red bureaucratic tape by a minister's office, as under this plan the minister can fully or conditionally approve recommendations made by Skills Queensland?

The education and training sector is worth about \$2.4 billion a year to the Queensland economy. The recent experiences of skills shortages highlight the need to ensure training keeps pace with industry development and needs. One of the biggest issues facing Queensland, and indeed the country, is to ensure the training of our trade skills workforce keeps pace with the demands of a growing economy and are responsive to shortages of skilled workers in certain sectors of the workforce. A common complaint from industry has been that Queensland's training sector delivers trainees too slowly and not to the required standard. Workforce development that is responsive to current and emerging industry needs is critical to the continued growth of the state of Queensland. We should not wait for a skills shortage in, for example, electricians. If we wait to take action, it would take at least three years to have someone in this sector of the workforce fully qualified.

Queensland is the state with the highest concentration of state based training—over 40 per cent. The level of industry investment in the skills system is significantly lower in Queensland than in other states. The electorate of Mudgeeraba is home to around 28,000 residents, with the major industry being retail trade and a majority of workers being technicians and trades workers. In the 2006 Australian census, 11,097 people considered Mudgeeraba, the town, the place they most likely called home. The average person is a youthful 34 years of age, and they have a very average weekly gross income of around \$481 per week.

Mudgeeraba folk who are lucky enough to be on their way to owning their own home found they had an average weekly mortgage of around \$363, with an average house price in Mudgeeraba being around \$487,000. For those too poor, smart or young to buy into the great Australian dream of spiralling debt, the average rent in Mudgeeraba was around \$290 a week. In terms of employment, 50.31 per cent of people in Mudgeeraba were considered employable. Skilled training is obviously very important to residents in my electorate, with a majority of them also owning small businesses. Therefore, the future impact of this legislation will be of interest to this particular group or residents.

Interestingly, there is no funding currently attached to the establishment of Skills Queensland, nor is there an indication of funds that will be available. I am sure that small businesses will be wondering how much they will have to contribute when the state no longer does. Under this Labor government, Queensland's skilled training sector has suffered skills shortages due to underfunding by both the Beattie and the Bligh governments. Queensland relies heavily on our skilled workforce from the mining industry through to the tourism industry. The Liberal National Party recognises this and supports further investment in the skills sector to train our workers to ensure the long-term viability of not only our skills training industry but of all small businesses across Queensland.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.27 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Training Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, and I can say that the government is committed to ensuring state schools remain safe places for students to learn and for teachers to teach. As a former teacher, I can say that probably the most significant issue facing teachers today is behaviour management. I am pleased to see that this problem is being addressed in this legislation.

Behaviour management for teachers right across the board has become very significant. We have changes in society that we would never have dreamed of even 20 years ago. Those changes are very much a part of a problem that goes with teaching and with schooling. Many teachers these days are faced with the prospect of having to sort out children's home lives, their personal lives, which of course exacerbate their behaviour problems. The new power for principals to exclude students is only one part of helping principals to manage poor student behaviour in their schools.

I am on the wrong bill; no, I am not. I think I am being given messages here that I should not be given. The primary objectives of the bill are to establish an industry led skills commission in Queensland called Skills Queensland. But behaviour management in schools is very important when it comes to our future.

Mrs Keech: You were on the right bill.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I was on the right bill. I was just getting a little carried away with myself. I am sorry, and I am glad that you did not pull me up, Mr Deputy Speaker.

We have to be able to strengthen the child protection measures within the teaching environment in schools. We are implementing a range of other initiatives to promote these positive behaviours. The Queensland government is really committed to delivering world-class education and training systems right throughout the state so that Queensland will continue to be that absolute premium state to live in, to work in and to learn in.

It is outlined in Smart Ambition under *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* that we need a skilled workforce. In fact, it is critical if we are to have a sustained workforce. Q2 has set a target to have three in four Queenslanders aged between 25 and 64 years of age with a trade, training or tertiary qualification.

Getting back to what I started to say, before young people are able to take part in a trade or further their education we really do need to make the learning environment the optimum learning environment for young people. Behaviour management is very significant in being able to assist people to make their way through the school system in order to be able to train for future skills later on in their lives.

The challenge for Queensland is to ensure that the approaches to skills and workforce development keep pace not only with the demands of the rapidly changing economy but also with the changing social times that we face as a country and as a state. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (5.31 pm): I rise to support the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. Can I start by addressing the comments of the shadow minister in his contribution to the debate. They show how out of touch he is with the vocational education and training sector in this state. To criticise the Queensland government despite the fact that it has built one of the strongest training sectors in this country I think is frankly ridiculous.

The Queensland Skills Plan has delivered thousands and thousands of apprentices, particularly school based apprentices and trainees. The Queensland Skills Plan has delivered the state the highest number of school based apprenticeships in the country. We continue to promote flexible training arrangements with industry, the education sector and employees that see Queensland in a leadership position when it comes to skills formation in this country.

The recent boom-bust cycle in Queensland has placed the state's skills system under considerable pressure. Traditionally, there has been a pattern in this country that as the economy picks up so does the rate of training. For a long while apprentice training rates followed economic growth. Unfortunately, a lot of deregulation in the 1990s saw a breakdown in that relationship. As the economy continued to improve, the rate of apprenticeship training did not. That has meant that when it has come to the boom many providers faced considerable challenges in meeting the ever-growing demand for skills within our economy.

The global financial crisis presented many new challenges as we needed to rapidly shift from employment-first strategies, where skills were largely formed while in the employment relationship, to training-first initiatives where potential employees were undertaking training prior to entering the workforce. As this economic growth resumes—and Treasury predicts growth of 3¼ per cent for the coming financial year—the Queensland skills system faces more challenges.

In addition to these challenges, the need of industry is also changing. When we talk about training-first initiatives, what we are talking about is people who are undertaking training, giving of their time and spending money to undertake training despite the fact that they have not yet got a job in that industry. The benefits of the traditional apprenticeship arrangement have been that the person who is undertaking that training already has a job in that industry.

We need to make sure that the training young people are undertaking is actually the training our economy needs and will lead to meaningful career opportunities for those young people. There is no sense in people doing a whole lot of training with the unrealistic expectation that there will be jobs at the end of it. There is no sense in doing a certificate II in horticulture when what we need for our growing LNG industry is instrumentation technicians.

Technological change, changing growth within sectors, new and emerging industries and the ageing population are changing the skills needs of our economy. They are constantly changing. Queensland needs to respond and industry needs to play a lead role if we are to respond rapidly to the needs of industry. We need our system to make sure that we are producing the right skills for industry. For Queenslanders that means better jobs, better pay and a better future. For industry that means improved workforce participation and productivity.

Skills Queensland represents a genuine partnership between industry and government to address our shared responsibilities towards meeting the skills needs of the future. What Skills Queensland's counterpart in the federal regime has been able to do is provide industry, the training sector and government with some very frank advice about the future needs for skilling. That has meant that industry and the training sector can target that training more effectively. It can make sure that government is focused on the training that will give people a real job opportunity for the future and will also meet our growing skills needs.

We have to ensure that effective workforce development can underpin the skills investment in this state. This can only be achieved through effective industry planning for our future skills needs. Skills Queensland will have the opportunity to direct future investment to produce the skills when and where industry requires. When employees are undertaking training before they enter the workforce we are making sure that that training is matching up with the workforce requirements and jobs opportunities of the future. By providing industry with genuine leadership and ownership of the skills system, Skills Queensland will help to support a more flexible and responsive skills system for the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (5.37 pm): In some ways this is a timely bill with an implicit ambition of the creation of a new education skills commission. I say 'timely' because week after week for two months now we have been seeing well-known education service providers falling over. This, of course, is mainly amongst those private providers of education services to primarily overseas students. Overwhelmingly, the aim of these students has been to obtain a permanent work visa and later citizenship. For the providers and their staff it is a viable business and for the nation it means a skilled and enhanced workforce. Due to immigration changes this has significantly moved the goalposts. This issue today is primarily about Australian based people and current Australian citizens.

National unemployment stands at 5.1 per cent. Most view this as near full employment since there is generally a hard-core group for whom work remains a challenge and for others something to be avoided at all costs. What has not really been said is that the key skills required to fill the economic engine that will drive recovery in Australia are being ignored by this Labor government focused entirely on its own long-term survival. What is the evidence to support that claim, members might rightfully ask?

There is no money allocated for the creation of this new entity, Skills Queensland—and to quote the minister in his second reading speech—‘an independent skills commission to lead the state’s skills and workforce development’.

I wonder whether the minister falsely believes because the skills commission is independent then the commission has to be self-funding—that is, funded by employers and their staff. Yet the government seems to be able to find hundreds of millions of dollars for pie-in-the-sky computer programs that do not work in Health, \$15 million for advertising for QR asset sales and \$5.1 million on the Gold Coast to tell people how to catch a train or a bus. This is called the Travel Behaviour Change Program.

Who is fooling who here? There is no money for the skills commission—no seed funding nor the said stipend. This is dopey and reflects a complete lack of understanding of how to develop, deliver and drive a successful business strategy. It is because the minister and most of his colleagues have utterly no business experience that the message conveyed to the wider business community is one of insincerity regarding ambition, incompetence in professionalism and an obsession with window dressing when a comprehensive solution is required.

The minister has stated this about his lofty ideals—

Skills Queensland’s key function will be to advise government on skills and workforce development and skilled migration. It will develop a skills and workforce development investment plan, a five-year plan with a ten-year whole of economy outlook that will be renewed annually.

The minister clearly understands how potentially important this proposal may be, especially in a state in which our own economic prosperity is critically dependent on mining and agriculture. This commission is being entrusted with the overall planning and supervision of the skills that both industries require, yet the state is not proposing to contribute significant funding. I am not suggesting that this organisation has been set up to fail, but what sort of financial straitjacket is this very insular Labor government delivering here? It will impede progress and it reeks of platitudes over provision of service, yet simultaneously the Labor government wants a voice at the table.

In his second reading speech, the minister proposed that to the seven independent business and government appointed stakeholders he will add the directors-general from the employment and training portfolios. Has it occurred to the minister that a passive government appointee is not independent? Not only do you only get what you pay for, but also if you contribute nothing—and read that as money—then one can expect little in return. Their concerns will also be given lip-service. The government has got to get it into its head that it has to buy its seat at the table, and that does not mean buy either exclusivity or a mortgage over the outcome. I acknowledge that the minister has stated that—

Government will continue to play a key role in funding, implementing and administering skills and workforce development strategies.

This implies no diminution of the supply and application of those funds to those areas now to be under the director of Skills Queensland. This is a worthy aspiration and will supply some succour to Queensland’s 1,140 active training providers in the VET sector—that is, the vocational education and training sector. With a \$2.4 billion value to the economy, this is big business. However, you do only get what you pay for, and the government needs to understand that if it appoints people who are effectively drones then it will have an organisation that goes backwards, not forwards.

The current concern is that training is lagging behind business needs and demand in Australia. Specifically, it is skills shortages both in emerging and nascent industries here in Australia that have prevented business expansion as credit, although more expensive as it has now become, is easier to obtain. This has allowed business to attempt to get itself moving. Of course, it is restricted by the skills shortages. The shadow minister has highlighted that Queensland has the highest level of state based training at 40 per cent. It is pitched against a lower level of industry involvement in skills training, but the imbalance is amplified further due to the slow delivery of trainees, lower standards in Queensland and higher training costs and inputs from the Queensland state based education sector.

We lag behind other states even though the minister seems to want to brag that Queensland trains 45 per cent of the nation’s school based apprentices and trainees. Whilst school based vocational training is to be applauded, schools must have a significant focus on producing students whose skills and knowledge learned at secondary schools will equip them for success in their lives after exiting school. It may be equally said that if NAPLAN is to be accepted as valid, Queensland is a long way behind the other states in its school based performance. This could imply that Queensland is being relegated somewhat as an academic backwater in relative terms but that in Queensland trades may become a strong potential labour and skills supplier. This does not necessarily follow, because in the other Australian states VET courses in a post-secondary school environment have been very successful in delivering well-trained, albeit mature, timely trainees and apprentices. It is a false sense of security on one hand to direct non-OP score students from years 10 to 12 in Queensland schools into VET courses to maximise the outcomes of other OP course students continuing on and, on the other hand, further providing that VET training earlier will have a greater impact on employment and capacity of the skilled workforce providers. It needs to be emphasised that students must be pushed to succeed since the qualities of appropriateness and excellence of education are what children here in Queensland will need to build a successful and happy future for themselves and their own families when they have them.

My immediate concern, and a concern expressed by others, is that we appear to be consigning too many of our young people to careers that may have a potentially short life span, be remunerated at a lower level, and possibly be eradicated by globalism and technical innovation. It also follows that there may be serious faults in our primary and middle schooling standards that might be too difficult to repair within this generation. Are we really all missing the point here and not accepting that a generation could be lost by virtue of an intrinsic failure of our public education system? Not only did Education Queensland allow its eye to be taken off the ball, but also the Bligh Labor government took too long to intervene and do something. Is that truly the lesson of this bill regarding a skills commission? I accept that the skills commission is being delivered after being recommended by the Queensland Resources Council, but what the minister is not saying is that the council is foreshadowing much greater industry involvement in the way the skills system in Queensland operates. This leads to the third aim of the bill and the setting up of the commission to allow direct intervention by Skills Queensland where there is market failure in training.

Skills Queensland is to be reactive, proactive and flexible, mainly in purchasing training places. What we know is that Skills Queensland's approach is to start small and later expand. That expansion must be difficult to predict since the government is proposing it is to be delivered on the basis of industry contributions. Of course, this consigns the board of Skills Queensland to be always reactive and bereft of what is called 'doing money' or 'doing funds'. They may be unable to move forward and it is likely that that is the most probable situation. In other words, they are treading water.

If that is truly to be the case, then the minister's stated aim that employers must take responsibility for skilling their workforce probably means that the government is moving towards a user-pays philosophy. Because of the paralysis of the Bligh Labor government's hopeless balance sheet with a fixed structural budget deficit, Labor in government is now transferring responsibility to employers. How does the Bligh Labor government expect to reduce full-time unemployment beyond where it is at the moment? As at August 2010, it still had 86,200 real jobs to go before it reaches its 100,000 new jobs target. As I say, these are real jobs—jobs providing a sustainable income, with growth for the individual for the future.

The user is paying by virtue of company tax, GST, levies, registration fees and generous internal employer and, in certain cases, company sponsored training schemes. This offensive Labor government is double dipping here. Labor needs to reappraise its priorities and allocate a very substantial, untied capital grant and probably the same amount in annual recurrent funding with yearly CPI increases. Industry needs to act unimpeded by lack of access to adequate funding to pursue the aspirational goals of this bill, that being in the minister's words—

... to lead reform to Queensland's skills system to create a more flexible and demand-driven system that meets the needs of industry, communities and the economy.

I expect that by 30 November 2010, when the first skills and workforce plan is to be delivered to the minister, we will all know how the experiment went and how high the bar has been set. Like many others, we will want to see that—and it is my hope—it does work.

There are also other amendments in this bill such as those that amend the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act. Specifically, it amends provisions relating to teachers who are convicted of disqualifying offences. It has two major objectives, one relating to teachers themselves, the other ensuring the Queensland College of Teachers is notified of the outcome of an investigation of a child harmed by a teacher. Regarding the teachers, the bill aligns the case of a teacher convicted of a disqualifying offence to the provisions of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian legislation. The three education sectors all support the changes. The shadow minister has covered them in detail, and they are to be supported.

Teachers are critical people in all of our children's lives. When those teachers in very rare cases take advantage of their access to and trusted position with children, we must take action both in terms of prevention and to do something about it—in other words, a form of redress. If this amendment does make children safe then it will always be supported.

My electorate of Gaven has 1,083 15- to 24-year-olds, out of 7,434 people between the ages of 15 and 24, engaged in this type of training, which is 14.5 per cent. The state average is 13.1 per cent. When this is compared to the state average of 15- to 24-year-olds who are currently unemployed—and that gives a good idea of the true situation regarding the impact of training that can be estimated—approximately three times as many unskilled workers of comparable age are unemployed. This is the evidence that these things will work. This demonstrates the real horsepower of appropriate skills training.

I must also congratulate all of those fine tradesmen and contractors who are training apprentices in my electorate of Gaven, and they are certainly doing it tough at the moment. Skills Queensland also has the capacity beyond the current aspirational goal to show and highlight those courses, training colleges, trainees and amounts expended that yield better results. This is the true power of using statistical analysis to optimise results beyond normal performance reviews, testimonials and course results. Successful employment is a very good measure of success in a skills environment. When added

to the physical and financial outputs together with employer and worker satisfaction and finally high-retention rates of employees, there is the successful formula delivered outcomes of such a structure as the skills commission. It must be real, it must not be a double-dipping approach and it must not be smoke and mirrors.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (5.51 pm): I rise to speak to the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. As we are all well aware, this bill will establish Skills Queensland, an independent skills commission to lead the state's skills and workforce development. This is an exciting prospect if it is used properly and implemented correctly. Skills training in Queensland must perform the function of skilling and training, and we have seen failures in the TAFE system in the past. This commission will have a vital role to play in being objective, being constructive and being positive in taking skills training in Queensland in a new direction. I certainly support what the minister is endeavouring to do with this bill if we can get that genuine outcome.

There is a need for sophisticated training in many different fields in Queensland. This state has an exciting economy—from the excitement of the mining industry to the smaller manufacturing industries to the agricultural industry. But, more importantly, this state has the exciting prospect of young people coming through education facilities on a daily basis who can fill the needs of these positions. I refer in particular to high-tech industries like mining, oil and gas and the associated infrastructure that we witness in industrial towns like Ipswich, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Townsville and Mount Isa, to name some of the larger centres around our great state. Those industries are the heart of the economy which needs those tradespeople.

There is a shortage of tradespeople in the areas of electrical, boilermaking, plumbers, carpenters and diesel fitters. One major company told me recently that if you have a son or a daughter you should encourage them to take up X-ray welding because that is a profession of the future that will be in high demand in the mining industry and other industries, and many industries are calling out for professionals in different fields. There are many young people who do not comprehend these exciting prospects in terms of career paths, and perhaps this commission can encourage schools to do more in the area in terms of alerting young people to what opportunities are out there for them.

It is so vitally important that we address the needs of young people and set them off on a career path where they can be a professional in that field for 20, 30 or 40 years. I spoke to a gentleman this afternoon who told me about his own son who has been asked to do a diesel fitter's apprenticeship at his business which grinds crankshafts and that sort of thing. What an exciting prospect that is for a 17-year-old lad to work in that environment and be given that opportunity to have that expertise by the time he finishes his apprenticeship. There are many young people who have never had that opportunity. Rather, they had to go through some engineering division at university or a technical workshop to get that sort of experience.

I hope that in his reply the minister addresses the need to assist business as an integral player. For a long time now, small business has been an integral player in the training of young people in workplace environments with apprenticeships et cetera. In the past, for many people there have been obstacles such as the cost of going away for TAFE grouping and what have you. All of these things are expensive, as members can appreciate, for people who live in Western Queensland. It is a huge impost on business to send people away to college for their instruction and to ensure that that instruction is going to be advantageous to that young person and not a monster, because they have to get the best they can out of it.

The people appointed to this commission must be people who have a correct professional background, and I cannot emphasise that enough. It is all very well saying, 'Yes, we're going to put that person and that person and that person on there.' But this is about getting the mix right the first time to address the need for skilling Queenslanders, because those people have the integral knowledge themselves to develop a system through their expertise and knowledge of creating an environment of pride and training in young people to be on top of their workplace career path. That is what all of us want when it comes to training—so that we can encourage young people to be integral players in their industry, to be innovative in their workplace and to have a vision for creativity to ensure that we see these young people excel not only on the local stage in Queensland but also nationally and ultimately internationally.

In terms of the maximum four-year appointment of these commission members, it is paramount to have a skilled workforce that qualifies the drive and management of this commission. As I said earlier, the real issue here is to get the mix right. We need the expertise and the professionalism of these people to drive this, along with government departments—and there are many government departments such as infrastructure, mining and energy and many other exciting departments in this great state. This has to be a team effort where we will see the advantage come through because there is somebody driving this agenda who wants to make it happen.

Training in Queensland is a multibillion dollar industry, and the emphasis on university training and professionals in recent years has caused this because the powers that be thought everyone should have a tertiary education. I am not against a tertiary education. I have been lucky to be given a good

education, but I am not tertiary educated. However, I will say that it is absolutely correct and right that every child in this state is given the opportunity to get a year 12 education, but if they cannot get that year 12 education and they leave school in year 10 or year 11 they have the basics so that they can go into some hands-on trade.

I compliment the government for implementing in recent times the school based traineeships and school based apprenticeships. The minister in his second reading speech stated that Queensland now provides 40 per cent of Australia's skilled trainees. The school based traineeships and apprenticeships program is a fantastic initiative. I have seen many young people in my own electorate—and I bet the other members have seen them right across their electorates in Queensland—who have not had the ability to go on to complete tertiary education, but they have had the ability to work with their hands and have gone on to become mechanics, hairdressers, or whatever. At the end of the day, this legislation is about being fair and realistic and catering to the needs of all young people regardless of where they live, who they are or their ethnic origin. The real issue—and I think the member for Waterford touched on this and he is still in the chamber—is that this system of school based traineeships has seen a lot of young kids walk straight into apprenticeships at local businesses.

I ask the minister to recognise that it is vitally important that small business is not penalised by setting the bar too high in achieving these objectives. I know that some huge multinational companies have based their headquarters in this state along with their training operations. Many of those companies are based along the eastern seaboard of our great state, but there are smaller businesses that are based in our rural towns around Queensland and we need to ensure that they can take advantage of the work of this commission so that we can create an environment in which these business operators are not going to be penalised.

We need to make our young people understand that their role as a hairdresser, a carpenter, or a trade assistant is just as important as being a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher or any other high-profile professional. I used to have a bit of trouble with teachers. I could never work out why. I think I have fronted up to more teachers than the whole lot of you in this room put together. But anyway, it was all in good fun and, at the end of the day, the outcome has not been half too bad, has it? A lot of people would probably disagree.

An honourable member: Will we take a vote on that?

Mr JOHNSON: I bet it comes up trumps for Vaughan. Queensland's strong growth in mining and agriculture will complement this concept of a skills commission and encourage growth and development. All facets of industry must be embraced to make this skills commission have the quality impact that the government is driving at. In recent years we have had to import meatworkers from overseas under 457 workplace visas to work at Western Exporters in Charleville, Dinmore at Ipswich and in other places around the state because we do not have those skilled tradespeople here in Queensland to be able to uphold the business activities that are needed to drive that very integral part of our primary agricultural production. We need a revolution to reignite our highly professional and skilled workforce to build a greater Queensland and to complement our exciting state's needs.

There are many other issues in relation to training young people that can be addressed. I think that all of us have a role to play in the training of young people through encouraging young people that they are vitally important to the future economy of our state, that they have an integral role to play in the future of our state and that they are people who are going to carry this state well into the future. As I said, whether that young person is a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, a boilermaker, or a hairdresser, they are going to be very esteemed players in taking this state forward. I hope that the minister, through his selection process for the membership of this commission, will have personnel there who will drive this agenda and make it happen.

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.04 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. This bill establishes an independent skills commission—Skills Queensland—to lead the state's skills and workforce development. Skills Queensland will have a high-level board that will provide the commission with genuine leadership and independence and will provide the opportunity for industry to genuinely contribute to the challenge of meeting Queensland's future skills needs.

This bill is the result of a visionary Labor government looking forward to an environment of a growing economy coming from a history of a skills shortage before the global financial crisis. Through this legislation, Skills Queensland will be able to enrol private businesses and organisations, members of the training community and schools to work together to plan for the skills that are needed in our workforce. Industry, as the ultimate user of skills, has an important leadership role in the future vocational education and training sector.

Because of the reforms of the Queensland Skills Plan, Queensland now has the most sophisticated industry engagement mechanisms in the nation. Through initiatives such as centres of excellence in secondary schools, Redcliffe State High School and Southern Cross Catholic College

have combined to develop a school of excellence in the performing arts, while Clontarf Beach State High School has developed an excellence program in science with a partnership program with Clontarf Beach State School to use its facilities and expertise. I am very impressed at how effectively these high schools in my electorate are adapting to new programs and delivering the best possible education, training and preparation for the future that they can for their students, ensuring that students will have better opportunities for employment and satisfying career paths.

Change is often difficult in schools, but the speed and effectiveness with which these schools have come on board and delivered programs that effectively assist students in taking the next step in their journey to gain the skills that are needed to achieve their place in the workforce has been phenomenal. Skills formation programs such as the Redcliffe-Dakabin Corridor Skills Formation Strategy are initiated by the state government partnering with councils and business to identify the skills that will be needed for businesses in this region in the future. This information will feed naturally into the new plan under Skills Queensland. Both of these plans, together with skills alliances, are demonstrating that a lot of work is happening in vocational education and training, even if it is on an ad hoc basis.

To deliver effective coordination and leadership state-wide, ensuring that the skills needs of employers in a growing economy are met, industry must be empowered to take genuine ownership of the skills system at a strategic level. If industry is to take responsibility for skilling their workforce, we must empower them to take that responsibility. The current engagement processes focus on individual industry sectors and provide little incentive for industry to outline their long-term as well as immediate skills needs within the context of the competing needs of the economy and the finite resources that are available to skills development.

To achieve the right balance of strategic and sector specific engagement, Skills Queensland will also have responsibility for facilitating existing industry specific engagement strategies. In that way, Skills Queensland will provide clear and coherent advice to the government on all issues relating to the skills system and there will now be an effective tool with which to identify current and future skills needs and an ability to formulate and deliver training so that Queenslanders can look forward to gaining the skills they need to give them the work they need for themselves and their families. I congratulate the minister for his initiative in putting Skills Queensland together. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (6.10 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. Skills are vital to Queensland's future economic prosperity. The Sandgate electorate has top-class schools and a TAFE that respond to industry needs with vocational education and training and industry focused training to ensure that our young people can find jobs by being qualified to work in areas that will be in demand. Skills Queensland will be an industry led statutory body empowered to lead the development of a more responsive and demand driven system that positions Queensland to meet the challenges of the future.

Skills Queensland will have the key function of advising government on skills and workforce development and skilled migration. It will be charged with developing a skills and workforce development investment plan. This five-year plan will be one of the key mechanisms through which industry may outline what it considers are the key priorities for government investment in skills, qualifications and workforce development. The plan may be used to recommend changes to the delivery of vocational education and training and to the government's existing funding programs to encourage flexible responses to emerging industry needs and the needs of the economy.

Another key function of the new body will be to promote and encourage industry investment in vocational education and training. This is important because the skills system is a shared responsibility between industry and government, yet Queensland has one of the lowest rates of private investment in the skills system. By giving industry a key role in shaping our future priorities, it is envisaged that industry will take more ownership and have more confidence in the system. From the 2011-12 financial year, Skills Queensland will be able to access a quantum of government funding to deliver on the strategic priorities identified in its investment plan and other advice and recommendations.

An example of such a co-investment has been the recently announced coal seam gas-liquefied natural gas fund, which leverages industry investment dollar for dollar. Energy Skills Queensland is a body that has been working with government and industry for some time and has created the CSG-LNG workforce development plan which is being used to identify where skills are needed. To support the development of training to meet this need, the Bligh government entered a partnership with industry to develop a \$10 million program to train thousands of workers needed for the new coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas industries. The program will cater for up to 18,000 direct and indirect jobs and is part of the government's election commitment to create 100,000 new jobs in this term of government.

Skills Queensland will be well placed to broker and implement similar programs in the future. The government expectation is that, through its strategic investment, Skills Queensland will aim to leverage a significant contribution from the industry. Queenslanders should notice a marked increase in industry investment in their own training needs and in time Skills Queensland should be able to leverage investment from industry that matches the government's investment dollar for dollar. I congratulate the minister on bringing this bill to the House and also thank all of the dedicated public servants who have worked on the development of this bill and I do commend the bill to the House.

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (6.13 pm): I rise to support this bill but particularly to put on record my interest as Minister for Women that we acknowledge and that the new skills commission acknowledges that girls can do anything—that women and girls have the skills and should have the opportunities to take up any occupation. A skills strategy in this state and in this nation has to acknowledge the value and importance of women and girls in that strategy.

There are three activities that I have been involved in in recent times that have sharpened my thinking around some of these issues. Today I attended the National Women in Male Dominated Occupations and Industries Conference organised by women in trade unions. Good on them! They have pulled together a conference program with women all around the nation. One of the clear messages today in that conference was that industry, trade unions and government have to keep working together to make sure that this economy actually makes good use of the skills of women and girls and gives women and girls the opportunities to pursue non-traditional trades and occupations. There were women plumbers, electricians, welders and others there today. You can count them on your hand in Queensland and in other parts of the nation as well.

The other activity that really inspired me to keep focusing on this message and this work was the opportunity I had recently to attend a training program at the Construction Training Centre in Salisbury, the area that I grew up in. It used to be the old Evans Deakin factory when I was a kid. The men would knock off and walk down the street with their lunch bags. Sadly, that industry came to a grinding halt. But we have made great use of that as a world-class construction training centre in partnership with industry.

Mr Wilson: The Queensland government is helping fund that initiative.

Ms STRUTHERS: Exactly. Great leadership is being shown by the Queensland Labor government in making great use of a facility by turning it into a wonderful world-class facility. The event that I attended there was supported and led by the Office for Women. There were 20 women who were job seekers who had been unemployed for quite a while. They were mature-age women who put up their hand to do a mining industry skills course organised with a training company from Ipswich, Ebenezer. These women were in the simulated—what do you call those big trucks in the mining community? My son calls them dump trucks. I, too, hopped in the simulator. That was one of their activities. They had been out in the mines and they had done some in-house work. When I presented those women with certificates and hard hats they were rapt. Many of them are going to leave the city. Many of them live in the Ipswich-Salisbury corridor, but they said they are keen to move and have a tree change and get a job in an industry that will offer them some wonderful opportunities.

Mr Wilson: Often times they are better employees than the blokes. They are not as hard on the gear.

Ms STRUTHERS: The employers tell me that these women are pretty good workers. The other event recently that inspired me to keep on this case of opportunities for women in non-traditional industries was the fact that, through the Office for Women, I have initiated a scholarship program called Indigenous Women in Hard Hats. Ten scholarships were on offer for girls and women in Townsville to take up jobs in non-traditional industries. They jumped at that opportunity. We have young Indigenous women taking up opportunities to be painters, carpenters or construction workers. I thank the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone, for her support of that program. She tells me they are doing great stuff there.

I wanted to get on my feet for a few minutes to say to the minister that when he sets up this commission, when he gives them their riding instructions, he has to make sure that they get the message that girls can do anything and women can do anything, and that in developing skills strategies with industry we need to make sure that we maximise the skills of women.

One of the local activities I will be attending in the next couple of weeks is the signing of the charter for the Beacon Foundation at Forest Lake State High School. For the past few years, Heather Varcin and the team at Forest Lake have ensured that the young people at that high school take up opportunities to do vocational education and training. I sponsor the VET award each year. I am keen to ensure that young people have these opportunities while they are at school. One of the best policies that this Labor government has delivered in the past five or six years is the learning or earning policy. We have acknowledged that young people need to have flexible learning opportunities. We really need to grow our VET opportunities in schools. I commend the current minister and ministers before him for the drive and initiative they have shown in leading the way. VET in Queensland has been probably the most successful VET in schools program of any in the nation.

Finally, I want to say to the minister that I know that he is on the case. He knows the value of women and girls, having I think two or three daughters himself. He knows that the growth and success of our state and national economy rely on women as well. We really need to encourage young women, particularly in schools. We need to break down those cultural barriers that say that women are not tough enough or strong enough to take up these non-traditional trades. They certainly are. We are seeing that in the mining industry. We have had a growth of women taking up opportunities in the mining industry.

Pay equity is a big issue for women. We still lag about 17 per cent behind men in terms of pay equity, but women in the mining industry are actually 18 per cent ahead of the average male pay. If women take up those opportunities they actually open up opportunities for better pay and better conditions in many cases. Women and girls can do anything. Go girls! Let us see this skills commission really maximise and open doors for skilling up young and mature-age women who want to take up those training opportunities.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (6.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. I intend to make only a short contribution. I will direct most of my comments to the amendment of the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000. Many members before me have spoken about the importance of having well-trained and well-skilled apprentices. I had my doubts about supporting the creation of this body called Skills Queensland. I was worried that it would be another layer of bureaucracy and more wasteful, unproductive red tape. However, I am happy that in his speech the minister stated—

Skills Queensland will be led by seven industry representatives with direct experience in industry, training or employment sectors, one of whom will be the chair.

That gives me lots of comfort. I believe that the body will deliver what it is promising. The minister also said—

It will also comprise the directors-general from the employment and training portfolios. Industry representatives bring commercial acumen, an understanding of emerging industries and technologies, supply and demand priorities for skilled labour and economic drivers for business.

I believe that a boom time is not too far around the corner. I acknowledge that many areas of the world are still struggling to recover from the global financial crisis. There is still a danger that the economies of America and Europe will slide back into recession. However, Australia has enjoyed a resources-led recovery. I was reading in the *Economist* that South-East Asia generally has done very well. Thailand had amazing growth of nine per cent. I believe that in this area a lot of opportunity will come very quickly. Of course, we have a lot of demand from China and we have the amazing economic situation where the Australian dollar has achieved parity with the US dollar.

This legislation says that, yes, we have a problem that we are not training enough apprentices, but we are not quite sure how to fix the problem. In his second reading speech, the minister points the finger of blame at the private sector. He states—

Non-government investment in vocational education and training in Queensland is relatively low compared to other Australian jurisdictions. The government is looking forward to employers taking further responsibility for skilling their workforce. Queensland is on the front foot in meeting this challenge with the recently announced CSG/LNG investment fund. This fund leverages resources dollar for dollar from industry to meet the skills needs of this new and emerging industry.

I have spoken to many employers. Last week I sat down and had a long chat with a builder. I have spoken with manufacturers. They all have one complaint, and it is the reason they do not put on apprentices and train people. It is that there is simply too much red tape. There are too many unnecessary government rules and regulations to deal with to make it profitable to employ more apprentices. I believe that if we are serious about addressing the skills shortage, both sides of parliament should make a concerted effort to identify those areas where more improvement can be made and where government incentives can be given to employers to employ apprentices and take over the training of those apprentices. I am not all that comfortable with the current situation where apprentices do not have much loyalty to existing employers as they do the majority of their training with employment providers.

Probably similar to yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, I come from an era when apprentices were hired by companies and those companies looked after them for four years. A certain amount of company loyalty went with that, as well as stability. To use the example of the Burnett area, many young lads—and mainly it was young lads—were offered apprenticeships through the Bingera mill. Whether it was an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic, an electrician or a boiler maker, they knew that they would do their time at the mill, which would give them valuable on-site training and experience. Most of those apprentices were let go after they had graduated at the end of a four-year period. They then created a life for themselves. Many of those young apprentices went to the mines to work, and then established their own businesses. I believe in those days there was a greater level of training and a better quality apprentice came out of that scheme.

At the moment the scheme is very disjointed. Apprentices may spend 12 months with an employer or they may spend eight weeks with an employer. They go away and come back. There is not enough hands-on training. That is one of the issues that employers within the building industry have raised with me. They say that there is not enough training and the quality of the workmanship and the quality of the apprentices are not up to scratch in an overall sense. Of course, there are very talented apprentices around Queensland who are winning all sorts of awards. However, on the whole, we have to improve that level of employment.

I ask that the government makes a genuine effort to identify unnecessary government red tape and procedure. If we are going to be fair dinkum about hiring, we have to have a serious look at how we can get rid of payroll tax, which is one of the reasons employers are not employing extra staff or putting on extra apprentices. When we discuss payroll tax, both sides of parliament always say, 'There will be a \$700 million hole in the budget'. We acknowledge that, but let us also acknowledge the economic benefits that will flow through to our economy and to our employers through the extra jobs that will be created once that tax has gone. It is a tax on employment. It is a disincentive to employ people. We need to address that issue. Recently in the national papers I saw that the federal government was looking at addressing the issue. I hope we can come together and find some solution to that particular problem.

The explanatory notes state that the Queensland government will give TAFE institutions more autonomy and funding arrangements to respond to the needs of local labour markets and communities. I applaud that. It is a very good initiative. The Bundaberg TAFE facilities are amazing, but they are underutilised. They are not getting the use that they deserve, and that includes the library where the books are not being borrowed. Maybe that has something to do with the accessibility of the electronic service. We have a magnificent parliamentary library that we do not have to enter physically. The website provides a portal to great research and products.

The employers' message to this place is that they want more students at the Bundaberg TAFE. One of the solutions for the problem of not having enough students may lie in this legislation, which is one of the reasons that I will be supporting it. It is the flexibility to respond to local labour markets. For example, in Bundaberg the message that I am getting is that while certificate IV and diploma courses are important, the students want certificate I and certificate II courses, especially computer courses aimed at older students. As legislators, we have to find ways of encouraging, nurturing and favouring our wealth creators, because they create jobs. There are only four ways that any community can grow and create wealth. You either make it, you mine it, you grow it or you show it. If you are not directly involved in one of those, you are simply recycling the money that those four wealth creators have brought into the community. If we are fair dinkum about creating jobs, we need to find ways of encouraging and nurturing the wealth creators.

In closing, I will describe the best vocational education and training system in the world. I am a graduate of it. I was a RAAF apprentice. I was able to join when I was 15. I believe that, if this country is serious about providing skilled apprentices, both state and federal governments should look at establishing a defence force apprenticeship scheme that would be available to 15-year-olds again. There was a time when 15-year-olds could join. We attended military boarding school for 2½ years. Magnificent training was provided by some of the best instructors in the world. You can find graduates from those defence force apprenticeship schools in every facet of the community. My fellow apprentices have provided valuable skills and training to the rest of the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (7.30 pm): I rise to speak on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill. The second part of the bill deals with the deregistration of teachers who are convicted of a specific offence. I support 100 per cent the proposal to exclude a teacher who has committed a disqualifying offence. A loophole has been inadvertently allowed which means that if a person was proactive and deregistered themselves before a conviction occurred they may apply again for registration. That is probably the type of person who is aware of their own behaviours and who you precisely do not want in the teaching profession. The change to bring this into line with the exclusion of teachers who are registered at the time of conviction is welcomed, as other speakers I am sure would agree the protection of children is paramount.

The other major part of the bill deals with the establishment of the Skills Queensland board. I would like to speak to that part, and I thank the minister for the briefing. I note that the membership of the Skills Queensland board comprises the chief executive of the department administered by the minister with responsibility for employment policies and programs and a maximum of seven other members, and those members have to have specific skills. I have no problem with the skill set. I am concerned, however, that when I asked about the geographical spread of those members there was no confidence that there would be people other than from South-East Queensland on the board.

I think that is problematic because people who live in the south-east corner can at times fail to appreciate the differences in rural and regional Queensland. They can fail to appreciate the cost of travel, the cost of accommodation, the cost of dislocation in a family sense for people who might be going away for training. They can also fail to understand the skills requirements for rural and regional Queensland. I know it is easy to flip that by saying, 'That's okay. They will be able to get advice.' Experience shows that often people who are time poor, for want of a better term, often do not have the ability and the time to get that advice or, if they get it, are not able to fully appreciate the breadth of the diversification of Queensland as a region. In the minister's second reading speech, he states—

Queensland is on the front foot in meeting this challenge—

that is, the skilling of the workforce—

with the recently announced CSG/LNG investment fund. This fund leverages resources dollar for dollar from industry to meet the skills needs of this new and emerging industry.

I remember around the time of estimates that the minister was very cognisant, and I acknowledge that, of the skilling needs of all of Queensland. My area of interest is in the Gladstone region, particularly with the LNG proposals that are on foot. The minister made an announcement in relation to the \$10 million training fund. I took that announcement to be an announcement of \$10 million being made available specifically for training for this LNG industry, both in the Surat and in the Gladstone area.

I then had a meeting with a representative of Energy Skills Queensland. It was quite a happenchance meeting in terms of the information that I acquired. They advised me that the \$10 million that was co-funded by CSG-LNG and government had already been allocated to Energy Skills Queensland and, indeed, they had expended it. The money had been allocated to RTOs, registered training organisations. This particular representative cited the sorts of programs—it was management and a list of other skills. I asked, 'Were any of the RTOs outside South-East Queensland?' She said no. I said, 'So there were no training organisations in Gladstone like GAGAL or TAFE or any of the other RTOs?' None of those RTOs got funding, but she said that the RTOs that did get funding would be able to come up to Gladstone and do training. That does nothing to build capacity in our RTOs. If indeed it is the same fund—if it is the \$10 million—(a) it has already been spent, according to that information, and (b) it was spent in the south-east corner. It would be incredibly disappointing if that is the case. Maybe there has been cross-communication. Maybe there is another \$10 million and maybe the RTOs outside the south-east corner will get a pot of some of that money allocated to them.

We have a number of very progressive training organisations in my electorate. We have Gladstone Area Group Apprentices Ltd. If you want to hear somebody speak almost without drawing a breath on training across-the-board, on women's skills, on youth training, on apprenticeships, I will get Kerry Whitaker to come to speak and you will need a Bex and a good lie down by the end of it, because Kerry knows her stuff. She is passionate about training. She has got programs in place where that training can be achieved, and all she is looking for is funding. Her predecessor, Dave Burns, was no less passionate. But they did not get a look-in with this \$10 million.

I know that there is a proposal at the moment to amalgamate Central Queensland University and the TAFE college. It is a conversation I would like to have with the minister because there are a lot of benefits to this, providing in the long term TAFE did not disappear from the reality of being. Many years ago the Queensland University of Technology was formed from a marriage between a uni and a tech college. When that amalgamation occurred there was an intention to keep a tertiary and a training program running in tandem. I have not yet had the research done, but I would be interested to see how much of the training program still exists because it is now QUT.

It is essential in an area like mine for TAFE to be appropriately funded and for the facility to be available for VET training as well as for tertiary training. I had a long conversation with Vice-Chancellor Scott Bowman, and certainly he is passionate about that amalgamation. I have no problems with any proposal that will further education and training that will give tertiary students an option to broaden their qualifications into the voc. ed type training—the manual arts type training. But the ability of those who are doing VET training to upskill to tertiary education is also very important. I know that is a conversation for another time, but it highlights the need for consideration to be given to the proper funding of training organisations, particularly those in the areas identified for high demand—the Surat Basin, the Gladstone area. There will be other industries that go to other areas but, as I said, my focus is on Gladstone.

This Skills Queensland organisation could be amazingly successful. On the other hand, it could turn out to be another quango. If that were the case, it would be a disservice to all our young men and women and more mature apprentices and trainees who should be benefiting from that. The proposal that is outlined in the bill is an expansive one. It gives Skills Queensland considerable power and considerable assets. As I said, that the board has a breadth of not only experience but also geographical location and knowledge I think is a very important part of the validity of that board in being able to fully represent all of Queensland. Living in the regions is different from living in the south-east corner. It is not just a trip on a train to get to another training organisation if the TAFE where a person lives does not provide the course that is required to finish off their qualifications.

I look forward to the minister's response, particularly in relation to the \$10 million training fund. It is of concern to me if it is the case that the \$10 million referred to from the CSG-LNG industry and the government has already been expended. If there is another \$10 million I am certain that there would be organisations in my electorate that would like to put in a bid to offer training to young men and women and mature-age people and apprentices. We have the runs on the board. We see from the training awards that there have been many mature-age students, as well as young people, who have shown excellence in their studies. That reflects very well on the training organisations.

I know the minister is passionate about education and training. I believe he is genuine in his desire to see skills improve and increase in this state. Certainly from my perspective that is critically important for the Gladstone region. I look forward to the minister's response.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (7.40 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the debate on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. I recognise that the purpose of the bill is to, firstly, establish an industry led skills commission in Queensland called Skills Queensland and to strengthen child protection measures in the teaching profession.

I have some concerns about this bill. They are that this bill does not address the issue of funding for Skills Queensland, that board appointments will be at the discretion of the minister—and we know the ambiguity that arises from measures like that—and whether the existing structures will be dismantled to make way for Skills Queensland or whether there is to be another duplicate bureaucracy. Others have spoken about these concerns so I will just record my concern about those issues.

There has been a need for a major focus on skills training in our education system for many years. That is absolutely vital for the future of industries all over Queensland, but it is particularly relevant in Central Queensland with its agriculture, mining and related industries. For far too long there has been an emphasis by the education system on vocational training being second rate to tertiary education.

Recently I sat with a group of year 10 students when an 18-year-old apprentice spoke to them about his future. He spoke about where he came from and where he was going. He had just bought a HSV ute, he had a boat in his shed and he was starting to look at buying a house. He was a little over 18 years old. He had started in the mining industry. He knew where he was going. He knew that he had a future. He knew that his future was secure. It was amazing to watch the young students take on board a glimpse of what their future could be.

For so long we have neglected to go back to talk to our younger students about this. It is no good saying to a class of year 10s that they have an opportunity to go into vocational training. We have to start this back in years 5 or 6. The students can come through in a training program and get an understanding of what it is like to work on the land or what it is like to be in the mining industry. It is no good leaving that until year 10 or year 12. We have to coax people along.

In the area that I represent there were a couple of programs put in place at the Mirani State High School and the Sarina State High School. I have spoken extensively about these programs in this parliament. The Lighthouse Kickstart to Literacy project was started at the Mirani State High School. Literacy and numeracy were encompassed with work on small motors. Students come in from cluster schools around the area. They spend time pulling motors down and accessing manuals on computers. They work it like a workshop and they have to cost the spare parts. They have to run it like a business and put a charge on the end product when the motors are rebuilt.

I am proud to have been a patron of that program from its inception. The quality of the students who have come out of that program is amazing. I can remember quite vividly a young bloke from a cane farm who was not doing so well at school. He obviously helped out his dad in his shed and those sorts of things. They took him to an engineering workshop in Mackay and put him on a mig welder. The foreman of the site was amazed. This lad was only about five feet high—a little bloke. He was welding better than their tradesmen. The next year he got an apprenticeship.

I believe it is very important to bring our students along. As I said, it is no good trying to get students into those sorts of programs later in their education. That program won a number of showcase awards over a number of years. A lot of students have actually gained very considerable help in gaining apprenticeships in the Mackay region.

There were some dedicated teachers and some parents who were switched on to the project who looked after those students. We even had grandparents coming in and helping the students pull motors down and show them how to set valves and all those sorts of things. It was magnificent to see the cooperation between the community and the school. There was a heck of a lot of sponsorship from the mining and engineering companies around the place. Such companies as Caterpillar and Hail Creek and others became involved. Those students were taken out to the mine sites and taken into the engineering works. The big picture things are great but we sometimes have to go back to the basics and encourage students to come on board.

Sarina State High School and the community actually built a skills centre at Sarina under the auspices of a board that was put in place. If the minister is in the Mackay area I invite him to give me a call and we will go through the skills centre in Sarina. It covers a range of areas such as agricultural pursuits—cattle and chicken production—horticultural and aquacultural pursuits. It is quite amazing to have young students from year 8 leading cattle through shows. They show cattle at Sarina, Mackay, Proserpine and the Pioneer Valley. It is a huge introduction to agriculture. Those students go on to become jackaroos, farm managers or to work in feedlots.

On the other side is the engineering component. They have state-of-the-art lathes, welders, metal handling equipment et cetera. We have employers from the coal ports and the mills who come into the school to take on the students that come out of this program. They do a certificate II at least in engineering. They are apprentice ready to go straight into the workforce.

Less than a million dollars was spent on that facility. Some 75 per cent of the high school students go through the facilities in one way or other. It really is amazing how this works for students who are not achieving well in the traditional schooling system and students who are, I guess, a bit of a nuisance for the teachers in the high schools. They go down to the skills centre and they get so involved that they line up at the gate to come to school. They would not miss this for quids.

The biggest penalty those students can be given is to be told they cannot come to the skills centre. Those are the sorts of things that are happening. I am highly supportive of any vocational training moves going forward. However, the reality is that we have to start from a base level. If, indeed, there is funding available for skills in Central Queensland, I would dearly like to see the agricultural section of the skills centre at Sarina fully funded as a dedicated agricultural centre of excellence, and I will talk to the minister about that later. That would mean that recurrent funding would be provided for the running of that centre. As it stands now, most of the funding has to be supplied by the high school except for money raised by the boards through grants and fundraising activities.

The area that I am most concerned about is Mount Morgan. The youth unemployment level at Mount Morgan is close to 20 per cent. There is a high school that does not really cater for vocational training. The skills centre where they actually teach vocational training is equivalent to a classroom from when I went through as a young bloke. That really needs to be looked at. Mount Morgan is close enough to be the supplier of employment to the expanding areas of Gladstone, as a previous speaker mentioned. To have young people fall through the cracks into unemployment is abysmal. We are not doing the right thing by our youth if we are not separating the education system out so that they have the opportunity to undertake vocational training and to do it properly as a learning project throughout their school life.

With those few words, I will conclude my contribution. I really do support any way in which vocational training and skilling can be upgraded throughout Queensland. I do have one beef about travelling allowances. Young apprentices from the Central Highlands et cetera have to travel considerable distances and quite often have to pay their own accommodation in order to complete their apprenticeship training at TAFE. I became aware of the case of an apprentice who was out of pocket by thousands of dollars due to having to travel to a regional centre to complete his TAFE training. It is fine for kids in Rockhampton and Mackay, but those students out in the bush must be able to receive some type of subsidy so that they can complete their apprenticeship. With those few words, I support the legislation.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (7.53 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. The Bligh Labor government is committed to ensuring a strong economy for Queensland now and in the future. Our \$17.1 billion infrastructure development is based on this commitment. The commitment means jobs and it means Queenslanders having the skills to perform those jobs. That is why it is so important that we have a system in place to lead the development of a responsive and demand driven skills system that positions Queensland to meet the challenges of the future.

Queensland already leads the way in terms of school based training schemes, with our state having the highest participation rates of any state or territory in Australia. There are schools in my local electorate of Bulimba which are making magnificent use of this program, offering real opportunities to those students who already know what they want to do when they leave school, and that is to get to work straightaway. I congratulate the local businesses in my area who recognise the value of training up keen young workers from scratch and who greatly contribute to the opportunities our young people have to skill themselves for the real-life workforce.

However, given Queensland's growth, given our rapidly changing industrial landscape and given the new opportunities that are available for Queensland to develop its economy, it is important that we do not just rest on our laurels with an existing paradigm. Skills Queensland will be an industry led statutory body which will take us into the future. It will have the key function of advising government on skills and workforce development and skilled migration and it will be charged with developing a skills and workforce development investment plan. With the government's approval, Skills Queensland may in the future take an active role in the development or delivery of initiatives to deliver on the skills and workforce development priorities outlined in this plan.

Another absolutely key function of the new body will be to promote and encourage industry investment in VET. Given that Queensland has one of the lowest rates of private investment in the skills system, it is critical that this sort of partnership is encouraged. Industry and government each have their own important contribution to make to supporting various sectors and their economic drivers and to identifying skills needs for the future with their own specific knowledge and understanding of industry trends, emerging needs and technological change. Neither industry nor government can be responsible on their own. The skills system must be a shared responsibility.

In addition, by giving industry a key role in shaping our future priorities it is envisaged that industry will take more ownership and have more confidence in the system. From the beginning of the 2011-12 financial year, Skills Queensland will be able to access a quantum of government funding held by

government to deliver on the strategic priorities identified in its investment plan and other advice and recommendations. This will be one mechanism which allows the government to act quickly to respond to the emerging needs of a new industry, and the coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas industry has been an excellent example of this working well in a partnership with industry, with co-investment leveraging industry investment dollar for dollar. Skills Queensland will be well placed to broker and implement similar programs in the future.

I congratulate the minister on the work he has done in bringing this bill to fruition and on his contribution to the spectrum of needs within his portfolio from early education to skilling Queenslanders for the future. I applaud the fine proposals in this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.56 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. At the outset I would like to congratulate the minister on his obvious commitment to education reform across all sectors of education and for advocating within the important area of skills and training. The main purpose of this bill is to establish an industry led skills commission in Queensland named Skills Queensland and to strengthen the child protection measures within the teaching environments in Queensland.

An appropriately skilled workforce is vital to the future success of Queensland employers and its economy. Indeed, the Bligh Labor government has highlighted this fact through our *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* target, which aims for three out of every four Queenslanders holding a trade, training or tertiary qualification by 2020. By skilling up our workforce, we can aim to avoid skills shortages, have highly mobile and productive workforces and provide continuity of employment and a variety of employment options for workers. It is also vital to the future success of Queensland employers and its economy.

Skills Queensland will empower industry like never before to direct government's skills investment to meet its future needs. However, this advice cannot be meaningfully developed unless industry adequately plans for its future workforce needs. This planning must acknowledge that training is only part of the answer.

Employers need to implement a more proactive and holistic approach to workforce planning and development to meet the needs of the future. Issues such as attraction, recruitment, retention and staff development in addition to training need to be addressed and led by industry. Through effective planning by industry, Skills Queensland can provide advice on skills development, labour shortages, strategies to improve workforce participation and the priorities for skilled migration. Skills Queensland represents a genuine partnership between industry and government. Government is providing industry with more responsibility and more control over the skills system than ever before. However, with this responsibility comes an obligation for industry to genuinely plan for their future workforce. Only by implementing a unified and industry led workforce development strategy can Queensland's future skill needs be met.

Skills training is a very important issue to residents of Pine Rivers, and our high schools and skills and training institutions are committed to working across sectors to provide options and outcomes for our future workforce. I would like to congratulate particularly Pine Rivers State High School and Bray Park State High School on the work that they are doing in relation to the training issues within their schools and the way that they are working collaboratively across the various industries within Pine Rivers to make sure that our young people have a chance to get the training and then a chance to implement the new skills that they learn. I know that the changes that we are making today will enhance the work already done. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (7.59 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill. One of the stated objectives of this bill is to establish an industry led skills commission in Queensland called Skills Queensland in response to what the explanatory notes describe as the challenge for Queensland to ensure that approaches to skills and workforce development keep pace with the demands of a rapidly growing economy and are responsive to economic factors impacting on the state. The explanatory notes go on to say that the establishment of Skills Queensland will respond to the demand for targeting workforce development that is responsive to current and emerging industry and community needs as critical to raising productivity, stimulating innovation and achieving global competitiveness. The explanatory notes also state that it is essential that government is able to respond to emerging issues in a timely way.

In view of this stated objective and the rationale advanced by the government in the explanatory notes for the establishment of Skills Queensland, I want to canvass the experiences, concerns and challenges faced by a constituent of mine, Mr Mario Menso of Bluewater, who has to this point in time been frustrated and disadvantaged professionally and financially by a serious deficiency in the training and licensing of tradesmen working in the composites industry in the state of Queensland. I hope the formation of Skills Queensland, which the explanatory notes insist will be a responsive industry led commission, will be able to prevent this type of issue from occurring again in the future.

The circumstances facing Mr Menso are of serious and pressing concern to all tradesmen in Queensland working as composites technicians who specialise in the use of plastics and rubber for industrial and manufacturing purposes because they relate to their training and their qualification as a professional in their field. The use of composites or the use of plastics and rubber is one of the fastest growing technologies used for industrial and manufacturing purposes. As such, composites technicians are in high demand. Mr Menso undertook his training at PARTEC's composites training centre in Townsville. PARTEC stands for Plastics and Rubber Technical Education Centre. The PARTEC institute is a Queensland Department of Education and Training registered training authority.

To briefly explain how this problem has been revealed, a client of Mr Menso lodged a complaint with the Building Services Authority about his repair work on the shell of a second-hand fibreglass pool that had been relocated to the client's property. Importantly, it should be noted that Mr Menso did not construct or install the pool shell at this location. The pool was not yet plumbed in, secured or filled at this location. The BSA inspected the pool three months after Mr Menso completed his work and subsequently issued a fine against Mr Menso supposedly for unlicensed work. However, Mr Menso contested this breach and provided his qualifications obtained through training from PARTEC and recognition of prior learning assessment by PARTEC, a registered training authority to the BSA. Mr Menso was effectively told by the BSA that his PARTEC qualifications as a composites technician were not worth the paper they were written on. Obviously this alarmed Mr Menso, who believed he had undertaken training provided by a registered training authority which delivered training in composites technology under Queensland Department of Education and Training guidelines.

This advice also alarmed Mr Mal Biebrick, a qualified composites technician and certified training consultant who has for many years delivered training in composites on behalf of PARTEC to literally hundreds of apprentices in North Queensland, including Mr Menso. Mr Menso and Mr Biebrick attempted to sort this issue out with BSA officers in Townsville as far as the training provided by PARTEC is concerned and the qualifications that trained composites technicians hold. Fundamentally, Mr Menso and Mr Biebrick question the jurisdiction of the BSA to issue a fine to a non-building or construction trade and the technical qualifications of BSA inspectors to scrutinise work of a composites technician. In support of this point, I would note that the Queensland government has published an A to Z of apprenticeships and traineeships. That document lists a composites technician apprenticeship as a manufacturing apprenticeship, not a building and construction apprenticeship, and that fact is very important.

As all members are aware, the BSA is a statutory authority primarily concerned with matters pertaining to the building and construction industry. Given that he was fined for unlicensed work, Mr Menso initially attempted to satisfy the BSA by asking what training he would need to undertake to continue the work he was presently doing on fibreglass pools. The BSA suggested Mr Menso complete a Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Queensland course. Interestingly, upon reviewing the modules and elective subjects in the SPASA course, Mr Menso observed that none of the modules or subjects pertained to his work with fibreglass pools. When Mr Menso pointed this out to the BSA, it inserted a number of modules into the SPASA course specifically to do with the repair of imperfections in composite structures and the repair of damaged composite structures which, ironically, were part of PARTEC's training modules that had been undertaken by Mr Menso. However, it should be noted that there were significant workplace health and safety issues involved here, as these modules can only be undertaken once individuals have completed prerequisite modules which cover the safe handling and use of composites products, which can be prone to volatile chemical imbalances and cause environmental hazards in certain weather conditions. The BSA did not ask if Mr Menso had completed these prerequisite modules.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! While I appreciate the member's concern for this issue, we have listened to it for a while now. Could I ask you to return to the long title of the bill as soon as you are able, please?

Mr CRIPPS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am happy to speak to clause 4(3) of the bill which states—

to strengthen Queensland's economic base by providing a skilled workforce that meets the current and future needs of industry, Government and the community.

I am speaking specifically to circumstances concerning a constituent of mine who has undertaken training with a registered training authority in the state of Queensland but who subsequently has been involved in difficulties confirming that training with the statutory authority in Queensland that has applied regulatory arrangements to that individual, and I am trying to give an understanding to members present that there are concerns from me and from Mr Menso that these government regulations are not appropriately providing for these professionals in their particular field.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will allow that.

Mr CRIPPS: The failure of the BSA to require Mr Menso to complete these prerequisites is a serious workplace health and safety oversight and underlines the charge advanced by Mr Menso and Mr Biebrick that the BSA does not have the technical qualifications to be responsible for the regulatory oversight of the composites industry, which is a type of manufacturing industry and not related to the

building or construction industries. When the BSA was advised that Mr Menso had already completed these electives as part of his PARTEC training, which the BSA had said were not worth the paper they were written on, the BSA then asked Mr Menso to complete a waterproofer or painter and decorator trade. This further confused and frustrated Mr Menso and Mr Biebrick, as neither a waterproofer nor a painter and decorator are qualified to be composites technicians.

Mr Biebrick then decided to test the issue and the system for himself by applying for a BSA licence that would allow him to undertake work as a composites technician. Mr Biebrick had owned his own manufacturing business for 16 years and had been a plastics consultant and trainer for PARTEC, the Queensland Department of Education and Training registered training authority for this industry, for 10 years. On 11 August 2009 Mr Cameron Murphy, the manager of Regulatory Services of the BSA, wrote to Mr Biebrick and advised that the Queensland Building Services Authority Regulation 2003, which contains the list of licensed classes the BSA is authorised to issue, did not contain a licence class known as a composites technician. The trade known as 'composites technician' has existed formally since the year 2000 when it was approved by the Queensland government and recognised by the Australian government. The trade was covered by the rubber and plastics award in Queensland and the national peak body for the industry is known as Composites Australia.

In view of this information, the obvious question to ask is: if a licence class known as composites technician is not listed as a trade by the Queensland Building Services Authority Regulation 2003, under which the BSA derives its jurisdiction and authority to issue licences pertaining to the building and construction industry, how could the BSA have possibly issued Mr Menso with a fine for unlicensed work? If the BSA is the correct authority with the jurisdiction to inspect work by composites technicians, it does not presently recognise as valid the trade training being delivered by PARTEC, which is a Queensland Department of Education and Training registered training authority. This would mean that literally hundreds of composites technicians who did their apprenticeships with PARTEC would not be recognised by the BSA. However, if the BSA has no jurisdiction to inspect work completed by composites technicians, it is not presently aware of this or that training provided by PARTEC is delivered under Queensland Department of Education and Training guidelines. If that is the case, Mr Menso has been subject to an injustice and he has been professionally and financially disadvantaged as a result. It would appear that, presently, the Building Services Authority and the Department of Education and Training are operating in isolation without appropriate reference to each other in respect of the training and regulation of the composites industry in Queensland.

I first drew this matter to the attention of the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology and the Minister for Education and Training in late January of this year. Minister Wilson confirmed that the composites technician apprenticeship was based on the national qualification of a certificate III in polymer training, which had been declared an apprenticeship in Queensland in the year 2000. Minister Wilson went on to confirm that the qualification is a nationally recognised qualification developed in accordance with the Australian qualification framework for the manufacturing industry.

Then, inexplicably, Minister Wilson stated that, in general, matters concerning work undertaken in a building and construction environment fall within the scope of the BSA. That statement in isolation is true and accurate. However, in the context of this issue, that statement is completely irrelevant. Minister Wilson then referred the matter to Minister Swarten as the minister responsible for the BSA, ignoring the obvious implications for PARTEC, a registered training authority overseen by his department.

For his own part, Minister Swarten acknowledged that Mr Menso was a qualified composites technician. However, having taken advice from the BSA, Minister Swarten simply repeated the chronology of events as far as the infringement notices issued to Mr Menso were concerned and reiterated suggestions about the types of training and qualifications that Mr Menso might like to undertake to satisfy the BSA. The suggestions that came forward from Minister Swarten included pool construction, pool installation, waterproofing and painting and decorating. Mr Menso, as a composites technician, does not work in any of these areas. Mr Menso does not construct, or install, or waterproof, or paint, or decorate pools. Mr Menso is a composites technician who works with plastics and rubber. Mr Menso has a nationally recognised qualification and has been trained by a Queensland government registered training authority to manipulate and repair composites materials, which include fibreglass pools.

This situation is a serious anomaly in the regulation of an important and growing industry in Queensland. Currently, composites technicians like Mr Menso are being regulated by the BSA, a statutory authority of the Queensland government, in relation to matters outside of its area of expertise. These composites technicians have been trained by PARTEC, a registered training organisation with the Queensland government.

I wrote to Ministers Wilson and Swarten again in May to outline these inconsistencies and I urged them to reconsider their responses to this issue. As I mentioned, Mr Menso has been frustrated and disadvantaged by this problem and he is not the only one threatened by a case of the left hand of the government not knowing what the right hand of the government is doing. Action needs to be taken to address this serious issue.

Mr Schwarten: It's not construction. We discussed this, you and I did. It is on the record.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, if it is building or construction—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Members will direct their comments through the chair.

Mr CRIPPS: I take the interjection from the Minister for Public Works. If it is not a building or construction matter then why is the Building Services Authority, which is the statutory authority in Queensland pertaining to the building and construction industry, regulating the composites industry? That is the fundamental point that I have been advancing all night and the Minister for Public Works has refused to accept that fundamental point tonight. He has refused to accept that fundamental point on two occasions that I have written to him on behalf of Mr Menso and I will continue to make representations on his behalf until I get a satisfactory answer.

Mr Schwarten: But you haven't got a solution to it.

Mr CRIPPS: Skills Queensland ought to take an immediate interest in this issue once it is constituted under this legislation. Composites are durable, light and strong, are corrosion resistant, have low conductivity as far as electricity, heat and cold is concerned, cannot be detected by radar and are not non-magnetic substances. I ask all members to seriously consider the potential consequences for the Queensland economy of the development of the composites industry being stifled in terms of productivity innovation and global competitiveness.

Mr Schwarten: I'm just signing a letter to Les Tyrrell now on that subject

Mr CRIPPS: I take the repeated interjections from the Minister for Public Works. He advances the proposition that I have no solution.

Mr Schwarten: No, you don't.

Mr CRIPPS: I will give him a solution: Minister Schwarten ought to speak to Minister Wilson about this matter. They ought to recognise that a qualification given by a registered training authority under the guidelines put down by the Queensland Department of Education and Training means nothing as far as the pursuit of that profession is concerned for Mr Menso in the community, because the organisation—the statutory authority that has been given the responsibility to regulate his industry, the BSA—does not have the necessary expertise to regulate the industry because it is charged with regulating the building and construction industry.

Mr Schwarten: That's right.

Mr CRIPPS: The minister has continually interjected on me tonight, insisting that a composites technician is not involved in the building or construction industry. So a licence class for a composites technician needs to be created so that they can go and practise the profession that they trained for, that they were provided training with by a registered training authority in the state of Queensland by the Department of Education and Training, without the need to take up the suggestion by the BSA that they become a painter and decorator or a waterproofer. Mr Menso is none of those things. He does not undertake—

Mr Schwarten: He needs to be licensed to carry out swimming pool repairs.

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Menso and other composites technicians—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to cease interjecting.

Mr CRIPPS: They do not undertake the activities of a painter and decorator or a waterproofer.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek your ruling on this. I have been under constant attack from the honourable member making all sorts of ludicrous statements. Are you saying that I am not entitled to respond?

Mr CRIPPS: Madam Deputy Speaker—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The member for Hinchinbrook has the call.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I simply seek a reasonable and fair resolution to this serious issue on behalf of my constituent who has, for the past period of time, been unable to practise his profession in the state of Queensland.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. Well-trained employees underpin a vibrant economy. Throughout business and industry—indeed every employment sector—it is the employees whose abilities and skills can value-add for their employers. In an industry the competence and capability of employees is the measure by which the industry can progress and develop and ultimately be a measure of its sustainability. Without an adequately trained workforce industry cannot perform to its potential. Without industry maximising its success our state's economy weakens. We have seen recent skills shortages. We have seen the impact on our resource-rich economy of a dearth of employees. Therefore, an essential component of this state's future success is a sustainable and flexible training sector that delivers the training industry requires.

If training is delivered in inadequate time frames where fourth-year trainees are still waiting to undertake first-year block exams, if training fails to provide the necessary skills industry requires, it means that training and industry are running to different priorities and plans. That is inefficient and damaging. Industry then has to retrain or look elsewhere for its workforce. Industry knows what it wants. It is best qualified to point out the direction for the future of the sector it represents.

The education and training sector is worth about \$2.4 billion a year to the Queensland economy. Industry contributes an amount almost immeasurable. Its present and future operations are the backbone of the state. So we cannot afford to get the equation wrong in training. We cannot afford to see the local skills base eroded or to always be playing catch-up in delivering training that suits industry's needs of yesterday. The results of those scenarios are just too dangerous for an economy that is as resource rich as Queensland. Skills need to be delivering what industry needs both now and in the future. A failure to do this will deliver a permanent skills shortage to our state.

This bill acknowledges the importance of listening to industry. Pleasingly, the bill follows the recommendation of the Queensland Resources Council and it is a move in the right direction. Less fortunately, it is a cautious move and one so shrouded in bureaucracy that it may not ultimately do much to improve the state of training in Queensland. Queensland has a remarkably low level of industry investment in the skills system and while training does need to be industry led it cannot be jettisoned by the government. That is a danger in the bill. The responsibility is being passed to industry in terms of financial contribution but less emphatically in terms of direction and method.

To be effective, Skills Queensland needs to be a truly industry based body, flexible and responsive and able to deliver the direction that will benefit our state, industry and trainees. Under this bill Skills Queensland will be able to make recommendations to the minister about skills and workforce development, skilled migration and any other matters referred to it by the minister. It would be tasked with developing a skills and workforce development investment plan with a 10-year outlook, a five-year coverage and annual reviews. Skills Queensland will be able to take action approved by the minister under the plan and to inform the public about matters relating to its functions. It will bear responsibility for promoting and encouraging industry investment in training and undertaking and promoting research on matters relating to its functions. This will allow Skills Queensland to identify areas of skills priorities.

Flexibility and the ability to prepare for future demands are vital in today's economy, with technology and innovation changing the processes and requirements of industry in short time frames and requiring a responsiveness in training systems we have not previously encountered. Our world is changing quickly and our ability to keep pace in the world economy depends on our ability to be responsive yet maintain excellence. That needs preparedness and training that can deliver to industry's requirements. So it is pleasing to see the establishment of a board dedicated to that end. It is less pleasing to see that the board will be appointed by ministerial discretion with no real requirement for the appointees to be independent and truly industry focused. The removal of funding responsibility from the government to industry needs to be backed by a system that delivers industry needs. It cannot deliver an out for the government just because it no longer wants to fund training to the current extent.

My fear with this bill is that it will require industry to give more but the promise of receiving in return will fail to materialise to the extent that is flagged. The other danger in this bill is the massive bureaucracy that it could create. The training bureaucracy that exists will be handing over a large chunk of their functions to Skills Queensland yet there is no mention of a scale-down of their bureaucracy. The worst result from this bill could be a dual layer of bureaucracy, a doubling of the onerous officialdom and the stifling of the industry with paperwork and pencil pushing. The establishment of Skills Queensland is a move in the right direction. It also presents an opportunity to the government to get it right, to make the board independent and efficient, to simplify the bureaucracy and to give industry a real say in their future.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (8.25 pm): The Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010 is an important piece of legislation. I certainly note the comments from the shadow minister for education and his support for the bill in principle. However, we do have reservations and concerns with some of the operational aspects of this legislation. The purpose of the legislation of course is twofold. The first is to enable the design and establishment of an industry led skills commission in Queensland to be known as Skills Queensland. The second purpose is the very important aspect of child protection measures in the teaching profession. I have always been a very great supporter of vocational education, having been a teacher in that area for many years and also having previously been chairman of a TAFE community council and involved quite passionately in this whole aspect. It really is a very, very important area of training and education within Queensland.

Industry in Queensland has had a long-held concern that the Queensland training sector is too slow to react to skills shortages and, what is more, does not fully train participants to the level that industry requires. Industry growth in specialised areas has taken place to meet national and global requirements. In many cases the ability to source trained personnel or to have people trained has caused industry angst. This is also costing our state with regard to revenue potential and also has a negative effect on employment potential. The Queensland Resources Council has been the catalyst by

promoting more industry involvement to make the Queensland skills system as effective and efficient as possible. The Skills Queensland commission will be charged with the strategic formulation of a five-year skills plan. This will then be broken down to more operational 12-month views. Full cross-sectional industry engagement will be critical to ensure the capture of all relevant current and projected data.

Building on from this view there will be a requirement of Skills Queensland to submit a skills and workforce development investment plan for approval by government each year. This will have a 10-year whole-of-economy outlook with a five-year plan to complement this outlook. Skills Queensland will be an industry led body and this plan is the driver for government prioritisation of skills, qualifications and workforce development within Queensland. Recent emerging industry opportunities have highlighted the failure of the present government to consult with industry in an effort to quantify skills shortages and how best to expediently and professionally satisfy this shortfall.

Skills Queensland is to be established with an industry focused board—we hope. The board will comprise the directors-general of the departments of education and employment and economic development, together with seven others who are deemed to have direct industry training involvement. It is very important that these people are not just leaders in bureaucracy but also hands-on industry people with the knowledge of the needs within the community. The appointment of these latter board members will be for a maximum of four years. There is scant detail as to how these board members will be chosen. The government does need to ensure that there is a genuine approach to ensure probity and transparency in the board member selection process.

It is noted that appointment will be by the minister and that there is a provision whereby ministerial discretion can overrule disqualification from potential membership resulting from insolvency or conviction histories. There is an aim for the body to be operational by 1 January 2011. With this short time frame in mind, one must wonder if there has been some discreet discussion and shoulder tapping to perhaps short-list these seven board members. Skills Queensland will enter into contracts; acquire, hold or dispose of property; engage consultants; fix charges for its services; and have other powers of an individual that are necessary to fulfil its functions.

Skills Queensland will have a huge responsibility. Financially, the education and training sector is presently worth \$2.4 billion to the Queensland economy. Queensland has also maintained a high concentration of state based training. In fact, it is the highest in the nation, with a 40 per cent stake of the market. That is good, but it is important to keep the quality within that stake. Conversely, industry participation by way of investment in the skills system is significantly lower in Queensland than in other states.

Skills Queensland will also be empowered to directly intervene where there has been a clear market failure in training. There will be provision for funding to invest in training and skilling programs. Skills Queensland is to have this flexibility to negotiate to get value for money in the purchase of training places. Where an industry has flagged that unexpected growth is imminent, the commission has the capacity to move funding quickly. The commission will only be able to purchase where it can be clearly demonstrated that market failure has occurred. In the norm, a holistic economy view and market operations will be a requirement in the purchasing process. Contributions from industry will be encouraged as part of this process also.

It is acknowledged that there are established bodies in South Australia and Victoria with similar functions to those proposed for Skills Queensland. Skills Australia, the Australian government industry advisory board, has recommended greater industry engagement in state and national skills investment decisions. Industry and employers deserve and need confidence in and, most importantly, input into the training and skills process. There has to be methodology to address skills shortages in specific industry sectors, occupations or regions. We have just heard the member for Hinchinbrook outlining such an area in very astute detail.

Queensland has a great depth of resources in a physical sense in relation to agriculture and mining. We also have natural resources for tourism with the outback, the beautiful coastline and the reef. With those combined, there is scope to employ a wide range of skill sets across Queensland, not just in the city but right across our rural towns and regional areas. The employment opportunities from those need to be planned and managed in a strategic manner. I have some concerns about the government's ability to engage with industry wisely. However, we certainly will be watching to see how the proposed program for Skills Queensland will roll out.

The second aspect of the bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act. These changes align to cases where teachers have been convicted of a disqualifying offence under the provisions of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act. A qualified registered teacher who is convicted and sentenced to an imprisonment order becomes an excluded person and may never apply again for registration. However, should that same person have surrendered their registration or permission to teach or allowed those to lapse prior to being convicted and sentenced to an imprisonment order, they may apply again for registration. Hopefully this amendment will ensure that the re-registration of a former teacher with a conviction will not be possible.

One further amendment will enable a system of notification of child harm by a teacher. Currently, the Queensland College of Teachers is not notified when an investigation stops for a teacher who then is no longer a teacher at some stage during the investigation. This could be due to resignation, dismissal or simply perhaps due to the expiration of a teacher's fixed-term contract. There also needs to be an acknowledgement that part of the amendment to this act is a remedy for an amalgam of hurried amendments relating to the criminal history screening bill.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.33 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. I take members to the explanatory notes, which at page 8, under the heading of 'Estimated Costs for Government Implementation', state—

It is estimated that the costs for establishing Skills Queensland, including staffing, fleet management and accommodation and corporate service costs and remuneration for appointed members at category C2 for the 2010-11 financial year will be approximately \$1.93M. The ongoing operational costs will be approximately \$3.58M per annum.

That is, \$3.58 million per annum.

It is all well and good to say that we are going to make these changes because it is consistent with what is happening in Victoria and South Australia, which have established bodies with similar functions to those proposed for Skills Queensland and, accordingly, it must be good for Queensland. I would have loved to see the explanatory notes outline a cost saving of similar amounts of money for the very departments we are talking about. However, that is not the case. We are building another great bureaucracy at significant cost to the Queensland taxpayer but with no significant savings demonstrated.

While it may be well and good to create this new entity, it is happening at a time when we are saying that dollars are tight and we have to sell off our assets to meet the job creation projects that the government wants to pursue and we want to keep people employed. Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to allocate \$3.58 million per annum to run another entity at a time when Queensland was buoyant. Whilst it is well and good that the minister is trying to plan for the future, I have major reservations about the costs involved.

Education Queensland is not a department that the Queensland government can be justly proud of, because it seems to me that it is a bloated bureaucracy. If we did a cost-benefit analysis of how many people are sitting in department offices on department chairs planning and guiding in comparison to how many teachers are working at the coalface in our schools, I think we would see a significant imbalance. It is high time we focused on getting more resources to our nurses, our teachers and our police, instead of creating massive bureaucracies in our regional offices. At the moment on the Sunshine Coast there is talk of significant staff changes from Nambour to Maroochydore, that we are going to have a new regional centre and that the government has a mandate.

I have reservations about this bill. I think the minister's department is bloated. I believe that we can do better. I have read the minister's material and I know what he wants to achieve, but I do not see anything in the material that demonstrates significant savings. It is just spending, spending, spending. Earlier this year when the Treasurer brought down his budget he said that times are tough and we have to cut back, yet here we are spending more. I look forward to the minister's reply and I look forward to the bill proceeding to the committee stage.

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (8.37 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. Skills are vital to Queensland's future economic prosperity. For the individual, qualifications represent the passport to increased employment and earnings potential, while for an employer a skilled workforce is a flexible and productive workforce. In Queensland our strong population and economic growth over the past decade have been the envy of other states. However, this growth has meant that maintaining a high participation in the skills system is difficult. In addition to this challenge, Queensland's economy is preparing for a renewed phase of growth as our state rebounds from the effects of the global financial crisis. In the future, Queensland needs to maximise all investment in training and workforce development to ensure that our workforce continues to have the skills needed to meet growing demand.

As a former Centrelink employee, I saw how training was offered to unemployed people with no reference to the needs of employers. I do not know how many young women were offered training as nail technicians and even I could see that they were never going to be employed in that industry. There were too many trainees and too small a client base. It must have been demoralising for those people to find that there was no work, but our role was to refer to training those long-term unemployed despite the fact that training courses were not relevant to their needs.

It is not just about continually increasing our skills base. Industry must also effectively prepare its future workforce through holistic workforce development planning that takes account of all issues relating to the workforce, not just training. We need to ensure that skills developed by our system meet the needs of industry and a growing economy within the context of effective workforce planning by Queensland employers. To achieve this, industry must genuinely lead and own the skills system. This will be the vital task of Skills Queensland as the state's independent skills commission.

Just in the last couple of days, a subcontractor working on the new Gold Coast University Hospital put out a plea for gasfitters to install medical gas services. He is even willing to train applicants in this specialised field such is the need. Skills Queensland will be empowered to lead the development of new models of skills delivery to provide a more responsive and demand driven skills system that positions Queensland to meet the challenges of the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (8.39 pm): I also rise to speak in support of the Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010. Skills and workforce development are primarily the responsibility of employers, whereas responsibility for the skills system has traditionally rested with the government.

Reform through the Queensland Skills Plan over recent years has included a much greater emphasis on the government engaging with industry. I would just like to talk briefly about some of the reforms such as the centres of excellence, which have included the areas of aviation, mining, building, energy and manufacturing and engineering; the skills formation strategies, which have involved quite a number of industries working with local councils including agribusiness in the Mackay region, aquaculture and also outback tourism, where communities have actually worked together with their local industries to develop strategies; and also the skills alliances, which have included industries such as automotive, community services and health, creative industries, hospitality and tourism, and of course sport and recreation. These reforms have encouraged greater participation in leadership from our industry, and we need to take this further to allow industry to genuinely lead.

However, the establishment of Skills Queensland, which is developed under this legislation, is not about government stepping away from its responsibilities. Government will continue to play a very key role in funding and owning the skills system. The delivery of high-quality training to Queensland industries and communities will be a shared responsibility between Skills Queensland and the government. Skills Queensland will therefore be a genuine partnership between government and industry to meet the skills needed for the future.

The establishment of Skills Queensland will also develop partnerships with training providers, unions and also the community. Skills Queensland will also enable debate, and encourage that debate, within industry and the training sector on some sensitive issues around the skills system such as skilled migration, the use of subsidies, moving funding between sectors, and creating new and innovative funding models. Whilst government will continue to play a very key role in determining these matters, it is absolutely vital that these debates are led by the industry. This will ensure that the needs of the industry and the economy are effectively addressed to support a growing Queensland.

I would like to recognise the very significant work that has already been done by the Department of Education and Training on developing strategies to train workers needed in the new coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas industry. I would also like to recognise the work of the industry liaison officers who work in our local schools. They work with local industries to encourage our school students to look outside of the square and to look at the industries that they are interested in and that are relevant for the future, and to get students involved in school based apprenticeships and traineeships. In that regard, I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (8.43 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have contributed to the debate on this bill. The Education and Training Legislation (Skills Queensland) Amendment Bill 2010 will establish an independent skills commission to lead skills and workforce development in Queensland, to lead the development of a more flexible and demand driven system that meets the needs of industry, communities and the economy. Skills Queensland's key function will be to advise government on skills and workforce development and skilled migration. The new body will develop a skills and workforce development investment plan, a five-year plan with a 10-year whole-of-economy outlook that will be renewed annually. Through this plan, Skills Queensland will identify priorities for investment in skills, qualifications and workforce development and recommend how government resources—that is, taxpayers' funds—should be allocated to meet the state's skills development needs, including responses to emerging industry opportunities and regional and global economic factors.

The government will ensure that the body is operating by the end of 2010, early 2011. In the first period of time, the skills commission will focus on developing and implementing industry engagement mechanisms to establish an identity amongst industry stakeholders and develop its inaugural skills and workforce development plan. Creating a system that engages and responds to industry needs is only part of the solution. A greater contribution from industry in meeting the demand for skills is more than just enhancing their role in planning and advising. To this end, Skills Queensland will identify opportunities to leverage greater contribution from industry into the investment of our state's skills system. This will be a key priority for the new body, as non-government investment in vocational education and training in Queensland is relatively low compared to other jurisdictions.

I want to point out for honourable members that, referring to the 10-year outlook and the five-year investment plan that is to be developed by Skills Queensland, Skills Queensland will be working with the product that is produced from all of the centres of excellence, all of the skills alliances and all of the skills

formation strategies that straddle each of the 20 major industries that operate in Queensland. Those centres of excellence and other engagement strategies already operate and have been doing so for a number of years. For example, we have Energy Skills Queensland, Construction Skills Queensland, the Mining Industry Skills Centre, Aviation Australia, the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council, and there are many others. So industry is already working with unions and government in a tripartite fashion and has been doing so for a number of years for their particular industry sector. What the skills commission will do is work with the product that has been generated and will continue to be generated by those very good engagement strategies, which we will seek to improve, so that the skills commission can then develop a whole-of-economy outlook for skills formation and then the strategies for priority investment of public funds into skill formation that are needed across the five-year horizon in the major industries.

The government is looking for innovative ways to engage greater industry investment in Queensland's skills needs. For example, the creation of the coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas investment fund is an example of this. Through this fund, industry is matching the government's investment to meet the skills needs of the new and emerging coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas industry. In other words, there is \$5 million of public funds and \$5 million of private funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis which the industry has agreed to contribute to a single fund that is then targeted at what the industry agrees should be the areas of targeted skill development in the coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas industry. That is worked out by Santos, by Arrow, by the BG Group, by the Queensland Gas Co., and the other gas companies, for example, in the Surat Basin. That is where they in fact now presently direct where that funding is going. Likewise, there is a workforce development plan that has been created for the Surat Basin and is now in the process of being generated for the construction phase of the LNG plants in Gladstone. That is work that is already presently happening within that sector. The skills commission, on a whole-of-economy and state-wide basis, is intended to operate in exactly the same manner, engaging closely with industry.

The commission will strengthen industry leadership of and investment in skills and workforce development in Queensland, increase industry confidence in and ownership of our skills system and ensure that the government's skills and workforce development strategies are well informed.

The bill also amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to strengthen the child protection measures within our schools. It will ensure that if a person who has previously held a teacher registration or permission to teach is convicted of a disqualifying offence after 1 January 2006 and sentenced to an imprisonment order then that person will be excluded from ever reapplying for teacher registration. In other words, they are banned for life. The same restriction applies to a person who was a teacher at the time of such conviction. In other words, they are banned for life.

The bill will also ensure that the Queensland College of Teachers is notified about the commencement and outcome of all investigations started by employing authorities involving an allegation of harm caused or likely to be caused to a child because of the conduct of a teacher. Currently an employing authority is not strictly required to notify the college of the outcome of every commenced investigation, for example if the investigation does not result in a teacher dismissal or resignation. The amendment will ensure that the college is best placed to decide whether to initiate its own investigation or take disciplinary action against a teacher in appropriate circumstances.

Before moving to consideration in detail I will respond to some of the questions raised by honourable members during the debate. I will respond to the comments made by the member for Moggill. I dare say he finds himself in fine territory with this bill when it comes to the training area. The opposition and the shadow minister have shown very little interest in training in the past 18 months. The member's criticism of a decline in training numbers shows a very poor understanding of the industry. The training numbers are directly linked to the economy and employment numbers.

The global financial crisis, which according to the Liberals and the Nationals did not exist and does not exist, had a significant impact locally and globally on training systems. The good news is that apprenticeship and traineeship commencements from 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010 are up 10.6—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Will the member for Condamine go to his seat if he wishes to interject.

Mr WILSON: Apprenticeship and traineeship commencements from 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010 are up 10.6 per cent on the same period last year. Apprenticeship and traineeship completions are up 1.4 per cent over the same period. In fact, the Department of Education and Training's Productivity Places Program provided training places for 15,788 job seekers and 7,673 places for existing workers.

I will correct the groundless assertions that were made by the shadow minister at the commencement of his contribution. The facts are these. TAFE funding in Queensland has risen each year since the Queensland Skills Plan was launched in 2006. The total growth over the last four years has been 43 per cent. Funding for the TAFE sector in 2009-10 was \$587 million. For the 2010-11 year it

is significantly increased on that. The fact is that the publicly funded part of TAFE courses in Queensland is the greatest of all of the states. The converse of that is that students in Queensland pay one of the lowest amounts in the country—approximately 6.7 per cent of course fees.

One of the key aims of the Queensland Skills Plan was to increase the number of private RTOs delivering apprenticeship training. That is to assist in ensuring that we have a demand driven model where the market gets to decide what training is needed and where it will be placed. The increase over the last four years in private RTOs has been 135 per cent. We now have about 1,100 private registered training organisations operating in parallel with the publicly funded TAFE system. Mind you, the private RTOs are also substantially publicly funded for the work that they do. Taxpayer funds are actually contributed to the private sector for the private sector to train for the private sector.

In relation to the allegation that the training achievements or outcomes over the recent period reflect a failure of training policy or delivery in Queensland, I have referred to a number of figures and the fact that training for apprenticeships and traineeships tracks the economic cycle. The shadow minister may not know it, but to get an apprenticeship a person must first have a contract of employment. There are two contracts: there is a contract of employment and there is a training contract. They cannot get the training contract for an apprenticeship unless they can get a contract of employment. If there is not an employer out there able to employ them because the GFC has knocked the guts out of their industry then they will not get a training contract such that they can have an apprenticeship.

The take-up of apprenticeships follows the economic cycle. With some small differences, it is essentially the same with traineeships. Notwithstanding that dynamic, the facts are that between 1 July 2009 and 30 April 2010 apprenticeship commencements were up three per cent and traineeship commencements were up 14 per cent. That shows that on a state-wide basis the economic cycle is starting to turn. The number of apprenticeships is reflecting the gradual growth in the Queensland economy. The significant areas where the downturn took effect were in the construction, automotive and engineering sectors.

When we look at completions as distinct from commencements we find that apprenticeship completions in the same period were down about one per cent. Traineeship completions were up about three per cent. If we take ourselves back to November 2008 when the employment task force was set up by the Premier, we see that the whole purpose of that was to dramatically shift the policy settings because employment was declining and declining rapidly. For example, 5,000 mining workers lost their jobs in about three months at the back end of 2008. A whole shift took place there whereby training moneys were pulled to one side to try to keep apprentices in their employment and so that they in fact completed their traineeships.

In conjunction with all of that we had the Queensland Skills Plan of 2006 updated in 2008. That is a \$1 billion training and skilling plan. At the same time we had a total abdication by the federal Howard government over a 12-year period of any significant funding and any planning whatsoever around a national skills plan, a national workforce development plan. So in that vacuum created by that side of politics, this government and its predecessors have been pumping more than a billion dollars into the training sector in Queensland. Those opposite have nothing to complain about. They should be complaining about their colleagues in the federal parliament.

In relation to Skills Queensland, we are not about stepping away from the responsibilities that the government does have in maximising industry and government investment to meet economic needs. The fact is that it is a partnership. Training and skilling is a partnership between the private sector and the public sector represented through the government. We will continue to assert that we need to build that partnership.

Skills Queensland will have its ongoing operations fully funded by government. So that addresses the concern that industry is going to pay for the operations of Skills Queensland. To address the question raised by the member for Nicklin, who was looking forward to my response—and no doubt he will get it by reading *Hansard* given that he is not in the chamber tonight—the intention is that there will be, essentially, a transfer of staff from two departments to the skills commission and that the funding will travel with the staff. So the skills commission is not added on top; it is actually a congregation of existing officers and the funding that attaches to them for the performance of the skills commission's tasks.

Skills Queensland will also have a strategic training investment fund of up to \$100 million made up of \$50 million funding each from government and from industry just like the CSG-LNG \$10 million training fund. Industry has a responsibility to train its workforce. In fact, Queensland has one of the lowest industry contributions to training—about \$80 million below the national average for industry contributions. I stress that it is a partnership between the private sector and government, and the government is continuing to increase its public funding into training. We are wanting to build confidence in the private sector so that, by coming into the skills commission and having a direct say about where public funding will be directed for skills formation, the private sector can have confidence that, for

example in the CSG-LNG industry, they can do a dollar-for-dollar funding arrangement. They will ensure that they get public funding directed where it ought to be directed and the private funding co-founded with that will get the maximum value for their corporation. The Queensland government remains committed to training Queenslanders, but we recognise that industry has an increased and important role to play.

While Skills Queensland's first long-term investment plan will be completed as early as possible in 2011—not November 2011, but as early as possible in 2011—it does not mean that work is not being done to deal with short-term and immediate skills challenges right now. Right now there is an existing training system called the user choice system, called the TAFE system and called the productivity places system that is already investing about \$700 million annually of public funds into skilling and training for the areas of greatest need in particular sectors. What the skills commission is going to do is put a sharp point on that spear of public investment.

An interim steering committee is in place to ensure the government is currently being advised on skills and industry needs. Programs such as the \$10 million LNG-CSG skills fund are already providing immediate focus on addressing skills needs in specific sectors. On the issue of broad representation and getting it right, I think there is no greater signal of our intention than the appointment of the managing director of Watpac, Mr Greg Kempton, as the chair of the steering committee and, pro tempore, the chair of the new skills commission, Skills Queensland. Expressions of interest for industry to join the board will be undertaken with complete focus on ensuring that we get the best industry representation capable of delivering real outcomes. To do it any other way would be self-defeating.

To reinforce that, what we are wanting to do with these seven industry members is to have the best commercially capable industry leaders on the skills commission. We have already set up a steering committee that is being led by Greg Kempton, as I said. It has a number of people on it who are working right now designing the detail of how the skills commission will work and also the manner in which we will go about calling for expressions of interest. They will assist in the selection process and the recommendations for the short-list of those who—the captains of industry, as it were—will go on to the skills commission. The steering committee has on it Greg Kempton, Managing Director of Watpac, as I have explained; Andrew Dettmer, Chair of Manufacturing Skills Queensland; Paul Braddy, Chair of Construction Skills Queensland; Peter Price, Chair of Energy Skills Queensland; Michael Roche, Queensland Resources Council; Sandra Harding, James Cook University; Wallis Westbook, Health and Community Services Workforce Council; Amanda Richards from the Queensland Council of Unions; Matthew Martyn-Jones of the Australian Industry Group; John Cotter from AgForce; Robyn Keenan from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council; and the Director-General of the Department of Education and Training and the Director-General of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. I think that sends a very loud signal as to what we intend for the composition of Skills Queensland.

To answer the question regarding duplication of roles, this is not about creating new positions, as I referred to earlier. Skills Queensland will lead but not actually be responsible for the implementation of substantial investment in the skills system. That will still be delivered by private RTOs—registered training organisations; there are 1,100 of them in the sector—and the TAFE system as well. However, it will have access to a strategic investment fund from which training can be purchased.

In relation to vocational education and training, Skills Queensland will be responsible for all industry engagement, the formulation of policy and the completion of an annual skills audit and workforce development investment plan to guide government's priorities for skills and workforce investment. In response to the member for Gladstone's point—and I note the honourable member is not here, but she will read this, no doubt, in *Hansard*—under the \$10 million LNG-CSG skills fund, to date contracts in excess of \$2.8 million have been issued by both the department and Energy Skills Queensland, which will provide training support for Arrow Energy, Origin, Queensland Gas Co. and Santos as well as a number of smaller chain enterprises. The honourable member did not indicate who it was she spoke to who gave her information which gave her concerns about what might be involved in this area and whether the \$10 million had been fully expended. The advice to me is that perhaps the honourable member should seek further, more reliable sources of information. Indeed, I would welcome her speaking directly with the director-general of my department so that she has access to reliable advice on how that training fund is progressing.

In addition to that training fund, \$9.2 million in funding was provided to the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, Gladstone campus of which over \$350,000 was specifically targeted at the LNG-CSG sector. With Skills Queensland, we are ensuring that this state will not see the level of interference in the training sector which we saw under the National Party's Santo Santoro. As we now know, he is notorious in the training industry in Queensland.

Mr Lawlor: He is still very influential on the LNP.

Mr WILSON: I take that interjection. Indeed, in a very short period of time Santo Santoro managed to become notorious within the training sector in Queensland in the mid-1990s. He sacked the most respected director-general in the Australian training system, Bob Marshman. He then replaced him with a director-general who saw the department as a toy to be constantly restructured. Then, through what has become known as the Calcutta report—appropriately named—he ripped funding out of TAFE, creating a serious black hole. It took Labor, when it was elected in 1998, to address that black hole. It subsequently did so with substantial contributions of funding.

I want to conclude by making reference to a number of contributions that were made by different members. The member for Gregory hit the nail on the head. On top of the existing ways in which the industry and government try to identify skill development strategies within each industry sector, we will now have an opportunity through Skills Queensland to create even more exciting opportunities for young people throughout Queensland. I acknowledge how positive he is and has been about training, about the gateway skills program and the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy for example. Today we celebrated the addition of another three schools to take it to 28 schools, including one in the electorate of one of the members here. We are increasing the opportunities for young students to gain training and skills so that they can enter the resources sector.

The member for Gladstone also raised questions about wanting to have geographical representation of the seven captains of industry on the skills commission or Skills Queensland. The first priority will be getting the best seven people to take control and set up Skills Queensland and provide to the government the best advice that they can, accessing all the information available to them, in terms of where we ought to be targeting both public funding and collateral private funding. Whether they come from Gladstone, from Boulia, from Coolangatta or from the Torres Strait I do not frankly mind, so long as they are available to bring the best industry advice to government.

The question of joint operations between universities and TAFEs is one of a number of things that is being examined by Peter Noonan, who is undertaking a review of the effectiveness of the delivery of training on the ground. That is looking at the TAFE system as well as the private RTOs and the university sector, and that review is consulting widely with a range of stakeholders. I look forward to his comments and suggestions in relation to the joint university-TAFE opportunities that there are available throughout the state given that we have eight universities—a significant number of them are regional universities—and 93 campuses of TAFE throughout Queensland. So we should be able to get some synergies there. The bottom line is that for workers throughout Queensland, especially regional Queensland, we want to make sure that any recommendation that comes from that is designed to increase the number of training opportunities for not only young Queenslanders but also mature-age Queenslanders in regional and rural Queensland.

In commending the bill to the House, I want to recognise and acknowledge the great contributions made by government members. I thank them for that and look forward to the support of the House for this bill.

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 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Dr FLEGG (9.12 pm): Clause 6 details the functions of Skills Queensland and really contains the guts of what this bill is about. In relation to the main areas we have expressed some concerns, because, as the minister is aware, we have supported in principle this approach to reforming what is happening in the training sector. It is a bit ironic given that after the minister's comments he seems to think that training is doing so well now, so I wonder why he actually wants to reform it. But in reality training is not doing well in Queensland and that is why industry has demanded this reform.

Mr Fraser interjected.

Dr FLEGG: With regard to clause 6, perhaps the three areas the minister might like to make some further comment on are the concern expressed by many—

Mr Fraser interjected.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order!

Dr FLEGG: The honourable Treasurer was not here in those days, I do not think.

Mr Wilson: You do, too, don't you? You remember, too, don't you?

Dr FLEGG: It must be getting late at night; the members opposite are getting a bit weary. There has been a concern expressed by stakeholders that this body might end up as another advisory body. I am sure the minister will not disagree that the way much of it is being phrased indicates that the minister has a very overriding power, not just on appointment but on what resolutions are adopted and so forth.

Concern has been expressed by the Queensland Resources Council, which was the originator of the concept, that it might lack teeth. As part of the minister's response to clause 6, I ask him to tell us if he can set those fears aside and that Skills Queensland will in fact have the teeth and the clout necessary and will not become simply another ministerial advisory body.

There was also significant concern expressed that we might see appointments to the board of Skills Queensland as just being what are referred to as 'the usual suspects'—the people who bob up on board after board or inquiry after inquiry whom the government is very comfortable with and who are very comfortable with the government. Concern was expressed that this might not have the level of independence and industry representation that will be necessary if it is to do a better job in training. The other area is of course the lack of clarity or information about the funding resources behind it. Maybe the minister could comment on those three areas.

Mr WILSON: The fact is that I have actually commented already during my reply on each of those. But to make it clear, proposed section 149 in clause 6 provides 'to advise and make recommendations to the minister about' skill formation and other related issues. If we did not want to know what it thought about where we should invest public funds, we would not be asking for recommendations from the skills commission. The purpose of asking for recommendations from the skills commission is that we will have a body of the best available expertise that guides where we ought to be putting priority funding.

Secondly, I have already addressed the 'usual suspects' allegation by speaking about the steering committee that has been established and the personnel who are on that, including the QRC and the Australian Industry Group. We are delighted in the interest that the QRC has in the setting up of Skills Queensland. It is an interest that is shared amongst a number of key industry stakeholders, including a number of trade unions and, as I said, the Australian Industry Group. One of that steering committee's tasks will be to advise the government on an appropriate methodology and recruitment process and selection process for the short list from which the seven will then be selected for formal appointment to the board. If we did not want to identify the best seven persons for the skills commission board where there is the greatest consensus on those best seven people then we would not be asking the steering committee to be involved. The corollary is that we want it involved because we know that that is the key vehicle by which we can identify the best people to put on to the commission.

In relation to funding, there are two aspects and I have already addressed both of them. One is that the administration of the skills commission will be from existing resources. Secondly, there will be a training fund of up to \$100 million—\$50 million and a co-contribution of \$50 million—on the same principle as operates for the CSG-LNG training fund of \$5 million plus \$5 million for a \$10 million fund. So we will have a total of up to about \$100 million.

Dr FLEGG: Thank you, Minister. Would I take it from the comments that the minister has made that members of the steering committee are also likely to be members of the board when that board is appointed?

Mr WILSON: The government has a totally open mind as to who the appropriate people are to go on to that board. So I am not ruling anyone in and I am not ruling anyone out.

Dr FLEGG: I have another point I want to ask the minister to clarify, because I appreciate the forthright nature of the answers that the minister has given me in this committee debate. Actually, they are very forthright. I have expressed a concern in that as we move resources and, as the minister described, personnel from the existing bureaucracy in DET across to Skills Queensland—and obviously it will take a considerable amount of time to put the training plan in place—what steps will be taken to ensure we do not take our eye off the ball, that training is not in effect in limbo until the skills commission is fully operational and has developed the training plan?

Mr WILSON: Two things: firstly, work is already taking place and has commenced well before the first meeting of the steering committee. That work has been commenced by the two departments working together, developing the time frame, the timetable and the range of activities that need to be undertaken so that Skills Queensland, starting formally and officially at the beginning of next year, hits the ground running. An aspect of that is that the steering committee, now having had its first meeting, is directly involved in overseeing the work that is being done and will continue to be done between now and the end of this year to enable Skills Queensland, when formally established, to hit the ground running. They are important things. No-one is sitting on their hands waiting for 1 January next year before anything is done. A lot of work is being done now under the oversight of the steering committee, the members of whom I just named a moment ago, to ensure that the work is happening in anticipation of that commission being established. Secondly, Skills Queensland is focused on a workforce

development strategy over a five-year period with a companion piece of work that flows from it and that is a strategic investment plan for skilling. This is about getting the best data, the best brains in Queensland working to identify the strategic areas to invest a significant proportion of public funds.

That is one part of the picture. The other part of the picture is that training delivery is happening right now as we speak and will continue to do so through 1,100 private registered training organisations, 1,300 TAFE institutes at 93 campuses and at university level. That training will continue to take place. Some of that training will shift in its targeting as a result of the work that is done by Skills Queensland. Skills Queensland will not be delivering training. That is not its area of expertise. We want Skills Queensland to be focused on a strategic workforce development strategy and a skills investment plan that travels with that, which will then guide where the training delivery takes place and the funds made available to those three areas of training delivery.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I thank the minister for the response in his summing-up. Whilst I may not have been in the chamber, the minister knows that we listen on the monitors. The question that I asked about membership of the board also being from outside of the south-east corner was a genuine one. I acknowledge that the minister wants the best people for the job and it would be easy to justify all of them coming from the south-east corner, but I would ask for consideration to be given to a more diversified board to allow for that breadth of representation and knowledge of rural and regional Queensland.

In relation to the \$10 million, I acknowledge that the minister said that only \$2.9 million had been allocated. If my information is wrong, I will acknowledge that. I met with a manager from Energy Skills Queensland and that person said that they were brokering the full \$10 million, that it had all but been allocated to places like the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, 200 places; Response Consulting at Woolloowin—and they told me that QGC had said that it wanted Response Consulting to be involved; and Baseline Training in Brisbane. When I asked if there was any money allocated to training organisations outside of the south-east corner the response was no, hence my concern. If that is the \$10 million that is supposed to be for CSG-LNG, the sorts of programs that were funded were certificate III in civil construction, certificate IV in front-line management, programs in occupational health and safety, project management, purchasing and management, and diplomas in construction, dogging, rigging and scaffolding. But there was not too much in the electrical trades and the instrumentation trades, which LNG is saying are going to be significantly lacking—and we are talking in the hundreds. That was the basis of my expression of concern—that this Skills Queensland board be reflective of the whole state and that money for training is not just expended in the south-east corner but that recognition is given to the regions, particularly those regions where industry is being based.

Mr WILSON: I thank the member very much for that further question. On the question of geographical location, Queensland is one of most regionalised states in Australia. So the consideration of who are the appropriate appointees to Skills Queensland will include an element of their familiarity and knowledge of regional Queensland and all parts of regional Queensland. Whether that actually means that they are physically drawn from a particular regional area is quite a secondary question. The primary question is whether they are well qualified in terms of a range of factors, including their knowledge and familiarity with the challenges and opportunities of different regional areas throughout Queensland. So in that fashion, we want to make sure that it is truly a representative skills commission board for all of Queensland.

In relation to the funding allocations from the CSG-LNG training fund, firstly, what I said earlier on the record was based upon advice that was given to me by the department. Secondly, it is possible that we are somewhat at cross-purposes in terms of the information and we can follow up on that. But it is important to bear in mind that, whichever training company may end up having contracts to deliver training, whether they are physically based in Gladstone or not, is a secondary question. The primary question is the delivery of training for workers in Gladstone. It may be that some Gladstone based training providers can provide that training; it may be that they are not Gladstone based but nonetheless are providing that training in Gladstone.

It is important to bear in mind that the way in which Energy Skills Queensland is brokering the training fund may be on the new basis, that is, the way in which user choice moneys are made available; namely, that the moneys are not allocated to training organisations, they are attached to employers and then employers choose the training organisation. They may be speaking about a training organisation having a contract to do something, but I doubt that it is presently because the moneys have been directly allocated to them. It is a consequence of money being earmarked for particular employers who have then engaged those contractors to provide that private training. But, in any event, I made the invitation earlier to clarify that. I am certainly happy to make my director-general available to brief you fully on that.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 25, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.27 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. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.28 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.28 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Eudlo Creek, Electricity Transmission Lines

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.28 pm): Many members would now be aware that there is a battle brewing in Eudlo Creek. On the one side are concerned residents, business owners and educators and on the other is Energex. In the middle sit the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. The battle is the latest in a string of confrontations surrounding the decision to construct 110kV overhead transmission lines rather than fully explore the long-term benefits of undergrounding the same powerlines. There is a lot of emotion involved. On Thursday a delegation from the concerned communities will be visiting parliament to express their frustration and call on the ministers to intervene. What I would like to do tonight is present some of the facts so that the ministers can see there is sense behind the emotion.

No-one is questioning Energex's need to operate under the National Electricity Rules that require it to develop the most cost-effective solution within the broader context of its environmental, technical and community responsibilities. Energex states that in most cases overhead powerlines deliver the best value for customers although there are some circumstances where placing high-voltage powerlines underground offers the best social, environmental and economic outcome. I and my constituents believe that this is one of those situations where the underground option delivers the better outcome.

Let us look at the three realms of consideration. In relation to the social aspect, the proposed route traverses the Bruce Highway, it passes adjacent to the Sunshine Coast Grammar School and it follows an important waterway—one that is highly valued by locals. Undergrounding also reduces community concern around electric and magnetic fields, or EMFs.

In relation to the environmental aspect, I am glad to see that the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability is willing to enter the debate. I quote from her recent interview on the *7PM Project*—

Unless the company can demonstrate that they are going to protect the platypus and its habitat, including those burrows, it can't proceed. They need to show that through a species management plan in order to get the tick of approval.

In relation to the economic aspect, here is where the debate gets hazy, largely due to confusion created by Energex. The original Parsons Brinckerhoff route selection report of December 2006 dismissed undergrounding on the basis that the cost was significantly higher than the equivalent aerial option—approximately eight times the overhead cost. But in subsequent correspondence Energex admits that overhead construction costs have risen in greater proportion to those of undergrounding and the true multiplier is closer to 2½ to three times, not eight. But there are additional economic benefits: a reduction in land compensation costs by more than 75 per cent, given the corridor is reduced from 40 metres for overhead to 10 metres for underground; fewer legal costs due to court action associated with an overhead solution; a 40-year life cycle as opposed to 15 years for overhead aluminium conductors in Queensland's climate conditions; reduced maintenance and outage costs; reduced bushfire danger; and increased efficiency due to a 30 per cent reduction in power loss for an underground solution.

Ministers, please consider carefully your approval of this project as it stands. There are alternatives. They make sound social, environmental and economic sense and they have the support of the local community.

Runcorn State High School

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (9.31 pm): Tonight I want to talk about a new initiative that is being undertaken by Mr Les Gomes, who is the school chaplain at Runcorn State High School in the Sunnybank electorate. Les has organised for the 2010 Runcorn State High School year 12 students to attend a Post Formal Mystery Tour following this year's school formal at the Mercure Hotel in the city.

Over the past decade, year 12 students across Queensland have been opting into an event that has developed into a rite of passage known as the post school formal party. It has become a cause for concern and heartache for some parents and schools as graduating students are enticed to throw all restraint to the wind and indulge in excessive behaviours. In response to this, Mr Gomes from Runcorn State High School has organised a healthy alternative for year 12 students called the Post Formal Mystery Tour. It is an all-night party that promises many things that post formal parties could never match: a 100 per cent drug- and alcohol-free event that will go all night without becoming boring. It is an event that parents can be comfortable sending their children to—an event that will not reflect negatively on the school's reputation or image but could quite likely be a selling point for future enrolments.

To draw members a visual of what I am talking about, the night will work something like this. At the conclusion of the formal there will be several buses waiting for students outside the venue. Police will breath-test each person before they board the buses. The tour will then begin and include several venues that will be open exclusively for the Runcorn State High School students. Included in these venues are Iceworld Acacia Ridge, two very impressive surprise events at the Gold Coast to be disclosed on the night, early breakfast to be provided by McDonald's, and a visit to Whitewater World on the Pacific Highway before heading back to Brisbane. The event will conclude with a carnival and barbecue breakfast at the Sunnybank Baptist Church on Nemies Road at Runcorn which I will be attending.

Les tells me that it is selling out fast and most students of year 12 will be attending. Even students who cannot afford to go to the formal are taking part in the Post Formal Mystery Tour. I congratulate Mr Gomes and the Runcorn State High School community on this initiative and encourage the establishment of such an event in all high schools in Queensland. I encourage all members to support this type of event at high schools throughout Queensland. It may well provide a positive paradigm shift for our year 12s in this state.

Indooroopilly Electorate, Traffic

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (9.34 pm): Worsening traffic congestion continues to impact on Brisbane's liveability and our environment. Traffic has been consistently growing in Brisbane by around two per cent a year, or an extra 80,000 trips a day. In the western suburbs—that includes my electorate of Indooroopilly—that growth is even higher. Some drivers are now experiencing congestion at the same intersections on the weekend as they do on weekdays. A report this year by Infrastructure Australia found that Brisbane faces the steepest rise in congestion costs, up 74 per cent to an average unit cost of more than 11c per kilometre by 2020. Surveys reveal that congestion is now the major issue for people across my electorate.

Unfortunately, the state government continues to ignore this issue through more than a decade of neglect. And even worse, it makes decisions that undermine attempts to alleviate congestion. For instance, in this year's state budget there was again no plan for an upgrade of the Western Freeway. That is despite an engineer's report finding that the Western Freeway is substandard and in parts unsafe. It has become a peak-hour parking lot. The congestion on the Western Freeway also has significant flow-on effects for many local streets including Oxley Road and Honour Avenue. Cars rat-run through these local streets to avoid the congestion on the Western Freeway, further fuelling the daily gridlock on the Walter Taylor Bridge.

While the state government has provided no plans to deal with this congestion, the Brisbane City Council's Northern Link project does provide some hope in dealing with this congestion. The Northern Link tunnel will help slash travel times between the western suburbs and the north by up to 66 per cent by 2026. This will not only make the trip faster; it will encourage drivers away from Oxley Road and Honour Avenue. It is also predicted that 85 per cent of motorists who use the Northern Link tunnel are expected to bypass the CBD which in turn will free up space on Milton Road and Coronation Drive, a further boost to easing congestion in my electorate.

Of course, the benefits of Northern Link will be undermined if we see the state government continue to neglect the Western Freeway. We have already seen the state government undermine attempts to ease congestion when it forced the Brisbane City Council, by making impossible demands, to abandon plans to build a right-turn underpass at the Hale Street intersection with Coronation Drive. If the underpass had been built, travel times would have been further slashed. But rather than looking at long-term solutions to benefit Brisbane motorists, the state government has been more interested in playing political games. I urge it to work with the Brisbane City Council to combat congestion, not against it.

Connecting SEQ 2031

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (9.37 pm): The Bligh government is building the transport infrastructure South-East Queensland needs for the future. Connecting SEQ 2031 is an integrated regional transport plan for South-East Queensland that will create the networks we need for the next 20 years. We are building the roads, the railways and the busways needed to meet the region's growing population. We are also creating jobs for thousands of Queenslanders. In South-East Queensland alone, \$4 billion in transport infrastructure projects are currently underway. Out in the south-west corridor, member for Indooroopilly, over \$1 billion is being spent. The Bligh government is investing in public transport. We are investing in the necessary infrastructure to meet the state's growing needs.

Out in Richlands in my own electorate we are building a \$40 million brand-new railway station due to be completed early next year. I was recently on the site and it is 80 per cent complete. This is great news for the people living in Forest Lake, Inala, Richlands, Carole Park and Camira. There will be a carpark for over 600 people, disability access and a kiss and ride. But what else is happening? The local students are participating in the artwork. Students from Richlands State School, Richlands East State School, Glenala High School, Serviceton South State School and St Marks primary school are contributing to the artwork on the train station. Horizon Alliance, which is building the train station, is investing in the local community. At the Western Suburbs State Special School, Horizon Alliance has constructed what I think is Queensland's largest sandpit. I was out there recently, walking for a day in the shoes of a teacher aide, and I saw those kids' smiles as they played in the sandpit made by Horizon Alliance.

What else are we doing? We are investing \$16 million to upgrade the Darra train station and build more car parks. That project is due to be completed by mid-December. There will be a community open day. What else are we doing? We are going to extend the train line not only from Darra to Richlands but also from Richlands to Springfield. That will be delivered by this government by 2013, two years ahead of schedule. That is what this government is doing. We are investing in the public transport that we need for the future.

The Bligh government is delivering. The Bligh government is setting the vision that we need. We are getting people off the roads and we are getting them on to public transport. We are also expanding our motorways with the expansion of the Ipswich Motorway and upgrades to the Centenary interchange. All we hear from those opposite—and we have just heard from the member for Indooroopilly—is whinging and complaints. This government is delivering on infrastructure and delivering on jobs.

Maryborough Technology Challenge 2010

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (9.40 pm): Maryborough is the capital of Queensland when it comes to hosting great events, and there is none better than the Maryborough Technology Challenge 2010. Can members imagine cycling the complete coastline of Australia in 24 hours? That was the challenge for the record field of teams that entered in this year's 24-hour Human Powered Vehicle Championship. This year's challenge was the most successful yet, with around 1,000 competitors from 31 Queensland schools forming 99 teams travelling approximately 40,000 kilometres and a 10,000-strong crowd. The visitor teams were from Nanango State High School, Gladstone State High School, Springwood State High School, Sunshine Beach State High School, Tannum Sands State High School, Rochedale State High School, St Laurence's College, Ipswich Grammar School, Kilkivan State High School, Kenmore State High School, Pacific Lutheran College, Albany Creek State High School, Browns Plains State High School, Isis District State High School, Aquinas College, Yarraman P-10 State School, Corinda State High School, Marist College in Emerald, Kingston College, Moura State High School, Bundaberg State High School, St Luke's Anglican College, Loganlea State High School's special education unit, Brisbane Bayside State College, Gin Gin State High School and Blackwater State High School. What a monumental event this was.

Team Fast Forward, which I am very happy to say is from my kids' school, Maryborough's St Mary's College, won first place, having completed in 24 hours 490 laps of the 1.5 kilometre circuit. The Supermen from Nanango State High School came second with 445 laps. Our team won by a margin of 45 laps, which was a fantastic effort. Team Adorables from Maryborough's Aldridge State High School came third with 431 laps. The Shooting Stars from St Mary's College came fourth with 431 laps and the Nitros, also from St Mary's College, came fifth with 425 laps. By the time the chequered flag was lowered at 12 midday on Sunday, the 99 teams of eight students clocked up more than 40,000 kilometres between them. The race is the signature event of the RACQ Technology Challenge Maryborough, where teams must design the ultimate speed machine and then endure 24 hours of pedal-powered racing. I can assure members there were some very tired kids the next day.

What an event it was with bands playing, fireworks displays and local crafts. This year's event shows that the Maryborough Technology Challenge gets better and better and attracts bigger and bigger crowds every year. I invite all members in the House and those who are not here but are listening to join us next year.

Bus Driver for a Day

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.43 pm): I walked in the shoes and the uniform of a bus driver for a day and it was a great experience. I chose to shadow a bus driver because I am interested in public transport. Over the 10-odd years I have been the member for Pumicestone I have lobbied hard for extended services and extra bus routes and have been successful in areas such as Bribie Island, Beachmere and Caboolture. The new park and ride facility on Bribie Island is a testament to the value this Bligh government places on public transport.

Most passengers were very happy with the services provided by Bribie Island Coaches. Two issues were raised by passengers and several were raised by the bus company and drivers. I have already passed on to the Minister for Transport some concerns over the bus shelter at the park-and-ride and a suggestion to simplify the concession cards and go cards. I have passed on to the Minister for Main Roads concerns over stops where safety could be improved and areas of the Bribie Island Road where there is a lack of vision at bus stops because of dense foliage, as well as the synchronization of a set of traffic lights.

On arriving at the bus company, I was greeted by the operations managers, Mr Willie Astorino and Michael Michael, who introduced me to the training supervisor, Mrs Kim Astorino. Kim kindly took me through an induction and health workplace and safety course. I was presented with an information pack that included driver responsibilities under the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, legal requirements, a driver's manual and a code of conduct. I was shown a display of the TransLink go card machines and was surprised at how popular go cards have become. Kim said when go cards were introduced they started with about 1,200 swipes per month and now it is up to 18,500 swipes per month. However, drivers still have to be familiar with manual ticketing as well.

I then toured the depot and met Mr Geoff Stevens, a veteran bus driver of seven years with a great sense of humour, and newly employed bus driver of two days, Mr Michael Bieganski. I accompanied them on a lengthy checklist of the bus to ensure all was ready for our departure. I completed a number of shifts on the day, including the 640 service from Bribie Island to Caboolture train station and return, the 641 service to Sandstone Point and the 642 around Bribie Island.

I take this opportunity to thank all the staff at Bribie Island Coaches for allowing me to be a bus driver for the day: Mr Con Patista, Willie Astorino, Michael Michael, Phil Halls, Ken Rutherford and particularly Mrs Kim Astorino, who accompanied me the whole day and was so giving of her time and answered all my questions. She also made sure that I had lunch. I express my gratitude to all the bus drivers—Geoff, Michael, Bruce Harms, Rod Kilminster and Brendan Cue—for their willingness to assist me on the day and for their very positive attitude towards all their patrons. They truly love their job. Their smiling faces and courteous nature said it all and the passengers have their favourites, too. These days the job is about far more than just driving buses. Their competence in dealing with people and equipment, including the new ticketing machines, is extraordinary and I am very grateful to them for their eagerness to share their experiences with me. I say, job well done!

Cost of Living

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (9.46 pm): With Christmas just around the corner, I rise to speak on behalf of both consumers and retailers. The recent biannual AMP shopping intentions survey found that Queenslanders are the most reluctant shoppers as a result of rising power and water bills. This state Labor government has terrified consumers into not spending money at the shops.

However, the Premier will not accept responsibility for what has happened to utility prices. On Tuesday, 14 September in question time, the Premier quoted a document dated April 2009 from the Chairman of the Council of Lord Mayors regarding the formation of the water entities. The Premier pretended that the councils got what they wanted when it came to the creation of the water entities. I will quote from a document dated 24 May 2007, which is two years before the document that the Premier quoted during question time was even written! I will say that again: it was two years before.

I refer to a ministerial statement by then Premier Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh. It states—

A streamlined 21st century management system for south-east Queensland water was unveiled by Premier Peter Beattie and Deputy Premier Anna Bligh in State Parliament this morning.

The ministerial statement continues—

Councils will still have an important role to play at the retail and distribution end jointly owning a single distribution entity that will be responsible for the domestic pipe network, pumping stations, and three retail companies.

The really important bit is the reference to three retail companies. We now know that one of those retail companies is Unity Water. There we have it. Two years before the Premier's document was even written, Premier Bligh was issuing press releases dictating to councils and Queenslanders how her Labor government would force water retailing to occur and even flagged the creation of the three water retailers.

I feel like I am walking in the shoes of ratepayers, in the shoes of electricity payers, in the shoes of people who have had amalgamated councils, licence fee increases and rate increases. That is not to mention the land taxes that are going to be bestowed upon Queenslanders who have invested in property. Those people have worked their heart out and want to achieve for their families and for future generations. Those people are being rated to death. They are being taxed to death. The cost of water is going through the roof. Electricity increases are going through the roof. As I articulated earlier, that is stopping people from spending money in this great state. We have to start to look after those people and not tax them to death. That is what this government continues to do and it needs to think about how the implications of its actions will affect everyday ratepayers in Queensland.

Cardiac Challenge

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (9.49 pm): In 2007 the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation organised the first charity bike ride between Cairns and Cooktown with 125 riders and raising \$115,000. The event has grown every year since, and in 2010 some 225 riders took part and to date have raised some \$296,905—well in excess of the target of \$250,000.

I am pleased to report to the House that I was one of those participants and, together with my wife, Mandy, successfully completed the 334-kilometre journey. Funds raised will be applied toward the establishment of a rapid access chest pain clinic that will improve access for people with chest pain to the hospital cardiology team, improve the accuracy of diagnosis, reduce waiting times, reduce time spent in the emergency department, speed hospital discharge and ensure people at highest risk receive appropriate life-prolonging treatment.

The clinic will complement the significant improvements the Bligh government has made to cardiology services in Cairns, culminating with the opening of a new \$4.18 million cardiac catheter laboratory in August 2010. The new facilities will enable coronary angioplasty to be performed in Cairns for the first time, as well as pacemaker insertions and angiograms, saving between 150 to 200 patients a trip to Townsville or Brisbane each year.

Cardiovascular disease remains the primary cause of death for over 46,000 Australians, despite major gains over the past 40 years, and it is still the second leading cause of healthy years lost. This is why the work of our government and the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation is so important and so beneficial to our community. In previous years funds raised by the Cairns-Cooktown bike ride have been used to purchase a Vivid S6 ultrasound machine that analyses heart anomalies—the first of its kind in Australia; an intra-aortic balloon pump CS300 Datascope, which boosts oxygen supply and reduces oxygen demand in critical care situations; and in 2009 a Vivid S7 cardiovascular ultrasound system.

I would like to pay tribute to Peter McNally, who not only came up with the idea of the ride but rides himself and is an inspiration to all who participate, including me. I would also like to pay tribute to Glenys Duncombe, the fundraising and marketing manager of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, and her colleagues and army of volunteers who make the ride not only possible but enjoyable and successful. I also thank all of the sponsors, especially naming rights sponsor Yellow Pages. I thank all of those who sponsored my ride, including my parliamentary colleagues, and I would like to thank all of the riders who accepted the challenge but particularly the pack 12 team with whom we trained and the pack 9 team with whom we rode.

Akuna Oval

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (9.52 pm): I have stood in this place many times and spoken about—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Moggill, before ruling you out of order, will you return to your seat? You have to speak from your seat.

Dr FLEGG: I have stood in this place many times and spoken about Akuna Oval at Chapel Hill and the 2,000 young western suburbs children who play various codes of football there every weekend. Over the past three years, this shovel-ready project has sat seeking approval. I am pleased to say that finally funding has been secured from the government to allow this project to proceed.

Special thanks and recognition must go to Sally Johannsen, whom members may remember appeared on the front page of the *Courier-Mail* and who had to show considerable guts and determination to ensure that this much needed project for our young people was delivered; to David Scarce, the president of Kenmore junior AFL; and to Tim Brailsford, the president of Kenmore Bears rugby, in their quest to obtain funding approval for a lighting project that would allow these fields to be used for training and for games at night. Special thanks should also go to Charles Webster of CR Webster & Associates for his strong support and advice, as he worked tirelessly on the tender process, which has been done in detail. Work is expected to be completed by January next year.

This took a truly herculean effort by the members of the club to overcome refusal after refusal from this government to fund the project. I will give thanks to the minister, whom I lobbied personally on behalf of the clubs on many occasions. He did rather quietly turn up and I came down for the occasion and presented a cheque for \$600,000—in fact the vast majority of the funding needed and far more than the original application, I might add.

I would raise here my concerns in relation to the former senior development officer with Sport and Recreation in the Department of Communities, Mr Warren Bolton, who is a very professional public servant, a non-politically aligned public servant. In the course of seeking to do his job and ensure that sports grants were fairly allocated on merit, he lost his job in that department over his efforts to behave as a truly professional and independent and non-political public servant in this state. The matters surrounding Mr Bolton have been referred to the CMC, and I understand that there are still matters outstanding with the CMC in relation to sports grants. But I think the government should seriously consider, now that he has been vindicated, reinstating this highly professional public servant.

(Time expired)

Bulimba Electorate, Sporting Clubs

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (9.55 pm): There are 46 sporting organisations in the Bulimba electorate, each vibrant and dynamic in its own way and each with its own community of people who are very proud of what their club achieves. We have seen some great victories in this last season, and I have loved doing the rounds of the trophy presentations to congratulate players, coaches and officials on their efforts—regardless of whether they won—and, in the case of the junior clubs, to thank the mums and dads for the efforts they go to to make sure their kids are participating.

There are two clubs in particular, though, which really rate a special mention: the Morningside AFL, which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year, and the Southside Eagles Soccer Club. Both clubs have had their own difficult histories, but both now, with the guidance of excellent committees, have beaten the odds to finish the season at the top of their game.

I can still feel my heartbeat going into overdrive from watching the Morningside Panthers win the grand final against Labrador a couple of weeks ago. They looked like they were gone in the third quarter but managed to pull back and win by a huge margin. And they do not win like this because they pay huge salaries to their players. They win because they all love their club and their team, and they have all got big hearts. This, and the excellent leadership of captains Kent Abey and Jacob Gough, and the coaching of John Blair—who celebrated his 300th game this year—and assistant Mark Holman, make them the team they are.

In so many ways the Southside Eagles' story is a similar one. There was huge excitement in the club last week when their top senior team, having finished as minor premiers and securing promotion to division 1 for 2011, won the grand final. The Eagles do not pay big money to their players, either. They figure that if people want to play because they love the club and love their team then they are the players who are going to stick around and do their best, through thick and thin. I so enjoyed being at the club's annual dinner on Friday night to see their huge pride in all the teams and particularly in the pinnacle achievement of moving to division 1. I congratulate the squad, coaches Gary Henshaw and Sid Camiolo, and all the friends and supporters of the Eagles.

But it is the management committee members and support staff of both of these clubs who perhaps deserve the most credit, for their efforts in pulling their clubs up by the bootstraps and encouraging such a positive culture. For the Panthers that is John, David, Mike, Jack and Desley and the many others who have worked tirelessly for the club. For the Eagles that is Nev, Jodie, Joe, Robbo, Kerrie, Chris and Steve and the many others on their committee who have done so much.

These are great clubs, and they give pleasure to many people in the Bulimba electorate. I thank them for everything they do and for their wonderful achievements.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.58 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson