



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## THURSDAY, 16 JUNE 2011


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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.


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

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### Recording of Proceedings


 **Mr SPEAKER:** There are some technical difficulties with the network this morning. Therefore, Hansard reporters will record this morning's proceedings from the floor of the House until the problem is resolved.

#### Motion of Condolence

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I say to all honourable members that, once the matter of condolence has begun, it is better if honourable members do not move in and out of the chamber as a mark of respect for the proceedings that are underway.

### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

#### McKechnie, Mr PR

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.31 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable Peter Richard McKechnie, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Peter Richard McKechnie was born in Goondiwindi on 9 February 1941. Mr McKechnie was educated at The Southport School on the Gold Coast and after his schooling became a station hand, manager and later a grazier in Charters Towers. Peter McKechnie was no doubt inspired to enter politics by his father, Henry Arthur McKechnie, himself the member for Carnarvon in this parliament from 1963 to 1974 and minister for local government and electricity from 1972 to 1974. The younger McKechnie was campaign manager for his father's successful tilt at state politics in 1963. When his father retired from the parliament in 1974, Peter McKechnie was chosen by the National Party to contest the seat of Carnarvon at the upcoming state election. Two months later he was successful in his bid to enter this place. He went on to serve as the member for Carnarvon until his resignation from the parliament shortly before the state election in December 1989.

Like his father, Peter McKechnie served as a minister in the Bjelke-Petersen government and he was also to serve as a minister in the Ahern government later in the 1980s. Mr McKechnie served as a minister for tourism, national parks, sport and the arts from 1983 to 1986; as minister for industry and technology from 1986 to 1987; as minister for family services and welfare housing from 1987 to January 1989; and as minister for transport from January 1989 to September 1989—a very wide breadth of portfolios to serve in. During his time in the parliament, Mr McKechnie was also a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, including as its chair for two years from 1979 to 1981; a member of a parliamentary delegation to South-East Asia in 1977; and a delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention in 1983. He also served on a number of government party committees.

Mr McKechnie was widely regarded as a hardworking and passionate advocate for his electorate and I understand is fondly remembered by many. Apart from his parliamentary service, Peter McKechnie was also an active member of numerous community organisations such as the School of the Air, Blue Nurses and tennis and local cricket clubs. I also note that, since his retirement from the parliament, Peter McKechnie had studied to gain accreditation as a lay preacher and he was closely involved with the Rangeville Community Church and Freedom Life Centre in Toowoomba. He helped greatly, I understand, with the construction of the Spring Street Christian Church.

The Hon. Peter Richard McKechnie passed away on 26 May 2011. A service to celebrate and remember his life was held at the Rangeville Community Church in Toowoomba. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that Mr Peter McKechnie gave to the people of Queensland and on behalf of the government I take this opportunity to extend our sympathy and that of this House to Peter McKechnie's family and his friends.



**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): I rise to support the condolence motion moved by the Premier for a former member of this House, Peter McKechnie. Peter Richard McKechnie was born in Goondiwindi in 1941 and raised on the family's property, Trevanna Downs, where he soon developed a life-long love of the land. He did well at The Southport School, where he was a boarder, and worked hard on the land during his school holidays. He developed into a young man with strong, forthright views.

Peter helped his father, Henry, campaign successfully to win the state seat of Carnarvon in the 1963 state election and at 22 Peter became the chairman of the Goondiwindi branch of the Country Party. Peter worked hard and dreamt of one day taking over from his father. As fate would have it, in 1974 his father suffered a severe stroke and had to retire. Peter successfully contested the preselection and was duly elected the member for Carnarvon. In 1983 he became a minister and held the portfolios of tourism, national parks, sports and arts and then industry and technology, family services and welfare housing and, finally, at the end of his career, the portfolio of transport.

Peter McKechnie served his community and the people of Queensland as an MP for 15 years, but, facing personal health issues, he retired from politics in 1989 aged 48. Peter devoted his time to his family and his cattle property and then returned to the workforce as an administrator of the Carramar senior citizens home, where he worked until 1999.

Throughout his life Peter formed enduring friendships in his local community, in business, in politics and through his strong religious faith. He became a lay preacher and studied externally through the Trinity Theological College. Peter and his wife, Jeanette, had a very wide circle of friends, a reflection of their devotion to family and, above all, their devotion to helping others. Peter was well known in his community for going out of his way to help families in need, especially those who had lost loved ones. Throughout his life and especially in politics, Peter held his principles and would fight waste, bureaucracy and red tape in all the departments he was responsible for.

His sudden passing on 26 May was an enormous shock to his close family and very wide circle of friends. Peter McKechnie was a successful pastoralist and a successful politician but, above all, he was a devoted family man. I know that I speak for all LNP members in passing on our sincere condolences to Peter's family and his many friends.



**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (9.38 am): This is the second occasion in my parliamentary career that I have had to stand in this House and place on record my tribute to an immediate parliamentary predecessor. In 1997 I stood in this place following the passing of Des Booth. For three years in this place I sat alongside him, prior to assuming his seat after the 1991 redistribution. He was a great friend and a great colleague. I succeeded Peter McKechnie when I was first elected to this place in 1989. He was a great mentor, a great friend and a great encouragement to me.

As was mentioned by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, Peter was born at Goondiwindi in 1941. He spent his early life on the family property of Trevanna. His early schooling was at Goondiwindi and then at TSS at Southport. Peter's early life was filled with a lot of hardship. His early life was filled with a lot of personal tragedy. His early life was filled with circumstances that ultimately caused him to search deep within and hone the person that he became. He had an enormous sense of innate justice. He always wanted to right wrongs, even for people he barely knew. He developed a deep and abiding faith as a consequence of the tragic circumstances in his early life. Peter's mother, Heather, and father, Henry, had four children. In 1950, when Peter was nine years of age, his mother died very tragically. She had had an operation, but the day before she was due to return home she suffered a blood clot and died. Her death profoundly affected Peter.

Peter grew up at Trevanna, which was a showcase farming and grazing property outside Goondiwindi. His father, Henry, selected the block in the 1930s. At that stage, it was infested with prickly pear and it took an enormous amount of hard work to clear the block. It became a showcase farming and grazing property in the area. Some of the best crops across Southern Queensland were grown there. The sheep flock and the cattle herd were among the best in the entire region, because of the dedication of Henry, Peter, Don, Ross, Libby, Heather and everyone who ran that particular farming enterprise.

Peter loved farming. He taught himself how to shear and he could competently shear more than 100 sheep a day. He also deeply loved animals, especially horses, with which he had a very special skill. He became the Goondiwindi branch chairman of the Country Party at the age of 22 and the campaign manager for his father, Henry, in 1963. He assisted his father to wrest that seat from Paul

Hilton, who was a well-respected and widely loved member of the Labor Party and, ultimately, the QLP. Paul Hilton is still well respected in the seat that I hold today. It was no mean feat to wrest a seat from somebody who had held it for 28 years, but Peter and Henry were able to do that.

In 1964 Peter married the love of his life, Jeanette. Jeanette was an enormous supporter of Peter's. As a girl, she had suffered from rheumatic fever, which resulted in her having two leaking heart valves. She later developed chronic fatigue syndrome. Notwithstanding that, and against doctors' advice, they had two magnificent and wonderful children, Mark and Jenny. In 1968 they moved to Spyglass, just outside of Charters Towers, to a block that Peter and Jeanette selected. They developed that block until 1974, when Jeanette's illness forced them to return closer to the Southern Downs.

At that time, Peter became Henry's electorate secretary, with a view to succeeding Henry in maybe a decade's time. Unfortunately, Henry suffered a stroke and Peter was then thrust into the role of candidate for the National Party in the seat of Carnarvon. After a very hard-fought campaign, he won that seat and went on to hold it in this place until Jeanette's health forced him to retire from here in 1989. He was a very compassionate person. He was a diligent member of parliament. He always conducted himself with great honour and an innate sense of justice. He was very proud of their five granddaughters and one grandson.

When Peter became the member of parliament for Carnarvon, he went about building an enormous reputation in the seat. He took over from his father, who left a big pair of shoes to fill. Subsequently, Peter himself left a very big pair of boots for me to fill in this place. In his maiden speech he spoke strongly about the need for decentralisation, which gives us a sense of déjà vu because we are still talking about it today. He talked about the need for government to focus on skills and training. He talked about a greater share of federal tax revenue going back to local government and a greater return of power from the federal government to Queensland. He was an ardent advocate of the abolition of death duties in Queensland. Indeed, the urgency motion that he moved at the 1975 National Party conference in Maryborough subsequently proved the impetus that was necessary for Joh to take that issue on, abolish death duties here in Queensland and lobby the Fraser government to do the same thing nationally. We should be deeply indebted not only to Peter but also to that government for removing that abomination of a tax.

Peter held a number of portfolios in the six years that he was a minister in this place. Some of those have been mentioned today and include family services, transport, national parks and the arts. Those were areas that he loved very much. He was the minister who oversaw the billion dollar electrification of the railway line system in Queensland.

Peter hated bureaucracy. He hated red tape. He had a very innovative way of dealing with it. I remember him saying to me that when he was minister he used to go to the frontline staff at the various government agencies and ask them to identify in writing areas of duplication, triplication or insane processes within the department that they felt could be done away with. He said to them that unless they heard back from him in writing their suggestions would be implemented. We can imagine the amount of apoplexy, palpitations and cartwheeling that that created in the upper echelon of the department, but certainly it led to a great number of reforms with regard to the reduction of bureaucracy and red tape.

Peter left this place and went on to make a major mark within the community. He became the manager of Carramar, the aged persons facility in Stanthorpe, and oversaw the construction of a dementia unit. I have mentioned his deep and abiding faith, which led him to undertake training as a lay preacher. He studied for three years and went on to practise as a lay preacher. To me he was a great friend and he was a great mentor. He provided advice without interfering. He was somebody whose views you could respect. He provided encouragement in a non-condescending way. I note that in 1986 the Deputy Premier stood against Peter McKechnie, as he blooded himself on entry into this place. It was not a successful first outing, but nevertheless one of those first outings that many young candidates have to undertake from time to time.

Peter passed away as a relatively young man in the context of today. He was only 70 years of age. I must admit that I never expected to have to stand in this place and speak in tribute to Peter McKechnie, because in relative terms he was such a young man. It was very fitting that his service was held at the Rangeville Community Church. He was very much involved in and passionate about that church. He was involved in its building and administration. It was fitting that such a wonderful service was held there for him recently. Peter's life was celebrated in a magnificent way. It was a fitting tribute indeed to the wonderful life of a great man who touched many and will be sadly missed but fondly and always remembered by his many friends and family.



**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (9.48 am): It is with great respect that I stand to speak in this condolence motion for Peter McKechnie. I got to know Peter some six years ago when he moved to Toowoomba. At his funeral, as we learned about his life, the early tragedies of his family life and the way in which he took his young wife up to Charters Towers to a block that they drew in a ballot and

subsequently developed, we started to realise the strength of character in the man. At that service and in the six years that I have known Peter, what came through to me was his compassion and care for people. When Peter was a minister for transport, Ross Dunning was the commissioner for railways. Ross spoke to me about the great care and consideration that Peter had for employees in the department.

When Peter came to Toowoomba he had a great love of his church. As other speakers have said, he had trained to be a lay preacher in the Uniting Church. There had been a transition in Toowoomba from the Rangeville Uniting Church to become the Rangeville Community Church. Peter became involved with that church. It is a church that has appealed greatly to people and to families in particular. Peter was part of the leadership team that undertook the most remarkable fundraising effort. In buying a beautiful block of land at Middle Ridge, they had to pay for it twice because of the transition from one church to another. They had to pay the church from which they had transitioned, the Uniting Church, and then they had to pay for the block of ground. In total, they raised almost \$12 million and completed the large first stage of that beautiful church debt-free. It was one of Peter's proudest moments a few weeks ago when they held the opening of that church.

It is a church that reflects modern Christianity in that it is very much a family church. It overlooks the eastern part of Toowoomba and it was built with great big glass walls. It is a church that welcomes people to come into it and take part and share in the various services that it offers, and Peter was a large part of that. I quite admired the role that he took in the long, arduous task of fundraising to get that money and to complete that church. I also admired the way in which he helped people as a lay preacher and an elder within that church and the absolute care and compassion he seemed to give to everybody as he moved around.

Peter, in a very respectful way, used to occasionally pop into my electorate office to offer some advice, but it was always done in a respectful way. He took a great interest in the recent preselection for Toowoomba South and carefully went through with me the various people who had put up their hands for that preselection. During the past few years in Toowoomba he wrote a book, and I was very honoured when he asked me to be a part of the launch of that book in Toowoomba.

He had a wonderful family, despite the family tragedies of his early days. His lovely wife, Jeanette, his children, Mark and Jenny, and all of the grandchildren were all part of the ceremony. The funeral service really reflected a man of great character, a man who had given so much to Queensland in serving in this parliament for 15 years—seven of those as a minister—a man who had given much to his church and a man who had given much to many organisations, as previous speakers, particularly Lawrence Springborg, have mentioned. Most of all, I think the service reflected the great respect for the McKechnie family—and for Peter McKechnie and his wife, Jeanette, in particular. Everybody would have been very proud of his son, Mark, and daughter, Jenny, as they spoke fondly of their father during the service.

I join with others here in thanking Peter and his family for all they have done for Queensland and their communities. We send our deepest sympathies and prayers to his wife, Jeanette, and his family.



**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (9.52 am): Peter McKechnie made a great contribution to the Queensland parliament, the state of Queensland and the electorate of Carnarvon. During my early years in parliament I had considerable contact with Peter as a backbencher and as a minister in the government. He held several ministerial positions and he carried out those responsibilities with dignity and enthusiasm. I found him to be a very effective minister.

One of my first contacts with Peter was when he and Don Neal, the then member for Balonne, were sent out by the then Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, to meet with councils in South-West Queensland to finalise the new route for the reconstructed dingo barrier fence. At that time there had been some very robust discussion on whether the fence should be rebuilt, and some of the old hands will remember that. As chairman, or mayor as they are called today, I was one of the representatives who met with Peter and Don in Charleville. We agreed on the new route and they drove back to Brisbane that afternoon. It had been a big day. They had left Brisbane at two o'clock the previous morning. The fence was built, it was successful and it is still used today.

My condolences go to Peter's wife, Jeanette, and their family. Peter will be sadly missed, but his contribution to this state will live on.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.*

## PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

### Samford Road, Improvements

**Mr Wilson**, from 221 petitioners, requesting the House to improve safety associated with pedestrians crossing Samford Road in the vicinity of the Keppera Sanctuary Retirement Village; review the current traffic speed limit of 70 kmh; and provide a vehicle u-turn facility at the intersection of Keppera Street and Samford Road [[4686](#)].

Petition received.

## TABLED PAPER

MEMBER'S PAPER TABBED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Broadwater (Ms Croft)—

[4687](#) Non-conforming petition, from 7,132 petitioners, requesting the House to regulate the breeding, supply and sale of companion animals to set mandatory standards and stamp out the mass-production of puppies

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in accordance with sessional order No. 4, the order of business will resume and, of course, question time will commence one hour from now, which will be at 10.55.

### *Queensland in the 21st Century*



**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.56 am): Despite events in Sydney overnight, I am very proud to be here again this morning saying that nothing beats Queensland. Nothing beats Queensland certainly for opportunities. That is the message in the new Queensland prospectus, *Queensland in the 21st century*, released by the Treasury yesterday which accompanies the budget, and I table that for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation: Queensland in the 21st Century [[4688](#)].

This document sets out the tremendous growth potential of our state and charts a way forward for economic and export development. It also uses some key statistics and facts to show us the nature of the transformation that Queensland has seen in the last decade.

In January 2000 in Queensland there was no prep year for schoolchildren. Now there is a full year of prep, and kindergarten is being rolled out across the state. Around eight per cent of Queensland's energy in 2000 was produced from gas. Now that is just under 20 per cent of our energy mix. In 2000 there were no busways in our capital city. Now there are four operational busways. The unemployment rate was eight per cent. It is now 5.3 per cent. The Gateway Arterial was only three lanes each way. We now have two bridges and 18 lanes. The Brisbane cruise ship terminal at Portside did not exist. Since opening in 2006, it has increased cruise ship bookings into Brisbane by 90 per cent. The Gold Coast entertainment centre did not exist. The Gallery of Modern Art did not exist. Queensland's coal export capacity was 130 million tonnes per annum. Now it is 232 million tonnes, a 78 per cent increase.


Net state worth for Queensland in 2000 was \$57.3 billion. It is now estimated at \$178 billion. The number of research jobs in Queensland has more than doubled, from 8,500 in 1998 to well over 18,000 today. It has been the policies of a Labor government that have restructured and diversified our economy. It is a modern economy that is fuelled by ideas, knowledge and innovation and is supported by a nation-building infrastructure program. Queensland now stands ready not only to ride the next wave of opportunity but to drive the economy of Australia. We are ideally positioned for tremendous growth to satisfy the insatiable appetites of our Asian neighbours and the rapidly expanding Latin American and Caribbean markets.

We are ready to sell on the world market our ideas, our energy, our coal and gas, our primary products, our food, biotech, our education and Queensland as a destination for a terrific holiday. We are turning ideas into commercial success—from medical science through to manufacturing and the development of our LNG industry. Vast opportunities lie ahead of us: opportunities within the emerging tropical economy; opportunities to fill the education market of our knowledge-hungry neighbours; opportunities to be part of the food security equation for a whole region; and opportunities to focus on leisure and develop a stronger, more resilient tourism industry.

Mr Speaker, Queensland is a great investment destination. Our new investment prospectus, *Queensland in the 21st century*, provides prospective investors with a clear, concise guide to becoming part of Queensland's next wave of success. I look forward to joining with the Treasurer to sell those opportunities around the country and around the world.



### Natural Disasters, World Bank

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.00 am): Just five months ago the country, and indeed the world, watched as Queensland experienced a summer of devastating disasters. Now the eyes of the world have once again turned to Queensland as we share our experience of the rapid and unique way in which we are carrying out our massive recovery and rebuilding task.

To that end, today I am pleased to advise that I will be signing a memorandum of understanding between the state of Queensland and the World Bank. A team of disaster response experts from the World Bank toured regional Queensland and worked with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority in March and May this year. What they were here to see was world best practice in disaster recovery and they will benefit in taking the experience to the international community.

It is little wonder that we are being held up by this international organisation as an example when we consider that within just five months of those disasters we see that all 11 closed ports are now operational, all 411 impacted schools have reopened, 6,934 kilometres of 9,170 kilometres of state roads are recovered and 98 of 139 impacted national parks have been reopened.

This MOU recognises the benefits to each organisation of sharing knowledge, expertise and information on disaster risk and reconstruction. Queenslanders can be proud that our state has been acknowledged for demonstrating what the World Bank describes as global best practice.


The Queensland Reconstruction Authority is tasked with not only rebuilding Queensland but also building it back better, and I am pleased to say that our strong progress to date on what is an exceptionally challenging job has been recognised. What we have in the Queensland Reconstruction Authority is a unique model for recovery never before used in Queensland nor I think nationally—a rapidly established statutory authority working across all levels of government and with integral support from the Australian Defence Force.

Also in May a visiting delegation from the United Kingdom exchanged information and resources on the management and prevention of flood disasters such as those experienced by the UK in 2007. A common point of feedback has been that Queensland's response to our disasters has been rapid and efficient.

Not only will our experience help other countries; Queensland will be better placed to manage future natural disaster responses by being part of this global effort. The strong governance framework, processes and policy established by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority will enhance disaster preparedness in Queensland and leave us better prepared for likely future events.

The tools and processes established over the last four months by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority will be an enduring legacy for Queenslanders which will see us more resilient and better placed to manage extreme weather events.

### Display of Tobacco Products, Ban

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.03 am): Every year cigarettes kill 3,400 Queenslanders. Every year more than 30,400 Queenslanders are admitted to our hospitals with illnesses related to smoking cigarettes. But, at the same time, every year thousands of Queenslanders continue to smoke and many more—mostly younger Queenslanders—take up the habit. These are shocking statistics. They are all the more shocking because lung cancer, heart disease and other smoking related diseases are preventable, and the link between cigarettes and these diseases has been well established and well known for generations.

As a former smoker I can say that I comprehend absolutely what an insidious habit smoking is and, worse, what a torturous journey it can be to kick the cigarettes. Not only must we do everything in our power to encourage and help all Queenslanders break the habit; we must similarly do everything in our power to stop new Queenslanders taking it up. Our government is determined to prevent our next generation of Queenslanders from ending up among this toll of the dead and the ill from smoking. That is why today I can advise that we will move to ban smoking displays at all retail outlets under new laws that will be introduced into the parliament by the Minister for Health later today.

These new laws make good on our government's commitment to ban displays of smoking and smoking related products at general retailers, including tobacconists. This ban was a key recommendation of this parliament's bipartisan Social Development Committee's report on chronic diseases in Queensland. I thank that committee for its work. Our laws already restrict tobacco displays to a square metre for general retailers and three square metres for specialist tobacconists, but this new ban imposes even tougher restrictions with one very clear and determined aim: to reduce the number of Queenslanders putting their health and lives at risk by smoking and preventing future generations from taking up the habit.

Queensland has been a nation leader in this area, implementing some of the country's toughest antismoking laws. We have already implemented measures such as banning smoking in private vehicles carrying children under 16. Laws such as that are not designed to discriminate against smokers or to dictate choice; they are designed to help prevent more than 3,400 deaths every year.

Just as there is strong evidence that the advertising, display and promotion of tobacco products encourages their uptake, restricting retail advertising and promotional material has been shown to be effective in reducing it. There will be those who say that it will make no difference, in which case they should not mind it not being available to them.


Research has shown that exposure to tobacco promotion at point of sale, particularly for children, normalises smoking and can make people more likely to start the habit or at least experiment with a tobacco product. Just the same, retail displays can interfere with a smoker's attempts to quit, tempting them to impulse buy.

By banning the display we put a significant dent in that exposure, but we also send a very clear message to big tobacco: we are taking responsibility for the future health of Queenslanders. This latest move also has the strong support of the World Health Organisation, along with local groups such as the Cancer Council Queensland, the Heart Foundation and the National Preventative Health Taskforce.

We cannot kid ourselves. Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of cancer and it is the greatest cause of preventable death in the developed world. Our government is determined to keep taking the action necessary to reduce the incidence of smoking and to help those people who want to quit to give up this habit.

### **Synthetic Cannabinoids, Ban**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the honourable the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State and former candidate for Carnarvon.

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (10.07 am): Mr Speaker, first time I got one-third of the vote. I am sure I gave Peter McKechnie a scare with a big one-third of the vote.

**Mr Seeney:** You've been scaring people ever since!

**Mr LUCAS:** Second time I got two-thirds of the vote in Lytton. They obviously appreciated me a lot more.

This government is tough on drugs, and those people who make, sell or use drugs face tough punishments. Our strong laws reflect the government's determination to rid Queensland of dangerous drugs that ruin so many lives. The maximum penalty for the unlawful possession, supply or trafficking of schedule 2 drugs is 20 years in jail.

The government commits significant resources through the Queensland Police Service to stamping out the illegal drug trade and illegal drug use. Our police put a lot of effort into targeting those involved in the production, manufacture, trafficking and distribution of dangerous drugs. And their hard work is having a major effect on the illegal drug trade. In 2009-10 police busted around 300 clandestine drug labs—nearly double the amount from the previous year.

Recently the Queensland Police Service has become aware of the increasing demand for a product called Kronic. Kronic is described as a synthetic cannabinoid and can have the same effect as cannabis. More than 380 drugs are currently listed in the Drugs Misuse Act as 'dangerous' and are illegal to use in Queensland unless prescribed by a doctor or otherwise authorised by law. This list includes all cannabinoids.

Advances in technology and people creating 'synthetic' versions of banned drugs means that we need to keep reviewing our laws. People are constantly coming up with new mixtures and compounds that have the effects of cannabis but may not yet be banned because they are chemically slightly different from listed substances. In the light of this, the government has agreed to ban synthetic cannabinoids.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2011, to be introduced later this year, will amend the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 to revise the definition of 'analogue'. The definition will include any substances that are 'intended' to have a substantially similar pharmacological effect as known drugs—'intended' being the emphasis. Analogues are substances that have a chemical structure and effect that are substantially similar to that of illegal drugs. This change will allow us to stay one step ahead, and this will overcome the current requirement to prove that the 'analogue' has a substantially similar pharmacological effect to a scheduled dangerous drug. It is preferable to put the position beyond doubt like in some other Australian jurisdictions, including South Australia, which already include analogues within their definition of a dangerous drug. The bill will amend the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987 to include 15 emerging drugs that warrant inclusion in schedule 2.

The emerging issue of synthetic cannabinoids is not confined to Queensland. Therefore, the matter was recently referred to the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs. The intergovernmental committee and the TGA are looking at what new approaches should be taken nationwide to deal with this issue. The committee has agreed to write to the National Drugs and Poisons Scheduling Committee with a view to having these substances scheduled so they can be regulated and effectively banned. Consultation will open soon for key legal stakeholders, including the Sentencing Advisory Council, to comment on the draft bill.

### Smart State



**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (10.11 am): The budget the government delivered on Tuesday outlined Queensland's next wave of prosperity. Our state is on the cusp of the next boom, driven largely by increased investment from the business sector and the strength of our resources industry, but what the budget also shows is that Queensland's economy is much more than a one-trick pony. Our strength is in our diversity and especially in the potential growth in the industries of tomorrow.

It was a Labor government that established Queensland's Smart State agenda, and this Labor government is continuing that investment in new industries and new job creation opportunities. As the Premier said, *Queensland in the 21st century* outlines not only Queensland's traditional strengths but the exciting opportunities that are before us. It is about acknowledging the role of coal and crops and embracing the possibilities in innovation and creativity. This government is determined to foster and encourage Queensland businesses and industries in their efforts to innovate.

As part of the budget, we will allocate \$100 million to a suite of new funding initiatives under the Smart State agenda. The bulk of this money will come from the Future Growth Fund—a vehicle for investment in tomorrow's industries. There are few things more important than investing in the skills of tomorrow—in the brains, knowledge and capacity of the next generation of Queenslanders. We do so knowing that we must look to the future where we export the power of our ideas, not just the energy of hydrocarbons. We will increase funding to our small and medium enterprise innovation program that provides Queensland businesses with up to \$50,000 to help commercialise their innovative ideas. We will also invest \$2 million to support the new food policy released yesterday by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies aimed at strengthening Queensland's reputation as a clean, reliable and high-quality food producer and as a launch pad for export growth.

Another \$2 million will be allocated to develop Queensland's pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity to stake a claim in the global pharmaceutical industry. Also, \$8 million over three years will be invested on a renewed investment in our Study Queensland brand to support growth in international education exports which are so vital to our universities. By attracting tomorrow's leaders to study here in Queensland, we will be encouraging their lifelong connection to Queensland—our people, our opportunities and our attractions.

Skills and science are a big part of Queensland's economy. Since 1998, the government's agenda has seen \$3.6 billion invested in research and facilities—bringing the best and brightest here to Queensland and fostering the considerable amount of talent that already exists in our own backyard. This new investment, our renewed commitment to the Smart State agenda's ability to deliver the jobs of the future, is central to our economic agenda for Queensland—supporting our strengths, supporting new industries and investing in the future—to deliver the jobs of the future, just like we said we would.

### South-East Queensland Cycle Network



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs) (10.13 am): The Queensland government has a strong record of delivering multimillion dollar cycling infrastructure in our state. I am delighted to inform the House that this will continue with more than \$48 million allocated to major cycling infrastructure projects in South-East Queensland next financial year. This funding will contribute to delivering a network of cycle routes that form a strategic cycle network for South-East Queenslanders. The network stretches from Noosa down the Sunshine Coast, through Brisbane and the Ipswich regions and to the Gold Coast and extending out to Toowoomba. This is an important part of the Queensland government's commitment to promote green transport options and to get more people cycling more often.

The projects to receive funding include: \$6.89 million to the remaining stages of the Bicentennial Bikeway, \$2.2 million towards the bridge across Schulz Canal at Nundah that will connect Nudgee Road and the airport, over \$1 million for the Moreton Bay Cycleway, over \$2.5 million for the Tugun-Bilinga Oceanway, \$2.2 million for the Surfers South Oceanway, and over \$400,000 for the Brassall Bikeway Connection. This funding will also be used for the design and construction for future cycling along sections of David Low Way on the Sunshine Coast. I know that the member for Kawana is very pleased with this good news.


**Mr Bleijie:** They've got a great local member.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And a minister that delivers. The funding will also go towards cycle lanes to be constructed along Anzac Avenue in Moreton Bay to North Lakes to Rothwell Park. I know that the member for Murrumba will be very pleased with that news. Mr Speaker, there is something for you. The funding will be used for the design of a cycle and pedestrian bridge over Scrubby Creek along Kingston Road at Logan. I am quite sure you will be very pleased with that and we will expect to see you cycling in the coming years.

These are just a few of the 40-plus projects to receive funding over the next financial year. These projects are part of the state government's \$600 million commitment until 2031 to develop cycle routes as part of the South-East Queensland Principal Cycle Network Plan.

**Mr SPEAKER:** After that very good news, even if the imagery is suspect, I call the Minister for Disability Services.

### Budget, Disability Services

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.15 am): Under Labor, funding for Queenslanders with a disability has increased by 495 per cent. This week, we delivered another record budget for disability services and community care—\$1.775 billion, which is an increase of 10 per cent. In my portfolio it is not about the dollars; it is about the people and what we can do as a government to make a difference to people's lives.


I am talking about people like Michael Cherry. I met Michael last week at the opening of the Espresso Train cafe in Nundah—a cafe that employs people with a disability or a mental illness. It is run by Nundah Community Enterprises Co-op and they have taken on around 20 workers, most of them long-term unemployed. They are supported by Social Ventures Australia and they are financially supported by us, with \$50,000 for cafe renovations. With those funds, they were able to expand their cafe and catering business. They have gone from strength to strength. That is where our budget dollars go.

Then there is Michael and Howie. I met them last month at their new, specially modified home in Cairns. This was \$740,00 of state government money well spent to turn what was once a day centre into a fully-functioning home, with 24-hour on-site support for a group of young people with a disability. With this year's state budget, we will be able to modify even more homes for people with a disability to give them the chance to live independently for the first time in their lives.

There is Jessica and Mark. They are recipients of our postschool support initiative. It is about providing pathways for young people with a disability from school life to adult life. Jessica wants to undertake a course in animal studies. Mark, like most young blokes, was playing it cool the day we met, weighing up his options to undertake a trade.

With this year's budget, we will be able to assist 140 more young people with a disability. We are serious about supporting Queenslanders with a disability and giving them real hope for the future. There are few things more important than that—just ask any one of those workers at the Espresso Train cafe in Nundah.

### Water Prices

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance and the Arts) (10.17 am): There is a crazy idea circulating about water prices in South-East Queensland and the time has come to put it to bed once and for all. For months now, the Local Government Association of Queensland has been publicly claiming—

**Mr DICKSON:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We still have a bill before the House on that topic, if the member is not aware.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Let me deal with it this way. The honourable member has made the point of order. Can the honourable member demonstrate how what the minister has said already interferes with the bill? Could you show me how that happens? I do not have the bill in front of me.

**Mr DICKSON:** Yes, the member was talking about the price of water in Queensland and what we were speaking about last night almost word for word.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mr Speaker, if I can assist, the bill that the member is—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I would like to hear this. I do not have a copy of the bill in front of me. I have a point of order that I am trying to get to the bottom of.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** As the bill that the member is referring to is a bill introduced by me and not the honourable member, I thought it may be of assistance to you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The bill refers to the capping of water prices in South-East Queensland to the level of CPI for the next two years. It does not refer specifically to the debt or the financing of the South-East Queensland water grid. That is quite a separate matter from the provisions of the bill.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In the absence of having the bill in front of me, I will have to be guided by what the minister is saying. I would say to the minister making the statement that, bearing in mind what the member for Buderim has raised and the explanation given by the minister, I would ask that you contain your ministerial statement to points other than what is in the bill. I call the Minister for Finance.

**Ms NOLAN:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I note your guidance. I will do that. The ministerial statement refers to the asset lives rather than the capping matter, as the honourable minister said. For months now the Local Government Association of Queensland has been publicly claiming that water prices could be reduced if only government paid off the debt on its water assets by more than 20 years. The LGAQ made the claim with a somewhat amateurish Aspire Consulting report in April and I responded to it in writing and in the parliament on Tuesday, 10 May. Undeterred by the facts, the LGAQ made the claim again in a letter to me just last week. To set the record straight once and for all, the claim that the repayment schedule of the water grid assets is 20 years is quite simply not true. Let me be even more clear. The Queensland government owns three water grid companies: Seqwater, which owns dams; WaterSecure—

**Mr DICKSON:** I rise to a point of order. The minister is directly talking about the three water companies. We are talking about the prices of water in Queensland. We are walking a very tight line here, in my opinion.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr Schwarten:** Sit down, you imbecile.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Rockhampton, that is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw that if you would.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Yes. I withdraw it, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Ms NOLAN:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I would ask you to confine your ministerial statement. I will now have a chance to study the bill.

**Ms NOLAN:** I understand.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** All right. Let us hear the point of order.

**Mr FRASER:** The point of order is this: given the concept of the standing orders, which have been broadened to provide for a broad-ranging discussion of the state's finances in order to assist accountability and transparency in the parliament, if you were to accept the member for Buderim's point of order you would also be circumscribing, I presume, the shadow Treasurer—if that is who is delivering the budget reply this afternoon—of speaking on any matters relating to water prices.

**Honourable members** interjected.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes, I will take the point or order.

**Mr HORAN:** The matter that the Treasurer has referred to is specifically about the three bills that he has brought into the parliament. What the honourable member for Buderim has brought up is about a separate bill called the Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Bill, which is about the pricing of water.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will take the point of order.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mr Speaker, just to further clarify, the bill before the House refers to the capping of the price of water charged by councils or their distributor-retailers. It does not refer to bulk water prices. It does not refer to how the water grid is funded. It does not refer to the debt.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Allow me to hear the point of order!

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Whilst those matters may have been canvassed in the debate, they are not contained in the provisions of the bill.

**Mr Crandon:** They are! It's specifically excluded in the bill.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Coomera will cease interjecting.

**Mr Robertson:** Go back to sleep. Do yourself a favour!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I now have a copy of the bill in front of me. What the bill appears to refer to is the capping of water charges. It does, however, in the explanatory notes—and this is where the minister may be running into the problem from the member for Buderim—say extending the period by which repayments can be made on outstanding debts of the South-East Queensland water grid. It then says in the explanatory notes that this would create a longer price path and reduce the need to escalate the cost of bulk water. So what I would then say to the minister is that that is the bill before the House. Under the standing orders that I have to deal with, I would then ask you to confine your remarks to matters that are outside the bill that is before the House.

**Ms NOLAN:** Mr Speaker, the—

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Coomera.

**Mr CRANDON:** Mr Speaker, the bill specifically does refer—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Could you give me the page so I can follow this—the page that you are referring to?

**Mr CRANDON:** The Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Bill 2011 at clause 7(2) (b). Under the definition of 'water supplier' on page 8 it specifically excludes all bulk water supply entities owned by the state. It does refer to those bulk water suppliers in the bill, and that is the point I was making earlier.

**Ms NOLAN:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think the minister has the sense of what my ruling is.

**Ms NOLAN:** I do, and there are essentially two ways that we can go here. We can accept the change to standing orders that the government made to allow a full discussion across a range of the state's financial matters—its financial basis—or—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Let me discuss what the Treasurer took the point of order about. As I understand it, the rules of anticipation are with respect to the budget and the number of bills that the Treasurer incorporated on the day of the budget. What I am struggling to understand with this is that this is not part of that budget. Therefore, as I understand it, it is a separate bill from the budget even though it may have budgetary implications. So I would ask you to confine your remarks to matters that are not in the bill that is before the House which the Minister for Water Utilities has brought to the House. I call the minister.

**Ms NOLAN:** The bill seeks to require councils to cap their water charges at CPI. It does not seek to limit the repayment period or to change the repayment period on the state government's bulk water assets. The point I make in the ministerial statement is that the state government's bulk water assets are being paid down over a period that is commensurate with their asset lives—that is, Lake Manchester, for instance, is being paid down over a period of around 48 years, the Tugun desalination plant is being paid down over 30 years and the southern regional pipeline is being paid down over 75 years. Similarly, things like the office chairs at Seqwater have a useful life of three to five years. As such, the point I make to the House is that the argument which is being made publicly, which is separate from the bill, that water prices would change as a result of asset lives being extended beyond 20 years—

**Mr DICKSON:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Again the minister is referring to points within the bill and I ask that she refrain from doing that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Again I would ask the member to help the chair by demonstrating to me what page the honourable member is having trouble with.

**Mr DICKSON:** Mr Speaker, it is in the explanatory notes. We were talking about the bill last night. The amendments that are being put up also talk about that.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the minister.


**Mr ROBERTSON:** What the member has failed to point out or advise you is what clause in the bill he finds so offensive. What he has actually referred to is the amendments that he has tabled. He is referring to the amendments that he has tabled, not the bill that is before the House. Therefore, the Minister for Finance is not offending the principles of referring to a bill before the House in her ministerial statement.

**Ms NOLAN:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I accept the point of order that the minister has made. Finish your ministerial statement and let us get it over with.

**Ms NOLAN:** Yes, I will. The critical point, as I said, is that these water assets are being paid down over an extended period well beyond 20 years. That is a relevant matter for the people of Queensland in determining their views on water pricing, and the government, having put these matters clearly on the public record, looks forward to further informed debate.

### Budget, Community Safety


 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.29 am): Queensland's community safety agencies—Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, Emergency Management and Corrective Services—are among the best in Australia at what they do. When the chips are down they come to the fore, as was demonstrated time and time again during Queensland's summer of sorrow. In the 2011-12 state budget the government will provide more than \$2 billion in funding for the Department of Community Safety to continue the admirable work that it performs on behalf of all Queenslanders.

This year's budget includes funding for 50 additional ambulance officers, 17 additional Emergency Management Queensland personnel, 140 new or replacement ambulance vehicles and 49 new and replacement urban and rural fire appliances, which will ensure that the current high standard of emergency services response can be maintained. The budget also includes funding for 19 new or redeveloped ambulance stations and 14 new or redeveloped fire stations.

The budget continues the renewal program underway within the state's correctional facilities. An allocation of \$51 million will be spent continuing the \$442.8 million expansion and redevelopment of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre near Mareeba, while \$33 million will be spent continuing the \$415.6 million first stage of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct development at Gatton. An allocation of \$40 million has also been provided to precommission and operate both facilities. An allocation of \$1 million has been provided towards the construction of new low-security accommodation for women at the Numinbah Correctional Centre and \$6 million will go towards the cell upgrade program at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre to increase the number of suicide-resistant cells. The budget includes around \$14 million over four years to introduce global positioning system technology to monitor and track the movement of dangerous sex offenders.

More than \$2 million will be spent developing a disaster management warehouse in North Queensland and purchasing additional stock of tarpaulins, sandbags, ladders, chainsaws, generators and other essential materials for existing caches and warehouse. The budget will also deliver 20 new vehicles, four new flood boats and a disaster exercise to enhance the State Emergency Service's capability. Additionally, funding is provided for a new All Hazards Information Management Program to provide accessible, relevant and up-to-date information to enhance situational awareness during disasters. The Bligh government is committed to ensuring that our community safety agencies are well funded and well resourced as they work to keep Queensland safe.

### Affordable Housing; Women

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.32 am): Queensland is a prosperous and resilient state. The Treasurer predicts economic sunshine for the next few years. Yesterday's budget saw the announcement of a \$15 billion Capital Works Program that will deliver 93,000 jobs. Times have been hard but we are on the way up, and my department is delivering on jobs and working to ease the cost-of-living pressures through affordable housing, the jobs that come with that and expanded concessions.

We are delivering through the National Rent Affordability Scheme, providing affordable homes in the private market and the jobs that come with that as well. The building of an estimated 3,000 new NRAS homes will further stimulate the economy and create 6,000 full-time jobs in the construction and related industries. The NRAS homes will be built around the state—more than 890 in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area, 60 in the Central Highlands, 145 in Gladstone, 520 on the Gold Coast, 300 on the Sunshine Coast, 400 for Ipswich, 54 for Rockhampton, 238 for Mackay and more. These NRAS homes help people dealing with cost-of-living pressures, with a subsidy to bring the rental properties to 20 per cent below the market rent.

We are delivering on new social housing: 1,631 social housing units will be completed in 2011 and another 231 will commence. One of the best ways our government can ease cost-of-living pressures is to generate jobs, and that is what we are doing. A well-paying job in a growing economy is the best protection that we can give to Queensland families. All of our housing affordability measures deliver jobs, because when homes are being built jobs are created. Our social housing build will deliver more than 3,700 full-time jobs between 31 May this year and 3 June 2012.

When I speak of jobs, I am also mindful of the inequity for women in pay and underrepresentation in some high-paying trades like the construction industry. As Minister for Women, I am committed to ensuring that the women of Queensland get a greater share of the action in industries like construction and I am determined to increase the economic prosperity of women. The Queensland government continues to invest in and promote our highly successful Women in Hard Hats program—and I do not go far without my pink hard hat—and our program has proven to be highly successful.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Good. Now that you have made your point—

**Ms STRUTHERS:** In fact, I am probably best to bring my hard hat into the House because there is a bit of rough and tumble in here occasionally and a woman needs a good pink hard hat.

Our program encourages and assists women to take up jobs in non-traditional and emerging industries. Women still earn on average 18 per cent less than their male counterparts. Our challenge is to improve the low representation of women in these non-traditional, higher paying industries. For instance, women make up only 11 per cent of the construction workforce. The women in construction network and the Women in Hard Hats program through my department are driving attitudinal change. The mining, energy and construction industries in Queensland will be looking for 20,000 to 30,000 new workers in the next couple of years and the Bligh government is preparing women and industry to answer the call.

The industry needs women. It is no longer optional. Women need to be taking up these roles. That is why in the coming months I will be travelling across the state to meet with women and girls at Try'a Trade events being planned to provide them with hands-on opportunities to try a different path and to learn a trade.

### Budget, Regional Health Services



**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.35 am): The Bligh government is continuing to deliver more services sooner and closer to home for regional Queenslanders. We have seen it in this week's budget, which allocated more than \$240 million to continue major hospital expansions in Townsville, Mackay, Mount Isa, Cairns and Rockhampton. The budget also provides nearly \$5 million to staff accommodation to help us continue recruiting doctors and nurses in rural and remote areas.

In partnership with the Gillard government, we are providing \$37 million over two years to hire 126 mental health staff to help those recovering from disasters, including Cyclone Yasi. We are also investing an extra \$61 million over four years in the Surgery Connect program to speed up treatment for elective surgery patients, including those in the regions.

This record budget continues to deliver new and improved cancer services in regional Queensland. We are investing nearly \$30 million in this coming financial year to deliver regional cancer centres, \$2 million in ongoing funding to the Cairns oncology unit and \$8.7 million for other cancer treatment facilities around the state.


I was pleased to see firsthand how these new services will improve the lives of patients in regional areas. During my recent visit to Cairns last week I was pleased to visit the Liz Plummer Cancer Centre. The centre held its first outpatient clinic on Tuesday and radiation oncology treatments start on 27 June. This great facility means that around 340 people will no longer have to travel to receive vital cancer treatments. While touring the centre with the member for Cairns and the member for Barron River—who are both vocal supporters of this centre—I was pleased to meet also with patients who will benefit from the new service.



I also had an opportunity to meet with Mr Bob MacGill from the Committee for Oncology Unit Cairns Hospital—better known locally as COUCH. This organisation has played an integral role in the delivery of this new cancer centre and I wish to again acknowledge their hard work to make this a reality. I was also pleased to announce that cancer survivors awaiting breast-reconstructive surgery would benefit from extra one-off funding to help local Cairns women have this important surgery sooner. That means that around 20 patients who have been waiting for this surgery will now be able to have their operations undertaken locally in the next 12 months. That will make a world of difference for these women and their families. I know that this is something my colleague the member for Barron River has advocated for over a long time, and I thank him for his efforts in this important area.


These improvements, these investments, in providing more services sooner and closer to home is proof of our commitment to delivering for regional Queenslanders. We want to ensure that as many patients as possible can receive the care they need in their local communities, and we are getting on with the job of delivering this care.

### Biosecurity

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies) (10.38 am): Queensland has the greatest exposure to external biosecurity threats in Australia. As such, it is vital that we invest in programs that strengthen our ability to protect industries and our lifestyle from invasive pests and diseases. In this year's state budget the Queensland government has made biosecurity program funding a priority. This focuses on boosting the front-line fight against pests and diseases such as fire ants, myrtle rust and Asian honey bees. For the coming year the Queensland government has contributed an additional \$6 million to fight fire ants, to take the total for the joint state and federal eradication program to \$21 million. This additional funding for 2011-12 is on top of the \$1.4 million Queensland has already committed as its share of the national cost sharing arrangement. This takes Queensland's total contribution to \$7.4 million. Queensland's additional funding is in recognition of the serious impact that this ant will have if we do not maintain our current capacity to respond. We are taking up the fight for the rest of Australia.

As well as fire ants, more than three quarters of a million dollars will be added to \$1.5 million from the Australian government to counter the effects of the plant disease myrtle rust. This funding will support disease management, improving disease knowledge, education and training as well as community engagement. The Asian honey bee program will also continue through Biosecurity Queensland, supported by the \$2 million recently announced by the Australian government. In addition, the Bligh government is investing \$3.5 million to deliver the Biosecurity Queensland strategy which includes landmark legislation and a single biosecurity bill for this state. All of these initiatives will help to protect Queensland's industries but, most importantly, are helping to protect our Queensland way of life.

### Budget, Roads

 **Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure) (10.40 am): Regional Queensland is the big winner in this year's road budget. We are spending big and fast in the regions. This year there is \$2.4 billion funding for roads in rural and regional Queensland. That works out at \$1,600 for every man, woman and child in regional Queensland. It is a 50 per cent increase on last year's per capita spend, as well as a 20 per cent increase here in South-East Queensland.

As many members know, I am a North Queensland boy and proud of it. That is why, like a lot of members in regional Queensland, we know there has to be continuing investment in roads for regional Queensland. I have said it before and I will say it again: we are committed to rural and remote regional roads because they are the lifelines of our communities. We are generating 58,000 jobs through our road construction work, with most of those in the regions. A large part of this year's spend is on recovery work after the disasters. We promised to focus on rebuilding these roads and these regions and that is exactly what we will do.

We are going to do everything we can to turn a disaster into a boom, and we make no apologies for that. We will start off by spending hundreds of millions of dollars—\$1.4 billion, indeed—in 2011-12 on repairs. The majority of this will be dollars poured into the regions. Rural and remote roads are our lifeblood. That is why on top of the disaster work, we are spending to improve regional roads. There is \$8.5 million to kick off the \$50 million new road and rail overpass south of the Capricorn Highway at Gracemere. I thank the members for Rockhampton and Keppel for that. They have been great advocates for that project. There is \$20 million for Whitsunday Way—\$10 million to upgrade the William Murray Drive intersection and a further \$10 million for those four overtaking lanes. I thank the member for Whitsunday. In fact, she took me there personally to look at those sites earlier this year. That is why they are great projects.

Then there is \$40 million to raise the Fursden Creek Bridge in line with the Edmund Casey Bridge, reconnecting communities across Mackay during flooding. That is a great project thanks to the members for Mackay and Whitsunday who are great advocates for their local area. A further \$41 million will be spent on the \$150 million upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Sheehy Road and Ray Jones Drive between Innisfail and Cairns. The members for Mulgrave and Cairns are great advocates for that really important work funded by a Labor government. What about Toowoomba? The member for Toowoomba North is a great advocate for roads in his area. That is why that \$96 million announcement to upgrade the Warrego west of Toowoomba to four lanes is a great announcement.

**Mr Wettenhall** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** I take the interjection from the member for Barron River. Great work.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** And I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. He wants the feds to help rebuild the Warrego. There is another project on the Warrego: \$16 million to continue the \$40 million project to widen the Warrego between Roma and Mitchell. That is important work on the Warrego.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WALLACE:** I take your interjection. That is a good announcement. There is more work being undertaken on the Bruce Highway: \$47 million to finish the \$110 million Douglas arterial widening; \$25 million to progress the Cardwell Range project north of Ingham; and \$10 million for that four-lane upgrade to the southern approaches to Mackay. This is great news for regional roads, a budget of \$1,600 for every man, woman and child in the regions, and one that this Bligh government is proud of.

## MOTION

### Amendments to Standing Orders



**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.44 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended in accordance with the amendments circulated in my name.
- (2) That the new Part 5 of Standing Orders in the amendments commence on 1 August 2011.
- (3) That all remaining amendments take effect immediately.
- (4) That the protocols for dealings between Parliamentary Committees and Public Entities adopted on 16 March 2000 be replaced by new Schedules 8 and 9 contained in the amendments to Standing Orders.

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### Amendments to Standing Orders

#### 1. PART 5 of Standing Orders (Bills)—

*Omit, Insert—*

#### **'PART 5 THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

#### **CHAPTER 22 INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### **126. Types of Bills**

A Bill may be introduced as—

- (a) a Government Bill—a Bill dealing with a matter of public policy introduced by a Minister, or
- (b) a Private Member's Bill—a Bill dealing with a matter of public policy introduced by a member who is not a Minister or by a Minister in their capacity as a member.

#### **127. Form of statement of enacting authority for Bills**

(1) The following form is used in Bills, except those in (2), as the statement of the enacting authority: "The Parliament of Queensland enacts".

(2) The following form is used in Bills requiring the consent of the electors of Queensland: "The Parliament of Queensland with the consent of the electors of Queensland enacts".

#### **128. Temporary laws**

The precise duration of every temporary law shall be expressed in a distinct clause in the Bill.

**129. Introduction of Bills**

(1) A Minister may introduce a Government Bill at any time during Government Business, so as to not interrupt other Government Business.

(2) A member may introduce a Private Members' Bill during any time allocated for the introduction or debate of Private Members' Bills.

(3) A Bill is introduced by the Minister or member by:

- (a) informing the House of their intention to introduce a Bill and reading the long title of the Bill;
- (b) immediately tabling a copy of the Bill and any explanatory notes for the Bill;<sup>1</sup>
- (c) nominating which portfolio committee established by Part 7 of these Standing Orders or other committee of the House will consider the Bill; and
- (d) delivering a speech explaining the Bill ("explanatory speech").

(4) A member who has presented a Bill may, with the prior consent of the Speaker, move that their explanatory speech or part thereof be incorporated in the Record of Proceedings.

(5) After a Bill is introduced it is deemed to be published by order of the House.

**130. First Reading**

(1) After the introduction of a Bill and the member's explanatory speech, the member introducing the Bill shall then move "That the Bill be now read a first time" and the question shall be put without amendment or debate.

(2) If the question for the first reading of the Bill fails, the Bill shall proceed no further.

**CHAPTER 23 BILLS REFERRED TO PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES****131. Reference to a portfolio committee**

(1) If the question for the first reading of the Bill succeeds, then the Bill stands referred to the portfolio committee or other committee nominated by the Member who presented the Bill under Standing Order 129(3)(c), and shall be dealt with under this chapter unless:

- (a) the Bill is declared an urgent Bill, in which case the Bill shall be dealt with under Chapter 24 of these Standing Orders;
- (b) the Bill is an annual appropriation Bill, in which case the Bill shall be dealt with under Part 6 of these Standing Orders; or
- (c) the House has otherwise ordered.

(2) If a Bill is referred to a committee other than a portfolio committee, that committee is to follow the procedures in this Part as if the committee was a portfolio committee.

**132. Portfolio committee consideration of Bills**

(1) Each portfolio committee to which a Bill is referred shall examine the Bill and—

- (a) determine whether to recommend that the Bill be passed;
- (b) may recommend amendments to the Bill; and
- (c) consider the application of fundamental legislative principles contained in Part 2 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* to the Bill and compliance with Part 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* regarding explanatory notes.

(2) A report by a portfolio committee on a Bill is to indicate the committee's determinations on the matters set out in this Standing Order.

**133. How a portfolio committee may examine a Bill**

(1) A portfolio committee to which a Bill is referred may examine the Bill by—

- (a) calling for and receiving submissions about the Bill;
- (b) holding hearings and taking evidence from witnesses;
- (c) engaging expert or technical assistance and advice; and
- (d) seeking the opinion of other committees in accordance with Standing Order 135.

(2) In examining a Bill, a portfolio committee is to operate in as public and transparent manner as practicable and to this end is to aim to—

- (a) engage likely stakeholders in the Bill;
- (b) hold hearings in public wherever practicable;
- (c) publish submissions as soon as practicable after their receipt, as long as such submissions are relevant and not prejudicial to any person; and
- (d) publish expert or technical advice received as soon as practicable after receipt, as long as such advice is not prejudicial to any person.

(3) Nothing in this Standing Order is to be taken as mandating a process that must be followed by a portfolio committee.

1. Section 22 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* provides: A Minister who presents a Government Bill to the Legislative Assembly must, before the resumption of the second reading debate, circulate to members an explanatory note for the Bill.

**134. Recommendation of amendments**

(1) Except as otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, a portfolio committee may recommend only amendments that are relevant to the subject-matter of the Bill, are consistent with the principles and objects of the Bill, and otherwise conform to Standing Orders and the practices of the House.

(2) In its report to the House recommending amendments to a Bill, a committee must distinguish between those amendments recommended unanimously by the committee and those recommended by a majority of the committee.

**135. Opinions from other committees**

(1) The portfolio committee to which a Bill is referred may ask any other committee for its opinion on the Bill or any portion of the Bill.

(2) For the purposes of giving its opinion, the other committee may examine the Bill or portion of the Bill, as if it had been referred the Bill, but shall report back to the committee that asked its opinion, not the House.

**136. Portfolio committee reports**

(1) A portfolio committee must finally report to the House on a Bill within six calendar months of the Bill being referred to it or by such other time as fixed by the House or the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

(2) The Committee of the Legislative Assembly may vary the time for report for any Bill, but must report such decision to the House at the earliest opportunity.

(3) If a portfolio committee has not reported within the time for report and no extension has been given, the Bill is discharged from further consideration by the committee and is set down for its second reading stage.

(4) Following the tabling of a portfolio committee report on a Bill the Bill is set down on the notice paper for its second reading stage in the House.

(5) When a Government Bill has been set down on the notice paper pursuant to (4), at least three sitting days shall elapse until the commencement of the second reading debate, unless the Bill is declared urgent.

(6) When a Private Member's Bill has been set down on the notice paper pursuant to (4), at least three calendar months shall elapse until the commencement of the second reading debate, unless the Bill is declared urgent.

**CHAPTER 24 URGENT BILLS****137. Urgent Bills**

(1) A Minister or Leader of the House may move that a Bill be declared an urgent Bill.

(2) A Bill declared urgent may be considered immediately and shall:

(a) not stand referred to a portfolio committee and be set down on the notice paper for its second reading stage; or

(b) if already referred to a portfolio committee, be deemed discharged from the committee and set down on the notice paper for its second reading stage.

(3) A Bill declared urgent may be passed with unusual expedition through all stages and a Minister or Leader of the House may move a motion specifying the time that shall be allotted to the various stages of the Bill.

**CHAPTER 25 SECOND READING****138. Motion for second reading**

The order of the day for a Bill being read, the member who presented the Bill shall move "That the Bill be now read a second time".

**139. Scope of second reading debate**

Debate on the second reading may address the principles of the Bill, the portfolio committee's examination and report and any amendments recommended by the committee.

**140. Questions put at conclusion of debate**

At the conclusion of the debate on the second reading of a bill the Speaker puts a question "That the bill be now read a second time".

**141. Amendments to second reading question**

Amendments may be proposed to the question for the second reading of a Bill, provided that the amendment is strictly relevant to the question for the second reading.

**CHAPTER 26 CONSIDERATION IN DETAIL****142. Consideration in detail**

(1) A Bill, having been read a second time, shall be considered in detail, either then or at a future time.

(2) After a Bill has been read a second time, the Speaker may take the Chair at the Table of the House for consideration in detail.

**143. Preamble to be postponed**

When a Bill is being considered in detail, the preamble, if any, shall be postponed until after the clauses and schedules of the Bill have been considered.

**144. Clauses postponed**

A clause or schedule may be postponed whether it has been amended or not.

**145. Order in considering Bill in detail**

The following order shall be observed in considering a Bill in detail.

(a) Clauses as printed, and any new clauses, in numerical order.

(b) Schedules as printed, and any new schedules, in numerical order.

- (c) Any clauses or schedules previously postponed.
- (d) Postponed preamble (if any).

**146. Question on each clause and schedule**

- (1) The Speaker shall put a question on each clause and schedule (if any) of the Bill "That the clause (or schedule), as read, stand part of the Bill".
- (2) In calling the clauses and schedules of a Bill it shall be sufficient to call the numbers only.

**147. Amendments to clauses, schedules etc**

- (1) On a question to a clause, schedule, or preamble amendments may be proposed to the clause, schedule, or preamble to:
  - (a) omit words;
  - (b) omit words in order to add or insert other words instead; or
  - (c) add or insert words.

- (2) If an amendment is proposed, a new question stands "That the amendment be agreed to".

- (3) If an amendment is agreed to, a new question stands "That the clause (or schedule), as amended, stand part of the Bill".

**148. Amendments in writing for circulation**

An amendment to a clause, schedule or preamble must be in writing and provided to the Clerk for circulation to members before being proposed.

**149. Debate to be relevant**

When a clause, schedule, preamble or amendment is under discussion, debate shall be strictly relevant and confined to the subject of that clause, schedule, preamble or amendment.

**150. No repetition if already negative**

No amendment, new clause or schedule to a Bill shall be at any time moved which is substantially the same as one already negated by the House, or which is inconsistent with one that has already been agreed to by the House, unless there has been an order of the House to reconsider the Bill.

**151. No amendments outside of long title without leave**

A member shall not propose an amendment outside the long title of the Bill, without first obtaining the leave of the House.

**152. Amendments outside of long title**

If an amendment is agreed to which is not within the long title of the Bill, the House shall amend the long title of the Bill accordingly.

**153. New clauses or schedules**

- (1) If it is proposed to move an amendment to add a clause or schedule to a Bill, such clause or schedule shall be proposed when the House has arrived at the part of the Bill at which it is proposed to be inserted.
- (2) If a clause or schedule is proposed to be added to a Bill, the Speaker shall put the question "That the amendment be agreed to".
- (3) A clause or schedule proposed to be added may be amended prior to the question in (2) being put.

**154. Amendments moved en bloc**

- (1) A member, by leave of the House, may move amendments to a number of clauses or schedules en bloc and such amendments can be put in one question "That the amendments be agreed to".
- (2) If amendments in (1) are agreed to, the question shall then stand "That the clauses or schedules, as amended, stand part of the Bill".

**155. Preamble**

- (1) After all the clauses and schedules have been considered, and new clauses or schedules (if any) added, the Preamble (if any) shall be considered, and, if necessary, amended.
- (2) A question shall be put "That the Preamble of the Bill be agreed to".
- (3) Any amendment to insert a preamble to a Bill shall be moved after all clauses and schedules have been considered.

**156. Members may speak more than once**

- (1) If a bill has not been considered by a portfolio committee, in consideration in detail, members may speak more than once to the same question, except where these Standing Orders or Sessional Orders otherwise expressly provide.
- (2) If a bill has been considered by a portfolio committee, in consideration in detail, members may only speak once to the same question.

**CHAPTER 27 PROCEDURE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION IN DETAIL****157. Resumption of Chair**

Following consideration in detail the Speaker shall leave the Table of the House and resume the Chair.

**158. After consideration, proceed to third reading**

- (1) After consideration in detail the Speaker shall put the question "That the Bill be now read a third time", unless a motion for reconsideration is moved.
- (2) When amendments have been made to a Bill, the question for the third reading shall be "That the Bill as amended be now read a third time".

**159. Reconsideration**

- (1) After consideration in detail, but before the third reading of the Bill, a motion for the reconsideration of the Bill may be moved.
- (2) A motion for the reconsideration of a Bill must be stated to be for the reconsideration of either:
- (a) the whole Bill;
  - (b) a particular clause or clauses;
  - (c) a particular schedule or schedules; or
  - (d) the preamble.

**160. Amendments on reconsideration**

- (1) When reconsideration of the Bill is completed the question for the third reading may be put.
- (2) When amendments have been made to a Bill on reconsideration, the question shall then be put "That the Bill as amended be now read a third time".

**161. Question for third reading**

- (1) On the motion being made, and questions put either "That the Bill be now read a third time" or "That the Bill as amended be now read a third time" only verbal amendments may be moved.
- (2) A verbal amendment is an amendment that seeks to omit from the question the word "now" and add another time at which the Bill shall be read a third time.

**162. Long title of Bill**

- (1) The long title of every Bill shall include the general objects of the Bill.
- (2) After the third reading a question shall be put by the Speaker "That the long title of the Bill be agreed to" which may be agreed to.
- (3) If any amendment has been made to the Bill, necessitating an amendment to the long title, such long title shall be amended, and a question proposed "That the long title, as amended, be agreed to".

**163. Clerk to certify passing of Bill**

When the long title of a Bill is agreed to by the House, the Clerk shall certify at the top of the first page the date of its passing.

**164. Message from Governor for amendment**

- (1) If the Governor forwards a message or sends a messenger, the Speaker will either read and table the message or suspend business for the messenger to be introduced.
- (2) When the Governor by Message to Parliament recommends an amendment be made to a Bill which has been presented to the Governor for Assent, the amendment shall be dealt with in the same manner as original amendments in the Bill.
- (3) Where the Governor recommends amendments to a Bill, the amendments shall be deemed published and a time fixed for taking them into consideration.

**165. Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill**

- (1) Amendments falling within any of the following classes of amendments may be made by the Clerk to Bills before they are presented for assent:
- (a) amendments of a formal nature necessary or desirable to any of the long title, the short title, and the method of citation;
  - (b) amendments correcting clerical, grammatical or typographical errors and other amendments of a minor or formal nature; or
  - (c) amendments to the citation of an Act.
- (2) The Clerk shall report any amendments made to a Bill under this Standing Order to the House on the next sitting day and the amendments shall, where possible, be included in the Record of Proceedings.

**Chapter 28 ASSENT****166. Three copies of Bill to be provided to and certified by the Clerk**

- (1) When a Bill has passed the House, the Government Printer shall provide three fair prints of the Bill to the Clerk.
- (2) The Clerk shall authenticate and certify the three fair prints of the Bill.

**167. Presentation for Assent**

- (1) The Clerk shall present to the Governor for assent all Bills passed, authenticated and certified, except Appropriation Bills.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) The Speaker shall present to the Governor for assent all Appropriation Bills passed, authenticated and certified.

**168. Deposit of original Bills**

When the Governor has assented to any Bill, the Clerk shall:

- (a) deposit one copy in the Registry of the Supreme Court;
- (b) deposit one copy in the Registry of Titles; and
- (c) retain one copy in the records of the Parliament.

2. Section 2A(2) of the *Constitution Act 1867* provides: Every Bill, after its passage through the Legislative Assembly, shall be presented to the Governor for assent.

**169. Acts to be numbered by the Clerk**

(1) The Clerk shall number in numerical order beginning with the number one all Acts in the order in which they are assented to, with the date of assent added next after the title, commencing a new series of numbers each calendar year.

(2) Where the title of an Act does not in its year date conform to the year in which the Act is assented to, the Clerk shall amend the year date in the title, short title, or otherwise as may be required.

**CHAPTER 29 OTHER PROCEDURAL MATTERS REGARDING BILLS****170. Withdrawal of Bills**

(1) The order for the second reading or any future stage of a Bill having been read, may be discharged.

(2) If the House discharges an order in (1), the House may then order the Bill to be withdrawn.

(3) A member shall not move a motion for (1) or (2), without first obtaining leave of the House.

(4) A Bill withdrawn or rejected may be reintroduced in the same session.

**171. Bills brought over from previous session**

(1) When a Bill has passed any of its stages and its further course has been interrupted by prorogation of Parliament, the consideration of such Bill, with such amendments (if any) as may have been made to it may, on motion with notice, be resumed in a subsequent session of the same Parliament at the point it had reached in the previous session, and be proceeded with as if no prorogation had taken place.

(2) If any Bill is of such a nature as to require a recommendation from the Governor, it cannot be proceeded with under (1), unless a fresh recommendation from the Governor has been received.

**172. Cognate Bills**

(1) A member may move that the House consider several Bills at the same time for one or more of the following stages:

- (a) second reading;
- (b) consideration in detail; and
- (c) the third reading and titles.

(2) The question in (1) is to be put without amendment or debate.

(3) Where the House determines that several Bills may be considered at the same time for their second reading stage:

- (a) the time allotted for the Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) may, at their discretion, be shared with another member;
- (b) however, the total time allotted for the Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) and the other member with whom the time has been shared, shall not exceed the total time that would have been available for both the Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) and that member had the time not been shared.

**173. Adjournment of debate of Bill**

(1) When a member moves for the adjournment of the debate of a Bill, during any of its stages, the Speaker shall put the question "That the debate on the Bill be now adjourned".

(2) If the question in (1) is agreed to by the House, the resumption of the debate, at the stage at which it was adjourned, is deemed to be an order of the day for a later hour or day without a question being put.'

**2. PART 6 of Standing Orders (Financial Procedures)—**

*Omit, Insert—*

**‘PART 6 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES****CHAPTER 30 INTRODUCTION OF APPROPRIATION BILLS****174. Appropriation proposal to be recommended**

(1) No proposal (including a Bill or a motion) for an appropriation that falls within the meaning of s.68 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*<sup>3</sup> shall be introduced unless first recommended by a message of the Governor as required by that section.

(2) No amendment of a proposal recommended by a message of the Governor shall be moved which would increase, or extend the objects and purposes or alter the destination of the appropriation so recommended, unless a further message is received.

**175. Governor's message to be read prior to first reading**

(1) When a message from the Governor, recommending that an appropriation of money be made for a Bill is required, the message shall be presented to the Speaker and read to the House immediately prior to the question for the first reading of the Bill.<sup>4</sup>

(2) When a message from the Governor, recommending an amendment be moved to a Bill for the appropriation of money is required, the message shall be presented to the Speaker and read before the amendment is moved.

3. Section 68(2) of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* provides that a message from the Governor in respect of a vote, resolution or Bill for appropriation must be given to the Legislative Assembly during the session in which the vote, resolution or Bill is intended to be passed.

4. Sections 64 to 68 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* provide for the appropriation of funds. Section 68(1) of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* provides that the Legislative Assembly must not originate or pass a vote, resolution or Bill for the appropriation of (a) an amount from the consolidated fund; or (b) an amount required to be paid to the consolidated fund; that has not first been recommended by a message of the Governor.

**176. Annual Appropriation Bills—Cognate Bills**

Where two or more annual Appropriation Bills are introduced together, they are to be treated as cognate Bills for the following stages:

- (a) the second reading;
- (b) consideration in detail; and
- (c) the third reading and long titles.

**CHAPTER 31 ESTIMATES TO BE CONSIDERED BY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES****177. Annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees**

(1) After the Annual Appropriation Bills are read a first time in accordance with Part 5 Chapter 22, the Bills are set down on the notice paper for their second reading stage in the House. Debate on the question "That the Bill be now read a second time" shall not commence until at least one whole calendar day has elapsed.

(2) After the annual Appropriation Bills have been read a second time the Annual Appropriation Bills stand referred to the portfolio committees (as set out in Schedule 6) for investigation and report.

(3) Each portfolio committee shall consider the Appropriation Bills and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility.

(4) The House is by Order to:

- (a) allocate the dates for each portfolio committee's estimates hearing; and
- (b) set the dates by which each portfolio committee is to report to the House.

**178. When portfolio committees may hold public hearings in respect of estimates**

Portfolio committees may only hold hearings and take evidence on the dates allocated by order of the House at times agreed to by the committee between 9.00am and 9.30pm.

**179. Open hearings**

A portfolio committee's estimates hearings are open to the public unless the committee otherwise orders.

**180. Opening hearing procedure**

(1) In a portfolio committee's estimates hearing:

- (a) the Chairperson is to call on the estimates of the proposed expenditure for the area of responsibility which the committee is to examine and declare the proposed expenditure open for examination; and
- (b) the Chairperson is to put the question "That the proposed expenditure be agreed to".

(2) In respect of Government Owned Corporations and statutory authorities, a member may ask any question which the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

**181. General hearing procedure**

In a portfolio committee's estimates hearing for the areas of responsibility for which the portfolio committee is responsible (as set out in Schedule 6):

- (a) the responsible Minister or Speaker is to be present at all times for the areas for which the Minister or Speaker is responsible is under consideration and may have advisers present to assist the Minister or Speaker;
- (b) the responsible Director-General is to be present at all times for the areas for which the Director General is responsible is under consideration;
- (c) a Chief Executive Officer, (as set out in Schedule 7) is to be present at all times for the entity for which the Chief Executive Officer, is responsible is under consideration;
- (d) a committee member may ask the Minister, Speaker, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer questions;
- (e) a member who is not a member of the portfolio committee may, with the committee's leave, ask questions;
- (f) advisers may answer questions referred to them by the Minister, Speaker, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer; and
- (g) a member may ask any question which is relevant to the examination of the Appropriation being considered.

**182. Questions on notice prior to the hearings**

(1) Members of a portfolio committee may, at a reasonable time prior to public hearings regarding estimates, put a combined total of twenty questions on notice to each Minister and to the Speaker.

(2) Of the questions referred to in (1), at least ten questions are to be allocated to non-Government members.

(3) The Minister or the Speaker shall provide to the committee answers to the questions referred to in (1) by at least 10.00 am on the day before the committee's allotted hearing day.

(4) The rules applying to questions on notice and questions without notice contained in Chapter 20 also apply to questions on notice prior to portfolio committee hearings regarding estimates.

(5) The Chairperson of the committee has the same power as the Speaker regarding questions.

(6) The Minister or the Speaker may refuse to answer questions which place unreasonable research requirements on their portfolios or are unnecessarily complex.

(7) All answers to questions on notice shall be in writing unless the committee otherwise allows.

(8) Answers to questions on notice are deemed to be authorised for release by the portfolio committee and published upon the commencement of the committee's hearing, unless the committee expressly orders otherwise.



**183. Questions taken on notice at the hearing and additional information**

(1) A Minister or the Speaker may, at their discretion, inform a portfolio committee at an estimates hearing that an answer to a question, or part of a question, asked of them or of someone else on their behalf at the hearing will be taken on notice and provided later to the committee.

(2) A Minister or the Speaker may, at their discretion, also give the committee additional information about an answer given by them or on their behalf.

(3) The answer or additional information:

(a) is to be written;

(b) is to be given by a time decided by the committee, or if no time has been decided by the committee, within 48 hours after the close of the committee's hearing;

(c) is taken to be part of the proceedings of Parliament;

(d) may be included in a volume of additional information to be tabled in the House by the committee; and

(e) may be authorised for publication by the committee prior to the material being tabled in the House.

(4) A Minister or the Speaker or a Director-General or Chief Executive Officer may decline to answer a question in which case the committee may report that fact in its report.

**184. Availability of transcripts and tabled documents**

(1) The Chief Reporter is authorised to release the transcript of a portfolio committee's estimates hearing as it becomes available, subject to any express direction of the committee.

(2) A Minister or the Speaker or any witness may only table a document at a portfolio committee's estimates hearing only with the leave of the committee.

(3) Any document tabled at a portfolio committee's estimates hearing, is deemed to be authorised for release by the committee unless the committee expressly orders otherwise.

**185. Power of the Chairperson to order withdrawal of a disorderly member**

(1) At a portfolio committee's estimates hearing, the Chairperson may, after a warning, order any member whose conduct in their opinion continues to be grossly disorderly or disruptive to withdraw for a stated period.

(2) A member ordered to withdraw in accordance with (1), shall immediately withdraw for the stated period.

**186. Portfolio committee must report on estimates**

(1) A portfolio committee must make a report at the end of its deliberations of the estimates of its portfolio area.

(2) A portfolio committee that considers proposed expenditure contained in more than one Appropriation Bill must make a separate report in respect of each Appropriation Bill.

**187. Content of report**

(1) A portfolio committee's report on estimates must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

(2) A reservation or dissenting report by a portfolio committee member may be added to the committee's report after it is adopted by the committee.

(3) A reservation or dissenting report must be provided to the Research Director within 24 hours after the committee's report is adopted or prior to the date that the committee's report is required to be tabled, whichever is the earlier.

**188. Effect of failure to report**

If a portfolio committee does not report on all of the proposed expenditures referred to it, the committee is taken to have agreed to the proposed expenditure that it does not report on.

**189. Tabling and consideration of reports**

(1) The Chairperson of each portfolio committee must table in the House the committee's report on the proposed expenditures stated in the Appropriation Bills and referred to the committee together with the minutes of committee meetings relating to the proposed expenditures and any other additional information which the committee agrees to table.

(2) The Chairperson of each portfolio committee is deemed to have satisfied the requirements of (1) if they present the committee's report, minutes and any other additional information to the Clerk when the House is not sitting in accordance with SO 217, in which case the report is deemed to have been tabled and authorised for publication by the House on the date it is presented to the Clerk.

(3) The report is to be received by the House without debate and its consideration deferred until the consideration of the Bills in consideration in detail.

(4) One whole sitting day must elapse between the committee's report or reports being tabled and consideration of the Bills in detail.

**190. Effect of consideration in detail**

Consideration of a portfolio committee's report in consideration in detail is taken to be consideration of the provisions of the Appropriation Bills so far as the provisions authorise the proposed expenditures referred to the portfolio committee.

**191. Procedure in consideration in detail**

In consideration in detail, for each portfolio committee report:

(a) the Speaker must put the question "That the report of <name of committee> be adopted";

(b) a member may speak for no longer than five minutes on the question;

(c) in reply to the debate, each responsible Minister may speak for no longer than five minutes; and

(d) the debate is to continue for no longer than one hour.

**192. Receipt of material by nominated officers of the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition**

Unless a portfolio committee otherwise expressly orders, or a Minister or the Speaker has requested confidentiality, its Research Director is authorised to release copies of the following documents as they become available to an officer from the offices of the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition (nominated by them) or the office of a committee member:

- (a) questions taken on notice by Ministers or the Speaker during its hearing;
- (b) responses from Ministers or the Speaker to any pre-hearing questions on notice and questions taken on notice during the hearing; and
- (c) additional information provided by Ministers or the Speaker to supplement answers given by them, or on their behalf, at the committee's hearing.

**3. PART 7 of Standing Orders (Committees)—**

*Omit, Insert—*

**‘PART 7 COMMITTEES****CHAPTER 32 ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES****193. Committees to which chapter applies**

(1) The following rules shall apply for the appointment and conduct of all committees,<sup>5</sup> unless otherwise ordered by the House or provided by these Standing Orders or statute.

(2) Unless otherwise provided, the term “committee” in this Part includes select committees, standing committees, statutory committees and portfolio committees established under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and any other committee of the House established by statute (including the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*) or order of the House.

**194. Portfolio Committees established**

The portfolio committees required by s.88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and their portfolio areas are established in Schedule 6.

**195. Membership of a committee**

(1) Statutory committees and portfolio committees established under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and any other committee of the House established by statute shall have the number of members determined by the statute or set out in these Standing Orders or order of appointment.

(2) If a statute, Standing Order, or order of appointment does not set a number of members, the committee shall consist of seven members

(3) The Speaker shall not be appointed to serve on a committee except with the Speaker's consent.

**196. Appointment, discharge and substitution of members**

(1) Unless otherwise provided, members shall be appointed and discharged from committees by motion without notice.

(2) A motion for the appointment of a committee may contain the names of the members to be appointed to serve on the committee and the name of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

(3) Despite (1), a member may, by signed notice to the Speaker, resign from a committee and the Speaker shall, at the earliest opportunity, report the member's resignation to the House.

(4) The member's resignation in (3), is effective when received by the Speaker.

**197. Ballot for committee members**

(1) Any member may call for a ballot for the selection of committee members.

(2) When a ballot for the selection of committee members has been called for, each member present shall deliver at the Table a list of the members whom they wish to be appointed to the committee not exceeding the number of members proposed for the committee.

(3) Any list delivered to the Table that contains more names than the numbers of members proposed is invalid and shall not be considered further.

(4) The Speaker shall appoint two members to be scrutineers, who, with the Clerk, shall ascertain the number of votes for each member proposed.

(5) The members proposed who are reported to have the greatest number of votes shall be declared by the Speaker to be the members of the committee.

(6) If in any case two or more members proposed have an equality of votes, the Speaker shall decide which of those members proposed shall serve on the committee.

**198. Meetings**

(1) The date and time of the first meeting of a committee after its appointment by the House shall be set by the Chairperson.

(2) If no Chairperson has been appointed, the date and time of the first meeting shall be set by the Research Director assigned to the committee by the Clerk.

(3) Subsequent meetings of the committee shall be set by the committee or may be called with notice by the Chairperson or their delegate.

5. Section 106 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that the Assembly's power to establish committees, and confer functions and powers on committees (including statutory committees), is not limited by the Act.

**199. Appointment of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson**

(1) If the motion for the appointment of a committee does not specify the name of the Chairperson, then the committee shall at its first meeting, before proceeding to any other business, elect a member of the committee to be Chairperson.

(2) If the motion for the appointment of a committee does not specify the name of the Deputy Chairperson, the committee shall at its first meeting elect a member of the committee to be Deputy Chairperson.

(3) The Deputy Chairperson shall act as Chairperson when there is no Chairperson or the Chairperson is not present at a meeting of the committee.

**200. Instruction to committees**

If the House has referred a matter to a committee with a date appointed for the committee to report on the matter, on any day prior to the date appointed, notice of motion may be given for an instruction to the committee extending or restricting its terms of reference or altering the report date.

**CHAPTER 33 QUORUM AND PROCEDURE****201. Quorum**

(1) Where a quorum for a committee is not specified in the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* or another Act, a quorum for a committee is a majority of the members of the committee.<sup>6</sup>

(2) When a quorum is not present at a meeting of a committee, the Chairperson shall suspend the proceedings of the committee until a quorum is present, or adjourn the committee.

(3) If within 15 minutes after the time set for the meeting there is not a quorum, the members present may retire, after their names are recorded by the Research Director attending the committee, and the Research Director shall issue a notice for the next meeting.

(4) A committee quorum may be constituted by members participating in the proceedings by way of telephone or video conference or other electronic means, so long as the committee members not physically present are able to participate in the committee's deliberations and take part in any vote.

**202. Illness, inability to attend or standing down**

(1) In the case of illness or inability to attend by a member of a committee, or where a member decides to stand down from a committee for a period of time or for a particular inquiry, where the member is a Government member, the Leader of the House may appoint another member to attend that committee for a period of time or particular inquiry and where the member is a non-Government member, the Leader of the Opposition may appoint another member to attend that committee for a period of time or a particular inquiry.

(2) Where a member is appointed in accordance with (1), that member has all the rights of the member replaced.

(3) Where, in accordance with (1), the member of the committee who is replaced is the Chairperson, the Leader of the House may nominate another member to be Chairperson.

**203. Casting vote**

In the case of standing and select committees established by resolution of the House, the Chairperson of a committee, or the Deputy Chairperson when acting as Chairperson, shall have a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equality of votes, shall also have a casting vote.

**204. Times of sitting**

(1) A committee may adjourn from time to time and move from place to place and may sit during any adjournment, suspension of the House or prorogation of the Parliament.

(2) A committee which has been specifically permitted by statute to continue in existence after the dissolution of the Parliament may, during such dissolution, adjourn from time to time and move from place to place.

(3) Unless otherwise provided, a committee may meet when the House is sitting.

(4) A committee may meet only within the parliamentary precinct when the House is sitting.

**205. Powers**

(1) The House may give a committee power to send for persons, documents and other things, and a committee with that power may summon witnesses, examine witnesses (including on oath or affirmation), and require the production of documents and things.

(2) The Chairperson and the Research Director of a committee are authorised to administer an oath or affirmation to witnesses.

(3) Any powers that the House may give a committee under (1) are, in the case of a committee which is a statutory committee within the meaning of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, in addition to any powers conferred on the statutory committee by that Act.<sup>7</sup>

(4) Any powers that the House may give a committee under (1) are, in the case of a committee which is created by statute (including the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*), in addition to any powers conferred on the committee by that Act.

**206. Methods of receiving evidence**

(1) A committee may take evidence from witnesses by any means the committee resolves, including by telephone, video conference or other electronic means.

(2) A committee may receive submissions and other documents by any means the committee resolves, including electronic means.

**207. Public and private meetings**

Persons other than members and officers of a committee may attend a public meeting of a committee but shall not attend a private meeting except by express invitation of the committee, and shall always withdraw when the committee is deliberating.

6. Section 82 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a quorum consists of 4 members appointed to the committee.

7. Section 25(2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides an authorised committee may order a person, other than a member, to attend before the committee and also to produce to the committee any document or other thing in the person's possession.

**208. Admission to hearings**

Any person admitted to a public hearing of a committee may be excluded at the discretion of the Chairperson or by order of the committee.

**209. Other members may participate**

A member, although not a member of a committee, may, by leave of that committee, participate in both its public and private meetings and question witnesses. However, a participating member shall not have any voting rights.

**210. Broadcasting of committee proceedings**

A committee may authorise the broadcasting of its public hearings, so long as the committee complies with any rules that the House may approve for the broadcasting of committee proceedings.

**211. Reference to proceedings<sup>8</sup> and disclosure of evidence and documents**

(1) No member shall in the House refer to any proceedings of a committee, until the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published the proceedings.

(2) The evidence taken by a committee or sub-committee and documents presented to it, and proceedings and reports of it, which have not been reported to the House, shall not, unless authorised by the House or the committee,<sup>9</sup> be disclosed or published to any person other than a member or officer of the committee.

(3) Despite (2), a committee may resolve to:

- (a) publish press releases, discussion papers or other documents or preliminary findings to any inquiry; or
- (b) divulge any evidence, documents, proceedings or report on a confidential basis to any person or persons for comment for the purpose of assisting the committee in its inquiry or for any administrative purpose associated with the inquiry.

(4) Despite (2), a public servant or an officer of a public entity may inform their immediate supervisor, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer, or responsible Minister of the evidence they have provided to a committee or evidence sought by a committee.

(5) For this Standing Order, proceedings include:

- (a) evidence taken by the committee by way of *in camera* hearings;
- (b) written or oral submissions presented to the committee;
- (c) written briefing papers and other documents prepared for the committee by its Research Director or other expert advisors;
- (d) draft reports by the committee;
- (e) correspondence between the committee and witnesses, departments and Ministers; and
- (f) private deliberations of the committee and the records of those proceedings.

(6) A member who wishes to refer to *in camera* evidence or unpublished committee documents of a committee in a dissenting report shall advise the committee of the evidence or documents concerned, and all reasonable effort shall be made by the committee to reach agreement on the disclosure of the evidence or documents for that purpose.

(7) This Standing Order does not apply to the proceedings of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which may adopt its own rules in relation to the confidentiality of its proceedings.

(8) A committee may elect for this Standing Order to not apply to a particular proceeding or a particular inquiry of the committee, and adopt its own rules in relation to the confidentiality of its proceedings for that proceeding or inquiry.

**212. Minutes**

(1) The Research Director of a committee is responsible for recording the minutes of the proceedings of the committee.

(2) The minutes of the proceedings of a committee shall include:

- (a) the names of the members attending each committee meeting;
- (b) every motion or amendment proposed in the committee and the mover and seconder; and
- (c) the names and votes of the members voting in any division.

(3) The committee shall confirm the minutes of its proceedings.

(4) The Chairperson or Research Director shall sign the minutes of proceedings after the committee has confirmed the minutes.

**CHAPTER 34 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****213. Draft report**

(1) When a committee is required to or has resolved to report to the House on a matter, the Chairperson shall prepare and table at a committee meeting a draft report for consideration by the committee.

8. Section 9(2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that without limiting subsection (1), "proceedings in the Assembly" include—(a) giving evidence before the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and (b) evidence given before the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and (c) presenting or submitting a document to the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and (d) a document tabled in, or presented or submitted to, the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and (e) preparing a document for the purposes of, or incidental to, transacting business mentioned in paragraph (a) or (c); and (f) preparing, making or publishing a document (including a report) under the authority of the Assembly or a committee; and (g) a document (including a report) prepared, made or published under the authority of the Assembly or a committee ... (5) If the way in which a document is dealt with has the effect that, (a) under an Act or (b) under the rules, orders, directions or practices of the Assembly; the document is treated, or accepted as having been tabled in the Assembly for any purpose, then, for the purposes of this Act, the document is taken to be tabled in the Assembly.

9. Section 50 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides (1) The Assembly may authorise the publication of a document relating to proceedings in Parliament. (2) A committee may authorise publication of—(a) evidence given before the committee; or (b) a document presented or submitted to the committee; or (c) a document (including a report) prepared or made by the committee.

(2) Any other committee member may also table at a committee meeting a draft report about the matter for consideration by the committee.

(3) If any member other than the Chairperson tables a draft report at a committee meeting, the committee shall first decide upon which report it will proceed.

(4) The committee shall consider the draft report and may amend or adopt the report.

(5) After the committee has considered, amended or adopted a draft report, the whole or any part of it may be reconsidered and amended prior to it being tabled in the House or prior to the committee adopting it as a report of the committee and authorising its publication.

#### **214. Dissenting reports and statements of reservation**

(1) Any member who does not agree with the report, or any part of the report, may give the committee notice that they intend to add a dissenting report or statement of reservation to the committee's report.

(2) A dissenting report or statement of reservation must be provided to the Research Director within seven calendar days of the committee adopting the report and must be signed by the member.

(3) When a committee is required by the House or statute to report on a matter on or before a certain date, a dissenting report or a statement of reservation must be provided to the committee's Research Director at least 24 hours prior to the date, despite (2).

#### **215. Progress reports**

A committee may report to the House on its deliberations and present its minutes, evidence and other documents from time to time prior to reporting to the House on a particular matter.

#### **216. Tabling of committee reports or other documents when the House is sitting**

Once a committee adopts a report, the Chairperson shall sign the report and, if the House is sitting, table the report (together with any dissenting report or statement of reservation) in the House.

#### **217. Tabling of committee reports or other documents when the House is not sitting**

If the House is not sitting when a committee has prepared a report for tabling or has authorised for release any other documents (including documents prepared by the committee, submissions received by the committee or the transcripts of any hearings conducted by the committee), the committee may provide the report or any other documents authorised for release by the committee to the Clerk, and, in that event:

- (a) the report or any such document shall be deemed to have been tabled in the House on the date it is received by the Clerk;
- (b) the publication of the report or the publication of any such document is deemed to be ordered by the House; and
- (c) the tabling shall be included in the Record of Proceedings on the first sitting day after receipt by the Clerk.

#### **218. Presentation of committee reports or other documents after dissolution of the House**

If a committee, which has been specifically authorised by statute to continue in existence after the dissolution of the House, has prepared a report for tabling or has authorised for release any other documents (including documents prepared by the committee, submissions received by the committee or the transcripts of any hearings conducted by the committee), the committee may provide the report or any other documents authorised for release by the committee to the Clerk, and, in that event:

- (a) the report or any such documents shall be deemed to have been tabled in the House on the date it is received by the Clerk;
- (b) the publication of the report or the publication of any such documents is deemed to be ordered by the House; and
- (c) the tabling shall be included in the Record of Proceedings on the first sitting day after receipt by the Clerk.

#### **219. Committee reports and other documents deemed to be published**

(1) Committee reports and other documents are deemed to be published when tabled in the House.

(2) Committee reports and other documents may be published in electronic format.

#### **220. Ministerial responses to committee reports**

(1) A ministerial response to a committee report<sup>10</sup> received by the Clerk, whether in accordance with s.107 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* or not, is deemed to have been tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the date it is received by the Clerk.

(2) The day of receipt and tabling of the ministerial response shall be included in the Record of Proceedings on the first sitting day after receipt by the Clerk.

### **CHAPTER 35 SUB-COMMITTEES**

#### **220A. Establishment of sub-committees**

(1) Subject to (2) and (3), a committee has power to appoint by resolution a sub-committee consisting of three or more of its members, and to refer to any such sub-committee any of the matters which the committee is empowered to consider.

(2) If the committee is a statutory committee, the matters referred to a sub-committee may include any matter which falls within the committee's areas of responsibility under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. However, the committee must continue to have final responsibility for the consideration of matters referred to a sub-committee and for reporting on any such matters, and making recommendations about any such matters, to the House.

(3) If the committee is a committee established under any other statute (including the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*), the matters referred to a sub-committee may include any matter which falls within the committee's areas of responsibility under that statute. However, the committee must continue to have final responsibility for the matters referred to a sub-committee and for reporting on any such matters, and making recommendations about any such matters, to the House.

10. Section 107(2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that the Minister who is responsible for the issue the subject of a committee report must provide the Assembly with a response to the report.

(4) In appointing a sub-committee, a committee shall be taken to be exercising by delegation the powers of the House in respect of the appointment of committees and, subject to SO 220B, such a sub-committee shall be taken for all purposes to be a committee of the House.

(5) The quorum of a sub-committee shall be a majority of the members of the sub-committee.

(6) The committee shall appoint a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the sub-committee in the resolution that establishes the sub-committee.

#### **220B. Powers, rights and immunities of sub-committees**

(1) A sub-committee, as a committee of the House, shall have the same powers, rights and immunities as the committee responsible for its appointment.<sup>11</sup>

(2) Notwithstanding that a sub-committee appointed by a committee is taken for all purposes to be a committee of the House, the provisions of these Standing Orders relating to the tabling and consideration of committee reports shall not apply to sub-committees, and any report of a sub-committee shall be presented to and considered by the committee responsible for its appointment.'

#### **4. PART 8 of Standing Orders (Examination of Witnesses), Standing Order 223—**

*Omit, Insert—*

#### **223. Committee to acquaint the House of charges against member**

If information comes before a committee (other than the Ethics committee) that alleges a contempt by a member, the committee shall either report the matter to the House or not proceed further in respect of the matter.'

#### **5. PART 10 of Standing Orders (Powers, Rights and Immunities), Standing Orders 264 and 265—**

*Omit, Insert—*

#### **'264 Definitions in part**

In this part:

- (a) the term "ethics committee" means the Ethics Committee established by the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*; and
- (b) the term "matter" means a matter concerning the powers, rights and immunities of the House and includes:
  - (i) any interference with or breach of the powers, rights and immunities of the House; or
  - (ii) an alleged contempt.

#### **265 Proceedings for contempt**

Proceedings for contempt of the House except for matters of disobedience in the House, shall be brought only upon the adoption by the House of a report from the Ethics Committee recommending that such proceedings be instituted.'

#### **6. SCHEDULE 2 of Standing Orders (Registers of Interests), Part 1 Preliminary, 1 Definitions—**

*Omit,*

"Committee" means the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee;'

*Insert—*

"Committee" means the Ethics Committee;'

#### **7. SCHEDULE 2 of Standing Orders (Registers of Interests), Part 3 Registers, s.13—**

*Omit, Insert—*

#### **'Inspection of Registers**

**13.(1)** The Registrar must, at the request of a person, permit the person to inspect the Register of Members' Interests during normal business hours of the office of the Clerk.

**(2)** The Registrar must, on request, make the Register of Related Persons' Interests available to?

- (a) the Speaker;
- (b) the Premier;
- (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
- (d) the Chairperson and members of the Ethics Committee;
- (e) the Crime and Misconduct Commission;
- (f) the Auditor-General; and
- (g) the Integrity Commissioner.

**(3)** The Registrar must, on request, make details removed from the registers in accordance with 9.(4) or 9.(5) available to?

- (a) the Speaker;
- (b) the Premier;
- (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
- (d) the Chairperson and members of the Ethics Committee;
- (e) the Crime and Misconduct Commission;
- (f) the Auditor-General; and
- (g) the Integrity Commissioner.

11. Generally, the powers, privileges and immunities of the House of Commons apply to the Legislative Assembly and its members and committees by virtue of s.9 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*. Section 25 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that an authorised committee may order a person, other than a member, to attend before the committee and also to produce to the committee any document or other thing in the person's possession.

- (4) The Registrar must advise the relevant member or former member, in writing, that details removed from the registers have been inspected in accordance with 13.(3)(a)-(d), (f) or (g).'

**8. SCHEDULE 5 of Standing Orders (Guidelines for the Protection of Whistleblowers)—**

*Omit, Insert—*

**'SCHEDULE 5—GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONS WHO MAKE PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

- (1) These guidelines apply when there is a public interest disclosure to a member pursuant to the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*.
- (2) These guidelines seek to provide guidance to a member who receives and acts upon a public interest disclosure about whether a member should or should not reveal the disclosure in a parliamentary proceeding.
- (3) Compliance with these guidelines is not mandatory, and a breach of these guidelines is not a breach of privilege or a contempt, but members are called upon to adhere to these guidelines so as to ensure public interest disclosures are properly investigated, that those making disclosures are protected and that no person's reputation is unnecessarily damaged before the investigation of the allegations has been finalised.
- (4) In general, members should exercise care to avoid saying anything inside the House about a public interest disclosure to a member which:
  - (a) could lead to the unnecessary identification of persons who have made public interest disclosures (unless such persons have consented to the disclosure of their identity);
  - (b) could cause unnecessary damage to any person's reputation before allegations have been appropriately investigated; and
  - (c) may jeopardise the investigation of a public interest disclosure by the appropriate entities.
- (5) If a public interest disclosure is received by any member of the Legislative Assembly and the member refers that disclosure to a referral entity to investigate the disclosure in accordance with s.34 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*, members should avoid disclosing the substance of the disclosure or the referral in any public parliamentary proceedings, unless:
  - (a) after inquiry with a referral entity in accordance with Chapter 3 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*, a member is not satisfied that the matter is being investigated or otherwise resolved; or
  - (b) the disclosure has referred to a referral entity, but a member has a reasonable belief that further disclosure in a parliamentary proceeding is justified to prevent harm to any person; or
  - (c) the disclosure has been referred to a referral entity, but a member decides to also bring the disclosure to the attention of a committee of the House that has responsibility for the area about which the matter relates.
- (6) In these guidelines "referral entity" and "public interest disclosure" have the same meaning as in the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*.

**9. SCHEDULE 6 of Standing Orders (INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICULAR COMMITTEES)—**

*Omit, Insert—*

**'SCHEDULE 6—PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES**

- (1) In accordance with s.88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the following table establishes the Portfolio Committees of the Legislative Assembly and identifies the primary areas of responsibility;
- (2) A reference to a Minister is deemed to include departments, statutory authorities, government owned corporations or other administrative units reporting to the Minister and parts thereof that report to the Minister with respect to the Minister's responsibilities as set out in the Administrative Arrangements; and
- (3) In accordance with s.88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* the number of members for each of the Portfolio Committees shall be six.

Portfolio	Area of Responsibility	Ministers	Oversight Responsibility
Finance and Administration Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>• Reconstruction</li> <li>• Treasury</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Public Works &amp; IT</li> </ul>	1. Premier and Minister for Reconstruction 2. Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade 3. Minister for Finance and The Arts 4. Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology	1. Auditor-General 2. Integrity Commissioner
Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attorney-General and Justice (excluding Industrial Relations)</li> <li>• Fair Trading</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> </ul>	1. Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State 2. Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services	1. Electoral Commissioner 2. Information Commissioner 3. Ombudsman

Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Small Business</li> <li>• State Development and Trade</li> <li>• Coordinator-General</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Skills &amp; Training</li> <li>• Workplace Health and safety</li> <li>• Industrial Relations</li> <li>• Retail</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade (2nd committee)</li> <li>2. Minister for Education and Industrial Relations</li> <li>3. Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining</li> <li>4. Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business</li> </ol>	
Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Mines</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Natural Resource Management</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minister for Energy and Water Utilities</li> <li>2. Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure</li> <li>3. Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies</li> <li>4. Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (2nd committee)</li> <li>5. Minister for Environment and Resource Management</li> </ol>	
Community Affairs Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safety</li> <li>• Youth Justice</li> <li>• Community Services</li> <li>• Multicultural Affairs</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Sport</li> <li>• Aboriginal Affairs</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs</li> <li>2. Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport</li> <li>3. Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women</li> <li>4. Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family Responsibilities Commission</li> <li>2. Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian</li> </ol>
Health and Disabilities Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Disabilities</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minister for Health</li> <li>2. Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership (2nd committee)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health Quality and Complaints Commission</li> </ol>
Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Main Roads</li> <li>• Marine Infrastructure</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Local Government</li> <li>• Building Industry</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (2nd committee)</li> <li>2. Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (2nd committee)</li> <li>3. Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (2nd committee)</li> <li>4. Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Communication Technology (2nd committee)</li> </ol>	

#### 10. SCHEDULE 7 of Standing Orders (Chief Executive Officers)—

Insert—

#### ‘SCHEDULE 7—CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

In accordance with Standing Order 181(c), the following table lists entities to which direct questioning of Chief Executive at Estimates is to apply.

#### Entities to which direct questioning of Chief Executives at Estimates is to apply

Australian Agricultural College Corporation
Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland
Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian
Coordinator-General
Crime and Misconduct Commission
CS Energy Limited



Electoral Commission of Queensland
ENERGEX Limited
Energy and Water Ombudsman
Ergon Energy Corporation Limited
Events Queensland Pty Ltd
Family Responsibilities Commission
Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited
Gladstone Ports Corporation Limited
Gold Coast Institute of TAFE
Health Quality and Complaints Commission
Legal Aid Queensland
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Library Board of Queensland
Motor Accident Insurance Commission / Nominal Defendant
North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited
Office of the Governor
Office of the Information Commissioner
Office of the Integrity Commissioner
Office of the Public Trustee
Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
Port of Townsville Limited
Prostitution Licensing Authority
Public Service Commission
QIC Limited
QRAA
Queensland Art Gallery
Queensland Audit Office
Queensland Building Services Authority
Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited (Powerlink)
Queensland Future Growth Corporation
Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Queensland Museum
Queensland Performing Arts Trust
Queensland Rail Limited
Queensland Reconstruction Authority
Queensland Studies Authority
Queensland Theatre Company
Queensland Water Commission
Residential Tenancies Authority
Screen Queensland Pty Ltd
Skills Queensland
South Bank Corporation
Southbank Institute of Technology
Stadiums Queensland
Stanwell Corporation Limited
SunWater Limited
Tarong Energy Corporation Limited
Tourism Queensland
TransLink Transit Authority
Urban Land Development Authority

# **11. Standing Order 65 (Notice of motion to be stated and delivered)**

*Omit, Insert—*

## **‘65. Notice of motion**

(1) The notice of motion for debate during Private Members' Motion (each Tuesday), may be given by stating the terms in the House immediately prior to Question Time each Tuesday and by delivering to the Clerk a printed copy of the notice.

(2) A notice of motion for the disallowance of a statutory instrument in accordance with Standing Order 59 may be given by stating the terms in the House in the time allotted each sitting day and by delivering to the Clerk a printed copy of the notice.

(3) A Ministerial notice of motion for debate may be given by stating its terms during that time set aside each morning for ministerial notices of motion or any other time during government business and by delivering to the Clerk a printed copy of the notice.

(4) All other notices of motion shall be given by delivering to the Clerk a printed copy of the notice and shall not be stated in the House as per (1) or (2).

(5) A notice of motion shall be entered by the Clerk on the Notice Paper immediately after receipt by the Clerk of the notice of motion.

(6) Unless otherwise provided by these Standing Orders or ordered by the House, the Clerk shall enter General Business notices of motion on the Notice Paper, in the order in which they were given.'

## **12. Schedule 1—Dictionary**

"Government Owned Corporation GOC" after "statutory authority" insert "or special purpose vehicle".

## **13. Schedule 1—Dictionary**

*Insert—*

"Chief Executive Officer" includes a Commissioner or other person responsible for the entity.'

## **14. SCHEDULE 8 of Standing Orders (Code of Practice for Public Service Employees Assisting or Appearing Before Parliamentary Committees)—**

*Insert—*

### **'SCHEDULE 8—CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSISTING OR APPEARING BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

#### **Contents**

Introduction

Application of the Code

General principles—factual or technical information, not policy

General duties of public service employees

Powers and responsibilities of committees and communication with Chief Executives

Public service employees as witnesses

Private evidence

Public service employees assisting committees

Private Members' Bills

Objections to producing material or answering questions

Threatening or disadvantaging a witness or assistant

Contempt of Parliament

Access to legal advice

Correction of evidence

Attendance in a personal capacity

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This *Code of Practice for Public Service employees assisting or appearing before Parliamentary Committees* ("Code") provides guidance for public service employees dealing with parliamentary committees ("committees") as either an assistant or as a witness.
2. This Code seeks to recognise the importance of the Legislative Assembly having a high standard of scrutiny over the executive government and legislation while recognising the duties owed by public service employees to their departments and Ministers, and to provide guidance on the public service employee's role in this process.
3. This Code has been approved by both the Government and the Legislative Assembly.

#### **APPLICATION OF THE CODE**

4. This Code applies to employees ("public service employees") of entities declared to be government departments in accordance with section 14 of the *Public Service Act 2008*. It may also be used by officers and employees of statutory authorities, government owned corporations and other government entities.

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES—FACTUAL OR TECHNICAL INFORMATION, NOT POLICY**

5. Public service employees may have dealings with committees as either an assistant or a witness. In both roles they can provide committees with detailed information about the processes and operations of departments and other entities to allow committees to effectively discharge their functions to scrutinise the executive, consider proposed legislation and conduct reviews and inquiries on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.
6. As assistants or witnesses, public service employees may be called upon to provide factual and technical background to Government legislation and administration. However, the responsibility for advocacy and defence of Government policy rests with the responsible Minister and not with public service employees. Therefore, when providing information to committees, public service employees may describe Government policies and the administrative arrangements and procedures involved in implementing those policies but should not:
  - advocate, defend or canvass the merits of government policies or alternate policy options (including the policies of other past and present local, state, federal and foreign governments); or

- identify considerations leading to Government decisions or possible decisions (such as Cabinet deliberations), unless those considerations have already been made public or the Minister authorises the department to identify them.
7. Most assistance by public service employees will be provided in person to committees. However, a committee may request that information be provided in writing. If this occurs, the public service employee should discuss this with their Chief Executive and obtain approval for the content and format of the written information to be provided.

#### **GENERAL DUTIES OF PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

8. Public service employees are expected to provide committees with full and honest answers and evidence. If public service employees are unable or unwilling to answer questions or provide information, they should advise the committee accordingly and provide reasons. Committees have a corresponding duty to consider the reasons and provide reasonable opportunity for public service employees to obtain advice and assistance. (See Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)
9. Public service employees appearing before committees must act in accordance with the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*. In particular they must:
- act with integrity and impartiality, maintain the highest ethical standards and provide advice that is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial, including answering questions respectfully, truthfully and to the best of their ability;
  - promote the public good and be responsive to the requirements of the community and the government by ensuring the committee has access to the information they require, within their role as a representative of their department;
  - act with commitment to the system of government by upholding the law, and operating within the framework of Ministerial responsibility to the government, the Parliament and the community by understanding and acting within their role as a representative of the Minister;
  - act accountably and transparently by exercising proper diligence, care and attention and assisting committees with complete and accurate information, unless there are good reasons for withholding it.
10. In dealing with non-public information, public service employees have a duty to ensure their Chief Executive is aware of, and approves the provision of, non-public information to committees.
11. Public service employees should fully understand the provisions of this Code prior to assisting or appearing before a committee.
12. Chief executives are expected to appear in person for estimates, supported by other staff as necessary.
13. A department may not make a submission to a committee on a Bill without the specific approval of the Chief Executive.

#### **POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEES AND COMMUNICATION WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

14. Committees have the power to summons witnesses to give evidence and order them to produce documents. Under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly*, the powers of the Legislative Assembly and its committees to gather evidence are very extensive, with few legal exemptions. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to whether there are legitimate and recognised grounds, in the public interest, that could be argued to a committee to not provide the document or information (see paragraphs 39 to 44 regarding objections to producing material or answering questions).
15. The Legislative Assembly has adopted instructions for committees to follow in their dealings with witnesses. (See generally Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)
16. These instructions, among other matters, provide that committees are to:
- Usually invite the production of documents and the appearance of witnesses, rather than order production or attendance;
  - Give reasonable notice for appearing and will provide an explanation of the matters to be considered and access to relevant documents;
  - Not question public service employees about Government policy;
  - Enable a witness an opportunity to object to questions asked or material sought, or to request that the material be kept private (see below for objections to material or evidence sought by a committee); and
  - Be generally fair and reasonable in their dealings with witnesses.
17. If a committee decides to conduct an inquiry into a Bill or another matter relating to a department, the committee should write to the responsible Chief Executive advising of the nature and scope of the inquiry and other details the committee deems appropriate. This advice should include an indication of whether or not the committee anticipates requiring the attendance of public service employees as either assistants or witnesses.
18. In response, the Chief Executive should, as soon as practicable, advise the committee in writing:
- whether or not they consider that the subject matter of the inquiry falls within the department's responsibility; and
  - the details of a suitable contact officer from the department, of appropriate seniority and subject knowledge, to coordinate requests from the committee for information or assistance.
19. All requests from the committee to the department for information and attendance are to be in writing and directed to the Chief Executive with a copy sent to the contact officer. Committee requests for information and assistance should be as specific as possible. The timeframe in which the information or attendance is required should also be specified.
20. It is the Chief Executive's responsibility to ensure that public service employees appearing before a committee have sufficient experience and knowledge of the matter being considered and are thoroughly prepared for hearings. In practice, the Chief Executive may identify who should appear before a committee, taking into account the nature and subject of the committee's considerations and judging when it is necessary to consult the Minister about proceedings.
21. All information and material supplied by a department in response to a committee's request should be accompanied by a covering letter. The covering letter should identify the request by the committee and the relevant information or material being supplied.

22. If the department is unable or unwilling to supply the information or material requested, the Chief Executive should write and inform the committee of this and give reasons.
23. Should the inability to provide the information result from the timeframes specified, a committee may then nominate a further period in which to supply the information and this granting of an extension should be confirmed in writing by the committee.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES AS WITNESSES**

24. Public service employees may be called as witnesses for examination of estimates, proposed legislation and to review departmental performance. They may also be called for inquiries, including public hearings where the media may also be present, unless the committee agrees to hear evidence in private.
25. Public service employees should consult and inform their Chief Executive before and following appearing before a committee and advise of any significant matters which are likely to arise or do arise. The Chief Executive must in turn judge when it is necessary to consult the Minister about proceedings.
26. If a public service employee is unable to immediately answer a question asked by a committee, the employee should advise the committee of this and indicate that they will endeavour to ascertain the answer to the question.

#### **PRIVATE EVIDENCE**

27. Committees can receive evidence in private sessions. This evidence will remain confidential unless the committee otherwise resolves. Before publishing information received in private, committees will provide the opportunity to submit that the material should not be published. Material that is not relevant to the committee's inquiry and reflects adversely on a person may be expunged from the transcript of evidence. (See generally Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)
28. While private meetings of committees are generally confidential and should not be revealed without permission of the committee, the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly* exempt disclosure from a public service employee to their Chief Executive and Minister.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSISTING COMMITTEES**

29. Public service employees may be asked to assist committees in relation to Bills, or in relation to an inquiry.
30. In relation to Bills, a public service employee may be asked to assist the committee by providing information about the Bill and how it will be implemented, clarifying how evidence received by the committee relates to the proposed legislation, producing departmental reports on submissions, and identifying potential solutions to emerging issues, including possible amendments and sometimes assisting with negotiations between the Minister and the committee on the detailed content of the Bill.
31. Public service employees are to seek their Chief Executive's approval to provide assistance to a committee, and the form any assistance will take (including any limits there may be to that assistance). Any limitations placed on the involvement of public service employees should be made clear to the committee.
32. Where assistance is provided in relation to a Bill, public service employees need to ensure they understand the Government's position on the Bill and the extent to which the Government will consider amendments, so that they can work constructively with the committee.
33. Any conflicts of duty should be managed from the position that while the committee is entitled to expect the public service employee to assist them as far as their role permits, public service employees represent and are accountable to their Chief Executive and the Minister. Where committee members question government policy, the public service employee should clarify their role with the committee and seek leave to consult or defer to their CEO or Minister.
34. It is the committee's responsibility to clarify with the public service employee the nature of the meeting or proceedings—i.e. whether it is confidential or not. Where the proceedings are confidential, care must be exercised to ensure information remains confidential, unless otherwise authorised by the committee. Inappropriate disclosure of information or documents may be regarded as a contempt of the Parliament. However, the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly* exempt disclosure from a public service employee to their Chief Executive and Minister.
35. In assisting a committee on a Bill, public service employees may be expected to undertake consultation with Ministers and other departments to ensure the advice represents Government policy rather than a narrow departmental view. Committee permission is not needed to do this, so long as confidential committee proceedings are not disclosed without the committee's permission. However, people consulted must understand the confidential nature of any committee proceedings under discussion.
36. If public service employees assisting a committee need to consult or obtain factual information outside the public service, they must obtain the committee's approval before disclosing any committee proceedings. Again, those involved must be cautioned about the confidential nature of committee proceedings.

#### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS**

37. Committees may request assistance with Private Members' Bills. Even when the Government is opposed to the policy in a Bill, it may make public service employees available to assist committees because of the public interest involved in producing good quality legislation. Assisting public service employees should clarify the Government's policy toward the legislation, the level of resources to be made available and the nature of the assistance to be provided.
38. The Government or a Department may choose to make a submission to a parliamentary committee on a Private Member's Bill, particularly when such Bills affect the interests of the State.

#### **OBJECTIONS TO PRODUCING MATERIAL OR ANSWERING QUESTIONS**

39. If a public service employee objects to producing material or answering a question from a parliamentary committee they will be invited to state the ground of the objection. (See s. 34 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)
40. Recognised grounds for objection to producing material or answering a question include:
  - that the question is asking a public service officer to comment on Government policy (see Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*);

- that the information sought or question asked is not relevant to the Committee's inquiry;
  - that the information sought should be asked of another Department;
  - that the material sought is commercially sensitive information relating to a Government Owned Corporation and should only be given in private session (see s.101-102 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*);
  - the material or question involve matters of a private nature that do not affect the subject of the inquiry (see s.34(a) *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*);
  - the information or question might tend to incriminate a person and the person would be able to claim privilege against self-incrimination in a Supreme Court action (see s.34(b) *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*);
  - the material sought or question asked relates to briefing, opinion or advice given to Ministers, unless the Minister has agreed to its release, as this may infringe the privileges of the Minister as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (see ss.8 and 9 *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*); or
  - the information sought is subject to statutory confidentiality or some other legally recognised privilege, such as legal professional privilege, and it is not in the public interest to disclose the matter, particularly in public session.
41. The committee may choose not to seek the material or press the question, or will consider in private whether to insist upon the production of the material or an answer, having regard to the public interest of the information sought and whether the public interest requires that the person be provided with appropriate protection.
42. If public service employees are asked for information they believe should not be released, they should seek the committee's leave to obtain their Chief Executive's view on the issue, rather than refuse to produce the material or answer the committee.
43. In the event that the committee insists upon an answer, the committee may nonetheless decide that it is in the public interest for the answer to be heard in private.
44. If there is a significant or unreasonable cost associated with providing information, committees should be advised of the anticipated costs. The committee may revise its request, but if it does not the request must be complied with. A committee cannot, however, require public service employees to undertake new research or analysis as the power to call for papers and records relates to existing material.

#### **THREATENING OR DISADVANTAGING A WITNESS OR ASSISTANT**

45. Parliamentary proceedings, including committee proceedings, are subject to absolute privilege, so that those participating in them can do so without fear of external consequences. There must be no pressure placed on public service employees appearing before a committee, in order to deter them from giving honest and impartial advice or evidence, nor should action be taken against them as a consequence of their giving evidence. Such conduct could be punished by the Parliament as a contempt.
46. The absolute nature of parliamentary privilege should not be seen to give public service employees the right to ignore the processes and expectations for their conduct set out in this Code or in the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*. Inappropriate conduct before a committee may, along with either criminal proceedings or disciplinary actions within their department, result in actions for contempt by the Parliament.

#### **CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT**

47. The Parliament may treat any conduct which amounts to, or is intended to or likely to amount to, improper interference with the free exercise by the Parliament or a committee of its authority or functions as contempt.
48. Examples of conduct involving committees which may comprise contempt include:
- breaching or interfering with any of the powers, rights and immunities of the Parliament, (including its committees);
  - deliberately misleading a committee;
  - removing or falsifying documents or records belonging to the Parliament (including its committees);
  - conduct not consistent with the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* in the presence of a committee;
  - divulging the proceedings or the report of a committee contrary to Standing Orders or orders of a committee;
  - failing to attend before a committee after being summoned to do so;
  - intimidating, preventing or hindering a witness from giving evidence to a committee; and
  - refusing to answer a question or provide information required by a committee except as permitted.

(See generally s.37 *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and Standing Order 266.)

#### **ACCESS TO LEGAL ADVICE**

49. Witnesses may request attending with a legal advisor. This is not usual where a witness is appearing in their capacity as a public service employee, although it is appropriate for a government legal officer to appear with other public service employees in order to provide their expertise to the committee, as opposed to as legal representation for the department.
50. The committee will consider requests for legal representation, taking into account the need to ensure proper protection of the witness. If leave is not granted, the witness will be advised of the reasons for the decision. If leave is granted, the legal advisor can advise the witness of their rights, but may not address the committee.

(See Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)

#### **CORRECTION OF EVIDENCE**

51. Public service employees must inform the committee as soon as they become aware of any inaccuracies in information they have supplied to a committee, and supply the correct information, consulting with the Minister when necessary.

(See Schedule 3 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—Instructions to Committees Regarding Witnesses*.)

### ATTENDANCE IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY

52. Public service employees have the same political rights as other members of society, including the right to make submissions to, and appear as witnesses before parliamentary committees. Public service employees should be careful that their attendance in a personal capacity is consistent with their professional obligations. In particular, public service employees who appear in a private capacity should, in accordance with the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*:

- make it clear to the committee that they appear in a private capacity;
- avoid commenting on policy issues related to their own department or agency or which they have been professionally associated with;
- maintain confidentiality of information they have access to due to their professional roles; and
- advise their Chief Executive that they will be attending.'

### 15. SCHEDULE 9 of Standing Orders (Code of Practice for Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office)—

*Insert—*

#### **'SCHEDULE 9—CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ASSISTANCE TO PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES BY THE AUDITOR-GENERAL AND THE QUEENSLAND AUDIT OFFICE**

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of this code is to outline the assistance that the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office is able to provide to portfolio committees.

The code is not binding on the part of the Auditor-General or staff of the Queensland Audit Office. It is intended to be used as a guide to ensure that interactions between portfolio committees, Members of Parliament and the Auditor-General are appropriate, and that these interactions respect the independence of the Queensland Audit Office and the role and status of the portfolio committees.

##### **Auditor-General's mandate**

The Auditor-General is an independent statutory officer appointed by the Governor in Council under the *Auditor-General Act 2009* (the Act). The Act makes it clear that the Auditor-General is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which the Auditor-General's powers in relation to audits are to be exercised.

The Act sets out the Auditor-General's mandate conferring on the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office the functions and powers necessary to carry out independent audits of the Queensland public sector and related entities. These powers include conducting audits of the consolidated fund and of all public sector entities subject to certain exemptions.

The Act provides that the Auditor-General must report to the House on the audit of the consolidated fund accounts, audits of public sector entities and on each audit conducted at the request of the House. The Act also provides that the Auditor-General may report to the House on other matters such as in relation to specific issues arising from an audit where the Auditor-General considers it to be in the public interest to do so.

The Act places an obligation on staff of the Queensland Audit Office and others who receive information obtained in the conduct of audits or draft audit reports not to disclose this information unless in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Act specifically provides that these obligations do not prevent the disclosure of this information to the parliamentary committee as defined under the Act.

Furthermore, where the Auditor-General considers it to be against the public interest to disclose certain sensitive information in a report to the House, the Auditor-General must not disclose the information and instead include it in a report to the parliamentary committee as defined under the Act.

##### **Assistance to Portfolio Committees**

The Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office may provide assistance to a portfolio committee by:

- briefing a portfolio committee on the findings, opinions and observations contained in an audit report or a draft report;
- assisting a portfolio committee including by providing evidence at a public hearing, in relation to a strategic review of the Queensland Audit Office;
- providing advice to a portfolio committee for the purposes of a committee inquiry in relation to draft terms of reference, the conduct of the inquiry, lines of inquiry and relevant questions that could be asked of witnesses for the inquiry, if the inquiry relates to matters in which the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office have particular responsibilities, knowledge or expertise; and
- providing advice to a portfolio committee in relation to a Bill that has been referred to the portfolio committee, where that Bill includes matters in which the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office has particular responsibilities, knowledge or expertise.

The Auditor-General should normally be regarded as an adviser when providing assistance to a portfolio committee however, in certain circumstances, the Auditor-General may be regarded as a witness. In such circumstances, the Auditor-General or staff of the Queensland Audit Office (like any other witness) may be questioned. The committee must ensure that this is made clear to the Auditor-General or the member of staff before appearing as a witness.

Further guidance on each of the main ways that the Auditor-General may interact with portfolio committees is provided below:

##### Examination of Auditor-General reports

The Auditor-General regularly presents various reports to the House in the exercise of the duties of the office.

In accordance with its public accounts and public works committee functions, after considering a report of the Auditor-General, a portfolio committee may decide to exercise its powers to examine a particular report of the Auditor-General, where it is relevant to the committee's subject area.

If a portfolio committee wishes to be provided with more information on an Auditor-General's report, the portfolio committee will first request the Auditor-General to provide a briefing to it on the report. A committee may also seek further assistance from the Auditor-General in deciding the nature and extent of the committee's consideration and report to the House. A committee could consider inviting the Auditor-General to provide advice on the key issues to be examined and the method by which the examination could be carried out.

Where a committee holds a hearing of evidence with another organisation as part of its examination of a report of the Auditor-General, it may request that the Auditor-General attend the hearing to advise the committee. When this occurs, questions should generally be directed at the organisation under examination as a witness, and not towards the Auditor-General as an adviser.

#### Assistance with portfolio committee inquiries

A portfolio committee may have an issue referred to it by the House for examination and report.

In considering such referrals, portfolio committees may wish to seek specialist assistance for inquiries involving highly specialised topics. As the Auditor-General has particular expertise in public sector financial management and reporting systems, committees may wish to access the expertise and skills of the Auditor-General and the staff of the Queensland Audit Office when conducting an inquiry.

The Auditor-General may be able to advise on possible options or terms of reference for the inquiry; the approach the committee might take when conducting the inquiry; act as an adviser to the committee during the conduct of its inquiry; or provide advice requested by a committee in the preparation of its report to the House.

The committee will consult with the Auditor-General and agree on the extent of assistance to be provided, if any, and specific terms and conditions for providing assistance to the committee.

#### Consideration of Bills

In accordance with Standing Orders, a Bill is referred by the House to the appropriate portfolio committee for consideration after its first reading.

The portfolio committee to which a Bill is referred examines the Bill and determines whether to recommend that the Bill be passed; whether amendments to the Bill should be recommended; and considers the application of fundamental legislative principles contained in Part 2 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* to the Bill and compliance with Part 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* regarding explanatory notes.

During consideration of a Bill, a portfolio committee may wish to request specialist technical advice from the Auditor-General on matters which the Auditor-General has particular responsibilities, knowledge or expertise.

#### Interpretation

This code is intended to operate in conjunction with Standing Orders and statutory provisions, and should be interpreted accordingly.'

These standing orders probably represent one of the greatest changes to the way the Queensland parliament is going to operate. I thank all members for their contribution and their input in formulating these new standing orders. I know that all members have been going to briefing sessions that have been put on by the Clerk over the last few days and I thank you all for your contribution.



**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.45 am): I reinforce the comments that were made by the Leader of the House that the standing orders that are being introduced will be a profound change for this parliament which I think will be for the better. The opposition will be supporting the introduction of the new standing orders.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## MOTION

### Amendments to Sessional Orders



**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.46 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That from 1 August 2011, the current Sessional Orders of the Legislative Assembly be replaced with the Sessional Orders circulated in my name.

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#### Sessional Orders—53rd Parliament (First Session)

##### Effective from 1 August 2011

#### Days and Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

1. (a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- (b) The House shall sit on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.
- (c) The House shall sit on Wednesday from 2.00pm until by its own resolution the House adjourns.

(d) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—

*Tuesday*

9.30am—10.00am—

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

Notice of motion for debate during Private Members' Motion (5.30pm—6.30pm each Tuesday) (Notice may be stated in the House and delivered to the Clerk)

10.00am—11.00am—

Question Time

11.00am—12.00pm—

Matters of Public Interest

12.00pm—1.00pm—

Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—

Lunch break

2.30pm—5.30pm—

Government Business

5.30pm—6.30pm—

Private Members' Motion (motion for which notice was given immediately prior to 10.00am to take precedence)

6.30pm—7.30pm—

Dinner break

7.30pm until adjournment moved—

Government Business

*Wednesday*

2.00pm—2.30pm—

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

2.30pm—3.30pm—

Question Time

3.30pm—6.30pm—

Government Business

6.30pm—7.30pm—

Dinner break

7.30pm—10.00pm—

Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business (in accordance with Sessional Order 1(e))

*Thursday*

9.30am—10.00am—

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk



Ministerial Papers  
 Ministerial Notices of Motion  
 Ministerial Statements  
 Any other Government Business  
 Personal Explanations  
 Tabling of Reports  
 Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

*10.00am—11.00am—*

Question Time

*11.00am—12.00pm—*

Debate of Committee Reports (in accordance with Sessional Order 2) or if no reports to debate, Government Business

*12.00pm—1.00pm—*

Government Business

*1.00pm—2.30pm—*

Lunch break

*2.30pm—4.00pm—*

Private Members' Statements (Leader of the Opposition or nominee having first call)

*4.00pm—6.30pm—*

Government Business

*6.30pm—7.30pm—*

Dinner break

*7.30pm until adjournment moved—*

Government Business

(e) On a Wednesday evening—

(i) if there are no Disallowance Motions or Private Members' Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the adjournment may be either moved immediately or otherwise the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved;

(ii) if there are Disallowance Motions or Private Members' Bills to debate (in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 59 or Sessional Order 3), the House will break for dinner between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and then commence with Disallowance Motions, Private Members' Bills or Government Business until 10.00pm when the adjournment will be moved.

(f) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may only be moved by the Member occupying the position of Leader or Acting Leader of the House in the House.

(g) As soon as the motion in (f) is moved, there will be an Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes and then the question shall be put.

(h) The motion "That the House do now adjourn" may be moved by the Leader or Acting Leader of the House at any time despite the order of business.

(i) If the House sits on any day other than a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, then unless otherwise ordered, the order of business shall be as follows:

*From 9.30am—10.30 am—*

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

Question Time (for remaining time until 10.30 am)

*10.30am—1.00pm—*

Government Business

*1.00pm—2.30pm—*

Lunch break

*2.30pm—until adjournment moved—*

Government Business

#### **Debate of Parliamentary committee reports**

2. (1) If a committee report is tabled that is neither a report on a bill pursuant to Part 5 of Standing Orders nor an annual report, then a motion shall be set down on the notice paper by the Clerk that the House is to take note of the committee report.

(2) Motions that the House take note of committee reports will be brought on for debate in the time set aside each Thursday in the order in which they are placed on the notice paper.

(3) A debate of a motion in (2) not completed may be adjourned to the following Thursday.

(4) A motion in (2) cannot be amended.

(5) A motion in accordance with (1) is set down on the notice paper regardless of whether the report is tabled whilst the House is sitting or not sitting.

#### Private Members' Bills

3. (1) A member who is not a Minister may introduce a Bill during time set aside in the Order of Business for Private Members' Statements. In such a case the Member introducing the Bill may either:

(a) speak on the Bill for the time allotted each member (two minutes) and then incorporate the remainder of their second reading speech, so long as the speech has been shown to the Speaker in accordance with Standing Orders; or

(b) speak for a maximum of 15 minutes, in which case any time spoken in excess of the time normally allotted (two minutes) shall:

- in the case of a non-Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements; or
- in the case of a Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements;

(c) speak for any time remaining for:

- in the case of a non-Government Member, the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements; or
- in the case of a Government Member, the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Statements.

(2) A Private Member's Bill which has been reported on by a portfolio or other committee will be brought on for debate on the sitting Wednesday evening next following the passage of three calendar months after the tabling of the committee's report on the Bill.

(3) The House will continue to debate the Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised.

#### Condolence Motions

4. (1) A motion of condolence may be moved as the first item of business after Speaker's Statements in the Order of Business.

(2) If a motion of condolence is moved in accordance with (1), the debate on such motion will last no more than one hour, after which time the question shall be put.

(3) After a motion of condolence is moved, debated and resolved in accordance with (1) and (2), the Order of Business for the day shall then resume, with Question Time commencing half an hour after the motion of condolence was resolved and with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.

#### Maximum time limits for debates, speeches and statements

5. The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are contained in the schedule below.

Subject	Relevant Standing or Sessional Order	Time
Election of Speaker—each member	SO 39	5 minutes
Extension of Time, by consent of a majority of the House, without debate		
- Motions and Second Reading Debates		10 minutes
- Question Time		2 minutes
Private Members' Statements (Thursday 2.30 pm—4.00pm)—each member	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Debate of Committee Reports—each member	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Tabling of Reports—member tabling report	Sessional Order 1	2 minutes
Tabling of Reports—Chairperson of Committee on presentation of committee report	Sessional Order 1 & 2	5 minutes
Personal Explanations—each member	Sessional Order 1	At discretion of Speaker
Matters concerning privilege	Sessional Order 1 & SO 248 & 267	At discretion of Speaker
Questions Without Notice	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	1 hour, Tues, Wed, Thurs
- Question time (total time)		Time remaining until 10.30am on Friday
- Member asking question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	At discretion of Speaker


- Minister answering question	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	3 minutes
Matters of Public Interest		
- Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour
- Leader of Opposition or nominee	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
- Other members	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Adjournment debate		
- Total time	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	30 minutes
- Each member	SO 56 & Sessional Order 1	3 minutes
Private Members' Motions (Tuesday 5.30—6.30 pm)		
- Total time	Sessional Order 1	1 hour
- Mover	Sessional Order 1	10 minutes
- Other member	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
Dissent to ruling of Speaker		
- Total time	SO 250	1 hour
- Each member	SO 250	10 minutes
Disallowance of statutory instruments		
- Total time	SO 59	2 hours
- Mover	SO 59	15 minutes
- Other member	SO 59	10 minutes
- Minister in reply	SO 59	20 minutes
Motions		
- Mover	Chapter 15	20 minutes
- Other member	Chapter 15	20 minutes
- Mover in reply	Chapter 15	30 minutes
Government Bills		
Introduction of Bills (Explanatory Speech)	SO129	1 hour
First reading	No debate	No debate
<i>Government Bills reported on by a committee</i>		
Second reading debate		
- Minister	SO 138	1 hour
- Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)	SO 138	1 hour
- Members of the relevant committee	SO 138	20 minutes
- All other Members	SO 138	10 minutes
- Minister in reply	SO 138	30 minutes
Consideration in detail		
- Mover (Minister)	SO146	no limit
- Other Members (on each question)	SO146	3 minutes
<i>Government Bills declared urgent and not referred or not reported on by a committee</i>		
Second reading debate		
- Minister	SO129, SO137 and SO138	To speak once only as per SO 129 for 1 hour
- Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)	SO137 and SO138	1 hour
- Other Members	SO137 and SO138	20 minutes
- Mover in reply	SO137 and SO138	30 minutes
Consideration in detail		
- Mover (Minister)	SO146, SO147 and SO156	no limit
- Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)	SO146, SO147 and SO156	1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
- Other Members (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
Private Members' Bills		
Introduction of Bills (Explanatory Speech)	SO129	1 hour
First reading	No debate	No debate


Second reading debate		
- All members	SO 138	10 minutes
- Mover in reply	SO 138	30 minutes
Consideration in detail (where Bill has been considered by portfolio committee)		
- Mover	SO146, SO147, SO156	no limit
- Other Members (on each question)	SO146, SO147, SO156	3 minutes
Consideration in detail (where Bill has not been considered by portfolio committee)		
- Mover		no limit
- Other Members (on each question)		3 minutes
- Minister responsible for policy area (on each question)		1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
Address in Reply Debate		
- Total time	SO 47	28 hours
- Mover	SO 47	20 minutes
- Other members	SO 47	20 minutes
- Mover in reply	SO 47	30 minutes

#### Dress standards


6. Dress standards in the parliamentary chamber should be appropriate to the Queensland climate and reflect general community standards. All members and staff are expected to dress in business attire. Male members and staff may wear a long-sleeve business shirt and tie or coat and long-sleeve business shirt without tie.

These are also one of the greatest changes we have seen to the way the parliament of Queensland operates. I know there are some very welcome changes contained in these sessional orders. I draw attention to just a couple of them. In future the time allocated for ministerial statements in the morning will be reduced from 60 minutes to 30 minutes. We will be increasing the amount of time that members have to give private members' statements from half an hour to 90 minutes which means 45 members every week will have an opportunity to say something in that particular time frame. The other significant change, of course, is that parliament will start in future at two o'clock on a Wednesday so that the new committees can meet formally on Wednesday morning.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.47 am): I once again place on record the support of the opposition for the changes that the Leader of the House is bringing into effect with this motion and again congratulate both the Leader of the House and all of the members who served on that committee and who have been part of this process. It has been said a number of times that it will be a profound change for this parliament and I think that parliamentarians who serve here in years to come will benefit from the changes that have been instigated today.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (10.47 am): In introducing this motion the Leader of the House commented that there are a great number of positives in these changes: the reduction of ministerial statements to 30 minutes—no maligning intended—and the increase of time for private members' statements to 90 minutes, which is welcome as well because there are a lot of matters in our electorates that are important to raise. I have a concern, however, in relation to the reduction of second reading debate time on bills to 10 minutes. The theory behind the reductions is that many of the member's concerns can be addressed when bills are referred to the various committees. I believe that the potential for that to be good is excellent. I have concerns about some of the unknowns: how many bills will be deemed urgent and therefore not referred to committees and how practical will it be for members who are already on committees to actually attend other committees and get their concerns aired in that forum?

My question to the Leader of the House and also to the CoLA is whether they will give an undertaking that after a period of time, six to 12 months, there will be a review of the sufficiency of that 10-minute period and whether, if it does show itself to be insufficient, that time can be reviewed and extended. As I said, I have concerns about the shortness of that time. I want that on the record. I also seek an undertaking from the Leader of the House and the CoLA whether they will review the sufficiency of that restricted time.

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (10.49 am): I rise to echo the comments of the member for Gladstone. The Queensland parliament is the least democratic parliament in Australia. Without an upper house we do not have the checks and balances that other democratic chambers have. There is a degree of arrogance from both major parties when introducing legislation. Whether the ALP is in government or the LNP is in power, there is a degree of arrogance with the introduction of legislation, which is thrown onto the table, the guillotine device is often used and, in past times, all too often legislation has passed through this chamber in a very quick and undignified manner.

Under standing order 138, during the second reading debate all members' speaking time will be reduced from 20 minutes to 10 minutes. That halves the amount of time that members have to express the views of their constituents. This especially affects members of the backbench. Often the executive forgets that it has to report to the backbench. That is the way that this parliament works. Often, the arrogance of the other side tends to cloud that issue. Often you think it reports to nobody else, but actually it is to the backbench that it reports. That is a fundamental principle in this democratic institution. Without an upper house, the only hope that this place has of producing legislation that is fair to regional and rural Queensland is to have a group, as is the case now, of strong Independents on the back bench who will put people before political parties.



**Mr McLINDON** (Beaudesert—TQP) (10.51 am): This motion is met with a mixed reaction, but last year The Queensland Party raised some of the issues contained within it. I thank the government for taking those issues on board, such as reducing speaking time for members to 10 minutes. I do not think any of us can deny the fact that often there is a lot of hot air in this place, to the point that we should not underestimate the impact humans can have on the climate as a result.

I support some notions within the motion; however, there are still numerous shortfalls. There is the lack of the upper house, but no doubt I will see the LNP support the bill before the House that The Queensland Party has lodged to get things right without any extra politicians. We need to make the most of this motion and not abuse the things that are somewhat open-ended. If this is what The Queensland Party can do from the crossbenches, it will be amazing to see what we can do in a hung parliament.



**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.52 am): I am happy to address the issues raised by members. There are a number of reasons for reducing the speaking time to 10 minutes. I will make a few points on that. If a bill is declared urgent and comes to the House before going to a committee, the 20-minute speaking time will remain. People who have looked into this and have been part of the formulation of the new sessional orders felt it was important for committee members to continue to have 20 minutes to talk in the chamber about the legislation, because they would have the greatest understanding of the legislation. We felt that other members could adequately present a case in 10 minutes. Members have to remember that we have taken away a significant amount of government business time by eliminating the Wednesday morning speeches. That was one of the reasons we had to find some time. This was one way to do that, to manage the business of the House. It was also observed by many members that people are using their speeches at the second reading stage to prosecute quite parish-pump electorate issues.

**Mr Messenger:** What is wrong with that?

**Ms SPENCE:** There is nothing wrong with that necessarily if it is to do with the bill, but often it is not to do with the legislation being debated. The quid pro quo was to increase the time for private members' statements from 30 minutes to 90 minutes to give members an opportunity to continue to make that kind of delivery to the parliament but to do it where it should be properly done—in private members' statements and not in debate on legislation. We are hoping that in the future members will be much more disciplined when they are debating legislation and will really target their comments to the legislation before the parliament. Hopefully in future there will be a much greater understanding of the detail of the legislation.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

### Estimates Hearings



**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.54 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 177, the dates for each portfolio committee's estimates hearing and the dates by which each portfolio committee is to report to the House as set out in the order circulated in my name be agreed to.

#### 2011 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES—ORDER SETTING DATES FOR HEARING AND REPORTING

(1) The dates for each portfolio committee's hearing are as follows—

Finance and Administration Committee—12 July 2011

Health and Disabilities Committee—13 July 2011

Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee—14 July 2011

Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee—15 July 2011

Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee—19 July 2011

Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee—20 July 2011


Community Affairs Committee—21 July 2011

- (2) The portfolio committees as estimates committees detailed in (1) are to examine and report by no later than Monday 1 August 2011 on the proposed expenditures for the organisational units allocated to them.
- (3) In addition to considering the estimates for its portfolio responsibility as set out in Standing Orders, the Finance and Administration Committee shall consider the estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### Membership

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.55 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the list appointing members to parliamentary committees established by statute or standing orders, circulated in my name, be adopted.

I move—


- (1) That effective immediately the membership of committees shall be—
- Finance and Administration Committee—Mr Wayne Wendt (Chair), Ms Ros Bates, Hon Desley Boyle, Ms Peta-Kaye Croft, Mr Tim Nicholls and Mr Ray Stevens
- Legal Affairs and Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee—Ms Barbara Stone (Chair), Mr Jarrod Bleijie, Mr Chris Foley, Mrs Betty Kiernan, Mr John-Paul Langbroek and Hon Dean Wells
- Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee—Mr Kerry Shine (Chair), Dr Bruce Flegg, Mr Steve Kilburn, Mrs Desley Scott, Mr Jeff Seeney and Mrs Jann Stuckey
- Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee—Mrs Carryn Sullivan (Chair), Mr Andrew Cripps, Mr Steve Dickson, Mr Jack Dempsey, Ms Di Farmer and Mr Peter Lawlor
- Community Affairs Committee—Mr Paul Hoolihan (Chair), Mr Michael Choi, Mr Peter Dowling, Mr Aidan McLindon, Ms Mandy Johnstone and Ms Fiona Simpson
- Health and Disabilities Committee—Ms Lindy Nelson-Carr (Chair), Mrs Liz Cunningham, Ms Vicky Darling, Ms Tracy Davis, Mr Mark McArdle and Mrs Christine Smith
- Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee—Ms Jo-Ann Miller (Chair), Mr Scott Emerson, Mr David Gibson, Ms Mary-Anne O'Neill, Dr Mark Robinson, Ms Lillian van Litsenburg
- Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee—Dr Alex Douglas (Chair), Ms Grace Grace, Mr Andrew Powell, Mr Evan Moorhead, Mr Mark Ryan, Mr Peter Wellington and Mr Steve Wettenhall
- Ethics Committee—Mr Evan Moorhead (Chair), Dr Alex Douglas, Ms Grace Grace, Mr Andrew Powell, Mr Mark Ryan and Mr Peter Wellington.
- (2) That the following select committees established by resolution of the House on 23 April 2009 be discharged—
- Economic Development Committee;
- Environment and Resources Committee;
- Law, Justice and Safety Committee; and
- Social Development Committee.
- Question put—That the motion be agreed to.
- Motion agreed to.

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

### APPROPRIATION BILL

## COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Cognate Debate; Declared Urgent

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.55 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That, under the provisions of Standing Order 159, the Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be declared an urgent Bill to enable the Bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this week's sitting; and


- (2) That, in accordance with Standing Order 129, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill, having already been treated as cognate Bills under the provisions of Standing Order 166, be also treated as cognate with the Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill for the second reading debate, but with separate questions being put in regard to:

- (a) the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill; and
- (b) the Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

## ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.56 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services will be absent from the House on Friday. Minister Fraser will be the acting minister for this portfolio.


## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call question time, I inform the House that today we will be visited by students, teachers and parents from the Birkdale State School in the electorate of Capalaba and the Pialba State School in the electorate of Hervey Bay.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Carbon Tax

 **Mr SEENEY** (10.57 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Treasurer's admission in last night's debate regarding the impact of a carbon tax on the state budget that the Queensland state Labor government has 'submitted to the federal government advising the Queensland government's support for strong action on carbon pricing'. I ask: has the Treasurer confirmed that the Premier's eight-point carbon tax smokescreen is a complete hoax and that Julia Gillard has always needed the support of the ALP national president for her carbon tax, which will destroy Queensland jobs and smash the Queensland economy?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. We all know that today he is on a rostered day off. As always, there is no surprise with the news that he brings into the House, which is the startling revelation that the Queensland government has made a submission to the federal government on a carbon tax. Of course, I advised the House of that perhaps three sittings ago. I made a ministerial statement that outlined it in detail. I understand that it is available on a website. There is nothing new about the fact that of course the Queensland government has an interest in any changes in taxation arrangements that affect businesses, communities and households in our state.

**Mr Seeney:** You gave strong support.

**Ms BLIGH:** I am very happy to take the interjection—

**Mr SEENEY:** Come on. You can hand it out, but you can't take it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition, the Premier has the call.

**Ms BLIGH:** I am happy to take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition because does our government support strong action on climate change? You bet we do! That is what Labor stands for. We believe that climate change is real. We accept the established science from those people who are world experts. We understand what it means. We understand what unchecked climate change will mean to our tourism industry. We understand what it will mean to our agricultural sector. We understand that it will leave our minerals sector way behind the rest of the world if we are not part of global solutions. Of course, there are 37 countries in the world that have already put in place arrangements to deal with carbon. There are many others that, just like our nation, are grappling with what is a very difficult policy question, but they are still grappling with it.

If the Leader of the Opposition every now and then got his head out of things like the *Country Life* and read a little bit more from publications from the IPCC and maybe if he even went overseas every now and then and talked to people who are wanting to invest in Queensland, he would know that they want certainty on this issue and that they support the federal government's attempts to provide certainty. I note that major industries that work in Queensland such as the mining sector want certainty, want an outcome. The senior people in the mining industry to whom I speak are not saying they do not want

carbon pricing. What they want is carbon pricing that suits their industry. They are not disputing the science, unlike those opposite. They are not saying whether or not we should have carbon pricing. They are saying, 'Let's talk about how we do it,' and that is what we are doing.

### Budget, Stamp Duty

**Mr SEENEY:** My second question without notice is to the Treasurer. I refer to the 125 per cent increase in stamp duty now facing Queensland families purchasing their principal place of residence following the budget on Tuesday, and I ask: is the Treasurer aware of the deep concern being expressed by real estate agents that this measure is already having a devastating impact on a fragile housing market? What modelling was done to anticipate any consequent reduction in stamp duty receipts before the housing market was smashed by this 125 per cent increase in stamp duty?

**Honourable members** interjected.

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

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let us be really clear about what the government has proposed. The government has proposed to maintain in Queensland, even after we implement these changes, the lowest stamp duty regime for homebuyers at every price point for every state in mainland Australia. To make the point, at a \$400,000 price point, which is close to the \$405,000 median house price, what is the stamp duty difference for each and every state around Australia? It is this. After 1 August people in New South Wales who buy a \$400,000 home will pay \$1,665 more than in Queensland. In Victoria, also under a tory government, anyone who buys a house for \$400,000 will pay \$4,545 more. In Western Australia, also a tory government, they will pay \$1,190 more—not less—and in South Australia, \$4,505. So after the changes are implemented—let us be really clear—what will be the case in Queensland? Stamp duty in Queensland will be lower than in each and every other mainland state in Australia, and the budget papers set that out explicitly.

I know that the real estate agents are out there campaigning against this move, but I make this very obvious point. If the point that they are making at the moment is, as the Leader of the Opposition suggests, that this has had an immediate effect, in fact, it would have quite the opposite effect because there is a six-week notice period. If his logic applied on any sense of economic policy we would be seeing precisely the opposite effect over the next six weeks until the changes are put in place.

Never mind the interim period. Let us disregard what the real estate agents, who make money on the sale of the house say—the commission goes to them. It does not employ other people. Let us look at what the Housing Industry Association said. Let us look at what the Masters Builders said. Let us look at what Stockland said, what Mirvac said, what the UDIA said and what the Property Council said. All of those people said yes to the reforms that the government is making. When asked, both the Master Builders and the UDIA said explicitly that this was a choice that was worth making, and budgets are about choices. Pretty soon those people opposite are going to get a chance to have a choice. Pretty soon they will have a chance to have a vote because from today the debate on the budget is on. The question for those opposite is not what are they going to huff and puff about, but what are they going to do? It is not what they are going to sit there and spray about but what they are going to do. In one hour's time it will have been two years, three months and 26 days, and I for one cannot wait.

**Mr Dempsey** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Bundaberg, you will appreciate that that interjection is a character reference. It is a character reflection.

**Mr DEMPSEY:** I will withdraw.

### Kindergartens

**Ms CROFT:** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier please advise the House how the state government is investing in educational opportunities to give Queensland children a flying start in life?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for her question. As the mother of young Queenslanders, she I know shares my passion for investment in education and the importance of giving our children the absolute best that we can and the best starts from the earliest years. All educational research shows us that dollars invested in the early years of education and schooling reap rewards for children right throughout their schooling years. That is why we were committed to and we delivered an extra year of schooling with the prep year, and it is making a big difference for families, for children and for the educational results that our system is seeing.

However, we were not content to stop there. At the last election we gave a commitment, one that was opposed by those opposite, to deliver kindergarten programs to children across Queensland. We are delivering that. In 2009, just 29 per cent of Queensland children were able to access a kindergarten program. Today, that figure stands at almost 45 per cent of Queensland children. In 2009 there were 16,000 kindy places available; now there are 35,488 places. It more than doubles the number available



to Queensland families. It is an additional 19,488 places in a kindergarten program—either a dedicated kindergarten service or a program with a qualified teacher in a long-day-care centre. That means that, since we made this commitment, 20,000 Queensland families now have access to a kindergarten program when before it was denied them. Those children have access to that program regardless of the choice that their parents make about the best place for them to be cared for in the lead-up to school. If the parents are working and need long day care, those children do not have to miss out on a structured kindergarten program. If they want to send their children to a structured kindergarten program, then we are increasing the number of kindergartens available.

We already have 22 new services operating. There will be another one open at Redlynch near Cairns by the end of this year. I am pleased to say that there are more to come. I can happily advise the House that the 14 locations for the next round of kindergartens are Proserpine State School, Glenmore State School in Rockhampton, Walkervale State School in Bundaberg, Jinibara State School in Narangba, Gumdale State School in Gumdale, Springfield Central State School at Springfield, Augusta State School at Goodna, Woodridge North State School, Windaroo State School, Park Lake State School at Helensvale, Woodhill State School at Beaudesert, Surfers Paradise State School in Surfers Paradise, Coolangatta State School and Glennie Heights State School in Warwick. These are part of the 240 new kindergartens that will revolutionise early childhood education in Queensland and they are being delivered by a Labor government.

*(Time expired)*

### **Budget, Mental Health Services**

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the \$30 million in the state budget to enhance mental health services and I ask: will the minister admit that the fact that the Bligh government needs to spend \$91 million to fix the payroll—triple the amount for mental health services in the budget—is a missed opportunity to further fund such services when so many people are suffering from, or at risk of developing, a mental illness?

**Mr WILSON:** I thank the honourable member for the question. We have a record spend on mental health as part of a record spend on public health in Queensland in this budget—\$950 million. That is well ahead of anything that was ever spent by the other side of this chamber. The shadow minister puts forward a proposition that we are not doing enough. We always want to do more, but we are at least going to be paying those people who work in mental health within our system. We are not going to be engaging volunteers, which was their big strategic push forward and policy announcement at the last state election. Their big breakthrough on mental health at the last state election was that they were going to engage volunteers in every mental health facility, opening up private and confidential records to all of those volunteers.

**Ms Bligh:** In fact I think the member for Burnett is sitting up the back because he was so embarrassed by that policy. That was one of the reasons he left.

**Mr WILSON:** That would be right. They would all be embarrassed by such a policy. That is the high-water mark of the innovation, the creativity and the imagination that has been brought to bear by the opposition on developing a policy for the future of Queensland—not even Queensland but just health. If you cannot do health, try mental health. There is \$950 million in record spending on mental health in this budget, part of the 11 per cent increase in this budget, taking us to \$11 billion for Health in this budget. That will bring more beds and more services sooner and closer to home for people living right throughout Queensland.

We will not let up on the importance of mental health. It is a serious issue in the community. That is why we have increased significantly the funding that is available and particularly targeted to those who have gone through the tragic and terrible experiences associated with not only Cyclone Yasi but also the floods that covered about 75 per cent of Queensland over a period of about two months. We will not let up. We are committed to the mental health plan. We are committed to continuing it. We are committed to continuing our efforts to make sure that there is record spending on mental health as part of record spending on public health in Queensland.

### **Moranbah, Affordable Housing**

**Mrs KEECH:** My question is to the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House about the government's commitment to the delivery of affordable and permanent housing in Moranbah?

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Moranbah is a dynamic community, a wonderful community. We have seen enormous growth in our coal industry. Coal, and LNG in the future, provides the standard of living—

**Mr Seeney:** There's no land available.

**Mr LUCAS:** The honourable member might like to know that there are actually mining leases surrounding these communities. Currently there are 50 coalmines operating in the Bowen Basin. Twenty mines have commenced production over the past six years. There are two new mines—Middlemount open cut and Encham underground—under construction. This growth is putting very significant pressure on affordability. In the past this was a matter for councils. Councils looked after urban land use matters.

**Mr Seeney:** Blame the councils.

**Mr LUCAS:** Well, they did. Of course, we know that there are members on the other side of the House who opposed regional planning processes when the states sought to involve itself in them. We know that there are members on the other side of the House who opposed the Urban Land Development Authority. The ULDA has been around since July 2010 and has already completed planning for the draft development scheme.

Earlier this week I authorised the ULDA to approve a major development application to deliver more permanent housing in Moranbah. A 20.27-hectare site owned by BMA will be home to 150 dwellings for around 350 residents. There will be a range of homes—multifamily units to traditional lot sizes—with 2.6 hectares of public parkland and open space. Most will provide permanent housing for BMA workers, but the ULDA also has the first right of refusal on making the first 10 homes available for key workers in those communities.

The Leader of the Opposition outside, in exile like Charles de Gaulle in the Second World War, in March this year said that if he is elected Premier—after he, in his view, joins parliament—he will curtail this organisation that he says is unaccountable and unelected. Interestingly, the Productivity Commission said that the ULDA is best practice for its type of organisation in Australia. We are rolling in two council areas without the support of the council—that is, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. In Townsville, in Gladstone, in Mackay, in Peak Downs, in Isaac, in Maranoa, in Logan and in Ipswich we are there delivering the goods with the support of the local councils.

The Logan council and the Ipswich council are both keen on the development of their communities and they want to work cooperatively with the state and the ULDA, which is recognised as best practice. This is about working cooperatively with councils. Just as we saw with water planning in other parts of Queensland where the state was not involved, the state had to step in—places like Cloncurry, run by their National Party mates. We will step in here and do a good job delivering housing for the future of the people in mining communities.

*(Time expired)*

### Budget, Police Resources

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Will the minister explain why, when \$16 million in the police budget was not spent, the Coomera police district remains so dangerously understaffed that it had only one officer for every 1,100 residents—less than half the state average of one officer for every 434 Queenslanders? How is this providing a safer Queensland when front-line police in the Coomera district and residents are being short-changed by Labor's inability to manage the finances provided?

**Mr ROBERTS:** This government has a proud record in resourcing the Queensland Police Service. If we go back to the bad old days of the National Party—

**Mr Johnson:** Answer the question!

**Mr ROBERTS:** The member for Gregory has had his chance as the shadow minister for police. If we go back to the National Party government during the Fitzgerald era in particular, one of the key criticisms of that government was low police numbers and high crime rates. Since the Labor government has been in power, we have significantly increased resourcing to the Police Service, and I repeat some of the figures. When we took over government, there was one police officer for every 507 people in Queensland. We have reduced that ratio significantly to one police officer for 434 people. That is a significant increase in the number of police officers. As I indicated earlier in the week, what has that led to? It has led to reduced crime rates. Let me repeat the statistics again: there has been a 20 per cent reduction in offences against the person and a 48 per cent reduction in offences against property et cetera.

We have invested significantly in the Gold Coast and the south-east region, including Coomera, in increasing police resources. The member would be aware that it is only two years ago now since we established a new district in Coomera. There has been a significant investment in that particular area with additional resources. In last year's police allocation the commissioner allocated 45 additional police to the south-east region, which included increased resources for the Gold Coast district, the Coomera district and indeed the Logan district. Included in that were four additional detectives for Coomera and 10 additional detectives for the Gold Coast. On top of that, the commissioner only a week or two ago now—and it is already getting results—allocated 18 additional detectives to a serious and violent crime squad.

The government has invested significantly in the Gold Coast, Coomera and Logan districts, which make up the south-east region, in terms of police resources. It is getting results. It is delivering for the people of those regions. The police-to-population ratio in particular districts is not a fair way to determine what the police resources should be. There are many parts of Queensland which will either be far above or far below the average police-to-population ratio. Police do not allocate resources simply on the basis of that police-to-population ratio. They take into account the demographics of the area, the crime rates et cetera. This government has a proud record of supporting police resourcing in general and in particular in the south-east region, which includes the Coomera district, and that will continue under this budget.

### Taxation

**Mrs SMITH:** Mr Speaker, may I firstly acknowledge in the public gallery the school leaders from Palm Beach State School, which is in the electorate of Burleigh. My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the House on Queensland's tax competitiveness compared to other states?

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the member for Burleigh for her question. In the context of the last question, can I acknowledge the significant advocacy and funds that she secured in the state budget to improve policing in Burleigh. She is a fine local representative.

Let me say this about Queensland's tax competitiveness. As the budget papers detailed, Queenslanders per capita, for every man and woman, will pay \$2,268 over the coming financial year, including all the changes that we are proposing to make. What is the average of the other states? It is \$501 more. That \$501 more is the highest tax take across the other states of Australia; they will pay \$2,769. Let us be clear about what the high taxing states are. In Victoria, run by the tories, it is \$2,712—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** In New South Wales, run by the tories, it is \$2,897; and in Western Australia, run by the tories, it is \$2,944.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** They do not like to hear the comparison because they know that the tory tax takers around Australia are out there gouging into people, while this government and this state is keeping taxes \$501 below the average of the other states.

What we are about to see at long last in half an hour's time is finally the chance for the opposition members to put their vote where their mouth is. Are they going to vote for the budget and the changes to help out households? Are they going to vote for the clear choices the government has made? Or are they going to stand up there with the same puffery, the same rhetoric, the same slagging off, the same opposition and no proposing, as they channel Tony Abbott, as the Leader of the Opposition advertises himself?

What will we see? I expect what we need to see from the LNP today is a clear policy position. After all, they have got an unelected opposition leader who cannot give the budget reply and they have got an elected opposition leader who will not give the budget reply. In the end, what we need to see from them is substance. We notice that they have got a new rotation policy this morning. They have put the shadow Treasurer on the bench for the morning. He is up at level 6 getting—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is unparliamentary to refer to the absence of a member. There may be extenuating circumstances. I have ruled on this before.

**Mr FRASER:** I am sure there are extenuating circumstances, Mr Speaker. Producing a policy is a very extenuating circumstance for the LNP.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would ask the Treasurer to not refer to the absence of a member.

**Mr FRASER:** I appreciate the ruling, Mr Speaker. Let us be clear about this though. The rotation policy is being used with the Leader of the Opposition. He has been used like the old warhorse, the old prop forward—all he is good for is the first 10 minutes; two hit-ups and then he is done for the day. What we want to see from the LNP are people who are going to get in the middle and have a red-hot go.

### Literacy and Numeracy

**Dr FLEGG:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. Will the minister tell the parliament why the government has been unable to meet 20 of its 24 literacy and numeracy measures outlined in the 2011-12 budget, causing lost opportunities for so many Queensland students as they fall to the bottom of the class?

**Mr DICK:** The best improvement in the nation in NAPLAN testing over two years—that is what this state delivers. That is what we do. The international PISA testing of students in Queensland places us third in the nation—that is what Queensland delivers. Queensland is getting on with the job of delivering terrific outcomes for students in literacy and in numeracy. This is in contradistinction to what

the opposition promises. The highlight of the last two years was arming teachers with tasers. That was the single policy legacy of the former Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise, who was aided and abetted by the member for Moggill. It is no wonder Campbell Newman wanted to get the member for Moggill out of this place. It is no wonder they wanted to get him out of here.

Let us look at what we are doing in this budget this year. There is \$10.342 billion in Education and Training—in early childhood education and care, in schools education, in vocational education and training and in higher education in this state. This is a 4.5 per cent increase in the budget, a \$455 million increase. The operational budget increased by nine per cent this year to \$7.4 billion in Education. We have put an absolute priority on education in Queensland.

What have we done in this budget? There will be 300 new teacher and teacher aides in Queensland schools in the forthcoming financial year. This takes the number of new teachers and teacher aides that this Queensland Labor government has put in Queensland schools since 1998 to 10,000. What a legacy for Queensland.

We know that education makes a difference. As the Premier said earlier this morning, we are responsible for delivering prep, for delivering universal access to kindergarten and for putting the next building block in place for the future by putting year 7 into high school from 2015. What did the conservative government spend on education when they were last in government in Queensland? They spent \$2.9 billion and now we are spending \$10.342 billion. Every single cent is making a difference, every single cent is improving educational outcomes, including in literacy and numeracy.

We have much to do in Queensland. We traditionally had a year less education in Queensland but we have filled that gap. New South Wales has had year 7 in high school for almost 50 years, and we are now putting year 7 into high school from 2015 because that will give students the best possible opportunity for the future. We will not rest. The finish line is never reached in education. We will continue our restlessness to ensure we deliver the best possible opportunities for Queensland students.

### Bruce Highway, Funding

**Ms BOYLE:** My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. Will the minister please elaborate on alternative funding proposals for the Bruce Highway?

**Mr WALLACE:** I thank the member for Cairns for her question. A stronger advocate for the Bruce Highway you could not meet. I can inform the House that there is a policy for the Bruce Highway for funding. It is the first policy the LNP has ever released for Main Roads and it covers the 1,600 kilometres of the Bruce Highway. In an interview in the *Innisfail Advocate* last weekend, the member for Callide revealed that the LNP is considering putting tolls on the Bruce Highway—tolls on the Bruce Highway.

**Mr SEENEY:** Rubbish. Mr Speaker—

**Mr WALLACE:** That is shocking and I table the article in the *Innisfail Advocate* in which he says that.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of article from the *Innisfail Advocate*, dated 11 June 2011, titled 'All stops out to fix Bruce: LNP' [\[4689\]](#).

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock. Resume your seat.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, that is profoundly dishonest and ridiculous. I find it offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn. It is absolutely absurd. I find the minister's comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member finds the minister's remarks offensive and he has asked that they be withdrawn.

**Mr WALLACE:** I withdraw. The paper says—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Hang on, I have not finished yet. And as for the remarks of the Deputy Premier—

**Mr Lucas:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Now let us have the Minister for Main Roads.

**Mr WALLACE:** I withdraw that. But the paper that I just tabled says—

Campbell Newman's Queensland LNP team will be putting all options on the table—including the possibility of introducing tolls—to deliver a decent all-weather highway linking the north and south of the State.

Mr Speaker, have you ever heard such bunkum in your life? Campbell Newman must say today whether he is going to back the member for Callide in this plan to toll the Bruce. Is he going to back him?

**Mr SEENEY:** Point of order!

**Mr WALLACE:** Does the member for Callide have the authority—

**Mr SEENEY:** Point of order, Mr Speaker!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Resume your seat, Minister.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister repeated the same dishonest absurdity that I found offensive before. It is equally offensive the second time.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my right.

**Mr SEENEY:** It is absurdly dishonest. I find it offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Withdraw.

**Mr WALLACE:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Does the member for Callide have the authority to make these statements? We want Campbell Newman to stand up in regional Queensland and say why he supports tolls on the Bruce. Why does he support tolls? Everyone in regional Queensland will have to have one of these tags.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Again, stop the clock.

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister for the third time has repeated an absurd dishonesty that I have found offensive twice before. I find it offensive again and I ask that it be withdrawn. It is absurdly dishonest.

**Mr SPEAKER:** All right.

**Mr WALLACE:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. He said it to the *Innisfail Advocate*. He needs to accept this. He has a glass jaw, obviously like his leader.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Let me rule on the point of order. As I understand the minister's answer, it was referring to a Mr Newman rather than the Leader of the Opposition. That was my understanding of it.

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

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Just resume your seat. Those on my right will cease interjecting; otherwise, I will take action under the standing orders. The honourable member for Callide has the call.

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I find it offensive when the minister continues to attribute absurdly dishonest remarks to me. I never made the remarks that the minister is attributing to me. They are absurd, they are ridiculous and I find them offensive, and I will seek a withdrawal every time he makes them.

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

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Let me hear the minister's point of order and then I will take yours.

**Mr WALLACE:** I rise to a point of order. I was referring to Campbell Newman. He is not in this place. What is he going to do about—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Do not argue the point.

**Mr WALLACE:** I was referring to Campbell Newman, not the member for Callide.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am listening to the point of order.

**Mr CRIPPS:** Mr Speaker, the article in the *Innisfail Advocate* that the Minister for Main Roads refers to is being selectively quoted from, and I quote directly—

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, I am sorry—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr CRIPPS:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sorry, that is not a point of order. Now, let us get this straight before the House gets right out of control. The member for Callide has asked for a withdrawal of comments made about him. I am not going to have a parade where we continue to malign a member who has taken a point of order. As I understood and tried to listen to the minister's comments subsequently, he had referred to a Mr Newman. I would therefore say to the member for Callide that I accept that if the minister continues a maligning of you, having ruled on a point of order, then I will sit the minister down. Minister, it would be better if you directed your comments away from the member for Callide because of the withdrawal and continue. Now, let me deal with the member for Hinchinbrook. What you are suggesting is not a point of order. As I have said repeatedly, those things are a point of view; they are not a point of order. I call the Minister for Main Roads.

**Mr WALLACE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Under Campbell Newman's plan, everyone in regional Queensland will have to have a transponder—beep between Townsville and Cairns, Campbell Newman's hand in your pocket; beep between Townsville and Mackay, Campbell Newman's hand in your pocket; beep between Bobbawobba and Bowen, Campbell Newman's hand in your pocket! He has got no plan for the Bruce Highway—beep between Rockhampton and Bundaberg! He has no plan whatsoever!

That is what Campbell Newman wants to do to regional Queensland. We on this side of the House will not stand for it. We are the only party that has advocated funding for the Bruce. Compare our record in government—\$480 million a year to the Bruce compared to \$100 million under the tories. No wonder Campbell Newman wants to bring tags into regional Queensland to pay for works on the Bruce! He is moribund! He has no plans! He wants to pay for that sinking tunnel that is now in bankruptcy by using transponders in regional Queensland, and we on this side of the House will not stand for it. The Bligh government will stand up for regional Queensland, and that is why we are spending \$1,600 for every man, woman and child in Queensland. I say to the people of regional Queensland: no beeps for us! Stick by Labor!

### Cost of Living, Housing

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Minister for Community Services and Housing. I refer to research by ratings agency Finch detailing that mortgage arrears in Queensland rose to two per cent of all mortgages, with Queensland the worst performing state in the six months to March this year. Will the minister admit that Labor's failure to address the cost-of-living increases over the last decade is now costing more and more Queenslanders their homes?

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I thank the member for the question. I want to say very clearly that this government knows that the best thing we can do for families—the best thing we can do to ease cost-of-living pressures for families—is to give them a job and an opportunity to get a decent income and to give them an affordable roof over their heads. For those on fixed and limited incomes, who do not have much opportunity to get ahead, we need to build a strong base of concessions and rebates. What is this government doing? Unlike tory governments around the nation, this government has expanded its concessions—\$1.4 billion worth of concessions and rebates for families who are doing it tough. In terms of concessions, pensioners around this state are going to get a boost to their electricity concessions, their rates concessions, their water rebate.

One of the big costs that families and individuals have is their housing costs. What are we doing in relation to housing? The member knows that on the Sunshine Coast we are building hundreds of units of housing, including under NRAS, the National Rental Affordability Scheme. With the help of the federal government under the nation-building program we are building more houses than we have ever seen under social housing programs in this state—more than 4,000 units of social housing. Under our state Future Growth Fund we will build another \$90 million worth of social housing this year alone.

We know that many people are doing it tough at times, but the best thing we can do is boost the economy. What is this government doing? We are stimulating the construction industry, stimulating the tourism industry and building jobs for people's futures. That is the best thing we can do, unlike the LNP. What is it doing? The member herself said in recent media reports—in fact, as late as yesterday—that the LNP cannot commit to increasing social housing. The LNP cannot commit to doing that. Shame on her!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock. Let us hear the point of order.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will hear the point of order, thank you.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister's comments are inaccurate and also offensive, as the full context of what I said—not what the paper said—is that we would actually look at working with the not-for-profit sector to deliver more housing.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order. I call the minister. Start the clock again.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** What did Campbell Newman do when he was heading up the Brisbane City Council? How much did rates go up? What did he do for the cost-of-living pressures for people in Brisbane? Let me tell you: rates went up 42 per cent under Campbell Newman—42 per cent! And what did he say? In 2004, when Mr Newman went to the people of Brisbane and said, 'Pick me, pick me,' what did he say? He said, 'If rates go up by more than CPI, I will resign.' Did Mr Newman resign? No, he did not.

**A government member:** Well, he did really.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** Well, he did. He finally resigned, but why did he resign? He cut and ran from the people of Brisbane. He cut and ran. Those opposite need to come clean on what they are going to do. They are prancing around the sidelines with their sandwich boards and their slogans, but they are not coming clean to the people of Queensland. We get little snippets now and then like the member's commitment, or the lack—

*(Time expired)*

### South-East Queensland Water Grid

**Mrs SCOTT:** My question is to the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities. Can the minister please explain the benefits of the South-East Queensland water grid and the cost to South-East Queenslanders of paying off this vital piece of infrastructure?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The benefit of the South-East Queensland water grid is quite simple, and that is that we have drought proofed this important part of Queensland and we will not be needing new water infrastructure in South-East Queensland until at least 2027. But one of the big issues that is before us at the moment is certain comments that have been made about how the water grid is in fact being funded. As the Minister for Finance outlined to the House this morning, claims are being made that the South-East Queensland water grid is being paid off over a 20-year period. In fact, it is Campbell Newman who claims that one of the things that he will do as part of his four-point plan is extend that debt period over a 40-year period or the life of the assets.

The simple fact is that that is exactly the period of time that the water grid is being paid off. The problem is that Campbell Newman and other members opposite simply do not understand how the South-East Queensland water grid is actually funded. The simple fact is that it is being paid off over—

**Ms Simpson:** Show us the business case.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** It would be really helpful if the member for Maroochydore listened to how the South-East Queensland water grid is being paid off. It is being paid off over the life of the asset. The life of the asset is about 50 to 60 years. What is being borrowed is the subsidy that we have put in place to ensure that we reduce the price of bulk water on the taxpayers of South-East Queensland. That is what is being borrowed, not the cost of the water grid itself. This is fundamental to how infrastructure is paid off in this state—a simple fact that members opposite, including Campbell Newman, do not understand.

**Mr Dickson:** How can we believe you?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The member does not have to believe me; he just needs to go to the Queensland Competition Authority website and download the report that outlines this. I know that requires a bit of hard work by members opposite to do that, but that is the simple fact of the matter. They need to stop being dishonest when it comes to outlining their so-called alternative policy because that is, in fact, the way that the infrastructure is being paid off currently—over the life of the asset, over the 50 or 60-year period of which these assets have an operational life. Once again, the LNP, and in particular Campbell Newman, has been caught out being dishonest with the people of South-East Queensland.

### Budget, Disability Services

**Ms DAVIS:** My question is to the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. I refer to the fact that people with disabilities lost funding of up to \$2,140 per person—community support average per person—in this budget, yet the government failed to deliver \$7.7 million or 44 per cent of the Positive Futures promised spending. Why is the minister taking funding from people with disabilities and also failing to deliver much needed projects? Why are our most vulnerable wearing the impacts of Labor's financial mismanagement?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me an opportunity to tell this House about our record budget in disability services in Queensland. We are spending more than \$1.8 billion in community care. I will make a comparison with what was happening when the opposition was previously in government. We can talk about the fact that in 1997-98 they spent \$187 million on Queenslanders with a disability—\$187 million. We have had to come from a low funding base. We have increased the budget by 495 per cent. This year we have seen total Disability and Community Care Services funding include \$1.18 billion for disability services for families, children and young people. This is a 10 per cent increase on last year's budget at a time when we are dealing with natural disasters.

I note that yesterday the member for Aspley released a media statement that referred to having to explain to Queenslanders nine years of budget failures. We are as far away from nine years of budget failures as we could possibly be. We are so far away from that that it is not funny. When we look at how money is spent in Queensland, I keep hearing promises from the opposition members that they are able to do it better. I think the member for Maroochydore talked about not committing more funding to housing but that their spend would be more cost effective. We know that there is unmet need in Queensland. I would like to know what the opposition plans to do or whether the member for Aspley

shares the point of view of the member for Maroochydore, that they could fund disability services more effectively, because it is stretched. We know that it is stretched because we have to make our dollar go as far as possible.

The opposition must have some international currency exchange. Apparently, the value of the LNP dollar must be worth almost double the value of the Labor dollar.

**Ms Darling:** Monopoly money.

**Mr PITT:** I take that interjection from the member for Sandgate. The LNP treats money like Monopoly money. They say that they are able to meet all the unmet need in Queensland and they say that they can do it better. I challenge them to come up with a policy that shows how they are able to deliver better. The opposition should show us how they are able to meet the unmet need and do it in a more cost-effective way than we are doing. We are very proud of all of our achievements, particularly the fact that we have grown this budget. It is a record budget in tough times. I challenge the opposition to come up with a policy that shows how it will do it better.

### Aviation Manufacturing

**Mr LAWLOR:** My question without notice is the Premier. Could the Premier inform the House of the ongoing success of Queensland's important aviation manufacturing sector?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As the member knows, with his interest in aviation, aviation has been one of the government's priority industries for us to work on and develop over the past decade and that has been paying off. We have seen the recruitment of head offices for Virgin Australia, which has seen more and more come to Queensland. We have seen Qantas make decisions to bring facilities here. We have seen investment from companies and we have seen investment from the government in training facilities such as Aviation Australia.

All of that is paying off and we now have seen, with the assistance of our grant programs, the development of manufacturing in the helicopter sector. So I am absolutely delighted to advise the House that this morning the Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith, has advised that the Australian government has approved the acquisition of 24 MH-60R Seahawk Romeo Naval combat helicopters at a cost of over \$3 billion. The successful tenderer is a consortium involving Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin, which is partly based in Queensland. This consortium will mean 120 new jobs in aviation here in Queensland. It will mean that the company will have a Brisbane based maintenance facility at Pinkenba. It will also mean that Raytheon's Aerospace Centre of Excellence at Murarrie will also be supported. It will also see CAE's simulator support office in Milton and GE's Aviation's support centre at Brisbane's airport supported.

All of these facilities will support this investment by the Australian government in the purchase of these new Naval helicopters. There are American partners in the consortium, mostly led by the US Navy, but this company is Queensland based, based at Pinkenba. The Australian government has chosen them because of their record and they say that it presents the best taxpayer value for dollars. The helicopters are largely military, off-the-shelf, built by Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin. They will be purchased through the foreign military sales process from the US Navy. The first two helicopters will arrive in mid-2014 for testing and evaluations, with operations expected to commence in mid-2015.

This is good news for Queensland's aviation sector. We are now competitive internationally with the Australian government's Defence purchasing. This puts this company even further on the international map, where they can compete for other contracts in the helicopter area. Queensland is on the way to new investment in many industries. Yes, the resource sector is leading that charge, but it is not the only industry that is seeing significant new investment and aviation is right up there with the best. I am delighted to hear this news today.

### Australian Agricultural College Corporation

**Mr CRIPPS:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies. Tuesday's budget papers reported that the Australian Agricultural College Corporation this year achieved an increase in qualifications of 24 per cent on the previous year and delivered more than the targeted hours of vocational education and training last year. Despite these outcomes, capital funding to AACC in the budget is actually set to decrease while the number of staff has fallen by 20 over the past year. When there is already a shortage of skilled people available to work in agriculture, why is the minister asking the AACC to do more with even less?

**Mr MULHERIN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. This government has done more than any other government in Australia in relation to addressing the need for rural skilling.

**Ms Bligh:** In fact, WA wants to copy it, don't they?



**Mr MULHERIN:** Yes. In fact, the Western Australians want to have a look at the model we have adopted. They will be coming out to look at that. I have embarked on a major reform of the ag colleges that will see training delivered in more locations across Queensland. We are also investing in our staff by upgrading their skills so that we can deliver more. We are partnering with industry and we are partnering with Education Queensland through our gateway schools initiative so that people, for the first time, will have a real choice in careers in the agribusiness sector, particularly through the partnerships that have been developed through Education Queensland, the ag colleges, industry and the University of Queensland. This is the first time that there will be clear points of entry and exit in the development of this career.

Industry have told us that what they want in reform is 'point of time and place' training—that is, skill sets—so that people can be work ready. In addition to that, they want residential college training so that they can provide middle management for agriculture. They also want recognition of prior learning, and that is why we have partnered with the University of Queensland. Through our disinvest to reinvest strategy we have identified the assets that we will be selling and we are using those proceeds to reinvest in new facilities. As these assets have not yet been sold, it would be wrong to include that in any budget statements. We are in the process of selling off land around the Dalby Agricultural College that is surplus to our requirements. That will be used to reinvest in not only new facilities or upgraded facilities but also our staff and our IT platforms. Overall industry are very happy with the direction that we have taken. We are leading the nation in addressing rural skilling needs.

### **Budget, Park-and-Ride Facilities**

**Mr RYAN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister advise the House on the government's efforts to provide park-and-ride spaces for commuters since the last election?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for his question. I know how much he is committed to public transport in his area. Recently we announced 87 extra parking spaces at Morayfield for him. That is a great asset for his local community. Providing ease of access to public transport, coupled with improved customer service, is a hallmark of this government. Indeed, it is a hallmark of this year's Transport budget of over \$1.8 million.

In 2009 the Bligh government made a \$123 million election commitment to deliver more than 1,300 new park-and-ride spaces for commuters. Many members would think that is probably a big ask. Today I can advise the House that, to date, 1,522 park-and-ride spaces have been delivered under this government. Not only that, another 565 are under construction and a further 847 are in the design phase. We will almost double the commitment we went to the last election with. We are delivering for public transport infrastructure.

In this year's budget we received \$5.5 million towards the Capalaba Park and Ride; \$4.5 million towards The Gap Park and Ride; \$3.5 million for North Lakes Bus Station; \$4 million towards the Logan Central Bus Station; \$3 million towards the UQ Lakes Bus Station; and recently the Minister for Sport opened the Klumpp Road Park and Ride, providing an extra 200 spaces. This clearly demonstrates our commitment to public transport.

I was somewhat surprised to learn that recently a Sunshine Coast paper asked some members opposite how they would spend \$1 billion on public transport in their area. Would members like to hear their answers? The member for Maroochydore said, 'No comment'. The member for Noosa said, 'No comment'. The member for Buderim said, 'No comment'. The member for Kawana said, 'No comment'. In fact, no-one had any ideas. Then they asked the shadow minister for transport how he would spend \$1 billion on the Sunshine Coast. Do members know what he said? He said, 'I can't go into specifics right now,' which basically means 'no comment'. In budget week I am very disappointed in the opposition—that when asked by the media how they would spend \$1 billion on public transport infrastructure in their local region all we got was 'no comment'.

This government has a clear vision for delivering public transport infrastructure in South-East Queensland and, for that matter, right across the state. We are committed to delivering on our election commitments. We have delivered a budget full of optimism and opportunity. Unfortunately, the opposition are still in the dark ages.

### **Queensland Rail**

**Mr MESSENGER:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs. I refer the minister to Queensland Rail's decision to change from a contract system of purchasing wooden railway sleepers to a tendering system, a decision which puts at risk the jobs and livelihoods of 56 sleeper cutters and some 200 indirect Queensland jobs while potentially giving these jobs to New South Wales. I also refer the minister to her decision not to meet with some 25 Burnett and Callide sleeper cutters who will visit this place tomorrow so that they can try to talk with her in order to

protect their families' livelihoods. Will the minister change her mind and accept our offer to have a hamburger tomorrow with these hardworking Queenslanders who just want to save their jobs and protect their families' incomes?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would like to thank the member for Burnett very much for his question. I just want to put some facts on the table which I think the member for Burnett has not made very clear. Queensland Rail is at the moment in a tender process for the supply of timber sleepers. This is a tender process and as the Minister for Transport, on legal advice, I cannot meet with people who are the subject of this tender process. There are probity issues relevant here. As a lawyer I also understand that I must meet my legal obligations in relation to this matter. I am more than happy to meet with these people at any other stage, but, as members would be aware, I am respectful of my legal obligations in relation to this matter. That is the right thing to do. However, I am somewhat concerned about a phone conversation that the member for Burnett made to a senior executive of Queensland Rail. I would question whether or not this is ethical behaviour.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. I made no phone call to a Queensland Rail executive. That executive made a phone call to me which I considered was going close to interfering with the free and fair performance of a member of this place.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** A phone call was made and unfortunately that phone call—

**Mr Messenger:** Did you ask him to make that phone call?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I did not. That phone call was taped. I question the ethical behaviour of a member of parliament taping a public servant's conversation without telling them. I take this as a very serious matter.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I rise on a matter suddenly arising. The minister is talking about the ethics of taping telephone conversations and the legality of taping telephone conversations in Queensland. Might I refer the minister to a library brief which indicates that it is quite legal to tape a conversation that you are a participant in and that it is quite legal, in fact, to tape telephone conversations that are not directly electronically connected into the telephone. So the minister, I suggest through you, Mr Speaker, should get her facts straight.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will be seeking advice on this matter and I will be looking at whether or not I should refer this matter to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** If you wish to do that there is a procedure to do that. You place that in writing to me and I will examine the material. The time for question time is over.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Rule of Anticipation



**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, because I take a deep interest in these things, I wanted to look at the points of order that were taken this morning in relation to the ministerial statement by the Minister for Finance and the Arts, in particular, how it may or may not have transgressed standing order 231. Normally my encyclopedia-like memory on all the bills before the House is infallible, but this morning it let me down.

This morning, the minister was making a statement that concerned debt on the South-East Queensland water grid. The bill in question is entitled Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Bill. The bill's policy objectives, as set out in the bill and explanatory notes, are to amend the primary bill by, amongst other things, providing for prices charged by retailers to be capped annually by the CPI. Amendments to the bill have been circulated by the member for Buderim and seek to have commencement of the bill contingent upon amalgamation of bulk water suppliers and extending the repayment of debt. I note that this morning I was quoting the member's explanatory notes to the amendment, not the minister's. I was in error there.

If the proposed circulated amendments to the bill are in order, then debate in the House on the issue of debt on the South-East Queensland water grid would be out of order as being in anticipation of the bill. On the face of it, though, the amendments are in order because they seek to amend the commencement date. However, the amendments also seek to effectively make commencement subject to policy implementation which if moved as an amendment to the bill would be out of order because the bill has a restricted title. The rules of relevance of amendments cannot be circumnavigated this way.

Therefore, the member will need the leave of the House to move the amendments as they are outside the title of the bill. What does all this mean? It means that the minister's statement this morning was not anticipating the bill.

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL


### APPROPRIATION BILL

## COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill resumed from 14 June (see p. 1796) and Appropriation Bill resumed from 14 June (see p. 1805) and Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 14 June (see p. 1808), on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.01 pm): Today I stand here as a Queenslander who is very concerned about the future of this great state. I am concerned that the cost of living is out of control. I am concerned that Queensland's debt is soaring to record levels. I am concerned that the government has sold our assets simply to keep the lights on and that it has neglected infrastructure like roads, trains, hospitals, schools and dams. What is more, I am concerned that no-one in this Labor government has ever been held accountable for wasting taxpayers' money or for their failure to deliver. What happened to the boom times? What went so wrong with our economy that Queensland is now the worst performing state in all of Australia? The answer lies in the failures of the Bligh Labor government.

While the Premier and Treasurer would have us believe it is all about natural disasters, the truth is that Queensland was beset with economic problems well before the floods and Cyclone Yasi. Let us take a look at the facts. The facts are that the Premier and the Treasurer decided to sell the state's assets not after the disasters but way back in 2009. Long before the floods the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that Queensland had the worst hospital-bed-to-population ratio in Australia. Around the same time, Moody's, the international credit rating agency, downgraded the Queensland government's credit rating. What is more, well before the natural disasters independent economists reported that Queensland was at the bottom of the ladder when it came to the economic performance of Australian states. The facts speak for themselves. This government is a failure when it comes to economic management and it has taken Queensland from being the No. 1 state economy in Australia to being the worst. Queensland's economy is struggling not because of the GFC and natural disasters, but because we have had a Labor government that wasted the boom years and failed to plan for the future.

Today, in responding to the Treasurer's budget, I am going to detail how he managed to get Queensland into a bigger financial mess than New South Wales. I am also going to outline what the LNP stands for when it comes to getting Queensland back on track. Let us start with Labor's failed budget record. In a short 24 minutes on Tuesday afternoon, Queenslanders were subject to yet another slick presentation from the Treasurer and this Labor government. The government is claiming that it handed down a budget for the future. Sadly, we have heard those words before. In fact, last year's budget was supposedly a budget about the future, as was the Treasurer's effort back in 2009.

Let us not forget that 2009 budget, because it was the beginning of the asset sales, which was when the rot really set in. It was when Labor introduced a fuel tax and started hiking up the state's debt. Since this Premier became Treasurer, and especially since 2009, the Queensland government has been living on a credit card. It has been borrowing heavily to fund recurrent expenditure and selling assets simply to keep the lights on. Quite simply, Labor has become addicted to debt and one hit is no longer enough.

The 2011 budget is no different. Once again the Treasurer has delivered a budget that pawns our future to pay for the promises he is making today. The Treasurer has delivered an election budget that fails to tackle the hard issues because it is simply focused on buying votes at the next election. Pushing the debt up and into the future is not a hard decision for this government. It simply puts a thundercloud over the future of Queensland.

Last year, the Bligh Labor government promised Queenslanders cost-of-living relief this year, yet all we have seen are tax hikes and soaring power bills. Lest I be accused of making this up, let us look at the figures. Let us refer to the budget papers for confirmation. Last year public transport fares increased 15 per cent and will go up another 15 per cent this year and, indeed, every year until 2015. Average powers bills will go up by \$118 or 6.6 per cent and Queenslanders will still be out of pocket, even when the one-off impact of removing Labor's ambulance tax flows through. What is more, this year car registration will increase by another three per cent, which is on top of the 24 per cent increase over

the past three years, further entrenching independent analysis that shows that Queensland is the most expensive state in which to own and operate a motor vehicle. Then there is the fuel tax that the Premier and Treasurer introduced—after saying they would not—that will cost Queensland motorists an extra \$2.4 billion over four years.

This government's taxes and charges are out of control. They are out of control because the government has lost control of its spending. Last year, spending was up by nearly nine per cent and this year spending will increase by almost the same amount. This is our money, our taxes, that the government is freely spending without any obvious concern for the sacrifices Queenslanders make to pay their bills.

Most of us would remember when Queensland was the state with the lowest taxes. Most of us would remember how Queensland became the envy of all other states because of low government debt and a growing economy. Under Labor, things have certainly changed and not for the better. The size of Queensland government debt has skyrocketed. As I have already identified, it has not been because of natural disasters and the global financial crisis. Government debt in Queensland was skyrocketing before the GFC. In fact, it was approaching \$65 billion before the GFC and it was heading to \$85 billion before the asset sales.

Without asset sales, now it would be in excess of \$100 billion. Even after Labor has sold some of the state's best assets such as Queensland Rail, the Port of Brisbane and the Gateway Motorway, it is still projected to reach that \$85 billion mark. This year the Treasurer is projecting a deficit of more than \$2 billion and his budget will deliver a further \$4 billion shortfall in just over 12 months. That is a shortfall of about \$1,000 for each and every Queenslanders. It is a shortfall that goes straight onto the state's credit card. We know what happens with credit card debt: it has to be paid.

Because of this Treasurer's complete inability to manage expenses, Queenslanders will end up being forced to pay \$595,000 an hour in interest. That is \$595,000 every hour of every day of every year, just because Labor has failed Queensland. If that figure is not scary enough, just remember that it adds up to \$100 million a week. This Labor government has Queensland up to its neck in debt and the interest bill is forecast to hit that \$100 million a week mark. When it comes to the deficit, the Treasurer is addicted to spending. He is borrowing to pay the bills and the Premier has failed to hold him accountable.

Let us look at the predictions for economic growth and let us also look at Labor's so-called Charter of Fiscal Responsibility. The growth projections tell a lot about the Treasurer and this government. On the one hand, the government blames natural disasters for all its financial woes while, on the other, its only plan for economic recovery is on the back of disaster recovery. If this does not seem to make sense then look at the figures.

When the Treasurer talks about growth, he neglects to mention how much the economy has shrunk. He fails to talk about the fact that he squandered the boom years and he never mentions that the Queensland economy was so very weak when the natural disasters struck. While Queenslanders suffered the tragedy and terror of the floods and the cyclone, the Queensland government was caught out for the complete financial mess it had created. In fact, the financial pain of the natural disasters is something that should cause this government great shame. While the Premier asked us to donate to her flood appeal, her government was exposed for sending the state broke in a boom. They were exposed as the government that failed to plan for the natural disasters that are so common in this part of the world. They were exposed as the government that used personal hardship and suffering to cover their own mismanagement.

What this means in simple terms is that Queensland will struggle even more to build the infrastructure and fund the services that Queenslanders need and deserve. Our hospitals, Police Service and schools will all suffer because the Queensland government did not save for a rainy day. If honourable members need further proof, they should just look at the independent reports that identified well before the summer of disasters that the Queensland economy had stalled—the reports that warned growth was sluggish and that Queensland was only being saved from complete economic disaster by the mining sector. The real concern is that the government ignored these warnings and then blatantly used natural disasters to deceive Queenslanders.

The Charter of Fiscal Responsibility tells a similar story of ineptitude. A report card that I table here today shows very clearly that this government has failed its own tests when it comes to delivering fiscal sustainability and a competitive tax regime and managing the state's balance sheet. I will go through the principles in the Charter of Fiscal Responsibility. In relation to fiscal sustainability, the first is that in the general government sector it meet all operating expenses from operating revenue: fail. The second is that growth in own-purpose expenses will not exceed real per capita growth: fail. The third is to achieve a general government net operating surplus as soon as possible but no later than 2015-16—a number pushed so far out that it is beyond the next election cycle and is not going to be achieved at any time over the forward estimates: a massive fail.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Report card: Labor's 2011-12 budget assessed against Labor's Charter of Fiscal Responsibility' [\[4690\]](#).

Another principle is to maintain a competitive tax environment for business: fail. Business taxes in Queensland are rising. Every Queensland business knows it and the IPA reported on it. In terms of managing the state's balance sheet, the first principle is to stabilise net financial liabilities as a proportion of revenue in the non-financial public sector: a massive fail, not only this year but also in the outyears. The second is to target full funding of long-term liabilities such as superannuation in accordance with actuarial advice. This also fails because sensible budgeting means saving for all long-term liabilities, such as cyclones, floods and droughts, and this government has failed.

This report is an indictment of a government that cannot even achieve its own benchmark for the sustainability of its own promises. If members wonder why it is mismanaging flood relief money, why it cannot help to get disaster relief to victims, then they should really worry about what it has been doing to the state's finances.

The Treasurer has no plan to restore Queensland's AAA credit rating. We should not forget how the Premier's very own Q2 plan detailed the importance of keeping the AAA credit rating and how, after much embarrassment when it was lost, the government changed the rules to justify its lack of fiscal discipline. This is an important issue. The AAA credit rating was Treasury's jewel in the crown. It was a symbol of success, of hard work and of sound financial management, of Queensland being No. 1. But now it is gone, taken because this government has failed Queensland. Not even New South Wales, with its much vaunted problems, or the US government, after its train wreck of an economy, have lost their AAA credit rating.

A few years ago the Treasurer claimed that he was selling assets such as Queensland Rail and the Gateway Bridge to try to get the AAA credit rating back. Those assets are now gone, the debt is bigger than ever and there is no sign that Queensland will have its AAA credit rating restored in the near future. The Treasurer often talks about debt and he talks about debt in relation to the Brisbane City Council. In particular, he talks about net debt. When we look at the budget papers we can see how poorly the state's finances have been managed. Next year Queensland's net worth will actually fall. Under Labor, Queensland will be worth \$1 billion less next year than it is this year. When was the last time that happened? Queenslanders deserve to know—and need to know—that net debt under Labor is set to double in just two years, from \$16.3 billion in 2010-11 to \$35.5 billion in 2012-13. Net debt will double in two years. That is a measure of just how much debt the Treasurer is incurring to simply pay the wages.

Above all else, the Treasurer is either clueless or deceptive when it comes to the kinds of reforms that are needed to get Queensland's prized AAA credit rating back. Queenslanders have a right to be suspicious about that deception because the Treasurer has form. We will not forget that before the last election the Treasurer and the Premier failed to tell Queenslanders about asset sales. They also misled Queenslanders about the introduction of a fuel tax. Just as the Labor Party is demanding policies from the LNP, Queenslanders deserve to know what structural reforms the Labor Party is putting on the table.

Queenslanders deserve to know whether Labor has an economic plan to get Queensland moving. Queenslanders deserve to know if the Treasurer has any more secret plans to sell assets, sack public servants or introduce new taxes. We also deserve to know, given Labor's support of a carbon tax, how it is going to be funded in future budgets and the effect on the economy. We know that the Treasurer supports a carbon tax. What we do not know is how he is going to make us pay for the very considerable impacts that this tax will have on the Queensland government's finances. Carbon based industries like energy, coal and LNG are essential to Queensland's future prosperity. This government has failed to plan for Labor's carbon tax or to even consider the effect it could have on our economy.

Unlike the Labor Party, the LNP stands for accountability in government. We believe that ministers should be held accountable for wasting money and failing to deliver for the people of Queensland. The Premier is clearly not too big on accountability. Not only does the Premier continue to stand by the Treasurer—the Treasurer who has taken Queensland to the bottom when it comes to independent comparisons of state economic performance—but she continues to support ministers who have presided over such things as the Health payroll bungle.

Small businesses across the state are hurting. Many are finding it harder to survive than ever before, yet this government continues to waste their money. To demonstrate how this government wastes money, I only need to highlight that this budget provides a further \$91 million to fix the bungled Health payroll system. That is \$91 million that the Deputy Premier has prevented from being spent on improving hospitals and access to health care right across this state. That is \$91 million that could have built much needed new hospital facilities in towns like Gladstone and Maryborough, not to mention that it could have improved health services in the many dozens of towns that do not even have autoclave machines.

The LNP has a very clear policy when it comes to accountability—that is, we will provide Queenslanders with value for money in an open and transparent way. We will do this by working hard to generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders. We will make it a priority to stop Labor's waste. We will work to balance the budget and we will work to restore Queensland's AAA credit rating.

Working hard to generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders is one of our aims. The LNP will generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders by supporting small business and economic development and by ensuring the Coordinator-General has the power and support to get projects moving and to save the government money.

When it comes to delivering major infrastructure and attracting investment in Queensland, the biggest problem is that the Coordinator-General's office has had its influence severely diminished by the Bligh Labor government. Under this government we have seen the slow erosion of the Coordinator-General's power to coordinate, and Queensland has paid a big price for the insidious creep of bureaucracy. Sadly, the Bligh government has pushed the office of Coordinator-General so far down the pecking order that it did not even have a mention on its own departmental website until we raised the issue. That is why we have already announced that an LNP government will restore the Coordinator-General's authority to properly coordinate major projects and deliver the best possible outcomes for all Queenslanders. The LNP will ensure that the Coordinator-General is a facilitator, not simply a regulator.

Under an LNP government, the Coordinator-General will be tasked with getting things done and done properly. When releasing our policy on the Coordinator-General we were overwhelmed by the number of major investors who came forward to share their stories about how the Queensland government had failed to support job-creating projects for all Queenslanders in Queensland. Whether it is agriculture, mining, tourism or public transport, the Coordinator-General needs to have the full support of government and the authority to get the best outcomes for Queensland.

The LNP will stand up and fight for Queensland. An LNP government will seek to intervene and support Queenslanders if there is a High Court challenge to Labor's insidious minerals resource rent tax. This tax is aimed at taking money from states like Queensland and sending it to Canberra so it can be spent on buying votes in marginal southern electorates. Queenslanders always miss out when it comes to federal road and infrastructure funding under Labor, and the minerals resource rent tax will simply make this worse. For too long the state Labor government has failed to take up the fight when it comes to getting a fair share of road and infrastructure funding out of Canberra. Labor failed to fight Kevin Rudd's resource super profits tax and they failed to fight Julia Gillard's minerals resource rent tax. What is more, after revealing their true colours in the House last night, it is clear that the Premier and her government strongly support Labor's carbon tax.

We have a government that always puts Labor first, not Queenslanders first. They put politics ahead of Queenslanders and never stand up for a better deal from Canberra. What is more, they seem happy for Queensland's resource industry, our lifeblood in these tough economic times, to be jeopardised by a tax that Canberra will take and will never return to Queensland residents. This craven kowtowing to Canberra is costing us dearly. It is the reason we are not getting a fair share of federal road funding. It is the reason there is no funding for the Toowoomba bypass, for better public transport or for much needed upgrades to highways that run the length and breadth of the state. The LNP will fight for Queensland and not stand back while the federal government shirks its responsibility to fix roads like the Bruce Highway and the Warrego Highway.

I turn now to housing affordability. Unlike Labor, which as the Premier boasted pulls rabbits from hats, we will release detailed plans to make housing in Queensland more affordable. Homeownership and affordability are very important issues for Queenslanders. That is why our plans, which will be released for all Queenslanders closer to the election, focus on cutting the cost of building new homes by dealing with red tape and supporting local government to make decisions. And it is why we will oppose this Labor government's plan to slug homebuyers with an extra \$7,000 in transfer duty, devaluing the investment of hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders in their own homes—Labor's insidious \$7,000 property tax. By addressing affordability in a sustainable way, by tackling the hidden costs of housing, the LNP knows we can generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders.

The opportunities for young Queenslanders need to be addressed. The LNP will generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders through a commitment to working with teachers to improve education outcomes in our schools. Under Labor, Queensland schools have ranked way down the bottom of the ladder in the NAPLAN program test. The government has not only failed to provide a response to this problem in the budget but has actually cut education funding as a proportion of total government expenditure. That means our schools are being asked to do more with even fewer resources. Our teachers will also be forced to do more because the Treasurer has failed to provide enough funding to ensure staffing numbers keep pace with population growth.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to detail our education policy today. But we are committing that an LNP government will make Queensland the No. 1 place to get an education. The LNP will work with our teachers, parents and unions to deliver for Queensland students. For us, unlike those on the other side, a Smart State is not about slogans or number plates or football stadiums; it is about results. And that is why the LNP will provide Queenslanders with a comprehensive plan to give students the best possible chance to excel and then develop beyond their school years.

Making it a priority to stop waste is one of our aims. I have already spoken about our commitment to accountability in government. When it comes to waste, with this government the buck stops with the Premier. This Premier is not prepared to deal with waste or the ministers responsible for that waste. We have a Treasurer addicted to debt, a Treasurer who has failed for more than four years to show us he has a plan to sustainably grow the Queensland economy and provide wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders. What is more, we have a Deputy Premier who bungled the Health payroll system and who seems to be overly preoccupied with ensuring his chauffeured limousine is fitted with a GPS system. Who has paid for these failures? Has the Treasurer with his job? Has the Deputy Premier? No, not one. Queenslanders have paid though. They have paid through higher electricity prices. They have paid through soaring taxes. They have paid through the mounting delays in our hospital system, the delays that they suffer in getting access.

Another example is that at the last election the Premier promised jobs, not cuts. In recent weeks this promise has proven to be yet another lie as details of her plans—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is unparliamentary and you know that. Withdraw it.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Those on my right will cease interjecting. The member for Clayfield has the call. I would ask you to extend him the courtesy.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** In recent weeks this promise has proven to be the sham that it is, as details of her plans to make public servants redundant have come to light. When the Premier says 'jobs, not cuts' that really means cuts, not jobs. It also means that Queenslanders are expected to fork out \$257 million in redundancy payments. This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how this government wastes Queenslanders' money.

Let us not forget the school curriculum they introduced even though they knew that the federal government was almost ready to introduce a national curriculum. Nor should we forget the money they wasted forcing councils to change water supply arrangements, or the billions they wasted building a water recycling scheme that the Premier has refused to turn on. That is not to mention the \$600 million wasted on Traveston Dam—another debt put on the credit card for Queenslanders to pay.

The LNP is committed to cutting such wasteful government spending. Our shadow cabinet is talking to Queenslanders right across the state to hear ideas on how we can deliver better government services and stop the waste. We have even appointed a shadow minister for waste watch. Campbell Newman saved Brisbane ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars by cutting waste in council. We will do the same for Queenslanders.

I turn now to balancing the budget. The Queensland economy was hit especially hard by the natural disasters this year because the government failed to save for a rainy day, literally. After years of reckless spending, the Treasurer has failed to properly detail how he will bring Queensland's budget back into balance. He may have pulled a rabbit from the hat, but there cannot be that many left. The government has raided all the hollow logs. Since 2005-06 when the Premier was appointed as the then Treasurer, Queensland's net operating balance has been in a relentless decline. In basic terms, that means all the rainy day savings have been spent, and they have been spent on wages, on football stadiums and on the bungled Health payroll system. These savings represented our insurance. They were put aside to deal with the unexpected, not to pay for Labor's cheap political promises. Yet that is where they have gone.

On Tuesday we never heard whether the Treasurer had any plans to put money aside for future disasters. We never heard him talk about the increasing ratio of net financial liabilities to revenue, and there was definitely no mention of the stupendous deterioration in Queensland's net debt position. By cutting waste and putting in place the structural reforms necessary to grow the economy, an LNP government will restore the budget to balance. We will save for rainy days and we will plan ahead for dealing with natural disasters. An LNP government will contain the expenses of government because we care about the cost of living.

I have spoken about restoring Queensland's AAA credit rating. Because we care about the cost of living, an LNP government will work to restore Queensland's AAA credit rating. As each day passes, this task becomes even more difficult. With Labor's high spending and waste, the AAA credit rating slips further away. We need to work to restore the AAA credit rating because the Treasurer's incompetence in having Queensland downgraded is costing at least \$200 million a year, or more than \$500,000 a day, in extra interest. This money, which is straight out of the pockets of Queensland families and residents, would be much better spent on cutting hospital waste and waiting times, assisting our teachers and police, as well as cutting the cost of power and water.

These things—cutting hospital waiting times, assisting our teachers and police, as well as cutting the costs of power and water—are fundamental policy objectives of the LNP. The government has had 20 years to deliver for Queenslanders; it has had two decades to get things right and it has failed to do

so. The LNP will release detailed policies on our plans to improve hospitals and how we will make our schools the best in the nation, but we want to know how Labor plans to fix its own mess—the mess it created. It is the height of hypocrisy for Labor to demand policies from the LNP when it cannot even explain how it plans to get the state back on track, when it shows no sign of dealing with the structural changes confronting the Queensland economy.

Queensland is changing and the government has failed to speak about how it will lead us into the future and how it will deal with the growing importance of resources, our shrinking manufacturing sector or our booming service industries. The rise of Asia and in particular China and India, the repositioning of Japan, the long-term increase in the value of the Australian dollar, the mobility of capital and labour, and even the shakiness of several European countries—these are all driving these structural changes in our economy. This government has failed to show any sign that it is thinking of these issues, let alone positioning Queensland for change.

The government does not even have a plan to deal with the carbon tax which it supports and which will cost Queenslanders dearly. The LNP has a plan for the carbon tax; we will oppose it. Through our infrastructure review, our commitment to generate wealth, prosperity and jobs for all Queenslanders and our overall economic vision, the LNP has a plan to deal with structural change and grow the Queensland economy in a strong and sustainable way.

Let us turn to the cost of living. A recent report by the Institute of Public Affairs reveals that over the past decade Queensland has recorded the highest increases in state taxes. Under Labor, taxes in Queensland have risen by 9.3 per cent a year compared to a national average of about six per cent. The same report identified that Labor has delivered the second highest blow-out in Public Service costs and could lay claim to having the worst fiscal position of all the states and territories. What this means is that Queenslanders have to pay more and more each year to the state Labor government. There is no better example of how this government has failed to do anything about the cost-of-living concerns than the \$40 million the Treasurer and Deputy Premier have allocated for Labor to prop itself up through its increased electoral funding laws.

Labor has no plans to deal with cost-of-living increases. On the other hand, the LNP is very aware that Queenslanders are feeling the pain of a very tough economy. Because we talk to people all over the state, we are hearing the fears and concerns of every day Queenslanders. Day in, day out we are hearing stories of how mums and dads, shop owners, farmers, taxidriviers, miners, truck drivers and pensioners are all hurting. We have spoken firsthand to the newsagent who has not drawn a salary since October last year and to the butcher who is worried sick about the future of his business. There is the operator of a local post office I visited last month who is fighting to hold on to his business while the government fails to act after the floods.

Our team has listened to the heartbreaking stories from farmers who lost their crops or livestock during the floods to people who lost everything when water inundated their homes or when Cyclone Yasi wreaked havoc on their community. That is why we have announced policies to put a lid on the cost of living. That is why we will freeze the cost of registering a family car during our first term. Taken on its own, this commitment will save families around \$15 to \$20 each year on their average family car rego. But this policy cannot be taken on its own because it is just one part of our plan to reduce the cost of living for Queenslanders.

We have also announced a detailed four-point plan to cut the cost of water. Our plan, which is supported by independent reports, will cut around \$80 per year from water bills. Under our four-point plan to cut the cost of water, we commit to amalgamating the five bulk water entities into one to provide greater efficiencies, handing back control of water retailing to councils, writing off the non-performing water grid assets and immediately adopting a 40-year price path to repay state government water grid debt.

Today I am pleased to detail the third element of our plan to cut the rising cost of living. Queenslanders are hurting from rising electricity prices. According to a recent report by the Queensland Council of Social Service, electricity, gas and water prices under this Labor government have risen by 63 per cent in Brisbane over the past five years. In pure dollar terms, an average Queensland family has had to pay an extra \$700 a year for power since the Premier gave an assurance that no Queenslanders would be worse off under her electricity reforms. Just like her promise not to introduce a fuel tax and her promise not to cut jobs, the Premier misled the Queensland people on the price of electricity. When it comes to dealing with electricity prices, the best the Premier can offer is a rabbit out of a hat. Just like her suggestion that the flood was a blip, the Premier again shows how out of touch she is by boasting about rabbits out of hats, which is really a wink and a nod for another slick budget.

What we have not heard is what the Premier will do after the election. What will she do when the rabbit is dead and electricity prices under her policies continue to rise? The Premier has form when it comes to saying one thing before an election and doing another after it. I again refer to her asset sales and her plans to sack public servants and introduce a fuel tax. The LNP has a very clear plan when it comes to cutting the cost of electricity for Queenslanders. Our plan is aimed at providing long-term, sustainable price relief for Queenslanders without the need for rabbits or more government debt.



An LNP government would immediately freeze the standard domestic tariff, tariff 11, while allowing the fixed charge to rise in accordance with the QCA recommendation. By freezing tariff 11, average households using around six megawatt hours per year could save around \$120 on their power bills in 2012-13—that is \$120. It is the difference between being 'can-do' and this long-term Labor government.

In addition, an LNP government will abolish the current ridiculous pricing system that allows retailers to charge you more if you use less power. That is right: Queenslanders who use less power pay more under this tired Labor government. We will achieve this by abolishing the so-called benchmark retail cost index. By abolishing the benchmark retail cost index, power bills may well be reduced even further. I might add that, when the Queensland Competition Authority last reported on the 6.6 per cent pay rise under Labor's failed BRCI mechanism, the LNP raised the urgent need for electricity tariff reform.

Labor is responsible for soaring power prices and it could have done something long ago to fix this problem. In making this announcement today, I am hoping Labor members steal this policy. We urge them to. Just as they have with our announcement on water prices, policing on the Gold Coast, the GPS tagging of sex offenders and abolishing the ambulance tax, I am urging them to pinch this idea. If Labor acted today to freeze tariff 11 at 2010-11 levels and only allowed the fixed cost to increase in accordance with the QCA recommendation on 1 July, average families could save, we estimate, up to \$70 this year compared to Labor's proposed price rise—I repeat: a saving of \$70 this year compared to Labor's proposed price rise. Our challenge to the government is to steal this policy: do not be proud, do not be afraid to accept that you have failed Queenslanders by not dealing with rising power prices, do something to make a difference and do it now.

The LNP is also affirming its continued support for abolishing Labor's insidious ambulance tax. This is a tax that should never have been applied. It is a tax that hit those who least could afford to pay it and it is one that the LNP argued against when it was introduced by the Labor Party. As conceded by the government, this measure will save Queenslanders an additional \$114 on their power bills on top of the savings we would introduce.

As I have already discussed, the LNP is resolute in opposing Labor's carbon tax. The carbon tax will have a significant impact on electricity prices and the government has no plan to deal with this problem. If Labor forces a carbon tax on Queenslanders, we will require electricity and water retailers to clearly show the full carbon tax component on power and water bills—Queenslanders will know how much they are paying for Labor's carbon tax policy.

As a final measure to drive down the cost of electricity, an LNP government will work with the energy industry to pursue optional initiatives to give customers an incentive to reduce electricity consumption. Options that customers might want to consider include the installation of smart meters for those who choose to have them installed and the possibility of introducing a new lower tariff 11 economy rate for households who choose to connect a range of appliances to interruptible power supply devices. These customers would get a lower overall cost in exchange for small interruptions to the power used in peak periods for equipment like air conditioners. Under our plan, the LNP would be able to offer Queensland households lower power bills than Labor. Our plan, which includes abolishing the ambulance tax and incentives for reduced electricity consumption, will save the average household around \$250 and up to \$330 a year—\$250 to \$330 a year in savings on electricity bills. If Labor steals our policy today—and we encourage it to do so—Queensland families, on an average bill, could save another \$70 on top of those savings before the next election.

The contrast could not be clearer. Under Labor, reform has stalled. Since 2007 Labor has sat on its hands while the BRCI has failed Queenslanders. Labor failed to act in 2009 when the Queensland Competition Authority recommended a change to the BRCI. It failed to help Queenslanders when the cost of generating electricity was actually falling. Every day Labor wastes is a day of lost opportunity for Queensland. Every day Labor wastes is a day that Queenslanders are being forced to pay spiralling government taxes and charges. The LNP will forward plan, not live for the moment. We will save Queenslanders money, we will deliver more by getting action on the basics and cutting waste and, importantly, we will oppose Labor's outrageous slug on homeowners through its 125 per cent increase in transfer duty.

The dirty shame of Tuesday's budget—the black rabbit that the Treasurer pulled from his hat—was a tax that will cost many Queenslanders thousands of dollars a year. Despite what the government says, regardless of how it spins the facts, an increase in transfer duty will cost Queenslanders dearly. If you do not believe me, here is an example: with average homes in Brisbane selling for \$515,000 and the average home being sold every seven years, the state government's transfer tax will cost the owners of those homes—will cost residents—\$2,315 a year. At \$2,315 a year, that is almost twice the cost of council rates. This government is so out of touch that it told journalists that homebuyers could simply add this tax to the mortgage. While the Treasurer might be able to keep adding bills to the Queensland mortgage, real families cannot get the loans to do that. It is just another sign of this government's lack of real-world experience.

The LNP will provide full costing details as required before the election. We estimate that our cost-of-living initiatives will require budget funding of around \$250 million a year. This money will be found by cutting the Queensland government's mounting consulting bill by around 15 per cent per annum, by cutting waste, by allocating savings derived through building the Sunshine Coast University Hospital as a public-private partnership and by finding savings in the Queensland Future Growth Fund projects.

After 20 long years of Labor in Queensland, this year's budget is a sad and embarrassing disappointment. It is a disappointment because it fails to bring spending under control, it fails to deal with the cost of living and it fails to position the state for the future. After 20 long years, this budget is evidence of a government that is out of ideas, a government that is preoccupied with politics and out of touch with Queenslanders. This budget is just another example of how this Treasurer and this Labor government are not up to the job. It is an example of how badly Queensland has been managed by a government that has failed to plan for the future or show any real financial discipline.

Like most Queenslanders, I find it hard to believe that the state's finances are in such an appalling mess. When I was growing up Queensland was Australia's powerhouse. It was the state that was booming, the place where everyone was moving. In some ways it seems that Labor does not want people moving here anymore. It is happy to pull down the shutters and tell people who have moved from interstate that they are not really true Queenslanders. But the real shame is how Queensland has slipped down the economic ladder. Independent economic reports have, long before the natural disasters, repeatedly ranked Queensland at the bottom of the ladder when it comes to economic performance.

We would all remember how Queensland used to be the lowest tax state. Now we are one of the highest. Who would have ever dreamt that Queensland would become the most expensive state in which to own and operate a motor vehicle? But that is what the RACQ has found. Once we would never have imagined that the Centre for Independent Studies would report that Queensland's taxes are in the top three.

The best this Treasurer can do is call for the LNP to give Labor more ideas to steal. In just 10 weeks since Campbell Newman became our leader, the LNP has had no fewer than four policies pilfered by the ALP. First, we saw the government react by trying to copy our plan to fix the dire problems Labor created in the supply of water to customers in South-East Queensland. Then we patiently waited as Labor very slowly decided to respond to our plans to deal with spiralling crime on the Gold Coast. It waited until we committed to support the GPS tagging of sex offenders and only this week, after nine long years, admitted that we were right all along in opposing the unfair and unnecessary ambulance tax.

Queenslanders are entitled to ask about Labor's plans to get Queensland out of its economic mess. We need to know what Labor plans to deal with—the problems it has created through neglect, mismanagement and a total lack of ministerial accountability. When people ask us what is our aim, we say that our aim is to make Queensland the No. 1 place to invest and do business, the No. 1 place to raise a family and buy a home, the No. 1 place to get an education and a great career. Most importantly, our aim is to make Queensland the No. 1 place to live.

Queenslanders deserve a government that has a vision for the state—a government that works for Queensland, not for itself and its own re-election. The LNP offers that alternative. We understand the importance of growing the Queensland economy, of making sure the government plans for the future and does not just live for the moment. Our can-do team will work for Queensland, not for ourselves, and we will fight red tape and the heavy hand of bureaucracy. We will cut the cost of living and support families and small businesses to get ahead. Importantly, we will position Queensland for the challenges ahead. An LNP government will not be caught short by natural disasters. We will cut waste and deliver Queenslanders with real value for money.

The next election provides Queenslanders with a clear choice: a choice between a tired, long-term Labor government that cannot stop the waste and does not know how to cut the cost of living and the LNP, which will save you money and deliver more by getting action on the basics and cutting the waste. We are determined to fight for Queenslanders, to stand up for what is right and ensure Queenslanders will power Queensland again, not politics. We have the plans, the passion and the energy to make this great state 'can-do Queensland' once more.

**Opposition members:** Hear, hear!



**Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (12.48 pm): The families in my electorate who tonight will be sitting around the telly will be none the wiser about what is going to happen if the alternative government in this state actually gets to be the government. They will be none the wiser after the 40 minutes or so that we heard from the shadow Treasurer—not the opposition leader, but the shadow Treasurer—about what is happening, because these people, the LNP members, do not want to let us know their game plan. They do not want

to come clean with the people of Queensland. They do not want to let them know what they are going to do. They have this mystery package that they are putting to the people of Queensland. That is totally unfair. It is totally irresponsible to treat the people of Queensland like mugs.

The people of Queensland are going to make a big decision over the next six months or so and they need to have the facts before them. But what they are listening to from Mr Campbell and from the shadow Treasurer and from all the other members of the LNP team is nothing more than slogans. The LNP members are prancing around on the sidelines with the sandwich boards, with the slogans and they have a few little giveaways to give to people. I have confidence that the people of Queensland will see through that nonsense. They will see through that, because what is at stake here is far too serious for them. It is not a game; it is their livelihoods that are at stake here and they will give good thought to these decisions. They need to be presented with the detail. It is no good that Mr Campbell Newman goes around the state saying, 'I'm not going to let out my game plan now. I'm not going to give the people of Queensland the facts.' It is not good enough that the shadow Treasurer says, 'I'm not going to let out my plan for education. I am not going to let the people of Queensland think about that now. I'll surprise them and give them a little bit of time to think about it later in the year before an election.'

The people of Queensland need the facts. They need to know what the plan is. They need the LNP to come clean. How is the LNP going to fund these giveaways? How is the LNP going to fund the things it has said it will do to reduce the cost of living? It is irresponsible of the LNP to set up an expectation in the people of Queensland that it will help ease their pain when it is just giving a few giveaways without the detail on how it is going to fund things. In fact, if you take what the shadow Treasurer has said today, all we are really hearing out of all of that is two words: more debt, more borrowings, because they have not indicated where they will get this money from.

What we have done through the Treasurer and our Premier and the leadership on this side of the House is set out a very clear, comprehensive, balanced social and economic plan. That is what a responsible government should do. That is what responsible leaders do. There is none of this prancing around on the sidelines with sandwich boards and slogans and a few little giveaways. We have actually done the hard yards here. We are on the field. We are taking the tackles. Those guys opposite do not want to take any tackles; they want to prance around on the sidelines. That is not good enough and the people of Queensland deserve better, because what is at stake here is their livelihoods. It is their quality of life and their livelihoods. All the members opposite are giving them is slogans. They will not give them the answers.

**Mr Langbroek** interjected.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I take that interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise—a former and failed leader of the LNP. He is saying something about pink hard hats. The pink hard hat represents advancing women's economic equality in Queensland. How do we do that? We give women some of the best opportunities they could possibly have in those higher paying non-traditional industries like construction. The member wants to mock that, but what he is doing is mocking opportunities for Queensland women. No wonder he got a bit cross and they tossed him aside.

**Ms Simpson:** Fourteen thousand jobs lost in construction in this area in the last few years.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** The shadow minister for community services in today's *Courier-Mail* said, 'I cannot commit the LNP to providing more funds for housing.' So when we get a little bit of a snippet of what they are going to do, we see that it is not pretty.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister's comments are offensive and inaccurate in that they do not tell the full message. I said that we would be allowing the not-for-profit sector to access more so that they can do more.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! No. The member is engaging in debate. I was listening to the minister's statement very carefully. She did not make a personal reflection on you. There is no point of order.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** Let us look at the facts of what we have presented to the Queensland public openly, honestly and courageously. Does our budget pass the test? It sure does. Does it generate jobs? Yes. We are well on track to achieve the 100,000 jobs target, with stimulus to the construction industry, the tourism industry and other key industries. We have a massive Capital Works Program—\$15 billion worth of capital works supporting 93,000 jobs. Does the budget ease the cost-of-living pressures? Yes. The abolition of the \$113 a year community ambulance levy will go a long way to helping families. I, too, can remember going to the Ekka and the big wheel fascinated me. If my memory is correct, I recall that that big wheel was where the fire service used to raise their money. They raised it through chook raffles in local areas.

**Ms Darling** interjected.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** It was the Ambulance Service. The ambos were there with white shirts selling tickets for the big wheel at the Ekka. I remember my mum would always buy tickets from the ambos. We do not want to go back to those days. We introduced a levy, because there was such a poor level of

funding to the Ambulance Service in Queensland. We no longer see the need for that. We want to give some relief to families and we have made that tough choice and we will find the money for the Ambulance Service and it will be a free service and an effective service and a timely service in the way it has been under a Labor government—not a chook raffle based service.

Queensland is now providing the largest and broadest range of concessions—a total of \$1.4 billion worth of rebates and relief for Queensland individuals and families. Pensioners, concession card holders and people on low incomes will benefit from an 11 per cent increase to the electricity rebate up to \$230. Pensioner rebates in water, electricity and other areas will help ease that cost of living. They are real, genuine, funded and costed propositions.

Does the budget help to provide more affordable housing? It sure does. It passed that test. We will see 3,000 new households assisted into renting affordable houses under NRAS—a new scheme supported by the federal government. More than \$369.8 million is provided to complete 1,485 social rental dwellings across the state and we are beginning construction on another 231 with \$90 million under the Queensland Future Growth Fund. An amount of \$155 million is also allocated to build and upgrade hundreds of homes in remote Indigenous communities. I did not hear the shadow Treasurer at one point mention Indigenous people. Did anyone else? Was I mistaken? Who are some of the most disadvantaged people feeling the cost-of-living pressures, feeling the inequity in this state? Indigenous people.

What have we done as a state Labor government? We have committed, with our federal Labor colleagues, to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, and we on this side of the House stand proud because we are committing to economic activity, real jobs through our housing program and our building program in Indigenous communities to give those people certainty and security. I did not hear the shadow Treasurer mention anything about spending for Indigenous communities. Members, am I wrong?

**A government member:** No.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** No—no mention of that. That is a very serious and important area.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Minister, you must refer your comments through the chair.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** There is a \$10,000 grant for new home buyers. Yes! A big tick. This budget passes the test in relation to helping people with their housing costs. There is zero stamp duty for first home buyers buying a home under \$500,000. First home buyers will walk out of a bank, put a contract on a house and they will receive up to \$17,000 in savings through the grants that we are offering and the stamp duty relief.

Does the budget boost services in education, police and health—those key areas? Again, it passes the test. Yes, there is \$50 million to upgrade schools, \$328 million to move year 7 to secondary school, 600 new police officers over three years and a record Health budget. There is also a record mental health budget. What have the others offered? All we have heard from the shadow spokesperson for health—and we have not heard anything from the Treasurer in relation to mental health—is offering volunteer workers. This is 2011. We have sophisticated approaches to dealing with people with mental health issues and they want to offer volunteers. Volunteers do a great job, but we need trained personnel who those volunteers can work with as a matter of priority and that is what our mental health plan is doing—funding more front-line workers, trained specialists in this area.

In my local area, the benefits will include \$1 million to kick-start work on a new—I was going to call it an on-and-off ramp. I do not know the technical names of these roadwork projects, but when you are going down Beaudesert Road and you want to turn right on to the Logan Motorway it has become quite a hazard. So I have been fighting hard for that ramp. The minister, Craig Wallace, has thrown a million dollars into the bucket to get a study underway to fix that hazard on Beaudesert Road. So motorists and residents in my local area will see great benefit from that funding.


My constituents and I also benefited from the education initiatives. We have given a big priority to early education in particular. My son, Alex, is now in prep. Guess what? He is learning to spell. Guess what? Yesterday when I rang him after he had come home from school he said, 'Mum, we learned the letter "G".' When I asked, 'Do you know what word starts with "G"?' he fired up, because he loves *Star Wars* and said, 'Galaxy.' He was so proud that he is learning to spell. He actually spelt 'dog'. That brought a little tear to my eye. He went 'd-o-g' and he is only in prep. The learning opportunities that our kids are getting under a Labor government are magnificent. We are committed to early education. We are committed to giving young people in this state a flying start in education. The LNP members need to come clean on what they are going to do—what they are going to cut, what areas they are going to cut, what jobs they are going to cut, what programs they are going to cut—because all they have given us is slogans.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL BILL

### First Reading

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act relating to local government elections, to amend this act, to amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Building Act 1975, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Mixed Use Development Act 1993, the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act 2011, the Public Trustee Act 1978, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985, the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 and the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2000 for particular purposes and to make consequential and minor amendments to the Electoral Act 1992, the Criminal Code and the Information Privacy Act 2009. 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:* Local Government Electoral Bill [\[4691\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral Bill, explanatory notes [\[4692\]](#).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (2.31 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Electoral Bill 2011. This bill provides for the conduct of all local government elections in Queensland and represents the final stage of the review of local government legislation started in late 2006.

The substantial review, culminating in the new Local Government Act 2009, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, their subordinate regulations and now this bill, highlighted the need for new stand-alone local government election legislation. This stand-alone legislation will provide an act that is user friendly for candidates and the community, and practitioner friendly to councils and electoral officers. The act will be a one-stop shop for the conduct of local government elections, consolidating the current local government electoral provisions from four legislative instruments into one, reducing the legislative burden on local governments.

In developing this stand-alone piece of legislation, the government has listened to what local government, stakeholders and the community were saying, particularly in their responses to the Law, Justice and Safety Committee's inquiry into the local government electoral system. This report, and the government's response, forms the policy basis of this bill. The message coming through was loud and clear: the community wanted an efficient and transparent electoral framework. To ensure community expectations of efficiency, transparency and integrity are met, the new bill moves responsibility for the conduct of all local government elections to the Electoral Commission of Queensland. By giving the Electoral Commission a mandate to oversee and administer all local government elections we will be creating an independent, central point of coordination and administration.

The 2008 local government elections conducted by the Electoral Commission of Queensland demonstrate the commission's ability to conduct local government elections with efficiency and integrity. Similar to the 2008 quadrennial election, councils will be invoiced individually on the basis of the actual costs incurred for their election and a share of the cost of centrally administered services.

Some councils and their representative bodies have raised concerns about the costs associated with the ECQ conducting all local government elections, which will necessarily cost more than they did in 2008. The increase in electoral costs is attributable to wage and CPI increases since 2008, as well as the cost of a dedicated local government electoral unit within the ECQ to manage all local government elections including quadrennial elections, fresh elections and by-elections. This replaces the role that CEOs previously performed as returning officers across 73 councils.

It has been clear in consultations since 2007 that it is an untenable position for councils to continue to conduct their own elections with the CEO acting as the returning officer. This arrangement puts the returning officer in the precarious position of having to make decisions about their employer while having to consider the possible impact such a decision may have on the CEO's tenure. Removing the role from CEOs will allow them to focus on the day-to-day operations of council, including the

delivery of key services to the community under the stewardship of councillors, and to keep their focus on rebuilding efforts in their local government area in the case of councils affected by recent natural disasters.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

But, community expectations of integrity and transparency in the democratic process are the pre-eminent considerations here, demonstrated no more clearly than in the bi-partisan recommendation to Government of the Parliamentary Law, Justice and Safety Committee, coming out of its comprehensive inquiry into the conduct of Local Government elections, that all Local Government elections be undertaken by the ECQ.

Importantly, Councils will be able to discuss with the ECQ potential opportunities for cost savings in the conduct of their elections. The Bill will provide a degree of flexibility for Councils and the ECQ to work together to support cost savings.

With the ECQ conducting Local Government elections the community can have full confidence in the continuing integrity of electoral arrangements, including the transparency of funding and disclosure arrangements.

The Bill retains many elements of the original Local Government election legislation that stakeholders and the community believe to be vital elements of an efficient and transparent electoral framework.

These elements include:

- the direct election of Mayors;
- the requirement that Councillors resign to contest a seat in State or Federal elections; and
- the prohibition of dual candidacy.

Where possible, this Bill reflects the requirements of the (state) *Electoral Act 1992*. The Bill also provides for absent voting where electors will now be able to cast their vote outside their local government division, but within their local government area for divided councils.

In acknowledgement of strong stakeholder support, existing voting systems have also been retained. Optional preferential voting is continued for a Local Government area divided into single-member divisions and first-past-the-post voting in undivided council areas.

I am introducing some further key changes in the new Local Government Electoral Bill to meet community expectations of efficiency, transparency, and integrity in their Local Government elections.

The candidate nomination fee for a Local Government election will be increased from \$150 to \$250. This aligns with the fee requirements for candidates nominating in a State election. This will keep it affordable to nominate while hopefully reducing the number of frivolous nominations received.

Perhaps one of the most important changes as already mentioned, is that, except in exceptional circumstances, Council chief executive officers will not be appointed as returning officers. Appointments to the role of returning officer will now be the responsibility of the ECQ. This important change has been made to remove any perception that a conflict may exist between the roles of chief executive officer and returning officer.

After consultation with the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, the Bill replaces existing arrangements for community forums under the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government (Community Forums) Regulation 2008* with an optional model which is the preference for these Councils.

The two Indigenous Regional Councils have been operating fully under the Local Government Act since 1 July 2010 and the community engagement requirements of the Act. The community forum provisions predate this and were originally enacted to provide a vehicle for community input into Council decisions after the 2008 amalgamation of the former Torres Strait Island Community Councils and Cape York Aboriginal Shire Councils into two Indigenous Regional Councils—the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

Under the Local Government Act, Councils have a range of options for community consultation which provide the flexibility they need to ensure all members of the community have their say.

Accordingly, the Bill will repeal the *Local Government (Community Forums) Regulation 2008* and amend the Local Government Act to provide that the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council can decide whether to establish a community forum and if so, may appoint members to a forum, both by a resolution of Council.

The changes will provide Councils with a greater level of independence but will be balanced with a community safeguard to fair appointments—that is, appointments will follow a call for expressions of interest and a merit based selection process. In the unexpected event of a problematic appointment, that is inconsistent with any law or the Local Government principles under the Local Government Act, the Minister will be able to use the existing State intervention power to revoke or suspend the appointment resolution.

This Bill, together with a review of statutes applying to Local Governments currently underway in the Department of Local Government and Planning, will complete the Bligh Government's implementation of a new, modernised, statutory framework for all Queensland Local Governments. They will indeed complete the most significant program of Local Government reform in our State's history.

Mr Speaker, the Bill also proposes amendments to the *Building Act 1975* regarding dividing fences for pools and fire safety in residential care buildings.

The *Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Bill 2010* has been introduced into Parliament. It will replace the *Dividing Fences Act 1953* and provide a new legislative scheme for dividing fences and trees. This Bill specifically excluded dividing fences that also serve as pool barriers to ensure that the child safety measures arising out of the recent pool safety reforms are not affected.

There are over 300,000 pools in Queensland and it is common practice for owners to use existing dividing fences as pool barriers. Under the new pool laws, pool owners may be required to repair or upgrade existing boundary fences to comply with the new pool safety standard over the next 5 years.

These pool safety amendments make special provision for these fences by allowing pool owners in appropriate circumstances to construct and maintain a pool fence on a common boundary without the need to obtain consent from each of their neighbours. The amendments will also provide for circumstances where the fence is also used for other purposes, such as an acoustic barrier or a regulated dog enclosure.

Mr Speaker, the Government is serious about fire safety requirements for our most vulnerable people who live in Residential Care Buildings. Residential Care Buildings have been identified as posing a high risk in the event of a fire. As such, a new building code was adopted for buildings constructed after 1 June 2007.

After extensive research and consultation, the fire safety reforms, included in this Bill, adopt minimum fire safety requirements for residential care buildings constructed prior to 1 June 2007. They complete the Government's fire safety improvement program for high occupancy buildings.

Owners and operators of Residential Care Buildings will be given 3 years for high risk buildings or 5 years for low/medium risk buildings to upgrade their buildings. Additionally, they must obtain within the first 6 months an assessment of their building to determine what work is required for compliance and the risk category of the building.

The code will mandate new fire safety measures designed to protect residents. These include life safety sprinklers and smoke compartments which are designed to provide adequate fire suppression, which in turn helps to prevent the spread of fire and assist in evacuation of residents.

Local governments can extend the time to comply with the 3 and 5 year timeframes by up to a year, but only where they have consulted with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service on the decision and any conditions imposed to keep residents safe while the building is being upgraded.

Mr Speaker, also amended in the Bill is the Mixed Use Development Act 1993. The existing Mixed Use Development Act pre-dates contemporary body corporate management frameworks under the *Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997*. This interim package of amendments addresses a number of pressing equity issues for these communities resulting from the outdated management model.

This interim package of amendments introduces mixed use development communities to the concepts of more contemporary body corporate management.

Over the next few years, the Government will be consulting with these communities as part of a broader review of the Mixed Use Development Act, the *Sanctuary Cove Act 1985* and the *Integrated Resort Development Act 1987*, to transition these communities to more contemporary frameworks for planning, development and body corporate management.

Minor amendments proposed to the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act will enable amendment of the land use plan, which was always an intention of the reforms undertaken in 2009.

Finally, I have taken the opportunity in this Bill to make a number of consequential amendments to legislation in my portfolio.

The amendment to the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* will correct an anomaly in relation to lessees who own restricted dogs. The amendment reflects the original policy intent of section 103(3) which applies to lessees who own regulated dogs, that is people who are leasing a property and are owners of restricted dogs, declared menacing and declared dangerous dogs.

Amendments in the Bill to the *Public Trustee Act 1978* and the *State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999*, including the regulation under that Act, will effect necessary changes consequential on the commencement of the *Commonwealth Personal Property Securities Act 2009*.

The *Public Trustee Act 1978* is being amended to clarify that the Public Trustee can publish online information contained in the Public Trust Office unclaimed moneys register. This had previously been the case however an interpretation of the law has necessitated the legislative recognition of the historical practice. These amendments also provide that money held by the State does not become unclaimed money unless it has been in the State's possession for 2 years.


These consequential amendments will provide users with up-to-date laws.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gibson, adjourned.

## WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### First Reading

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Resource Management) (2.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007, the River Improvement Trust Act 1940, the Water Act 2000, the Wild Rivers Act 2005, the Water Resource (Gulf) Plan 2007, the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, the Water Regulation 2002 and to make consequential or minor amendments to particular water resource plans under the Water Act 2000. 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:* Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[4693\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[4694\]](#).



## Second Reading

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Resource Management) (2.35 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 provides amendments to a number of acts within my portfolio. These amendments will continue the government's drive to simplify and streamline environmental and natural resource regulation. This bill will integrate the current two-stage water resource planning process and simplify economic development approvals for Indigenous communities in Cape York. It will also make it easier for category 2 water authorities to transfer to alternative structures, entrench the wild river rangers program in legislation and implement the government's commitment to improve Indigenous consultation on future wild river declarations.

This bill will amend the Water Act 2000 to establish a single process for water resource planning. Previously, water resource and operations plans were developed consecutively. Under this new legislation it will be done concurrently. This implements a key recommendation of an independent review of the water resource planning framework conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It also responds to the stakeholder feedback received during that review.

These changes are a win for government efficiency and for the wider community. The existing water resource planning process was designed for first-generation plans and assumes a blank canvas. However, plans are now in place across all of the state's major catchments, except the Wet Tropics, where a plan is under development. The process is now being redesigned to ensure efficient reviews of the plans. This will provide significant improvements to community consultation. For the first time the community will be able to comment on changes to strategic catchment-wide goals and see what this means for individual water users.

Changes to community consultation will allow extra community involvement and scrutiny of planning proposals in instances where planning is particularly complex or of high community interest. There is also opportunity for streamlined consultation. This will be most useful in less complex plans where communities want to see work completed quickly, giving certainty to water users. It will also reduce uncertainty for water users by slashing the time taken for water resource plans and resource operations plans to be reviewed by up to two years. These significant time savings will first benefit communities in the Boyne, Pioneer and Barron water resource plan areas. In the coming few years communities will also benefit from the improved review process in the Warrego, Moonie, Condamine-Balonne, Border, and well as Georgina and Diamantina catchments. Changes to the water resource planning framework have been designed to be consistent with the Commonwealth Water Act 2007 and the National Water Initiative.

The bill also makes other changes to the Water Act aimed at streamlining processes, including simplifying the notification of works process for works and water use information and making it easier for category 2 water authorities to transfer to local governments or alternative structures. The Water Act will also be amended to allow the Queensland Water Commission to recover government seed funding through the levy on petroleum tenure holders. This will support the vital work the commission is doing to assess and protect groundwater as the coal seam gas industry expands. These amendments are consistent with announcements last year that will ensure that industry pays for the petroleum and gas water functions undertaken by the commission.

This bill also implements a number of crucial wild river initiatives. It amends the Water Act to increase Indigenous economic development and recognise Indigenous access to water in the Gulf of Carpentaria wild rivers. This builds on arrangements currently in place for Indigenous water reserves in Cape York and is a clear example of the government's commitment to realise sustainable economic development in wild river areas. A similar process to that used in the cape has been used to determine sustainable Indigenous water reserves for the gulf wild rivers. Traditional owners have called for these Indigenous water allocations and I am pleased Queensland is leading Australia in this regard. As supporting information for the forthcoming debate on this amendment, I would like to table the gulf resource operations plan amendment.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Environment and Resource Management: Gulf Resource Operations Plan Amendment [\[4695\]](#).

The bill also amends the Wild Rivers Act 2005 to allow the minister to establish Indigenous reference groups under the Wild Rivers Act. This implements a key reform announced by the government earlier this year and will ensure greater engagement with Indigenous communities in wild river declaration processes. Indigenous reference groups will provide advice on the views of traditional owners and the Indigenous community on the wild rivers program and declaration proposals. This will include feedback on wild river management areas, natural values of the river system and policy options set out in any declaration proposals. They will also provide advice on the future development aspirations of the traditional owners and the Indigenous community, including how those aspirations might interact with a wild river declaration.



The bill also amends the Wild Rivers Act to recognise the 40-strong wild river rangers program in legislation, which is a key government commitment that responds to the request of traditional owners. The bill also amends the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act to provide for a property development plan under the act to be recognised as a property development plan in a wild river high preservation area. This will make it easier for Indigenous communities to get project approval in wild river areas.

These are crucial changes to the management and planning of water resources in Queensland. They advance the government's agenda of increasing efficiencies in the system and implementing wild rivers policy going forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gibson, adjourned.

## HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK BILL

### First Reading



**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (2.43 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the delivery of public sector health services and other health services in Queensland and to make amendments to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 for particular purposes and consequential amendments of the acts mentioned in part 15 and schedule 1. 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:* Health and Hospitals Network Bill [\[4696\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Health and Hospitals Network Bill, explanatory notes [\[4697\]](#).

### Second Reading



**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (2.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2011. Today I introduce into parliament laws that will change the face of health in Queensland. The Health and Hospitals Network Bill amounts to a massive shake-up. It will break up what has been known as Queensland Health. With this bill the Queensland government is continuing in our commitment to provide Queenslanders with more health services sooner and closer to home. The bill is a demonstration of this government's commitment to national reform—reform that will deliver more beds, more surgery and faster emergency care to Queenslanders. This is great news for our state, but our commitment to reform does not end here.

This government is committed to taking this opportunity to build a health system that is able to meet the challenges of the future. The challenges are not small. In June 2009 the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission delivered its final report following 16 months of consultation and research. The report is sobering reading. The commission found that while the Australian health system has great strengths it is under growing pressure. The challenges include large increases in demand for and expenditure on health care, unacceptable inequities in health outcomes and access to services, growing concerns about safety and quality, workforce shortages and inefficiency. In Queensland, each of those challenges is compounded by the fact that health services must be delivered across a geographical area six times the size of Victoria.

Despite this, our commitment to delivering the care Queenslanders need closer to home is unwavering. To achieve this goal we need: a system that, in every single instance, puts the needs of patients first; a system that values the local knowledge of our skilled and hardworking front-line staff; a system that gives each and every local community a say in their local health services; and a system that ensures that every taxpayer dollar spent is spent wisely and well. Our commitment to reform will stand, irrespective of the final shape of the new National Health Reform Agreement, which has not yet been signed and is due to be considered by COAG at its next meeting.

The changes are significant. They include new funding models that create a direct and transparent link between dollars spent and services delivered, and establish national benchmarks for prices for services. These new funding models will be backed up by new performance reports at the local level. The public will be able to see what funds the Commonwealth and states are contributing to public health and hospital services in their area, what is delivered and how well when compared to similar networks across Queensland and Australia.

Initially, in Queensland the most visible change will be the establishment of 17 local health and hospital networks, as announced by the Premier in December 2010. These networks will deliver the same range of services as Queensland Health's existing health service districts and no disruption to

services is anticipated during the implementation of the new arrangements. However, the networks will be managed differently, each being an autonomous statutory body run by its own expert governing council. Members of the governing council will be appointed following a transparent and public recruitment process. Shortly, I will be calling for expressions of interest from suitably qualified persons in the network areas, including persons with financial, legal and human resource expertise, as well as persons expert in the areas of governance and the delivery of clinical services.

The governing council will be responsible to the Minister for Health and to the community for the performance of the network. The governing council will enter into a service agreement with the director-general of Queensland Health that will identify the services to be provided, the standard to which they are to be provided and the funding to be made available. By emphasising local accountability and decision making, it is expected that the new networks will have both flexibility and incentive to innovate and to pursue quality and efficiency. The new networks will also be required to have strong clinician, consumer and community engagement processes in place to ensure that their decisions are responsive to local needs and priorities.

Queensland Health will focus on system-wide policy and planning to ensure state-wide consistency of service access and quality across the state. The department's other critical role will be to support the networks to deliver the highest standard of care to patients. The Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011 will enable these changes and is proposed to replace the current Health Services Act 1991 from 1 July 2012.

Queensland Health began consultation on these reforms over 12 months ago. In that time, Queensland Health has held more than 60 consultations across the state. Nearly 3,000 people have been directly consulted, including community representatives, consumer groups, clinical opinion leaders, unions, other health service providers and staff working in our health system. Our commitment to consult on these broad-ranging changes does not end with the introduction of this bill. On my request, Queensland Health has made clear to our stakeholders, from staff and their unions to clinical leaders and local communities, that we want them to be part of continued discussion on these important reforms. We are committed to getting this right and that is only possible with the continued involvement of those groups. That is why we are also working with Health Consumers Queensland to build the best possible model for local communities to have their say in how their local health services are run.

Given the magnitude of the reforms, I have also requested that the director-general of Queensland Health establish a strategic advisory group comprising eminent persons in a range of disciplines relevant to the reforms we are progressing. This group will add their expertise and experience to help me ensure that, at every stage of implementing these reforms, we drive improvements in our system to deliver the best possible health care to Queenslanders.

The bill also amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to provide for a ban of smoking product displays in retail settings. These amendments will align Queensland with other states and territories and give effect to the government's public commitment to support a recommendation of the Social Development Committee in its 2010 report, *Chronic diseases in Queensland*. The amendments will provide certainty to retailers and tobacco companies, who have been preparing for the display bans in Queensland, and will meet the government's commitment to introduce those display bans by mid-2011.

Public health in Queensland is changing and, through the reforms outlined in this bill, the state government is continuing our commitment to provide Queenslanders with more health services sooner and closer to home. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gibson, adjourned.

## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**


### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

## **COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed from p. 1965, on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the appropriation bills and the associated bill regarding the ambulance levy, or the ambulance tax as it was infamously known. I begin by congratulating the member for Clayfield and shadow Treasurer on the address that he made, laying out the LNP's official response to the government's budget.

**Ms Nolan:** What an embarrassment. It is the opposition leader who speaks after lunch.

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the members of the government who have been offering me advice for the last two days about what I should do and I note for the record that most of them are not here. I know I am not allowed to say that.

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order!

**Mr SEENEY:** It typifies the approach of government members. They think they can say anything for the short-term gain, say anything for the political purpose of the moment, and it means nothing. Their words are meaningless. What they say is meaningless, and that is demonstrated by the response here in the parliament this afternoon. It is complete and utter errant nonsense. The shadow Treasurer has a role to respond on behalf of the alternative government to the Treasurer. The Treasurer has a role to lay out the government's financial plan and the shadow Treasurer has a role to respond. That is the right and proper way.

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Finance!

**Mr SEENEY:** That is the right and proper way. I commend the shadow Treasurer for the financial plan that he outlined, for the response that he gave on behalf of the LNP this morning. On behalf of the LNP, the member for Clayfield and shadow Treasurer gave an address that can give hope to the people of Queensland, but there is some alternative—

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister for Finance will cease interjecting.

**Mr SEENEY:** The member for Clayfield and shadow Treasurer gave the people of Queensland some hope that the incompetence they have seen from a government made up of ministers such as the Minister for Finance will soon come to an end, that there is an option, that there is an alternative. There is hope for the people of Queensland for something other than escalating debt and further financial ruin. I congratulate the member for Clayfield on the address that he gave.

The budget that was introduced by the member for Mount Coot-tha and Treasurer here in the parliament on Tuesday was a budget that I think could best be described as a budget of desperate hope from a government that has clearly failed. It has failed in a whole range of areas but most of all it has failed in the area of financial management. When historians look back at the record of the Labor government in Queensland they will note above all else the extent to which it has failed to manage the finances of the state. That should come as no surprise to anybody because that is what Labor governments always do. Labor governments always fail to manage the finances. This one has failed spectacularly to manage the state's finances.

So we have a budget introduced into the House on Tuesday by a Treasurer who clings to some desperate hope. He clings to the desperate hope that the people of Queensland will believe that it is all the fault of the natural disasters that beset Queensland this summer. He hopes that they will believe that somehow or other the financial situation in which he and his government find themselves after almost 20 years is all the fault of Cyclone Yasi and the Brisbane floods—that it has nothing to do with the financial management strategies that have been adopted by the government but that it is all the fault of the natural disasters. It is desperation at its limits. It is self-delusion to think that the people of Queensland are going to believe that.

As well as the desperate hope that the government clings to that the people of Queensland will not hold the government accountable, that they will instead hold the natural disasters accountable for the situation, there is also a desperate hope that there will be a megaboom just around the corner, that there will be another megaboom coming to save the government from the financial fate that it has engineered for itself. There is a desperate hope that if the government can hang on long enough there will be a boom, a wave of employment and investment that will save the state and boost the financial situation in which the government finds itself.

It reminds me of a compulsive gambler who keeps on borrowing, waiting for the big win. That is the situation the government is in. That is the message in the budget that the Treasurer introduced. It is a government that, like a compulsive gambler, seeks to keep on borrowing, waiting for the big win. There is ample evidence of that in the budget documents, but the one I like best is the chart on page 5 of Budget Paper No. 2. That chart shows the general government sector net operating balance. It is a beautiful chart that shows the decline in the financial situation that the government has engineered over the years of its tenancy. However, it does not point out that we are right at the bottom of this big 'V' in the chart, that we are right at the bottom of the trend line. The government is projecting that all of a sudden the trend line on that chart is going to reverse, that it is going to trend upwards with the same rapidity that it has trended downwards over the last five or six years. Of course, it is a desperate hope. It is easy to put those projections into a budget calculation. It is easy to put the numbers into the spreadsheet and calculate those sorts of results. However, it is a lot harder to turn them into reality, and that is what the government has failed to do over a series of years.

To achieve that sort of upward trend in that chart line on page 5 of Budget Paper No. 2, the Treasurer has had to budget for a  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent growth rate over the next few years. It is an extraordinary projection to suggest that the state is going to grow at  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. It is an extraordinary leap of faith to assume that the huge levels of private investment that are part of that projection are actually going to happen. That is an extraordinary assumption at the best of times. What makes it all the more extraordinary is the fact that the Queensland economy is a resource based economy and those projections are based upon a huge international investment in our resources—an almost unprecedented development of our resources. All those projections are based upon the further development of our coal industry—the expansion of our existing coal industry in the Bowen Basin, the development of a new coal province in the Galilee Basin—but, most of all, those projections are based on the development of the coal seam gas industry and the LNG plants at Gladstone into an export earner to provide enormous economic benefits for the state.

That potential is certainly there. There is no doubt that Queensland has an abundance of resources. There is no doubt that the Queensland resources industry can provide that sort of economic boost to the state. There is no doubt that there are customers out there in the world. There is no doubt that there are investors out there willing to invest in and develop those resources. For those projections to become reality we need a political climate to facilitate that investment, but we have just the opposite. We have in Queensland the threat of a carbon tax hanging over the head of every Queenslander and of every project that is part of that growth that the Treasurer has assumed is going to happen to provide that uptrend in the financial situation of the state. Yet the Treasurer and the government take no account of that risk. In fact they play both sides of the game.

On the one hand, they come in here and they say they strongly support carbon pricing. They play to that part of the electorate they believe supports carbon pricing, even though I think it is a fairly small part of the electorate. They play to the loony lefties in the government, like the Minister for Finance. They play to the 'looney tunes' and the woolly headed thinking of those who think that somehow these projects and the money they produce just appear out of thin air. At the same time, they write into the budget documents projection figures that are very optimistic to say the least and that are threatened by the carbon tax proposal that they support at a federal level.

The change that a carbon tax would bring about to the taxation regime and to the investment decisions of the companies who have to make those decisions would have a profound effect on the Queensland budget. The carbon tax that Julia Gillard is proposing and that Anna Bligh is supporting would blow the Queensland budget that we saw introduced into this House on Tuesday into a million pieces of irrelevance. The carbon tax that Julia Gillard wants to introduce and that this Queensland government is supporting would blow the Queensland budget into a million pieces of irrelevance, and that is the great contradiction in the budget documents. That is why the budget documents that the Treasurer introduced into the House are almost meaningless. They are almost meaningless because they do not take into account the single biggest risk to the accuracy of the forecasts.

There is no doubt that the Labor government has gotten Queensland into an awful mess. Once again the proof is there in the budget documents. The other chart that I like is on page 9 of Budget Paper No. 2 which shows what the net financial liabilities to revenue ratio is. That gives Queenslanders an insight into how difficult it is going to be to recover the AAA credit rating that has been lost by the Treasurer and by this government. That chart projects out to 2014-15 and shows that the trend line is still considerably above the AAA credit rating range. It is an admission that the Treasurer does not want to make: that even to the extent of the projections in this budget there is no chance of the state recovering its AAA credit rating—the credit rating that was lost by this government and the loss of which has compounded the losses that the government has continued to incur, because with the loss of that AAA credit rating comes an increased cost of borrowings for the ever-increasing amount of debt.

It is that debt that should frighten every Queenslander. From the projections within this budget the debt will peak at some \$85 billion—some \$85 billion. The shadow Treasurer this morning used the statistic that net debt has doubled in two years. We will end up with \$85 billion worth of debt in the projections within this budget. That is debt that will take generations of Queenslanders to pay off. It is not something that can easily be reversed. It is something that is going to change the administration in Queensland. It is going to affect every Queenslander as successive governments will have to struggle with the problem of dealing with that debt—by somehow reducing the rate at which the debt is accumulating and then by reversing those trends to a point where the debt can begin to be paid off.

There is only one way I would suggest that that is going to happen, and this too was outlined by the shadow Treasurer this morning. There is only one way for that to happen, and that is to grow the economy to generate the income, to boost those industries that have been the mainstay of the Queensland economy now for many, many years—to boost the resources industry, to boost the agricultural industry, to boost the tourism industry. We need to boost those three great industries—agriculture, tourism and mining in no particular order, those three great industries that are the basis of the Queensland economy and that are all suffering a malaise under the stewardship of this state government. That is the challenge.

It is pointless for the Treasurer to come in here with his charts, all of which are showing a very optimistic uptrend in their trend lines in the out years but a very different and depressing downtrend in their trend lines in the actual years. That does not give anybody any confidence that that is going to be turned around. It can only be turned around by a change in attitude in the government. It has to be turned around by a change in attitude—an attitude that is about growing the economy, that is about stimulating those industries, that is about facilitating development, that is about removing the constraints, that is about providing the infrastructure, that is about building the infrastructure that facilitates economic growth and economic development. There is certainly nothing in the budget to suggest that this government understands the imperative of that.

What the government does understand is the numbers, but it does not understand the imperatives that are necessary to turn those numbers around. There is no greater indicator of that than to look at the money that has been allocated for infrastructure spending, because it is that infrastructure spending that will stimulate those industries. It is the removal of infrastructure constraints that will stimulate those industries. If we look at this budget, the capital outlays for the current year have been massively underspent. The government has not been able to spend the money that was allocated last year for the provision of infrastructure. For 2010-11 there was a budget figure of \$17.05 billion allocated for capital outlays. The estimated actual in the budget documents is only \$14.83 billion. Almost \$3 billion of capital spending remained unspent.

Of course once again the government sets out to blame the natural disasters rather than itself. The government is the reason that that money remains unspent. It is the constraints on the approval process. It is the constraints on anybody who wants to do anything, who wants to build anything, who wants to develop anything. It is the interminable processes of DERM, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, which seems to swallow applications and produce next to nothing. It seems to be a department to stop development rather than facilitate it. It is because the position of the Coordinator-General, as once again the shadow Treasurer outlined this morning, has been completely subsumed and denigrated. Rather than coordinating the development, rather than driving the development and rather than facilitating the development that is necessary for the projects of state significance to advance, the Coordinator-General remains powerless to do anything of any real import. They are the things that the government can change and change quickly.

There is also an essential need to get a fair share of funding for our federally funded roads, for example. They are probably the most important pieces of infrastructure for regional Queensland. Both the Warrego Highway and the Bruce Highway are a disgrace. Both highways are incredibly important for the development of the Surat Basin, the Bowen Basin and the Galilee Basin, but both highways are an absolute disgrace. The Warrego Highway is a disgrace. It is a dangerous piece of road, in particular the Toowoomba section. The entire length of the Bruce Highway is inadequate to the point that it constrains development.

**Mr Schwarten:** You didn't say that when Howard was in.

**Mr SEENEY:** I hear the noise coming from the other side of the House—just as we heard this morning the absolute stupidity from the minister responsible, the member for Thuringowa. The absolute stupidity that the minister carries on with here in the parliament is a good indication of why Queensland cannot get any money from Canberra. That is the sort of nonsense that the minister believes is part of his responsibility.

Until the government makes the application, until it does the planning, until it gets credible ministers who can do that work, Queensland will continue to miss out. Queensland will continue to miss out on the essential funding for things like the Bruce Highway and the Warrego Highway. All that does is compound the financial malaise that grips this government. The shadow Treasurer has outlined hope for the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland need to understand that there is an alternative and that it has been outlined by the shadow Treasurer today. We will continue to convince the people of Queensland that that hope represents an opportunity for them.



**Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP)** (3.10 pm): I wish to respond to the Treasurer's budget in my portfolio areas of education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and on behalf of my constituents in Moggill. This budget shows the price you pay for poor economic management, lack of foresight and lack of forward planning. A \$2 billion deficit this year turns into a \$4 billion deficit next year and it culminates in a debt of \$85 billion in the forward estimates. This is despite \$17 billion in asset sales and the fact that in this year's budget federal flood recovery money has been brought to the bottom line ahead of its expenditure, meaning that for a budget bottom line purpose this budget made a profit out of natural disasters.

Despite the sale during the year of some \$17 billion of publicly owned assets, the projected debt at the end of the forward estimates is now higher than the projected debt prior to the announcement of those sales. That is why, when we look at the Education budget and the education system, the overwhelming impression is that it is as underresourced as the government felt it could get away with.

This budget has continued with the trend of Education being a smaller and smaller proportion of the budget—again dropping from 23 per cent to just 22 per cent. Enrolments in state schools continue to languish, with the budget forecasting a decline in state secondary school enrolments and an overall increase in enrolments of all state schools of less than 0.1 of one per cent, from 488,650 to 489,210. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said—

The school is the last expenditure upon which a country should be willing to economise.

It beggars belief that in this era of dramatic education change—the introduction of a national curriculum, the imminent move of 50,000 year 7s into high school, compulsory prep and the like—education could still be embraced with so little enthusiasm by the Treasurer in this budget.

The measure of any education system is the results that it produces for its students. The report card on the Queensland government from this budget reads 'not good enough'. Of the 24 measures of literacy and numeracy that had targets set last year, 20 measures missed the target. Children get only one chance at their education. Too many Queensland children are missing that chance. Once children fall behind in basic tools like literacy and numeracy, they continue to slip further and further behind as subjects get more complex and more specialised. The LNP is absolutely committed to lifting the standard in education. Children should not be just progressing from one year level to the next, falling further behind.

I want to say some particular words about the physical environment of our schools. If government members do not want to listen to what I say, they should listen to the words in a very powerful submission by the Association of State School Principals, a group not normally regarded as a ginger group to the Labor government. I quote—

Queensland faces some major challenges in coming years. Schools built economically in the last quarter of the 20th Century to accommodate a growing population base are now ageing. The cost to maintain these schools is now greater than their original build cost.

The issues overtaking our state school stock are growing and include:

- Quality of schools and classrooms
  - ageing structures
  - functionally redundant classrooms
- Health and safety
  - asbestos (includes low density board)
  - CCA treated playground hazards
  - trip hazards
  - safety glass
- Meeting population growth
  - population growth in new areas.

It continues—

All contribute to a concerning threat to the continued viability of state schools, particularly in urban areas where non-government schools offer an alternative education provision.

The rise of non-government education as a serious rival to the state system has perhaps saved some government funds but conversely has also created a large amount of unused and often functionally redundant government school stock. In Sydney for example, some schools have become so run-down and avoided by the public, it has meant the virtual collapse of the state system in those areas.

The quote continues—

We are seeing a phenomenon in Queensland where some older schools that once educated well over 1,000 students now accommodate a small fraction of this number.

There is a real danger that the perception of a public system unable to meet the challenge of providing facilities equal to non-government schools may residualise government schools and see them become schools of last resort.

They are very powerful words coming from a group which actually works for the education system in this state.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** You can hear the bleating of the minister opposite; she does not appear to realise that the state schools in Queensland are the responsibility of the Queensland government. I will continue to quote from the Association of State School Principals, who said—

Under the DET Maintenance Management Framework ... funding of 1% of the replacement value of the asset base ... is required to maintain the assets.

On this basis, we are funding only a very base asset management, a base maintenance in this budget. It is a little over \$80 million, which is only about two-thirds of what is required. The association went on to say—

Community standards ... have risen to the extent that sending children to be educated in locations designed in the middle of the last century have contributed to an exodus from the state sector. All 21st Century classrooms require space for classroom computers, network and data connectivity and adequate overall electrical capacity.

In locations where DET staff have been successful in providing a desirable educational service, parents have shown their willingness to travel relatively long distances to enrol their children. In such instances the DET response has been to cap the enrolment thus removing that option and DET's capacity to retain market share.

The final quote from that group states—

The unwillingness of Treasury to fund for growth, in our opinion, signals the beginning of the end of an egalitarian, broad-based and popular schooling philosophy.

We on this side of the House are strong supporters of choice in education and of maintaining the viability of non-government schools. These schools are producing in many cases quality results with less funding per student than government schools. But the message I have given on a number of occasions to non-government schools is that an LNP government would try to ensure that they get a good run for their money out of the state school system and it would be upgraded to a competitive standard. A good, strong rivalry between those systems would be to the benefit of every student in this state.

There also continues to be increasing instances of accidents with asbestos—that is, exposure of children and teachers. This is extraordinary and I have fought this battle since virtually the first day I came into this place. This to a significant extent is a reflection on the inadequate maintenance and care of the school environment we expect our students and teachers to go into.

Another area where we hear a lot of huff and puff from the government but the results do not live up to its promises is in the opportunities for young Queenslanders when they leave school. The government set itself the not-too-challenging target that 88 per cent of school leavers should go on to further education, some sort of training or some sort of employment. Not only has it missed that target substantially, with only 85¼ per cent taking up those life opportunities; it is a significant further decline from last year—that is, one in every seven school leavers or over 15,000 young Queenslanders are leaving school without continuing their education, their training or finding a job.

In relation to Flying Start and the move of year 7, I have made the LNP's attitude crystal clear over the last year and a half. I will not repeat most of that here; it is on the *Hansard* record already. We hear the minister making highfaluting promises about \$660 million for the move and so forth, but when one reads this budget, which takes us out to the middle of 2012, there is a meagre \$7.5 million towards that goal of moving 50,000 additional students into our high schools. In the area of early childhood we on this side of the House have supported the principle of universal access to kindergarten, but again the devil is in the detail. We hear very little now compared to what we heard in the past from this government about community kindergartens, which are well and truly under the pump as a result of government policy. It is quite plain to see that in this budget there is a significant decline in funding to community kindergartens—former kindergartens on non-state school sites—from last year's \$43 million. This government knows what it is doing to community kindergarten, and that is why it has reflected that decline in this budget.

But the biggest failing of all in the early childhood education area is in disadvantaged communities—the group that need early childhood education the most. This government set itself the target last year of having 55 per cent of children in disadvantaged communities participating in an early childhood education program. It achieved a mere 33 per cent. We did not exactly hear the Treasurer or the education minister trumpeting that one. Despite all of the hot air we hear from the other side about new kindergartens and the like, the government has actually lowered the target of the number of new kindergartens by the end of 2012 from the target it set last year. In the area of school staffing, there are currently 58,711 school staff and that is expected to increase by only 477, which is a 0.75 per cent increase in staffing at the coalface of education. Funding for new schools and land acquisition declined by \$3 million. The replacement and enhancement program declined from \$95 million last year to \$62 million.

In the area of Indigenous welfare, we know and we accept that we face some difficult challenges in ensuring that discrete communities in particular remain economically viable, that they have real jobs and that they can share in the same opportunities as the rest of us take for granted. I note in the budget that we missed the target for community libraries—an important education resource—in these remote communities.

The poor performance continued in Indigenous homeownership. Dwellings delivered through the capital program missed the target by 25 per cent. But perhaps the worst reflection of our failure to make sufficient headway in Indigenous communities comes in the areas of health and law and order. Whilst in the area of preventable admissions to hospital we were able to meet the targets set last year for non-Indigenous communities, the number of preventable admissions for Indigenous Queenslanders once again exceeded the target. For example, 47.2 per cent of Indigenous women at 20 weeks of pregnancy still smoke cigarettes—nearly half. The comparative figure for non-Indigenous Queenslanders is less than 12 per cent. This, along with alcohol and substance misuse—foetal alcohol syndrome—means that many of these children start intellectually and physically way behind the eight ball and mostly do not catch up. In the area of law and order, an Aboriginal child from the ages of 10 to 16 is 22 times more likely to be in custody than a non-Indigenous child—in fact, so much so that 60 per cent of the people in Queensland in this age group in custody are of Indigenous origin, and that is about 90 Indigenous children every single day who remain in custody.

In the few minutes remaining to me I want to address some of the issues on behalf of my constituents in Moggill. The first issue I want to mention and will continue mentioning and I am sure the government will continue hearing about far beyond what it would like to hear about is the raid on the family home of removing the stamp duty exemption when someone buys a house for their family to live in. It has always been accepted—and I have been in Queensland now for many decades—that when you bought a home to house your family you received concessional rates in relation to stamp duty, and that is because we believe that it is a good thing for people to buy their home and to be a stakeholder in that way.

The people of Queensland will cast judgement on this government for this tax on homeownership. Many of them would have felt quite angry to hear the Treasurer's words when he said that homeowners are participating in a rising property market. I do not know where the Treasurer was coming from when he said that, although I do: in Mount Coot-tha there are not a lot of rising property prices, nor in Moggill, nor in most other parts of Queensland. In fact, most of those prices are falling. This is a tax on economic activity. When people think about taking up a job in regional parts of Queensland or moving to Queensland to support business and provide the skills that we need, this is another disincentive to come here and build a bigger and better Queensland.

In relation to the problems that I bring to this House frequently with regard to the western and south-western suburbs of Brisbane, this budget again has no answers. The chronic, severe traffic congestion that occurs every day along Moggill Road—making it one of the worst roads in Brisbane and one of the slowest commutes—and similarly along the state government controlled Western Freeway continues to be neglected. We have waited over a year to get some sort of answer or some sort of direction in relation to what the government is planning with the Kenmore bypass, only to be told by the minister that he is more worried about natural disasters, failing to realise that having only one access road in and out for 30,000-odd people is setting us up for problems in any sort of natural disaster.

Our very congested public transport system is virtually the only part of Brisbane's transport network that has not been improved by providing dedicated public transport priority. Again it remains completely ignored. We have stringent enrolment management at Kenmore State High School, denying people—even people in Chapel Hill, just across the road—the right to send their children to that school. Yet we see another 400 to 500 students being moved in and nothing to suggest that the government will meet its obligation to provide adequate secondary education. Areas such as Karana Downs, with 10,000 or 12,000 people, still do not enjoy a TransLink bus service. It must be the only large community in Brisbane that is not serviced by a TransLink service.

For the residents of the west and south-west in Mount Ommaney, Ashgrove, Ipswich West, Indooroopilly and Moggill, this is a budget of despair, because the issues they have had to live with every day now for years are still not important enough for this government to address. I think we shall be reminding people in all of those electorates that their best chance of not being ignored is to make this budget this government's last budget.



**Hon. JH JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business) (3.30 pm): I am very proud to rise in this House as the tourism minister and put on the record my great admiration for the many tourism operators right across this state who have had what could not have been imagined to be a more difficult start to the year than the one they have had. But they have shown enormous courage, persistence and tenacity and they are fighting their way back, hand in hand with the government, and I have been very proud to walk that journey with them as their minister.

I know that this week the tourism community welcomes the \$83 million in additional funding for events that will flow over the next four years. Events Queensland's record funding allocation will take the total investment in events in this state over the next four years to more than \$175 million—effectively doubling the annual investment in major events from next year. This funding boost will build resilience in our tourism industry and drive increased visitor numbers to all regions of the state, supporting those local communities and their economies.

The value of events is very clear. Every dollar invested by Events Queensland in major events delivers a return of \$10 to the Queensland economy. For example, the Gold Coast marathon generated an economic benefit of more than \$43 million, attracted more than 24,000 people and generated more than 46,000 visitor nights, supporting some 347 full-time jobs. Of course, there is a component of events funding that will go towards building our regional events right across the state. Their annual budget will be taken from \$2.4 million up to \$3 million for the Events Queensland Regional Development Program. This funding will support more than 100 events in communities right across the state. It is a significant funding injection that will support and foster regional events in our smaller communities, many of which attract visitors from near and far and deliver a really big boost to those local economies.

The event in my own community that I am looking forward to most is our DanceSport championship—a brand-new event for the Whitsundays that will be held on the foreshore in a specially constructed marquee, bringing dancers from all over Australia and across the world who will come to compete in a *Strictly Ballroom* type of competition. I cannot wait. I think it is going to be a huge spectacle



and one that my community is sure to enjoy. Events like that are the heart and soul of our regional towns. They provide a sense of vibrancy and, more than that, they bring our communities together. They build morale and give us a reason to get out and enjoy life.

I am pleased to say that there will also be an extra \$1 million in this budget to continue the good work that we began in the Nothing Beats Queensland campaign of developing industry capacity, particularly in the areas of technology uptake, and preparing for the biggest emerging international tourism market that we have—that is, of course, China. There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of potential should we undertake that work.

The business community has not missed out in this budget. The Bligh government will appoint Queensland's first Business Commissioner to cut red tape and drive reform that will help Queensland's business community make the most of the state's next wave of prosperity. We know that there is a huge wave of investment coming to Queensland and we want our local businesses to make the most of it. The Queensland Business Commissioner will have the task of freeing up businesses from unnecessary red tape and allowing them to ride that wave of investment that is ahead for the state. The commissioner will give the business sector a direct voice within government through its peak industry organisations—groups such as the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, the Australian Industry Group and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland. These peak industry bodies will have a direct role with the Business Commissioner in working on systemic reform of regulation so that the whole of our business community across the state will benefit.

In a direct benefit to business, it was announced in the budget speech that the proposed waste levy will now be deferred for six months and will not come into effect until December this year. We project that that deferral will save businesses around \$41 million. It will buy them some time and allow them to prepare for this very important measure that is about environmental sustainability as much as it is about business sustainability. I am sure that a bit more time to prepare for that initiative will be welcomed.

For those businesses that are still needing a helping hand, our \$10 million JobsAssest program is set to receive an additional \$1.3 million, which, along with the \$2.5 million business recovery program, will continue to help disaster affected businesses return to normal operations. Crucially, we are also extending the payroll tax rebate of 125 per cent for eligible wages of apprentices and trainees, which is a huge boost for industry and jobs. This extension of the rebate means that those businesses that are employing and retaining apprentices and trainees will enjoy the benefits for their bottom line.

I want to point to an outstanding example of a remarkable Queenslander who saw the need and the opportunity to train young people as a strategy. He has found that, by training apprentices above and beyond his own immediate needs, he is able to support the manufacturing sector in a very holistic way. That person is Rex Vegt from Atlas Heavy Engineering in Caboolture. Rex is an outstanding individual who took out the Manufacturing Skills Queensland Industry Champion Award this year for his incredible business acumen and enormous community work through his involvement with the Albany Creek, Narangba and Dakabin state schools. Rex is an enterprising Queenslander who undoubtedly deserves every commendation that comes his way for seizing and seeing opportunities that have delivered amazing outcomes for his own community.

Our government will continue to support Queensland manufacturers, with \$2.65 million for QMI Solutions to deliver industry services, including technology diffusion and business improvement as well as specialist manufacturing support and best practice manufacturing benchmarking. We will also put \$2.29 million towards the Industry Capability Network Queensland to help major project proponents find capable local contractors to support local industry to develop their knowledge and skills and to tender successfully for government funded major project work.

So businesses, manufacturers and tourism operators are all celebrating very good news in the government's budget this week. But so, too, are the good folk of my own electorate of Whitsunday. A little earlier, during the regional sitting of parliament in Mackay, it was announced—and this budget delivers the first tranche of funding—that a brand-new high school will be built on the northern beaches of Mackay. The new high school will be open in 2013 and it will offer a new pathway for the young people in that part of Mackay.

The estimated cost to build the school is \$27 million. When stage 1 opens in 2013 it will cater for around 300 students. We expect that enrolments will grow by more than 1,000 by the time all levels are enrolled at the school in 2017. I have been fighting for this new high school for quite some time. We have been waiting for the numbers in the feeder schools to reach that critical point. I am so delighted that this year we are able to announce the new school and its time frames. I look forward to working with my community on the simple things such as the colours of the uniform, the school motto and the badges but also the important things as well such as the name of the new school. In other educational successes in the budget, \$1.84 million has been allocated towards the Eimeo Road State School for the opening of a brand-new double-unit kindergarten to the value of \$20 million. That kindergarten is to be opened next year. It is fantastic for the northern beaches.

Roads are a great winner in my electorate. They have been damaged by several years of cyclonic activity and wet weather. I am really pleased that we are getting some upgrades and some new work on our road network. There is money in the budget for the Airlie Beach Main Street Revitalisation Project, which is an absolutely critical revitalisation in the heart of Airlie Beach that will give us a whole new outlook to promote ourselves as a refreshed destination. There is a new roundabout near our industrial area in Cannonvale at William Murray Drive and some passing lanes, which are so important on that arterial road. There is one road in and one road out and those four new passing lanes over the next four years will make an enormous difference to driver comfort and safety along Shute Harbour Road.

One of the really great things in the budget for my community this year is something I have been working on for a number of years, and that is a brand-new community centre for Proserpine. The community centre was housed in the old buildings of the Proserpine Hospital, but as the hospital grew and needed those rooms back the community centre had to make do in another old building that does not have great disability access. The council generously gave them some land and we have been working really hard to find a way to build a purpose-built community centre for Proserpine. The amount of \$1.1 million has been allocated for this project over the next two years. I thank the Treasurer for that. It is his home town. He knows how much it means to them. I am delighted and cannot wait to start working with them on the wonderful centre that will be so important for the community.

My local Sunfish group and Lance Murray in particular will be delighted to know that there is some money in the budget for some boat ramps and marine infrastructure. Lance has worked hard with me to achieve this. There is money for renewal of a boat ramp at Proserpine River as well as a new floating walkway at the Abel Point Marina so that people can launch their boats in safety, not have to enter the water. More boats will get through in a timely manner.

There is great news for infrastructure right across my electorate. There is great news for pensioners and for my whole community. For young people looking to buy or build their first home, I could not be more delighted. I cannot wait to get home to start sharing the good news with my constituents.



**Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.42 pm): This budget is about rebuilding Queensland after the recent natural disasters which devastated two-thirds of our state. It continues investment in new infrastructure facilities and services for our growing population. To suggest that my area has been neglected over the past 10 years is ignorant. The local LNP candidate has been too busy making money in her parents' real estate business to know what is going on in the community. Unlike my opposition, who did not grow up in the area, I have lived there permanently for 26 years. I am the only candidate who has the experience and time to do the job full time and I am committed to lobbying for even more funding for Pumicestone in the future.

No government can provide everything, but at least this Labor government has kept its promises. History shows the LNP failed to deliver our hospital, four-laning of the Bribie Island Road and the Caboolture northern bypass. When it got into government in the mid-1990s, after Labor built the Caboolture Hospital in 1993, it downgraded the second stage—the worst decision ever made by the LNP.

Despite the natural disasters and less money to spend, the state Labor government has still managed to remove the ambulance levy which means that no Queenslanders will have to pay the levy from July. This is welcome news. As well, the Bligh government is providing \$10,000 to all Queenslanders buying or building a new home from 1 August 2011 for six months.

In relation to pensioners, the state government will give more money to eligible pensioners: for electricity, \$230; for rates, \$200; and for water, \$120 each year. While we increase money to pensioners, the new LNP governments in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia have decreased their rebates. Shame! I have provided Hansard with an electronic copy of my speech, so I seek leave to incorporate the rest of the speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### Health

This budget delivers a record health budget of \$11.05 billion. Currently we spend \$26 million a day on health providing free services to patients. We see \$2.59 million for the new ambulance station at Ningi, new mental health facility, more paediatric rooms and \$1.7 million for integrated health, family support and early childhood education and care services for families and children up to eight years of age through the Caboolture Early Years Centre. These follow on from ongoing funding for the free breast screening clinic, free needles for diabetics, improvements to the emergency department at Caboolture Hospital, MRI equipment, more training for health staff and funding for community defibrillators.

The new GP Super Clinic will be built under the Labor Government.

The LNP do not support GP super clinics. Shame.

#### Education

This budget delivers \$1 million for a new kindergarten at Banksia Beach State School, \$106,000 to provide approved kindergarten programs for children in the year prior to prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year and \$58,000 to provide kindergarten programs for children in the year prior to prep.

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Approp. Bills; Comm. Amb. Cover Levy Repeal & Rev. & O'r Leg. A'ment Bill 16 Jun 2011

These new investments in local education build on the work this Government has done in Pumicestone in the past ten years, including new prep year, upgrading all state and non-state schools, new kindergartens at Caboolture East and Beachmere, setting up the Caboolture Community Campus and establishing the College of Civil Infrastructure and Construction at Caboolture State High School. It demonstrates our commitment to quality education for our young people and our focus on jobs and providing the skills Queensland needs.

The former Liberal Government starved state schools of funding. Shame.

#### Police and Safety

I am committed to ensuring Pumicestone remains a safe community and have worked hard to increase police numbers at Caboolture and Bribie Island stations and establish a 24 hour police station on Bribie Island. I supported safety cameras on the Bribie Bridge thanks to a Federal Labor Government grant.

I lobbied successfully for refurbishments to both Police Stations and I was able to get our own police district. I congratulate our first Superintendent, Michael Brady.

I established new Neighbourhood Watch Groups (NW), launched new fire equipment and implemented fire management plans. We have funded more ambulance paramedics and ambulances. Jet ski laws have made our waterways safer along with State Government funded VMR rescue boats

LNP has no policies on police and safety. Shame.

#### Environment

I have always been passionate about protecting our environment and proud of the fact that 80% of Bribie Island is now protected and that in my time as an MP the Government has added significant national parks, protected the marine environment, kept professional fishing out of Pumicestone Passage and fish farms out of Moreton Bay, improved protection of our waterways and fish habitats and fought against Council's high rise developments on Bribie Island.

We have more National Parks Rangers and more facilities in National Parks.

The LNP is running a real estate agent, a developer's dream. Shame. The LNP threatens to remove protection on natural vegetation. Shame.

Fire up the bulldozers.

#### Roads/Infrastructure

This budget delivers \$1 million to begin work on a roundabout at the T-Junction of Old Toorbul Point Road and Bribie Island Road, improvements to the new Caboolture Northern By-Pass, \$480,000 to complete the construction of the Bellara new floating walkway and \$480,000 to complete the construction of the Beachmere Boat Ramp floating walkway.

Safety of all roads have been a priority including Beachmere and Pumicestone Roads, passing lanes on Bribie Island-Pumicestone Road and planning is underway to design a new Pumicestone Road overpass over the Bruce Highway. This, along with the planning of the widening of the Bruce Highway from Bribie Island Road to Pumicestone Road will see part of Old Toorbul Point Road relocated away from residents so they will have local traffic only.

Roads are not a priority under the LNP. They failed to build the Caboolture Northern Bypass and failed to keep their promise to 4 lane Bribie Island-Caboolture Road. Shame. But they did introduce speed cameras.

#### Jobs

Thanks to our continued building program, unemployment is down to 5.3%. We are on track to deliver 140,000 new jobs. Locally we see new computer training facility Caboolture East-Caboolture Learning Centre, \$100,000 Caboolture Community Learning Centre—14 weeks of IT training to locals and the building of affordable housing.

Continuation of grants for all sporting and recreational groups including \$162,000 for new field lights at Bribie Island AFL. Others to benefit in the past include bowling clubs, rugby league clubs, tennis, netball and Surf Life Saving Clubs.

Funding continues for the Bribie Island Resource Centre and the Skilling Queenslanders for Work office and sport and rec coordinators employed.

In the last election the LNP wanted to axe 3,000 public service jobs. Shame.

#### Community

The Budget delivers \$571,000 to remove some of the practical housing-related difficulties experienced by older people and people with a disability so they can choose to stay in their own homes, continuation of rent connect to help people enter the private rental market, \$345 for subsidies for up to 61 people at Comptons Retirement Village, \$7.3 million to assist people with a disability, \$829,000 to support people affected by domestic violence, \$99,500 to provide a generalist counselling service for clients in the area, \$62,500 to provide clients with budget, counselling and home management skills, \$360,700 to fight local homelessness and a share of \$3.67 million (across the Sunshine Coast) to improve existing social housing rental properties and \$1.9 million to provide services and counselling to at risk members of our community including; young people, the homeless, those with disabilities and drug and alcohol problems.

This builds on past community projects including KABTEC, Bribie Island Museum, free Justice of the Peace service (Mondays) Bribie Island Library, Sandstone Point multipurpose clubhouse, skate parks.

We continue to provide numerous investments in local community and non-profit organisations.

LNP will axe all the social infrastructure programs and put money in the bank just like Howard did. Shame.

#### Housing

Our Government is committed to helping first home owners. We were the first Government in Australia to abolish mortgage duty for all first home buyers purchasing a home under \$500,000.

In this budget we are delivering a massive \$140 million program 'Queensland Building Boost.'

For six months from 1 August any Queenslanders buying a newly constructed home or signing a contract to build a new home will be eligible for a \$10,000 grant from the State Government.

Former Liberal Government axed \$400 million from the Housing Budget. Shame.

#### Volunteers

Can I once again say thankyou to all unpaid volunteers who work selflessly for our community. Well done again!



**Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (3.44 pm): Queensland is crying out for cost-of-living relief from this high-taxing, wasteful Labor government, but once again they have been let down in the state budget. That is no more obvious than in the area of transport. Whether one takes public transport or

drives their own car, they are going to be paying more under this Labor budget. Just when we are hoping for some relief from this Labor-driven cost-of-living burden we instead get sluggish again by this government.

If a person takes public transport they have already had to pay 20 per cent more for fares last year and 15 per cent more this year. Under this Labor government and this Labor budget they will be paying 15 per cent more next year as well and then 15 per cent more the year after that—fare rise after fare rise. Labor is determined to ensure that fares keep going up and up and up. There is no relief from this Labor government.

For Queensland families and households battling to pay for high electricity and water prices, the constantly rising cost of fares is just another blow. It is an extraordinary decision and one of the clearest demonstrations of Labor's mismanagement of the state's finances that it needs to keep making these massive increases in fare prices when we want to encourage more people to take public transport to cut congestion on roads and help the environment.

South-East Queensland commuters are already paying some of the highest prices in the world for public transport, despite being consistently told train and bus fares are very competitive. Most cities are offering heavily discounted weekly or monthly tickets which are no longer available here after they were scrapped by Labor as part of the rollout of its go card. The minister's predecessor, the failed former transport minister, Rachel Nolan, stated in October 2009 that passengers would continue to pay cheaper fares than in Sydney or Melbourne despite the fare increases. This is not the case. Weekly tickets are available in Sydney for as little as \$25 and in Melbourne from \$29.40. This is much cheaper than Brisbane commuters pay each week.

Despite all the empty rhetoric from Labor about how well it has done on public transport, still only seven out of every 100 journeys is taken by public transport. That is the same percentage of journeys taken by public transport when Labor came to power in 1998—more than 12 years ago. It was seven per cent in 1998 and more than a decade later the percentage has not changed. The only thing that has gone up is the price of fares.

What Labor does not understand is that unless public transport is made a viable alternative people will not choose it over private transport. These massive fare increases do not encourage anyone to choose public transport. All this week's budget does is increase fares even more. It is not just fares that are going up. Previously one may have got some relief from monthly, six-monthly or 12-monthly tickets. These periodic tickets and the savings they gave commuters were scrapped by Labor when it introduced the go card.

That meant that, on top of the fare rises, there was the loss of discounts. For instance, if you are a Sunshine Coast commuter travelling by train to Brisbane, based on a 12-month ticket your annual transport bill would have jumped from \$3,224 in 2009 to \$5,800 this year. By 2014, Sunshine Coast commuters will be paying \$8,834 to commute from zone 16. That is nearly three times the cost they paid five years ago.

What has Labor done to help those commuters? It has offered them rhetoric. Last month when I questioned the minister about the loss of those periodic tickets, she told parliament that she was looking at it 'very seriously'. She told parliament—

One of the concerns that people have been expressing to me is in relation to the six-month and 12-month passes.

She said—

This is something that as minister I am seriously looking at and about which I have had discussions with the Treasurer.

The transport minister had the chance to fix it, to give some fare relief to those commuters. What did the minister deliver after her talk with the Treasurer about this very serious issue? Zero, zip, zilch, except for three more fare rises at 15 per cent each. Just like her failed predecessors, this minister has failed to deliver.

However, it was not just the minister telling parliament how seriously she was taking the issue of fare relief. In April the minister told the *Brisbane Times* that she was seeking urgent advice on the issue. She said—

... we've got [the] budget in June, so we'll need to be making a decision about these six-monthly and 12 monthly passes pretty quickly.

The minister was taking it seriously. She knew it was urgent. The budget was coming up. She was speaking with the Treasurer. And she delivered zero. Well, it was not quite zero. I am wrong there. The minister says that she is forming a committee to look at the issue now.

**Mr Cripps:** A committee?

**Mr EMERSON:** A committee! How typical of Labor to form a committee. She made a promise to fix the issue, but all she delivers is a committee. The fares keep going up, but all the minister can do is form a committee. At the same time, over the coming year Labor will collect another \$73 million from public transport users. Under Labor, fares keep going up but the service does not improve. Is it any wonder there were 10 million fewer trips on public transport than forecast for 2010-11? Is it any wonder there was a five per cent fall in trips on public transport when commuters face fare rise after fare rise, and all this minister can do is break a promise and form a committee?

Labor keeps getting it wrong on public transport. This latest state budget shows that another failed minister is in charge. As Robert Dow, from commuter advocacy group Back on Track, told the *Courier-Mail*, the budget was a disappointment. An article in that newspaper stated—

"We think (the Budget) is a lost opportunity ...," Mr Dow said.

The failure to provide fare relief is just the latest failure of this government to deliver for public transport users. Last week the transport minister made the admission that the new train timetables, which took more than a decade to deliver and cost \$26 million of taxpayers' money, may be subject to another review. That was an admission that Labor has once again bungled the \$26 million spent on the first major upgrade of train timetables in almost 15 years and has not alleviated overcrowding for public transport commuters. Almost 15 years and \$26 million later, still Labor has not got it right. Within 48 hours, commuters on the new timetables had seen a loss of service, longer journeys and overcrowding. It is a farce when the minister admits we may need another review of the review. What Labor promises and what it delivers are two different things. Under this government we see fares going up and services getting worse.

If you give up on public transport, this failed Labor government will hit you as a motorist as the cost of running a motor vehicle will keep going up because of this budget. Since 2008 the state government has increased car registration by almost 30 per cent. Is it any wonder that under this Labor government Queensland has become what the RACQ calls the most expensive state to own and run a motor vehicle? Many families own two cars, and these increases will be a double hit to their household budget.

It is not just registration rises that Queensland motorists have been hit with by this Labor government. Queenslanders should never forget that this is the government that before the last election promised it would not give us a fuel tax. This is the Premier who said before the election, 'I will not kick Queensland households when they are down and I will not abolish the petrol subsidy.' Before the election the Premier said, 'I will not abolish the petrol subsidy.' This is the Treasurer who said—

Make no mistake about it, we will be delivering a fuel-subsidy scheme. It will stay in place.

That was his promise. It was his pledge before the election. He said—

It will stay in place.

But the moment the election was over, Labor broke its promise not to introduce a new 9.2c fuel tax by scrapping Queensland's fuel subsidy.

The cost of Queensland drivers' licences will more than double due to the state government's bungled implementation of smart card licences. By 2014 the cost of five-year licences is due to skyrocket to \$152, which is an increase of over 50 per cent. This government promised there would be zero costs associated with the new licences. Isn't it enough for the state government coffers that car registration fees have gone up by almost 30 per cent since 2008? Isn't it enough that the state government broke an election promise not to increase the cost of fuel for Queenslanders? Isn't it enough that the state government's bungled implementation of the smart card licences will increase by 50 per cent the cost of licences over the next few years?

The Queensland Council of Social Service's cost-of-living report, which was released last month, detailed the spiralling cost of living under this failed Labor government. It detailed the rise in the cost of essentials far above the consumer price index and how that was particularly hitting families. It has got to the point where many families are struggling to find the extra money to pay for the rising cost of essentials including housing, food, electricity, water and transport. The Australian Bureau of Statistics data reference in the report shows that the cost of electricity, gas and water in Brisbane increased 63 per cent from March 2006 to March 2011. Public transport costs increased 48 per cent in the past five years. This government does not care. All it wants to do is increase the cost-of-living burden for Queenslanders struggling to pay their bills. All it does is mismanage its budget, bungle its finances and charge people more for its mistakes. It makes the people pay for its mistakes. Queenslanders are paying for Labor's mistakes.

That is why the LNP is moving to give Queensland families a break by vowing to freeze car registrations for its entire first term in office if elected. Motorists have been treated as cash cows by Labor. Queensland has become the most expensive state in which to own and run a car. Last month the RACQ, the state's peak motoring body, welcomed a pledge by the Liberal National Party to freeze

vehicle registration costs. RACQ executive manager for public policy, Michael Roth, said that Queensland vehicle registration fees had increased by 30 per cent in the past three years and now generated \$1.3 billion in revenue. Mr Roth has been quoted as saying—

Queensland drivers pay the highest vehicle registration fees in Australia, well above the Australian average.

And further—

Struggling motorists really have been a cash cow for government. Not only have they been slugged with increases in rego and licence fees, but they are also being stung by high petrol prices and inflated parking costs.

The RACQ welcomes any moves to reduce overall running costs for motorists.


The LNP is the only party promising some relief for motorists. In this budget, the government has made it more expensive to take public transport or to own and drive a car.

In the areas of multicultural affairs and the arts there are serious concerns about the government's performance. In multicultural affairs, why has the number of annual grants fallen? There have been significant cuts in funding from the previous year.

In my own electorate of Indooroopilly, this budget is particularly disappointing. It fails to provide real solutions to those key issues of fighting road congestion, improving public transport and enhancing green space. All it has done is increase the cost-of-living burden for the residents of Indooroopilly. Labor asks, 'What is the solution to this?' The single solution is to get rid of Labor, because its members are the failed lot who have caused the problems. That is the solution: get rid of Labor. That is the solution and they all know it.

**Mr Kilburn:** You're a joke. You're an embarrassment.

**Mr EMERSON:** Labor is the failure. The solution is to get rid of Labor. Keep telling your constituents that and they will listen and they will get rid of Labor.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2011. Before I go any further, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on what he has achieved in this budget against the strain of the unprecedented events of the last couple of years: the global financial crisis and our summer of sorrow with the January floods and Cyclone Yasi.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Ms FARMER:** I take that interjection.

**Ms Struthers:** Dismissed as a rainy day.

**Ms FARMER:** I take those interjections. These events have wreaked massive negative impacts on Queensland's economy and yet this budget still manages to address the priorities that government should be addressing at a time like this, and that is rebuilding Queensland and easing the cost of living for Queensland families. We are able to do that, one, because we know where it is important to spend money but, two, because of the wise economic decisions that we have made over the last few years.

The government's decision at the last election to fund an infrastructure program to support jobs has delivered a boost to the economy and a stronger balance sheet. This year Queensland's debt is more than \$17 billion less than it was forecast to be two years ago. The 2011 budget delivers lower deficits, lower debt, more jobs and nation-leading growth for Queensland, and we are well on the way to a budget surplus in 2015-16. In fact, Queensland is about to experience a new wave of prosperity, with economic growth heading back to five per cent next year—the fastest in the nation—and with 140,000 jobs expected in the next year. The government's investment in two struggling areas of the economy in this budget—housing, with the \$10,000 Queensland Building Boost, an initiative that earned us a 'highly commended' on the Australian Property Council report card, and tourism through the \$85 million major events package—combined with the reconstruction program, resource investment and surging business investment are the elements that will fuel this growth.

It is because of the government's sound economic management through times of crisis that we are in a position now to fund the things we are funding in this budget. In fact, Standard & Poor's currently rates Queensland as a AA plus with a stable outlook, noting the state's 'excellent financial management' as recently as last Friday. I shudder to think of what would happen should Campbell Newman get his hands on the Queensland budget just when the horizon is starting to clear, just when we are getting the state through one of its toughest periods. With Campbell Newman, we are talking about the man who increased rates by 42 per cent when he was Lord Mayor despite saying at the beginning of his reign that he would resign if rates increased by anything more than inflation. In fact, rates went up by up to 400 per cent in the case of unit owners.

We are talking about the man who sank \$773 million of ratepayers' money into a tunnel that is now in receivership, built a toll bridge that no-one uses and created a bike hire scheme that is going bankrupt. We are talking about the man who, just two years after the state gave him \$1 billion for his water assets and cleared the Brisbane City Council debt, had managed to rack up \$1.2 billion in debt, and this will be \$2.23 billion by 2015. We are talking about the man who sacked Standard & Poor's in April 2008 because they rated Brisbane City Council as a AA plus but with a 'negative outlook'. We are

talking about a man who walked out on the city of Brisbane just when it needed leadership after the devastating floods and one can only assume that that is because he knew that it was only a matter of time before people were going to realise what a financial mess he had left the city in and he got out when the going was still good. Not even the 107 PR people he employed were going to be able to spin a good story around his financial disasters once people started to realise what was going on.

One of the many reasons I am a member of the Labor Party is that we are a party that sees it as our job to look after people who might find life a bit of a struggle, whether that be a financial, emotional, physical or any other kind of struggle. That is why I am particularly proud that, despite the economic circumstances of this year, we have made it our business in this budget to address cost-of-living issues. It is a clear statement of our priorities as a Labor government. There is no doubt that cost of living is a big issue. As MPs, we see it and we hear it from our constituents every day and more and more so. I have felt some comfort in knowing that there is a significant range of subsidies, concessions and rebates that I can tell these constituents about that are on offer from this Labor government to help with health care, electricity, water and public transport. This year those concessions will total \$1.385 billion, a package that will maintain Queensland's status as the biggest provider of cost-of-living concessions per person in the nation.

However, the 2011-12 budget offers more for those who are struggling to make ends meet. There is the abolition of the community ambulance cover levy for all Queenslanders, saving \$113 a year from electricity bills; increasing council rebates for pensioners up to \$200; and increasing electricity rebates for pensioners up to \$230. There is also funding to increase the capacity of the many groups within our community who work with the disadvantaged. There is a number of excellent groups of this kind in the Bulimba electorate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech and I have permission to do so.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Have you actually showed it to a Speaker yet?

**Ms FARMER:** I have.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Have you forwarded it to Hansard?

**Ms FARMER:** I will do so.

Leave granted.

It was pleasing to see that their work will be well-supported. Government can achieve the best outcomes if we are working in partnership with groups like these. We are talking about funding such as:

\$194,071 to the Gateway Community Group to provide counselling and support for people at risk of homelessness

\$1.27 million for the Endeavour Foundation to support individuals with a disability and \$300,000 to address rising costs and associated viability issues

\$80,000 to L'Arche Brisbane to support individuals with a disability

\$155,000 to The Tertiary Place to support school leavers with a disability make the transition from school to adult life

\$28,744 to provide activity groups for Seniors Participation and Support

\$19,064 to provide a community centre-based development and support service for spouses, partners and other dependents of prisoners and ex-prisoners

\$302,000 to complete construction of social housing family accommodation, and

\$1.29 million to construct eight one-bedroom apartments of social housing.

Mr Speaker the very best way of course to help families who are suffering financially is to make sure there are jobs available for them. That is why the measures the government is taking to stimulate the economy, particularly through the housing and tourism industries, are so important.

This budget describes a capital program of \$15 billion in 2011-2012 supporting 93 000 jobs. It includes:

a massive stimulus package for building new homes a \$10 000 grant for a new home contracted—1 August 2011 and 31 January 2012; no stamp duty for first home buyers under \$500 000; and first home owners can now receive up to \$17 000

\$100 million over three years in new Smart state initiatives

\$85.8 million over five year to attract new events to support tourism.

Mr Speaker the opposition laughed at us when the Premier announced early in 2009 that this government would have created an additional 100 000 jobs by the end of our term, and they've kept on jeering and poking fun. If I was a more cynical person I would have thought they did not actually want us to be able to meet that goal but I can't believe they would wish such ill will upon Queenslanders. Well Mr Speaker I can tell you that we will have well and truly surpassed that 100 000 jobs mark by the time of the next election. And I'm proud of that and what it means for Queensland families now and in the future.

One of the other really important priorities in this budget and I know this is something that residents of the Bulimba electorate do care deeply about—is Education. There is no doubt that successive Labor governments over the last 10 years have been true reformers in government, and this budget adds to that raft of reforms.

I spoke earlier in the House this week about the government's plans for transitioning Year 7 into secondary school a reform which will see our future year 7 students given every opportunity available to be the best that they can be.

Initiatives like this on top of the 'earn-or-learn' reforms, the introduction of the full-time prep year, our plans to make kindergarten available to all Queensland children, our support for parents and carers to help their children be ready for school and for life, our work with teachers, principals and schools to support them as they deliver quality learning opportunities—are the sign of a fresh and innovative government, keen to be pushing the boundaries on what can be achieved.

I have been particularly passionate about the early education reforms which the government has been rolling out over the last period reforms like the commitment to building 240 new kindergartens across the state, support for ensuring there are qualified kindergarten teachers in long-day care centres and scholarships for child care workers to upskill.

Families within the Bulimba electorate have most definitely benefited from these reforms already, with the commitment of \$1.85 million towards a double-unit kindergarten in Seven Hills, due to open next year. And with allocations of—\$52,000, \$71,000 and \$44,000 to Tricia's Playschool, Avenue's Early Learning Centre and the Okeedokee Early Learning centre respectively.

And it has been pleasing to see recognition in the budget of the role of Limited Hours Day care as well, with the allocation of \$32,000 to Hawthorne Limited Hours Care. This is a sector that still needs some attention and I hope to hear positive outcomes about how more support may be able to be offered in the future.

You more than most people, Mr Speaker, know that all of these Education initiatives are critical to shoring up our children's futures. However unless we put our money where our mouth is in terms of bricks and mortar for schools, we are only going to get so far. There is clear evidence that good facilities enhance learning and so we must continue the strong commitment that has been made by successive state Labor governments in Queensland to build and maintain high quality facilities.

I am not ashamed to admit that I have been an aggressive advocate for more maintenance funding in my local schools and I was very pleased to see that those efforts have paid off in this year's budget. It was a huge delight to phone the principals and P&C presidents of Seven Hills state School which will receive a funding injection of \$500,000 for a new toilet block; Cannon Hill State School—where we'll have an extra \$50,000 to do some important landscaping work; and Murarrie State School, where \$100,000 will be spent to resurface their quadrangle to tell them the good news.

And to also let the principals of Balmoral High know that they'd be receiving \$52,000 for maintenance work; and Morningside State School \$66,000 for maintenance work. Alison Crane and Jann Simmonds, the two principals involved, are responsible for two of the older schools in our area, and have already done a huge amount of work to spruce up buildings and environs, encouraging the students to be proud of their schools. They were both thrilled to hear about this money so they can achieve even more.

Mr Speaker another one of the key priorities of the government is the environment, and the budget reflects the importance we place on this key policy area. This is in stark contrast to the Opposition. During the budget Reply Speech by the Shadow Treasurer, I kept waiting to hear what he was going to say about the LNP's plans for the environment. As he covered one topic after another, I thought, well he certainly puts Environment down on the list. But he kept on going and going and going, talking and talking and talking and then he was gone! What's this Mr Speaker? Not even one of his cheap shots? Not even more empty rhetoric on this critical area? No, the Environment does not even rate one of these. Well, if that is not a message about what the LNP thinks about the Environment, then nothing is. In fact they clearly do not think anything at all about it.

The 2011-2012 budget allocates \$1.1 billion to the Department of Environment and Resource Management to address the significant environmental damage which has been wrought as a result of the natural disasters Queensland has experienced in addition to assisting the Department in carrying out its critical role in managing Queensland's water, land, biodiversity and protected areas.

There are so many features of the budget for the Environment which I know will get the stamp of approval in the Bulimba electorate, but I would like to name just a few of these in particular, which reflect the feedback I have received since being the MP for the area, and certainly quite strongly even since the Treasurer handed down the budget on Tuesday.

They are the additional funding of \$34.5 million as part of an additional \$60 million investment to extend the ClimateSmart Home Service to 31 December 2012; the additional funding of \$2 million to reduce rural and urban pollution through the Healthy Waterways partnership; and the more than \$27 million for the department's strong compliance and regulatory regime, to crackdown on any breaches of Queensland's tough environmental laws which, among a range of activities, will allow officers to undertake nearly 700 targeted inspections and audits of businesses and work sites across Queensland.

I was also very pleased to see the allocation of funds to continue to bolster the operations of the government's LNG Enforcement Unit, to undertake the proactive monitoring of 300 bores in 2011 and another 300 in 2012, a total of 187 proactive inspections and audits across an extensive range of CSG operations, and the establishment of the CSG Compliance Portal, which will fulfil the government's commitment to transparency.

In addition to these proactive activities, the LNG Enforcement Unit will also continue to ensure that any complaints received about the CSG industry are promptly investigated and appropriate enforcement action is taken.

The last key plank of the budget which I would like to especially mention Mr Speaker is the attention to the needs of business. Poised as we are in Queensland to experience a new wave of prosperity, its imperative that we do everything we can to make sure business can take advantage of every opportunity. Business will help to drive our growth.

That is why the decision to appoint a Business Commissioner to cut red tape and drive reform is so important. This new Commissioner will give the business sector a direct voice within government and identify areas of reform that will benefit business and the state economy as a whole.

I hear a lot about red tape Mr Speaker, but it's too easy to say that all bureaucracy is bad—and that is just not true. Some regulations like workplace health and safety, environmental protections, food safety standards and child protection laws are absolutely necessary and we wouldn't want them watered down in any way. However what we need to ensure is that there is always a strategic focus to any red tape and that it helps rather than hinders business.

I was very disappointed to hear what the shadow Treasurer had to say in his budget Reply Speech, which was presumably written by Campbell Newman. He was full of rhetoric. We heard phrases like "we will deliver more by getting action on the basics" and "we will save Queenslanders money." But there was no detail. No costings. No solutions.

Well I know if I said that to my constituents, they'd say "but what does that actually mean?" "What are you actually going to do?" They, quite simply wouldn't let me get away with talking forever but saying nothing.

Stewardship of Queensland is a huge responsibility. Stewardship of our future is a huge responsibility. It is not good enough to take either of those things for granted, by not making the effort, by not having any plans for Queensland. And I will be fighting all the way to make sure that does not happen that it is a Labor government which is leading the way for Queensland after the election.

This budget will lock in the spending that will build better Queensland communities, and I'm proud to be part of a government which considers that a priority.



**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.05 pm): It has been a difficult year for Queensland with 75 per cent of the state affected by flood and cyclone disasters. My own electorate of Mount Ommaney suffered enormously with 2,323 households and 195 local businesses flooded. In March this year I asked local church groups, community organisations and state government departments to come



together to set up the Centenary Recovery Centre, the CRC. This centre operates three days a week and the space is provided free of charge by Mount Ommaney Shopping Centre management. The CRC continues to support those people at a local level who continue to be displaced because of hardship, insurance and rebuilding difficulties, and family circumstances which prevent them from getting their lives back to normal after the floods.

People recognise that it is a difficult time for the state government because of the need to rebuild and get Queensland back on track as well. With the flood recovery debt rising to \$6.4 billion, it is not an easy task for the Bligh government to provide income relief, but we have endeavoured to do this within the constraints forced upon us. Queensland is still a low-tax state and a very desirable place for people to live and work. This is the heart of Labor governments—getting the services right, providing opportunities for people who are less advantaged, promoting full employment, building the necessary infrastructure to support basic services like schools and hospitals, and pulling us together in the tough times when every dollar counts. Improving the road network, school facilities, support services for people with a disability and sport infrastructure in Mount Ommaney are key priorities in this year's state budget.

I turn now to the Sumners Road interchange. While the impact on our finances is heavy, our government still listens to my specific needs for the people in the Mount Ommaney electorate. I am happy to announce the commitment to fund the \$57 million interchange upgrade and the duplication of the bridge at Sumners Road over the Centenary Highway at Jamboree Heights.

**Ms Croft:** Well done!

**Mrs ATTWOOD:** Thank you. This is a massive project and securing the funding is a great win for the electorate to eliminate increasing congestion leading up to the current single lane bridge. In late 2009, I started working with officers from the Department of Main Roads with stage 1 of consultations through to the options recently being released for stage 3 of the process. In 2011-12, \$2 million will be spent to commence the detailed design and preconstruction work to upgrade the interchange. I look forward to continuing to work with residents in relation to this enormous project. There will also be a need to work with the Brisbane City Council, who committed to road widening along Sumners Road in 2008.

I turn to transport and main roads. Early last year I collected a petition from local residents calling on Brisbane City Council to examine safety and congestion hot spots along Oxley Road. I am happy to confirm that the state government will make a contribution of \$1.38 million towards intersection improvements at the Oxley Road and Clewley Street intersection, Corinda, to assist the Brisbane City Council.

I am pleased that the government will provide \$950,000 for the continuation of infrastructure works to a third track between Corinda and Darra at a total cost of \$203.28 million. There has been an enormous amount of funding going into public transport on the Ipswich rail corridor with the upgrade of Oxley, Corinda and Darra stations, new timetabling and the construction of Richlands station complete with over 650 car parks and with work on the extension of the railway line to Springfield underway. Preparation for bus park-and-ride bays at Jindalee is ongoing at a total project cost of \$7.3 million and the second stage of broad based community consultation will be undertaken shortly.

Residents recognise the importance of encouraging public transport to take traffic off our connecting roads. The Centenary Motorway congestion problem stems from a build-up of traffic at the Toowong roundabout. Brisbane City Council has finally commenced work on the Legacy Way tunnel at that end. However, the time line for completion of this work is estimated at beyond 2014.

Last year I lodged a petition with the state government calling for an upgrade of the Centenary Motorway, particularly in relation to hotspots at Jindalee, Sumners Road and Mount Ommaney to complement the timing of the Northern Link-Legacy Way tunnel. I am pleased that the government has committed funding for the Sumners Road interchange as well as providing \$5.1 million to continue master planning for the future upgrade of the Centenary Motorway between Ipswich Road and Toowong to complement the completion of the Legacy Way tunnel.

Last year funding was announced for the construction of noise barriers along the Centenary Motorway between Oldfield Road and Glen Ross Road and consultation will begin with residents in the near future. After meetings with local stakeholders over the last 12 months, noise barriers have also been approved along the railway corridor near Clewley Street, Corinda and construction is due to commence later this year.

I turn now to education. As members of this House are aware, improving education is one of my top priorities. Over the past decade, millions of dollars have been spent on education facilities throughout my electorate to enhance learning and improve teaching facilities.

This government has made a commitment to \$328 million over four years for buildings works in our state schools to move year 7 to secondary school in 2015. The amount of \$50 million will be spent this financial year for the State School Investment Program. This year's budget is also investing in Corinda State School, with \$50,000 allocated for shade structures to ensure students and teachers can enjoy outdoor activities in comfort and safety.

Maintenance is important, and \$15,000 will be provided for the Jamboree Heights State School for extra work at the school. To maintain facilities in a high-tech, modern condition, \$127,000 has been allocated for an assembly hall upgrade at Corinda State High School at a total cost of \$128,000.

The amount of \$225,000 has been set aside to provide an approved kindergarten program at Yuingi, Centenary Child Care and Early Education Centre, and Little Ted's Childcare Centre for children in the year prior to prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year at a total cost of \$678,000. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Have you sought leave from the Speaker?

**Mrs ATTWOOD:** Yes.

Leave granted.

#### Sport and Communities

Sport and community services in the Mt Ommaney electorate will receive a massive funding boost for various programmes.

In the sporting arena, \$298,000 will help build stage two of the Centenary Rowing Club which will incorporate an activity space, change rooms and meeting facilities to support rowing at Riverhills. Although their pontoon was swept away in January, Stage One of the Clubhouse previously funded by the State Government at \$390,000 survived the floods and this second stage will improve facilities and be a great boost to the Centenary Rowing Club.

Government funding totalling \$538,272 was provided under the "Flood Fightback Program" early this year to sporting clubs in the area which were devastated by the floods.

Local Clubs will benefit from \$52,000 to be provided to employ a local coordinator to support Little Athletics in South West Brisbane with a total cost of \$156,000. The same amount will be provided to employ a local coordinator for Australian football to support juniors in the Brisbane Region.

This Budget, as with previous ones, supports disadvantaged Queenslanders with Mount Ommaney receiving over \$6.344 million. The Budget has set aside nearly \$2.3 million to help young people with a disability living in residential care facilities.

Funding for people with disabilities includes:

Autism Queensland Inc who will receive \$496,000 to provide for short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability.

Enhanced Care Assoc Inc will be provided with \$426,000 general funding to provide support for individuals with a disability.

Lifeline Community Care will be allocated \$168,000 to support adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in their community

MontroseAccess funding includes:

\$317,000 for centre based activities for adults with a disability

\$548,000 funding for early intervention support for children with a physical disability and their families

\$2.37 million in general funding to support individuals

\$473,000 to provide for short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability.

Multicap will receive:

\$58,000 in general funding to support individuals with a disability

\$565,000 to support school leavers with a disability to make the transition from school to adult life

\$111,000 to provide for short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability

\$508,000 to support adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in their community.

Real Community Services Pty Ltd has been allocated \$304,000 to support adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in their community.

Wesley Mission Brisbane will receive \$2.28 million in funding provided to assist in reducing the number of younger people with a disability living in residential care facilities.

I am pleased that the Department of Communities has a pre-commitment lease on Level 1 of the proposed new shopping centre development at Oxley. The site will accommodate staff currently based at Wacol and some staff displaced from the Goodna centre destroyed by the January 2011 flood.

#### Community Safety

This budget will provide increased frontline services including 150 more police and another 50 ambulance officers this year.

This builds upon previous initiatives including a 24 hour Centenary Ambulance Station with state of the art vehicles and additional paramedics; the Corinda Community Health Centre and extensions; a new police station at Sherwood; new fire service vehicles and refurbishment of the Mt Ommaney Fire Station; annual increases in local police numbers and two Police Beats at Oxley and Jindalee.

The State government's GCBF and the Jupiter's Casino Benefit Fund have assisted the following organisations in my electorate over the past twelve months.

\$31,150—Endeavour Foundation Corinda Residential to paint the interior of the building

\$10,505—Wesley Mission Brisbane Jacobs Court to upgrade the building and landscaping

\$31,715.16—Oxley State School P&C to purchase musical and AV equipment

\$6,564—Brisbane Valley Anglers Fish Stocking Association to purchase trailer and tank

\$26,000—Centenary Archers Club to purchase archery equipment

\$6,970—Children's Safety Australia to promote a safety project

\$2,149.94—Focus on Youth Inc to upgrade their computer system

\$16,909.09—Jindalee Guides to construct outdoor undercover space

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\$26,320.45—Oxley Guides to construct outside activity area  
\$13,170.91—Jamboree Community Kindergarten and Preschool Association to upgrade building and equipment  
\$10,900—Mandolins in Brisbane Music Club to fund a performance  
\$26,166.55—Mt Ommaney Special School P&C to purchase specialised equipment  
\$31,818.18—Jindalee Scout Group to upgrade facilities  
\$31,818.18—Oxley Scout Group to upgrade their den  
\$29,561—Y West Sports Fitness and Community Club to upgrade facilities  
\$31,818.18—Wesley Mission Brisbane Sinnamon Village & Wheller Gardens Day Therapy Centres  
\$12,181.81—Centenary Christian Kindergarten  
\$31,818.18—Enhanced Care Association to purchase a motor vehicle  
\$28,767—Corinda Horse and Pony Club to purchase ride on mower and equipment  
\$28,272.73—Endeavour Industries Wacol to construct a shade awning  
\$31,818.18—Good news Lutheran Primary School Parents and Citizens Assoc. to install playground equipment and shade  
\$30,532.47—Centenary Christian Kindergarten to upgrade playground  
\$3,631.81—Anglican Parish of Centenary suburbs for a solar sport and community group grant  
\$32,985—Montrose Access to purchase specialised equipment  
\$2,900—Centenary Connect Inc towards disability access  
2011-2012 Budget Highlights for Queensland

A massive stimulus package will kick-start the housing market and generate jobs and construction. For people building new homes, \$10,000 grants will be provided for contracts between 1 August 2011 and 31 January 2012. There will be no stamp duty costs for first home buyers under \$500,000 and first home owners can now received up to \$17,000.

\$6.8 billion in State and Federal disaster funding, including \$2.9 billion on roads, \$2.75 billion for local governments and \$656 million for small business, non-profit organisations and primary producers will be provided to rebuild Queensland.

The Community Ambulance Cover levy for all Queenslanders will be abolished—saving \$113 from electricity bills. Council rebates for pensioners will be increased up to \$200, electricity rebates for pensioners increased up to \$230 and \$1.385 billion in concessions in 2011-12 to help Queenslanders with health care, electricity, water and public transport costs. This will maintain Queensland's status as the biggest provider of cost of living concessions per person in the nation.

This budget has allocated \$75 million to support continuing investment in solar power generation and \$60 million to the end of 2012 for ClimateSmart Home Services which will help to reduce household bills and carbon emissions.

A massive program of supporting jobs and investing in the future will provide \$100 million over three years in new Smart State initiatives, \$85.8 million over five years to attract new events to support tourism, and a capital program of \$15 billion which will support 93,000 jobs.

There is always more to be done and I continue to work hard to obtain improved services and facilities for the area.

Mr Speaker, it is always an honour to have the privilege of serving all of the residents in my electoral area (sometimes beyond) and it is appropriate to take this opportunity to applaud the many volunteers who make our community a better place to work, live and enjoy. One of the most fulfilling responsibilities as the local MP is to work with many of these extraordinary people and I see every day what a difference they make. I wish to also place on record my thanks to the many volunteers and community organisations who assisted during and after the January 2011 floods.

A list of community organisations servicing the Mt Ommaney electorate is attached.

List of Groups with Members in the Mt Ommaney Electorate

Aged Care Facilities

Corinda—Bethesda Caring Centre; Hopetoun Aged Persons Complex

Jindalee—James Ommaney Village; Jindalee Tri-Care Nursing Centre

Oxley—Canossa Services

17 Mile Rocks—Sinnamon Village Aged Complex

Churches

Corinda—Corinda Christian Brethren Assembly; Riverside Christian Church (Assemblies of God); St John's Lutheran Church; St Joseph's Catholic Church

Darra—Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Durack—Phap Quang Temple

Jamboree Heights—Westside Church of Christ; Kingdom of Christ Ministries

Jindalee—Darra-Jindalee Catholic Church; Universal Apostolic Church

Middle Park—Centenary Baptist Community Church; Centenary Uniting Church; Evangelical Presbyterian Church; Good News Lutheran Church; Salvation Army Centenary; St Catherine's Anglican Ministry

17 Mile Rocks—Metro Church Brisbane

Oxley—Apostolic Church; Oxley Wesleyan Methodist Church; Presbyterian Reformed Church Brisbane South; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church; St John's Anglican Church; Oxley Darra Uniting Church, Oxley.

Sherwood—Sherwood Uniting Church; St Matthews Anglican Church

Community Groups

Apex—Jindalee.

Bushcare and Environmental Groups—Benarrawa Bushcare Group; Blackheath Road Bushcare Group; Centenary and District Environment Action Inc.; Edenbrooke Bushcare Group; Fort—Cliveden Avenue Bushcare Group; Friends of Oxley Creek Common; Friends of Pooh Corner; Friends of Sherwood Arboretum; Horizon Drive Bushcare Group; Jindalee Bushcare Group; Nosworthy Park Bushcare Group; Oxley Creek Catchment Association; Oxley Creek Environment Group; Rana Frog Group Inc.; Save Our Riverfront Bushland; Sustainable Jamboree; Westlake-Riverhills Bushcare Group; Wolston and Centenary Catchments Association; Wolston Creek Bushcare Group.

Children's and Women's Groups—Avant-Garde Women's Business Club; Brisbane Multiple Birth Association—Westside Inc.; Centenary Evening View Club; Centenary Family Day Care Scheme; Centenary Quilters Inc.; Focus on Youth Incorporated; Graduate Women Queensland; Kidz2Kidz Choir; Kiwani Club of Brisbane; Montrose-Access; Multicap Mt Ommaney; Australian Breastfeeding Association Centenary/Forest Lake Group; QCWA Oxley; The Inner Wheel Club of Brisbane West; Westside Youth Support Service (Westside Church of Christ); Young Widows & Widowers Support Group of Brisbane.

Girl Guides—Sherwood Guides; Jamboree Heights Guides, Jindalee Guides; Oxley Guides; Centenary Trefoil Guild.

Lions Clubs—Brisbane Jamboree; Brisbane Jindalee; Brisbane Oxley-Sherwood.

Meals on Wheels Associations—Centenary, Sherwood.

Multicultural Groups—Al-Risalah Islamic Association Inc.; Bangladesh Association of Qld; Borrel Club Brisbane; Brisbane Marae Community Centre Inc.; Egyptian Australian Association of Qld; Ethnic Communities Council of Qld; Hindi-Speaking Congregation; Hindu Ahlaya Sangam Qld Inc.; Islamic Society of Darra Inc.; Latvian Arts and Crafts; Linh Son Nunnery; Island Sensation Dance Group; Phat-Da Monastery Inc.; Qld Chinese Community Voice; Qld Sri Lanka Buddhist (Vihara) Temple Association Inc.; Radio 4EB; Serbian Society Vuk Karadzic; St. Paul's Antiochian Orthodox Church; Taiwan Friendship Assn of Qld; Taiwan Womens League of Queensland; Tamil Association Queensland; Tamil Senior Citizens Association (Qld); Tetun Cultural Assn Inc.; The Qld Kosciuszko Polish Association of Darra; The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Assoc.; Trung Vuong Vietnamese Language School; Ukrainian Association of Queensland Inc.; Ukrainian Folk Dance Ensemble Kalyna; Ukrainian Senior Citizens Club; United Vietnamese Buddhist Congregations of Qld; Van-Lang Cultural and Social Welfare Association; Veterans Federation of the Republic of Vietnam in Australia; Vietnamese Buddhist Church Association of Brisbane Inc.; Vietnamese Community of Australia (Qld Chapter); Vietnamese Forum for Multiculturalism; Vietnamese Senior Citizens Association in Queensland Inc.; Vietnamese Women's Assn of Qld; Women's International Zionist Organisation; World & Asian Pacific League for Freedom & Democracy; World Lebanese Cultural Union; World Orthodox Buddhism Association.

Neighbourhood Watch Committees—Corinda, Jindalee, Middle Park, Mt Ommaney, Oxley, Riverhills, Sinnamon Park, Windemere.

Other Groups with Mt Ommaney Electorate Affiliations—Anti-Graffiti Group (Rotary Jindalee); ARAFMI Queensland Inc.; Aspergers Syndrome Network UQ; Association of Independent Retirees Inc (Brisbane West Branch); Autism Queensland; Benarrawa Community Development Association; Brisbane Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group; Brisbane's West by Southwest Historical Society; Carers Connecting; Carers Queensland; Centacare South West Brisbane Community Options Project; Centenary Community Connections; Centenary & Districts Chamber of Commerce; Centenary Flexible Support Service; Centenary Local Ambulance Committee; Centenary Suburbs Historical Society; Centenary Toastmasters; CHARM Support Services; Citizen Advocacy South West Brisbane Association Inc; Corinda Bridge Club; Disability Action Queensland; Disability Forum; Endeavour Foundation; Enhanced Care Association Inc.; Foresight on the Western Front Parent Support Group; Graceville Anxiety Management Support Group; Heart Foundation Walking Group; John Oxley District Orchid Society Inc.; Miraa House; Motor Neurone Disease Association of Qld; MTM Australia; Obedience Dog Club of Brisbane; Oxley-Chelmer History Group; National Assn of Watch and Clock Collectors; National Pituitary Association; Rail—Back on Track; ReachOut-Connect Centenary; REAL Community Services; RSL Care; Sherwood Community Festival; Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre Inc.; Sherwood Respite Centre; Sherwood Services Club; South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre; South West Interagency Committee; St Vincent de Paul; Stroke Community Support Program; Transport Options Project (TOPS); University of the Third Age Centenary; Walter Taylor Action Group; Wesley Mission Brisbane; Western Districts Branch Qld Justices Association; Westside Community Services Limited; Youngcare.

Parent Associations—Centenary State High School; Corinda State High School; Corinda State Primary School; Darra-Jindalee Catholic School; Good News Lutheran School; Jamboree Community Kindergarten and Preschool; Jamboree Heights State School; Jindalee State School; Middle Park State School; Mt Ommaney Special School; Oxley State School; Sherwood State School; St Aidan's Anglican Girls School; St Joseph's Catholic Primary School; Yuingi Child Care Centre.

Probus Clubs—Centenary; Combined Probus Club of Sherwood; Jindalee; Mount Ommaney; Corinda.

Progress Associations—Corinda Residents' Association; Darra Community Group; Jamboree Heights Residents Association; Oxley Progress Association; Seventeen Mile Rocks Progress Association; Sinnamon Park Residents Progress Association.

Rotary Clubs—Brisbane Centenary; Jindalee; Sumner Park; Rotaract Club of South-West Brisbane.

RSL Clubs and Associated Organisations—Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch, Jindalee; Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL Sub-Branch, Corinda; Darra and District, Darra.

Scouts—West Centenary Scouts; Oxley; Sherwood; Richlands.

Seniors Associations—National Seniors Australia Centenary Branch; National Seniors Australia Corinda Branch; Senior Citizens Club of Oxley; Centenary Seniors.

Sporting Groups—Brisbane Radio Yacht Club Inc.; Brisbane Water Ski Club Inc.; Brisbane Wakeboard Association; Carrington Boating Club; Cementco Bowls Club; Centenary Archers Club; Centenary Bikeways Group; Centenary Canoe Club; Centenary Rowing Club Inc.; Centenary Community Sporting Association; Centenary Cricket Club Inc.; Centenary Little Athletics; Centenary Netball Club; Centenary Stormers Football and Community Club Inc.; Centenary Swim Club; Centenary Table Tennis Club Inc.; City West United Football Club; Corinda Bowls Club; Corinda Horse and Pony Club; Dragon's Volleyball Assn; Jamboree Heights Swimming Club; Jindalee District (Jags) Australian Football Club; Jindalee District Netball Club; Jindalee Golf Club; Jindalee Ladies' Bowls Club; Jindalee Men's Bowls Club; Jindalee Pony Club; Jindalee Swimming Club Inc.; McLeod Country Golf Club; Oxley Bowls Club; Oxley State School Amateur Swimming Club; Oxley United Football Club; Qld Rugby Union Samoan Association; Queensland Darts Association Inc.; Queensland Lions Football Club; Queensland Radio Control Multihull Owners Assoc; Rivercity Waterpolo Club; Sapphire Netball Club; Shamrocks Gaelic Football Club; Sherwood AFL Club; Sherwood Services Club Junior Snooker; Sherwood Services Social Lawn Bowls Club; Sherwood State School Amateur Swimming Club; South West United Hockey Club; Southern Cross Junior Rugby League Football Club; Special Olympics Brisbane West Region; Splitz Academy of Gymnastics; St. Catherine's United Football Club; St. Joseph's Netball Club; TAG 5; West-Brisbane Falcons Basketball Club; Western Suburbs District Cricket Club; Wests Baseball Club; Westside BMX Club; Wests Centenary Junior Rugby League Football Club; Wolston Park Centenary Cricket Club Inc; Y-West Sports, Fitness & Community Centre; RSL Darts Club.



**Ms van LITSENBURG** (Redcliffe—ALP) (4.11 pm): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill 2011. This is a smart budget—a budget to get us out of difficult times and make us the envy of all of the other states in Australia, a budget that will position Queensland not only to recover from our summer of disasters but to set us up to be on the leading edge of economies in Australia with growth ramping up to

five per cent next year and an extra 140,000 jobs expected to be created in the next two years, a budget that supports and builds the Queensland economy while it helps Queenslanders to make ends meet. This budget is about building a better future for all Queenslanders.

Yes, we have debts but who could implement the huge state infrastructure program that this Queensland government has delivered without acquiring debts? How many families do not go into debt when they buy a home or a car? Queensland's debt is currently nine per cent of the state's income. Considering the huge state-wide infrastructure program we have delivered in the last 10 years and the improvement in lifestyles it has produced for all Queenslanders, it is a credit to the Treasurer that our debt is at such a low level.

This government is continuing to build essential infrastructure right across Queensland but most importantly in my own electorate of Redcliffe. Now is not the time to take fright and hide. Now is the time to take advantage of this breathing space to be ready for our recovery in the next year or two. Transport and economic infrastructure is what Redcliffe has needed to enable us to go ahead, and that is continuing with this budget.

It was this Labor government that delivered the Ted Smout bridge. It is this Labor government that is delivering a new and expanded bus interchange at Peninsula Fair. It is this Labor government that is about to deliver the Moreton Bay rail link, with \$12 million brought forward in this budget to begin construction. These pieces of infrastructure form the basis of an integrated transport system for the Redcliffe peninsula. With these in place we can build an even more effective public transport system than we have now.

This budget also includes \$8.95 million to upgrade South East Queensland Water's existing dams and water treatment stations; \$2.27 million to install fibre-optic nodes at various substations; and almost \$500 million to improve Energex's subtransmission network, improving reliability and capacity and other network issues.

This budget has delivered \$50,000 for detailed planning and design work for a boardwalk along Hays Inlet. This boardwalk is planned to connect the Ted Smout bridge to the rail station at Kippa-Ring, delivering a sustainable transport option for people to travel to the railway station or across the bridge on foot or by bicycle along our beautiful wetlands. Recreational use of the boardwalk will also open the wonders of our wetlands to a larger number of people so they can enjoy them without doing damage to the fragile ecosystems. Even more importantly, a boardwalk will allow visitors to Redcliffe to more easily enjoy them so that it will increase the ecotourism available on the peninsula. This will be a valuable tourism asset to the Redcliffe peninsula because it will give visitors another facet of Queensland's natural environments to experience while they are in Redcliffe that are easily accessible as part of a short stay, and it will allow visitors to enjoy the largest koala colony on the north side of Brisbane.

The money for the design of this boardwalk is a great budget initiative that is welcomed by the Redcliffe Environmental Forum and our whole community. I have advocated for this boardwalk for a long time, and I thank the Treasurer for his foresight and understanding of how to grow economies while preserving our natural environment. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. It has been approved by a Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): And you have forwarded your speech to *Hansard*?

**Ms van LITSENBURG**: Yes, I have.

Leave granted.

Other transport money for Redcliffe includes;

\$3million to construct a cycleway on Anzac Avenue

\$539,000 of \$1.13million to complete traffic signal improvements at the Anzac Ave/Ashmole Road intersection

A part of more than \$2million to complete the operation of Brisbane metropolitan traffic management centre at various locations including Redcliffe

One of the mainstays of this budget is the raft of measures to help ordinary Queenslanders make ends meet.

The abolition of the ambulance levy from our electricity bills will reduce bills immediately.

Pensioners and seniors will have their electricity rebate increased by 6.6% to \$230.

And those living within the regions of the South East Water Grid will have the subsidy on their water rates increased by \$20 to \$120.

The maximum council rates rebate for pensioners will be increased by \$20 to \$200.

The Climate smart program will be extended for another two years so Queenslanders will have the opportunity to make potential savings of \$480 on electricity bills.

The Affordable Housing Scheme will continue, increasing the number of four plus star units that will be rented at 20 to 25% below market rates to assist those on low incomes or having temporary financial issues such as after a divorce.

These homes help the aspirational amongst us get a leg up. They will continue to be built around the Peninsula in handy locations.

There is also a continuation of social housing being built.

These solutions will decrease the homelessness and the risk of homelessness in the community.

This Labor Government is about ensuring Queenslanders from all walks of life can make ends meet and have a good quality of life.

Our schools have also benefited from the budget. These include:

\$11,000 for two separate maintenance works at Clontarf Beach High

\$6,000 for maintenance work at Humpybong State School

\$23,000 for three separate maintenance works at Kippa Ring State School

\$26,000 for two separate maintenance works at Redcliffe High

And \$51,000 for three separate maintenance works at Scarborough

Schools will get \$328million for construction to prepare for Year 7 students going to high school and \$50million for the State School Investment Program so that in 2015 when our children go to high school everything will be ready and they can get straight on with the business of learning.

Community Groups have not been forgotten with:

\$32,000 of \$64,000 to upgrade the lighting to four junior football fields at Kippa Ring

\$88,000 of \$175,000 towards the installation of lighting to baseball fields at Talobilla Park

Also \$170,000 of \$231,370 to continue to replace the toilet facilities at Comboyuro Campground on Moreton Island

The budget also includes strategies to stimulate the housing market.

For six months Queenslanders who construct or buy a new home, whether it is a family home or an investment, up to the value of \$600,000 will be eligible for a \$10,000 grant.

There is still no stamp duty to pay for first home buyers who purchase a home under \$500,000 and they can get grants of up to \$17,000.

These measures will help Queenslanders into their first homes and alleviate some pressure on the rental market.

And they will encourage Queenslanders to invest in new homes increasing the total number of houses available.

There is also increased funding for health and police.

This budget also supports the economy with \$85.5million over five years for new events to support tourism.

Redcliffe has several iconic festivals and we would be happy to have more. I know we do them well and they will help boost our fledgling tourism industry as they will right across the state.

There is a \$15billion program to support 93,000 jobs. For Redcliffe that means our Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Green Army programs will continue.

\$52,000 will go to the Redcliffe Leagues Club to employ a local coordinator to support six rugby league clubs and a netball club in the Moreton Bay Region.

\$52,000 each will go towards one coordinator to support six baseball clubs and another to support six Touch Football Clubs and a community group.

\$100 million will also be spent over three years on Smart State initiatives.

This Budget sketches a strong vision for Queensland and a plan for a better lifestyle for all Queenslanders. It sets out a program to stimulate the economy and supports growth in jobs but it has something for everyone. To make ends meet for householders, for community and sporting groups and in our vital social infrastructure of education, health and police.

I commend the Treasurer for his vision in producing a well rounded budget that will jump start our economy and will ensure our children will have a better future.

I commend the Appropriation Bill 2011 to the House.



**Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (4.16 pm):** I am pleased today to speak to the state budget. There is no boon but more gloom in this state budget. Despite the \$17 billion in asset sales, state debt will increase by \$6 billion. State debt will rise to \$52.8 billion and is expected to reach \$85 billion in four years, with an hourly interest payment of \$595,000. That is a lot of money, and people need to understand what this really relates to. Had this money been channelled into infrastructure, say, in my electorate, it would have funded 28 kilometres of upgrades to the Warrego Highway every day. Twenty-eight kilometres of highway would be funded every day with the interest that we will be paying on this Labor government's debt. People need to understand how much this money really is and what it would do if it were used properly.

The removal of the principal place of residence concession will result in making it more expensive to buy a house by \$7,175. The LNP will reintroduce the principal place of residence concession for transfer duty. The temporary new home scheme will be of short-term advantage for some people. However, the overall housing plan in the budget will not be successful.

I have recently sent out a 'have your say' in my electorate, and that has confirmed the views that I had of what is needed to boost this state and what I believe should have been in the budget. Roads were the No. 1 priority across-the-board. There has been such a deplorable lack of funding and assistance for the road network throughout this whole state for a long, long time. We need to upgrade the Warrego Highway. We need to have a four-lane highway from Brisbane right through to Dalby and then a proper two-lane highway at least to Roma and the rest of it maintained and upgraded. There is work being done out there in relation to the road from Roma to Mitchell for type 2 road trains. That is certainly welcome. That is money that has come from the federal government that was allocated and earmarked quite a long time ago.

We need to upgrade the Condamine Highway to try to get as many of those road trains off the Warrego Highway as we can. It is a perfectly good road that was put through during the war by the Americans. It gets away from the heavy black soil country and it is a far better place to actually have a road. I am not suggesting that we change the category of the road, but if we can update that road and put more road trains on it, that would be a safer road, a better road and an easier road to maintain in the long term.

We need more passing lanes. There are no passing lanes in Western Queensland and we desperately need them. There are convoys of trucks heading out into that area with all of the coal seam gas development and mining areas. We definitely need some real attention to safety on the road network in those areas.

The cost of living is going up everywhere. Taxes seem to be going up and up and up—registration, electricity, water, rates, rent. The LNP will reform electricity tariffs and freeze the standard domestic tariff 11 and this will reduce the cost of living in Queensland.

Coal seam gas is a huge industry out there. We certainly welcome the CSG industry but we also have to make sure there is a balance between what is good for the CSG industry, what is good for the landholders and what is good for the state of Queensland overall. We need to do a lot more work on making sure that both industries are viable. We need to have better arrangements in relation to access to land and the long-term viability and sustainability of the CSG industry, and we need to have some certainty.

We need to resource the regions. We need to get money back into those areas where there is an enormous amount of work and damage being done to the infrastructure, particularly the roads and the airports. The Roma Airport is a good example. Something like \$7 million will be needed to upgrade that airport. Santos and Origin are putting money in, which is really good. When the CSG companies first went out there, they were supporting the race meetings, the football matches and things like that and that was good, but we have to go into the real assistance that is needed in those regions. The companies are slowly doing it now but we certainly need to do a lot more to make sure the infrastructure is there for the long term.

In the responses that came back in the 'have your say', people said they were very unhappy with the forced council amalgamations simply because of the ongoing consequences, such as an increase in rates, a reduction in services and the general lack of community involvement that is occurring. These are the sorts of things that could have been addressed in the budget.

We need more assistance. The government grants system that was in place was taken away and it has not been increased in this budget—in fact, it is exactly the same as it was last year—so that will not help. This will mean that councils will have to increase their rates to try to manage their very serious funding shortfalls. A lot of the councils out there are facing severe financial pressure. In fact, I think we will see council debt go from something like \$2 billion up to \$6 billion. I have heard recently that it might even go as high as \$10 billion to \$15 billion in the out years. We cannot sit back and allow that to happen. Councils have been forced to go out and borrow this money to try to get the infrastructure in place—infrastructure which, in many instances, is the responsibility of the state government.

We need to get the rail services back. I have tried for a long, long time to instill in a lot of the government bureaucrats the need to include rail freight when they do their calculations for road costings. They need to put them both together and do the equation that way. If we can put more freight on rail and take it off the road, we will require less maintenance on the road network. We are seeing it out there all the time. We have a good train line that goes out west, but it is hardly used at all. It is used this end when it carts coal down to Brisbane, but there are only two Westlanders a week and they cart a couple of wagon loads of freight on the back, and there is one freight train that goes out there as well. As for cattle trains—

**Mr Johnson:** Where are they?

**Mr HOBBS:** Where are they, as the member for Gregory said. We need to bring them back and get the freight off the roads. This is the sort of thing that should have been addressed in the budget. These are common-sense things and people are saying that all the time. We have government waste. We need to be able to reduce the red tape. Government programs start but they do not finish.

We need to do better in relation to disaster management. People are sick to death of the flooding and the disasters that keep coming along. They are coming in the same place with the same result, the same clean-up and the same heartache. We need to manage these and put in place more flood mitigation works—for instance, levy banks. Fixing up some of this flooding is not rocket science; it is quite simple. All we have to do is provide some assistance, and the councils can do that. We have to put in place more flood measuring stations upstream. If people have better advice about what is coming downstream, they have a real chance of trying to fight the natural disaster as it comes. We need more support for the rural properties and businesses that are impacted by these floods.

In the 'have your say', people came back and said that there were not enough doctors and dentists. In Charleville, for instance, which is a major service centre in Western Queensland, there is only one GP and they do not take new patients so other people have to go public. We need more visiting specialists. I know it is often hard to try to find these specialists but at the end of the day we have to try harder and do a better job. I know at different times we have gone out there and made a super human effort and we have been able to attract doctors and specialists to come to those areas. We certainly need a few more of them.

In relation to education, we are finding that bullying in schools is extraordinary. I am amazed and disappointed at the amount of bullying that is going on. There are a couple of schools in my area that are in absolute turmoil about this issue. In a couple of schools, the headmasters have been stood down and it is taking so long to resolve the issue. We want to get these matters fixed up. I understand due process has to be followed if there is an Industrial Relations Commission involved and this type of thing, but at the end of the day we need a stable school environment for those students. The parents have to be happy that they have a stable and good environment for education. I have some areas out there that are really serious and they are going to blow up. I am trying the best I can to manage that but the bullying part is quite extraordinary. I just do not understand it, but that is what happens these days.

We have had trouble with the electricity supply to Mitchell, which is one of my towns, for many years. I would have liked to have seen some more funding in the budget to make sure that companies, such as Ergon, can do some more work on that. I suppose we have to keep on working at it. The supply there is deteriorating again.

We need more assistance put into the drugs problem. It is extraordinary to see how prevalent drugs are becoming in those regions, and it is disappointing. There was a break-in two doors from my office the other day. These guys came in and they cut the telephone wires; they left syringes in the place they broke into, for heaven's sake. They caused chaos in the town because it was days before the telephone lines were back on. It is just disappointing. These people are blow-ins and they cause such havoc. There is a fair bit more to that, but I will leave it there.

I want to talk to the Minister for Health about an issue in relation to the Maranoa Retirement Village. This is a wonderful retirement village in Mitchell that was put in place and supported by the council. It was costing a lot of money to run and the council felt it could not afford to keep on doing that so basically it announced that it would close it down. We now have 15 people out there who are going to have to move somewhere else and this is causing great anxiety. I think it is very important that people who have a service now retain that service. There is no question: we have to maintain that service in that town of Mitchell. We need the retirement village to stay there in some manner or form; we could attach it to the hospital, as has been done in other areas. We need to talk our way through this because I am sure there is a solution to this. Those people are already in that village. If we had to say to them, 'We can't look after you anymore in your old age. You can go somewhere else,' that would not be good enough. I hope to talk to the minister about that today and see what we can do.

Compensation for landholders in relation to CSG is an important issue. There needs to be a minimum compensation package put together for CSG and mining. Landholders whose land is required for mining purposes should receive 150 per cent of the asset value of that land because they cannot move from where they are and buy something else of equivalent value. Why should they lose? They should not have to get something less because their land is required for a mine. It is the same with gas wells. Landholders should be paid a minimum of \$10,000 a well because of the ongoing impacts.

We are seeing enormous issues arising. When those landholders want to sell their land or want a valuation, they should be able to include their land, their stock and their plant. If there are wells on the land, they should be able to say that they are returning a certain amount of money per year which makes it reasonably attractive—it does not have to be over the top—for people to want to buy that land. Time and time again I hear that the value of land has gone down dramatically and that those landholders who want to sell their properties have put them on the market and real estate agents have said that people have inquired as to whether there is any CSG drilling or potential drilling in those areas. If there is, those buyers are not interested. That is a real issue. It is hard to pick the market—we understand that—but at the end of the day that would be one way to solve that very important issue.

There are a number of other important issues that I want to talk about. Today I thought it would be interesting to read one particular letter which was a very common-sense response in relation to asking constituents to have their say in my electorate. This letter is from a lady at Jandowae. She said—

#### Roads

Why is it that since amalgamation of councils less maintenance has been carried out on local roads? Potholes that were present at the beginning of the year are still there—not even a bit of gravel put in them, causing damage to cars. Cars are an expensive investment in the first place. You are not expecting them to be damaged just driving on the road. Then we have cars swerving trying to avoid potholes while we have the Premier sitting on a couple of hundred million. Should we turn into some overseas culture and start suing each other?



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Government service delivery

Why isn't the government placing more services out in rural areas instead of having them in major cities? It would be more work, especially for your people. It would help to relocate long-term workers to the country which would promote other businesses.

Mining and coal seam gas development

More and more mining leases are being given out. What are we going to eat in the future, or doesn't anybody care about Australia? Apparently not!


Cost of living

Fuel is putting extra cost on living. Perhaps we need two railway lines to the ports—one for coal and one for farming and other products. It might keep some of the heavy loads off the roads, which is and will continue to damage them.

Health

Why haven't larger hospitals been built inland to accommodate all the cancer patients et cetera?

I could go on and on, but I think members get where I am coming from. There was so much more that we could have done in this budget—so much more we could have done for the people of Queensland. If we had not been in such a parlous state of debt, doing more for the people of Queensland certainly would have been a lot easier. Unfortunately, debt is in the ALP's DNA. It will take many years of hard work to grow the economy in order to pull us out of this debt. I say this to the people of Queensland: make sure that in future you take your electricity bills to the ballot box.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.33 pm): The Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, reminds me of the Iraqi information officer: as the bombs fell, as the plaster cracked and scattered around their feet—as the disaster of that situation unfolded—there was the Iraqi information officer saying, 'No, there's no problem. We're fine. Nothing happening here to worry about.' It seems that that mantra has been taken on by this deceitful government. It has ample spin doctors to say that it has a policy and a plan, but when we look at its track record we see that it is just another hollow promise waiting to be broken.

We are now in a situation where this state has lost its AAA credit rating. We are now in a situation where this state has seen major assets sold, but still the debt continues to climb. We are now in a situation where this government promised that it was going to cut the waste, cut the red tape and actually stimulate the local economy, and it broke its promise. There was an announcement from this government in the budget that miraculously it was going to cut the red tape now—another repeated promise—by creating a new position, a business commissioner whose task it will be to undertake this role. But let me remind the people of Queensland: the last time this government promised to cut red tape and help small businesses in this state, what did it do? It increased the cost of doing business in this state. In fact, it increased the amount of red tape by more than 13 per cent in a period of just over 12 months. In terms of anything this government says it is going to do, we see the opposite manifest. That is once again the very danger in the promises that this government makes to the people of Queensland.

We look at this government's track record and we know that it is lying to the people of Queensland, and once again the people of Queensland will pay the price. When there has been mismanagement by this government, who pays for it? Who pays the price? It is ordinary Queenslanders who pay the price when they go to pay their petrol bill at the bowser, because this government lied to the people of Queensland and imposed a petrol tax.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Maroochydore, you know that that language is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw it.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I withdraw. This government deliberately misled the people of Queensland and imposed a petrol tax by taking away the full tax rebate. This government deliberately and wantonly misled the people of Queensland by promising not to sell the assets that the people of Queensland were so proud of and had an investment in, and then it went ahead and did that. We now see a situation where these assets have been flogged off but the debt continues to rise, as does the waste of this government—\$540,000 an hour for peak debt interest repayments, and that is to be paid by all of those people—ordinary Queenslanders—who look at their bills caused by this government.

There has been an increase in the amount of taxation this government expects Queenslanders to fork out, and now we see another dead brake—a lead in the saddlebags; in fact a concrete weight—on a struggling economy with the impact upon our housing market. What this state government has done with the increase in stamp duty is being heralded with cries of greater distress in an economy that is already struggling, and this government has no idea. So it has a business commissioner that it says will miraculously now cut red tape while it had an Office for Regulatory Efficiency which failed to do that. Where did that Office for Regulatory Efficiency sit? In Treasury! I have no doubt that there are some good people who are seeking to do their job there, but there is a very important message that comes from this: despite all of the hot air and the spin doctoring by this Treasurer, the government has lost control. It is unable to control the regulation of its own entities, even from Treasury. It has lost the discipline of good government. It has lost the discipline of even understanding what is good government. Once again, the people and our local economy are paying.

The situation with waste in this state is one where the government wastes the money and Queenslanders pay the cost. We say that it is time to cut the waste, and more can be done to help people in effective service delivery. There is a litany of examples of this government wasting money, and there are some simple answers in respect of saving money. The first thing is that you have to admit where there have been mistakes made so you do not keep making them. I think that is pretty basic, but does this government do it? No! It will not admit that it has made any mistakes, but it keeps making them. We know that of the \$7 billion spent on the water grid at least \$2 billion was completely flushed down the drain—flushed down the drain except for that nasty sting in the tail, and that is that ordinary Queenslanders are paying for it through their increased water bills. We have seen a situation where \$600 million was spent on a Traveston Dam that was never built; half a billion dollars—\$500,000—is being spent currently, as we speak, on the northern pipeline interconnector 2; the desalination plant has largely been mothballed and has rusted at a value of \$1.1 billion; and the budget of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project has seen a blow-out of more than \$700 million.

It is important to talk about a track record. We should learn from the mistakes of this government, because you do not want to keep making them. One basic essential of good economic management is that major projects should have a business case. Did the government have a business case for that \$7 billion expenditure? Only on one project, and that I think is an indication of where the incompetence of this government is at its height.

There are other projects on which this government has wasted money but, once again, the government does not admit that there has been a mistake. So it is destined to make the same mistake again and expect Queenslanders to pay for it. Such is the case with the so-called smart driver's licence. More than \$110 million was spent on a project that, according to the former Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, was not originally supposed to cost anything. Then it was \$20 million and now it is \$112 million. But the licence does not do a fraction of the things that this government said that it would do originally.

Then there is the \$200,000 wasted on water restriction fridge magnets that were never distributed. But what about the money that was spent on those T-shirts that were supposed to advertise 'Buy Queensland made', except those T-shirts were made overseas? So the government ditched those. Once again, that waste is symbolic of the systemic issues of an arrogant government that has been there for too long, that says, 'No, there's no waste. We're not wasting money,' and it never admits where it has made mistakes. But once again, ordinary Queenslanders are expected to pay for the government's mistakes.

I have confidence that the people of Queensland and many of the fine public servants who are trying to do their jobs have the answers. They are quite adamant that the answer to cutting waste really should be about empowering the people and listening to their voice. I include in those people the good public servants who have been frustrated as they see their advice ignored about ways to deliver services more cost effectively to this state and to meet need.

Let me address some of the issues relating to housing. The federal government rolled out money for the building of public housing in this state. What did the government do? Yes, there were projects built, but they did not ask, 'Where is the need? What is the best way to meet that need?', which is not all the same. The government essentially had people lining up offering it blocks of land and projects that were ready to go. Then it said, 'Okay, we are going to build that project,' such as the one at Palm Cove. In that case the product that was delivered did not meet the local need. As I understand it, there were spinal injuries patients and there were people from an area of need who were told, 'This is the product for you.' It was a very nice product, but it was 20 kilometres away from local hospitals where those people's need was to be near service centres and where, quite understandably, their need was to be near public transport. But the government did not look at the need and the best, most cost-effective way to meet that need. The government took on projects that, in many regards, are indicative again that it was not addressing the real needs of the social housing mix.

Communities across Queensland are bearing the brunt of Labor's economic mismanagement and lack of planning. The cost-of-living increases have a financial impact on family tables, but they also have a social impact. Participation, emotional and mental wellbeing, community development and individual confidence are all casualties of skyrocketing bills and economic failures. The result is isolation and increased need. Just as the government has failed to comprehend its economic mistakes, so, too, is it ignoring the impact on our communities, both in terms of the people in need and the people who provide the assistance.

The minister can boast as much as she likes about this budget, but the fact is that it is empty. It does not deliver for our community. It takes away from our community. In fact, an accurate measure of the minister's performance may well be the Service Delivery Statements itself. Just two service standards relating to community services remain in the budget. The minister is content to measure her performance and the department's addressing of the very real areas of need and vulnerability in the community on just two measures. What are those all important measures? The percentage of volunteers and the uptake of the Seniors Card. They are really central issues! The government does not

even acknowledge the real heroes of volunteering—the community sector. In fact, the government does not even have actual statistics on how many people volunteer. For the record, the uptake of Seniors Cards is down. The community services budget has been reduced to nothing—no encouragement for a sector that is weighed down with cost-of-living increases, no assistance really for families, seniors and people in need.

Over recent years as electricity prices, water prices, car registration, petrol prices and food prices have risen, more and more people have been pushed to the brink of crisis and it is the non-government sector that has been there to provide assistance, counselling, vouchers and goods. The non-government sector has done that in an environment of ever-increasing need and ever-increasing bureaucracy and cost. The red tape that I was talking about before impacts not just on our business community; it impacts on the charitable sector as well. This government does not make it easy for the non-government sector to operate. It implements red tape and paperwork. It creates new rules and regulations without consultation or understanding of the impact of those new rules and regulations.

A non-government organisation has to deal with up to nine different government agencies, all with different rules and forms, just to receive simple funding. I say nine, but I have heard of examples of up to 14 different agencies that non-government organisations have to deal with. Non-government organisations are literally having to employ people just to deal with the ever-increasing amount of government paperwork and red tape. That is hardly the optimal engagement of funds that these organisations work so hard for as they try to help Queenslanders.

The cost of the operations of NGOs are increasing. Just like every household in Queensland, NGOs have operational costs and they pay today higher electricity, water and car costs. The wage increase was met with a limited and token response from the government and it seems that the government has certainly moved on from any need to offer any support to any organisations that are still struggling to keep afloat. This government's attitude to the community sector is, as the minister stated in the estimates hearing last year, that they should find efficiencies, that somehow these organisations are not already operating on a shoestring, that these organisations should stand by while this government wastes billions of dollars in failed IT projects, wasted water infrastructure, red tape cutting teams that oversee increases in bureaucracy, and similar stories throughout each department.

How difficult is it for these organisations, filled with people who genuinely want to make a difference to those in need, to jump through the hoops for money to be told to make more efficiencies at the same time as they see hurt inflicted on our communities. The non-government sector provides the front-line services. That sector knows it is needed in our community because it sees it every day. The non-government sector knows the increase in homelessness and hunger, the pressure on families and individuals and the isolation that plagues people who are restricted in their community participation. But this government is not listening to the non-government sector. It simply imposes more and more regulation and paperwork.

A reflection of this government's lack of understanding of the need in our community is the minister's attitude to homelessness and housing. Indeed, this morning the House was again subjected to the minister's pride that she was delivering fewer than 15 new houses in the next 12 months. This figure is in the same budget that shows that for every one of these houses built, presuming they are all built and built on time, there will be more than two new people added to the waiting list. There are already more than 30,000 people on that waiting list—more than 30,000 people waiting for long-term housing. The minister expects applause because she will provide housing for five per cent of the people on that list while that list grows by more than 10 per cent. That is this government's version of economic management. But then this government's management of housing has gone from appalling to horrendous, because it is not listening to the community, it is not listening to the NGOs and those who are trying to deliver wraparound care.

Whenever the waiting list gets too long it just changes the list; it wipes a few people off it. When there are floods it does not bother to include displaced people on any of the lists. Then there is a waiting list for housing in an area and it builds the project somewhere completely different for the area of need.

Just look at the implementation of the federal Nation Building Program. It seems that the government has this mindset: 'Why would we build facilities in areas of high need and homelessness if we can build them in areas with no actual waiting lists, no medical facilities for 20 kilometres and in a place that is recommended against by the department's own staff?' That is actually seriously the way the minister has operated her department. As some of this minister's own staff said of the Palm Cove project, 'Unless advised otherwise, due to the lack of support from the area office and the absence of services nearby, I would not support progressing this project.' What was the minister's response? Well, the project was progressed. This budget has seen a slashing of housing funds. From \$733 million last year, funding for capital works and housing are plummeting to \$254 million—a 65 per cent cut, when housing needs are still at their most acute.

Other parts of the Capital Statement make interesting reading, such as the reannouncement of the Moranbah Youth Centre, a highlight of this budget. It was a highlight of last year's budget, too. But of the \$3 million promised last year just \$450,000 was spent, or just 15 per cent.

Another area that greatly affects the non-government sector is the regulation surrounding employment of those working with children—the blue card system. Increasingly there are accounts of people waiting too long for applications and renewals of their blue cards. No-one disputes the need for regulation in this area, but the Bligh Labor government's bureaucracy has almost doubled the amount of time Queensland's volunteers and NGO employees are waiting for their blue card. Processing delays, which have blown out the average time to between 17 and 29 days, are causing chaos for many of Queensland's community organisations. Prospective employees and volunteers wanting to undertake work around children are forced to wait or change plans because over the last 12 months the percentage of employment-screening applications processed in the 28-day time frame has plummeted from 87 per cent to just 30 per cent. The government blames new processes, legislative change, new databases, record numbers of applications and the impact of the floods, but the delays are hitting Queensland's community sector hard.

The biggest difficulty I have with this budget is that it leaves out so much. It ignores so much. Seniors are reduced to a line in the budget on the Seniors Card. There really is nothing for them in this budget, just as there really is nothing for families. There is nothing to address the very real need in our community, a need that has certainly been exacerbated, if not created, by this government's incompetence.

The LNP's focus is on empowering communities, working with the NGO sector to deliver housing and wraparound care and respecting that those at the front line delivering services deserve to be consulted and involved. We believe that it is about helping people in crisis but in particular also focusing on breaking the cycle of poverty. Instead, this government is tipping a record number of people into poverty. This government that claims it is the battler's friend is creating an awful lot of battlers through its policies, which have put such a high cost of living onto people who are now the new working poor. There is a situation in this state where those who are homeless are not always without a job. In fact, some have jobs and may be living in their car. They may have missed the mortgage payment. As we have heard, Queensland is leading Australia in regard to mortgage stress and foreclosures on mortgaged properties. These issues are a direct signal of the way this government has mismanaged the economy.

When I saw the minister with a pink hard hat on this morning I was thinking, 'That's the begging bowl they put out—a begging bowl for many Queenslanders who were once able to pay their way, until this government put its hand in their pocket and ripped out their last dollar.'



**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (4.54 pm): I would describe Labor's 2011-12 state budget as another disappointing bankcard budget. This is another year when all funding for Queensland will be put on credit, with a now surging \$80 billion deficit on which the interest repayments will be \$595,000 per hour. It is an utter disgrace that the \$15 billion sale of Queensland's profitable assets has done nothing to reduce this debt.

I do welcome the abolition of the ambulance cover levy as many Queenslanders have been paying this levy multiple times year after year. It will provide some relief from the government's massive increases to the cost of electricity and car registration. The abolition of this tax is long overdue. I believe that Peter Beattie introduced it around 2003-04 because the Ambulance Service went broke. At that time no other Premier in Queensland had run a bankrupt Ambulance Service. Even former Premier Wayne Goss was able to manage the Ambulance Service, but not Peter Beattie.

The sad thing about this budget is the \$80 billion deficit. It all started when the Labor Party opposed the Wolffdene Dam. After that there was a water crisis. Then Peter Beattie flew over the Traveston Crossing and put his hand on his heart and said, 'I will build my dam there.' Then we had the energy crisis. Then we had the health crisis. We had crisis after crisis and now we have an \$80 billion deficit.

I acknowledge the \$10,000 grant to Queenslanders constructing or purchasing a new home up to the value of \$600,000, with first home buyers also eligible for the \$7,000 first home buyer grant, which will give a much needed boost to the housing industry and homebuyers. However, the government needs to be condemned for the average increase in stamp duty of over \$7,000. This means that stamp duty for a \$400,000 home will increase from \$5,250 to over \$11,825.

I welcome the \$8.5 million to reinvest in the Walkamin Research Station and the Mareeba Client and Training Centre. I bring to the attention of the House the importance of the Kairi Research Station and question whether it is saveable, because the government has sold off the dairy herd of that research station. I believe that there is a completely different climate from Walkamin to Mareeba and, likewise, to the southern part of the Tablelands when one is looking between Mount Garnett and Charters Towers, where we see the research station now in place. Kairi is important for research and extension. It is a completely different climate. When you travel through there it is raining and by the time you get to Walkamin it is dry. I stress the importance of retaining the Kairi Research Station.

The \$25 million in disaster response funding to improve the Kennedy Developmental Road from Three Ways to the Lynd Junction was a step in the right direction. That road is pounded day in, day out by triples, quadruples and road trains carrying superconcentrate. There needs to be better investment. It is great that we can spend \$25 million, but we need a lot of work put into that road so that each year it is not ripped up and torn to pieces by those quadruple road trains.

Also welcome is the funding for the auxiliary fire station at Millaa Millaa, as well as the allocation of \$4 million to provide new housing for the aged across the Tablelands. This is a much needed investment in aged-care accommodation. The member for Cook knows that aged care is a big issue in the Tablelands area.

Another new announcement is the construction of two new overtaking lanes on the Flinders Highway between Townsville and Charters Towers. This \$4.2 million initiative is money well spent. Since the closure of our rail service this section has become a deathtrap. It is very difficult to overtake, particularly from Mingela to Charters Towers. There are winding curves and ranges.

**Mr Johnson:** You have to have a two-way radio to tell them you are coming.

**Mr KNUTH:** That is right. Two overtaking lanes is a step in the right direction. However, the road between Townsville and the Burdekin has eight overtaking lanes while the road between Charters Towers and Townsville has only one overtaking lane. While two more overtaking lanes are to be constructed, a lot more work needs to be done.

It is an unbelievable joke that we closed down our rail freight services. The massive mining industry in the western province around Mount Isa and Cloncurry, and the farming communities around Julia Creek, Richmond and Hughenden, and the smaller towns in-between, rely on road transportation for everything. The ridiculous thing is that we have a railway line—the great northern railroad—running beside the main road, the Flinders Highway, all the way to Mount Isa. Just west of Bells Creek, a road train toppled over and blocked the road for 2½ hours. For two to three hours road trains, trucks, cars and other vehicles blocked the road for as far as the eye could see, yet there is a railway track running right beside the road with no transport on it.

It is disappointing that the budget contains no increase in the patient travel subsidy. This is a big issue for rural and regional Queensland, because in the past 20 years we have seen our health services downsized. Our hospitals have been downgraded to health centres. Our medical services have been moved to major centres such as Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, which have become stressed like they are at the present moment. If we want to look after the main regional hospitals at Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, we have to look after the regional and rural hospitals. If we look after them, we will keep people in their communities, we will keep people off the roads, we will save money in the patient travel subsidy scheme and we will take the pressure off the major regional hospitals on the coast.

It is ridiculous that the patient travel subsidy scheme has been increased by only 5c. It now pays 15c a kilometre and \$30 for a motel. That payment of 15c a kilometre has been increased only once in 15 years. It is an insult, especially as more people have to travel because of the downsizing of our health services in rural and regional Queensland. The way to solve that problem is to invest in health services.

This has been a big issue for the chemotherapy service at Atherton, which they are trying to downsize. People feel a great frustration about that. Many Tablelanders are forced to use the chemo service in Cairns, even though there is one available in the Tablelands. At a most vulnerable time in life, the last thing you want to do is drive down the range and find a parking spot at the hospital in the city and then have to try to access the travel subsidy scheme. That problem can be resolved by letting people access chemo services in their local hospitals. I bring this to the attention of the House because we want to save the chemo service in Atherton at all costs. There is no need to downsize it. The minister must thoroughly invest in that service. He has committed not to downgrade it, but we want to know why all our Tablelands patients are being directed to Cairns, especially at this most vulnerable time in their lives.

It is very important that the government is providing funding for the two overtaking lanes. The minister bragged about the \$17 million of disaster funding to be spent on the Flinders Highway. An issue that has been brought up time and time again relates to the Homestead community. Only two months ago, a drop of rain led to the closure for two days of Shovel Creek, Gardiner Creek and Puddler Creek. All livestock and all trucks were stuck for two days. The town of Petlin was a catastrophe, because the road was blocked following a small drop of rain. We need funds invested into that low-lying area. A whole mineral province can be cut off from a drop of rain. If the road was raised by two or three metres—that is all it needs—the problem would be resolved and people would not be caught, year after year.

It is also important that we flood proof the Gregory Developmental Road from Charters Towers to Mount Garnet. It was a catastrophe when that road was blocked off at Tully. There was no access anywhere. Once road users knew that there was an inland highway, there was a constant convoy of vehicles on it. We have a golden opportunity to have an inland highway to relieve traffic congestion on the coast. To create that inland highway all we need to do is upgrade a few creek crossings, such as at Fletcher Creek, Basalt River, Clarke River, Stockyard Creek and Snake Creek. Raising the crossings a little would create the inland highway and—bang! We would not have the issues that we experience with the Bruce Highway today. It is important that the minister acknowledges that and invests in it, because it is a serious issue.

I turn to the Peak Downs Highway. In coal alone, \$6 billion in gross revenue comes out of the region, but the road is a catastrophe. A lot of money must be invested into that road. The government needs to take a good look at it. On the Tablelands, half a billion dollars of gross revenue comes out of the region from agriculture alone, but at Atherton the Gillies Highway is a disaster. The Kennedy Highway is a billy goat track.

**Mr O'Brien:** Oh, it is not.

**Mr KNUTH:** It is. The member should go and look at the Tumoulin Road turnoff. If he does not think it is a billy goat track, he should go and have a look at it. It is a billy goat track. The Millaa Millaa-Malanda Road has B-double access and is full of potholes. It is hard to get vehicles through it and is always blocked off. Often you cannot get through because of thick fog. Another problem exists with the Watsonville to Bakerville road. On that road the school bus has broken down seven times and the kids have been stuck in the bus. I know that the minister will be very sympathetic to that cause. We need about seven kilometres of that road sealed to solve the problem once and for all.

The budget contains a number of reannouncements, such as the Moranbah Youth Centre, the Ravenshoe Ambulance Station and the Charters Towers high school skills centre. Even though it has been a reannounced budget, those things are still much appreciated. I wanted to bring those issues to the attention of the House.



**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.07 pm): This is a good budget in bad times. It is good for the people of Rockhampton. It offers to those whom the Labor party seeks office to represent relief from the cost of living. It offers financial assistance to those who have paid their dues to our society and have helped build Queensland—that is, the pensioners who now struggle to make ends meet. This budget recognises the two industries that need our help to survive the economic downturn: the building industry and the tourism industry. It further recognises the need for bold incentives in home investment, not just to help young people into homeownership but also to stimulate our lagging housing industry, which contributes so significantly to our economy.

On the Rocky front I am pleased that the Treasurer was able to accept my submission to continue to fund our Riverbank Redevelopment, which now brings the total expenditure for the showgrounds, sports and riverbank precinct to close on \$60 million. All of this from a Labor government in which I have been proud to serve. This latest funding will provide an extra \$2 million for the further development of the world-class swimming pool, which was funded under last year's budget. This extra funding will allow for further projects such as a wading pool and grandstand to be considered. However, the bottom line is that we will have the only international standard swimming pool outside Brisbane. I thank swimming stalwarts Bill Dobson and Cyril Thomasson for their unwavering support for this project. It is worth noting that no ratepayers will have to fork out for its construction.

On the subject of the riverbank proper, this budget provides \$6 million towards new infrastructure on both sides of the river that will include a new exercise park between the two bridges and fishing platforms on the northern bank. Just last weekend we saw over 1,000 Rockyites participate in a fun run that used the facilities provided by this government, and this latest funding will enhance events like this. In fact, when I came into parliament the Fitzroy River bank was overgrown by guinea grass. It is particularly satisfying to end my time here with this project, which gives greater access to and enjoyment of this great river.

Last week I announced that the Queensland Labor government would split the \$900,000 cost of repairing the airport with the federal government following the damage caused by the flood. Today we announced \$900 million worth of repairs to our Central Queensland roads. This is an enormous commitment to Central Queensland and will create jobs while repairing and upgrading our roads. Last year, following representations from Mayor Brad Carter, the state government committed to the development of industrial land just west of Gracemere. It is pleasing to see that this commitment is being delivered by way of an instalment of \$8 million out of the \$50 million commitment.

I note that again there is a record budget in the health department. When we came to government in 1998 the Health budget was less than \$2 billion. This year it will exceed \$11 billion, which demonstrates our commitment to a free health system that treats, on average, at Rockhampton Base Hospital a patient every 20 minutes. I well recall how during its brief period in office between 1996 and 1998 the National Party took \$9 million out of the \$26 million hospital redevelopment that had been

committed by the Goss Labor government. Since we came back into office, the base hospital has been a continuous building site. Some \$70 million has been committed which has given us some of the best hospital facilities in the country. For example, the recently completed accident and emergency building rivals any such facility in the world.

When I entered this parliament in 1989 I made the point that Labor governments believed that education was the key to equality, and I highlighted the poor condition of the schools in my electorate and the lack of priority placed on education by the National Party. Our teachers were the lowest paid in the country and Queensland funded education was the lowest in the country. I am proud to say that successive Labor governments have overturned the previous status where Queensland was at the bottom of the class. It is great to see that our 15-year-olds are achieving at a level amongst the highest in the world. We are now a leader in the world in education, thanks to the investment that successive Labor governments have made. It is a matter of great pride to me to have been part of this great journey that has taken us from the state that was least prominent in education to one that can truly claim to be the smart state.

This budget is about values. It strives to commit and redirect our limited financial resources to those which are in greatest need, in the true spirit of Labor policy. So it is not surprising that it is criticised by the opposition. I recall when the opposition opposed the reforms to our Ambulance Service. The last 20 years have seen the service transformed from a community based board system that depended on charity and chocolate wheels, through the community levy, to now a fully funded, world-leading service. Every Rocky citizen who has been paying the ambulance levy will never have to do so again. The funds to do this will come from bringing to an end the tax break that homeowners get when they change their principal place of residence, remembering of course that first home owners pay no stamp duty on homes under \$500,000. No other state in Australia rewards people for trading their principal place of residence. Quite frankly, it is time that people like me, who own their own home, do not look for a subsidy from the taxpayer when they trade.

The funds from this most fair reallocation of budget funds are being used to provide a one-off stimulus to the building industry to build its way out of the doldrums by providing a \$17,000 boost to first home buyers and a \$10,000 incentive package to housing investors in the next six months of this year. This will create jobs and provide economic growth and much needed affordable housing.

The other beneficiary of this decision to redirect the funds away from subsidies to homeowners will be the pensioners who struggle to make ends meet. We have the lowest stamp duties in Australia and we have the highest level of assistance to pensioners of any state. This budget delivers a record \$1.385 billion worth of subsidies to pensioners. Rates rebates will be increased to \$200 and rebates for electricity will be increased to \$230. These are just two examples that show that Queensland pensioners are the best looked after in Australia—as they should be—by a Labor government.

We have heard a lot from those opposite about debt. We never hear them say that Queenslanders, on average, pay \$501 less state tax than any other Australian. We never hear the opposition say that we as a state have faced up to our responsibility to rebuild the state after the worst disasters in a lifetime, which are costing us over \$6.8 billion including \$2.7 billion to local governments like the Rockhampton Regional Council and \$2.9 billion in repairing road damage. We hear nothing from those opposite as to which of the \$15 billion worth of capital works such as the Rocky hospital, roads and the new industrial park at Stanwell they would scrap. There is no mention from those opposite of the fact that this state leads the country in economic growth and that it is our responsibility to build infrastructure to help the state grow and employ people.

Every Queenslanders understands that without debt we would be living in caves. I well recall sleepless nights 30 years ago when we borrowed \$30,000 for our home in Main Street, where we still live. The bank loaned us the money because, in their view, we could pay it back. I recall the horror with which I added up the interest bill over the 20-year period. So when I hear those opposite rave on about debt, I draw the conclusion that this opposition is merely using base politics to frighten people. The LNP cannot have it both ways. It cannot say on the one hand that we need to spend more in all areas and say on the other hand that we need to borrow less, tax people less and hold onto non-essential businesses that are pushing up debt such as the QR coal business—and if we had held onto that it would have cost us \$750 million to repair due to the floods.

As this is my last speech on a budget, I want to place on record the satisfaction I have had in being the minister for public works that shook this state out of the capital works freeze imposed by the opposition when it was last in government which caused one out of 10 Queenslanders to lose their jobs. And I fear that the LNP is planning to do the same thing again. Cutting the capital works was a disaster that those opposite inflicted on the people of this state. Every time they mention debt, taxpayers should remember that they are being softened up for the sorts of cuts that we are seeing in other states and the loss of thousands of building workers' jobs.

The fact is that business investment in Queensland is higher than in any other state and is expected to increase by around 30 per cent next year. Our economic growth, at five per cent, exceeds that of every other state. So we need to support this by a sustainable debt level, which is what we as a

government are doing. We are providing extra services to deal with the extra growth and this budget, for example, commits record funding to all service areas, including an extra 600 police and an extra 50 ambulance officers.

As I said, this is my last budget speech and, as such, I want to thank those who have supported me in the role of delivering significant projects to our city. On my resignation from the ministry I thanked my wife for her dedication to raising our two great kids and for the support she has given me during my time here, and I reaffirm that statement. I also reiterate my thanks to my family—my mum, my brothers and sister and, of course, my late dad—for all their wonderful support, guidance and advice. I am also indebted to the people who have worked with me in the electorate office—Ann McDougall, Greg Evans, Debra Wickersen and Karen Horstman—who have served the people of my electorate so well. They are loyal, hardworking individuals who intelligently and diligently helped in every way they could the people who came to us for assistance. They kept the home fires burning during my absence from the office in my 13 years as a minister. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I am proud to claim them as friends.

I also thank the loyal Labor members who have been there for me at every election and at times when I have needed them. I am particularly indebted to the branch members who have chosen the next Labor candidate for Rockhampton. Bill Byrne is an excellent candidate and a strong family man who has been managing the Shoalwater Bay training grounds for the last 17 years, having risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Australian Army after an earlier career as an electrician in Queensland Rail. He has managed budgets of over \$100 million and some of the most environmentally sensitive land in Queensland. He has dealt with robust stakeholders such as Indigenous groups, commercial fishers and environmental advocates. He has the same work ethic as I do, a passion for issues like education and a tenacity that will ensure the people of Rockhampton are always foremost in his mission.

I want to thank the electors of Rockhampton for placing the trust in me that they have over such a long period. I know that I have not been perfect. I have never asserted that I am any better than anyone else. I have done the best I could to serve and lead our community while working as hard as I can in their interests. I look forward to retiring in Rocky, which I still believe is the best place in Queensland to live and raise a family.



**Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (5.17 pm): The member for Rockhampton is certainly a very hard act to follow, and he certainly covered the bases in terms of putting this budget in perspective. One of the things that always amazes me about the opposition's budget reply is that we would think we were living just outside the gates of hell because of the way they portray Queensland and the way they think this state is being run. But in reality, if they got around the world and if they travelled a little bit, they would know that Queensland is the best place to be in. It has the best services and the best infrastructure. They are being delivered by a Labor government and by a Labor Treasurer who is doing a fantastic job and has put together a brilliant budget in very difficult financial circumstances.

To put that in some perspective, in other parts of the world places like the United States have unemployment rates well above 10 per cent and other states such as Greece, Portugal and Spain are unable to meet their debt commitments and have high risk of defaulting on their debt. When we compare Queensland to other Western democracies around the globe we see that we are in a very strong financial position, have very strong capability of meeting our debt obligations and, more importantly, are using the resources that we have to build for the future to ensure this state remains the best in which to live in not just Australia but also the world.

The Cook electorate has fared well again in this year's budget. It is always difficult to ensure that there is something in the bag for everybody in 30-odd disparate communities spread across an area the size of Victoria. But this year in all regions of the Cook electorate there are some achievements and there are some things that we are going to build and deliver that will benefit people in those communities.

I will point out a few highlights. I was very pleased that this year's budget confirms that there will be \$2.78 million over two years to build the new Mareeba Fire Station. At the old fire station—and this is a common problem with a lot of old fire stations around the state—the doors are now too narrow to fit the new fire engines that we use nowadays. The property itself is old and is in need of replacement. So there is nearly \$3 million for the new fire station at Mareeba. That is something I have been working on with the minister, Neil Roberts, for some time now. I am particularly pleased that he has been able to deliver that for me and for the Mareeba community in this budget.

Also, this budget contains \$2.6 million for a child and family centre at Mareeba. That will be particularly targeted at Indigenous kids, who make up nearly 17 per cent of the zero to eight population in Mareeba. It is a fantastic initiative to ensure that kids in Mareeba get a flying start to their education. Other programs will also be run out of that centre in terms of positive parenting and making sure that those kids are competitive with everybody across Queensland.



The budget contains nearly \$13.5 million for an upgrade of the Mareeba Airport. This is a very important project and one that the Treasurer has taken a personal interest in.

**Mr Fraser:** With Mayor Gilmore.

**Mr O'BRIEN:** With the mayor up there, Tom Gilmore. It has been great working in partnership with a former National Party member of this parliament who is positive, who plays it straight, who does not whinge and who simply just gets on with the job in a very effective manner.

**Mr Rickuss:** Like most conservative politicians, might I add.


**Mr O'BRIEN:** Conservative or not, he is a very good advocate for the Tablelands region and he is doing a great job up there. That is why this is a great partnership that we have with the Tablelands Regional Council. I suspect that in the next 20 to 25 years Mareeba will take up a lot of the general aviation that is currently run out Cairns. It is simply getting too expensive and there is not enough room on the general aviation side of the Cairns Airport for expansion. What I want to see and what I foresee in Mareeba is that a lot of the maintenance and charter flights that service the cape, the gulf and the Torres Strait currently out of Cairns will in the future come out of Mareeba. They are high-end, high-tech jobs. The beauty of Mareeba is that it has a multifaceted economy. There is tourism. There is agriculture. There is mining. What we are doing with this Mareeba Airport upgrade is putting another facet in the diamond that is the Mareeba community and the Mareeba economy.

There is also money in the budget this year for the Murray Island State School. It will cost over \$30 million to build a new state school out there on Mer, and \$28 million of that appears in this year's state budget. The bulk of the funding for that project appears in this year's state budget. Education is the big winner in the Torres Strait. We will be building new pre-prep facilities on Darnley—which is Erub—Dauan, Kubin, Mabuiag and Poruma. The St Pauls community will also be getting pre-prep facilities. These are fantastic facilities to ensure that kids in the Torres Strait get a flying start. In the northern peninsula area, the Bamaga Junior Campus will be getting a multipurpose sports centre.

We will be building a new police station on Badu Island this year. I think it was today that the traditional owners signed off on the land for that project on Badu Island, and construction will be starting this financial year for that project. In the northern peninsula area, there is also \$260,000 for an all-abilities playground. I opened an all-abilities playground in Mossman the other day. They are fantastic facilities and are accessible to kids at all different physical levels. They are great, and I thank the minister responsible for that funding.

The other big project that I do want to make special mention of is that this year there is \$9 million to build a bridge over the Laura River. This is a much needed project. A lot of people get blocked there during the wet season. When the Laura River goes up, sometimes it is up for days. It has been a bugbear of the Laura community for many a long year. This project is very important for access to all parts of Cape York Peninsula but particularly to Laura during the wet season. I welcome that funding with open arms. I suspect that either this year or next year we will have the road to Laura fully bitumen sealed. It is a fantastic achievement for this government. It is certainly good news coming into this weekend's Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival.

Finally, I want to make special mention and thank the minister Simon Finn. The budget contains the money that is required to build a cyclone shelter in Weipa. I know that he took a deep and personal interest in that project, and I want to thank him for that. I also want to thank the people of the United Arab Emirates who are funding half of that project. It is going to be an important facility not just as a cyclone shelter but as a community centre and sporting hub for the community of Weipa, a very isolated community. That project is greatly appreciated. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (5.26 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the budget handed down by the Treasurer two days ago. During one of many speeches delivered by the Treasurer after the global financial crisis, he made mention of the fact that this is probably the worst time to be a Treasurer of a state—or any country for that matter. Many of us would have agreed with him at the time, but we would all be wrong. The worst was yet to come as we said goodbye to 2010 and welcomed the dawn of 2011.

Mother Nature had other plans for us to test our resolve and determination in the form of floods and cyclones. Let me put that into perspective. We had the worst drought for over 100 years only a short 40 months ago, followed by the worst global financial crisis since the Great Depression, then followed by the worst flood for 30 years. And just to ensure the resolve of this government and the people of Queensland is tested to the extreme, a category 5 cyclone of the same intensity as Katrina, which devastated the US, grazed our shores. As a result, over 90 per cent of the state of Queensland was declared a disaster area. What does this all mean? It means that the 2011-12 budget was always going to be a tough and hard budget, and it is.

Overseas goods and exports fell a massive 18 per cent, the largest fall on record. Lost production in the mining industry totalled nearly \$6 billion. Coal alone lost 27 million tonnes of exports and lost royalties of close to \$500 million. Agricultural losses are also massive, around \$1.4 billion. And tourism, as we all know, has also been hard hit, with losses of around \$400 million.

Stamp duty from a much softer property market is down by \$350 million, not to mention that the reconstruction bill is expected to top \$6.8 billion. Most governments would find that hard to comprehend, but not this government. Most people would find it too hard to get back up, but not the people of Queensland. Most treasurers would find it very overwhelming, but certainly not this one.

The state is doing it tough. While we are plotting a way to recover, we are mindful of the fact that a lot of Queenslanders are doing it tough. We have an obligation to ensure that seniors, the marginalised and families receive some relief from the cost-of-living pressure, and they are. I was very pleased to be told by the Treasurer and the Premier that the community ambulance cover levy will be abolished, giving cost-of-living relief of close to \$113 per year from 1 July. More than 1.4 million Queensland households and small businesses will benefit from the abolition of this levy. This levy was introduced some 10 or 11 years ago to fund ambulance services across the state, replacing the old subscription model. I can say that ambulance services will remain free for all Queenslanders. Importantly, the government has announced that we will step in to maintain funding for the Ambulance Service to ensure these services remain free for all Queenslanders. This \$113 will stay in the pockets of Queenslanders and it is a big help in order to relieve the cost of living.

On top of the \$113 saving from our power bill, the government has announced a \$60 million extension to the ClimateSmart Home Service, including the new standby power eliminator. I suggest to members of parliament that if they have not installed one of these devices they should pick up the phone and get a ClimateSmart Home Service. I did this about 1½ years ago. My power bill with a family of five used to be around \$600 to \$650. I have done two things in the last 18 months: firstly, I changed my hot-water unit to a gas fired solar hot-water unit and, secondly, I invited the ClimateSmart Home Service technician into my house and I received a monitor to monitor the electricity usage of my home. That is one of the best things I have done because it changed the behaviour of everyone in my family. My last power bill was \$320; this was a drop from \$600-plus to \$320. I thank the minister and his staff for introducing this particular initiative into Queensland and for continuing to find ways to improve it.

Queenslanders will also get the benefit of almost \$1.4 billion in concessions and subsidies in this year's budget, including the fact that the electricity rebate will increase by 6.6 per cent, up to \$230 for pensioners and seniors, and also a council maximum rebate will increase by \$20 to \$200. The Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme will continue and will increase by \$20 to \$120 as well.

I mentioned in the House only this week that in my electorate I have the highest number of construction workers and tradies in the whole of Queensland. Therefore, I welcome the announcement by the government within this budget of the Queensland Building Boost—a six-month, \$140 million initiative which will provide a \$10,000 grant for all Queenslanders constructing or purchasing a new home up to the value of \$600,000. As first home buyers are also eligible for the \$7,000 grant, that will increase to \$17,000.

The Building Boost is a shot in the arm for the construction industry. As we all know, that industry has been suffering in the last couple of years and the government is stepping in to stimulate again the construction market so that tradies and construction workers can continue to find work. The housing construction market is a very major employer in Queensland. This particular initiative is aimed at increasing activity and maintaining employment for the hardworking men and women of the construction industry. On top of that, Queenslanders do not even have to pay one single cent in stamp duty for their first home purchase up to the value of \$500,000. The stamp duty regime is still the most generous stamp duty arrangement in the whole country.

On top of this, a few days ago the Deputy Premier announced the formation of a building revival initiative and allocated \$4.2 million for this purpose. The formation of a major project office will facilitate further growth in the construction sector. The MPO idea was put forward to the government during one of the consultation processes which was used to seek ideas from the industry on how to protect and grow the industry.

I also mention the fact that the Health budget has increased. It now has an annual budget of \$11 billion, which is about 25 per cent of all the revenue collected by this government. I am pleased to hear that the Queensland Children's Hospital will continue to receive massive funding. A total of \$18 million will be contributed for research at the Queensland Children's Hospital. Also, \$145 million will be given to the Translational Research Institute at the Princess Alexandra Hospital to research a cure for prostate cancer.

Education is very important, and I was very pleased to hear the announcement that year 7 will move into high school and will commence in 2015. Young students and teenagers will get more benefit from receiving their education in a high school environment; that is what our research has indicated. With the introduction of a new Australian curriculum, the move to high school will ensure that our year 7

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students have the same learning opportunities as their interstate counterparts, with specialist teachers and facilities like dedicated science labs. Higher performing states such as New South Wales and Victoria have had year 7 in high school for many years. I am pleased that we are finally getting that on the way.

I seek leave to incorporate into *Hansard* the capital expenditure for my electorate of Capalaba that the Treasurer announced a few days ago.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Has the Speaker seen a copy of the document?

**Mr CHOI:** Yes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Education and Innovation

\$51,000 for maintenance work at Birkdale State School.

\$15,000 for two separate maintenance works at Capalaba State College.

\$15,000 to provide an approved kindergarten program at St Luke's Catholic Parish Child Care Centre for children in the year prior to Prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year at a total cost of \$45,000.

\$33,000 to provide an approved kindergarten program at Lady Gowrie Degen Road Child Care for children in the year prior to Prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year at a total cost of \$98,000.

\$32,000 to provide an approved kindergarten program at Grow Capalaba for children in the year prior to Prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year at a total cost of \$97,000.

\$41,000 to provide an approved kindergarten program at Bayside Community College Early Childhood Centre for children in the year prior to Prep for 15 hours a week and at least 40 weeks a year at a total cost of \$122,000.

Community Infrastructure

\$1,000 towards upgrading the field lighting to support rugby league at John Frederick Park, Capalaba. The State Government total contribution over the life of the project is \$63,000.

Transport and Roads

\$8.15 million to commence intersection improvements at the Tingalpa Creek and Taylor Road intersection, on Redland Bay Road, Sheldon at a total cost of \$13.36 million. Involves the electorates of Mansfield, Capalaba and Redlands.

\$313,000 to complete asphalt resurfacing on a section of Capalaba-Victoria Point Road, Alexandra Hills, at a total cost of \$2.5 million.

\$152,000 towards provision of passenger set-down facilities at Birkdale State School, Birkdale. The total State Government contribution over the life of the project is \$152,000.

Energy and Water

\$205.02 million on ENERGEX's sub-transmission network in the Greater Brisbane region to improve network reliability and capacity.

\$263.13 million to undertake distribution augmentation works on ENERGEX's network in the Greater Brisbane region.

\$2.27 million to install fibre optic nodes at various substations across South East Queensland to improve network protection signalling and SCADA telecommunications at a total cost of \$13.67 million.

\$2.12 million to continue the renewals programs at SEQwater's dams and other water sources.

\$8.95 million to upgrade SEQwater's existing dams and water treatment plants.

Jobs

\$29.49 million to provide assistance to low skilled workers, those disadvantaged in the labour market and to support the Queensland Green Army strategy for a total cost of \$162.61 million.

\$52,000 towards employing a local coordinator for multi-sports to support seven clubs in Cleveland. The State Government total contribution over the life of the project is \$156,000.

\$52,000 towards Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club Inc employing a sport and recreation coordinator to support two clubs and five sub-committees of Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club in Victoria Point. The State Government total contribution over the life of the project is \$156,000.

**Mr CHOI:** In closing, can I just mention that, even though this budget has been a tough budget, there is good news on the horizon. Our economy will grow at a much faster rate than any other state in the next two years. We are forecasting a growth of five per cent next year and then 5¼ per cent in 2012-13. Naturally, construction resource investment—particularly in the LNG sector—will be a very major component of that growth. Therefore, I am looking forward to continuing to work with the Treasurer to ensure this state continues to be strong. I commend the budget to the House.



**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.37 pm): I rise on behalf of my constituents in the Lockyer electorate to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2011. I must congratulate our shadow Treasurer, the deputy leader and member for Clayfield, on the delivery of his speech this morning. It was very informative.

Unfortunately, the Lockyer Valley was devastated earlier in the year by some floods. There was not only catastrophic infrastructure damage but there was also loss of life, which was the most heart wrenching. This budget talks about the infrastructure that needs to be rebuilt, and some of that is being rebuilt. There is disaster response funding of hundreds of millions of dollars for areas such as Flagstone Creek and Lefthand Branch and other roads controlled by Main Roads, including the Mount Sylvia Road in the Lockyer Valley. The Warrego Highway has had a lot of money spent on it but a lot more money needs to be spent on that highway.

There was also \$33.7 million for the completion of the Southern Queensland correctional centre at the Gatton precinct. It is unfortunate though that through poor planning this \$400 million facility has no prisoners in it. I did some statistics recently and discovered that there is enough jail capacity in Queensland now for something like 13 years. This government has 800 spare cells, and why it needed to build 300 cells in the Lockyer beggars belief. The real problem is that there is a \$400 million asset sitting there doing nothing when I would have much preferred to have an emergency services centre built in the area or highway flyovers. I am sure that the Minister for Main Roads would have much preferred to have that funding than have wasted \$400 million on a facility at Spring Creek which is virtually being underutilised. There has even been talk of the Borallon prison in the member for Ipswich West's electorate being turned into an immigration centre for illegal immigrants coming into Queensland. That is how it is for Corrective Services—that is, they need prisoners to put into a new \$400 million prison that has no-one to go into it.

The Lockyer has not only had problems with floods and infrastructure, but there was also the unfortunate announcement recently that Heinz-Golden Circle will stop processing beetroot in the local area and Brisbane. That is also unfortunately going to be devastating for the Lockyer Valley.

**Mr Wallace** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is right; he does. I take the interjection from the minister. Linton Brimblecombe does grow beetroot. There is probably about 2,000 acres and a dozen or so growers in the Lockyer Valley. The worst thing about that decision is the fact that it is going to put a lot of pressure on all of the other crops that are grown because they are going to have to change crops. Unfortunately, it is not growing the produce that is the problem; it is selling it that is the problem. Internet site [sharechat.co.nz](http://sharechat.co.nz) states—

Manufacturing NZ executive Catherine Beard said that New Zealand's 28% corporate tax rate and comparatively low wage rates was a strong incentive for Australian manufacturers to shift 'at least part of their production' to New Zealand.

This is a problem we will keep facing unless some of the government red tape that is impeding businesses in South-East Queensland is lifted. Payroll tax and things like that are a real impediment to doing business here, so they are issues that we do have to look at and get right, because the balance at the moment is not right. Business is leaving here in droves—manufacturing businesses such as the Golden Circle Cannery. Unfortunately, hundreds of people will lose their jobs in Brisbane and it will also affect the Lockyer quite dramatically.

As I mentioned earlier, the Warrego Highway, the Mount Sylvia Road and the Gatton-Esk Road need major work done after the devastating floods. I congratulate the minister for putting in place a program on the Warrego Highway that is starting to improve it dramatically, but it will need to be resealed. Unfortunately there has been some mill and fill work done, so I encourage the minister to please negotiate with the federal government to see if we can get that full reseal done there. We have got the Warrego Highway to a reasonable standard, but unfortunately it will only last 12 months or two years if more is not done.

**Mr Shine:** You wouldn't recognise it from a year ago.

**Mr RICKUSS:** No, that is right. I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. It has improved from over 12 months ago. The Cunningham Highway is also in need of repairs. I know work is being done up on the range on the Cunningham Highway, but work needs to be done before that at the Boonah exits and along the Muttapilly area. The edges on the road there are very dangerous and are starting to fall away. Remedial work will have to be done in the near future because I fear that one night a truck will blow a tyre and have to pull up on the side of the road. The side of the road will just about disappear when it parks there because it is all cracked. There are signs up, but in emergencies if drivers are not paying attention that will definitely happen. It is an ongoing issue.

People are concerned about changes in this budget with regard to buying property. I was talking to my son, who lives at Mount Ommaney. He is concerned given that he is in the process of selling his house and purchasing a new place in Toowoomba. His concern is the fact that it is probably going to cost him \$15,000 simply because he will have to pay the higher duty on the sale and then pay the higher duty when he buys again.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** The price is going to go up, isn't it?


**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** It is still going to be a disadvantage to him. I also happened to be travelling in the car listening to Michael Cusack the other day, who is a real estate commentator, and he felt that in the long term it would be detrimental to the real estate market. That was a totally independent view of what was being done.

I must also thank the education minister for allocating \$400,000 for school parking in the Greenbank school area in my electorate. It is actually chaos there. It is the largest primary school in my electorate with something like 1,100 students, and probably only about 50 walk to school. It is a rural/residential area where nearly everyone gets driven or catches a bus to school. It is on the old Goodna Road, which creates absolute chaos every morning and every afternoon. We have been trying to do some remedial work there for a number of years to improve the parking and improve safety for children. Hopefully that will come to fruition this year in some form. There had been discussions with the Army base that is opposite the school, but it has turned out to be very difficult to negotiate any land transaction with the Army. They are not the easiest people to deal with in that situation.

The other issue I want to raise is that our creeks, streams and creek banks are in quite a catastrophic state after the amazing amount of water that flowed down in the original floods. The minister for DERM should try to negotiate with the federal government some recovery assistance for that, because unfortunately it will be to the detriment of the whole community if some of the banks do slip in. That affects the water quality of Brisbane and affects the infrastructure that is further downstream. It goes on and on and on. It is one of those big issues that can hurt the whole community in the long term. It is not just the landholders who are being disadvantaged by landslips on their properties; it is the whole community that is being disadvantaged. We all live in catchments. The Lockyer catchment is one of those important catchments which feeds into the Brisbane River as well.

Many times in this place I have spoken about the need for an emergency services centre north of the Warrego Highway at Plainlands. There are fast growing rural/residential suburbs to the north of the highway. There is nearly as much population north of the highway as there is south. The old towns south of the highway such as Laidley have service centres, but an ambulance, police and SES centre north of the highway really is needed to meet the demand from the growing population in the area. That is very important. The Lockyer Valley is also a real transport hub for the western region and we still do not have a transport centre in the Lockyer Valley area to service major transport companies such as Nolans, Lindsay Brothers and other independent operators. As I said, there is no transport office in the Lockyer Valley. We have a very busy police station that does licence work, but this is to the detriment of the whole community because the services there are only part time and there are quite lengthy waits at times to get licences which impedes employment. I call on this government to revisit a transport centre for the Lockyer Valley.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (5.48 pm): It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak to the budget for 2011-12. There are aspects of the budget which are good, but there are many aspects that have no merit at all. The shadow Treasurer made a very good contribution on behalf of the opposition.

**Mr Fraser:** That's about it!

**Mr JOHNSON:** We have got the Treasurer biting already. The Treasurer did not like one word of it, because I saw him sitting over there this morning when members of the government hung off every word that the shadow Treasurer said. That means that they had a problem with what he had to say. I would say that this time next year, when the shadow Treasurer is delivering the real budget for Queensland, we will see some reality come out of it.

**Mrs Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Pumicestone, that comment is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I hope it was not attributed to me.

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** No, I just said 'polite'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Excuse me.

**Mr JOHNSON:** In relation to the budget as it affects my own electorate of Gregory, I am very disappointed with many aspects of it. The electorate of Gregory is a major contributor to the economy of this state. It is one of the significant generators of wealth for this state through the coalmining industry, the agricultural industry and the tourism industry. At the same time, the people who live there are very industrious. I think they deserve more than the crumbs off the table.

In talking about my electorate I will reflect on the major floods that many of us in Queensland experienced earlier this year. Places like Emerald, Alpha, Jericho, Rolleston—and many other parts of the state, but those four centres in my own electorate in particular—were certainly devastated in many ways. Many of the people of those areas have rebuilt. Some of them have not and we still have a long way to go. I want to congratulate those work gangs in Queensland Rail and RoadTek, other council

gangs and private contractors who did a very able job in putting back together that road and rail infrastructure throughout Central Queensland to get our coal trains moving, to get our livestock transport moving and to get other commerce traffic moving.

At the same time, I want to thank the appropriate people for the advertising that has been done to let tourists from other states know that Queensland is open for business. The tourism industry is an integral part of the way of life of the people in Central Queensland and the Central West, especially at this time of the year when they get a lot of southern tourists and international tourists coming through. From time to time the media can paint the wrong picture. I want to correct that picture by saying that Queensland is well and truly open and tourism is doing very well. But we need more people to come into that region.

I want to reflect on the issue of the \$125 million of federal road money—a lot of this money is reannounced—for the Warrego and Landsborough highways. The Landsborough Highway runs through my electorate, starting at Morven and going right back up to the electorate of Mount Isa. That road is deteriorating at a rate that nobody could comprehend. When you look at that inland plain country and all of that blacksoil pavement—and I note that the Minister for Main Roads is in the House this evening—government departments, ministers and people from whatever side of politics have to have a vision to rebuild Queensland. That vision has to start with the most important arteries that we have, and that is road infrastructure. We have crumbling, decaying road infrastructure in this state. I do not think the government can comprehend just how disastrous the situation is. It is very important that we recognise the need to upgrade some of those feeder roads that back on to the central highways like the Bruce Highway, the Warrego Highway, the Capricorn Highway, the Landsborough Highway and the Flinders Highway. It is very important that we recognise the need to upgrade those arteries in question.

I think the floods of early 2011 justified the need to do an analysis of our road infrastructure. This afternoon I heard the member for Charters Towers make reference to the Gregory Developmental Road from Charters Towers back north to the Tablelands. I want to talk about the Gregory Developmental Road from Charters Towers south back to Emerald and also the Carnarvon Developmental Road from Roma through to Emerald. During the floods it was an alternative route to the Bruce Highway because of the closure of the Bruce Highway at places like Rockhampton further north. We had significant, heavy traffic come around there which virtually destroyed the road between Barcaldine and Emerald because it was not used to that heavy traffic in such wet conditions. I have to say that RoadTek and those local councils did a good job in the reconstruction there.

But the one thing that came out of that work—and I said this to Major General Mick Slater—is that we have to look at the reasons upgrades are not done to the road from Roma through to Charters Towers. When I say 'upgrades', I am talking about Panorama Creek at Rolleston—I understand from talking to Main Roads engineers that it costs somewhere around \$105 million to correct that flood plain there—and the Cape River between Clermont and Charters Towers. That crossing must be raised. If it could be raised five or six feet, probably at a cost of \$50 million or \$60 million, we would have another duplicated route from Brisbane right back through to Townsville. Those two areas are the linchpins of that road that are causing that dislocation in a big wet. The fact of the matter is that that expenditure does not represent a lot of money when we compare that to the dollars that have been spent here in the south-east corner.

I refer to the Kennedy Developmental Road from Winton through to Hughenden. To the minister's credit, I know that there is \$13 million or \$14 million in this year's budget for the further upgrading of that road. That is another road that will provide duplication to the Bruce Highway if the route between Morven or Roma and Longreach to Winton is closed, because that is another significant route for going north.

This is just common sense, and common sense must be put into play. The vision must be injected into the Department of Transport and Main Roads to make sure that that infrastructure becomes a reality in future government policy—whether it is the current government or future governments. Queensland relies on its road network, and that road network is vital to the ongoing viability of this state. All of that heavy traffic in the north-west of Queensland and the western part of Queensland that goes through to Darwin goes via those western roads—the Warrego Highway and the Landsborough Highway. The majority of the cattle that comes out of the north-west and central west into abattoirs in the central west or abattoirs here in the south-east is coming on the back of road trains that travel along those arteries. They are important arteries.

Today I heard the member for Warrego talk about the upgrade of the Warrego Highway, which is so vitally important, as is that second range crossing at Toowoomba—whether it is the coal industry now that it is relying on that road, whether it is commerce traffic to the north or the south, or whatever. It is so vitally important. I say to the federal government and to the state government that they have to sharpen their knives on this one, because there is too much fat there still and we do not see the money.

I want to canvass many issues. I know that time is precious, but I notice that there is \$108 million in the budget for recovery and reconstruction programs in conjunction with the federal government and local government. I hope that a lot of that money is going to be spent in recovery work on some of those arteries that I have been talking about that connect to major highways.

There is \$3.4 million—it is virtually a reannouncement—for the auxiliary fire service for Emerald. There is \$800,000-odd for the kindergarten at Clermont and the same for the air conditioning of Blackwater State School. I welcome all of those contributions, because they are significant. They are vital to meet the social needs of those communities.

There is \$146 million for Western Queensland for remote education and student transfer. That is very important. The one thing I have always said in this parliament—and I said it in the first speech that I made here—is that equality of education for the children of this state, regardless of whether they live at Birdsville, Bamaga, Mount Isa or wherever, is important. It is so vitally important that we give the parents of those children the opportunity to educate their kids to year 12 standard regardless of their socioeconomic status. This money is certainly going to be a significant contribution to enabling those children to get the advantage of that education and go on to do whatever they choose to do in life, whether that be to have a professional career or to have a career in some other field. Whatever happens in life, all 87 members of this House know that education is vitally important. It is the most important thing that we can give to the children of this state.

I welcome the abolition of the unfair community ambulance cover tax, but at the same time we will see electricity and other charges go up. The real fact of the matter is that although we see the abolition of that ambulance cover tax, I notice that there is no money at all in the budget for QAS personnel at Alpha. Mrs Gina Rinehart has kindly donated \$250,000 towards a new ambulance for that centre.

**Mr Lawlor:** Can she afford that, Vaughan?

**Mr JOHNSON:** I did not ask her that. I will take the interjection from the honourable member for Southport. We are truly grateful for the generosity that the lady has shown to the people of that region. I think that her heart is certainly in the right place. I thank Mrs Rinehart, and I know that the Barcaldine Regional Council does, too. We want to see QAS officers able to man and maintain that service at Alpha. With the exploding future of the coalmining industry in Alpha we will see a significant need not only for ambulance services but also medical services as a whole. From the two mines there, Hobartville and Kevin's Corner, and further north the Adani Mine at Carmichael, they are looking to extract 180 million tonnes of coal. That is more than we are extracting out of all mines in Queensland. It concerns me—and I note that the Minister for Main Roads is here—that there is nothing in the budget for that 170 kilometre section of road between Clermont and Alpha. I hope that is a short-term oversight and that we can see the development of that project. In real terms, the foundation of that road will not stand up to the heavy infrastructure that will be carted along it.

I believe that there are many issues that have been overlooked in the budget. There certainly has to be something done about the bottlenecks on those Central Queensland coal lines. Along the line between Emerald and Rockhampton there will be 14 or 15 coal trains stopped at points waiting for other traffic to come through. This is a situation that is retarding the ongoing progression of that product to the ports. At the same time it is also retarding the ongoing progression of other commodities that can be carried by rail, be it cattle, passengers or freight. It is an integral part of the development and the upgrade of the Central Queensland region and it is something that has to be put on to the screen of the vision for the future. These bottlenecks are costing industry.

I note that the minister is not here but the former minister and the Minister for Main Roads are here. That cattle train concept is so vitally important to keeping some of that heavy transport off our road network—whether it is the northern line back into Townsville and further south, whether it is the north-west line that runs from Winton back into Longreach and into Rockhampton or whether it is the Quilpie line that runs back into Roma and Toowoomba and on down onto Dinmore and Brisbane. The importance of this cattle train concept is that every cattle train in a 42KL is keeping 18 B-doubles off our roads. Our roads are not of a satisfactory standard to carry that type of heavy transport. It is vitally important that we see the upgrade of these roads before we do not have roads at all. In some areas of Western Queensland the shires are fearful that some of their road infrastructure will go back to gravel pavement. That is something we certainly do not want to see and something that I believe the government does not have the vision for at the moment.

In all sincerity, the people of western, northern and south-western Queensland have had a gutful of being absolutely left behind when it comes to significant infrastructure funding. For the amount of dollars that are generated out of those regions in question by agriculture, mining and tourism we are only getting a couple of crumbs; the rest are being blown out the door. We do not wish to deny the people in the south-east the opportunity to go to good football stadiums. I too like going to good football stadiums and seeing good football games or going to tennis tournaments or those sorts of things.

**Mr Hoolihan** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I take that interjection. The fact of the matter is that we have to get our priorities right in the development stage, and we are at the development stage.

I want to touch on strategic cropping land. I have said before and I will say again that we are sick of big mining companies riding roughshod over prime agricultural land. That prime agricultural land is sacrosanct in Central Queensland. It is no different to land on the Darling Downs or on the Western Downs. I said the other day on *ABC Radio Rockhampton* that we will defend that country to our last drop of sweat and our last ounce of blood. We will maintain it as we know it. That sort of land has been put there over thousands of years through science. It is important that it is there for current and future generations so that it can be farmed accordingly.

The carbon tax issue was debated in this House last night. I believe that this is a deceitful tax. If we introduce a carbon tax in this state to prop up the budget it will shut our mining industry down in a lot of places. Those big players will leave in droves. As I said last evening, they will go to West Africa or elsewhere where they can mine that product a lot cheaper than they can in Queensland.

The issue that is on the lips of everybody in Western and Northern Queensland at the moment is the shutdown of the live cattle export industry. Today I spoke to senior management of Elders and other people in the industry. They are hoping that we might be able to see the boxed meat trade coupled with what is left of the live trade in some of the Indonesian programs. I know Colin Barnett in Western Australia is endeavouring to see the industry reactivated. I understand that some of our people in Canberra are looking at ways that we might be able to reactivate this industry. Whilst we do not condone what has been going on with the slaughter of cattle in Indonesia, we have to help these people to address the problem. We have to arrest the problem so that we can once again reactivate this great industry and generate dollars for North Queensland.

I spoke to a North Queensland mayor yesterday. He told me they are losing somewhere between \$500,000 and \$850,000 out of the program in Indonesia. This will be a big loss in terms of the dollars generated. These people from Elders tell me that their abattoirs in Jakarta are as good if not better than anything in Australia. We need to work with the good people to make sure that we continue those operations to allow our cattle to go there. It is about jobs. It is about productivity.

**Ms Nelson-Carr** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I know what the member for Mundingburra is saying, but at the same time this is about us being realistic and showing that we are doing the right thing by our producers. It is about jobs and the economy of our state as a whole. It is about quality of life for Queensland producers. We have to protect them. The LNP will make absolutely certain that we do protect those jobs and drive industry in the right direction.



**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.08 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Appropriation Bill and respond to the Treasurer's budget speech. I thank the Treasurer for the financial assistance offered in this budget to all first home buyers in Queensland. I understand that the \$10,000 grant is for new homes contracted between 1 August this year and 31 January next year. I believe that this grant, when used in conjunction with the zero stamp duty for first home buyers under \$500,000, will certainly kick-start home building in Queensland, including in my electorate at Kenilworth, Nambour, Bli Bli, Cooroy or wherever it might be. I believe it will kick-start the building industry and will flow on to aid plumbers, carpenters, cabinet-makers—

**Mr Lawlor:** The candlestick maker.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Yes, and the carpet layer. Many associated workers will find employment. Certainly it is a great initiative. To focus that on a small period from 1 August to 1 January will bring people together and I hope, working in partnership with our banks, will bring a great outcome to many Queenslanders.

The abolition of the Queensland ambulance cover levy is appreciated and will be well received. I do not envy the Treasurer for the challenges that he has had to grapple with in preparing this budget. While it is easy to stand here and criticise, I do not envy the Treasurer who has had to put this budget together and present it in the best interests of Queenslanders. I acknowledge the significant impact the cyclone in North Queensland and the flooding throughout Queensland have had on Queensland's finances and their effects on Queensland families. During the flood disaster I volunteered to help at Goodna and Graceville, and I witnessed firsthand the real devastation caused by the floods to many struggling families. There is no doubt that the parts of Queensland that were adversely affected by the terrible weather deserve priority consideration for financial support.

It concerns me that some people who have recently approached me for financial support carry on as if nothing has happened. It seems to me that some of them do not comprehend the costs of the flooding and cyclone and their impact on Queensland. They do not seem to understand the impact they have had on generating income for Queensland. Nevertheless, I put on the record my recognition of the need for other communities to be further to the front of the queue than I may be in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast.



The Sunshine Coast escaped the devastation that other parts of Queensland recently experienced, but in my electorate many roads were affected by the continuing wet weather. In particular, the Obi Obi Road was cut as a result of a significant landslip. Traffic is now travelling along the Obi Obi Road and passing the landslip site. I understand it is anticipated that workers at the site will complete the repairs in the near future. I use this opportunity to thank all the workers for their efforts.

I note the significant allocation of further money in the Capital Statement to the Queensland Bulk Water Transport Authority for the Northern Pipeline Interconnector stage 2 project and how the cost of that pipeline has blown out. Certainly it has blown out. My views about the pipeline are on the record. I do not need to repeat them here. The reality is that the pipeline is continuing to be constructed and it is continuing to cost a lot of money.

I turn to some more specific matters in relation to my electorate of Nicklin on the Sunshine Coast. I note the continuation of the upgrade of the Nambour Hospital, where \$11.6 million was allocated towards the new cardiac and vascular surgery procedural suites, a dedicated endoscopy procedural unit and a new outpatients neurosurgery service. While on the topic of the hospital, I turn to additional car-parking options for hospital workers and visitors. I thank the Minister for Health for continuing to investigate the potential for the purchase of adjoining land to the hospital for additional car-parking needs. I understand that discussions between Queensland Health, the local council and the landowner involved are continuing. I believe that, if taken up by the state government, this option will remove the current proposal for a park-and-ride facility in Glenbrook Drive in Nambour.

It is great to see Nambour TAFE continue to receive financial support and funding in this budget, with a further \$8.7 million to continue the redevelopment of the Nambour campus. The TAFE is strategically located beside the Burnside State High School and is not far from the Nambour State High School.

In preparing this budget speech I took time to reflect on some of my contributions to earlier budgets. When I became the member for Nicklin I was presented with a proposal that significant development was not going to happen at the Nambour campus and that parts of the campus should be relocated to a rented premises down on the coast. At the time, Paul Braddy was the minister and Peter Beattie was the Premier. Once I was aware of the proposal, I raised the issue with the then Premier and the then minister. It was not long before the plan was stopped and the start of the upgrade and redevelopment of the Nambour campus started. It is great to see that that is continuing. I thank the minister and the government for continuing to put money into that very significant foundation stone for Nambour.

This financial year part of the Nambour-Mapleton Road between Willandra Place and Mapleton is set to be upgraded at a cost of \$6.1 million. In the budget papers it is recorded that the Maleny-Kenilworth Road between Cambrook Creek and Bulimba Creek Road is to receive an additional \$500,000 to start the \$5 million upgrade. It was not that long ago that this was a part of my electorate, which used to include Mount Mee, Peachester, Woodford, Glass House and Beerwah. I still feel for this area. I note that the member for Glass House is in the House and it will not be long before he speaks. It is good to see that funding is continuing for that part of the Sunshine Coast.

Other projects that are in need of further funding include the completion of the upgrade of the Nambour-Mapleton Road with an overtaking lane on the approach to Mapleton. The construction of traffic lights at the intersection of Nambour Connection Road and Blackall Street at the entrance to the town of Woombye is also needed. Earlier this year I invited the main roads minister, who is present in the chamber, to inspect this intersection and meet with locals. I understand that the State Coroner is currently investigating the circumstances surrounding a fatal accident at this location in 2009 and has not yet published his findings. Once the Coroner has released his findings, I look forward to again raising this matter with the Minister for Main Roads.

In relation to the National Highway between Cooroy and Curra, I am pleased that the senior Main Roads staff listened to the Cudgery community and my requests to move further north, away from the current intersection, the proposed Cudgery intersection with the National Highway. I understand that we are currently waiting on the federal minister to approve the proposed change of location.

I note that in the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, the Treasurer refers to a further \$147.9 million to continue the upgrade of the Bruce Highway from Sankeys Road to Traveston Road. Some members may not be aware that the Cooroy-Curra road upgrade needed the state primary school to be relocated. Last month I joined with my colleagues David Gibson, the member for Gympie, and Mary-Anne O'Neill, the member for Kallangur, for the official opening of the new state school. I congratulate all involved. I know that Mary-Anne, David and I were very impressed with the way the students took us on guided tours and looked after us during that celebration.

While I reiterate my serious concerns about the location of the proposed new Sunshine Coast regional hospital on flood-prone land at Kawana, I note in this budget that a further \$46.3 million is allocated towards the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the Sunshine Coast Academic and

Research Centre. In the budget, Yandina State School is to receive \$892,000 for the expansion of the school program to include a kindergarten. I believe that that will be a significant asset to our school community.

Today I use this opportunity to again call on the Treasurer, the Premier and the Minister for Transport to approach the federal government to bring forward the allocation of money so that the duplication of the railway line to Nambour can occur. I acknowledge the money the Minister for Transport will be spending on the upgrade to the Nambour Railway Station later this year and the benefits the public lift beside the subway entrance will provide to the elderly and disabled. The railway line subway provides an important thoroughfare for the public who need to cross from one side of Nambour to the other.

I also use this opportunity to again call on state government ministers to lobby their federal and state colleagues on the significant advantages in increasing the salary packages for nursing and aged-care staff in our nursing homes. I am certain that if respective governments increased the funding formula for senior nurses and allied aged-care workers there would be an immediate flow-on effect in our hospitals, with many current hospital patients returning to nursing homes for proper care and treatment.

Today I use this opportunity to urge the Treasurer to bring forward the sale of land purchased by the government in the Mary Valley for the now abandoned Traveston Crossing Dam. I continue to receive inquiries from people keen to purchase in the valley. I believe that significant income could be generated for the state government from the sale of those properties. New interest in our community would immediately occur, with significant new employment-generating opportunities for all in the valley.

The allocation of \$9.6 million over three years and \$4.1 million per annum from 2014 to 2015 to introduce GPS technology to monitor and track the movements of offenders on continuing supervision orders under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003 is great news. Recently I spoke in this parliament calling for the monitoring and tracking of the movements of convicted serious sex offenders. If Queenslanders choose to change the state government at the next state election, I use this opportunity to call on the opposition and alternative government to honour this important funding commitment.

I note the funding in the budget for additional regional disaster planning staff. I use this opportunity to call for some of those staff to be allocated to the Sunshine Coast region. A lot of the development on the Sunshine Coast is on flood plains and current forward planning anticipates continued development on low-lying flood-prone land.

Recently I questioned the Minister for Education on what additional funding was available to support teachers and teacher aides working with students with a disability. I look forward to receiving information on how much of this additional \$15.7 million will reach state schools in my electorate of Nicklin.

I continue to support the benefits of school gardens and I support the government's expanded program to include a further 25 schools in this program. For the benefit of members, I have been donating mandarin trees to most of the primary schools in my electorate for a number of years. I am a passionate believer in the benefits that will flow from the school garden program not just in terms of healthier eating but also behavioural management. Many of our young children simply are unable to concentrate in the classroom. If we put them in the garden, they can learn to add up and a whole range of other skills. I believe that is a great asset to our learning environment.

The addition of \$10.5 million to fund more Queensland parks and wildlife rangers is certainly needed, especially considering the Mapleton Forest is to be designated a national park later this year. I look forward to additional park rangers being assigned to the Sunshine Coast area to assist in managing this additional area. While on the topic of national parks, I notice the allocation of another \$196,000 to replace two bridges at the Kondalilla Falls National Park in our region. This is a great park. Many people—not just from the Sunshine Coast but also international visitors—visit this park and I believe the money will certainly be well spent.

I also support the additional funding for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme so that victims and their families can receive increased support. I note the provision of significant new money in this budget for the rollout of digital cameras in Queensland to improve safety on our roads. Drivers on our roads must drive according to the speed limits or risk significant fines and greater detection of speeding. There is no excuse. It concerns me that people who drive on our roads seem to think they can ignore the speed limits. Ever since the commencement of the trial of the fixed speed cameras on the Bruce Highway heading north to the Caloundra turn-off I have witnessed a significant reduction in the speed of vehicles. During that time when I have driven on that road I have noticed that the traffic has slowed down.

I am not interested in people saying that speed cameras do not work or that fixed cameras do not work. They do work. Quite frankly, I do not care whether the argument is that it is a source of income generation for the government or something else; the reality is that they work and we must learn to slow down. If people travel over the border into New South Wales they will find that everyone drives slower because they know they will receive a significant fine if they do not and that there is a great prospect they will be caught. I am a passionate supporter of fixed speed cameras. We need to re-educate all drivers to slow down because the cost of traffic accidents is too significant.

**Ms Grace:** You don't get fined if you don't speed.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** You don't get fined if you don't speed. I thank the member for Brisbane Central.

I also note the allocation of more money to improve the safety of people affected by domestic and family violence. I look forward to receiving advice on how much of this new funding will reach the Sunshine Coast. I look forward to listening to the Treasurer's reply. Again, I say that I do not envy the Treasurer's challenges in having to prepare this budget. I know it is easy to criticise. I look forward to listening to the Treasurer's reply.



**Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance and the Arts) (6.22 pm): I rise to support the budget before the House and to lament the pathetic response that we have seen from the opposition today. No, it is not unprecedented that the budget reply is delivered by the shadow Treasurer, but to do it in an environment in which the opposition leader is not even the leader of his party is indeed unprecedented. It is an absolute abrogation of leadership. It is ultimately an affront to our parliament which lies at the heart of our democratic society.

Queensland stands at a critical point in its history. Our economy is opening further to Asia, it is about to grow rapidly and it is on the cusp of another major resources boom. We are rebuilding after the biggest and the most devastating natural disasters in our recorded history and our society is modernising in a way that would not have been imagined 20 years ago. With critical issues such as these arising at this point in history, now is a time when Queenslanders need leadership. This government offers leadership and this budget demonstrates that.

Given the natural disasters and the pressure that they placed on our budget, it would have been easy for the government to stand still. It would have been easy for the government to meet the needs of the natural disasters but to make no further changes, to hold our hands in the air and say, 'The circumstances changed. We were confronted with a terrible dilemma and we are unable, therefore, to further assist.' But that at this time is not what this government chose to do.

Rather, the budget which the Treasurer laid out two days ago made some crucial decisions—decisions which reflect our values. The government decided at this time to support those industries which needed our help the most. We decided to get tradies back in work by boosting the building industry with a \$10,000 in the hand grant. We decided to support the tourism industry, which is so much at the heart of regional Queensland's economy, by putting \$83 million into events, doubling the size of the events budget and giving our tourism industry—which is so well represented by the new tourism minister—something which they can grasp and something which gives them promise for the future. We decided that we would help people with the cost of living by abolishing the ambulance levy, thereby putting \$113 in the pocket of every household and business. We decided that we would increase the scope of a range of pensioner rebates to assist those people with the cost of living. To make those decisions, this government decided that it was worth changing the stamp duty arrangements—increasing stamp duty but keeping it at a level which remains substantially lower than stamp duties in other states.

With this budget the government made a choice. We made a choice for the future by moving year 7 to high school, bringing our education system into line with other states. We made a choice in the arts, by putting money into the Queensland Art Gallery, which has been so incredibly successful in generating economic growth since the opening of GoMA, and putting money into the museum which records so critically our natural and cultural history. In Ipswich, my electorate, we made a choice to redevelop the hospital, to build a new fire station and to keep providing infrastructure for the city's growing future.

This choice is at the heart of the budget. It is a choice and a set of values to which this opposition has today comprehensively failed to respond. Rather than stepping up to the big decisions, the opposition continued to do what it has done for the last two years. It has continued to suggest to the people of Queensland that they can have more whilst making none of the difficult economic decisions that lie at the heart of the responsibility of government. Instead of responding to the choice and responding to the challenge, this opposition has sought to undermine the independent Treasury by impugning the budget forecasts utterly shamefully and it glossed over, quite simply, the difficult

decisions. This opposition did that because it is made up of a group of people who think that that is all they need to do. This is an opposition that thinks that it can gloss over the tough choices and simply coast to the line with a bit of a wink to the people of Queensland but no more than that. It is my view that that is a terrible abrogation of responsibility and that it is, ultimately, an insult to the people to whom we all choose to dedicate our working lives to represent. I say to that opposition today that this government will not let it get away with such a lightweight approach.

This is a government which will fight. This is a government which does not think that it is born to rule. This is a government whose members understand just what is the weight and the seriousness of the responsibility that we hold to represent people and to take the state forward. We understand what a privilege it is to serve and we understand that at every point we must seriously consider the decisions that confront us.

We know that the people of Queensland deserve a strategy. With this budget we have, as we have for the last two years, laid out such a strategy. We have made our choices. We are willing to defend them. We say to the people of Queensland, 'These are the things that we believe in. We believe in education. We believe in protecting the environment. We believe in supporting industries like tourism and building during the times that they need it most. We believe in economic responsibility and that is why at the heart of this budget we have made a choice which we are willing to defend.'

The opposition has utterly failed in responding to that choice. It has skated in here, undermined the Treasury, glossed over the detail and hoped to keep coasting to the line. That, in my view, is an utter disgrace. It is the kind of disgrace that goes with a group of people who think that it is not even the opposition leader's responsibility to lead. The people of Queensland should judge that abrogation of financial responsibility, that abrogation of ideas and that abrogation of leadership for what it is because they will see much more of it as we lead into the election ahead.

Sitting suspended from 6.31 pm to 7.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Ryan, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Minister for Energy and Water Utilities, Documents



**Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (7.30 pm), by leave: I refer to issues raised by the member for Coomera in this House on Wednesday, 15 June alleging that I acted improperly in that page 14 of a briefing note was not signed on the same date that the briefing note was signed by me. The briefing note in question was signed by me on 30 June 2009, and at the same time I signed a statement attached to the briefing note which effectively commenced an Executive Council process for the acquisition of an easement affecting the member for Coomera's constituent. The normal practice in the department in relation to acquisitions of this nature was to remove my signed statement from the briefing note and use it to form the basis of an Executive Council minute. This minute was prepared and received Executive Council approval on 23 July 2009. My signed statement dated 30 June formed part of that minute.

As part of normal practice, the signed briefing note was returned to the property area of the department minus the signed statement and placed on file. At that time a copy of the unsigned statement was placed with the briefing note to show what had been submitted to me. However, the departmental electronic ministerial and executive correspondence tracking system had a scanned image of all documents, including my signed statement, entered into it on 2 July 2009. The department has taken a scanned image of what came out of my office and recorded it in their tracking system. It shows that the signed brief accompanied with the signed statement both dated 30 June 2009 were received back into the department and scanned on 2 July 2009.


I understand that to date Mr Peter Lehmann, the constituent in question, has had a total of seven right-to-information applications with the department—six by Mr Lehmann and one via law firm River Legal. The first application was received on 14 August 2009 and Mr Lehmann received a signed copy of the ministerial briefing note and an unsigned copy of the statement. Mr Lehmann did receive a signed copy of the ministerial briefing note and two signed copies of the statement when he applied on 9 September 2010. Mr Lehmann, as a result of his RTI applications, has received copies of the signed briefing note and unsigned statement and copies of the signed briefing note and signed statement. The documents in question were provided both with and without signed statements.

Mr Lehmann accessed signed copies of both the statements and the ministerial briefing note together under RTI application No. RTI 10-056. The documents tabled were documents provided under RTI 09-029. I note that the signed briefing note with the signed statement was not included in the documents tabled in this House on Wednesday, 15 June. The evidence shows that I have not acted inappropriately and the departmental tracking system proves it.

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL****APPROPRIATION BILL****COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed from p. 2013, on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (7.33 pm): It certainly is an honour to rise in this parliament as the state member for Morayfield and to contribute to the debate on the 2011-12 Queensland state budget. This is a good budget for Queensland and a good budget for the people of the Morayfield state electorate. Although this year has been a tough year for Queensland, for Queenslanders and for the Queensland state budget, this budget shows that not only is this government forward-thinking but also it is a compassionate government. It is a government which has strong and stable leadership and it is a government which has a plan for the future.

Our summer of natural disasters and the lasting effects of the global financial crisis continue to have an impact on budgets, from individual budgets to government budgets. This impact continues to be felt. That is why this budget is so important. That is why a good Labor budget is needed so much by our community. Labor governments are rebuilding governments. Labor governments are reforming governments. Labor governments are fair governments. Labor governments are supportive governments. This budget is a true Labor government budget. This budget makes the hard decisions to relieve cost-of-living pressures on families and individuals and to continue investment in public services and public infrastructure. The government's economic plan introduced a few years ago is working. It is supporting and creating jobs. It is delivering more and better public services. It is building new public infrastructure. This budget continues that proud tradition, and I am very proud to support this budget.

Generally we see this budget deliver some critical cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. We see the removal of the ambulance levy, a \$113 per year saving on electricity bills. The Queensland Ambulance Service will now be fully funded entirely from consolidated revenue. The ambulance will still arrive but the bill will now not arrive. Further, pensioners have not been forgotten. The water bill rebate increases to \$120 per year. The council rates rebate increases to \$200 per year. The electricity bill rebate increases to \$230 per year. Queensland has the biggest and broadest pensioner concession program in Australia. When other states with tory governments are cutting pensioner concessions, this Labor government is providing extra help to those in most need. We are truly a government that is doing what it can to support those most vulnerable in our community.

Locally, this budget is great news for the people of the Morayfield state electorate. The people of the Morayfield state electorate will always know and will always see that I am committed to delivering real results for them. I have been advocating for a number of years for the commencement of major works on the Morayfield Road upgrade project. I am very pleased to see that \$10 million has been allocated in this budget to commence major work on the four-lane upgrade of Morayfield Road from Gaffield Street to Uhlmann Road.

Education is also a key priority in this year's state budget and a key priority for me as the state member for Morayfield. Accordingly, I am very pleased to see that \$3.4 million will be spent in this budget year to construct eight new classroom spaces at the Caboolture Special School, a marvellous contribution to the learning of young people with disabilities and a marvellous contribution to our community. But we will also see \$1.4 million allocated to build a trade training centre for Narangba Valley State High School students. This is an exceptional outcome for the young people of our community and it is certainly an exceptional investment in our community.

The other investment we see in the education sector in the Morayfield state electorate is a new \$1.25 million kindergarten service. This kindergarten service will be based at the Jinibara State School at Narangba. Again, it is another project which I have been lobbying government for for a number of years, and I am very pleased to see this government delivering real results in the Morayfield state electorate in the education sector.

We will also see a couple of little road projects. We will see \$68,000 spent on building an additional lane at Kurrajong Drive near the Burpengary Meadows State School. This will improve student and motorist safety around that school. We will also see \$28,000 spent on the construction of

pedestrian crossings at the Burpengary State School. They are important projects. It is not much money, but they are important projects that improve safety and protect our young people, and it is a further investment in infrastructure in our community.

Finally, one of the last highlights from this state budget for the Morayfield state electorate is the funding boost of more than \$1 million for the provision of disability services in the Caboolture region. This is a marvellous contribution and a further investment in providing quality disability services for those people in most need.

This budget delivers lower deficits, lower debt, more jobs and nation-leading growth for Queensland. The Queensland economy is ramping up and this is great news for Queensland businesses and the people of Queensland. But it is important to note that the hard work and tough decisions of this government in recent budgets have contributed significantly to this positive economic outlook of the next few years. It is a great outlook, and we should not forget that it has been the hard work of this government and this Treasurer which has led to this positive economic outlook for our community and our state.

We are predicting that there will be nation-leading five per cent growth next year and 5¼ per cent in the following year. We are also seeing forecasts that over 140,000 jobs will be created over the next two years. Unemployment is expected to fall to 4.75 per cent by 2012-13. Most importantly, we will see this government meet its election commitment of creating 100,000 jobs over this term of government. This government keeps its promises. We have delivered on those promises to create and support jobs and implement the economic policies to support that. We will also see Queensland maintain its status as one of the lowest-taxing states in Australia.

This budget is a good Labor budget. It is a necessary budget for a modern contemporary government. This budget delivers real results for the people of the Morayfield state electorate. I am very proud to support it. I encourage all other members of the House to do so.



**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.41 pm): I rise to speak to the budget documents and the community ambulance cover levy amendment bill. The budget had a very small number of capital items for the electorate of Gladstone, but it failed in great measure to address the stresses from the LNG industry and the other industries that are establishing and operating in the electorate now and into the foreseeable future.

Work on the Calliope Police Station has started and the budget continues with the funding for that work, and that is essential. The growth in the Calliope township has been exponential. Anyone who has not been there for even five years would be surprised at the amount of growth, so that police station is essential. Indeed, the Gladstone Police Station is pushed for room now so they are intending to move the traffic branch out to Calliope once that station is completed.

I believe the Gladstone police numbers are stressed already. We need a great increase in the number of uniformed and traffic officers so they can manage the population growth. We have a small dog squad and water police, but their sizes will certainly need to increase given the amount of port traffic that is involved in the industry and the imports and exports.

I have a letter that was written to me from somebody who is connected to a police officer, and I want to read a part of that letter. It stated—

I am a local resident of Gladstone and have lived here for more than 2 years. I am married to a local Police Officer ...

She is employed, and she said—

Both would appear to be good paying jobs and certainly enough to be able to afford to rent a property in Gladstone. This is not the case. We live in a little timber Queensland and worry that our imminent rent increase, some time this month, will have us in a dire predicament. We are already looking at cancelling our health, life, car and contents insurance and limiting fuel to a purchase of just 20 litres per fortnight. Clothing, hairdressing, dining out and any time spent holidaying have been out of the question for the last year or so.

Queensland Police Service has never acknowledged that in growing areas of the State, in the last 10 years at least, that members would not be able to afford housing. A small amount of housing is available to non commissioned ranks such as single persons barrack style accommodation and higher ranking officers in positions such as District Officer or Officer in Charge.

When approached QPS say they have housing available for those in need but this is very rare and highly contested. I have heard that Officers who have been posted here and not come of their own free will, leave their families in other areas of the State due to the fact they can't afford housing here.

With the growing population Gladstone needs Police Officers. Those who have done their three year tenure here are opting to get out and there is little attraction to come here unless Officers have property to sell in other lucrative towns in Queensland.

She wrote—

I believe our union has been attempting to help QPS members with the issue of housing and it is still a top priority in the Central Region. Some Officers don't wish for others to know their financial situations and how they are currently coping.

She went on to ask me to raise this in parliament. She also said that they are both looking for alternative employment out of the town where they can afford to pay rent. These are the real situations that are being faced by police officers, particularly newly commissioned police officers, who are on quite modest pays. The rent in Gladstone and the surrounding areas is high so the people who live there—not only the police officers but the teachers, court staff and all of those people—are finding it incredibly difficult to afford to live in the town.

We welcome the Calliope ambulance refurbishment and the Gladstone ambulance refurbishment. They will cater for the growth. I do not fully understand the extent of that refurbishment at this time but within that rebuild there certainly needs to be a component to allow for future growth.

I note also in the budget that there is \$10 million for a foreshore development on Flinders Parade. I was alerted to this in the ministerial statement and also through the media locally. This is a huge amount of money. I know that once it is constructed the community will value it, but it will not put people in houses and it will not make houses affordable. I cannot say clearly enough how stressed the people in the electorate are in relation to affordable housing.

I have raised affordable housing with the minister and in this chamber, and I have been told alternately about the National Rent Affordability Scheme but this does not apply to existing rentals; it is to new houses that are being built. The ULDA constructs homes but they are available on the open market. The people who are stressed cannot afford a loan to buy a house under the Urban Land Development Authority. The people who have been in the region for a long time and who have invested in our social infrastructure are the fabric of our region. They are the ones who are being affected and they are the ones who are having to leave. This is happening now. It is not something that will happen in the future, it is happening now. More and more families are stressed and are saying, 'We have to go.' I think that is a sad indictment on the state government. This cannot be meted out to other people anymore. We need housing commission type houses to be built.

To add insult to injury, it has come to light in the last week or so that a couple of months ago the Department of Environment and Resource Management was considering selling—and I cannot say whether it made a decision on this—12 parcels of land that are reserves for the education department. It wants to turn them into freehold land and sell them on the open market. One of those blocks of land is the future Calliope high school site. I raised this with the Minister for Education yesterday and he said he would have a look at that issue, and I thank him. It would be a travesty to see that block of land sold. It is a future high school site for one of the fastest growing areas of the electorate. The school has something like 100 new enrolments in the primary section. The high schools in Gladstone, which that area feeds into, would not take the sort of growth that Gladstone and Calliope are facing without there being an excess of students, so it is incredibly important to retain the Calliope high school site.

With regard to these other blocks of land that are proposed to be freeholded, if they are excess to need for whatever department it is—genuinely excess to need—we should build houses on them. We should build Queensland Housing type houses on them such as units and duplexes. The waiting list in Gladstone is significant. I know it is the same everywhere, but Gladstone has got such growth pressure coming and pressure there now. Families are in dire need. That \$10 million foreshore development will probably just create more park benches for people to sleep on, and I am not being facetious and I am not being harsh. People are so desperate for housing. We are back to the days when QAL was being built and anything that anyone could live in was lived in, whether it was a caravan or a car in somebody's backyard. I have heard rumours of each room in houses being rented out to somebody separately—completely against local government law—because people are so desperate for somewhere to live.

Many of those people are from down south, because the government and other people have said that LNG is powering the state and LNG is the new industry for the state. Neither of those statements is wrong, but people who come up from down south want the work but there is no accommodation. We had the Hook Up on the weekend, one of the biggest fishing competitions in Australia—a great family event. It was constrained this year for two reasons. Some of the people who are normally involved had helped families affected by flood and cyclone and said that they would not be involved this year, but overwhelmingly the people who did not come were the people who had rung to get motel accommodation but found there was no availability because the LNG industries have booked the motels out so that workers can stay there on a permanent basis.

I wish I could be more clear in saying how incredibly difficult it is for families to afford housing. A housing rental at Calliope is about \$420, if indeed you can get a rental. It is a significant impost. People who work in the supermarkets, people who work even on the council and people who work at schools such as school cleaners—all of those people who are so incredibly important to a community—are facing rental increases that they just cannot afford. Unless the government makes a concerted effort to invest in affordable housing, I do not know how we are going to manage.

Additionally, the stamp duty increase on the principal place of living will have an impact on buyers, particularly young buyers. I was contacted by somebody living in town who was in a rental property as a low-wage earner who thought that we might be able to help her. My office followed up with the Minister

for Community Services' office in relation to NRAS and it was then that we determined it was important for the minister to understand just how difficult it was for people in Gladstone to rent. I do not know how some pensioners are managing at all.

The other big issue that was ignored in this budget was health. I know that the Minister for Health said after I asked a question without notice this week that a strategic plan for the hospital will be completed at the end of 2011, but health has been an issue at the Gladstone Hospital since 1995. There was some respite for the next couple of years with some significant investment in the hospital, but since then there has been little. There are a number of people who deserve better—initially, and I think importantly, the people who work there, the doctors and the nurses. They provide an amazing service and have been knocked from pillar to post in being asked to provide more with less. The most recent insult to them was the pay issue in that they are now being asked to pay back wages that may have been overpaid. However, they have no paperwork. The payslips were abominable.

Health at the Gladstone Hospital needs a significant line item investment—not \$100,000 here or \$100,000 there but a number of millions of dollars. Major companies have expressed concern to me—and I spoke with the previous health minister about this—in that they are considering bypassing the Gladstone Hospital if there is an LTI and taking them to alternative medical services. That is a huge indictment on the Queensland government and its investment in that hospital. It is happy to accept industry and it is happy to welcome a mixture of industry of differing levels of risk, but it is not willing to invest in the local health services. I had a constituent contact me yesterday, and this is the message that he had—

All of the departments at the Gladstone Hospital, except the accident and emergency department, will be closed in July. The nurses and doctors have had to sign a gag order.

They are his words, not mine. He continues—

There will be no more in-patients at all. Emergency will be transferred to Rockhampton or to Bundaberg.

With regard to how he got that information, I think all of us know that the grapevine in all of our electorates is well and truly alive and well. We faced a similar situation last year when the current Deputy Premier was the health minister. At that time it was acknowledged—and he acknowledged it himself in a meeting that I had with him—that there were 50 per cent locums at that hospital. I am told that locum contracts are being cancelled—it is all budgetary—and that the hospital will not accept any patients because junior doctors will be brought off the wards and into accident and emergency. This is for a town that is getting billions of dollars of LNG industry not on its doorstep but in the middle of it. This is a town that has cyanide plants, cement plants and high-pressure vessels at at least two of the major industries. It has potlines at the Boyne Smelter. Please God, I am not suggesting that there is a higher risk of an incident. But these are plants that are unforgiving if there is an incident, and we have a hospital that is contemplating turning all patients to Rocky or Bundaberg because the government will not fund the services adequately, and I think that is completely unacceptable. There are worse words for it. There are words that constituents in my electorate call it, but they are unparliamentary.

There are demands on allied health such as a waiting list for oral health that is unacceptable. Wards have closed, yet statistics are read out in this chamber that say that Gladstone has one of the shortest waiting lists. Of course it has, because we do not do anything much at the hospital. People get sent to other hospitals where there is a waiting list. That is, our patients wait to get on the list at Rockhampton or they are told that Rockhampton Hospital cannot manage because its beds are fully occupied. There is a matter with a little girl—and the parents are aware that I am going to raise it—who is being treated cooperatively between Gladstone, Rocky and Brisbane who should have had the modern callipers—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** It is a prosthetic, but she should have had it 12 months ago and somehow fell between the cracks. That is not because the doctors at the hospital are uncaring; it is because there are not enough of them. The paediatrician had a heart attack and was finally back on half duties. It is shocking for them to have to cope. It is shocking for them as medical practitioners and nurses who are proud of what they do to have to operate under such callous, indifferent circumstances. It is wrong. It is wrong, and this budget has given nothing in terms of a major injection of funding into the Health portfolio into Gladstone. There is plenty at Rocky, but Rocky does not share well. Rocky does not share at all!

Roadworks are also an issue for Gladstone. There is one particular intersection that causes a great deal of angst, and that is the Kin Kora roundabout. There are significant queuing times there. They would now compare to the times spent at a lot of intersections here in Brisbane. They may not equate to Coronation Drive, but they are certainly queuing times that are unacceptable. The other intersection that causes the greatest anxiety is a federally funded one, and that is Calliope Crossroads. Both of those have the potential to cause accidents because people will become impatient and make foolish decisions. The Kin Kora roundabout is on a state funded road. It is at capacity now and it needs to have a capital injection as soon as possible. It is not an easy intersection, because it is surrounded by commercial enterprises—Stockland Shopping Centre is one. However, the road needs that work started because, as I said, it is already at capacity.



Investment in skills development for the upcoming industry is way past. I was at a conference where what was being said by a representative of one of the organisations that was established by this parliament by legislation gave the same talk that he gave 18 months ago—almost word for word. We should be well and truly past that. We should be delivering on skills development, not still talking about needs.

I have spoken with the Minister for Child Safety about support for the officers and I know that he is looking at that. Those are the things that are not seen in the community that are so important. When you have financial stress on a family—when people are wondering whether they will be able to keep their home, whether they will be able to feed the family, whether they will be able to meet all of the other necessities of life—those stresses then perhaps provoke unwise decisions made by parents and children suffer. So those Child Safety officers and other ancillary support services, such as Anglicare and the like who do a brilliant job, will need extra support.

I have already talked about the high school site at Calliope. Certainly, there will be a need to have an injection of funds to cater for the increase in population. Over the past few months in this parliament—in fact, probably over a year—we have heard often about LNG being the future of the state. There are some in my electorate who still have disquiet about LNG. But more and more are becoming frustrated and angry because, along with the influx of people, there has to be an investment in infrastructure to meet that influx. People are not seeing that this government is committed to balance and fairness in that area. We are asking for an investment in infrastructure now that will be recouped when the royalties start rolling. We need an investment in infrastructure now to ensure that the community that is there now and the community that is coming will be equipped to face those challenges.

*(Time expired)*



**Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (8.01 pm): This 2011-12 budget does very little for the rural and regional communities of Queensland. We on this side of the House are extremely concerned about the government's lack of interest in that area. Rural and regional Queensland provides much of the wealth of this state, yet this long-term Labor government continues to ignore the poor condition of our rural and regional roads, hospitals and infrastructure.

We have just come through the worst floods in history. Many farmers, many small businesses and many homeowners in rural and regional areas are in very dire straits. The cost of the floods to farmers has been absolutely immense. Only last night I phoned the Minister for Agriculture hoping that he would get back to me because the funding for what are called mental health workshops is ending on 30 June this year. This is a desperate situation. When parliament was sitting in Mackay I called on the name of those workshops to be changed to better health workshops. Those workshops must go on. There are farmers out there who are in desperate situations and who need those workshops and who need to be helped. I also spoke to the minister about the need for further funding, which I will not go into tonight. But that funding certainly must be increased. The minister gave me an assurance in Mackay that he would seriously look at the issue. I hope that he gets back to me and lets me know of the outcome because some farmers in my electorate are very concerned.

Rural and regional Queensland lacks many of the basic services that urban Queenslanders have readily available to them—services such as breast-screening clinics, medical specialists, dental care and a choice of educational facilities, just to name a few. The rapid expansion of the resources sector in many rural and regional communities has put increased pressure on services and infrastructure. This pressure has not been adequately addressed by this tired Labor government. There is talk of there being 40,000 coal seam gas wells from my electorate heading west in the next five to 10 years. That is an immense number of wells. In our small towns our house rentals are going up. Our workers are leaving industries to go to work for the mining companies. That is a good thing to a certain degree; they are getting good money. But we have to have a look at the impact that that has on our rural towns. We have to protect those towns.

The traffic on the Warrego Highway continues to increase, yet this long-term Labor government continues to provide insufficient funds to upgrade that highway. We really need four lanes from Toowoomba to Dalby. We see a government that is living from day to day. Queensland was under Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen for many years. We are living off the resources that his government put in place.

**Mr Hoolihan** interjected.

**Mr HOPPER:** Yes, yes, yes, member for Yeppoon. We saw a Premier who had a vision for 50 years. What do we see here tonight? We see a government that brings in a budget that lives from day to day to try to survive. With an \$85 billion debt, \$500,000 every hour just paid on interest, we hear the member for Yeppoon correct me! Forgive me, but one day's interest—

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** I rise to a point of order. I find the member's comments—particularly since he does not even know my electorate—offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! The member asks for that to be withdrawn.

**Mr HOPPER:** I withdraw. We are certainly living off the fruits of a National Party government.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HOPPER:** We certainly are. We get our coal to port. They put the electric train system in place so that we could do that. They built our ports. What has this government built? Absolutely, blatantly nothing! That is what this government has done. We are seeing another budget now—

**Mr Lawlor** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Member for Southport will cease interjecting.

**Mr HOPPER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. As I was so rightly saying, we now have a budget brought forward—as our leader said, delivered by the worst Treasurer in the history of Queensland—and we are supposed to accept it tonight. The Warrego Highway is the gateway from the west to the south-east corner. Every day on the National Highway over 7,000 vehicles pass through Toowoomba, yet that road remains in an atrocious condition. This year's budget announced funding to upgrade the Toowoomba to Charlton section. We heard the member for Toowoomba North speak about that upgrade earlier today and yesterday. He spoke very well about it—and rightly so. This upgrade is to take place in my electorate and it is to repair and renew a section of the road that goes for about two kilometres. We heard Minister Wallace speak about the \$96 million that has been granted, but out of that \$96 million only \$10 million is going to be spent this year. So in next year's budget it will be \$96 million again and again and again. The members opposite will stand up and say proudly, 'We are putting \$96 million into the Warrego Highway,' but that funding is ongoing. That is never mentioned. That is the deceit that is perpetrated in the House that we have seen today.

This year's budget talks about reconditioning the rail track and the replacement of the 29 turnouts between Dalby and Rosewood at a cost of almost \$28 million. I thank the government for that. But that should have been done three years ago. We have coal at Warra, but companies cannot get the trains to get their coal to port or get it to Swanbank so that they can keep producing coal. They can double their coal output if they can get it to Swanbank. They have argued with the department of transport for that for many years now—trying to get these things put in place. Thank God, finally there are some things happening. There is some funding to put some of these bypasses in place to get our coal there. We need that delivery method for our coal resources and that will mean a little bit less heavy freight on our roads.

We see those trucks coming from Acland going down the Toowoomba range. The companies applied for more trucks once the rail line got washed out to get our coal down to port. What will that do? That road goes straight through the middle of Toowoomba, through all of those traffic lights, down the range—

**Mr Johnson:** Eighteen sets.

**Mr HOPPER:** Yes, 18 sets of traffic lights. I thank the member for Gregory for that. We need that range crossing desperately. We need that bypass around Toowoomba.

The amount of \$3 million will be reinvested to facilitate the Darling Downs Cropping Research and Training Centre. This centre is to be located near Toowoomba. We do not know where yet. This sounds very, very wonderful. However, there is just one little catch. Before this can happen the agricultural land at the Dalby Agricultural College has to be sold. The same funding was announced in last year's budget. This is exactly what we heard last year. We are hearing it again this year. We are seeing our ag colleges totally destroyed and the land being sold off. There is a promise of a research station but only if the land can be sold off and that funding put in place.

The Western Downs Regional Council will receive \$4.6 million as a capital grant to fund the Dalby Aquatic Centre. This funding is welcomed by the Dalby community and surrounding regions. The aquatic centre will be well utilised and appreciated.


The budget is very disappointing to say the least and delivers little for hardworking families, small business owners, apprentices, pensioners and low-income earners. In rural and regional Queensland we are crying out for improved health services, access to specialists, better education facilities for our children, more services and support for older people and people with disabilities—people with disabilities are just left behind in the bush—greater access to sporting resources and safer roads. None of this has been adequately addressed in this budget.

The cost of electricity has been continually skyrocketing under this current government. Many households struggle to pay the exorbitant prices charged. We hear members opposite spruiking about how good it is that the government has dropped the ambulance levy. How many nights did we fight in this chamber about the ambulance levy that was imposed by this government? Now it is a hero for taking away what it brought in. It does not mention that power will go up by \$120 per annum. It is an absolute negative. There will be \$110 saved by not having to pay the ambulance levy yet there will be a \$120 rise in power costs. People are \$10 worse off. What a sham! This government has been portrayed as a hero by its members because it has dropped something it brought in in the first place.

At a time when Queensland should be prospering, it is spiralling downwards at a very rapid rate of knots. Queensland needs sound long-term economic strategies to be put in place right now if we are ever going to regain our AAA rating.

**Mr Johnson:** Like decentralisation.

**Mr HOPPER:** That is right, a decentralisation policy. Unfortunately, that will not happen any time in the near future with Labor at the helm. Queensland has an \$85 billion debt—that is, \$85,000 million. When John Howard left government we had \$40 billion in the bank. Federally we are now up over \$300 billion in debt. Queensland has a debt of \$85 billion. That is absolutely disgusting. It is \$500,000 every hour.

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (8.12 pm): My last speech on the budget referred to the global financial crisis and the \$7.6 billion that had been stripped from state revenue as a result. The opposition would have the people of Queensland think a global financial crisis never happened but in fact it did, and it was only three years ago. Since that time the Bligh government has been determined to do everything it can to stimulate our economy through its commitment to deliver major infrastructure projects. In some regions it was government capital works expenditure that kept the economy going. It was government capital works projects that kept locals employed. It was this government's steadfast commitment to fund those key capital works projects that reignited business, kept and created jobs and provided for a future that is far brighter than what was being proposed by the opposition.

On the Gold Coast it was this Labor government's commitment to building Metricon Stadium, the redevelopment of Carrara stadium. The opposition in the 2009 campaign talked about choices and tried to convince voters that we were just building a football stadium instead of investing that money into other areas. They opposed it. Metricon Stadium, now complete, is indeed a world-class facility. It is home to the Gold Coast Suns. It will be used for other major events. It will potentially host the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games should the Gold Coast bid be successful. The construction of Metricon over the past two years has also supported 1,100 jobs.

The new Gold Coast University Hospital is another project that the opposition did not commit to. It is a 750-bed tertiary hospital and is the largest public health infrastructure project currently underway in Australia. Over the life of its construction it will generate 10,000 jobs in the construction industry. In addition, the construction of the light rail rapid transit system from the university hospital to Broadbeach commenced in July 2010. As of 30 May this year this project has employed an average of 327 workers per day and spent \$30.3 million with local Gold Coast businesses.

The Bligh government also maintained its commitment to funding major roads projects that not only were critical in maintaining the momentum of keeping up with our fast-growing population and increased road usage but also were about supporting the Gold Coast's economy. As tourism and other major industries on the Gold Coast, such as the housing construction industry, suffered, it was this government's funding commitment that kept the Gold Coast moving. In my electorate it committed to the \$127 million Gold Coast Highway upgrade, completed last month, and the \$166 million Hope Island Road upgrade, completed in September 2010.

The opposition went to the Gold Coast community with a plan to cut jobs. It promised not to commit to the infrastructure expenditure that I just outlined. It had no plan and no vision for Queensland's fastest growing city. The Bligh government has a vision, and its promises committed to at the last election either have been delivered or are now taking shape. This work, in my view, is preparing the Gold Coast for what is around the corner and the opportunities that this budget presents and offers to the people of the Gold Coast and our economy.

I know, however, that, despite the state government's efforts, people are still doing it tough. It is also important to keep in mind that this year, just as we started to climb out of the GFC hole, Queensland bore the brunt of severe and unprecedented natural disasters in the form of flooding and cyclones. State and federal governments have met the \$6.8 billion cost incurred by the natural disasters and this, combined with a temporary loss of production revenue, has resulted in a record deficit of \$2.13 billion for this financial year and a forecast of \$4.06 billion for 2011-12. However, thanks to our fiscal reforms program, the budget deficits are lower than those forecast at the midyear review. Furthermore, the debt for this year will be \$17.5 million lower than forecasts made in the 2009-10 budget.

The opposition will argue that we have a debt and that they would have put the money in the kitty for a rainy day. In fact, I think that is exactly what the shadow Treasurer said this morning in his reply speech. It would have not spent the money after a cyclone or severe flood in which people lost their homes and their livelihoods but would have saved for a rainy day. When we spend they whinge and when we do not spend they whinge. If the opposition put forward one single idea, one single policy, someone might listen, but in the shadow Treasurer's reply today there was nothing. Last night in this House those opposite voted against capping water prices for South-East Queenslanders and today again they offered nothing to the people of Queensland.

Despite this year's hardships, the state government stands to deliver on our promise of 100,000 new jobs this term and 140,000 new jobs over the next two years. Job growth is set to rise above three per cent and drive unemployment lower. To help people enter the expanding labour force, this budget delivers \$3.8 million for the Queensland Green Army strategy and projects that assist low skilled workers and those disadvantaged by the labour market. This budget aims to support those who are struggling with the rising costs of living and provides for a range of initiatives to support families with disabilities, vulnerable families and those needing safe, secure accommodation.

The budget will fund the largest reconstruction effort ever seen in Queensland. The budget paves the way for the future and, importantly, the future of our children. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### Education

This year's budget reflects Queensland's commitment to ensuring a first rate education for the children of today, and a new generation of skilled workers for the economy of tomorrow.

The Bligh Government will spend a record operational budget of almost \$7.4 billion in 2011-12 to continue its education reform agenda and give all young Queenslanders a flying start to learning and life.

This investment will deliver more teachers, more teacher aides, new and renewed schools and continued support for children with special needs.

Since 1998, the Queensland Government has overseen a dramatic transformation in our education system—including our learning or earning reforms, the introduction of Prep and efforts to ensure every 4 year old has access to an approved kindergarten program.

I am indeed proud to have served this government as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education during which time the Government funded long day care centres to enable them to employ qualified staff and establish a kindergarten program for 4 yr old.

Many parents may not have even known that now if their 4 year old goes off to day care, at 9 o'clock that child will now participate in a structured government approved kindergarten program. There should be no extra cost to the parent as most operators have applied for and received funding for this initiative.

Across Queensland, \$75 million will go towards the establishment of 23 new kindergarten services by the end of this year, followed by another 85 by the end of next.

In my own electorate Harbour Town Kindyland, Paradise Point Kindyland, Runaway Bay Kindyland, My Kindy Runaway Bay and My Kindy Labrador will all receive funding towards the development of kindergarten programs for 4 year olds.

As I mentioned the Government's commitment to education reform continues as we take the first steps towards transitioning Year 7 to high school in 2015.

This move is a direct result of the government's decision to introduce full-time Prep in 2007, which added an extra year of schooling to Queensland's education system.

When Queensland children reach Year 7, they will be in their eighth year of schooling, which is the right time to start high school and because we raised the school entry age by six months from 2015, more than half the students in Year 7 will turn 13 years of age.

Teenagers will benefit more from their education in a high school environment.

In addition, with the introduction of the new Australian Curriculum, the move to high school will ensure our Year 7 students have the same learning opportunities as their interstate counterparts, with specialist teachers and facilities like dedicated science labs.

Visit: [www.flyingstart.qld.gov.au](http://www.flyingstart.qld.gov.au)

#### Jobs and Skilling

The Bligh Government will help more than 24,000 Queensland job-seekers into work with a \$104.5 million investment in the 2011-2012 state budgets for the Skilling for work initiative.

The Skilling for work initiative is aimed at helping people who can work, but who face significant barriers when it comes to entering the workforce.

In the last financial year, the state government helped 24,000 and I am pleased that this help is set to continue. Participants get jobs and training in fields like construction, horticulture, retail, hospitality, administration, community services and aged care.

For more information people can go to: [www.employment.qld.gov.au](http://www.employment.qld.gov.au)

#### Housing Market Reform

This budget delivers major reforms to the state's housing sector to boost construction jobs and make new housing more affordable.

The Treasurer has announced "Queensland Building Boost"—A six month, \$140 million initiative that will provide a \$10,000 grant for all Queenslanders constructing or purchasing a new home up to the value of \$600,000.

This initiative is about boosting the Construction industry—a major employer in Queensland, stimulating the market and creating more jobs for Queenslanders.

This initiative will start from 1 August 2011.

This incentive acts on top of the current \$7,000 first home buyers grant, meaning first home buyers stand to benefit from \$17,000 up front, with no stamp duty for properties under \$500,00 and no mortgage duty.

This is the most generous state-wide housing grant in the nation.

2022

## Approp. Bills; Comm. Amb. Cover Levy Repeal & Rev. & O'r Leg. A'ment Bill 16 Jun 2011

This initiative will be funded by the abolition of the transfer duty concession for principal place of residence homebuyers.

Qld has long offered this concession that is not replicated in any other state. Even after removing it, Queensland will continue to have the lowest standard stamp duty rates for homes in the mainland states of Australia.

Of course, the Qld Building Boost initiative is all about stimulating the market and following the announcement the initiative has been supported by the Qld Property Council, the UDIA, the Master Builders, the HIA and developers such as Stocklands.

For people wanting to buy a newly built home as a first home buyer, or buy a newly constructed property as an investment—now is the time to make the most of this opportunity.

For more information people can go to: [www.budget.qld.gov.au](http://www.budget.qld.gov.au)

This initiative is also about adding to our state's existing housing stock—which has been under pressure due to our strong population growth.

An investment of more than \$1 billion will also help more Queenslanders into homes and give homeless people a roof over their heads.

This budget also provides for the building of 1485 additional social housing homes, the upgrade and repairs of buildings, and provides more places to stay for homeless people. Locally, the Uniting Church will receive \$911,016 for Blair Athol Accommodation and run a program to provide a street-to-home service for people on the Gold Coast.

Under the community managed state owned housing program, the Gold Coast will receive \$2.36 million to complete construction on 19 units of accommodation. \$4.3 million will be allocated towards upgrades to social renting houses across the Gold Coast.

People needing housing support can contact: [www.communities.qld.gov.au/housing/housing-and-homelessness-services](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/housing/housing-and-homelessness-services)

### Tourism

In this budget we will continue to support the Queensland tourism industry.

The state government will double the annual investment on major events from next year to more than \$175 million over the next four years.

Major events are pivotal in supporting our Tourism industry; every dollar invested by Events Queensland in major events being staged in Queensland delivers a return of \$10 to our economy.

On the Gold Coast for example the Marathon generates an economic benefit of more than \$43 million, it attracts more than 24,000 people, and generates more than 46,000 visitor nights and supports 347 full time jobs.

The state government's investment in the events industry is about protecting local jobs, supporting local businesses reliant on tourism.

Gold Coast Tourism will receive \$201,000 to fund local tourism organisations for regional projects contributing to tourism development and marketing.

Find out more about Queensland Events by visiting: [www.eventsqueensland.com.au](http://www.eventsqueensland.com.au)

### Cost of Living

The Queensland government will meet the rising cost of living by eliminating the ambulance levy, currently added to electricity bills.

This means a \$113 reduction in electricity costs for the coming year.

The government will take on the full responsibility of funding the ambulance service, ensuring Queenslanders can continue to access ambulance services for free.

The Ambulance Levy has only ever accounted for 30% of the total Ambulance budget. The cost of abolishing the levy is recorded in this year's budget at \$139 million.

Last year's budget for the Queensland Ambulance Service was \$533.7 million. This year's budget delivers for the QAS an increase—at \$575.8 million.

There are an additional 50 ambulance officers and 140 new and replacement ambulance vehicles funded for in this budget—ensuring the QAS continues to provide a world-class service to all Queenslanders.

This budget has delivered \$1.4 billion in concessions for 2011-12 to help Queenslanders with health care, electricity, water, rates, public transport costs and more.

These include an 11% increase in the pensioner rates rebate scheme to \$200 per annum, a 6% increase in the electricity rebate to \$230 per annum and a 20% increase in the South-East water rebate to \$120.

For more information on Concessions visit: [www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/concessions](http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/concessions)

### Helping Out Families

The Queensland Government's Helping out Families initiative is making a difference in the lives of young Gold Coast families. This initiative is all about helping families who have been identified as families at risk of referral to Child Safety.

The Helping Out Families initiative is designed to provide appropriate support to children, young people and families who have been referred to the department of Child Safety but do not require ongoing statutory involvement.

This initiative aims to strengthen the response of government and non-government family support services to provide support earlier and more effectively to families in need.

This includes the establishment of new services and provision of additional funding for existing organisations that support children, young people and families.

In last year's budget this government committed funding to kick start this initiative, enabling the establishment of the Family Support Alliance Service.

The Family Support Alliance Service works in collaboration with other government and non-government agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need.

On the Gold Coast, since the program began taking referrals in January 2011, 408 referrals from the Department of Child Safety have been made. On average more than 22 families per week are being referred.

Act for Kids in my electorate based at Labrador is one of the non-government organisations funded to provide Intensive Family Support programs.

I know that the dedication of staff at Act for Kids is making a huge difference in providing these programs and offering guidance to hundreds of Gold Coast families, however I know they have been concerned by the continued increase in referrals and great need for this type of support service for vulnerable families.

I am pleased that this year's state budget recognises the outcomes achieved through the Helping out Families initiative and the work of organisations such as Act for Kids with \$15 million allocated to continue the program.

If you have a reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm contact Child Safety Services.

During normal business hours contact a Child Safety Services regional intake service on 13 QGOV (137468). After business hours and on weekends, contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 32359999 or freecall 1800177135.

#### Disabilities

Mr Speaker, the state budget demonstrates very clearly the distinction between Labor and the conservatives and one portfolio that has greatly benefited from this government has been, and continues to be the Disabilities portfolio.

In this budget an additional \$11.7 million will go to Disability Services QLD, including \$70.329 million for community health.

The Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland will receive \$545,000 funding for its services in supporting individuals with a disability, school leavers with a disability and \$500,000 to expand its current services.

The Gold Coast Family Support Group will receive \$2 million to support adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in the community, \$772,000 to support school leavers with a disability, \$534,000 to provide short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability, and \$116,000 to support young adults with a disability exiting state care to maintain living arrangements of their choice.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship will receive \$62,000 to support adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in the community, \$411,000 for community awareness campaigns and community support, \$19,000 to support individuals without carers who are homeless, and who are at significant risk of abuse and neglect, as well as individuals inappropriately housed in hostels.

In addition \$463,000 has been allocated to assist adults with a psychiatric disability and moderate to high support needs, to be supported in accommodation provided by the Department of Housing.

Guide Dogs for the Blind will receive \$152,000 and Endeavour Australia will receive \$281,000.

For advice regarding disability support phone: 1800177120

#### Transport and Roads

Construction is set to continue on the Gold Coast Rapid Transit System project, with \$175.25 million funding in this year's budget.

The project will deliver stages of light rail transport from Southport to Broadbeach, directly servicing the soon to be unveiled Gold Coast University Hospital. The total state Government contribution over the life of the light rail project is \$710.12 million.

Installation of road signage will commence, with \$900,000 for signage on the Gold Coast Highway between Helensvale and Government Road, Labrador.

#### Energy and Water Infrastructure

Energy and water infrastructure will also receive development, with \$380,000 towards work on the trunk main, pipe works and reservoirs in the Gold Coast region; \$37.8 million for ENERGEX's sub-transmission network to improve network reliability and capacity; \$54.48 million for distribution augmentation work on ENERGEX's network in the Gold Coast region, and \$458,000 for the undergrounding of short overhead sections on the Gold Coast to improve network reliability. Additionally, \$5.16 million will go towards backup power supplies to water treatment plants.

The Urban Water Security Research Alliance, which aims to provide water security to Australian capital cities by more than doubling water recycling capabilities, will receive \$5 million.

It will focus on best-management practice methods for recycling wastewater and stormwater and the development of a coordinated water management system for South East Queensland.

#### Community Infrastructure

To promote healthy, active living in Queensland, Sport and Recreation will receive \$155 million, including \$65.8 million for sports and recreation infrastructure.

The Runaway Bay Sport Precinct will receive \$131,000 towards the first stage of construction of six multipurpose sports fields. Over the life of this project, the State Government contribution is \$1.5 million.

Arundel Park, Coombabah, will receive \$82,000 towards construction of a roof and to install an irrigation system and lighting for equestrian sports.

As a part of the \$15million Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan, funding has been included in this budget for Gold Coast Junior Rugby League and the Gold Coast AFL Junior Football Club to continue to employ co-ordinators, for six AFL football clubs and seven rugby league clubs in the Northern Gold Coast area.

I know the co-ordinators are doing a great job, supporting volunteers and building the capacity of these clubs. This is an important initiative that is creating jobs and helping kids enjoy their sport.

Last year the state Government announced that it would purchase the Runaway Bay Sports Super centre through Education Queensland to create a Sports and Leadership centre for state school students.

I am very proud to have been able to deliver this outcome. I know the centre is starting to see more and more people using it, and that the government is working to reinvest to improve the facilities.

This budget delivers \$500,000 towards the upgrade of the athletics track.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately the time allocated for budget replies is not long enough and I have to close my remarks. In doing so, I congratulate the Treasurer for delivering a good budget for the people of Queensland.

A budget that demonstrates good fiscal management, a commitment to true Labor values and policies and a budget that steers Queensland and our regions towards an improved economic position following the GFC and the natural disasters.

Residents can find out more by contacting my electorate office on 55296000.



**Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (8.19 pm): I am proud to stand here today and acknowledge that this ninth budget of the Bligh Labor government focuses on essential service areas such as health, education and community safety. It provides money for the types of activities that will impact on the lives of every family in the Burleigh electorate and ensures that our community remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

In Burleigh, early education has received a big boost in this budget with over \$1.14 million received for local primary schools, kindergartens and child-care centres. Palm Beach State School has also received the \$860,000 needed for the establishment of a double kindergarten unit at the school. That is in addition to a further \$210,000 for local child-care services to provide kindergarten services across the electorate. There is also significant funding in this budget to upgrade and improve other schools in my electorate. A smaller, but no less important, announcement was funding for the installation of an industrial sized fan in the Miami High State School great hall. Anyone who has spent a summer evening in the Great Hall would appreciate the need for extra ventilation. While the funding for fans has generated some light-hearted tweeting, I look forward to the next awards night when we can all sit in comfort.

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**Mrs SMITH:** I do. Community safety has been an important issue in Burleigh for some time now. I have worked closely with the community and the government to make sure that police receive the funding and resources they need to keep Burleigh safe. This budget delivers \$1.5 million for the construction of a police beat on the Burleigh beachfront and \$500,000 for the refurbishment of the Burleigh Heads police complex. This is great news for Burleigh and a testament to the rewards that community involvement in community safety can reap. I take this opportunity to thank my community for their tireless work in this area.

Keeping up with the pace of growth on the Gold Coast means we need to invest in our local road network. Roadworks in the Burleigh electorate are set to improve with significant projects being undertaken and funded in this budget. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the efforts being put into improving key areas such as the Kortum Drive intersection opposite Marymount College. This work will go a long way to ease the congestion in this area and I will continue to lobby for further funding to complete the upgrade of the nearby Reedy Creek Road-Bermuda Street intersection so that we can address this issue once and for all.

I am pleased to see that cycling infrastructure is also included in the budget, with \$300,000 allocated to commence construction of the Burleigh Connection Road cycleway. It is important that we provide more such infrastructure if we wish to promote healthy and sustainable communities. While I am on the subject of healthy and sustainable communities, this time last year I was pleading for funds to reconstruct the Tallebudgera boardwalk in front of the David Fleay Wildlife Park. This project has now been started and I am happy to see that \$900,000 has been allocated for the continued reconstruction of this valuable community asset.

As Queensland's economy moves forward and recovers from the dual blows of the global financial crisis and natural disasters, the Gold Coast is still experiencing high unemployment. The construction and tourism industries are two of the principal employers of Gold Coasters and I am pleased to see additional assistance given to those sectors in these tough times. The \$10,000 construction and new home grant provides the local construction industry with a great short-term boost. In addition, the record \$83 million in events funding for Queensland will assist Gold Coasters working in the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors as we encourage more people to visit our wonderful city. Everything that we as a government can do to keep employed people working in those industries is important.

Finally, I mention the Bligh government's commitment to easing the cost of living for Queenslanders. The removal of the ambulance levy from electricity bills will be of great assistance to many Queenslanders who are doing it tough. I applaud the increase in assistance to pensioners in this budget. We will see the maximum pensioner local government rates subsidy increase to \$200 per annum. An increase in the subsidy for pensioners in the South-East Queensland water grid to \$120 and a \$230 increase to the subsidy for their electricity bills will no doubt be welcome.

This budget delivers resources for the people of Burleigh where they are needed most, in our neighbourhoods. It is delivered at a time when much of Queensland is rebuilding from devastating natural disasters, but it puts a few extra dollars in the pockets of the people who need it most and continues to fund major infrastructure such as the Gold Coast University Hospital and the rapid transit project. It gives me great pleasure to see that, at a time when there are so many well-deserved demands on the budget, the Bligh government has not forgotten the Gold Coast. I commend this bill to the House.



**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (8.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the state budget, a budget that is responsible and a budget that will create activity in sectors needing some stimulus such as the building and tourism industries. It is a budget with a heart that takes into account the stress of cost of living that is being felt in households around our state and offers some relief in the area of cost-of-living expenses. This budget was brought down under very difficult circumstances. I put on the record that I think the Treasurer has got the balance right. It will rebuild Queensland while focusing on families. It will rebuild communities while delivering a concessions pack totalling almost \$1.4 billion, including increases to electricity rebates, pensioner rates and SEQ water subsidy schemes. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Andrew Fraser, on delivering a budget that delivers lower deficits, lower debt, more jobs and nation-leading growth for Queensland.

This budget allocates \$50,000 to the Logan East Community Neighbourhood Association—or LECNA, as we in the community like to call it—for planning to expand and meet the future needs of our community. The Logan East Community Neighbourhood Association was founded in 1990 and operates with the support of a management committee and volunteers. LECNA endeavours to provide an effective support and referral service to the eastern suburbs of Logan City and beyond, including Underwood, Rochedale South, Springwood, Daisy Hill, Shailer Park, Loganholme, Cornubia, Carbrook and other areas close by. In other words, it services the whole of the Springwood electorate and more.

The centre has been operating for over 20 years, mostly through the efforts of volunteers. Funds have been raised through fairs, cent auctions, raffles, book sales and other fundraising events. Local businesses have also given donations and supported the centre. Since 2001 the centre has received a small amount of funding from the state government. The centre is accessed, on average, by more than 650 people a month. It provides many services including counselling and parenting programs. There is a long list of activities provided at the centre of an educational and supportive nature and it also provides space for community organisations such as the Amputees and Family Support Group Queensland, of which I am the patron. Therefore, I am pleased to inform the House that in the budget this group will receive funding of \$41,000 so that it can keep providing very important information.

At LECNA there is something for everyone: playgroups, parenting programs, a craft group, advanced driver learning courses, internet for seniors, Christmas lights tours and carols nights. It provides all this and more, as well as being the centre that provides emergency relief packages to those in need. The centre is run by an amazing bunch of people. They work tirelessly and selflessly for our community and we could never thank them enough, nor could any level of government fund all that they do.

In 2010 I asked the Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh, to visit the centre. The Premier was impressed with the work being done by staff and volunteers under difficult circumstances. She noted the limited space at the centre and the need to expand in order to develop more programs to keep up with the community's demands. I thank the Premier for taking the time to visit the centre and for listening to the staff, volunteers and clients. I also had several talks with the Treasurer about the needs of the centre. I thank him for listening and delivering the planning money. LECNA is a very important part of the Springwood electorate and plays a significant role in the fabric of the Springwood community. This is a great example of the Bligh state government listening to our community and delivering for the people of Springwood.

I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*. Approval has been given by the Deputy Speaker and Hansard has an email copy.

Leave granted.

#### Cost of Living Assistance

Those on low and fixed incomes are doing it tough. That is why I am extremely pleased the budget will be providing help to those who need a hand with the cost of living. Pensioners deserve our support, and that's why I am pleased that this Budget will increase the maximum pensioner local government rates subsidy paid by the State Government by 11 percent to \$200 per annum.

This budget will also increase the allocation for the subsidy scheme for pensioners and seniors for their electricity costs to \$115.6 million this year, this will increase the subsidy to \$230 for their electricity bills. There will also be an increase to the subsidy for pensioners in the SEQ Water Grid to \$120. From 1 July the ambulance levy on electricity bills will be abolished. This delivers a saving of \$113 to around 1.4 million electricity bills across the state. The government will meet the full costs of running the ambulance service, providing free ambulance cover for all Queenslanders. This will provide benefits not only to households and families, but to small businesses and community groups, sporting clubs and body corporates.



This Budget also funds a \$60 million extension to the ClimateSmart Home Service to help Queenslanders reduce their energy consumption, electricity bills and carbon footprint. I know of families in the electorate who have used this service and they speak of the great savings they have made. This service can deliver savings of up to \$480 per annum for households. This budget delivers for those who could do with a handout—pensioners and lower income households struggling to make ends meet.

#### Rebuilding the State and Economy Hit by Natural Disasters

There is no doubt the natural disasters that hit our State have also hit our bottom line. In fact the cost of natural disasters has increased by \$1.8 billion to \$6.8 billion. Councils have gone about making their full assessments and their estimated claim to the state has increased by \$900 million. Despite a bigger damage bill the Budget recovery and the rebuilding is underway, a \$15 billion infrastructure Program supporting 93,000 jobs. This building program is larger than Victoria and larger than Western Australia.

The Government remains on track to meet the commitment to create 100,000 jobs this term. Budget forecasts 140,000 jobs over the next two years. Unemployment is forecast to fall to 5½% this financial year, 5% in 2011-12 before dropping to 4.75% in 2012-13.

Queensland continues to have the cheapest stamp duty and the lowest rate and highest threshold for payroll tax of any State in mainland Australia. Queensland's taxation per person is \$501 per person below the average of other States and territories and the lowest of a State in mainland Australia.

#### Rebuilding Communities Hit by Natural Disasters Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal, Allocations

At the end of May 2011, \$84 million has been paid out of that fund since it started. That is about \$100,000 an hour since it started, or about \$1 million a day. In fact in just one fortnight, \$12.8 million was paid out as people begin to understand the process and get their claims in. In May around 28,418 individuals in Queensland have received assistance from this fund. In Queensland there have been three rounds of applications for the appeal with applications now being received at a rate of around 350 a week. At the time of writing this speech, the middle of June, there are 200 people led by an Assistant Director General working seven days a week to process applications and they are now making payments at twice the rate they are receiving applications. Any additional monies coming into the fund after June 30 will be allocated to St Vincent de Paul, which is currently distributing \$10 million from the fund. I thank everyone who donated to the appeal.

#### Sporting Clubs

The 2011-12 State Budget will deliver \$155 million for sport and recreation to promote healthy and active living in Queensland. I am very pleased that this budget includes \$10 million for the popular Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan, enabling grassroots clubs around the State to hire co-ordinators to build capacity and recruit participants, partners and sponsors. Many sport and recreation clubs rely almost entirely on the dedication of volunteers and often they do not have the capacity or the knowledge and skills to seek out sponsorships or spend time developing strong community networks. Through this program local sport and recreation co-ordinators will be able to provide advice and support on promotion, fundraising, marketing and sponsorship activities to increase opportunities for participation in sport and active recreation in local communities. The local co-ordinator would work with a cluster of five to seven sport, recreation or community clubs and councils to provide a vital link between clubs and also local schools. Co-ordinators help clubs manage their volunteers, increase membership and help in their planning, governance and grant applications. So far \$15 million has been approved under the Plan, creating 111 new jobs to assist up to 720 clubs across Queensland.

I am pleased to inform the House that in this budget \$52,000 has been funded towards employing a local co-ordinator for rugby union to support eight clubs in the Greater Brisbane area including Logan. The State Government will contribute \$156,000 over the life of the project. This budget also includes:

\$65.8 million to continue development of sport and recreation infrastructure to support local communities participation including a further round of the Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Program;

\$11 million to support people from disadvantaged communities participate in sport and recreation including \$5 million for targeted Indigenous programs;

\$2 million of equipment grants available to sport and recreation clubs who sign up to the 'Positive or it's Pointless' campaign that aims to promote a positive culture and supportive environment in junior sporting clubs; and

\$2 million to support clubs recovering from natural disasters including \$1 million under the Flood Fightback program to help clubs repair, rebuild and replace their flood damaged facilities.

#### Law and Order

The State Government will provide the Queensland Police Service with more than \$2.1 billion in 2011-12 to enable it to continue its efforts to reduce crime and enhance community safety. That is an increase in the police service's operating budget of \$72.4 million or 4% in 2011-12 compared to the previous year. Thanks to ongoing investment by Labor Governments and the good work of police, the overall rate of crime in Queensland has reduced by 27% in the past 10 years including a 48% reduction in the rate of property crime and a 20% reduction in the rate of offences against the person.

This Budget demonstrates the State Government's ongoing commitment—more police officers, a significant capital works program and funding for initiatives including road safety and the trial of Drink Safe Precincts. The budget also includes funding for 150 additional police officers, the final instalment of the Bligh Government's election commitment to increase the number of police officers by up to 600 during this term of government. These additional positions will see the number of sworn police officers in Queensland increase to more than 10,600 by March 2012.

The ongoing development of the new state-of-the-art Police Academy at Wacol has attracted \$54.9 million in this budget, while \$51.1 million will be spent on a range of information and communication technology initiatives, including the continued development of a new computer-aided dispatch system, upgrade of existing resources through Technology Refresh and the Digital Integrated Traffic Camera System.

The capabilities of the state's water police would be significantly boosted by a \$12.7 million funding allocation to purchase three new catamarans. The budget also contains an additional \$25.7 million for the continued deployment of fixed and mobile speed cameras across the state in an effort to keep our roads safe and reduce the tragic number of deaths on our roads.

Maintaining the Bligh Government's commitment to reducing alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour, the budget also delivers \$3.1 million for the Queensland Police Service to continue the trial of Drink Safe Precincts in Townsville, Surfers Paradise and Fortitude Valley. \$5 million is in this budget to go towards the completion of the \$7.6 million refurbishment of the Beenleigh Police Station which includes the communication centre which services the Springwood Electorate. Also in the budget is \$2.4 million to continue construction of the new \$3 million Oxley District Forensic Facility.

## Education and Training

Thanks to investment by Labor Governments Queensland's education system has undergone an exciting transformation in the past decade, including ground-breaking 'learning or earning reforms', the introduction of full-time prep and the current plans of making kindergarten available to all Queensland children. Major reforms to Queensland's education system in the past decade places the year 2015 as the right time to transfer Year 7 into high school. As a direct result of the government's decision to introduce full-time Prep in 2007, which added an extra year of schooling to Queensland's education system means when Queensland children reach Year 7, they will be in their eighth year of schooling, a good time to start high school. Along with this the school entry age has risen by six months, which means that from 2015, more than half the students in Year 7 will turn 13 years of age. As children enter their teens, they are becoming more independent and are looking for new learning challenges. High school provides a better environment for their social, emotional and academic development. In response to feedback from parents and communities, pastoral care programs will be developed to support students and help make the transition to high school easier.

The decision to transfer Year 7 to high school will mean significant investments in the state and non-state sectors to build new classrooms, buy extra teaching resources, support teachers and develop programs to make the transition easier for students. The first funding allocations would be made as part of the 2011-12 State Budget by providing additional capital funding for state schools totalling \$328.2 million over four years from 2011-12 to implement the Flying Start initiatives. There will also be additional recurrent funding of \$293.8 million over five years, which includes \$81 million to the non-state sector for capital assistance grants. Between now and 2015, there is much to be done and I look forward to working closely with state, Catholic and independent schools in the electorate to make sure the infrastructure and student and teacher support programs are in place so there can be a safe and smooth transition into high school.

In the budget is \$34.9 million to continue the development of Skillstech Australia major trade and technician skills campus at Acacia Ridge. I know that a great education provides children with a solid foundation needed to succeed in life. The State Government's investment in education and training is an investment into our future.

## Building Industry

In this budget the State Government will deliver a \$140 million Building Boost to stimulate the housing sector. The Queensland Building Boost is a six month, \$140 million initiative that will provide a \$10,000 grant for all Queenslanders constructing or purchasing a new home up to the value of \$600,000. Already, Queenslanders don't pay one cent of duty on first home purchases up to the value of \$500,000. The Queensland Building Boost is on top of those concessions that are already in place. The \$10,000 will apply across the board to all buyers of new homes under \$600,000. This is good news for growing families wanting to build a new home. It is great news for investors looking to purchase a new property. It is also a great boost for workers looking to build a property in the growth hotspots around regional Queensland. For first home buyers this can mean \$17,000 up-front. They will also pay zero stamp duty for properties under \$500,000, zero mortgage duty and thus keep the full \$17,000. This is the most generous statewide housing grant in the nation. It will stimulate activity, promote supply and support jobs in the housing industry.

For some, home ownership is not an option. That's why in the budget there is an injection of more than \$93 million over five years into the National Rental Affordability Scheme that will deliver over 11,300 dwellings.

## A Responsible Budget for Tough Times

This State Budget is a responsible budget for tough times. This speech only has a small amount on some of the many budget areas. I encourage residents to have a look at my website for more information regarding the 2011-12 State Budget.



**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.28 pm): I, too, rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the appropriation and revenue amendment bills. Firstly, I commend the shadow Treasurer for his excellent contribution to this debate this morning. The shadow Treasurer eruditely highlighted the deficits in the Treasurer's performance, and that of the government more generally, in handing down this year's budget. I will touch on some of those deficits.

Firstly, as a state our finances were in trouble long before the global financial crisis and the natural disasters. We were on track for \$65 billion in debt before the GFC and it was heading in the direction of \$85 billion in debt before the asset sales. Funnily enough, after selling \$17 billion in assets for the sole purpose of paying down debt, we are still heading for \$85 billion in debt. That is not a GFC and it is not natural disasters. That is plain and simple ALP economic mismanagement, straight from the ALP textbook. What frustrates me most is that the interest payments on that debt will equal \$595,000 each and every hour, or \$100 million a week. What we could do with \$100 million in Glass House! However, I will touch on that later.

The truth is that the Treasurer failed to deliver real, long-term cost-of-living savings for Queenslanders. The shadow Treasurer, on the other hand, has outlined how a can-do LNP government would tackle the biggest issues facing Queensland households such as their rego bills, water bills, electricity bills and sneaky Labor taxes. Yes, the LNP supports the removal of the repugnant ambulance tax, saving \$113 per year on Queenslanders' power bills—it always has—but we will also freeze vehicle registration on the family car, saving another \$15 to \$20 per year.

Our four-point water plan, which I reiterated in the debate last night, will cut around \$80 from the annual water bill in South-East Queensland. As announced by the shadow Treasurer this morning, a can-do LNP government will also freeze the standard domestic tariff, tariff 11, providing savings of \$120 per year. The LNP also opposes the 125 per cent increase in transfer duty on family homes. When in government it will reintroduce the principal place of residence concession for transfer duty, saving a typical family who moves house once every seven years \$2,315 a year.

Those are real savings. Those are real policies. As the shadow Treasurer has already challenged, we call on the government to steal these policies for the sake of all Queenslanders. It should steal them in the same way it has stolen our policies on addressing crime on the Gold Coast, like it has stolen our policy on GPS tagging of sex offenders, like it has stolen our policy on abolishing the

ambulance tax and like it tried to copy—but failed dismally—our water policy. Those opposite harp on the LNP being bereft of policy ideas. No-one is listening anymore because everyone knows that it is a mistruth. The fact is that it is the ALP that is bereft of policy ideas and that it only wants us to put out more so it can steal them. So it can go ahead—steal away—and truly help Queenslanders address their cost-of-living issues.

I now turn to the environment portfolio. I note that the minister put out a rather shrill media statement. Before she throws stones, perhaps she should look at how her own government considered the environment when it came to this budget. For starters, the big environmental announcement, the \$60 million extension of the ClimateSmart Home Service, was not even promoted as an environmental initiative; it was portrayed as a cost-of-living program. Let us look at the Treasurer's words. I quote from the media statement of Saturday, 11 June. It stated—

Queenslanders will receive even more money-saving devices to help knock-down their household bills, under a new and improved ClimateSmart Home Service announced by Treasurer Andrew Fraser ...

He went on to say—

As at 1 June 2011 more than 277,000 Queenslanders have had the money-saving ClimateSmart technology installed ...

The LNP certainly commends the intent of this initiative, but clearly the Treasurer is following the lead of the LNP and is focusing on cost-of-living pressures first.

In terms of some of the capital funding allocations for the environment, the LNP has identified some alarming trends. Consistent with Labor's mismanagement and neglect of national parks, a number of projects need to be singled out. There is the Bunya Mountains National Park. It was meant to be completed in 2008-09. There was nothing in that budget outyear forecast but, in fact, last year there was a \$70,000 underspend. Where did that come from? Delay and mismanagement!

Then there is the Cardwell QPWS base, another project that was meant to be completed in 2008-09. Again, there was nothing in the 2008-09 outyear forecast, and back then it was worth \$620,000. It has gone missing for three years but now it is back, bigger and better than ever. In fact, it is much bigger, at \$1.025 million. We have to ask the minister why, and where was it in the 2010-11 budget papers?

Equally alarming and very consistent with the LNP's concern that the current government has a 'lock it up and throw away the key' mentality when it comes to national park management is the \$150,000 underspend on boundary fence work for the past year. The QPWS was slated to spend \$172,000 on boundary fencing this past financial year; it spent \$22,000. No wonder the LNP and I as the shadow minister are fielding calls from concerned landholders who neighbour national parks.

Continuing the trend of mismanagement and underspends, the Lytton Quarantine Station came in at \$200,000, or 57 per cent, under anticipated expenditure for this financial year. The line item of 'QPWS building and accommodation upgrades—various' was \$100,000, or 50 per cent, under budget. Was this mismanagement? Was this poor planning? Was this redirecting money from these vital capital works programs to prop up mismanagement in other arms of the government, perhaps the Health payroll debacle? Similarly, and perhaps most disconcertingly, there is a \$2.7 million underspend within rainforest and green land acquisitions. Is this not a failure to secure land of the highest conservation value?

The LNP has long been calling for additional investment in ranger positions, so we are pleased to see the allocation of \$10.5 million over four years to employ an additional 50 QPWS staff. I will be watching with interest to see how these positions are allocated and where they pop up. I will be interested to see if this allows the government to catch up on its appalling record of producing management plans for its protected estates.

I will also be watching with interest the development of the Biodiversity Strategy for Queensland. Feedback that I have received to date from stakeholders suggests that this is not a true aspirational strategy but, rather, a hotchpotch of existing initiatives and programs, pulled together and re-released with a new glossy cover. If that is the case, I am concerned about whether the \$3.9 million made available over the next four years will really achieve the stated goals of reversing the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of species, ecosystems and ecological processes. I am a big fan of corridor protection, as I have stated on numerous occasions, but it needs to be done in the right corridors based on scientific rigour, solid planning and consistent with an ambitious strategy. The government's history to date on each of these elements is pretty disappointing. It is a lot of money to waste and I hope the government has got it right this time.

I turn to the electorate of Glass House. In short, I am disgusted not because, yet again, the Bligh Labor government has neglected the good constituents of Glass House and treated them with disdain but because it takes us for fools. It is one thing to be treated with contempt and to be ignored; it is

insulting to be treated as idiots. Does the government really think we would not see through its deception, through its spin? That deception is best displayed in the regional budget statement for the Sunshine Coast. The three 'marquee' items listed for the electorate of Glass House are not new announcements; they are rehashed, recycled, respun announcements, some from as long ago as 2008-09. There is \$196,000 to replace two bridges at Kondalilla Falls National Park. That is funny; last year it was \$75,000 for the same bridges. There is \$6 million to complete the \$11.1 million project to replace Hammond Bridge at Six Mile Creek, Elimbah—another old announcement rebadged. Ask any local from Elimbah and they will tell you how astonished they are at the slow progress on this bridge replacement project. Now we know why. It is so that this tired, old Labor government has something to announce in this year's budget.

Then there is the amount of \$500,000 to 'start' the \$5 million upgrade to a section of the Maleny-Kenilworth Road between Cambrook Creek and Booloumba Creek Road at Cambrook. Firstly, this is not funding to start the project. The Treasurer obviously did not talk to his Minister for Main Roads because even the most cursory glance at the recently tabled Queensland Transport Roads Implementation Program would reveal that this is not the case. To date, \$2 million has already been spent on this project. Add the \$500,000 for the coming year and that actually leaves \$2.5 million still to be spent. Some 'start'! The project is actually very well advanced. I would be happy to show the Treasurer the temporary barriers that have been alongside the road for the past two years and the mountain of earth that has been shifted. I do not expect the Treasurer to walk the road each year as I do, but I do expect him to do his homework, consult with his colleagues in cabinet and present the truth, not spin. No-one who uses the Maleny-Kenilworth Road will be hoodwinked by this glossed-up announcement. They will be grateful when the project finally recommences, but they will not be duped.

If we delve deeper we can find a couple of wins for the people of Glass House. Students at two Maleny schools will be safer because the Sunshine Coast Regional Council has extracted contributions from the Treasurer in the form of the TIDS program. So students travelling to Ananda Marga River School will be grateful to know that the state government is plugging in \$108,000 and the regional council \$107,000 to widen Bridge Creek Road. All I can say is thank you to local Councillor Jenny McKay for listening to her constituents, prioritising this project and forcing the government to come to the party.

Similarly, Councillor McKay has been instrumental in ensuring that the Maleny State School will receive improved passenger set-down facilities through a \$60,000 joint state and local contribution. I think it is fair to say that both Councillor McKay and I see this as a temporary solution. It does not resolve the ongoing safety and traffic issues on Bunya Street outside the school. A true, long-term solution involves the development of the Maleny precinct, the relocation of the Maleny swimming pool and the relocation of bus and vehicle set-down and pick-up facilities away from the main road altogether. I will be working with her and with the Minister for Main Roads and the Minister for Education to make this happen in the short term.

But perhaps the most significant achievement for the electorate of Glass House is not actually even in the budget papers. It is actually in the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program—and that is a time frame and budget allocation for the upgrading of Steve Irwin Way between Bowen Road and Amy Drive at Glass House Mountains. Importantly, this includes the dangerous intersection of Steve Irwin Way with Reed Street. Again, I have been lobbying in conjunction with outgoing local Councillor Anna Grosskreutz to get this on the program, and it is great to see it there. The project will kick off some time in the 2013-14 to 2014-15 time frame with an injection of \$4.8 million, with an additional \$19.4 million to follow. This will be a great relief to the residents of the township of Glass House Mountains. It does create problems, sure—problems such as the relocation of the much loved Glass House Mountains RSL club, but everyone knows that this is desperately needed, so they will be reassured to know that it is going to happen.

In the time remaining I would like to touch on what is not in the budget—projects that are priorities for Glass House, projects that I will continue to pursue. The most glaring omission in both the budget papers and QTRIP is any commitment to the north coast rail corridor duplication. Commuters on the coast know all too well that funding for the project was pulled three months after I won the seat of Glass House off Labor. They also know that the government has gone to great lengths to ignore them in the time since. Not only has there been no further commitments to reinstate the project; the government, the minister, refused to meet coast commuters regarding the recent timetable changes, and the government continues to treat them with contempt with respect to periodical ticketing. Fortunately, commuters know that I will not rest until we get action on the corridor, on the timetable and on the fares.

I will use other opportunities to detail my concerns regarding north coast rail, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people: firstly, the shadow minister for transport for his willingness to catch the train from the coast, meet with commuters and represent their concerns; to Rail Back on Track for their ongoing advocacy; but most importantly to those commuters who have worked with me to pester the government on these matters—none more so than Jeff Addison. I can only say that I am

disappointed that Jeff was unsuccessful in his bid to be the Sunshine Coast representative on the Public Transport Advisory Group. But I know this: the Sunshine Coast representative, Natasha Hart of Nambour Safe, will have no better ally than Jeff.

Another disappointing omission is the D'Aguilar Highway. Put simply, the deaths continue but the safety upgrades go missing. I am most disappointed that the black spot funding submission made last year by the state government has disappeared into a federal government black hole. All attempts to date to gain an update on the submission have been ignored. I do acknowledge that in discussions with the Minister for Main Roads just yesterday he has undertaken to source this update. But an update is one thing; we need action. We need investment in improving the safety on this dangerous highway. Locals have had enough. They have approached me to sponsor a petition, led by principal petitioner Beverley Wilson, to reduce the speed limit on the highway between Rangeview Estate at Wamuran and the township of D'Aguilar to 80 kilometres an hour. This is not an ideal solution. It is not a long-term solution. But, as a short-term remedy to the ongoing deaths occurring on this highway, it is perhaps our only remaining course of action in the absence of funding for upgrades. I look forward to the minister's update and ultimately his response to this petition.

There is still no word on the Caboolture Health Hub either. How long will it be before this fast-growing population has a purpose-built health centre of their own? How many more services, like the Children's Therapy Service, are going to be lost to Caboolture because they have no facilities? It is just not good enough. Is it going to take a hardworking LNP member for Pumicestone in Lisa France to actually deliver this for the families of Caboolture and surrounds?

The Minister for Transport has made much of the government's investment in cycleways. Well, the top priority for the electorate of Glass House is still absent. The kids at Beerwah High who live at the Glass House Mountains need a safe way to commute to school. It will not take much but we continue to go without.

In concluding I want to touch on a concern that impacts on Queensland as a whole, not just Glass House. It also impacts on the portfolio of environment.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! There is too much noise in the House.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! Those on my left.

**Mr POWELL**:—and that is the Bligh Labor government's record, action and investment in biosecurity. I am concerned most about myrtle rust, which has already found its way into nurseries in my electorate, and the Asian honey bee. I know that even as this morning the Minister for Agriculture has pledged Queensland's support to biosecurity through \$3.5 million generally and \$800,000 specifically for myrtle rust. I have to be honest and say that that is not enough—the horse has already bolted. The fact that the Asian honey bee is not receiving any contribution from the Queensland government is concerning. I shared this with a leading scientist in the field of bees from my electorate, Max Whitten, and I just wanted to share some of his responses. He states—

Thanks for this, Andrew. I have rung the Minister's media people to find out why Fire Ant and Myrtle Rust have sums allocated to their eradication/control but nothing for Asian Bee. A—

member of the minister's office—

is following up for me.

I'm not impressed if QLD is reneging on funds to crank up the eradication program for AB. Yesterday and today there is a Meeting of States and Commonwealth etc in BNE to talk about the proposed revived eradication program—which was supposed to start at the beginning of May. And we are still talking! The AHBIC rep at the BNE meeting, Trevor Weatherhead (who is also President of the QLD Beekeepers Association) said little of value happened at yesterday's meeting. Let's hope more happens today.

If QLD does not lead the way on taking AB seriously, the whole exercise will collapse. In my view, AB is a more serious threat than fire ant; and hundreds of millions have been spent (or mis-spent) by QLD on this serious pest.

Overall, this budget has been very disappointing for Queenslanders, for the environment and for Glass House. It is yet another tribute to the debt, mismanagement and waste of this tired Bligh Labor government. This state needs new passion, new plans and a reinvigorated energy. A can-do LNP government will deliver that for Queensland.



**Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (8.46 pm): The 2011 budget handed down by the Queensland Treasurer is an extreme disappointment to the people of Cleveland and the broader Redlands and to Queenslanders in general. This budget would have to be one of the worst budgets ever brought down in Queensland, providing no hope for the future—only more debt, deficits and no effective relief to Labor's out-of-control cost of living. It is a budget that holds out with one hand but takes back much more with the other. At the outset I would like to congratulate the shadow Treasurer, Tim Nicholls, for his budget reply speech, and I commend it to the Queensland public for its analysis of this failed budget.

What we see in the 2011 state budget is more of the same from Labor. The budget is a typical Labor budget, with high debt levels and ongoing deficits. It is also a miserly, mean-spirited one. The cost of living has skyrocketed due to Labor's fuel tax, electricity price hikes, car registration increases, boat and trailer registration increases, hikes in public transport fares, water price rises and licence cost increases. After the massive hikes in the cost of living under Labor, the relief offered by this government is minimal.

After 20 long years Labor is still promising that good times are around the corner. This Labor government sent Queensland broke in the last boom. They squandered the rivers of gold and now with an election pending they ask to be trusted with the next boom as it comes. Their track record speaks loud and clear that they are incapable of managing the state's economy into the future and cannot be trusted with Queensland's recovery. Already we have seen that the Premier cannot even disburse flood appeal funds in a timely way to those Queenslanders who have suffered from the disasters. It has now been over 160 days since the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal was launched and victims are still waiting for payments. So how on earth will this government rebuild Queensland with that kind of approach?

This government has failed to manage the state's economy through difficult times. Its legacy is a record high \$85 billion debt forecasted which means an interest bill for Queensland taxpayers of \$5 billion a year, equating to \$100 million per week or \$595,000 per hour. Labor's projected high debt level was part of the reason this Treasurer lost Queenslanders our treasured and respected AAA credit rating. No other state government managed to drive their economy so low as to lose their AAA credit rating. Congratulations, Treasurer.

Further, we were promised by the Treasurer that if we took some pain in the form of Labor's asset sales program we would help pay down this debt and go some way towards getting our AAA credit rating back. Yet, in reality, despite the painful sell-off of assets and sell-out of Queensland's workers, the debt forecast has continued to spiral upwards. Where did the \$17 billion from the asset sales go? Further, the government is projecting a deficit of more than \$2 billion this year and a \$4 billion deficit in just over 12 months.

This is a budget that promises five per cent economic growth for 2012, significantly beyond what this government has delivered in the past. These very optimistic forecasts further undermine the credibility of this budget. The growth forecasts by the Treasurer are little better than an exercise in reading tea leaves. The Treasurer has repealed Labor's ambulance charge—a charge that should not have existed in the first place. We agree with the abolition of Labor's ambulance levy.

Motorists will receive no relief in this budget. The government has snubbed motorists by continuing to drive up the costs of car registration. Car registration costs have grown by 30 per cent in recent years under Labor with no sign of relief in this budget. Despite calls from the RACQ to freeze car rego and the commitment from the LNP to freeze registration on the family car during the first term of a Newman government, this government has failed to respond likewise and match our policy and commitment. Since 60 per cent of workers in the Cleveland electorate have to travel outside the Redlands for work every day, and mostly by car, the pain of Labor's continued increases to registration costs is multiplied.

Labor's ongoing bungling of water management and attempts to blame councils for this government's failures continue to be a sore spot among Redland residents. The LNP can-do Queensland's four-point plan for water reform will deliver savings to water bills, and I commend these reforms to the people of Cleveland, Redlands and Queensland in general. Our four-point plan will help families with Labor's rising cost of water. In relation to electricity prices, this government is responsible for out-of-control increases. The LNP in contrast will save Queenslanders money off their power bills.

Labor's record debt and projected deficits mean that every week \$100 million will be spent on interest payments instead of needed infrastructure and service delivery—road infrastructure, schools, police officers and hospital beds that would ensure a better standard of living for Queenslanders. As a result of this budget, families in my electorate face more financial pain from the rising cost of everyday living brought about by the ineptitude of this Labor government. Queensland's worst Treasurer has given my electorate and Queensland Australia's worst budget.

This budget of lost opportunities brings no hope to the many struggling families in areas of my electorate like Wellington Point, Cleveland, Thornlands, Ormiston, Birkdale and North Stradbroke Island. It gives no assistance to the development and improvements of Toondah Harbour, which is a major economic link to North Stradbroke Island. The complete failure to invest in an upgrade of marine infrastructure at Toondah Harbour shows that there will be no going forward with jobs growth in the Redlands and North Stradbroke Island under a Labor government. If this government were serious about the transition to a tourism based economy on North Stradbroke Island, the Toondah upgrade would be in this budget. This shows the government is not serious about a sustainable Stradbroke. It once again shows how Labor says one thing and turns around to do the complete opposite.

As I have previously stated, 60 per cent of my electorate and the wider Redlands must commute outside of the area for work, yet the government has hit commuters across the state with significant increases in public transport costs. The government has withdrawn weekly, monthly and yearly tickets, which is a blow to commuters in my electorate who use the Cleveland line as a vital link to their work.

Another measure in this budget is the removal of concessions on stamp duty on the sale of a principal place of residence. This concession that non-first home buyers receive when buying homes as their principal place of residence will be removed from 1 August. This decision to slash stamp duty concessions for all but first home buyers has been tipped to wreak havoc on the real estate industry. It will cost Redlands residents on average \$7,000 on the price of selling their homes every time they sell. Both the opposition and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland have slammed the move, claiming it punishes homebuyers and will affect the real estate industry badly.

The property market in the Redlands has been hit in recent years, with many real estate agents struggling to get by with very low sales. This budget measure will kick them again while they are down. I stand with the shadow Treasurer in opposing this measure and support the commitment that the LNP in government would reintroduce the concession on this stamp duty for Queenslanders. After we consider this world of pain inflicted by this failed long-term Labor government on Queenslanders, we still have not factored into the Queensland economy in the near future the federal taxes that are coming—the carbon tax, the mining tax and the flood levy—that the Premier and the Treasurer have embraced.

I will now turn my attention to my shadow ministry portfolio of main roads. Time prevents me from giving a full and detailed appraisal of all of the government's failures to deliver on main roads. Sadly, the budget reveals numerous cases of underspends—that is, the failure to spend money allocated to vital road projects. In main roads, that can mean project delay, inconvenience, lost productivity and, at times, a prolonged risk of motor vehicle accidents. This budget reveals a number of underspends and shows this government's incapacity to deliver on what is promised and provide the road infrastructure that Queenslanders need and deserve. These are serious discrepancies and they have serious consequences for anyone who uses Queensland roads.

Of the \$550 million pledged for construction works on the Dinmore-Goodna stretch of the Ipswich Motorway, only \$360 million will be spent. That is \$190 million, or 35 per cent, worth of progress, that did not occur in the time frame committed to by the minister. I should add that this is not money saved—the total estimated cost has not come down; this is a delay and amounts to a breach of contract with the people of west Brisbane and Ipswich and anyone from further afield who relies on the proposition that the main arterial route between Brisbane and Ipswich is in a passable condition. Then there is the disgraceful Cooroy-Curra section of the Bruce Highway. Of the \$288 million meant to be spent in 2010-11, just \$106 million was spent. That is \$182 million not spent, or 63 per cent of its value.

This just would not stand in many fields of endeavour, yet in this most serious of business—the business of providing and delivering safe and functional roads for the motorists of Queensland—there is breach after breach. A 75 per cent failure to spend on the grade separation works south of Cairns, an 84 per cent failure to spend on the Temples Lane to Farrellys Lane duplication of the Bruce Highway near Mackay, a 36 per cent failure to spend on widening of the Pacific Motorway between Nerang and Worongary—the list goes on and on. Spending failures mean project delays, broken promises and, with a government of this calibre, slick repackaging of money that has not been spent when and how the public was entitled to expect.

If only that was the extent of it, but it is not. In real terms, the Bligh government has slashed its construction budget for national and state network roads in 2011-12. Budget analysts will know that the NDRRA disaster relief funding—which will be of great and urgent assistance to the areas of the state hardest hit by the national disasters—is not to be counted as part of the state's standard acquittal. Certainly, the RACQ understands this when it talks roads and motoring. What has the RACQ said? It reacted to this budget and said—

... if you take out the flood recovery money, Queenslanders are actually getting less for road upgrades.

Executive manager Michael Roth asserted—

It is disappointing to see that the State's contribution to roads funding is going backwards while motorists are being asked to pay annual increases in registration fees and other government costs such as driver's licences.

It is actually time to put some truth on the record about this relief money, to counteract the way the government has spun these funds. The NDRRA funding is the entitlement of every Queenslanders when natural disasters strike. It is contingency funding that comes directly from the Commonwealth government of the day, and rightly so. It is not to be spruiked for the expedience of a state government under pressure.

Finally, in terms of my role as shadow minister for fisheries and marine infrastructure, I want to make some comments on marine infrastructure. Queenslanders are similarly aware of the stealth that this government conducts itself in with regard to the privatisation of assets and, as has been documented, this government has divested itself of some of our marine infrastructure asset base such

as the Port of Brisbane and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, but there are other assets still left in the portfolio. A familiar theme develops rapidly when we look at this. The Cairns city port foreshore development missed out on \$6.7 million of committed money in 2010-11. That is a 72 per cent spending failure. At the same time, the total estimated project cost has increased from \$17.3 million to \$23.3 million and it is further away from completion than this time last year. That is what underspending means to infrastructure development in the marine area.

The RG Tanna Coal Terminal at the port of Gladstone has had the Wallace treatment as well, with a \$25.4 million spending failure for 2010-11. Some 63 per cent of the funding allocated to upgrade and improve the fourth biggest coal export terminal in the world here in Queensland was kept in the pot. With regard to the port of Gladstone tug facilities, of the \$14 million set for acquittal at one of Queensland's most significant infrastructure assets, just \$100,000 was actually spent. The total estimated cost of the tug facility upgrade has remained very similar from 2010-11 to 2011-12, having been revised down by \$2.5 million from \$47.5 million to \$45 million. For project after significant project, the tale remains the same.

In conclusion, every time Queenslanders fill up their cars, turn on the tap and flick on the lights they are paying more thanks to the Premier and Treasurer and this Labor government. Only the LNP can offer real change to the cost of living in Queensland. The people of Queensland need a can-do government that will save them money and deliver more by getting action on the basics and cutting waste.

Interruption.

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITOR**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! Before calling the next speaker, I welcome to the parliamentary gallery His Excellency Mr Xu Ming, the Vice Governor of Jiangsu Province in the People's Republic of China, and his delegation, who have just had a very nice dinner with the Speaker in the Speaker's dining room. Welcome to Queensland.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

## **COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the honourable member for Cleveland.



**Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (9.01 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but it is Redlands.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Redlands; sorry.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DOWLING:** Missed it by that much! Mr Deputy Speaker, you are not Robinson Crusoe in your mistaking us: I often say to people that I am taller—

**Mr Ryan:** But better looking!

**Mr DOWLING:**—and much more handsome; thank you. That is seconded by the member for Morayfield. I take the interjection. Tonight I rise to speak to the cognate debate on the Appropriation Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It has been just over two days now since the Treasurer delivered his budget, and he spoke in glowing terms of our future. I have now sat through two budgets over two years and, sadly, after hearing the same story last year and the year before that, I am not left with terribly much optimism. I am certainly not optimistic about what the Treasurer has to say, because in the last few years things have not looked up. Things have, however, gone up; they just have not looked up—water costs, fuel costs, power costs, registration, public transport fares, all the basics of life, and my community cannot continue to afford what this Labor government sets as luxury charges for what are actually essentials of life.



But let us take a look at the positives as they were outlined by the Treasurer. I begin with the removal of the ambulance levy from electricity bills. Will this make electricity any cheaper? No, it will not. It does not make electricity one cent cheaper. The ambulance levy was an ambulance levy. It was always an ambulance levy and the government has removed it from electricity bills. That will not change electricity pricing whatsoever. But this government will always find a way to reintroduce a fee, reintroduce a tax. It will get it back. Something that has been pointed out many times during various contributions from the LNP side of the House is that that levy was argued against when it was introduced. It was not supported, not for one day, and now this government is admitting that it quite clearly got it wrong. That is how this government operates. It has someone else wear the pain of its incompetence, as we have seen with electricity. It tacked the ambulance levy on to electricity bills so that someone else took the blame. This Labor government will gouge that money for the Ambulance Service from somewhere else. Today it is on stamp duty, but tomorrow it will come from something else. You can rest assured about that!

This Labor government has shifted costs to councils through the amalgamation process. Local governments have had to bear the financial burden that was the amalgamation process. We have seen it in water reform, an issue I cannot go into under the rules of anticipation. We have seen it with the capping of infrastructure charges for local governments—all adding to the misery of local government in the pretence of affordable housing. That is the way this Labor government operates. Labor just does not get it. It does not understand how the real world works. What about the first home buyer incentive of \$10,000 designed to kick-start the building industry? Any benefits of that will be completely negated by the increase in stamp duty charges. Young families buying their first home will be benefited by it, but the rest of the people in the marketplace will miss out.

Already there are some knock-on effects. I received an email from a local developer, and I note that the Treasurer has also received this email. He may not have received it physically, but it has certainly been sent to him and to the Premier and to a few other members. It states—

I am a property developer with projects underway currently in Redlands. We have a number of contracts—off-the-plan purchases—for those properties, but as yet they have not gone unconditional. They should go unconditional in the next couple of weeks.

However, the buyers have contacted the developer to say that they want to terminate those contracts and they will re-sign the contracts on 1 August to pick up that \$10,000. The email goes on to say—

That action places our finance requirements with lenders at high risk of being withdrawn.

They are the unforeseen consequences of this kind of ill-conceived legislation. In their opinion, it will put other developers in the same predicament and maybe put builders out of work. According to this email, they intend to put their tradies on hold—to actually suspend work—until 1 August. As a result, a number of tradies are not going to enjoy the benefit of this legislation. The email then goes on to ask the question of the Treasurer, and quite rightly—

What can be done about altering this timing?

There also seems to be a great deal of uncertainty currently. That uncertainty is what destroys an economy. That is what this government fuels—that is, uncertainty.

An increase in stamp duty will almost certainly stop real estate transactions. It will halt them in their tracks, and that is certainly the feedback I am getting from estate agents who have taken the trouble to contact me. It is a very real issue. I heard those opposite interjecting earlier saying that the real estate industry was just relying on its commissions and really did not contribute a great deal to the economy and that it was only looking after self-interest. That demonstrates quite clearly how those opposite just do not get it. They do not understand that estate agents employ staff. They are a part of our community. They use banks, they use accountants, they purchase goods and services within our community. That is what those on that side of the House just do not get. They simply do not get it—that is, how an economy works. The mortgage stress and the defaults that we are seeing are not going to be aided by any of this.

The Treasurer also talked about the economic sunshine coming our way. Surely not when this government supports carbon tax! There is no economic sunshine in that. The sunshine is not coming our way if Labor is at the helm. This government has already squandered the last minerals and resources boom—completely squandered the last boom—and promptly sent this economy into a tailspin. In terms of the property development boom, again there were missed opportunities. This government presided over and lost those opportunities.

So instead of keeping up with growth and forward planning, under this Labor government we are going backwards. To say that we are holding is quite honestly saying that we are going backwards. So instead of being the No. 1 state, Queensland is the worst performing state economically. Our economy could almost sit in the same category as those of Spain, Greece and Ireland, with rampant debt. Our debt is absolutely out of control. Queensland is saddled with debt. We have sold our assets in order to pay down the debt. Did our debt get paid down? No. That has not happened.

The Labor government just does not get it. It fails to plan. For example, my electorate of Redlands is a growing community that needs investment into the future. It needs road infrastructure. I do not know how many times I have stood in this House and talked about the numerous intersections—Anita Street, Double Jump Road—and road upgrades. That work was not done during the resources boom and the development boom. All the while this government has been at the helm. That is when that infrastructure should have been delivered, but it has not happened.

The people of my electorate need transport services. The dual-laning of rail out to Cleveland has not happened. The busway keeps moving further and further from reality. It keeps moving backwards from the community. We heard the member for Cleveland talk about the reliance that the people in our area have on a public transport system when so many of our constituents work in Brisbane.

**Mr Reeves:** Show us your go card. When was the last time you got on a bus?

**Mr DOWLING:** I hardly know you. The constituents in my electorate are in need of healthcare services. Again, the member for Cleveland has raised the issues relating to our hospital system in Redlands—the parking issues, the transport to and from the hospital, the dialysis ward. All of those facilities have not kept pace with a growing community under this Labor government's regime.

My electorate has educational needs. None of these services is keeping pace with the growth of my electorate. By way of example, Victoria Point State High School is already a very large high school. It has a huge population. It is bursting at the seams with its cohort. It is at or very near its capacity. This transition of year 7 into high school in 2015 means that approximately 400 new students will be added to the already 1,200 population of Victoria Point State High School. The government is going to squeeze another 400 students into an already crowded school.

That school is already land locked. It has very little room for expansion. The only area that can have buildings put on it is the playing fields, and that is unacceptable. That is not forward planning. I have written to the minister and asked if some consideration can be given to an alternative high school in the southern part of Redlands, which is the growth area of the Redlands. Six primary schools feed into that school. It was an absolutely legitimate request by my constituents. It is supported by the P&Cs and it is supported by the families who live in that area. But, quite literally, this government has no plan to accommodate those 400 students.

**Dr Robinson:** \$620 million.

**Mr DOWLING:** I take that interjection: \$620 million spent right across the state equates to very little. It equates to next to nothing within my electorate. There has been no forward planning.

I return to the transport issues in my electorate. Is there any financial relief in the fare structure for the residents of the southern Moreton Bay islands? Absolutely not! They have been completely forgotten. That area is like *The Lost World*. Those who are in most need of support are being overlooked due to this government's failure. Under TransLink, it is cheaper for people to travel from Redland Bay to the Sunshine Coast than it is for them to travel from Redland Bay across to the southern Moreton Bay islands. That is the inequity of the transport system in my electorate.

This government has form on new taxes, it has form on mismanagement and it has form on saying one thing and then doing another. I refer to the sale of assets and the removal of the fuel subsidy. The government also has form on passing costs on to others, such as the ambulance levy and water pricing. It has form on debt—a debt level that is really hard to get your head around: \$100 million in interest in a week. That equates to a few new schools every week. It is a regional hospital. It is the road duplication that I am calling for in the Redlands. It equates to \$14 million a day in interest—and that is just the interest. According to the government's guesstimates—and I say 'guesstimates'—that figure equates to the introduction of TransLink out to SMBI. So that cost is covered by one day's worth of interest on this debt. Such opportunities are lost.


The debt equates to \$595,000 per hour in interest. It is \$198,000 during my 20-minute contribution. In five minutes, it is a new motor car worth \$50,000. That is the real terms of that interest on our budget. That is how ingrained that debt is. That is what this Labor government is all about. That is what it has done to what should be—and was—the most prosperous state in Australia. This government has form on losing Queensland's AAA credit rating. Debt is something that a prosperous community can manage, but this state has been penalised. Queensland is no longer a AAA state.

This government has form on many things, but the one area that this government does not have form on is in delivery for Queensland. We need a can-do government. In fact, Tuesday's local paper referred to the budget implications for the Redlands. Even to the journalist it was all a rehash. The projects that are listed are either finished, are underway from previous budgets, are just addressing ongoing maintenance issues or have stalled.

**A government member:** Do you know what a budget is?

**Mr DOWLING:** I know what a budget is. I thank the member for the interjection. My community, like most of Queensland, has been neglected by this Labor government.

We are told that this government will somehow create a surplus in 2015. Under Labor, we need to call this surplus for what it is: the impossible dream. Under this Treasurer, a surplus is an impossible dream. Under this Labor government, a surplus is an impossible dream. The shadow Treasurer, the member for Clayfield, in his contribution gave an example of the qualities that a Treasurer should have. His contribution was thoughtful, deliberative and reasoned. I congratulate him and look forward to him being the Treasurer in a can-do government after the next election.

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (9.18 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill and in particular to talk about issues that directly affect the Chatsworth electorate. In bringing down this budget, the Treasurer has needed to balance a number of difficult and complex financial issues. We are all aware of the massive personal and financial costs that the summer of disasters inflicted upon the state of Queensland. Although the residents of my electorate were not directly affected by floodwater, the financial costs of these floods and Cyclone Yasi will need to be borne by all Queenslanders.

The rebuilding of our state is expected to cost the Queensland government \$1.8 billion out of a total cost of \$6.7 billion. However, this commitment to rebuilding our schools, parks, roads and rail networks, supporting small business and primary producers and not-for-profit organisations is only one side of the financial equation. On top of this cost and massive outlay there has also been a reduction in revenue caused by the disruption that the disasters caused to the mining and general business community.

The amount of GST allocation from the federal government for this year is the same as it was in 2007. We all know that since then costs have increased significantly. Increased costs with reduced incomes means that hard decisions and choices need to be made. I am pleased that this government did not take the easy way out and cut services and building programs, but instead continued our program of rebuilding and renewal. I am pleased that this budget contains \$50,000 for a Men's Shed at the Clem Jones Centre at Carina. I have been lobbying very hard for this funding. I strongly believe in the Men's Shed concept. For many years local residents George Hickey and Mal Wier have been running a Men's Shed under their own home. The popularity of this Men's Shed has meant it has quickly outgrown the space available. This new facility will be a perfect fit with the Clem Jones Centre and will allow the users of the Men's Shed to work closely with the other 17 sport and social clubs that currently operate out of the Clem Jones Centre site.

I am absolutely committed to improving educational outcomes for the Chatsworth electorate. I am proud of this Labor government's education reform program which has included the introduction of prep, the funding of kindergarten programs in long day care centres, a commitment to building new kindergartens and upgrading and modernising our schools. In fact, this budget continues the government's commitment to education. I was recently very pleased to open the newly refurbished Tingalpa State School. The school has undergone a total transformation thanks to \$6.7 million funded under the State Schools of Tomorrow program.

This budget continues the work with \$1.1 million to build a kindergarten at Gumdale State School. Gumdale is a rapidly growing area in my electorate. This kindergarten will be a welcome addition for the many families moving into the area. I am also happy to have been able to obtain \$50,000 in funding for the Mayfield State School to provide shading to complement the fantastic new hall and library built as part of the federal government's BER program.

This budget also contains \$35,000 for five separate maintenance projects at Belmont; \$7,000 for an important project at Carina State School; as well as \$15,000 for set-down facilities at St Martin's Catholic Primary School as part of a \$50,000 program which will increase the safety of students using that school. There is \$18,000 for the construction of pedestrian crossings and facilities at Carina State School. While this is great news, I know that there is always more to do. I am aware of the concerns of parents regarding the rapid growth of Gumdale State School. I can assure the residents of that area that I am working hard to ensure that Education Queensland plans for this growth and we deliver the infrastructure when needed.

This government has led a revolution in early childhood education. This budget continues that process. The new kindergarten at Gumdale and \$1.2 million for the recently completed improvements at the C&K kindy at Carina State School which, has doubled in size, has added increased kindergarten capacity in the Chatsworth area. However, many families with both parents working need to use long-day-care facilities which is why this government has developed a program of delivering structured kindergarten programs in long-day-care centres. This budget has allocated \$67,000 to the ABC Developmental Learning Centre in Carindale; \$38,000 for the King of the Castle Childcare, Kindergarten and Preschool; \$31,000 for Kindy Kapers Early Learning Centre at Wakerley; and \$56,000 for Carina Heights Child Care and Development. I congratulate each of these centres for developing and recently being accredited to run kindergarten programs. This will get our children off to a flying start.

This budget also provides the funding to commence the transition of year 7 to high school. This is another important part of this government's commitment to improving education outcomes for Queensland children and families. I am constantly amazed by the great work being done in our schools, the commitment of our teachers and staff and I will continue to work hard to support all the schools in my electorate.

I am also pleased that this budget has recognised the need to provide some relief from cost-of-living increases, particularly for those on low or fixed incomes. I have been lobbying hard to have cost-of-living pressures recognised. I am happy that we are boosting the pensioners local government rate subsidy by 11 per cent to \$200 per annum. There is also an increase in the pensioners and seniors electricity subsidy to \$230 and an increase in the pensioners water subsidy to \$120. This government will also remove the ambulance levy which will remove \$113 per year from every household electricity bill. This government has also capped water increase charges which will save another \$120,000 a year. The budget also allocates an extra \$60 million to extend the ClimateSmart Home Service which can deliver savings of up to \$480 per annum. I encourage every resident in the Chatsworth electorate to take advantage of this fantastic program.

I am delighted that after many years of seeing funding for the new Carina Police Station in the budget papers, I can now announce that work has commenced on the site. The site has been levelled and workers are on site. I look forward to seeing the opening of the new station later in the year.

I know that there are many builders and tradies living in the Chatsworth electorate. I am very happy with the \$140 million Queensland Building Boost program. This program will provide \$10,000 to anyone who signs a contract to build a house from 1 August until February 2012. When people buy or sell an existing home there are very few people who directly benefit from that transaction. However, by encouraging people to build new homes—up to 14,000 of them throughout the state—we will be creating jobs for thousands of people who work in the construction industry. This means more jobs and more training places for our school leavers through traineeships and apprenticeships. This program means that first home buyers will now be eligible for up to \$17,000 upfront when they sign a contract for a new home. Added to the removal of stamp duty and mortgage duty from homes under \$500,000, this is a great boost to young people trying to break into the housing market.

At a state level, this budget delivers a \$15 billion capital works program that will support 93,000 jobs building roads, schools, kindergartens, police, fire and ambulance stations; a \$11.7 billion Health budget building hospitals across the state and providing doctors, nurses and medical services; \$10.3 billion in Education to continue the education revolution that has been happening throughout Queensland; and \$104.5 million to help more than 24,000 Queensland job seekers into work with the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

This budget aims to balance many competing interests in a complex economic environment. Building for the future comes with a cost, but not building will eventually cost us more. It balances the need to manage government borrowing with a need to deliver services and build infrastructure to ensure Queensland is ready for the challenges of the future.

I listened very carefully to the budget reply by the member for Clayfield to see whether the LNP understands the challenges that face governments as they work through these competing interests. The speech demonstrated that the opposition has failed to grasp the difficult choices that must be made when in government. The former mayor this morning said that he would like to be in a position to not have to have payroll tax. I am sure we all would. However, that would remove 31 per cent of the state's total taxation revenue, a total of \$3.26 billion, from the budget. It sounds good in theory, but it means one of two things: increasing the debt or reducing services. The \$3.2 billion is nearly the total cost of the police and emergency services in Queensland.

The great revelation from the shadow Treasurer's speech today is that it will freeze tariff 11 while leaving the price of other tariffs to the QCA. Once again it sounds great in theory, but does not actually deliver anything. The cost of building the network has not changed so all that will happen is that the cost of the other tariffs will rise to cover the costs or money will need to be taken from elsewhere in the budget. Earlier today we found where that money might be taken from. It will be taken from money allocated for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. I notice that the member for Kawana is on the speaking list later on. I look forward to him guaranteeing on the record tonight that the LNP will not steal any of the money and will commit the full \$2.07 billion that has been allocated by this government for the hospital.

Over the last two years I have listened to the LNP making statements about the need to build more and then saying the government needs to cut spending. There is no free way to build infrastructure, but it is important that it is built. The opposition promises to cut expenditure and yet day after day it makes promises that cost more. It complains about a blow-out to bureaucracy, but then says it will not cut the Public Service. It will repay debt but not sell assets or cut expenditure. The public can see straight through this charade. I call on the opposition today to stop trying to please everyone, do the hard work that is required, make some tough decisions and produce some costed policies so that the people of my electorate can see what it really stands for and make an informed choice.

No-one likes paying tax. Most of us would prefer not to have debt. But sometimes debt is necessary to build future prosperity. Families borrow money to build or buy homes. Businesses borrow money to develop and expand. The Queensland government has borrowed money to build for the future.

I believe that the people of Queensland understand that we have an obligation to build for the future, to continue to improve the delivery of government services, to provide more support for people with a disability, to provide the best educational outcomes that we can, to build hospitals to cater for our ageing population, to continue to improve our road network and public transport infrastructure, to assist communities affected by natural disasters, to build a resilient community and to continue to develop world-leading police and emergency services, whilst protecting the environment. That is what governments should do and it is exactly what we are doing.

The government debt repayments are approximately nine per cent of revenue. I am sure that most of the people in my electorate pay far more than nine per cent of their income on their mortgage, so this level of debt is not unmanageable and the infrastructure that will be provided by it is crucial for our future prosperity. I am proud to represent the people of Chatsworth in this government and I will continue to work hard to achieve outcomes for my community. I commend this bill to the House.



**Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (9.30 pm): I rise to support the Queensland state budget for 2011-12. In introducing this bill, the Treasurer has shown what it takes to be in government and what this government is prepared to do to deliver for the people of Queensland. This budget delivers strong—

**Mr Fraser** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! The member for Kawana and the Treasurer will cease the crossfire.

**Mr MOORHEAD:** The budget provides strong support to address the cost-of-living pressures that families find themselves under, yet also finds the money to deliver on the basics. I will come to that later.

Today we have seen an opposition that is hardly fit to be in opposition, let alone in government. We have seen an opposition leader who is not fit to deliver the budget reply. The first budget reply speech from a Leader of the Opposition that I heard—it was also your first, Mr Deputy Speaker—was in 2007. The now Leader of the Opposition popped up, spoke for 21 minutes and sat down, leaving us none the wiser as to what the opposition of the time stood for. Nothing has changed in that regard. All we heard was 21 minutes of rhetoric. He then sat down and for the next two days we heard the same whining and moaning. Frankly, the people on the *Titanic* have changed, but the story remains the same. The only change is that now we have an opposition leader who cannot even deliver a 21-minute speech, as he did in 2007. We have a putative leader outside of this place who obviously cannot come into this chamber and do anything. Even when he went outside, he could not answer the questions asked at a press conference. We have a shadow Treasurer who came into this place this morning and provided \$250 million worth of policies—

**Mr Fraser:** So he thinks. That's his guess.

**Mr MOORHEAD:** The Treasurer is right. What the LNP has really espoused today is a policy of 'I reckon' economics. They have put forward \$250 million of spending promises on the basis of four sheets of paper. One of those was a printout of a newspaper article—

**Mr Fraser:** They had two.

**Mr MOORHEAD:** Sorry, two. Another was a page copied from the Treasurer's budget and there were some other calculations. Importantly, apparently \$180 million will be saved on this 'I reckon' economics principle. They say that \$180 million comes from looking at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and saying, 'Because the government has moved this hospital project to be a public-private partnership and they have included any savings in their budget, I reckon we can add another \$180 million worth of savings into that project.' The member for Kawana is yet to speak. I will sit here and listen to him. I will wait to see how he finds \$180 million in a \$2.07 billion project by doing nothing different. This is simply a bit of 'I reckon' economics. Truly, this is really sad.

We simply do not have an alternative. The LNP cannot even find one of its own as an alternative leader and it could not put forward an alternative policy on budget day. Unfortunately, this debate is hollow because there is one side with a plan—and that plan is contained in this budget—to deliver strong measures to support families facing cost-of-living pressures and the other side wants to fill this House with rhetoric and hot air.

This budget removes the \$113 per year community ambulance levy from electricity bills. That means that, rather than that money going to the government, 1.4 million Queensland families and small businesses will have \$113 a year in their back pockets.

**Mr Wendt:** It is a good thing.

**Mr MOORHEAD:** It is a good thing, member for Ipswich West. In addition, pensioners are not forgotten. Pensioner concessions for electricity increased to \$230 per year, concessions for local government rates increased by more than 10 per cent to \$200 per year and the water subsidy for South-East Queensland residents will increase to \$120 per year. Queensland has one of the most generous concession packages for pensioners and seniors in the country, and that is something of which I am quite proud.

Let us compare that with the record of the LNP, which this week flagged that it would vote to oppose legislation that will mean that water users in my electorate will save \$111 per year. One side of this House—the government—is delivering \$113 worth of savings off the bat from 1 July. The other side of the House wants to put \$111 onto the family water bill.

The biggest cost in the family budget is housing. The \$10,000 Building Boost for people buying or building a new home gives people the chance to get into homeownership. It means they can make what for most people is the biggest investment in their lives. The Building Boost will get the construction industry growing, delivering jobs for the construction industry, and other jobs will come from the flow-on effects in other parts of the economy. It ensures a strong supply of new housing, ensuring that housing prices remain affordable for people on average incomes. For those who cannot afford to buy, there is \$93 million for the National Rental Affordability Scheme investment in Queensland.

In Logan, there is a strong focus on the really important services of health, education and transport. This year we will see the construction of new car-parking facilities at Logan Hospital. That funding will continue into the next financial year, delivering a short-term boost of up to 200 new car-parking spaces. This is part of a \$230 million expansion to Logan Hospital that has already delivered a new day-services building in the old private hospital building. Under construction right now is a new acute mental health care facility. The new expansion will get underway this financial year with 50 new beds, a new emergency department, three storeys of car parking, specialist paediatric waiting areas and emergency treatment beds.

When it comes to education, there is a massive investment in early childhood education. In my area, there is \$1 million in funding for a kindergarten at Waterford State School and \$800,000 for a kindergarten at Logan Reserve State School. Both are welcome boosts to early childhood education, to ensure our children can get a flying start. There is also funding for Bethania Lutheran Primary School and Nanna's Childcare Centre to kick off the provision of kindergarten services in their existing buildings. Importantly, I thank the education minister for his support for the Kingston East Neighbourhood Centre and the continued support for the occasional hours child-care service. In 2010 the federal government made the disappointing decision to cut funding to occasional hours child-care services. As an interim measure, the state government has chipped in to tide over those services. That is a very sensible and compassionate decision made in this budget.

The education investment of which I am most proud is the \$1 million investment in the special education unit at the Beenleigh State High School. For some time the current facility has been struggling to keep up with the high number of special enrolments at that school. In the time that I have held this role I have harassed principals, district directors, regional directors and a series of ministers. Not only will \$1 million mean a new special education unit building for the school; it will also mean a new contribution to the whole school environment. I think some people do not understand that there are some schools in this state, such as Beenleigh State High School, for which special education enrolments represent up to 15 per cent of their total enrolment. A special education unit investment of \$1 million will make such a significant difference for schools like that.

There is a massive investment again in transport. There is \$159 million for the completion of the Pacific Motorway upgrade and the Slacks Creek park-and-ride facility at Nujooloo Road. There is \$1 million for improvements to Waterford-Tamborine Road at Waterford. There is also funding for improved public transport, with a massive \$27 million for rail stabling yards at Beenleigh contributing to strong services across the Citytrain network and the completion of the Loganlea train station upgrade. If there is one thing I would like to see in the budget that is not there it is an upgrade of the Beenleigh train station. It is a strong regional hub for transport in our area and it does need a facelift, some new lights and better security provisions. Along with the member for Albert, I have been talking with the Minister for Transport about the need for this upgrade. I hope that we can see some improvement in that regard shortly.

I congratulate the Treasurer and the government on such a strong budget. I look forward to watching it be delivered over the next few years.



**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (9.40 pm). I am so pleased to join members on this side of the House in recognising the achievement of our Treasurer, the Premier and the cabinet of Queensland in coming up with such a good budget in such difficult times. In Cairns those of us who have been watching the lead-up to the budget period as well as watching the gradual reconstruction that is

occurring on the coast south of Cairns in the communities of Cardwell, Tully and others had been thinking that this budget was not going to be full of much that is new for Cairns in particular. We were conscious of the over \$6 billion that our government needs to spend in the post flood and post Yasi recovery period and we absolutely accepted that that had to be the government's top priority. Nonetheless, there are some pleasant surprises in the budget for Cairns and the Far North and we are grateful, indeed, to have them.

One project that I and other local members, in particular the member for Barron River, have been working on for some years is the development of a new public transit network for the coast of Cairns all the way from Ellis Beach in the north, through the electorates of Barron River and Cairns, down in the south to Edmonton and Gordonvale. It has been publicly consulted on widely. The centrepiece of this public transport project is a new transit mall in Lake Street in the centre of the CBD. In truth, this area of the CBD is tired. It is not attractive. In some ways the city has become like a donut with a huge drawcard to tourists as well as locals on the Esplanade, and at the same time there is large visitation to a shopping precinct on the other side of the CBD. Lake Street was once a proud and busy thoroughfare and it will be again thanks to \$38 million that has been allocated over four years for the transit mall and the public transport project in the Cairns area, the northern beaches and south of Cairns. It will not only contribute to a modernised public transit system for a growing centre, but it will also contribute tremendously to the revitalisation of the city centre of Cairns.

Moving from that city centre down the road, as it were, towards the port, there is more good news. The Ports Corporation will spend \$9 million on the further upgrade of waterfront facilities. It is a project known in Cairns as Cityport. It will see an extension from the Esplanade, around through the port, past the fingers for the sailing ships and into the wharves and the more serious parts of the wharf precinct of public facilities—facilities for boaties, for fishers and for those of us who like to walk or jog or even stop and sit for a while and enjoy the history and the surroundings. Additionally, that \$9 million will fund an upgrade to some of the marina berths, which will allow for the berthing of some of the superyachts that visit from around the world and are part of our industry—certainly our tourism industry. More than that, while they are stopped in Cairns they seek refitting and refurbishment. That, too, is good business for our marine and construction sectors. Moving from there around to the convention centre, there is the good news that over \$6 million will be spent refurbishing our convention centre. This is an economic driver for Cairns. It is a world recognised and award-winning convention centre that is essential to not only the tourism but also the business life of Cairns.

I am pleased, too, that there are continuing spends on substantial infrastructure in health and in education. The progress of the redevelopment and the expansion of Cairns Base Hospital is proceeding well. In fact, it was only last week that our new radiation oncology centre opened for business, saving over 300 Cairns people each year from having to travel to Townsville or to Brisbane for treatment in very difficult, emotional times.

**Mr Wilson** interjected.

**Ms BOYLE:** I have been corrected by the Health minister, who clearly is across his figures, and I do take that correction. It is 340 people. This year the budget reflects \$50 million for the further expansion of facilities, and that is the commencement now of block D, the new clinical services building that will go up on the hospital site.

I am pleased, too, about our education spending. We have a huge work program to build a modern trade training centre at the Cairns TAFE. The further completion of that project is reflected in the \$6.4 million allocated in the budget for that.

I am pleased to say, too, that the Minister for Main Roads has attended to a number of nuisance intersections in Cairns and he is going to fix them. We will be pleased about that. He tells me that he will be up there soon and will go and look at the intersections himself and get that work underway for us as soon as possible.


I am pleased to hear that over the next number of years the Queensland events budget funding is being increased by over \$85 million. This is good news for Queensland but has particular benefit to Cairns. We are hot on the heels of the success of the Challenge Cairns, an ironman event which was spectacular and marvellous when it was held in Cairns only several weekends ago. It was a huge event not only within Cairns during the period of the Adventure Festival but also in terms of the broadcast around the world in all kinds of forums of this spectacular footage of Cairns and the coast north of Cairns through to Port Douglas.

In the next month or so we are coming up to CIAF, the third annual Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair. That is a spectacular event that brings in people from around Australia and overseas. We are on the events bandwagon. Events Queensland, which has provided such excellent support, particularly through the Challenge Cairns and through the AFL matches coming to Cairns, will undoubtedly put further effort into broadening the events calendar in Cairns.

I am pleased for the people of Cairns, particularly the young people, who would like to build a house and who have been short of the dollars to do so. That \$10,000 might now make the difference for them in terms of being able to sign on the dotted line. That news is even better for our construction industry. Sadly, over these last three years we have seen three major construction firms in Cairns go to the wall. We have not had sufficient work for our construction industry. While much is going on now to fill in the jobs for our tradespeople in the Cyclone Yasi recovery areas and with the housing build up in Cape York, not enough work has been available in the private sector in Cairns. I have no doubt that this \$10,000 boost towards the construction of new homes will be taken up quickly and eagerly by the industry as well as by buyers in Cairns.

I am so pleased, too, that those very many people in Cairns who are feeling the pinch in terms of these hard economic times will receive a benefit in this budget and an immediate one. The ambulance levy has not been well celebrated, one might say. The news that it is over and we are taking it off the power bills is being very well received. That is a substantial relief to all of the families and to many businesses in the Cairns area. I am pleased, too, for our pensioners. They will get rates relief and electricity bill relief in terms of increased subsidies. It is good news for people who are finding it difficult to make ends meet.

So there is no doubt that we have in the budget something good for immediate relief, we have some good projects for the medium term and we have set Cairns up again with better infrastructure for the long term. It is a good budget in difficult times. I do sincerely, on behalf of not only myself but also many people in Cairns, thank the Treasurer and in fact the Bligh government.

 **Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (9.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Community Ambulance Cover Levy Repeal and Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in this cognate debate. At the very start I would like to say that I knew this would possibly be a difficult budget and a hard budget for the simple reason that there was a lot of expense incurred over the Christmas-New Year period with the disasters. I also thought it would be an interesting budget because we are heading for an election, and there is always a different flavour in a budget when we head to an election. I think this budget is typical of that. It has some good parts—and I will admit that they are very good parts—but I also believe that there is pain for many other people.

The first thing I would like to bring to the attention of the House is the need for funding for our roads. We all know that our roads suffered major damage during the floods. A lot of the road funding that has come through has actually come from the federal government. I would hate to see the state government use those federal funds as a possible out and a reason to reduce its funding for roads throughout the state over the next 12 months or so.

Let me give the example of the Blackbutt Range, which is a range I have mentioned at almost every budget since I came into this place. With all of the machinery that is there now to repair that road after the floods, I would find it particularly distressing if the federal funding plus some state government funding was not used to ensure that that road was suitable for the next 50 years. There should be double lanes up and down that range. The amount of equipment and manpower there is amazing. I do not think I will see that amount of plant and manpower in the one place for a long time to come. As I said, I hope the Minister for Main Roads will capitalise on this opportunity and make that particular road fit for the next 50 years.

Here we are six months down the road from the floods and all around my electorate we are finding more and more potholes appearing because the substructure of all of the roads has been strained. Every time they fill a pothole just to make do—to patch it up to make it trafficable—the bitumen pops out as soon as a couple of trucks go over it and the pothole just gets bigger and bigger. What was initially thought to be the amount of damage to road infrastructure has now been exceeded somewhat, and I hope that will be taken into consideration in the future.

I would like to give a thankyou for the new ambulance station that is coming to Kingaroy. I think that is brilliant. It is not before time. Then again, I am still wondering where the new police station is. The police station is often called the 'dump of the month'. It is almost an annual event; they could toast that one. The officers are pushed in there like sardines and they work very hard. Again, that is something we have been asking for almost every year. We have been promised renovations to the courthouse over the years. I know that we have had touches of paint on the police station, and I know we have had a little bit of work done on the courthouse, but it is still unsuitable for an area that is growing the way Kingaroy is.

I must say that I did not find anywhere in the budget anything new for the areas of Crows Nest and places like that. There was nothing in the budget for the small places west of the range, such as Haden and Kulpi. They never seem to get a mention in the budget. I find that a bit distressing, but it could be that the Treasurer does not necessarily know where these places are. He may, but I do not know. It is a beautiful area way out there. Anything over the range seems to get limited mention in the budget.



I am particularly thankful—and I am sure that our community of Kingaroy will be grateful—for the \$461,000 for the Kingaroy State High School Performing Arts Centre. This is something that this area has been trying to get for a long time. It is a brilliant school.

**Ms Struthers:** They have a great principal.

**Mrs PRATT:** The whole school is brilliant. All our schools are brilliant, I believe. I do not know whether many members here have heard the school band; they should. They should take the time. They are exceptional. They are one of the best bands I have heard in a long time.

**Ms Grace:** Bring them to Parliament House.

**Mrs PRATT:** I would if I could afford it. Is the member going to help me subsidise them? If everyone wants to throw a few dollars in, I would gladly bring them down. Maybe we could have them playing at a Jazz on the Green night or something like that, because they have represented our community throughout Australia very, very well.

So there are a few things that we need. As I said, we need a new police station and courthouse at Kingaroy. The Nanango township also needs a new police station, so that needs to be looked at. All the infrastructure out in these western towns is ageing rapidly. But what we need more than anything else is a greenfield site for a hospital. We need a new hospital. The hospital has been patched up and patched up and patched up. I know that we were a long way down the list for a new hospital. I have been told that we have moved up to the No. 2 position after Charleville. I hope that is the case and that in no time at all a new hospital will be forthcoming.

I also have to thank the government for the various other bits of funding that have been delivered. The Kilcoy water treatment plant was in desperate need, as the government knows, and ongoing funding there is greatly appreciated. The other issue that I need to have clarified, because I found nothing in the budget, is to do with the Kilcoy bypass. I have been told that it is going to start in 2012-13. It is something that is desperately needed. I would like to read an example of some of the communication I get. I got this only recently, which made me think of it. It states—

Dear Dorothy,

Below is a copy of my 'letter to the editor' ...

She goes on to talk about the difficulty of crossing the road. She says—

Since going on to the "Disabled" list I have become more and more aware of the urgent need for Pedestrian crossings with traffic lights in the shopping centre in Kilcoy.

As everyone will know, the Kilcoy bypass will eliminate the need for a pedestrian crossing and will hopefully slow the traffic to a degree. She went on to say—

This week I had need to go to the centre of town. I went on my scooter. But it was a nerve wracking exercise to cross the streets safely. I became so nervous, anxious, in trying to judge a safe time to head out across the street with constant traffic—trying to judge when to venture—how quickly I and my scooter, could react, that I have decided I will not do this again.

It is a difficult street to cross. There are semitrailers and vehicles going non-stop. Even I—and I am able bodied—have to almost run to get across the road in time because it is extremely wide. The width is probably equivalent to three roads in total. There was nothing in the budget to speak of with regard to the Brisbane Valley areas of Esk and Toogoolawah. Nor was there anything, as I said before, about Crows Nest, Goombungee, Haden, Kulpi and Quinalow.

I would like to mention the \$10,000 grant for new home buyers. I think that is an excellent idea but it is only for six months. I recently experienced the difficulty of dealing with council and obtaining a builder to start on a building or extension and it was horrendous. When I first sought to get a builder, I was told it could take anywhere between eight months and 18 months before I could get anyone to start. Three of the builders refused flat out to even look at it and give me a quote for the simple reason that they were so busy. It may be possible in city areas to get everything organised in that six months and get the grant, but I think you will find it is very difficult in rural areas. And I believe that is where we need a lot of housing—an awful lot of housing. I would like to ask the minister: if anyone has at least started negotiations, are they eligible if they start within that six months? I would have liked to see this grant extended a lot further because I do believe that with all the work that goes into a new home—carpets and everything else—it will help with employment.

Then I come to stamp duty. Quite a number of people have contacted me with concerns and queries about this. I will quickly read a letter I received. It states—

Dear Dorothy,

I am sure you are as appalled as we, and many others, at the doubling of stamp duty as announced in the State Budget.

Don and I have our house "on the market", wish to sell—

And keep in mind that these people come from a very small town—

to be able to move to some outer precinct of Brisbane for health reasons. I have spent almost 3 months in total out of the past 18 in hospital in Brisbane—

This was for severe medical conditions. She says—

As a result of aggressive but essential treatment, I have become diabetic as well.

She continues—

This massive increase in stamp duty may well have voided these plans. We would be stretched, as pensioners, to our limit just to find suitable housing at a price we could afford, given the large differences between suburban and urban housing and homes in the South Burnett, especially those in Blackbutt!

I wish to vehemently protest this, and hope you may find time to voice this displeasure to the Premier and Treasurer.

My argument is thus;

Apart from the fact that these stamp duty revenue raisers were to be abolished on the introduction of GST, its increased impost makes it hard if not impossible for the average person to move! Even with the current rate of agents fees, GST on these, legal fees, sales tax and stamp duty it was a big dip into the proceeds, but now adding thousands more makes it nigh on impossible.

She continues—

What about people in our position, aged pensioners, needing to move closer to friends, family and efficient medical services because of illness and age?

They need to move because they do not have them out there. She continued—

Or any persons needing to move closer to large centres ... from a rural setting?

How about the poor struggling family man who can get a job that pays better by moving and is closer to transport, saving fuel costs.

I would like to add another story here. A gentleman wanted to move to a mining town from a small country town but he found that there was no way he could afford accommodation or a house. Even though he owned a house, there was no way he could afford a house in those areas or find any sort of accommodation. We actually need a lot of those new buildings out there in those areas for people to be accommodated in them. Maybe this \$10,000 will be a start and it will help them; I am not sure. Members can see that there are a lot of problems, and people are seeing a lot of problems with regard to this. The letter continues—

"Captain Bligh" made a ridiculous statement that average house prices had jumped by around 200% (not everywhere however!) So people could afford the extra duty ....

These people cannot afford the extra stamp duty because house prices did not rise in the South Burnett by 200 per cent—no way in the world. This is what this lady is arguing about. They need to be near good medical services but she does not think it is possible now. If they moved from the town they live in—which is Blackbutt—they could never raise the funds, as age pensioners, to live in or near the city. There are issues here and people have a lot of concerns with them, and the government should take that on board.

A lot of people have said that the removal of the \$113 ambulance levy from the power bill is a good thing. It is an excellent thing. It should never have been there in the first place because most people who wanted ambulance cover were well and truly covered. In saying that, I note in one of the papers that the Treasurer said he will pick that money up with the stamp duty. That is fair enough! We get \$113 per annum back and if we move he gets \$6,000 or \$8,000! That seems a fair deal! Perhaps not. It is good that the government has got rid of that. I always thought it was a difficult thing to introduce and that people were ambushed into having to pay it. There was no opting out of it in any way, shape or form because it became the first part of your electricity bill. People will be happy with this move.

I have to say that we do everything in our power to save energy; we put solar panels on and we have done all the bits and pieces. The dearest part of our house is our pool and we are now getting that worked on to tariff 33, as that will be permissible soon, so we do everything right. On the day we installed the solar panels, I read in the paper that because people were not using as much electricity as they used to and because people were actually being paid for it—that is, with solar panels they were putting electricity into the grid—the company was not making enough money so it decided to put prices up. I do not believe that in the long run any energy-saving methods we use as individuals will bring our prices down for very long. The energy companies will in fact raise those prices and we will be back to square one in no time at all. I believe the same has happened with water. People were not using enough at one stage so they raised the price.

I now want to talk about Greg, who is having trouble with his energy. He rang me the other day and said, 'I don't know what I'm going to do. I have my hot-water system. I have a hot shower on day one and then I turn it off. The next day, it's still a little bit warm and I have a warm shower. On the third day it is a cold shower, and on the fourth day I turn it back on again.' I have people coming to me with stories like that. During our conversation Greg said that he now cooks outside on a barbecue when he needs a hot meal. Members who know the Brisbane Valley would know that it gets quite cold there. It is almost criminal that the government allows that sort of thing to happen and allows power to get so dear that pensioners feel they cannot have hot showers.

I have previously spoken about people lighting donkeys. I remember that last time I did this there was a strange little snippet in the paper which alluded to the fact that people in Kingaroy and the South Burnett were burning donkeys, believing they were actually burning living creatures. For those who do not know, it is 44-gallon drum with a fire under it that is hooked into the house water so that when it heats it feeds in. We do not burn donkeys out there, but people do burn candles for light, they eat before dark and so on.


I will move to the federal carbon tax because that is another impost which adds to the burden for people at the moment. I would like to look at a statement by Dr David Evans. I will not read too much of it because I do not have it all here. He gave a speech on 23 March 2011 in Perth on global warming in which he said, 'Sorry, but you've been had.' I will give a bit of his background just so people know. Dr Evans consulted for the Australian Greenhouse Office, which is now the department of climate change, from 1999 to 2005 and then part time from 2008 to 2010, when he modelled Australia's carbon in plants, debris, mulch, soils and forestry and agricultural products.

Dr Evans is a mathematician and engineer with six university degrees, and I could go on. He wrote—

I am a scientist who was on the carbon gravy train ... I was an alarmist but I am now a sceptic ... This is an issue tearing society apart, making fools and liars out of politicians ... If Australia went back to the stone age according to government climate modelling, it would be cooler in 2050 by about 0.015 degrees. Their models exaggerate tenfold, in fact our sacrifice would make the planet in 2011 a mere 0.0015 degrees cooler.

He goes on and his speech can be easily found. People who do not believe that it is man-made climate change are called sceptics, but I agree with that and I am happy to be called a sceptic. A sceptic is a person indisposed to accept popularity or authority as proving the truth of opinion. We should all be sceptics in everything that comes before this House. People are desperate. I do not believe this budget does enough, but these are difficult times, and I accept that. We all want more for our electorates—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (10.10 pm): In rising to speak to the 2011 appropriation bills in this cognate debate, it is a great honour to stand in the people's Legislative Assembly—a chamber which has a long and proud history of democratic representation and service to the people of Queensland—to represent the people of Burnett. The Burnett is the most beautiful electorate in Australia with an estimated resident population of 47,602 persons or 1.1 per cent of the state's population. Burnett's population in 2031 is projected to be 75,266 persons, and that is a figure and a prediction that drives my thinking. We need to be able to prepare the future infrastructure for those people. At the time of the census in 2006 there were 738 persons in Burnett who stated that they were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin or 1.9 per cent of the total population. I pay my respects to the first Australians who are the traditional custodians of the Burnett's land—the Gurang Gurang, the Tribaliabunda and the Gureng Gureng.

As well as acknowledging the traditional owners, I also want to acknowledge another group of important people who also deserve to be spoken about during this special democratic moment when all parliamentarians are gifted an opportunity to speak to bills which attempt to fairly share with all Queenslanders the wealth of our great state and nation. That other group of special people is the people who have served and are serving in our military. It is only by their willingness to serve and die for their mates and families and, of course, a democratic ideal that this chamber has remained in continuous service to the people of Queensland for 152 years. I table as a mark of respect Parliamentary Library research showing the names of the Australian heroes serving in the Middle East who have died defending our democracy, and to date the ADF has suffered 27 operational deaths in Afghanistan in terms of soldiers killed in action.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'ADF personnel deployed to Afghanistan wounded in action' [4698].

I am disappointed that neither the government nor the LNP opposition have responded to two notices of motion which have called for the members of this place to observe a minute's silence for all military personnel who have died while on active service.

The delivery of this year's budget by the Treasurer comes at a time when the world still teeters on the brink of economic recession. Twelve months ago the headlines of the respected current affairs magazine *The Economist* read 'Fear returns—how to avoid a double-dip recession'. While war and social unrest, especially in the Middle East during the Arab spring, dominate much of the media, it is still the economy which will determine the electoral futures of the world's governments. The same will apply also to Queensland. This year's *Economist* says—

President Obama is the Giant of American politics. The President has a huge war chest, his own party firmly behind him and a rare capacity to inspire. Yet he is vulnerable. This week a poll showed him in a dead heat with Mitt Romney, the Republican front runner. America's sluggish recovery will give any challenger a chance.

Queensland is no different from the western economies struggling to overcome the downturn caused by the GFC and our recent natural disasters. The *Financial Review's* Mathew Dunckley and Mark Ludlow point out—

The states are under increasing fiscal pressures as rising costs and soft revenues slash surpluses and push debt up, leaving governments unable to deliver on tax reform and struggling to relieve infrastructure backlogs.

Queensland is in the worst position on some criteria, with yesterday's budget forecasting an operating deficit of \$4.01 billion and net debt across Queensland rising 72 per cent to \$28.1 billion in 2011-12.

Of course, the final forecast for 2015 is around the \$85 billion mark. In plain terms, despite a \$14 billion asset program, last year the state spent \$2.12 billion more than we earned. This coming financial year we will spend \$4.08 billion more than we earn. The budget predicts that we will spend \$47 billion and take in only \$43 billion. We will borrow \$33 billion and, as members on this side of the House have said, have loan repayments of more than \$500,000 per hour.

I look at this budget and I wish that Gwen Curtis and the ladies of the Bargara CWA, Rob Bromich and George Shuter's committee of the Moore Park Beach Association, Jenny Ryan's Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce committee or John Russo's Childers Chamber of Commerce were in charge of the state's finances, because they know that you cannot spend more than you earn. You can also trust these Burnett community members to deliver credible and sincere financial documents. Unfortunately, these financial documents the government has presented to this place are designed to be deliberately vague. Especially when one seeks specific information on important community projects, the financial details are missing. For example, in the 'statistical division' column, instead of an identifying number allowing you to locate the exact region in Queensland where the money is spent, this government allows financial records with 'various' to be tabled in here. On page 26 of the Capital Statement \$15 million is being spent on 'various' projects around the state. You have no indication where Labor's 'various' dollars are being spent in Queensland. To make matters worse, the column for 'total estimated cost' is blank. The column for 'expenditure to 30/06/11' is blank. There is no definable period for this money to be spent. It is just ongoing.

This is a substandard accounting method. No credible commercial company would accept this. I think it is deliberately substandard. It is designed to give politicians and senior public servants plenty of alibis and places to hide when questioned about specific project expenditure. It is designed by those who have a guilty mind to discourage questions about our state's finances. This substandard accounting encourages corruption, which leads to the first structural reform that must be carried out if we are to answer two key questions Queenslanders, indeed people world-wide, are asking right now: how do we get more people back to work and how do we fix the deficit?

How much of the \$4 billion operating deficit was caused by corruption? How many times have the workers received a small fraction of the total cost of a project while politically well-connected middlemen pocket outrageous management and success fees that this government is only too happy to incorporate as part of the normal cost of doing business in Queensland? How many times have those well-connected middlemen made donations back to the Labor Party or politicians in order to keep this cycle of legalised political corruption spinning? We will never know if we do not invest in a royal commission.

Campbell Newman and the Premier do not support the establishment of an independent royal commission into political corruption. It appears that both believe Gordon Nuttall is the only corrupt politician in Queensland. Both are refusing to support a call for indemnity to be given to one of the only former politicians in Queensland who is well qualified and capable of becoming a star witness at an independent royal commission into corruption similar to the historical Fitzgerald inquiry. For those opposed to such an inquiry, they need to ask themselves: how many billions of dollars of taxpayers' funds have been siphoned off because of political corruption? I say to the Labor and LNP politicians who oppose a royal commission that they will have to explain to their electorates. What have they got to hide? Who are they protecting? The Queensland government has borrowed to make payments to Labor mates. The Queensland government has borrowed to pay inflated management fees to projects.

Campbell Newman and Anna Bligh are both natural climate change deniers. Even though we have South American volcanic ash interrupting Australian commercial air flights and we have had the full force of nature's cycles on display, both Campbell Newman and Anna Bligh honestly believe that climate change is actually happening because of the puny three per cent greenhouse gas emissions made by man while 97 per cent of the greenhouse gases that enter the atmosphere are naturally occurring.

Who is going to pay the carbon tax on volcanic CO<sub>2</sub> produced in Iceland or South America? The world's climate and average temperature have changed for hundreds of millions of years without the influence of man-made carbon. The world's average temperature has been much higher—five degrees higher—and much lower—14 degrees lower—than what it is today without the influence of man-made CO<sub>2</sub>. But both Newman and Bligh are now slavishly following the great green untruth, the Orwellian group-think affecting our society that was created by the green lunatics, of man-made climate change for both politicians' own short-term political survival, because they both desperately need the voting preferences of a small group of city elites.

I am very concerned that Mr Newman will sell out the bush and pander to the 14 per cent of green lunatics in Ashgrove who believe that camels and cattle should be shot because their burps and greenhouse gas belches are somehow changing the world's average temperature. The only saving grace that Mr Newman has when it comes to climate change is that he is opposed to a carbon tax, and I applaud him for that. At least he is not one of the group of lunatics and traitors who believe that by paying more in taxes to Canberra we can stop the world's climate from changing.

Obama does not believe in a carbon tax. He has ruled it out. So have four other countries—the biggest economies in the world. China, India Japan and Brazil have said no to a carbon tax. Yet if a carbon tax is brought in, our farmers will be competing with American farmers and Chinese farmers and Brazilian farmers who will not pay a carbon tax.

If the natural climate change deniers are to win this battle and convince parliaments that man-made CO<sub>2</sub> is changing the world's climate then the only long-term man-made solution to it is to move to a baseload power generation that does not produce man-made carbon—that is, nuclear power. The head of BHP—a company that owns one of the largest deposits of uranium in Australia—loves politicians like Bligh and Newman who deny natural climate change and who believe in man-made climate change, because eventually their kind will deliver laws and economic conditions that will force the building of nuclear power stations in Queensland.

Any sane person with a minimal knowledge of power generation knows that renewables, solar and wind cannot and will never be able to provide baseload power to sustain or develop an industrialised 21st century society such as Queensland. Those politicians like Mr Newman and the Premier who believe in man-made climate change and who deny natural climate change will eventually be forced, because of their beliefs, to impose economic conditions and drivers on our economy that penalises the production of man-made CO<sub>2</sub>—the very air we breathe. Once those false conditions are in place that restrict CO<sub>2</sub> emissions then nuclear power generation will be the only viable economic method of producing baseload power for our future generations. Those who believe that mere man-made CO<sub>2</sub> is causing climate change are giving strength to the argument for the building of Queensland nuclear power plants and weakening the argument to secure our energy needs by building more Queensland coal fired power plants, which provide the most reliable, safest and cheapest electricity in the world.

No other community in Australia deserves at least a doubling of the public health resources or a new hospital more than the Burnett-Bundaberg community. This is where the bureaucratic cancer in Queensland Health was discovered and where the systemic underfunding, dysfunction, waste and criminal behaviour by public servants and politicians was exposed. This is the issue that will define my political career. I will have succeeded in politics if I am able to help fix the managerial dysfunction and the chronic underfunding and underresourcing at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. I want to win a doubling of health resources—beds, doctors, nurses, specialists and allied health staff. I will fail if the Bundaberg Base Hospital is not prepared to meet the growth in population that will occur in the coming years.

The majority of health crises and mistakes are made because the staff are overwhelmed by a huge workload. I applaud the staff at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. However, I have no faith in their political management or the management of Queensland Health, who will not stand up for them and who will not fight for the resources and funding that they need. The Burnett-Bundaberg region would never receive a doubling of the hospital beds, doctors, nurses and specialists if I did not become an Independent member of this place. It is only since I have become an Independent that the LNP has stopped taking the Burnett-Bundaberg region for granted and has started to make some significant commitments in health resourcing and funding.

Recently the LNP candidate for Bundaberg said that he wanted to see an extra 60 staffed and funded beds. That is a good start. I welcome that. But just to catch up to the state average of public beds per population—2.4 beds per 1,000 head of population—we need an extra 160 staffed and funded beds, not just 60 staffed and funded beds. Two elections ago the LNP promised the extra 160 beds with a new hospital of 300 beds—a doubling of the funded and staffed beds. But at the last election the shadow health minister stood in front of the Bundaberg Base Hospital promising nothing except a mental health policy manned by volunteers while other communities all around the state were promised new hospitals. By becoming an Independent, whether I win or not, I have ensured that that outrage, that disgusting insult to the people of not only the Burnett but also Bundaberg and Callide who were all forced to seek treatment there, will never happen again. The LNP will be forced to offer significant funding to the Bundaberg Base Hospital.

The present government has been forced, kicking and screaming all the way by whistleblowers Toni Hoffman and Christine Cameron, the media and the findings of the royal commission, to spend significant money on the Bundaberg Base Hospital. This coming year, \$7.5 million is being spent to complete the \$40 million Bundaberg Base Hospital expansion. This funding is very welcome. However, like the member for Gladstone I want to warn this place that there is a chronic and dangerous shortage of medical staff and hospital beds. There is also a problem with overseas trained doctors that I will be speaking about later in the year.

I have received correspondence from a Mr Wal Kenney, requesting my assistance with regard to what he identified as alleged investment partnership and corruption between the Bundaberg Regional Council planning officer and a solicitor. I table the correspondence that I have sent to the CMC on his behalf.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 14 June 2011, to the Crime and Misconduct Commission from Mr Rob Messenger MP regarding allegations raised by a constituent in relation to the Bundaberg Regional Council [\[4699\]](#).

Country Queenslanders who live outside the capital city and the south-east corner have been ripped off. The majority of Queensland's wealth is produced in an area outside the capital city and its surrounding areas. I am determined to reverse this regional rip-off by supporting a policy of royalties for the regions, similar to the Western Australia Nationals' Royalties for Regions program, which has delivered an extra \$1.2 billion of mining royalties for the country councils and the people. This is a point of difference between me, the LNP and Labor members. They will not work to reverse this rip-off. I will.

The government has announced that it will remove a discount to stamp duty for property transactions. First home buyers can apply for a \$10,000 grant for houses worth less than \$600,000. According to Andy from Andy's Real Estate in Childers—

The announcement of the increase in stamp duty is another blow to an already depleting market in the real estate industry. No doubt the increase on the first home owners grant was good for some and supposed to stimulate sales, but with the new increase in stamp duty, the increased talk has seen our phone go silent.

The first home owner grant needs to go back to \$21,000 for new homes and \$14,000 for old homes and new buyers should be exempt from such a tax. Andy has sold only one home to a first home buyer in two years.

There are a number of projects missing from this budget that I will be fighting very hard for in future budgets: flood proofing of the Fingerboard Road from Miriam Vale to the beaches of 1770 and Agnes Water; a high school for Agnes Water; more money for the upgrade of the sports facilities at Miriam Vale's Larson Oval; more money for the continuing improvement of Rosedale Road; a police beat for the Moore Park Beach community; funding for a 24-hour police station at Bargara; a turtle hospital for Bargara and the turtle coast; more funding for Elliott Heads Road including school bus stopping pads; and a new Bargara high school.

Some of the highlights in this year's budget, as I alluded to, were \$7.5 million to complete the Bundaberg Hospital expansion and \$5.6 million for the construction of the Bundaberg-Hervey Bay oral health clinic. We have chronic underfunding in dental care. There is a nine-year waiting list on the public dental health scheme, which is an outrage.

Campbell Newman and Anna Bligh have failed to announce policies that will ensure the state's food security by protecting the 4.5 per cent of Queensland's only remaining prime agricultural land. That has to change. We have to protect our prime agricultural land from the ravages of underground coal gasification.

In closing, a Burnett resident recently wrote to me—

Everything else seems to be a big carrot held out before us just to get votes without delivering.

This government is broke. It is time to fix it.



**Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (10.30 pm): The dictionary defines the word 'sophistry' as a subtle, tricky, superficially plausible but generally logically unsound method of reasoning. It is obvious that the 2011-12 budget is an act of sophistry by this government as it tries to present a false argument to explain the numbers. It is clear that this Labor government continues to ignore the painful economic realities of its mismanagement of the state's economy for the past 13 years. It is a budget that puts politics first, not Queenslanders. It is a budget high on political rhetoric and low on hope. It is clear that after 13 years of governing this state, Labor has become powerless to address the vexing issues facing Queensland today.

This budget ignores the plight of those families struggling with cost-of-living increases brought on by the policies of this Labor government. This government now throws out the crumb of removing the ambulance levy—a levy it introduced; a levy which, when one reads the speeches at the time, was something that those opposite waxed lyrical about and said would bring equity into the state and ensure all Queenslanders would have access to an ambulance; a levy that today they have said is a regressive levy. This budget and the government's blatant attempt at political bribery by removing the ambulance levy only nourishes the disillusionment that the people of Queensland have towards the political process.

We have an obligation as members of this House to make sure that our state's future is better than its past. This budget does not do that. It is a budget that has not put Queensland first. Somehow, from what we have heard from Labor members opposite, they now expect gratitude from Queenslanders as the crumbs are thrown to them in an election year budget. It is too little and too late. This budget is about political expediency not our state's priorities. There is no doubt that tackling economic growth ought to be the No. 1 priority of this government. Instead this budget is myopic and sells the future short.

I will now turn to the policies and announcements that have been made in this budget. Small business is considered the heart and soul of the Queensland economy, a source of pride and a source of jobs. In this budget we have heard the announcement of a business commissioner, a new position to cut red tape, establish clear time frames for turning around paperwork and to work closely with key business representative groups in their strategic priority areas. Excuse me, but I thought it was the job of a government to cut red tape, to establish clear time frames and to get on with the job of delivering for key strategic priority areas. This government seems unable to slash the red tape that it has brought in over the past 13 years. Why has it announced in this budget a business commissioner? Queenslanders know the answer. It is nothing more than a political ploy.

Now, let us look to major projects. We see that the government has allocated \$1.8 million this year to establish a major projects office within the Department of Local Government and Planning. This is nothing more than an admission by this Labor government that its planning processes have gone out of control. According to the government, the MPO will be a one-stop shop that works with proponents to guide economically significant projects through the planning process. Again, I thought that was the job of government. I thought the government would naturally work on this and would not need to be establishing a major projects office. But it is clear that after 13 years of Labor mismanagement, after 13 years of Labor's failure to present a vision and to overregulate, we are now seeing bandaid measures such as the major projects office and a business commissioner to address the problems that Labor has created.

Clearly, the Labor Party is a party in power that has different priorities from ordinary Queenslanders. I can imagine that when its members get behind closed doors they are looking at how to set things up to blame others for their failures. In this budget we see that with the establishment of more bureaucracy. This is not a government that puts Queenslanders first. Likewise, it is not a budget that puts Queenslanders first.

We have heard much from the Treasurer with regard to the impacts of the flood. I wish to address one specific element that I believe highlights the mean-spiritedness of this government. During the floods and the cyclones we saw for the first time Auslan interpreters available. Auslan interpreters contacted the government and said, 'We need to get that message out'. I commend the government for accepting the offer. It was an important initiative, one that has been recognised not only across Australia but globally. It has set the standard for disasters when information needs to get out quickly and efficiently to the public where captioning may not be suitable. The mean-spiritedness of this government is that not one of those Auslan interpreters were paid for their time. Not one. We have a situation here where the Auslan interpreters put forward their time and not one was paid.

**Mrs Kiernan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Mount Isa.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! Members on my right, order.

**Mr GIBSON**: It would have been a generous gesture to simply make a payment in recognition of their efforts. The failure of this government to do so speaks volumes about its commitment to disabilities. What we are hearing now is attacks from members opposite when they do not like the truth. It is nothing more than that. No clever political marketing, no attacks on the LNP, no government funded political propaganda or fanfare can mask the fact that this government has failed on economic management. When it is confronted with the failures on any issue, this government has a standard response ready. We have heard it time and time again in this chamber just in this debate. It is to blame the LNP. That is not a creative response. It is not a truthful response. But I will give them this: it is a consistent response from Labor. It blames the LNP when its failures are exposed because it does not like to have the light of scrutiny shone upon it.

The Bligh Labor government cannot seriously hope to avoid responsibility for its failures in managing this state. Today, the shadow Treasurer challenged the Labor Party to steal our policies. I thought about that. Perhaps those opposite do not wish to be branded as thieves, so I will reword the challenge: take our policy. This is a gift to you. Use this policy because it is good for the state of Queensland. The government has recognised and taken other LNP policies that were of benefit to Queensland. Please do not feel the need to steal this policy; simply take it as a gift offered. The Treasurer likes to brag about his ability to make decisions. This is a decision that he can make. So many of his other decisions have been the wrong ones—the wrong ones for our children, the wrong ones for our state and the wrong ones for our future.

Within my portfolio responsibility areas the budget holds no major surprises for local government or sport. Overall this budget presents a mixed picture for councils. On the negative side is the government's decision to remove the capital infrastructure subsidy, putting pressures on councils that are passed onto ratepayers. This decision causes ordinary Queenslanders to face great costs. Today I



heard how this government tries to weasel its way out of paying to councils infrastructure charges on state government projects. Not only has the government removed a subsidy that helped subsidise the cost of water and sewerage delivery; we now find that it is 'difficult' to extract infrastructure payments from the government. The government is going for a double hit upon councils' bottom lines.

The government has announced a delay in the introduction of the waste levy. I put it to this government that the waste levy needs to be seriously reviewed before it is introduced. There are great concerns in the industry, from all areas, about the impact of another tax on Queenslanders at a time when we can least afford it.

This government is about spending other people's money and borrowing without any concern for the future or those who will have to pay high taxes for years to come. It has mortgaged the future at the price of political victory at the next election. I have a message for the government: with so many serious issues facing our state, Queenslanders have had enough. They have had enough of Labor and its mismanagement. In this chamber tonight we have heard so much. The member for Bribie Island, who chose to use her time in this honourable place—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member for Gympie will refer to the honourable member by her correct title.

**Mr GIBSON:** The member for Pumicestone chose to use her time in this honourable place to do nothing more than play dirty politics and espouse political propaganda. There are serious issues facing the people of Queensland, but it is clear from those opposite that politics is more important than the people of Queensland.

I must remind the Bligh Labor government that the people of Gympie and Pomona, the people of Kin Kin and the Mary Valley, and those on the Cooloola Coast in Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach are Queenslanders, too. My constituents pay their taxes. Like anyone else, they contribute to the welfare and development of this state, but they appear to have been forgotten in this budget. Indeed, for the Gympie region the budget is about repackaging old announcements to make them sound new, like the kindergarten announcement at Gympie South State School or funding for roads in the Kin Kin region. We have already heard those announcements, but they have been regifted in this budget.

When we look into the detail of the budget papers, we start to see a very disturbing picture. Gympie is widely recognised as a region of high housing stress—that is, when more than 50 per cent of a household's income is spent on rent or mortgage payments. Yet what initiatives are there within this budget to assist? When it comes to social housing, there is a paltry \$4.68 million to be shared across the whole Wide Bay-Burnett region for upgrades in social housing. That is disgraceful when it is compared to the need in my electorate.

The \$10,000 new home bonus grant will be available for only six months. It is recognised that it will encourage new buildings, but the challenge for the residents of Gympie is their ability to obtain loans to benefit from that \$10,000 grant. In Gympie, to get into the market most new home owners will buy a small established property. This budget will do nothing to help those people. The 125 per cent increase in the transfer duty will hurt. Within the past month, three Gympie real estate agencies have closed. No doubt more will have to put off agents and administrative staff as the impact of this transfer duty is felt, causing people to reassess whether they will purchase an existing home.

I come to the issue of the Bruce Highway and the Cooroy-Curra bypass. When we look into the budget papers we see that once again this government has underspent on the Cooroy-Curra section B bypass, which is recognised as one of the most dangerous stretches of road in Australia.

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr GIBSON:** This is a stretch of road that governments from both sides have failed to fund. This government refused to take the fight over this stretch of road to the Rudd Labor government when it withdrew \$600 million.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members, it is getting late. We are nearly there. Can we just hold our decorum for a little longer. The member for Gympie has the call.

**Mr GIBSON:** This is a road that governments of all persuasions have failed. This is a road where too many lives have been lost and those members opposite—

**Ms Nolan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Minister for Finance and the Arts, cease interjecting. The member for Gympie has the call.

**Mr GIBSON:** It is disgraceful for members opposite to sit in this House and sanctimoniously lecture us, when it is our residents who have to drive on that road every day. This is a disgraceful display of how out of touch is a minister of the Crown.



I move on to education. When it comes to property, plant and equipment announcements in the budget papers, of the 62 announcements the Gympie State High School is last with a paltry \$274,000 provided for a covered learning area. Gympie State High School requires money for maintenance now. Currently, money to address ongoing maintenance issues comes from other elements of the school's budget. Once again we find a Labor government failing to address the pressing needs of this area. What we see from this government is what we have seen far too many times: for too long it has not been willing to address its own policy failures.

This budget has failed on all scores. It is clear to Queenslanders that for the Labor Party politics matters more than people. On behalf of the people of the Gympie electorate, I am proud to stand in opposition to this mockery of governance and this state budget. It is clear that Queensland needs new leadership. It needs a new direction, which has been lacking under this long-term Labor government. It is clear that only a can-do LNP government will save Queenslanders' money and deliver services where they are needed most.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gibson, adjourned.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.49 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Friday, 17 June 2011.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT



**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.49 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Principal for a Day




**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (10.49 pm): I commend the Minister for Education for the annual celebration of state Education Week. I joined in this year by being principal for two half days, the first on Wednesday, 1 June at Sunshine Beach State High School and the other on Friday, 3 June at the Tewantin State School. I was prepared for life by being a student in the public school system. My son, Kristin, attended Sunshine Beach State High School and, for a time, I was both a member and chair of the school council there.

When I experience excellence firsthand, as I did recently at both schools, my regard for the public system is both renewed and refreshed. Sunshine Beach State High School is led most ably by Leanne Jensen-Steele. The truism that a school is only as good as the leader is clearly in play here. The breadth of the curriculum on offer is extensive and my classroom to classroom tour showed students very hard at work indoors on the academic side of a full school life. Outdoors, I met quality teachers like Graeme Doe pressing his Netbooks program and I saw Martin Dorey's science robotics and velocity challenge, Dwight Macaulay's pedal power, Geoff Hounslow's ice-cream making for year 10 and Suzanne Barrell's cupcake making, which had the added social benefit of being sold with the proceeds going back into supporting the hospitality courses. The school motto of 'quality in all we do' was evident everywhere. Its curriculum is extended by debating, cheerleading and a gamut of musicianship. Consider choosing between a string orchestra, concert band, vocal group, percussion ensemble and stage band.

My experience at Tewantin State School was very different because it was their annual sports carnival. Principal Neil Jenkins enabled me to start a race and then mingle with pupils on the oval. I was able to follow this up by talking with some of the parents as well as the ladies who had set up the mobile tuckshop. The Tewantin sports carnival did remind me of many of those same events at the Everton Park State School many, many years ago when hundreds of students who were out in the fresh air and sunshine competed in a range of events that have not changed much. Everyone, including the teachers, parents and pupils had a great time.

For the record, Laguna house won the sports for a third consecutive year with Cooroibah second and Doonella third, and they were separated by only a single point. I am assured that Weyba will challenge for the title next year. Individuals who excelled were 12-year-old national superstar Samantha Johnson, who broke the 1986 record for the long jump and the 1991 record for the 100 metres as well as the 200 metre record. Jack Coppock won both the 100 and 200 metre events for 11-year-olds. Ko-Dee Gibbins won all seven of her individual age events. My thanks for their invitation are extended to Tewantin State School and Sunshine Beach State High School. It makes me very proud to have two such outstanding state educational facilities in my electorate.

### Challenge Cairns

 **Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (10.52 pm): I would like to inform honourable members about the tremendous success of the first ever Challenge Cairns. This particular event was the highlight of the week-long Cairns Adventure Festival held only recently in Cairns. The culmination event was amazing to many of us who had never before visited such a large, internationally run event. We were blown away. It is an ironman event in terms of the distances involved. An amazing amount of organisation was required to present this triathlon. Of course, many of the athletes who competed came from not only the other states of Australia but also from around the world. A significant proportion of the athletes are, in fact, professional triathletes, as you would need to be to undertake in some eight hours a 3.8 kilometre swim, a 180 kilometre bike ride and then follow that up with a 42.2 kilometre run. It was spectacular. There was the swim at Yorkeys Knob, the bike ride from Yorkeys Knob through to Port Douglas along the coast road and then the final run from Yorkeys Knob into Cairns and of course along the Esplanade.


The success of the event showed in a number of ways. Of course, it provided tremendous enjoyment for Cairns locals. The level of participation was amazing. The numbers were much larger than had been expected. In fact, there were some 2,000 entrants, some of whom chose to do the half-iron event. Many of them were locals who decided to join in, whether singly or in groups.

What was also amazing and contributed importantly to the success of the event was the over 1,600 local volunteers as well as some who were from out of town. This event showcased Cairns to the world, with footage from the race, particularly of the coast road, broadcast in many countries. It will also be displayed in many magazines.

I say thanks indeed to Mr Felix Kuhnel, the boss of the challenge organisation, thanks to Events Queensland and thanks to USM Events, who are the ones who made it happen. I say thanks to our chief sponsors Cairns Airport and the Cairns Regional Council. I say thanks to the *Cairns Post* for its amazing coverage in the lead-up as well as on the day. I also say thanks to the volunteers who did us proud. I say congratulations to Chris McCormack, professional athlete and Australian, who came in first, as well as to all the other athletes, young and old, men and women, groups and individuals.

*(Time expired)*

### Weinam Creek, Parking; Redlands Electorate, Roadworks

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (10.55 pm): Tonight I rise to talk about a couple of issues. One is a petition which is going to be tabled in the Redland City Council. Earlier I sought permission to include a copy of the petition in this adjournment debate. I table that petition.

*Tabled paper:* Non-conforming petition to the Redland City Council regarding parking facilities at Weinam Creek [4700].

The petition contains 6,151 signatures. Basically, it calls on the council—and, in that respect, the state government to intervene with Redland City Council—to conduct a feasibility study on the parking issues at Weinam Creek. For those members who have not heard me speak on the many occasions I have raised it, Weinam Creek is the port by which people access the ferry to the southern Moreton Bay islands. This is an issue that has long challenged Redland City Council. It is ongoing and it really needs addressing.

The council has embarked on a strategy of rolling out a 'pay and display' parking arrangement which is causing considerable angst. As I mentioned in my previous contribution to the budget debate, this is a community that has been neglected. It faces a number of challenges. The ferry to these islands is not part of the TransLink system. The cost of living on the islands is astronomical when all these things are added in. These people are just asking for a little help from this state government in preventing council from introducing a 'pay for parking' arrangement, which is why I tabled the petition.


When I have made this request I have heard from a number of ministers that the Redland City Council does not contribute to the Transport budget. It does not tip into Queensland Transport in the way that every other local authority does. That may well be the case—and I do not disagree with that sentiment. However, the trouble here is that the island community is the meat in the sandwich. They are caught between a council that is refusing to do the right thing and a state government that is refusing to hear them and to help them. At the end of the day it is our constituents of Queensland who are missing out. That is why I draw this matter to the attention of the House. It is an issue that has been ongoing.

Because I hate to always be negative, in closing, I would also like to actually thank—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DOWLING:** There is only 29 seconds left, people. I would like to thank the government for the roadworks that have taken place at Beverage Road. They are almost complete. I place on record that the contractor has worked very well with the school community and the rest of the community in terms of its traffic management. The project is coming together well. I thank the government very much for the contribution to the Beverage Road intersection upgrade as well as the upgrades to the Dinwoodie Road intersection and the Ziegenfusz Road intersection.

### Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (10.58 pm): In excess of 1,500 kids aged seven to 15, their parents and siblings—with bikes, swimmers, runners and most of all anticipation and enthusiasm—converged on Lowe Oval in Logan City for the Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon on Sunday, 17 April. With major sponsors Sanitarium and MBF and substantial funding of \$50,000 from our state government for our two state events in Logan and Townsville, other support came from the Logan City Council and Channel 9, which crossed live to the event for their *Today* show throughout the morning. In recognition of the devastating floods and cyclone, Sanitarium graciously offered a \$10 discount for registration.

The Hon. Karen Struthers, acting sports minister, accompanied by her son, Alex, attended and fired the gun to commence the swim leg. Wave after wave of 11- to 15-year-olds set off on their 150-metre swim, to be followed by a six-kilometre ride and one-kilometre run. The seven- to 10-year-olds, who comprised 67 per cent of the young athletes, faced a 75-metre swim, three-kilometre bike ride and 500-metre run. Many of these youngsters compete year after year and are inspired to keep active and healthy.


There was a fantastic festive atmosphere and a number of sporting stars were in high demand for photos and autographs. Jessica Watson was an absolute hit, as well as swimmer Yolane Kukla, triathletes Maxine Seeers and Ollie Whistler, and Nick Buchanan from the Queensland Bulls. Minister Struthers, our elite athletes, Logan councillor Lisa Bradley and I congratulated the young athletes as they passed the finish line and then awarded them a gold medal. This event is about fun and participation, with every child a winner. Many of the young athletes, perhaps spurred on by watching their favourite sportspeople and with an acute sense of competitiveness, found themselves in a group heading for the line and put on a huge burst of speed to reach the finish line ahead of others in their group.

The challenge in 2011 was to beat the record set last year of 29,487 kids participating throughout Australia and New Zealand to become the largest kids triathlon series on the planet. With 15,000 Aussie kids and 20,000 Kiwis, they undoubtedly will break that record. Free cereal, drinks and iceblocks were on offer during and after the event and the whole area was filled with excited chattering, laughter and a great feeling of accomplishment.

Congratulations to the sponsors, the organisers and the many volunteers who enabled this event to run smoothly. Our thanks also must go to the many parents who are encouraging their children to grow into active, healthy adults and who take the time to bring them to such events. We now need our federal government to take a stance on junk food advertising in all facets of the media and ensure that healthy eating becomes a way of life.

*(Time expired)*

### TransLink, Train Timetables

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.01 pm): Mr Speaker, I have to tell you that I am disappointed that I have to stand up again in this House and speak on the plight of north coast rail commuters. I am equally, if not more, disappointed to say to the Minister for Transport, on behalf of the north coast rail commuters, 'We told you so. Why didn't you listen?'


Last Monday, 6 June, saw the implementation of the new north coast rail timetable. This is the timetable that commuters from the coast have been begging and pleading with the minister to revise. Their major concern with the reduction in the express service from Caboolture to Petrie was that five more stops were being added to each and every service, adding between 10 and 15 extra minutes to each trip. The services would undoubtedly become more crowded, too, given that passengers joining or departing the services between Petrie and Caboolture would naturally opt for these express services over their usual all-stops or limited-express service.

This is what the commuters were saying to the minister. This is what I have been saying to the minister ever since the draft timetable was released in November last year. What has the minister been saying to the commuters? 'We are creating more than 150,000 seats.' Well, not on the north coast line. The minister has not created 150,000 more seats; she has created the Queensland version of the Bombay Express. On the 5.20 pm Central to north coast service it is now not uncommon to have 70-odd passengers seated and more than 70 passengers standing in the aisles in each and every carriage. And they are standing for nearly an hour until the numbers equalise around Morayfield.

Yes, things may have improved slightly since that first horrid Monday but only because my commuters—coast commuters—have made the decision to stay at work longer and wait for the next service. The minister has penalised the longest commuters in the TransLink network, and rather than acknowledge the negative feedback she has received she calls it 'constructive' and dismisses it. The timetable needs to be amended. This cannot go on. I hate to say 'we told you so' but we did, and the minister ignored what we were saying.

And while we are at it, as the shadow minister for transport has already addressed in this House, the minister has also misled the commuters of Glass House, the coast and across the TransLink network by saying on 17 March that the first task of the newly appointed Public Transport Advisory Group, or PTAG, would be to look at six- and 12-month tickets and that the minister had spoken to the Treasurer and was hoping to make an announcement as part of the budget. Well, the PTAG has been appointed. There has been no discussion on periodical ticketing. The budget has been announced, and there has been no consideration given to TransLink's most regular, patient and reliable customers. It is slap in the face after slap in the face for coast commuters. And this tired, lazy Bligh Labor government just does not care.

### **Redlands Police Officer of the Year Awards; Redlands Relay for Life**

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (11.04 pm): I rise tonight to make a special mention of all those involved in the Redlands Police Officer of the Year Awards and also the recent annual Relay for Life. As one of the local members within the Redland City Council area, it is my honour to be involved in such events. The first event recognises the efforts of our local police officers and the other raises much needed funds for the Cancer Council.

It was heart-warming to see the pouring out of respect and grief before, during and after the funeral of Gold Coast police officer Damian Leeding. It was a reminder to us all, firstly, of the dangerous nature of police work and, secondly, that we as a community are able to go about our normal daily life and routine, to work and to raise a family because of the protection and services provided so selflessly by our men and women of the Police Service.


The Rotary Club of Capalaba recently held their annual Policeman of the Year Awards for the Redland City area. There was again a strong field of contestants, and this year the award went to its first female recipient, Constable Nikki Nicholls. Constable Nicholls received the award for her swift action when responding to a disturbance in Capalaba where a man was allegedly threatening people with knives. Constable Nicholls ended the danger in a calm and professional manner which drew the attention of the judges. Community policing awards were also presented to Sergeant Paul Ryan for his work in search and rescue. Other recipients included Constable Scott Knijff and Constable Vanessa Fritz for her work in dealing with an incident at Cleveland Railway Station.

I would also like to make mention of the annual Redlands Relay for Life, which is one of the many annual fundraising activities for the Cancer Council of Queensland. I would also like to recognise the 700 Redlanders in 56 teams who participated in the annual 18-hour relay. I give particular acknowledgement to Councillor Wendy Boglary, Councillor Kathy Reimers, Michael Ellis, Scott Piper and Andrew Ross for their tireless work.

During the relay, some dressed in fun costumes or adopted a theme such as Star Wars. Stormtroopers mingled with fairies and a prisoner was encased in a mobile jail cell. The event so far has raised over \$70,000. The money is still coming in and is expected to exceed \$100,000. The top fundraising team was 'Passion Pit', who raised over \$10,000 alone. I am pleased to join the Melanoma Awareness Foundation and thank Tracey Eather and her team for their commitment and dedication to this event.

Again, it is important that we take the time to recognise and appreciate the efforts of our police men and women and local Queenslanders and the contribution they are making to our community.

### **Queensland Day Community Awards; Flying High at Currimundi Day; Kawana Waters Relay for Life**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.07 pm): It is my pleasure this evening to inform honourable members of the Kawana electorate Queensland Day community awards that I am hosting this Saturday at the Kawana Community Hall. This is the second year that I am hosting the awards to recognise the efforts of the many volunteers in the Kawana electorate. Without the efforts of these volunteers, many services in our community would not be available, to the detriment of many local residents.

This year we have some 68 nominees who will be recognised, some eight more than last year. With family and friends invited, I am expecting more than 150 local residents to attend the awards ceremony. The awards are a small token of recognition that I am pleased to provide on behalf of the Kawana electorate, and what better way to do this than at the time we celebrate the birth of our great state.

I would also like to update honourable members on several recent local activities and initiatives that I had the privilege of attending. Education Week was held during the week of 22 to 28 May, and one of the initiatives that is encouraged is that of being 'principal for a day'. This year I was lucky enough to be invited to be principal for a day at the Talara Primary College and at the primary campus of the Chancellor State College.

At Talara I was able to speak to all of the year 7 students following their recent tour of Queensland Parliament House. I was able to meet and visit some other classes, teach some of the classes, including year 5 students, and take a tour of their virtual classroom. I would like to thank the hardworking principal, Steve Adams, and all of the student leaders, who afforded me the usually friendly and helpful Talara welcome that I always receive whenever I visit the school.

At Chancellor State College, primary principal Mark Birchall led me through another busy day of activities. I then had the opportunity of attending the school assembly and handing out the weekly 'Chancellor Champ' awards. I then conducted a leadership forum with the school leaders to discuss my previous experiences as a school leader and what they wanted to achieve as a student leader at Chancellor. This was followed by a morning tea with staff and parents and I finished the day with playground duty before being farewelled by the student leaders. It was great to attend another fantastic local school. I take my hat off to our local principals and their administration teams for the role they perform in educating our young leaders of tomorrow.

On Saturday, 4 June, I took my three children down to Currimundi Lake to participate in the Flying High at Currimundi day being held by the Currimundi Catchment Care Group. The day was attended by over 350 local residents and was an initiative that was part of World Environment Day. The slogan for the day was 'Kites are colourful, kites fly high in the sky, but kites go home with their owners'—unlike balloons. Congratulations to David and Jenny Allan and the Currimundi Catchment Care Group for their continued local advocacy of environmental issues in our community.

I conclude by congratulating all who participated in the Kawana Waters Relay for Life. The participants this year raised about \$75,000. I was involved again for my fifth year running, as I have a mother who is a survivor of cancer. Mum's team is the Mad Hatters and we certainly enjoyed participating. I thank all local residents in the Kawana electorate for participating in such a worthy event.

### RAAF Base Amberley, Events



**Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.11 pm): I want to advise the House of a great event I took part in on Sunday, 5 June, at the RAAF Amberley air base. For those who do not know, that base is in my electorate. At the request of Air Commodore Chris Sawade, I attended the third commemorative service for Bomber Command where I laid a wreath. For those who do not know about Bomber Command, I will read a short spiel about them. It states—

During the Second World War, Britain's Royal Air Force was divided into a number of functional and geographic commands in line with an organisation that had first been implemented in 1936. Bomber Command was based in Great Britain and was responsible for bombing targets in enemy-controlled Europe. At the height of its operations in late 1944 Bomber Command comprised over 80 operational squadrons. These squadrons were organised into several groups on the basis of their role, the type of aircraft they operated, and the locations of the airfields from which they operated. Approximately 10,000 Royal Australian Air Force personnel served with Bomber Command.


It was great to see that we had a number of veterans from Bomber Command there on the day and I spent quite a bit of time talking to them about their flights over Germany. This was something that was unreal to listen to. We talked about the aircraft they operated at the time—Lancasters, Lockheed Venturas and Vickers Wellington bombers. The *G for George* aircraft at the War Memorial in Canberra is in fact one of the Lancasters used in Great Britain during that time.

Later on the same day, I was invited to attend the opening of the Aviation Heritage Centre at the RAAF base itself. This is a new museum which has been created by the RAAF personnel and a lot of volunteers. It contains Caribou aircraft, Boston bombers, Canberra bombers, a Sabre, a Mirage, a C47 Dakota, a Bell Sioux helicopter and a Bell Iroquois helicopter. Those helicopters were operated by the Army, not by the Air Force, when they were in operation in Vietnam. For those who would like to come up and view the museum—and I would certainly encourage anyone in the House to do that—I can advise them that they are only open at this stage on one Sunday a month. It is advised that they ring and book a particular day with them.

It was an amazing opportunity to sit and talk to people who actually travelled over Germany and looked at the fires and the flak that was coming up from the ground. There were at least 20 or 25 veterans there on the day, and they really appreciate the fact that, like on Anzac Day, Australians young and old are taking more of an interest in what occurred, not only in their particular theatres of war but certainly in what is going on in the world at the moment.

I take my hat off to all the service personnel, particularly those who are operating out of the RAAF Base Amberley. The RAAF base not only has RAAF personnel but also Army personnel. We have quite a large contingent of Army out there and it is certainly getting larger in that capacity. I take my hat off to all of our Defence Force personnel who are stationed throughout the world.

## Springbrook Visioning Plan

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.14 pm): I rise tonight to speak on Springbrook, a small but very passionate community. I have attended public meetings facilitated by the Gold Coast City Council as part of its community consultation for the draft Springbrook visioning plan. The council's objectives for this plan are—

... the establishment of a vibrant community of residents by providing visitors a world class experience, resulting in improved economic benefits for Springbrook whilst ensuring the protection of Springbrook's World Heritage values.

During a reference group meeting in March 2011, I was astounded to hear the DERM representative, Neil Cambourn, take the council to task and allege it had not attempted to engage DERM at all in the consultation process. A meeting of the Economic Development and Tourism Committee was held in March 2010 with the following comments noted—

In January 2010, PB the (Project Consultants) held a meeting with DERM to begin the consultation process.

A site visit was organised between the key stakeholders of DERM, unfortunately key DERM members could not attend or cancelled on the day, despite the consultants continued effort to satisfy time demands of all attendees. Follow up correspondence from PB to DERM has seen no further commitment.

The CEO of the Gold Coast City Council, Dale Dickson, wrote to DERM in March 2010, and a reply was not received until May, in which Director-General John Bradley stated—

I look forward to the development of the Stakeholder Reference Group to enable community involvement in this process, which I am sure you will agree, will be necessary to enable ownership of the outcomes of this process by all key stakeholders.


As a result, project timelines were delayed and have now been revised. As we know, \$40 million of taxpayer's money has been spent in Springbrook with no accountability. Submissions from various entities to the visioning plan would like to see a rainforest interpretive centre based in Nerang where visitors could view what Springbrook would be like should they be allowed to visit. It is no wonder local businesses think that the agenda of this government is to lock up Springbrook for Greens preferences.

In a recent community feedback questionnaire on the visioning plan, 86 per cent of Springbrook residents were in favour of the plan and for the work to be carried out. As recently as May this year, the minister announced funding for ecotourism in Springbrook. Unfortunately, Natural Arch is in the Numinbah Valley, which is 25 kilometres from Springbrook and closer to New South Wales than the township. In 2010, the Auditor General's report entitled *Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas* was tabled. The report stated—

The Act requires the plans to identify the key natural and cultural values, and strategies for day-to-day and long-term management to protect these values. The Act also states that plans should be prepared as soon as practicable after the dedication of a protected area.

Further, the report revealed that only 98 of the 576 national parks in Queensland have a management strategy in place—a mere 17 per cent! This report highlighted what we already know—that there is no plan for Springbrook and ARCS has no accountability to the government or the people of Queensland, despite the provisions dictated in the restoration agreement. Carbon Kate should hang her head in shame at the utter disregard for the human factor in Springbrook.

## Ricketts, Mr M

 **Ms MALE** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.17 pm): I was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden death on Good Friday of one of the great environmental campaigners of our time, Mark Ricketts. His memorial service was held in Witta in May and people came from far and wide to share their memories of Mark, to get together to affirm his conservation values and to honour a man who has inspired generations of people. In fact, 'inspire' was a word I heard over and over again when talking to people about Mark.

I met Mark shortly after becoming the Labor candidate for Glass House in 1999. At a meeting in Maleny, Mark and his Conondale Range Committee colleagues took the opportunity to fill me in on their long-term campaign to protect the Conondales and to ensure that logging was phased out of native forests through the regional forest agreement. Everything he said made perfect sense, and I was proud to be able to do my part behind the scenes to help them achieve their aim.

Prior to this, Mark had been involved in the campaigns for the Conondale National Park, stopping the gold mine, attaining major conservation outcomes through his work with the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, writing the first Environment Protection Act during the Goss government years and becoming the environment adviser to Mayor Jim Soorley in the Brisbane City Council. I cannot even begin to fully document his many, many contributions to the environment here and overseas.

I know that through my contact with him and his amazing energy and enthusiasm I became a more careful and confident carer of the environment. Even today, when I am contemplating a variety of environmental issues and legislation, I think to myself, 'I wonder what Mark and Elaine would think of what we are doing? How can things be changed to make them better?' Like many others, I wish I had spent more time in his company and was able to absorb more of his amazing knowledge, his boundless energy and his wisdom and common sense.

Ian Christensen from SCEC has said that Mark was a lateral thinker with an ability to draw people together to work cooperatively, a knack for diffusing potential conflict with humour and the resolve to hold his ground if need be. That is the sign of a well-developed person, that they can use the skills that match the appropriateness of the situation—although I am not sure that ‘appropriate’ is a word that I would ever use to describe Mark.

Ian Mackay wrote a poem in celebration of Mark and his amazing contribution. Part of it reads—

There wouldn't be one here among us  
That he didn't inspire, you know;  
And if "inspire" means to breathe right in  
Then he's still with us .. and so  
That's how we must face the future,  
Take on board his warmth and his wit;  
We'll never do it as well, mind you,  
But recycle it ... every bit  
And when we turn our eyes outward to trace his steps,  
From Emu Mountain to Conondales Park,  
His environmental legacy's writ loud and clear;  
... he truly left his Mark.

I offer my condolences to Elaine and her family. I cannot even begin to imagine how they are coping with such a huge loss. I also offer my condolences to all of Mark's friends and colleagues. We are all so much poorer for his passing. Rest in peace, Mark. You will be remembered forever.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.19 pm.

## ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszcuk, 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