



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2011



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

PRESENTATION OF APPROPRIATION BILLS



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that on Tuesday, 9 August 2011 I presented to Her Excellency the Governor the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill for royal assent and Her Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe her assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

ASSENT TO BILLS



Mr SPEAKER: I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of the parliament. I table the letter for the information of all honourable members.

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

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

Date of Assent: 9 August 2011

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Auditor-General Act 2009, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Legislative Standards Act 1992, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to deal with matters about dividing fences and trees, to make consequential and minor amendments to the Acts mentioned in schedule 1 and to amend the Land Act 1994 and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2009, 1 July 2011 and 1 July 2012"

"A Bill for An Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2009, 1 July 2011 and 1 July 2012"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

9 August 2011

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 August 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor to Mr Speaker advising of assent to bills [\[5050\]](#).

REPORT

Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the *Statement for public disclosure: expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011*.

Tabled paper: Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 [\[5051\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Appointment of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I report that, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, Mr Paul Favell has been appointed as the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner for a term of three years commencing 22 August 2011.

Mr Favell was admitted to practice as a barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1980. Throughout his 31 years of practice, he has been a Crown Prosecutor and has served as a member of various tribunals, such as the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This appointment of Mr Favell has the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. I table the relevant notice of appointment as required under the act.

Tabled paper: Notice of Appointment of Mr Paul Joseph Favell as Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner for a term of three years commencing 22 August 2011 [\[5052\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appointment of Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner: Oath of Office [\[5053\]](#).

Kolosowski, Ms M

Mr SPEAKER: I remind all honourable members that a farewell function for long-term parliamentary officer, Ms Mary Kolosowski, will be held this afternoon at 3 pm in the Strangers Dining Room. I hope all honourable members and staff will be able to attend.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Vaughan, Mr KH

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.32 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Kenneth Hamilton Vaughan, a former member of the parliament of Queensland and minister of the Crown; and further
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.

Kenneth Hamilton Vaughan, known as Ken to all of us, was a true Labor man and a gentleman in every sense of the word. Ken was born in Townsville on 29 October 1934, the only son of Clifford and Ruby Vaughan. His father, Cliff—a butcher in Richmond—died when Ken was just five years old. His mother raised the little boy with the help of his loving grandparents. In January 1950, Ken came to live with his Aunt Lulu in Brisbane so that he could work as a junior clerk in the chief accountant's office of Queensland Railways. In October that year, Ken started an electrical apprenticeship with Queensland Railways and joined the ETU. Ken was called up to do national service with the Army six years later, where he advanced to the rank of sergeant. On discharge, he went back to Queensland Rail at Mayne Junction, working on diesel electric locomotives and air-conditioned trains, and became the shop steward for the ETU. The year 1959 was a big year for Ken. Two things happened that would change his life forever: he married Lesley Cowdroy and he joined the Australian Labor Party.

In 1964, Ken was elected state organiser with the ETU with responsibility for the Queensland power, coal and general mining industries. He went on to be the assistant secretary of the union. Ken's union responsibilities in the mining industry coincided with enormous expansion of that industry, including the opening up of the Bowen coal basin. Queensland's annual coal exports then were about one million tonnes a year. Today, they are in excess of 180 million tonnes. Ken's experience and knowledge of these growing and burgeoning industries stood him in very good stead for his later career where he served as minister for resources in the Goss government.

Ken's political career started in 1977 when he was elected as the member for Nudgee. Following the election of the Goss Labor Government in 1989, Ken Vaughan served as the minister for resource industries and subsequently as the minister for employment, training and industrial relations. Like anyone who has the opportunity to serve as a minister of the Crown, Ken had many chances to succeed and achieve and he took those chances. But I think his proudest achievement as a minister was the introduction of the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991. This act provides a portable long service leave scheme for workers in the building and construction industry. It extends long service leave entitlements to building workers who, by the very nature of their jobs, do not stay with one employer for long periods. All building workers and their families owe a debt of gratitude to Ken Vaughan for the entitlement that they now enjoy because of his diligence and dedication.

In 1992, Ken moved to the back bench and on 15 July 1995 he resigned from state parliament and as member for Nudgee after 17 years and seven months as a state member. Ken was awarded life membership of the Electrical Trades Union and the Australia Labor Party.


But there was more to Ken Vaughan than unions and politics, as much as he loved them both. He was also a strong environmentalist and a very keen fisherman. Ken specialised in winter whiting in and around the Pumicestone Passage. He fished with a number of his parliamentary colleagues, including Nev Warburton and Anne Warner. I am told that Ken and Nev were very competitive. Nev reckons that he outfished Ken. I am unable to confirm Ken's view on the matter, but I doubt that he would agree. Anne talks fondly of Ken as a good fisherman with a very dodgy boat. Both she and Nev agree that Ken was a wonderful fishing companion.

Ken was a great outdoorsman, with a special love for the Kedron Brook Wetlands. He worked tirelessly to have a 700-hectare area opened up to the public following the completion of the construction of the Brisbane Airport. He achieved his wish in 1993. In recognition of Ken's dedication, the current member for Nudgee, Neil Roberts, and Brisbane City councillor for the local area, Kim Flesser, are working with the local community to have a boat ramp on Kedron Brook named the Ken Vaughan Memorial Boat Ramp.

Of course, Ken was known in this parliament as a keen bowler. He served as the president of the Banyo Bowls Club and, with colleagues from this place, he was an active member of the Parliamentary Bowls Association. In fact, Ken was the Parliamentary Bowls Association's president for most of the 1990s and I understand that he represented Queensland in every annual interstate parliamentary bowling carnival from 1978, when he became a member of this House, and later he served in that role as a former member of this House. Despite failing health, Ken made it to Perth in January of this year to again represent Queensland and to be part of the winning Queensland team. I understand that Ken's presence will be sadly missed at future parliamentary bowling carnivals and that both Ken and his wife, Lesley, who also attended nearly all of these carnivals with Ken, will always be fondly remembered by all of those from Queensland and interstate who met them and shared these times with them.

Those who knew Ken Vaughan know that he was also a great family man. He and Lesley raised three children—Janelle, Wayne and Lyndall—who are in the gallery today and they have two grandchildren, Isabella and Caitlyn. For Ken, his family always came first, which is not an easy thing to manage in political and public life. Kenneth Hamilton Vaughan passed away peacefully on 22 June 2011 and a celebration of his life was held in the Lakeview Chapel at the Albany Creek crematorium on 28 June 2011.

I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that Ken Vaughan gave to our democracy, to the proud Labor movement of Queensland and Australia and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Ken's family and his friends.


 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.39 am): I rise to express, on behalf of the opposition, our condolences on the passing of Ken Vaughan, who served as a member of this parliament for 17 years from November 1977 until he retired in July 1995. Kenneth Hamilton Vaughan was born on 29 October 1934 in Townsville. He passed away on 22 June 2011 in Brisbane. Ken Vaughan was an electrician before entering parliament. He worked his way up through the union movement before running for the seat of Nudgee and going on to become a minister in the Goss government. He was the only son to Clifford and Ruby Vaughan. Sadly, his father, a butcher, died when Ken was four. He was raised by his mother with the help of his grandparents, the McCalls.

Ken Vaughan grew up in Richmond and attended Richmond State School, passing his scholarship exam with a perfect score in maths. He went on to Thornburgh College at Charters Towers before finishing junior schooling in 1949. In 1950 he was sent to live with his Aunty Lulu in Brisbane to take up a job as a junior clerk in the chief accountant's office with Queensland Railways. Clerical work obviously was not for him and he applied for an electrical apprenticeship with the Ipswich Railway Workshops. He finished his apprenticeship in 1955. In August 1956 he was called up for national service, serving as an Army sergeant at Wacol. In 1957 he transferred to Mayne Junction, where he worked on diesel electric locomotives and the latest air-conditioned trains. Here he began his long association with the union movement and his move into politics and was made shop steward for the Electrical Trades Union at the Mayne diesel shed.

In 1959 he married Lesley Cowdroy and the couple had a daughter, Janelle, later a son, Wayne, and then another daughter, Lyndall. Ken became a state organiser with the ETU and he ran for the ALP for the Senate at the 1974 federal election. He was unsuccessful in that Senate bid but continued to climb the political ladder and became assistant secretary of the ETU. He won the state seat of Nudgee in 1977 and became shadow minister for mines, energy and police. In December 1989, under Wayne

Goss as Premier, Ken Vaughan became the minister for resource industries. He served as minister for employment, training and industrial relations before stepping down to the backbench in 1992. After 17 years as the member for Nudgee he retired in July 1995.

While I never knew Ken Vaughan personally, he is remembered by those who did as a devoted family man, a dedicated member of this parliament and a man committed to his political beliefs. All members of the LNP wish to pass on their condolences to his wife, Lesley, to his children and their families and to his many friends.

 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (9.42 am): I first met Ken Vaughan sometime around 1977 on the front steps of the home of former member for Nudgee Jack Melloy. It was following a visit to my parents' home in Banyo from a local ALP branch official. My recollection is that the purpose of the visit was to ask if I would sign Ken's nomination form as the candidate for the state seat of Nudgee to replace the existing member, Jack Melloy. In those days, as a member of an affiliated union but not yet a party member, I was entitled to participate in ALP preselection processes. Coincidentally, it was several years later, in 1980, when I again met Ken Vaughan, the newly elected member for Nudgee, on the front steps of my own home. Ken was delivering a cash prize to my father, who had won it in one of Ken's infamous silver circle fundraisers. During that visit Ken and I talked about politics and the local community. It was that chance meeting, and our brief discussion in my parents' lounge room, that led me to attend the next local branch meeting and subsequently join the ALP.

No-one achieves anything of note without the support of others. For many, the opportunities and support provided by parents and families are significant factors in whatever we achieve throughout our lives, but there are always other people whose support and encouragement play a significant part in our achievements. For me, one such person is Ken Vaughan. Ken and I have walked a parallel pathway in terms of our journey to and through this place. We were both apprentices and electricians in Queensland Rail; we were both officials of the Electrical Trades Union, Ken as an organiser and myself as an industrial officer; and we both were elected as the member for Nudgee and both have had the privilege of serving as ministers in a Labor government. Ken was a mentor and a mate, and it is the friendship we developed following our chance meeting in late 1980 that propelled me on a course which ultimately led to this place.

Ken Vaughan was much loved and respected amongst his family, in the broader community and in this parliament. I know that he had good friends on both sides of the chamber. Ken was a gentleman. He was always fun to be around, enjoying a joke and engaging in friendly banter. He was meticulous in everything he did, always smartly dressed, his office neat and ordered with everything in its place. He prided himself on the prompt attention he gave to issues raised by his constituents, handwriting letters which were then typed by his electorate officers, Sandra and Judy. After I became the member he often chided me about not carrying a notebook to take down important details if I met with a constituent. He was most unimpressed with my habit of writing notes on the back of business cards and scraps of paper—something I still do to this day.


An insight into Ken's businesslike approach to his job as a member of parliament can be found in the content of his inaugural speech. In that first speech Ken talked about the needs of his electorate, its local schools and railway stations, but also about broader state level issues, such as his belief that the people of Queensland were at the time not being compensated fairly for the utilisation of the state's natural resources—all of it backed up by well-researched facts and figures. Ken spoke about his disappointment at being labelled a 'trade union heavy' during the election campaign and also negative comments in the chamber about his role as a union official. Forever the gentleman he was, Ken resisted the temptation to strike back at his detractors, preferring instead to reassert his pride at being a former trade union official. As far as Ken was concerned, the past is past and, in his own words, he would prefer to be judged on his performance in this House and in his electorate than by the words of his political detractors.

Some of my lasting memories of Ken arise from our campaigning activities, particularly letterboxing. As with all of his work related activities, Ken had a system and a plan for everything and everyone had to follow his instructions to the letter. The rules for letterboxing were simple: start delivering at the corner of the block you were dropped on; keep walking with the letterboxes on the left until you return to the same spot; do not cross any roads; remain at the spot you were dropped at until he returned, no matter how long it took; and always insert the pamphlet with Ken's face folded inwards so that it would open outwards inside the letterbox for when it was collected by the householder.

Letterboxing with Ken started at 5 am with a team of up to eight people in summer and winter—rain, hail or shine. I clearly remember one dark, rainy morning when our local councillor, Kim Flesser, was on one block sheltering under a tree in the pouring rain. Kim raced to the car as Ken pulled up alongside him and, much to Kim's disgust, rather than letting him in, Ken wound down the window, handed him an umbrella and told him to finish the block. They were wonderful times, wonderful memories of Ken's life.

Ken spent a good deal of his life working for the common good. He spent 13 years as an organiser and assistant secretary of the Electrical Trades Union and 17 years and seven months as the member for Nudgee. He served in this place as minister for resource industries, minister for employment, training and industrial relations and opposition spokesperson for mines and energy, employment and industrial affairs and police. He was a life member of the ETU and the ALP.

In amongst his public duties he devoted time to his great loves of family, bowls and fishing. I know that Ken and Lesley will be sadly missed at the annual parliamentary bowls carnival. Ken is survived by his wife, Lesley; daughters, Janelle and Lyndall; and son, Wayne, all of whom are with us in the chamber today; and also his beloved granddaughters, Isabella and Caitlyn. I extend to them and their partners and Ken's broader family my sincere condolences. I also commend Ken's lengthy, dedicated and admirable public service to all members of this House. May he rest in peace.

 **Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (9.48 am): Much has been said about my old mate Ken Vaughan and I do not intend to travel over the same ground. I do extend the condolences of Don Livingstone and Nev Warburton, his lifetime friend, who sat next to me at the funeral. They wanted me to place that on the record today. Nev told me that they shared careers as apprentices, as ETU organisers and as members of parliament. Nev asked me to pass on to Lesley and the family his condolences at losing a great mate.


I first met Ken Vaughan in about 1969 when he came to the home of our neighbour, who was an official with the ETU. He was a very frequent visitor to Rockhampton. When I was transferred to Hughenden, Ken came there and stayed with me in his quest to become a senator for Queensland. His timing was not quite right in 1975, because that was the Whitlam era. He was out there working as hard as he possibly could in what he called 'tiger country', which showed the commitment of the man, not only to the Labor Party but also to the Labor cause.

Ken had a couple of great mates who have passed on, such as Les Yewdale, who was my predecessor, and Ron McLean. Ron was exactly the opposite of Ken. To say Ron was untidy is an understatement and to say that Ken was fastidious is also an understatement. The story goes that those people with juxtaposed positions in tidiness went fishing. They caught some sand crabs. Ronny just heaved them into the boat. Ken immediately flung them back over, because they brought with them some weeds that ended up in the boat. He produced a dustpan and brush. Mr Speaker, for fear of eviction for unparliamentary language I will not say in the chamber what Ron said. Suffice to say that Ron never accompanied Ken fishing again. That shows the character of Ken. Everything was in its place and everything had its place.

I watched Ken, as shadow minister, shadow an electricity bill. Members will remember that they were pretty tough times at the end of the Joh era and we were debating the Electricity (Continuity of Supply) Bill. Ken shadowed that bill in this parliament. He was right across every clause of that bill. He had read every single clause and he understood it all. I have not seen many people in this place with the same capacity to get down to the minutiae of a bill. The bill was passed and one of the results was that it denied superannuation to SEQEB workers, who were members of the ETU. It was a great irony and comfort to Ken that he became the minister who reinstated that. He made right that wrong. Many years later I asked him what he thought his greatest achievements were and he cited that as one of them. As Labor people, we appreciate that. I am sure, Lesley, that is something that he shared with the family.

Ken Vaughan probably would have said that he did not enjoy being a minister. He said to me that every morning seeing the big white car turn up in front of the house was not a great enthusiastic welcome for him. He took the courageous decision to step out of the ministry and back onto the backbench, where he continued to perform. He formed a great relationship with Don Livingstone. They bowled together and fished together. They both had the same sort of fastidious outlook, so they became good fishing companions. At the funeral it was great to see so many of Ken's former colleagues, including former Premier Wayne Goss, former Treasurer Keith De Lacy and so many of the party faithful.

Ken was rightly given life membership of the Labor Party and the trade union movement. He was an old-style Labor bloke who basically formed the mould of what the Labor Party is all about. He saw it in tough times in opposition, became a minister in the Labor government and created enormous initiatives in both the portfolios that he held during that time. I am sure that wherever he is he will be skiting about the winter whiting. I hope that his family take some solace from the fact that he was well respected across this chamber, that the parliament was a much poorer place for him leaving and that society is a much poorer place for his departure.


 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (9.54 am): When I came into this place in 1989 or early 1990, my predecessor Bill Glasson told me, 'Mate, there's one great bloke on the other side. I am very good friends with him and he's a champion in every way.' This morning the Premier said that Ken Vaughan was a gentleman. I think that should be underlined in red. Recently I said the same of the late Bill Eaton. Those two men epitomised what decency is all about.

Late at night in the Strangers Bar I enjoyed many a beer with Ken Vaughan. We talked about issues. We went over the old times. His home town was Richmond, where the honourable member for Mermaid Beach comes from, and so we talked about issues in the bush. We talked about the early days that we enjoyed in the bush. I grew up at Quilpie and, as a kid growing up, we had kerosene lanterns and carbide lights. Ken and I had some great stories about carbide lights. He said, 'Mate, the bloke who created them, I hope he wasn't knighted.' I said, 'I don't know how many of them I threw into a waterhole at home, the rotten damn things.' If they didn't blow up, they bubbled and gurgled. Those were good stories. It is good to reminisce and think about those good times. I suppose they were not all good times, but they are a part of our heritage and history. Ken Vaughan was a very integral part of that, too.

Today others have spoken about his love of bowls. He and Bill Glasson forged a friendship through the parliamentary bowls club. Ken had a passion for it. I heard the member for Rockhampton talk about when the ministerial car pulled up outside of the parliament. Ken told me, 'I never ever enjoyed question time.' I think those of us who have been ministers would recall thinking, 'What's coming from left field today?' Ken was a very sincere man, a very decent man and a man of great integrity. He always had that twinkle in his eye. You knew he was a champion of the little bloke.


I read Ken's maiden speech in which he talked about the old ladies at the Nudgee bowls club who could not buy a stubbie to take home. Vince Lester interjected. Ken said to Vince, 'You look after the pubs in your electorate and I'll look after those in mine.' There were no hotels in his electorate. I do not know whether Neil has done anything about getting a pub in the electorate of Nudgee. Maybe they need an LNP member out there, so we can get a pub in the electorate of Nudgee. That is no reflection on the present honourable member or the former member.

I found Ken Vaughan to be a very approachable bloke. He was a gentleman at all times. He was a man of decency at all times. I say to his family, who I believe are here in the chamber today, that you should be proud of your husband, proud of your dad and proud of your grandfather because Queensland has been a better place for Ken Vaughan's presence. May he rest in peace. I am sure that Bill Glasson, if he understands what is going on, passes on his condolences to Ken's family too.

 **Hon. VE DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.57 am): I pass on condolences to the Vaughan family on behalf of the Melloy and Darling families. We have been long-time friends. In fact, my earliest memories involve Ken Vaughan. I pass on condolences to Lesley, Janelle, Wayne, Lyndall and all of their family. Wayne and I went to Nudgee State School together. I am a Nudgee girl born and bred. As part of an ALP family, I had a very early association with the Vaughan family.

I was interested to hear the member for Nudgee talk about letterbox drops, which probably is my earliest memory. When you are a child in a Labor family, you go out letterboxing from a very early age. My children seem to get away without doing it, but that is another story. I think it is a mark of the man that Ken was able to have the respect of all of the adults in the ALP. The ALP is a very big family and involves lots of children. To get them enthused and enjoying letterbox delivery is a very special skill. I always remember the way that he had us all specially organised. He looked after me. He gave the boys double blocks, but he let me take a ride in the car now and then. He made sure that I was looked after, because I was one of the youngest kids out letterboxing.

I put on the record the condolences of my extended family. We will dearly miss Ken. He served the people of Nudgee tremendously well. His legacy lives on.

 **Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (9.59 am): Between 1986 and 1989 Ken Vaughan was a member of the Labor caucus of only 30 which saw, assisted and some would even say precipitated the fall of the Bjelke-Petersen government, the Ahern government and the Cooper government. I had known Ken Vaughan for a decade before then. Those early days when I knew him were pretty dark days for the Labor Party. They were the days before federal intervention in the Labor Party. They were the days when the Labor Party was tearing itself apart.


I remember meetings at the Bald Hills State School hall, where I first encountered Ken's indomitable optimism and cheerfulness. Ken effused all the time the attitude that it was going to be all right in the end. I wondered where it came from. I think it came from his family and the support they gave him in all his work. But he was right, and in 1989 the opposition frontbench of which Ken was a prominent member became the cabinet.

During those days we were all buoyed by Ken's cheerfulness, by his optimism and by his positive outlook on everything. Some of us were in a state of grim determination. Goss had said before the election, 'Just give me three years and I'll make things a great deal better.' We had the sense that maybe we were only to be there for three years to turn around the legacy of 32. We thought that maybe we were only to be there for three years and we had only that time to bring Queensland into the 20th century and cut the path through the bush to the 21st century. Many of us had about us a degree of grim determination. Not so Ken. For Ken it was different.

Ken was always cheerful and always optimistic, and he always assured us that it would be all right in the end. If you had a bad day with the media, if you woke up in the morning and you were being lacerated in the newspaper and on the radio, you would go to a cabinet meeting and Ken would be there with a cheerful grin. He would say, 'There's a bit of flak around today, mate'—grin, grin. If things were going tough for Ken personally he would say, 'We better dodge this one.' It was never, 'This is going to get us'; it was always, 'How are we going to deal with this? There is going to be a way of dealing with it.'

I think Ken's greatest political contribution may well have been the work that the member for Rockhampton identified, but his greatest asset and what he gave to all of us was the inspiration and the good humour to keep going in a time of considerable adversity when a great deal had to be achieved.

At the service that was provided for Ken as a commemoration of his life at the Albany Creek crematorium his family gave out a little card, which honourable members will excuse me for not tabling because I would like to keep it. I would like to show it to you. It is a sign, I think, that his family were always his best publicists. For those who cannot see it, it says, 'Vote 1 Ken Vaughan, ALP.' Wherever Ken is now, I think that is what they are going to do.

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.03 am): I would also like to pass on my condolences to the family and good friends of Ken Vaughan, many of whom are in the gallery today. As we heard today, people who knew Ken loved to spend time in his company and I was no exception. I also found him to be a very happy and cheerful person. He had a really cheeky smile. He was a great storyteller. He was very down to earth.

I was very fortunate to spend one term in his company when he was on the backbench. In those days we did not have the backbench roster; we were just meant to sit in parliament the whole time unless we had a very good reason not to be there. So we ended up spending a lot of time with our colleagues and talking to them. It was good for a new member of parliament to sit with someone like Ken and learn how to be a good member of parliament, because he had lots of experience in that respect.

I did learn a lot from Ken. I learned his views about letterboxing, which unfortunately I think he passed on to Len Ardill. I did a lot with Len and he had the same authoritarian views about how you should letterbox; there was no other way. I also learned about the silver circle, which I had never really done before I entered parliament. He had very good views about how to conduct a silver circle. I learned bowling from him. Before I entered parliament I had never played in a bowls game. I played a couple of games with the Parliamentary Bowls Club. Ken taught me how to play bowls. I am sorry that I never took him up on his offer to go fishing. He was always making the offer but I had young children and I was too busy. I know that he loved his fishing and he talked a lot about it.

I also attended the funeral, which was a lovely event. It was great to see so many of his colleagues there. As we have heard from everyone this morning, he was a well-loved and well-respected member of this parliament. If he had wanted to continue as a minister I am sure he would have done so. He did not love being a minister; he loved being a member of parliament. He loved looking after people. He loved the company of his colleagues and we loved his company. He will be sadly missed by so many people in the Labor family, in his electorate, in his general community and, I am sure, by his family and friends.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Order of Business

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in accordance with sessional order No. 4, the order of business will now resume and question time will commence half an hour from now, at 10.36 am.

PETITIONS

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

Morayfield, Bus Service

Mr Emerson, from 68 petitioners, requesting the House to restore bus routes 651, 653 and 654 removed without prior notice from Norfolk Esplanade, Morayfield; ensure that any changes to public transport are prominently displayed at affected stops on these services; and to determine the adequacy of public transport planning within the Moreton Bay Regional Council [[5054](#)].

Flaxton Drive, Pedestrian Footpath

Mr Powell, from 204 petitioners, requesting the House to assist the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in funding and constructing a pedestrian footpath adjacent to Flaxton Drive, between Glen Eden Court and Nimbus Drive, Flaxton [\[5055\]](#).

The following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), is lodged and presented—

Darling Downs, Mining Applications

30 petitioners, requesting the House to quarantine the Darling Downs from all forms of mining in perpetuity in order to protect communities, water resources, quality agricultural and horticultural lands the flora and fauna of this environment [\[5056\]](#).

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

Louisa Creek, Coal Stockyards

Mr Malone, from 266 petitioners, requesting the House to not make the proposed land at Louisa Creek for coal stockyards a project of state significance and to encourage the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal Management and North Queensland Bulk Ports to consider all other options [\[5057\]](#).

Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007

Mr Rickuss, from 1,335 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 to ensure that local authorities, community groups and individual land owners are entitled to have input into the decision making processes and the rights to natural justice, particularly the right to appeal to an appropriate court of law, are provided to any body or individual who is aggrieved by any decisions [\[5058\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

5 August 2011—

[5039](#) Community Affairs Committee: Minutes of a meeting of the Community Affairs Committee held on 28 July 2011

[5040](#) Community Affairs Committee: Letter, dated 3 August 2011, from the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers) to the Chair, Community Affairs Committee (Mr Hoolihan) correcting the parliamentary record of the committee's estimates hearing on 21 July 2011

8 August 2011—

[5041](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace), pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Transport Infrastructure (Gold Coast Waterways) Management Plan 2000, the Transport Infrastructure (Sunshine Coast Waterways) Management Plan 2000 and the Transport Infrastructure (Yeppoon Waterways) Management Plan 2000

9 August 2011—

[5042](#) Letter, dated 8 August 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of material (Report 117) from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding treaties tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 9 and 10 February and 1 March 2011

[5043](#) Letter, dated 8 August 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committees on Treaties regarding proposed international treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 5 July 2011, and the Treaties, National Interest Analyses and Regulation Impact Statements for the proposed treaty actions listed in the letter

[5044](#) Electricity Industry Code (Ninth Edition: made 30 June 2011, effective 1 July 2011) made under the Electricity Act 1994

10 August 2011—

[5045](#) Environment and Resources Committee: Report No. 4—Growing Queensland's Renewable Energy Electricity Sector, May 2011—Government Response

18 August 2011—

[5046](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to an ePetition (1705-11) sponsored by Mr Powell and a paper petition (1737-11) presented by Mr Powell, from 34 and 30 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to reduce the speed limit to 80 km along the D'Aguiar Highway between Rangeview Estate, Wamuran and the township of D'Aguiar

[5047](#) Family Responsibilities Commission: Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships—Quarterly Report No. 11—January 2011 to March 2011

22 August 2011—

[5048](#) Letter, dated 18 August 2011, from the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities (Mr Robertson) to the Clerk of the Parliament (Mr Laurie) in response to the Scrutiny of Legislation Secretariat report regarding the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011

[5049](#) Letter, dated 19 August 2011, from the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to the Clerk of the Parliament (Mr Laurie) in response to the Scrutiny of Legislation Secretariat report on the Local Government Electoral Bill 2011

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Liquor Act 1992—

[5059](#) Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 147

[5060](#) Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 147, Explanatory Notes

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000—

[5061](#) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2011, No. 148

[5062](#) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2011, No. 148, Explanatory Notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[5063](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011, No. 149

[5064](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011, No. 149, Explanatory Notes

Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011—

[5065](#) Queensland Reconstruction Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 150

[5066](#) Queensland Reconstruction Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 150, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Act 2009—

[5067](#) Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 151

[5068](#) Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 151, Explanatory Notes

Motor Racing Events Act 1990—

[5069](#) Motor Racing Events Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 152

[5070](#) Motor Racing Events Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 152, Explanatory Notes

Financial Accountability Act 2009—

[5071](#) Financial and Performance Management Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2011, No. 153

[5072](#) Financial and Performance Management Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2011, No. 153, Explanatory Notes

Parliamentary Service and Other Acts Amendment Act 2011—

[5073](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 154

[5074](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 154, Explanatory Notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[5075](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011, No. 155

[5076](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011, No. 155, Explanatory Notes

Geothermal Energy Act 2010—

[5077](#) Geothermal Energy (Postponement) Regulation 2011, No. 156

[5078](#) Geothermal Energy (Postponement) Regulation 2011, No. 156, Explanatory Notes

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—

[5079](#) Government Owned Corporations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 157

[5080](#) Government Owned Corporations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 157, Explanatory Notes

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

[5081](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011, No. 158

[5082](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011, No. 158, Explanatory Notes

EXEMPT STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

The following exempt statutory instrument was tabled by the Clerk—

Information Privacy Act 2009, Statutory Instruments Act 1992—

[5083](#) Waiver of privacy principle obligations in the public interest No. 1 (2011)

[5084](#) Waiver of privacy principle obligations in the public interest No. 1 (2011), Explanatory Notes

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (Mr Reeves)—

[5085](#) Department of Communities: 2009-10 Child Protection Partnerships Report—Annual report on the operations of Queensland Government agencies relevant to child protection

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cleveland (Dr Robinson)—

[5086](#) Non-conforming petition, from 1,517 petitioners, regarding the decision to close the North Stradbroke Island mines and turn 80 per cent of the island into national park

Member for Glass House (Mr Powell)—

[5087](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the urgent need for a footpath adjacent to Flaxton Drive, between Glen Eden Court and Nimbus Drive, Flaxton

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[5088](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Bill 2010

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—


Omit—

'Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Bill 2010'

Insert—

'Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Bill 2011'.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Daniel Morcombe**

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.09 am): Eight years ago the Morcombe family had their lives torn apart when their son Daniel went missing on the Sunshine Coast. Daniel's disappearance and his family's courage have touched the nation. For eight years, Bruce and Denise Morcombe, despite their own pain, have been relentless in their fight for answers and to keep Daniel in the hearts and minds of us all. As a parent—and I am sure other parents in the House feel the same way—I cannot begin to imagine the grief and heartbreak that the Morcombes have suffered these past eight years. But they have never given up, and similarly our police have kept their pledge to never give up.

The strength and determination of the Morcombe family has made Daniel's smiling face well known in every household, and the colour red has become associated with his memory. That has meant that the public have come forward with literally thousands and thousands of leads, and in the past fortnight we have seen some very significant developments in this tragic case. With an arrest having been made and a case now before the courts, I do not intend to comment on the specifics of the case. But I do want to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to the officers of the Queensland Police Service who have worked, and continue to work, doggedly—who have relentlessly followed every lead—in their quest for the truth. I would like to also thank the many members of the public and the media who have assisted the investigation by providing information. I also pay tribute to our SES volunteers who are working tirelessly scouring thick bushland in lately very terrible weather in their pursuit of answers. I think their efforts were summed up by one tweeter on Sunday evening who wrote, 'On behalf of every parent in Australia, thank you to those still out there searching in this weather.'

Through what must have been unspeakable pain, Bruce and Denise Morcombe have been an inspiration to us all. Their never-ending fight to find out what has happened to their son has touched and inspired the hearts of Australia. Daniel's legacy is their dedication to educating the community about child safety. On behalf of every member of this House, I send our thoughts and our prayers to the Morcombe family during what must be an unspeakably traumatic time. Your strength is an inspiration to us all, and you and Daniel will forever be in our thoughts.

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Interim Report, Government Response

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.11 am): We are determined as a government to ensure that Queensland is better prepared than ever for the upcoming wet season. Today the government is releasing our response to the floods commission of inquiry interim report, and I table a copy for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Queensland government response to the Floods Commission of Inquiry Interim Report, August 2011 [\[5089\]](#).

This response confirms my pledge to implement each and every one of the 104 recommendations that are the state government's responsibilities. We will also be working cooperatively with the federal government and local governments to ensure that the recommendations under their areas of responsibility are implemented. Our response details an additional \$14 million of investment over this financial year and a total of \$76 million over the next five years in improving our disaster response and our flood infrastructure management. This is on top of what agencies are already spending in reprioritising their existing budgets towards improving their disaster management systems.

Today I can also advise that the LGAQ have provided a response to the interim commission of inquiry report. The LGAQ have requested additional state government funding to fulfil their recommendations in addition to assistance that our government is already providing, including additional disaster management support through Emergency Management Queensland. The floods and cyclones caused \$6.8 billion worth of damage, and the finances of every level of government have been stretched by our summer of natural disasters. Council costs will be paid for by the state and federal

governments as part of NDRRA arrangements—that is, under these arrangements, disaster recovery costs of local governments are shared 75 per cent by federal government and 25 per cent by state governments, and no contribution is required of local councils.

This year's budget provides more than \$2.7 billion over four years to meet the reconstruction costs of local governments. Disaster preparedness and response is the core business of local councils. However, we do acknowledge that these responsibilities can place a large impost on smaller councils, particularly those with large flood or cyclone prone areas. For that reason I have directed the Deputy Premier to reserve up to \$5 million of the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program to allow vulnerable councils to apply for assistance on a co-contribution basis for purchase of equipment and capital items such as warning and alert systems and river monitoring gauges.

As part of our response to the commission of inquiry, a dedicated delivery unit has been established within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. This unit's job is to ensure that each agency, government owned corporation and statutory authority is doing everything it can to implement the inquiry's recommendations where necessary before the next wet season.

Our response outlines a number of significant steps that the government is taking already to prepare Queensland and the community for the next season. To help improve household disaster preparedness and individual and family resilience, we will launch the 'Get Ready Queensland' campaign. Under this state-wide campaign, over two million Queensland households will receive guides about the steps that we can all take to get ready for whatever Mother Nature might throw at us. 'Get Ready Queensland' will include an advertising campaign, as recommended by the commission of inquiry, about the dangers of driving into floodwaters called 'If it's flooded—forget it'. There will also be a storm and cyclone campaign using the theme 'Can you survive for three days?'

A suite of additional resources and training will be provided to our valued emergency services staff and volunteers—those on the front line of any disaster. This package, to be delivered in time for the next wet season, will include: a total of 19 new flood boats by the end of 2011, a further five by February next year and a further 32 following that, with the training required for operators; a minimum of 18 new disaster training courses delivered approximately 400 times across Queensland; a total of 2,000 additional participants in the Queensland disaster management arrangements course by 1 November, in addition to the 900 who have completed the course since May; an estimated 200 additional SES volunteers available for activation by 1 November, following a highly successful SES recruitment campaign which has seen almost 800 expressions of interest to date; a total of 253 swift water rescue technicians, level 2, in place by the end of November; personal floatation devices, including for children, and waterproof radios for all front-line personnel during disasters; and 100 helmet kits for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Special Operations Unit by 1 November.

On dam management, a review of the dam safety manual for Wivenhoe and Somerset dams is now well underway. We will also be making legislative changes before the end of this year to the Water Act to clarify the roles of the water entities and to simplify the regulatory framework by which clear advice and recommendations are provided to the responsible minister. This will make it easier to make a reduction in the full supply level of key dams, if required, before a wet season. Before the start of the next wet season we will also ensure that each of our dams have updated emergency action plans that will include improved community notification processes regarding dam outflows.

These are just some of the measures to ensure compliance with the inquiry's recommendations before the storm season begins. Throughout our history in this state we have had to endure what Mother Nature has thrown at us and we have always built back stronger than before. That is exactly what we are doing now and what we will continue to do—to get better and stronger every time we have one of these terrible experiences.

Deaths of ABC Newsmen; Death of Soldier in Afghanistan, Motion to Take Note



Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.17 am): This past week was marked by the tragic—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation. As I understand this statement, the House may well be interested in showing the necessary respect for it.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. This past week was marked by the tragic loss of three of the finest from the ABC. I speak, of course, of Brisbane cameraman John Bean, journalist Paul Lockyer and pilot Gary Ticehurst—lost to us in a helicopter crash while they were filming near Lake Eyre in South Australia. Through their words, their images and their skills in taking us to places we might otherwise not go, we saw the great diversity and beauty of our country and our communities.

Each of them worked with the ABC for more than 20 years and each of them packed a lot into those years. Gary Ticehurst had been the ABC's lead helicopter pilot since the mid-1980s and was one of the most experienced media pilots in Australia. Gary, remembered as a man with a big heart, not only filmed the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race but played a significant role in the rescue of 14 crew members from one of the yachts.


Paul Lockyer is well known to Australian journalism, having covered some of the biggest stories that have broken both at home and abroad. I know that many will remember the excellent work he did during the floods of last summer. He was among the first journalists on the ground in flood battered Grantham, where he is mourned as a caring and genuine man who told the stories of those who endured those terrible events.

But it was Queenslander John Bean who I knew personally and who I know was well known and well liked by many in this House, particularly those in our media gallery. As well as producing sublime images of Australia and its people, John was a great delight to be around. The loss of John Bean is shattering for the Queensland ABC family. At the ABC, John was a friend, a colleague and a mentor to many. In a competitive industry, John was always a delight to be around, with a kind and a friendly word for everyone he met. In a crowded room, John would always wave hello. He always seemed happy to see you and his energy and goodwill made you happy to see him. His work for the very best of ABC television meant that there is barely a place in Queensland where he has not been. On every story, in every place and at every time, he always cared for the people, wanting to portray their story to the absolute best of his abilities; this always meant images of beauty and tenderness, and his remarkable body of work will live on.

His first love was his wife, Pip Courtney, who also works at Brisbane ABC on the much loved *Landline* program and who will also be known to many. Pip was the love of John's life and he was never shy of telling anybody that. John's family was from Rockhampton and he loved regional Queensland. John would often drive up to Rockhampton on a Saturday to watch his nephews play sport and drive back down again to be with Pip. The thoughts of all of us are with Pip, John's family and his Queensland media colleagues. The loss of these three outstanding journalists is felt and mourned across Australia. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of Gary, Paul and John.

I also note with sadness the death of another Australian soldier in Afghanistan. I understand that the family has requested that the military not release details about this young soldier so that they can grieve in private. We do know that he was with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, based in Townsville so our thoughts are with his family today and also with his colleagues in Townsville. I move—

That the House take note of the statement.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 am): I thank the Premier for the opportunity to endorse on behalf of the opposition the remarks she has made on this sad occasion. The death of the ABC crew has touched people right across Australia, and it has certainly touched people here in Queensland in a profound way and in this parliament in particular. The death of John Bean has touched a lot of people who work in and around this parliament. I endorse the comments the Premier made and extend the condolences of all on this side of the House to John's wife, Pip, to his family, to the ABC crew here in parliament and to all of the people in the Queensland media community who knew John well.


I only knew John as a cameraman who I used to nod and say g'day to occasionally, but I remember his friendly, smiling face in what was otherwise, more often than not, a stressful occasion for me. I will remember him with some fondness and he will be universally remembered by the people who knew him well as exactly how he has been described so many times in the days since his death—'a great bloke'.

I also endorse the comments that were made by the Premier in regard to the tragic death of yet another serviceman in Afghanistan. Australia is paying a terrible toll for the very worthwhile work that we are doing there, and we always need to note the extent of the impact that it has on individuals and their families. I endorse the comments the Premier has made in that regard.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Carbon Tax

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (10.23 am): Mr Speaker, if you accept the weight of scientific evidence in consensus, then you accept the reality of human induced climate change. If you accept the advice of the weight of economic opinion, then you accept the need to price carbon as the most efficient way to deal with climate change. These two somewhat confronting realities are accepted by our government. We are not denialists.

Pricing carbon is a significant economic reform. It is especially important for a state like ours. We are the state of tremendous coal resources and the new LNG industry, but we are also the state of the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree and a state of enormous food-producing potential. The government has always put forward the policy position that we will support pricing carbon in the long-term interests of the state of Queensland. Today I table a report prepared by the Treasury which models the carbon price on the Queensland economy.

Tabled paper: Queensland Treasury document titled 'Carbon Price Impacts for Queensland', August 2011 [[5090](#)].

The report sets out in detail modelling of the carbon-pricing proposal, and it finds—

The introduction of a carbon price is estimated to have a relatively small economic impact for Queensland over the next decade.

In fact, the report finds that the effect on growth will be marginal during the transitional next decade. Despite the hysterical scaremongering, the economy will grow and grow strongly with a carbon price. The modelling I table today, which replicates the Australian Treasury modelling, shows that by 2019-20 our economy will grow by 41 per cent with a carbon price. The difference from the base case for the decade is just 0.4 per cent. Indeed this finding is at the margin, such that annual average economic growth over the decade is forecast to be 3.5 per cent with a carbon price and without a carbon price. On this analysis, Queensland will grow more quickly than the nation and generate higher jobs growth and investment through the next decade with a carbon price in place. Those declaring economic calamity lying ahead should read the report carefully and soberly.

This modelling was also undertaken out to 2049-50 and using different scenarios to test sensitivities. Deloitte Access Economics was also commissioned to utilise a different model from that used by the Australian Treasury. All of this information is being included in the material released today, which I table.

Tabled paper: Deloitte Access Economics document, dated 22 August 2011, titled 'The economic impacts of the Clean Energy Future on Queensland' [5091].

As both reports note, any modelling exercise is greatly influenced by the assumptions incorporated into the model. In that regard, different scenarios which assume lower technological change, lagged labour market change, different commodity prices and different exchange rates can materially alter the outcomes. DAE shows a higher shorter term impact to 2020, while forecasting a stronger growth than the Treasury model to 2050. The reports both note that the effect on Queensland is amplified by 2049-50 as the abatement task increases as the projected carbon price rises in the international market.

The report I table today looks at employment, regional economies and specific industry sectors, with the DAE work informing the sectoral analysis in particular. Just as the economy is forecast to grow and grow strongly, so too are jobs. Employment growth will be two per cent annually out to 2020, generating 474,000 extra jobs over the decade. Employment growth is impacted by one per cent out to 2050 as the economy transitions to pricing in carbon. Employment with a carbon price is projected to be 3.95 million jobs, and it is projected to be 3.91 million without a carbon price by 2050.

Those parts of Queensland more reliant on mining are still expected to grow and grow strongly, with the carbon price reducing forecast activity by just over one per cent to 2019-20. Conversely, those regions with a strong agricultural base are expected to see growth above the base case scenario under a carbon price. This reflects the opportunities for farmers to gain additional income without being liable for the carbon price.


The coal industry will continue to generate growth, generate jobs and generate income for the nation and the state but it now will pay for the pollution that it produces. The model finds that the carbon price will see potential growth in coal 7.9 per cent lower by 2049-50. The future of the LNG export industry, taking into account transitional arrangements, has been secured. Again, this was a key test for our consideration of the carbon-pricing model.

The report also contains a fiscal analysis. The net impact on the Queensland budget of \$251 million in 2012-13 rises to \$360 million in 2015-16 using similar assumptions to Western Australia and New South Wales. The impacts on the budget relate predominantly to lost revenue from the gencos in the ownership of government. This is an issue that we continue to prosecute with the federal government. The rise in expenses is forecast at up to 0.4 per cent by 2015-16. It is important to emphasise that this fiscal assessment does not yet incorporate other policy decisions and parameter adjustments expected at any update of the budget forward estimates. The government remains committed to returning the budget to surplus in 2015-16.

This reform needs to be put in context. The GST was proposed as a necessary economic reform that would cause some disruption but at the time we were implored to accept it in the national interest. Back then, people like Mr Abbott were the chief spear-throwers in favour of the GST, which truly was 'a great big new tax on everything'.

Last year the GST raised \$48 billion. Next year the carbon price will raise \$7.7 billion. Why the GST, some six times bigger in terms of its fiscal impact, was sensible and carbon pricing reckless should be explained by all of the GST cheerleaders who now parade as climate change deniers arguing that pollution should continue to be free. It is the \$48 billion question that those opposite cannot answer. There is a debate to be had here, and it needs to be based on the facts. A carbon price will not kill industries or regions; it will make polluters pay. Much of what was said that was important to Queensland has been delivered. There remain issues on which we will continue to seek a better deal for Queensland, as we do on a daily basis. Our environment and the health of our children and their children deserve to be protected. Putting a price on pollution does just that.

Carbon Tax

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (10.30 am): The Commonwealth's proposed carbon price will affect the operations of the Queensland government's electricity generation corporations, CS Energy and Stanwell. Some 81 per cent of Queensland government electricity generation capacity is coal fired and the Commonwealth's Securing a Clean Energy Future plan has always been predicted to have an economic impact on the value of our generator assets.

Today I can inform the House that Queensland Treasury has finalised modelling of the potential impact of the Commonwealth's carbon tax, and this modelling contains updated estimates of the impact of carbon pricing on the value of the state government owned electricity generators. The modelling estimates that the net value of Queensland's government owned electricity generator portfolio will fall by \$640 million as measured in economic value. Breaking down this figure, the modelling estimates that the value of Queensland's coal fired stations will fall by \$1.13 billion. The loss in the value of coal fired generators is partially offset by a \$490 million rise in the economic value of Queensland's gas and hydroelectricity assets. This comprises a net improvement in gas generation assets between Swanbank E and Mica Creek Power Station of around \$330 million and a net improvement in the value of hydrogeneration assets, including Barron Gorge and Kareeya in North Queensland, of around \$160 million.


The new figure for the reduction in economic value of the state's generators of \$640 million is less than the estimates reported at the time of the parliamentary estimates. These estimates of an \$800 million to \$900 million reduction in economic value and \$1.7 billion accounting loss were preliminary estimates. The new estimates are based on updated modelling using the further details since released by the Commonwealth which update the operation of the carbon price stream forecast in the Clean Energy Future package. The carbon price stream for the Clean Energy Future package is significantly lower in the first decade than it was for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, and this is what has led to lower generator value impacts. The final accounting value losses, including the carbon related impacts, are currently being finalised by the gencos and the Auditor-General.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to inform the House that there is a potential for the annual reports of CS Energy and Stanwell to be delayed this year. Under normal circumstances, the annual reports for all GOCs are tabled on or before 30 September 2011. The accounting and auditing complexities that stem from both the restructure of the organisations, which took effect less than two months ago, coupled with the complexity of modelling asset values following the Commonwealth's carbon tax announcement may see a delay in the tabling of CS Energy's and Stanwell's annual reports this year. The Auditor-General would of course be consulted on any such delay should it arise.

We on this side of the House believe in climate change and in taking strong action to address it, but we will continue to work to ensure Queensland is fairly compensated for losses arising out of the Commonwealth's Clean Energy Future plan.

NOTICE OF MOTION


Gold Coast, Crime

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.34 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House condemns the Premier and this government for its failure to provide strong leadership against crime and particularly for its failure to take timely action against crime on the Gold Coast.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call question time, I would like honourable members to welcome in the gallery throughout the morning students and teachers from the Lihir International Primary School of Papua New Guinea, the Thangool State School in the electorate of Callide, the Eatons Hill State School in the electorate of Everton, the St Ignatius School of Toowong in the electorate of Mount Coot-tha, and the Woodridge North State School in the electorate of Woodridge.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Bruce Highway

Mr SEENEY (10.35 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Last week four Queenslanders were tragically killed in two separate accidents on a notorious stretch of the Bruce Highway south of Miriam Vale. Also last week the Minister for Main Roads issued two press releases about the Bruce Highway—one about a dog eating homework and the other about confusing Arthur with Martha. Does the Premier believe that this is an appropriate response from the minister to the developing crisis on the Bruce Highway in the same week that four more Queenslanders were tragically killed on Queensland's major road?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. The position of our government and in fact of the Labor Party on the Bruce Highway is absolutely clear. We believe it is National Highway. We believe that Queenslanders are entitled to see a National Highway of the same quality that Australians in other states see on the National Highway that they drive in places like New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and others. Frankly, it brings no good reflection on either side of politics in the federal arena that that has not been the case for too long in Queensland's history. I am very proud of the fact, though, that that has started to reverse in the last three years. What we have seen in Canberra is, at last, a federal Labor government—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. My question was about the minister's attitude. My question was about whether the Premier believed that the minister's response was appropriate. I do not need—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Allow me to rule on the point of order. It is a point of order with respect to relevance. As I understood the question, there are many parts to it. It mentioned the Bruce Highway. It mentioned the unfortunate deaths of four people. It is quite relevant. I call the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point I am making is that the Bruce Highway in too many places has been neglected for too long by those who are responsible for it and unfortunately that has tragic safety outcomes. But I am pleased and I am happy to have the chance to put on the record that a federal Labor government has now taken appropriate steps, for the first time in decades, to put more funding in and we are starting to see repairs on some of the worst affected areas of the Bruce Highway.

When it comes to the Minister for Main Roads, I do not believe that anybody could identify a more passionate advocate for the Bruce Highway than the member for Thuringowa. The member for Thuringowa and Minister for Main Roads has been a strong advocate every time he has talked to the federal minister and every time he has had an opportunity to speak to any federal member of any side of politics and has been a constant champion for the Bruce Highway. Under his leadership our government is contributing to some of the projects that the federal government has put in place, and we have over many years done what we could to improve the Bruce Highway.

While I am not familiar with every single word of every single press release that the minister puts out, I would be very surprised if some of his press releases last week did not refer to comments by Mr Campbell Newman, who advised the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*—

We—

that is, the LNP—

will be releasing a 10-year plan for the upgrade of the Bruce Highway, not long after the LNP getting into government, if that occurs.

So we will have election promises made after the election. I think the people of regional Queensland deserve better than that. I think the people of regional Queensland deserve what they are getting from this government and that is a long-term plan for the Bruce Highway to upgrade its safety and to continue to put pressure on the national government. We do not care if they are Liberal or Labor. If they are not doing the right thing by the Bruce Highway, they will have us to reckon with.

Premier's Literary Awards

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Premier. How does the Premier believe that a book from confessed terrorist David Hicks meets the appropriate standard for the Premier's literacy awards? Does the Premier believe any prize money awarded to David Hicks from the Premier's Literary Awards should be confiscated under the proceeds of crime laws?

Ms BLIGH: I just want to correct the honourable member: they are the Premier's Literary Awards, not the 'Premier's Literacy Awards'. I am very happy to have the opportunity to answer this question. I believe that I am a very lucky citizen of the globe to be living in one of the strongest democracies on the planet. I am acutely aware, as a mother of young men, that there are young Australian men and women fighting right now in other parts of the world to ensure that others get the same opportunity to live in a democracy that is enjoyed by Australians.

If we were to ask those young men and women what they think they are fighting for and what they think the hallmarks of a strong democracy are, I would be very surprised if some of them did not list very high and near to the top one of the fundamental principles of a democratic and open society and that is freedom of speech. What it means in Australia and how it manifests itself in our democracy is that people can say and publish material that may be embarrassing or inconvenient to the government of the day. That is one of the hallmarks of the Australian democracy.

In relation to this book, this book is published legally in Australia by Random House Publishing—a well-established publishing firm. It is legally nominated as a legally published document for the Premier's Literary Awards, where it has been judged by an independent panel made up of academics and others with expertise in judging nonfiction. I make no comment on its merit because I do not believe that I am qualified to do so. The day that we see Premiers intervening in things like literary awards and making themselves self-appointed judges of the artistic merit of those sorts of documents is the day that Queensland takes a step backwards, and it will never happen while I am Premier.

I think it was a shameful thing yesterday to see the member for Indooroopilly—a former member of the profession of journalism and representing a seat with the University of Queensland in it—advocating that we should do something other than allow—

A government member: Book burning.

Ms BLIGH: Reducing himself to a book burner. The nomination of this book in my view is a profound reaffirmation of the values that distinguish us from those who want to terrorise others. It is the freedom of speech that is enjoyed in this country that makes us different from terrorists. That is the difference. Shame on the member for Indooroopilly! Shame on you!

Multiculturalism

Ms JONES: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House the importance of maintaining Queensland's international reputation for being a tolerant and welcoming society, particularly as our global interests and business partners grow in Asia and around the world?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and I particularly thank her for embracing multicultural Queensland and her determination as a member of our government to make sure that Queensland not only maintains welcoming arms for those who come to share in our prosperity but also is prepared to stand up when it is threatened. Queensland has changed a lot since Pauline Hanson and One Nation made us the laughing-stock of the world, when our Asian trading partners started to wonder what on earth was happening to our body politic, when those people who were seeking to invest in Queensland to grow our economy, to work in partnership with us, to grow our trading opportunities, saw racism rear its ugly head and go on to the political stage in many ways accepted and nurtured by some major political parties. None of those parties ever included the Australian Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party from the very outset said no to preferences to or from One Nation. We said that we would never get into bed with racists in order to further our own political opportunities.

Our view on this issue is clear, and the member for Ashgrove has an absolutely clear position on this. The Australian Labor Party will not preference a single One Nation candidate in a single state seat in the next election or indeed in any other election. What we do know, though, is that it is not quite so clear on the other side. It is now two weeks—hot on the heels of book burning, and I want to make sure that others understand this—since the leader of the LNP, Campbell Newman, was asked whether the LNP would preference a One Nation candidate in the seat of Ashgrove. And guess what? He could not answer the question. And what excuse—

Mr Lucas: Rob Borbidge stood up to them.

Ms BLIGH: Yes. I remember when the Queensland National Party led by Rob Borbidge was prepared to stand up and now the former Liberal Party will not. What were his excuses? The first excuse was, 'Those are matters that you should put to the party, not me.' That is, he is not a leader; he has not got what it takes to stand up. He will wash his hands. Secondly, he said, 'There is not even a One Nation candidate,' as if it would make a difference who the candidate was if they had One Nation next to their name. This was a profound test of leadership and Campbell Newman failed it. This is a test of his integrity.

It is now 16 days—16 days and counting—since the leader of the LNP—

Mr Seeney: Ten years ago. Has nothing happened in 10 years?

Ms BLIGH: I note the interjection from the member for Callide that this is somehow an old issue. If that is the case, then rule it out.

Carbon Tax

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business. Will the minister inform the House what increased costs and impacts Labor's carbon tax will have on the state's struggling tourism sector? Does the minister support the carbon tax?

Ms JARRATT: I thank the honourable member for a further question on carbon tax. I am happy to take this question this morning in light of the information delivered to the House by the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance this morning in relation to studies that have now been undertaken that clearly reveal the possible impacts of the federal government's Clean Energy Future package on Queensland's economy.

It is very clear to all of us that the introduction of this Clean Energy Future package will have a relatively small economic impact on Queensland over the next decade. In fact, our gross state product—GSP—is estimated to be just 0.4 per cent lower than it otherwise would have been by 2019-20. So there is a lot of hype coming from the opposition—a lot of scaremongering around the impacts of a carbon tax on industries and on the Queensland economy.

It does the tourism industry no favours to have the opposition spokesperson continue to raise people's levels of fear and dread at a time when it has never been more important to talk up the tourism industry in Queensland. This is an important industry. I think the shadow minister should understand that at a time when the tourism industry in Queensland is fighting back from an unprecedented high Australian dollar—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on both sides, I am listening to the minister. The honourable minister has the call.

Ms JARRATT: That is right. At a time when the tourism industry continues to fight back from the impact of the high Australian dollar and uncertainty overseas, what we need now is optimism and confidence in the tourism industry, not somebody talking it down continuously. Mr Speaker, speaking of people talking down the tourism industry, I do not know whether you were reading crikey.com yesterday, but it appears that the shadow minister has been called to account by her own tourism industry on the Gold Coast for doing just this. They have said to her, 'Stop talking our industry down.'

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. Those on my right!

Mrs STUCKEY: I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's comments offensive and untrue. To have to stoop to talking about Crikey in this House—

Mr SPEAKER: No, do not debate it. You want the comments withdrawn?

Mrs STUCKEY: I ask her to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The member finds the comments offensive. Rather than delay the House—

Ms JARRATT: In the interests of the House I will withdraw. However, apparently, according to crikey.com, she also found the comments by her industry offensive so I think perhaps she should take a lesson from it.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister's time has expired.

(Time expired)

Work for Queensland Summit

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier. The unemployment rate on the Gold Coast is up to four per cent higher than the official figures show, so I was pleased to be present at the Work for Queensland mining summit held on the Gold Coast last week. Can the Premier report to the House on the success of the summit and some of the efforts already being made to help Queenslanders find work in the mining boom?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for her question and I thank her for her participation in the Work for Queensland summit, and I thank those representatives of the mining industry and a number of regional mayors who were with us. This is the first in a series of steps to ensure that the bright future that is ahead of Queensland can be more evenly shared. I do not believe that we should accept a two-speed economy as inevitable. I think it is the role of government to intervene and do what we can to ensure that many people who are not sharing in the prosperity that is being created can get a better share.

There are as many as 38,000 construction and operational jobs that will be created in the resource and energy industries between now and 2015. Yet, as the member in her question outlined, we know that we face in some parts of Queensland, like the Gold Coast, the Fraser Coast and Cairns, higher than average unemployment. There is essentially a skills and labour mismatch and there is a role to be played in bringing these together. Every Queenslanders, no matter where they live in our state, must be able to enjoy some of the opportunities being created by this boom. What the summit resolved in the first instance was to sponsor and to fund jointly a series of Work for Queensland jobs expos be to held, at least six of them, before the end of the year in areas where people are still experiencing job difficulties. They will offer career advice, skills assessments and jobs. It is estimated that there are over 3,000 vacancies in these sectors on the books right now. We need to make sure people understand what those vacancies are, what the demand is and what training and upgrading they must do to ensure they can be part of that opportunity.

We also understand that there will be some skill gaps that Queenslanders and Australians will just not be able to meet. That means, firstly, a very comprehensive training plan, which we have committed to work on together with industry, but it also means that we have to think laterally. That is why I was very pleased that at COAG on Friday all Premiers and first ministers, regardless of political persuasion, unanimously supported a proposal put forward by Queensland, which the Commonwealth said it will now assess, that we should encourage more international students here by offering them a working visa of at least three years after they graduate in any area of skill shortage. We have some of the best engineering and medical training in the world. These young people sitting in our classrooms graduate with high marks. Instead of sending them home straightaway we should offer them the chance to work in some of these areas so that we can make sure the training that has been invested in them can benefit Queensland and Australia as it grows. I thank my colleagues from other states for their support on that. As I said, it was across the political divide. It was understood just how important that is. None of this will work unless we are prepared to embrace everybody.

Carbon Tax

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Will the minister inform the House what the increase in public transport fares will be as a result of Labor's carbon tax? Does the minister support the carbon tax?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. As the Treasurer has just outlined, the government accepts that the carbon price is a significant reform. He has tabled the modelling that has been done by Queensland Treasury. We will now look at the microeconomics in terms of public transport. In relation to the information that was tabled, the impact on public transport fares is clearly stated as follows—

Increased electricity costs are estimated to add around \$5 million to the cost of providing passenger rail services in 2012-13. Public transport fares in South East Queensland are already subject to a price path ...

and the government has put in place our fare prices over the next five years. The modelling continues—

The additional electricity costs have been factored into the fiscal estimates outlined in Chapter 4, and the costs will be absorbed by the government.

We do have the information that has been tabled by the Treasurer today. We will do more modelling in relation to that. This government will continue to grow our public transport network. We are very committed to this. What we have seen from the opposition, at both a state and the federal level, is a scare campaign in relation to a carbon price. It is disgraceful. They are misleading the public. They are not taking into account that households will be compensated. The federal government has outlined this in relation to carbon pricing. The Queensland Labor government will continue to expand our public transport network in South-East Queensland.

All we hear from the opposition is negativity in relation to everything that this government is doing. This Saturday the Premier and I will be opening the brand-new Eastern Busway. For 10 years this government has committed to building busways in South-East Queensland. We do not see anything from the opposition. What has Campbell Newman said? Campbell Newman comes out in relation to issues on the Sunshine Coast and says, 'I will fix everything.' How is he going to fix it? There is no plan. Newman has no plan for public transport in Queensland at all. When he was the lord mayor he cut public transport. It used to be funded fifty-fifty and what is it now? Council's contribution is down to 37 per cent. This is what the Liberal council is doing in Brisbane. It is shameful and disgraceful. It has gone from fifty-fifty down to 60-40. Quirk should be putting more money into public transport. He has slashed the council budget by \$30 million. I make no excuse for committing to continue to grow our public transport network, not only in South-East Queensland but right across Queensland.

Drink-Safe Precincts

Ms GRACE: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. Can the Deputy Premier please inform the House about any recent statistics relating to the drink-safe precincts and any alternative policy positions?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, she is the local member for the Fortitude Valley drink-safe precinct and a very keen and enthusiastic supporter of what goes on in the Valley, the traders and the young people who go there to enjoy themselves. At two o'clock in the morning I am usually in bed asleep, but young people have every right—

An opposition member: Oh, come on.

Mr LUCAS: You might go out then, but not me; I am fast asleep. Young people have every right to go out and enjoy themselves. Young people have every right to enjoy their youth. However, when they do that the government asks one thing of them, which is to respect the rights of other people. Each Friday and Saturday night about 50,000 young people go to the Valley. No doubt many thousands of hardworking young people are employed in legitimate jobs there. That is why the government has invested in the \$8.5 million state-wide trial of drink-safe precincts. We are taking strong action to ensure that young people have the right to enjoy themselves.

The statistics from the first six months of the trial are very impressive. In the Valley 11 people were banned, 995 arrested and 274,000 transported home through secure taxi ranks. At Surfers Paradise nine people were banned, 1,044 arrested and 166,000 transported home through secure taxi ranks. In Townsville 11 people were banned, 245 arrested and 53,000 transported home. In fact, the trial has been so popular that almost a year before its end other areas are asking to be incorporated into the drink-safe precinct program. Of course, we have always made it clear that ultimately, because licensees make a lot of money from late-night trading, they will need to make a contribution towards the costs of operating the precincts. We have a message for the mugs and thugs: if you want to play up and if you want to deprive others of the right to enjoy themselves, you can expect to be banned and dealt with.

It is interesting to look at the position of Campbell Newman in relation to this. On 27 October 2009 he was reported in the media as saying that he did not support late-night trading in nightclubs. In other words, the view of Campbell Newman is that young people do not have the right to enjoy themselves. Just like the book burning spoken of before, he will determine what they can do. Of course, the position outlined on 27 October was a backflip on what he had previously said, so we will see what he says in the future. However, let us be clear that under the LNP there is no place for young people and those who work in the industry to enjoy themselves. We all know that Campbell Newman has been seen on YouTube, with the member for Ashgrove, enjoying a bit of dancing. To paraphrase the words of Alicia Bridges, Campbell Newman might like to boogie, but he does not like the night-life.

Carbon Tax

Mr DICKSON: My question is to the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities. Will the minister inform the House by how much household electricity bills will increase as a result of Labor's carbon tax? Does the minister support the carbon tax?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question. The federal government has been open on this issue. As part of its overall carbon pricing package, they have indicated that under their modelling they expect electricity prices, over a period, to increase by about 10 per cent. In acknowledgement of that, they have put in place a comprehensive system of tax breaks and assistance, particularly for low-income earners, so that at the end of the day the vast majority of Australians will, in fact, be better off financially through the compensation measures already announced by the federal government. I am surprised that you would not be aware of that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair, Minister, thank you.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am surprised that the member for Buderim would not be aware of that. In asking me whether I support a market based mechanism for determining carbon prices, I assume that he would join me in supporting that because it was not all that long ago that the LNP supported the determination of a carbon price through market based mechanisms. After all, that is the free enterprise way. After all, that is the discipline of the market coming into play to determine the—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: As the member for Rockhampton said, that is something that the LNP used to believe in. Instead, the LNP has gone down the centralist socialist line of investing taxpayers' money in direct action, which is a complete reversal of their position of only a couple of years ago. The simple fact is that the comprehensive proposal that has been put by the federal government relies on the market to determine an appropriate price of carbon over time. As a result of that and because of the carbon intensive nature of our energy sources, yes, there will be a price impact, which is acknowledged by the federal government. A comprehensive system of tax breaks and compensation for average Australians has been developed to accommodate that.

In Queensland we already have in place a comprehensive assistance package, particularly for low-income earners, to assist with rising electricity prices. The federal government is building on those. I recommend that the member for Buderim does some hard yakka and picks up the package from the federal government to inform himself about the exact impact of a carbon price on electricity prices and the compensation processes that the federal government has already announced as part of that package.

Climate Change

Mr WATT: My question is directed to the Treasurer. In the context of the carbon price modelling that the Treasurer tabled this morning, can he inform the House of the state's leading scientific opinion regarding climate change in pricing carbon and the role it plays in informing state government policy? Is he aware of any alternative policies?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Everton for his question and for his commitment to dealing with the issue of climate change, which is a challenge not only for the people in this parliament today but, indeed, also for future generations of Queenslanders that will come after us. This government accepts the science on climate change. We are not climate change deniers. We accept the consensus from economists that the most efficient way to deal with climate change is to price carbon into the economy. What does the Queensland Chief Scientist, a man of considerable scientific repute, Dr Geoff Garrett say? As the Chief Scientist, he too accepts the reality of climate change and accepts that the most efficient way to deal with it is to price carbon into the future. In doing so, he endorses the comments of his successor at the CSIRO, Dr Megan Clark. Of course, this government will continue to put the science and the expert opinion of the scientists and the economists at the forefront of making policy in dealing with this issue.

Is it any wonder that those opposite, the economic vandals opposite, the intellectual Neanderthals opposite, dismiss the science in this respect? No, it is not! Let us look at their form. The Leader of the Opposition is on the record as saying that the Kyoto protocol would 'decimate the mining industry'. He has questioned the environmental value and the appropriateness of the tree clearing laws that we put through this place. Right out on the fringe the former Leader of the Opposition, the member for Southern Downs, has said that climate change is caused by oceans heating up, by volcanoes and even by sunspots. We have heard the member for Gregory describe current circumstances as nothing but a good old drought. Of course, the case is quite the opposite. The science tells us unquestionably that we must deal with climate change.

What does the new LNP leader say? In his conference speech he said that his plan was to put the Chief Scientist properly in charge of science policy. Obviously, what he did not say was 'except when the science does not agree with the convenient politics of the day'. What we now have is Campbell Newman as a dog whistler, saying one thing to the Greens in Ashgrove and one thing to the farmers in regional Queensland. Of course, we know that the science is unequivocal and that climate change needs to be dealt with.

We see a reality that is very different. What has happened since the carbon price was announced? BHP has pledged \$1 billion for a rail line from its coalmines. We have seen a number of suitors for Macarthur Coal. Arrow and Shell have committed to the start of their LNG project in Gladstone and Origin Energy has committed \$14 billion. I invite the deniers on the other side to ring up Marius Kloppers and tell him he does not know what he is doing. I invite them to ring up Grant King and tell him he is being reckless with \$14 billion. I invite them to ring up Andrew Faulkner from Arrow and tell him he does not know what he is doing. What we will see is that investment will continue and the economy will grow, but pollution will be priced.

Carbon Tax

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. What will the additional cost per kilometre on road construction be as a result of Labor's carbon tax? Does the minister support the carbon tax?

Mr Lucas: This is the man who thought the Bruce Highway was on the Gold Coast.

Mr WALLACE: I take the Deputy Premier's interjection; this is from the man who thought the Bruce Highway was on the Gold Coast. As the Treasurer told the House this morning, the impact of a price on carbon will have minimal impact on Queensland. Our economy will continue to expand and we will tackle the scourge of climate change. This side of the House will never deny that climate change is taking place. If we are talking about taxes on our roads, let us look at that tory tax, the GST, and its impact on our roads. Last year alone my department forked out almost \$575 million in tory GST payments. What would that be over 10 years? My rough calculation is that we will have to pay over \$5 billion in tory GST tax on road construction here in the state of Queensland. Over 10 years we will pay \$5 billion in tory taxes, inflating our road construction exercises.

What could that \$5 billion buy us? I tell you what, it could buy that Yeppen flood plain south of Rockhampton. I know the member for Keppel supports us fixing up the Yeppen flood plain south of Rockhampton. We could do it with that \$5 billion. What about the Goorganga Plains south of Proserpine? The member for Whitsunday knows what that does when it cuts the Bruce Highway every year. We could fix it up with that \$5 billion. What about Yellow Gin Creek south of Home Hill? The member for Burdekin sits in this House and points fingers but she is responsible for there being no fix on Yellow Gin Creek because of that \$5 billion tory tax.

What about a new bridge over the Haughton River? The member for Burdekin makes a lot of hoo-ha about that, but she will not stand up to Canberra. Why did she support that \$5 billion tax on our roads? My good friend from Toowoomba North would certainly support getting some of that \$5 billion for road construction. We could build three Toowoomba bypasses with that \$5 billion. That side is guilty. They are guilty of imposing a \$5 billion tax on roads and they dare to come into this place—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will round up his question. You were asked about the carbon tax. I am waiting for the relevance.

Mr WALLACE: I will talk about taxes all day in this place and what the tories have done for road construction in this state. They have coughed up \$5 billion in road construction and they should hang their heads in shame.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat.

Bruce Highway

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is also to the Minister for Main Roads. I refer to the Bligh government's Bruce Highway strategy, and I ask: can the minister tell the House if there are any alternative policy documents relating to the Bruce Highway?

Mr WALLACE: On this side of the House we have got nothing to hide. We have a 20-year plan for the Bruce Highway. There are 60 projects across the Bruce. We do not have anything to hide.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left!

Mr WALLACE: They do not like it because there is one document you will not find. There is one document we cannot find, and that is Campbell Newman's top secret dossier outlining what he wants to do on the Bruce Highway. Campbell Newman says he has a plan for the Bruce Highway but, as the Premier said, Campbell Newman wants this kept secret until after the election if they win.

Mr Lucas: It's a bit like the Wivenhoe Dam.

Mr WALLACE: The Wivenhoe Dam—until after the election. Let us look at Campbell Newman's and the member for Callide's ever-changing position on the Bruce Highway. Last week the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* told us that Campbell Newman had a policy but he would keep it secret until after the election. I table that document for the interest of the House.

Again last week in the *Townsville Bulletin* the member for Callide said that the LNP's Bruce Highway plan will be complete within six months of taking office. Also last week the *Courier-Mail* reported that the member for Callide insisted that the LNP did have a policy and they would release it soon. But again last week the Leader of the Opposition issued a press release indicating the LNP's policy for the Bruce is a job that only the department or its engineers can do. I table that for the information of the House. Of course, as I said, earlier last month the shadow spokesman said that the Bruce Highway was located on the Gold Coast, and I table that for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract from transcript of Main Roads and Marine Infrastructure estimates hearing held on 14 July 2011 [5092].

We know that they have one plan for the Bruce and that was revealed in the *Innisfail Advocate*. I outlined it to this House and I will continue to talk about it. The one policy that they have for the Bruce Highway is to toll it. I table that article for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Bundle of newspaper articles relating to the Bruce Highway [5093].

What a joke we saw last week from the opposition. We saw them flip-flop, flip-flop on the Bruce Highway. They had changing policy after changing policy day after day. That is not good enough for the people of regional Queensland. This is our lifeblood. It is our lifeblood up the Queensland coast. Only Labor has a plan for the Bruce Highway. All the tories have is a petition calling for a plan and they cannot deliver a plan. They have no position on the Bruce; only Labor can fix up the Bruce. The people of regional Queensland will hear that day after day from this side of the House. We will never walk away from the people of regional Queensland.

Carbon Tax

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Treasurer. If the report that the Treasurer released today is such a strong endorsement of federal Labor's carbon tax, why have four ministers today failed to commit to supporting that carbon tax? Why can they not even say its name?

Mr FRASER: I thank the shadow Treasurer for the question. For the benefit of those in the cheap seats, as we have said a long time in the past and into the future, this government accepts the reality of climate change. It accepts the reality that the most efficient way to do it is to price carbon. It is what we have said time and time again. Each and every member of this government accepts the need to deal with climate change. What we see from the other side is a stated opinion that they say to people like the Green voters and the Liberals in the shadow Treasurer's seat that they support dealing with climate change, but they only whisper it, they only dog-whistle it. What they in fact want to do is go out there and pretend that they do not accept the reality of climate change. They want to get away with not confronting the issue of climate change. They want to get away with the idea that you should not most efficiently price carbon into the way the economy works to deal with climate change for the future.

Of course what they do support, however, is Tony Abbott's direct action model, which would cost each and every Australian thousands. How would that direct action model work? It would do things like supporting regrowth and planting extra trees. However, the Leader of the Opposition says that there is no environmental value in that when you oppose the tree clearing laws here. What we see from those opposite is nothing short of rank hypocrisy parading as political opportunism.

The reality of dealing with climate change is one that this government accepts. Those people opposite seek to pretend that people like Marius Kloppers; Alan Joyce, the CEO of Qantas; Grant King, the CEO of Origin—those people are out there and their actions speak louder than the flimsy, weak words from those opposite. They are committing billions of dollars in investment in order to deal with the reality of pricing carbon into the future. This is a government that will stand square-shouldered with the scientific opinion and square-shouldered with the expert economic opinion. That is the key to the way that we will approach this. In the past we have heard people like the shadow Treasurer say to the people that the GST will not hurt just a little bit and it is there to be done with the important goal of national tax reform and economic reform.

As I said earlier, the GST raised \$48 billion. The carbon price will raise less than \$8 billion. Why is it that the GST was declared as important but the carbon price is reckless? It is the \$48 billion question that the shadow Treasurer cannot answer. How can you support the GST and not support pricing carbon? Pricing carbon deals with climate change, it deals with the health issues for children into the future and it deals with the environment into the future. What did the GST ever deliver? It only ever delivered \$48 billion. In the end that hypocrisy is why on this point the shadow Treasurer, the LNP and all of the other people who used to represent the Liberal Party in this state are wearing absolutely no clothes.

Police Resources

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Can the minister advise the House on plans to increase police numbers across the state?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question and also for the very public and proactive support that she provides to officers in the Coomera and Gold Coast districts in the Gold Coast region. Currently, there are around 10,500 sworn officers in the Queensland Police Service. Since the Nationals were last in power in 1998 there has been an increase of around 3,700, or a 54 per cent increase, in the number of police in Queensland. That has delivered significant improvements in the police-to-population ratio. Members should be able to recite these figures now. When the Nationals were in power there was one officer for every 507 people. Due to the significant increase in resources by Labor governments, that has improved to one officer for every 436 people currently. So that is a significant improvement in the resourcing of the Police Service, particularly over the last 10 years.

What has that given rise to? A significant reduction in the overall rate of crime. Again, members of the House should be well aware of these figures. Property crime in Queensland over the last decade—from 2000-01 to 2009-10—has reduced by around 48 per cent. In 2009-10, there were in fact more than 30,000 fewer homes and businesses broken into in Queensland than in 2000-01. That is a dramatic reduction due to proactive policing, professional policing and increased resources by this government.

The Police Commissioner allocates those resources to areas which are in need, as we have seen recently through Operation Seymour—a significant blitz on the Gold Coast which is taking place and which is getting very good results. Since Operation Seymour started, around 770 people have been arrested on more than 1,000 charges. When we combine that with the excellent work that has been undertaken by local officers, in that period of time—heading up to about 24 days now of the operation—1,870 people have been charged with more than 2,700 offences.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your ruling on anticipation. We have a motion before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a motion. As I recall the motion, it specifically relates to the Gold Coast. So I would ask the honourable the minister to speak more broadly than just the Gold Coast.

Mr ROBERTS: I am happy to speak more broadly. In the last budget the government provided additional resources for the Police Service. The Police Commissioner has now determined how those resources will be allocated throughout Queensland. I do need to mention the south-east region, which includes the Gold Coast, but I am sure you will not mind, Mr Speaker. The Police Commissioner has allocated 35 additional officers to the south-east police region—in fact, all of those 35 will go into both the Gold Coast and the Coomera districts; 25 additional officers to the north coast region; 18 additional officers to the metropolitan south region; 12 additional officers each to the far northern, northern, central, southern and metropolitan north regions; with 14 remaining officers still to be allocated, and announcements about those will be made soon. That is a far cry from the approach of the National Party, which, from comments by the member for Surfers Paradise, wants to take us back to the days when ministers and the Premier determined where police were allocated.

(Time expired)

OneSchool

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology. Will the minister confirm that, prior to purchasing the \$7 million finance technology component for OneSchool, known as Agresso, the advice of the QGCIO was sought, or was this yet another purchase of dubious overseas solutions doomed to failure and in direct contravention of Government Services's 'share before buy before build' policy?

Mr FINN: I thank the honourable member for the question. OneSchool is a very important ICT project for the Queensland government and the delivery of education services in the Department of Education and Training. This program implements a schools management system that enables schools to run their systems online, bringing about greater safety for schoolchildren, bringing about much more efficient management of schools in the way that they run, and bringing about more opportunities for schools to run more efficiently and for teachers and kids to focus on the main activities of their schools.

The decision to procure that project was done in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training. They have the responsibility for this program. Obviously the work that is done in the procurement of ICT is done in conjunction with agencies where appropriate. This is a system that is being implemented very, very well by the department of education. It has now been running for 2½ years. It has a three-year operational focus. What it is doing right now is implementing a new finance management system and an assets management system across our schools. In order to do that, the third tranche of this program involves some training for those who are running that program. That training is rolling out across our schools. Schools are using the program. It is a successful program.

Eastern Busway

Mr KILBURN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. Given the importance of public transport in my electorate, can the minister please advise the House how the opening of the Eastern Busway will increase services and boost patronage on public transport?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member for Chatsworth very much for the question. I know that he will be joining the Premier, me and the member for Greenslopes this Saturday for the opening of the new Eastern Busway—a commitment of over \$400 million to growing our world-class bus network in South-East Queensland.

Ten years ago there was not one kilometre of busway in South-East Queensland. This Labor government is delivering 25 kilometres of busway network—25 kilometres—which is an investment of over \$1.8 billion in providing a world-class public transport network here in South-East Queensland. The new Eastern Busway will deliver 100,000 new weekly seats, 31 new buses, 12 new bus stops and five new bus routes including two new high-frequency bus routes. It will also cut travel time for commuters by up to 1.5 hours a week. This is about delivering to South-East Queensland.

Members may be interested to learn that the Lord Mayor is running around town blaming the state government for what he sees as being only a two per cent growth in bus patronage. I want to put this very clearly on the record. He has recently put out a press release—and members would like to hear this—claiming that the council is going to continue to deliver 500 new buses this term. Who is delivering the 500 new buses? It is not Quirk; it is this Labor government. We are delivering the 500 buses.

Why were our patronage figures not as high as we would have expected in the first quarter of this year? There is a very simple reason: there was a thing called the flood that was affecting Brisbane, and we put on free public transport during that week to enable people to get around our transport system. So that is why our bus figures were not as high as we would have liked them to be. But we will continue to deliver increases in our buses right across South-East Queensland. We will continue to fund public transport. We will continue to grow our network. It does not do anything for Graham Quirk, the Lord Mayor, to go around making things up, telling lies and not putting the facts on the public—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is unparliamentary. You will withdraw it immediately.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. It is very clear that he is not telling the truth. I say to the Lord Mayor: how about you look at the decline in your CityCycle system from around 1,600 people using it in October to now about 100—a decline of 80 per cent? He should focus on fixing up his CityCycle network rather than on criticising our expanding bus network.

Wijeratne, Dr HW

Mr MESSENGER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to his reply to question on notice No. 384 in which he wrote that, in relation to a Dr HW Wijeratne, formerly employed at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, he is 'not employed within Queensland Health'. I table a copy of that answer.

Tabled paper: Copies of answers to questions on notice Nos 1022, 671, 434, 384 of 2011 and 680 of 2010 [5094].

I also refer the minister to the fact that a TV crew found the same doctor working at Mount Isa Hospital approximately 69 days after the minister's reply. Given that that doctor, along with Patel, was described by a secret 2005 cabinet medical audit as being the subject of a significant number of adverse patient complaints—and I table that page—and that a significant number of new adverse and shocking complaints have emerged in the last six years since 2005—I table that report as well—

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Review of Clinical Services Bundaberg Base Hospital', pages 44 and 45 [5095].

Tabled paper: Document prepared by member for Burnett titled 'Patient complaints against Dr Hewawelengodage Wimalasiri Wijeratne (Queensland Health)' [5096].

Mr SPEAKER: And I would ask you to come to your question.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the minister release the full details of Dr Wijeratne's employment record by Queensland Health and explain what steps he took to protect the pregnant women of Mount Isa from a doctor who had a dangerous and incompetent employment record at Bundaberg for 10 years?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. This member has on repeated occasions previously raised allegations about the gentleman whom he has named. On each occasion I have alerted him to the reality that everyone else knows about—that is, if he has any evidence of any malpractice or inappropriate behaviour by this doctor or by any other doctor then it is incumbent upon him as an occupant of public office to refer that immediately to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission for it to investigate. That is the step he should take; that is exactly what should take place. That is why the HQCC was set up. I call upon him now, forthwith today, with no delay whatsoever, to forward all evidence that he has in his possession to the HQCC to enable it to do its statutory job, which is why we set it up.

Mr MESSENGER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The minister failed to answer the question and failed to provide an undertaking that he would give the details on this doctor.

Mr SPEAKER: My ruling on that is that the minister had concluded his answer. I listened very carefully to his answer and he was quite relevant to the person concerned. He recommended a course of action. Therefore, in my view, the answer was relevant.

Women, Economic Prosperity

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. Could the minister please inform the House what the Bligh government is doing to improve women's economic prosperity and opportunity?

Ms STRUTHERS: I welcome the question from the member and commend her. She is part of a Bligh Labor government that is committed to advancing women's economic security, committed to providing every opportunity for women in Queensland to share in all that our great state has to offer.

Last week CommSec released its analysis of wages in Australia. This showed that the average male worker earns around \$12,870 more a year than the average female worker. This also means less superannuation and less retirement income when women retire. The Bligh government is working hard

to bridge this financial divide. We support pay equity and we are investing in the highly successful Women in Hard Hats and Girls in Hard Hats programs, which aim to attract and retain more women to non-traditional, high-paying careers—careers in our booming mining and energy sectors, careers in construction.

Sadly, the shadow minister for women, the member for Maroochydore, does not share the government's commitment to improve the economic security of Queensland women. In fact, when questioned on her views about Women in Hard Hats the member said, 'Quite frankly, that's flippant and tokenistic.' This blatant disregard for women's equality is not surprising, coming from a member who, since becoming shadow minister for women, is yet to ask a single question in this chamber or make a single statement on women's issues.

While the member for Maroochydore sits silent, the Bligh government works tirelessly to increase the representation of women in leadership positions. On the other hand, the LNP is failing to recognise the valuable contribution women make even in its own ranks. Mr Newman has created his own boys club, with only 13 of the 84 LNP candidates being women. Is that 10 per cent? Is that 12 per cent? That is a mere 15 per cent of LNP candidates being women. On the other hand, the Labor Party will give Queensland voters a clear choice at the next election, with almost 50 per cent of our current candidates being women. That is nearly 50 per cent compared to a mere 15 per cent. The LNP has no policies for women. It does not even have many candidates who are women. The LNP cannot do and will not do much for women with that kind of record.

Bandanna Energy

Mr JOHNSON: My question is to the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts. Can the minister tell the House what were the significant compromises made by Bandanna Energy in relation to its mining proposals in the golden triangle which allowed the minister to grant it transitional arrangement status under the strategic cropping land policy?

Mr SPEAKER: There will be two minutes for this answer.

Ms NOLAN: The government will legislate to ensure that this mine goes underground. It has not yet been through its environmental impact statement process, but measures around any rehabilitation of the mine, should there be subsidence subsequent to that underground mining take place, will be a matter considered through that EIS process. This government has world-leading legislation being developed right now to protect quality, prime agricultural land from mining. We have announced a comprehensive framework and, as is well understood, we are currently developing legislation to bring that properly and legally into force.

For this specific mine, the development of which was well developed when the government's framework was announced, we will legislate to ensure that it is underground and that there are good environmental protections around it. In very stark contrast, Campbell Newman went to Springsure Creek, where people are concerned about the impact of this mine, and gave them, according to the landholders who run the local interest group, what they described as an ironclad guarantee that mining, including underground mining, would not go ahead, something which was subsequently contradicted in this House by the local member, the member for Gregory himself.

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's comments offensive and misleading. I did not contradict Mr Newman.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is not a debating point.

Mr JOHNSON: I was there with him, and it is about time the minister went there and visited those people for herself.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not a point of order, member for Gregory. That is a debating point. I call the minister to round off her answer.

Ms NOLAN: The member—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory! The minister has the call.

Ms NOLAN: Either Campbell Newman gave the promise or he did not. The member for Gregory is not giving us a clear answer on that question.


(Time expired)

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory! Goodness me! The time for question time has ended.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Suncorp Stadium

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (11.36 am), by leave: I seek to update the House on the use of Suncorp Stadium approved under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act within my portfolio and in particular the community consultation that has occurred on the use of the stadium. That consultation has included a letter to those living close to the stadium inviting direct feedback, an online survey and a community forum. Most of the respondents to that survey have supported the change in use to Suncorp Stadium. I table a summary of the outcome of that community consultation.

Tabled paper: Outcomes of community consultation in relation to capping scheduled games at Suncorp Stadium [\[5097\]](#).

Most of the respondents, as I said, supported the change in use. In fact, 52 per cent—a clear majority—strongly supported it. A further 18 per cent supported the change, while 20 per cent indicated that they did not support it. So just on 70 per cent of local residents supported the change.

Issues were raised through the process, including changes to police patrols, clean-up and parking enforcement by the Brisbane City Council, and interaction with the local community from the stadium. In that time, the LNP councillor and the LNP candidate have supported a trust for the stadium. They have supported this with a levy on football tickets. On behalf of the government, I categorically rule this out. I also call on Campbell Newman, on behalf of the LNP, to rule out an LNP plan to tax football tickets. It seems passing strange that at a time when the LNP does not want to tax pollution it does want to tax football tickets. The reality is that Campbell Newman should rule out this proposal for a genuinely new tax on absolutely every football ticket.


What we do know is that there is an entity that presently taxes the stadium; it is the Brisbane City Council, which gained \$312,000 in rates last financial year from Suncorp Stadium as well as in excess of \$300,000 in pedestal charges on every toilet in the stadium. So if the LNP would like to commit to a portion of those funds—the gravy it skims from the stadium—then I commit as Treasurer on behalf of the state through Stadiums Queensland to match those funds.

This is a sensible reform to ensure Suncorp Stadium can be used into the future, to ensure semifinals can be played at Suncorp Stadium for the benefit of not only those locals who support it but also those people around Queensland who do want to see the stadium used. It should be above the petty politicking we have seen by the LNP on this issue. I also table a copy of a response to the LNP representatives calling on them to rule out their new proposal to tax football tickets.

Tabled paper: Copy of a letter, undated, from Mr Andrew Fraser MP to Councillor Peter Matic and Ms Saxon Rice relating to community consultation and operations of Suncorp Stadium [\[5098\]](#).

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bruce Highway

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.39 am): The Bruce Highway, Queensland's Highway 1, is a crisis in the making. The Labor government has been in power in Queensland for almost 20 years and has a well-established record of stumbling from crisis to crisis. Under this Labor government Queenslanders have endured a water crisis and a health crisis that never ends, a power crisis, a kids in care crisis and a nurses' payroll crisis. All of these crises were the result of government inaction and all were initially denied by ministers. All of these crises cost all Queenslanders dearly. Sadly, some of them have cost some Queenslanders their lives. Now Premier Bligh and her government are blind to another developing crisis that is costing Queenslanders their lives almost every week. Last week the Bruce Highway crisis cost another four Queenslanders their lives in two separate accidents on a well-recognised horror stretch between Miriam Vale and Apple Tree Creek. Main Roads minister Craig Wallace is blind to the developing crisis on the Bruce Highway. He seeks to deny the crisis, just as other ministers sought to deny all of the other crises that have resulted from this government's inaction.

The Bruce Highway is a disgrace, but main roads minister Craig Wallace's response is a bigger disgrace. The juvenile and petty attitude of the minister is causing increasing frustration and anger in communities along the highway that resent his political, nonsensical claims about the highway which are devoid of any believability. Minister Craig Wallace infuriated and disgusted many community leaders as he continued to play juvenile political point-scoring games in the same week that four more innocent people died on the horror stretch of this crisis-gripped road. In the same week four people tragically died, Minister Wallace put out two press releases about the Bruce Highway—one about a dog eating Campbell Newman's homework and the other about telling the difference between Arthur and Martha. While four people died, the minister indulged himself in this political nonsense. Rather than

acknowledge the tragedy of the four deaths and rather than commit himself to addressing the crisis situation on the Bruce Highway, he instead indulged himself in these silly political attacks on the LNP. These four tragic deaths last week brought the number of deaths to 10 in eight weeks. In the same eight weeks the minister has put out 22 press releases attacking the LNP—22 absurd, childish, puerile, nonsensical attempts to play politics with the Bruce Highway—while 10 Queenslanders have died on the same road in the same time.

There is no question that Queensland now has a Bruce Highway crisis—a Bruce Highway crisis that has been a long time coming and will take a long time to fix. The RACQ has called for a decade of action to significantly improve the Bruce Highway by 2010. The RACQ has made a chilling estimate that 350 more people will die and more than 5,000 will be injured on the highway over the next 10 years if we do not get some sustained program of investment to address the crisis. The Minister for Main Roads, however, is too busy issuing childish, nonsensical press releases to even recognise the Bruce Highway crisis, let alone take any real steps to address that crisis or to acknowledge the tragic loss of far too many lives. The highway crisis is universally recognised among local governments and regional communities from Brisbane to Cairns. It is recognised by industry. It is recognised by community leaders, and it is recognised by ordinary Queenslanders who drive the notorious sections of the highway every day. Safety concerns are raised in almost every conversation involving the Bruce Highway across regional Queensland, especially with regard to the volume of traffic and the number of heavy trucks. Major horror stretches such as the one that claimed four lives last week between Apple Tree Creek and Miriam Vale have been talked about for years. Those horror stretches are readily identified by regular road users and emergency workers alike because they know the poor road alignments and they know the high number of accidents. With regard to major intersections such as those with the Wide Bay Highway, the Dawson Highway and the Capricorn Highway, all of these intersections cause congestion and dangerous near misses on a daily basis.


The Bruce Highway is part of the National Land Transport Network and therefore upgrades need to be funded by the Commonwealth government. However, the state government has an important role to play in managing the highway. It cannot wash its hands, as the minister seeks to do. The state government has an important role in the planning and prioritising of upgrades that are continually needed to cater for the increasing volume of traffic over time. There is an alarming degree of concern in communities all the way along the length of the highway at the opaque funding process that so easily allows the Queensland government to pass blame for this issue that is having a major impact on the lives of many Queenslanders without doing anything itself. It is indicative of the current Labor government's failure to plan that after almost 20 years in power it does not have a comprehensive plan for the future of the Bruce Highway; it has just released a discussion paper! In a belated recognition of the community concern about the emerging crisis on the Bruce Highway, a so-called discussion paper discussing a strategy was released in July 2011. This document contained many maps, many photos and a long, long, long list of unfunded projects with no indication of any quantified costs or benefits for any of those projects. Queensland needs a far more serious and professional approach to this the state's most critical road infrastructure issue. Queensland needs an action plan based on engineering, not political expediency.

An LNP government would recognise the grave community concern about the crisis on the Bruce Highway and we would move to end the political nonsense that has dominated Labor's response to that crisis. As a priority, an LNP government would task the Queensland department of main roads to compile within six months a proper engineering based 10-year Bruce Highway crisis action plan—a Bruce Highway crisis action plan that would be based on considered engineering solutions, not political expediency; a Bruce Highway crisis action plan with proper costings and proper cost-benefit analysis for road users and local communities. We would ensure that the department did the type of work that only the department of main roads can do and the type of work that the department of main roads should have done years ago under a competent government. A creditable, professional plan based on engineering, not on politics—a 10-year-long plan to address the crisis gripping Queensland's main road produced by the department and supported by stakeholders—would be in stark contrast to the political nonsense we get from the current Minister for Main Roads. A responsible LNP Queensland state government will allocate more resources and commit more money to proper planning for the Bruce Highway. That allocation of state resources is vital if any progress is to be made in accessing more federal funding for the long, long, long list of identified but completely unfunded projects that currently constitute an upgrade from a government that has demonstrated no ability to do anything other than compile an ever-increasing list of unfunded projects. The government's list of projects just gets longer and longer but very little ever gets done on the highway.

The Bruce Highway is unarguably Queensland's most important piece of transport infrastructure. We should be setting targets that reflect that importance. We should be embracing the target that the RACQ has set to make the Bruce Highway a four-lane highway from Brisbane to Cairns, and we should be setting time frames for achieving that. That would be nation-building infrastructure. That would be the ultimate state development project for Queensland—a four-lane Bruce Highway from Brisbane to

Cairns, a road that justified the title of a highway. But we see and hear nothing from this minister and his Labor government. None of the 22 press releases he put out in the last eight weeks while 10 people died on the road discussed the necessity for four laning the highway anywhere at all, let alone over its entire length. What we get from Minister Craig Wallace is self-indulgent political games—a crass, insensitive, uncaring attitude and no progress on any meaningful improvement. The Bruce Highway will remain a disgrace while Minister Craig Wallace, a disgraceful minister, adopts a disgraceful attitude to a problem that is affecting Queenslanders all the way up and down the state.

Mining Industry

 **Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (11.49 am): As we hear report after report of the latest massive mining or resource development, the enormous scale of this boom is becoming clearer to people around the state. Of course, the mining boom is already obvious to those who live in or near the area where the mines are located as the mines are developed and new workers pour into the towns and regions, either on a permanent residential basis or on a fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out basis. As the growth of this sector proceeds apace, it is not just miners who will benefit. Labour is needed to support the influx of miners in a wide variety of both unskilled and skilled occupations.

The unprecedented scale of this boom is having a major impact on our national and state economies. Some of these impacts are experienced in different ways across different industry sectors and different parts of this state. For example, as the demand for the commodities we export has skyrocketed, so has the price of key resources like coal and iron ore. These facts have driven our dollar to historically high levels and have kept upward pressure on interest rates. In turn, these effects have had a major impact on our other important and traditional export industries, particularly tourism and agriculture, and, as we have witnessed with sadness this week, manufacturing.


For the people who live in those areas who are not directly benefiting from the mining and resources boom but who have long depended on the other industries, it can be difficult to appreciate just what the benefits and opportunities are or can be. I think this is behind much of the anxiety and negativity that we hear and see in the media and as we go about our business as elected representatives. Whilst I agree that the mining and resources boom will ultimately be of overall benefit to our nation and to Queensland, we must be especially vigilant to ensure that the benefits of the boom are spread equitably throughout Queensland. In other words, we need to synchronise the two-speed economy and ensure that the patchwork economy is stitched together. But to do this, we are going to need to think about doing things very differently from what we have done in the past. This is certainly already happening, as the demand for labour is met by workers flying in and out of mining resource regions around the nation and indeed from places overseas like Papua New Guinea and places throughout Queensland, including Cairns and the tropical north. In fact, some 3,000 workers in Cairns operate on a FIFO base already.

The demand for labour during the construction and operational phases of Queensland's mining and resource expansion, particularly in the new coal seam gas and LNG industries, is unprecedented. The demand cannot be met in the towns and regions surrounding these projects. Companies are looking much further afield and if they cannot find the workers at home they will surely bring them in from overseas, because these projects cannot be held back. That is why the Work for Queensland Summit that the Premier convened last week on the Gold Coast was so timely and so important. I thank the Premier for her invitation to the summit and I was very pleased that I was able to attend. The summit enabled the companies to convey the sheer scale of the demand for labour. The summit also enabled representatives from the regions to articulate how the boom is affecting them and how they are positioned to feed the regions' appetite for labour. It generated an immediate response from our government to stage a series of jobs expos throughout our state in areas of higher than average unemployment, including Cairns and the tropical north and the Gold Coast. Typically, these are the areas that are most dependent on tourism and most vulnerable to the external factors that have impacted on jobs in the tourism industry.

Cairns and Tropical North Queensland are well placed to take advantage of the mining and resource boom that is occurring in Queensland. Our manufacturing industry supplies equipment to the sector, our farms supply food, our high-quality schools, TAFEs and universities turn out quality graduates and our sea and air ports connect our region with the booming resource regions in Australia and our neighbours in the Pacific and Asia. On top of all of that, our city and our region offers a lifestyle that is second to none and the type of infrastructure and services that will appeal to the new FIFO phenomenon.

The jobs expo that will be held in Cairns later this year will provide a timely opportunity for people to find out about the opportunities for employment from mining and resource companies. It is an important step towards spreading the benefits of the boom.

South East Queensland Regional Plan, Exploration Restricted Areas

 **Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.54 am): Last week the Premier announced what was for the people of my electorate—and indeed for the people of Queensland—a most important new policy. The effect of that policy is that no mining exploration will be allowed in and around urban areas of Queensland, including regional centres such as Toowoomba, Ipswich, Beaudesert, Rockhampton, Mackay and St George. In particular, the Premier announced that an exploration restricted area would be declared over land bound by the South East Queensland Regional Plan—and I recall urging then minister Mackenroth to include Toowoomba in that plan—as well as on other regional centres and towns with a population of 1,000 or more. Of particular importance is that the restriction that was announced will cover existing exploration permits as well as future permits in those areas. For example, the restriction will apply to existing permits to explore that currently exist over parts of my electorate, namely, Highfields.

Why is that? Firstly, Highfields is situated within the designated area contained in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. Secondly, as a locale in excess of 12,000 people, it will truly exceed the minimum township population of 1,000 people or more. The announcement by the Premier means that, for those towns—that is towns of 1,000 people or more—no more exploration activity on urban land will be allowed or allowed within a two-kilometre buffer of urban land. I have been asked why the figure of 1,000 was chosen. The explanation is that this is the smallest number of persons used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its calculations. A question was also asked from what point in the town does the two-kilometre buffer run. The answer is from the edge of the town's footprint—that is, its boundary.

Although most members would have always accepted that mining would be unlikely to be approved close to urban areas, this announcement provides another layer of assurance for communities on top of the already tough regulatory framework that exists. These measures provide for certainty right from the start and do away with any anxiety whatsoever. Reasonably held fears or not, the fact was that many people, particularly in townships like Gowrie Junction, were suffering genuine anxiety over the possibility—and in some people's view the probability—that mining would take place. People asserted that their properties were unable to be sold and that they were devalued as a result of the prospect of nearby mining occurring. A developer of subdivided land came to see me advising that sales had stopped completely.

According to media reports, a very large meeting took place at Gowrie Junction at which real concern, and indeed anger, was expressed. It was in this context that I approached here at his parliamentary office the then minister for mines. I explained the position, which I thought was reasonable, and posed the question: why allow any exploration permits causing this anxiety and loss if the chances of mining ever taking place are nil anyway? Members will recall that changes in the ministry occurred. Consequently, my representations were then made to new Minister Hinchliffe and subsequently the Premier. I recall speaking in these terms both in a 5.30 pm debate in this place on 9 March and likewise at a public meeting at Highfields shortly after. In my speech in parliament I said—


What do I believe? I believe that there should be no mining at or near Gowrie Junction. I believe that the government should explore ways to achieve the prevention of exploration at or near residences of this nature. I understand that already there is in the law a prohibition against such exploration to the tune of about 100 metres. I think we can do better than that.

I was pleased to successfully lobby the Premier to hold a community cabinet in Toowoomba, partly to afford aggrieved locals the opportunity to personally present their views to the Premier and the minister. I, of course, continued my lobbying of both. The honourable member for Condamine presented a petition on the subject and spoke on it here. His contribution is acknowledged. It is always a challenge to seek to change longstanding laws and practices, particularly where the interests of a powerful and influential industry are involved. Therefore, I wholeheartedly thank and congratulate the Premier and the minister for listening to these representations and for fixing the problem such that, for example, in my electorate no continuing issue exists.

This is a great example of proper consultation and effective response. This decision, together with the government's landmark policy on strategic cropping land and imminent legislation, are clear examples of certainty and definite direction continually being given by this government with respect to exploration.

(Time expired)

Carbon Tax

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.59 am): I just want to say a few words this morning about this government and the Premier's complete failure to support Queenslanders and Queensland businesses when it comes to the issue of Labor's big new carbon tax. In events since the carbon tax was first announced as a fait accompli by Julia Gillard back in March, despite the promise that she made that there would not be a carbon tax under the government she led, where has this Premier been? She has been missing in action. She has failed to stand up for the

interests of Queensland families, Queensland workers and Queensland businesses. Even as late as last Friday when she went down to the COAG meeting of ministers in Canberra, she refused to stand up for Queenslanders and to take the fight up in the way that her counterparts in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia did. She has quite obviously been kowtowing to her Labor Party mates in Canberra in the implementation of this big new tax that will impact on everyone.

We have had a bare 30 minutes to look at the modelling delivered today in the two reports tabled by the Treasurer. A preliminary look at those reports notes some of the assumptions that are made. One of the big assumptions that is being made is that the rest of the world imposes a carbon tax and puts a price on carbon, an assumption heroic in its proportions and, in fact, completely unsupported by the activities of many of the largest emitters in the world, in particular India, China and the United States of America.

We can see the impact from the figures that have been provided by the Queensland Treasury modelling. When one looks at some of the figures on page 47 of that report, it shows a loss of about 18,500 jobs by 2020, it shows real investment declining by six per cent as opposed to the business-as-usual case and it sees wages declining by almost four per cent. There are many aspects of these reports that the Treasurer has failed to identify and has failed to put before the people of Queensland at this stage that we will investigate and continue to make sure are fully understood.

Today we have also witnessed a remarkable performance from this tired 20-year Labor government. There were four questions and four opportunities for four ministers to stand up and say quite clearly, 'I support Labor's carbon tax'. They could have said, 'Of course I support it.' They were asked a question so simple that all they had to do was stand up and say, 'Yes', and commit and confirm their support for Labor's carbon tax. On this big issue those four ministers squibbed the opportunity. If this big new tax is such a boon, if it is so good for the Queensland economy, why do four Labor ministers not proudly shout its name and its benefits?

What is it about this tax? Is it like Lord Voldemort: is it the name that they refuse to speak? Because so far they have refused to do so. Do they say one thing to the comrades on the left, one thing to the Green political movement and another to the public of Queensland when it comes to the big new carbon tax? Do they try to buy off the radicals who want to see the end of coalmining and who now want to stop the LNG industry, whilst at the same time go into the boardrooms of Brisbane talking up their support for this industry? Because we know what they do: they get onto their mates and say, 'No, no, we are going to protect your industries,' and then they go off and try to do their deals with the Green political movement to try to save their bacon. Why do they speak with forked tongue?

Perversely we heard the Minister for Main Roads today, in a completely bizarre spray, start complaining about the GST that has funded the growth of this state over the last 10 years.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: A GST, for the benefit of the member for Ashgrove, in relation to which her colleague the member for Mount Coot-tha said on radio two weeks ago—

For what I think it is worth, the Labor Party was wrong to deny the necessity of the GST.

'Wrong to deny the necessity of the GST,' is what the member for Mount Coot-tha, the Treasurer, said only two weeks ago on radio. So we have the bizarre buffoon from Townsville talking about—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Your language is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr NICHOLLS: We have the minister, the member for Thuringowa—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw your unparliamentary language.

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw.

(Time expired)

Ashgrove Electorate, Preference Allocation

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (12.04 pm): Some of those opposite may not want to remember this, but it will soon be 15 years since Pauline Hanson made her maiden speech in the federal parliament. That speech, on 10 September 1996, lay the foundations for the One Nation Party. One Nation was based on appeals to prejudice, urban myths and the promotion of division in our country. This House saw firsthand evidence of that after the 1998 state election. But there were always thinking voters, principled politicians and decent party organisations who rejected One Nation and its damaging tactics.

Who was one who spoke out against One Nation, rejecting its shallow populism? Who fought it tooth and nail, saying that One Nation's policies were a black cloud on our political landscape? Who warned that One Nation was enormously damaging to the way Australia was viewed overseas, was hurting trade prospects and causing our country to be seen as less tolerant of its neighbours? That was the then Liberal Party Premier of Victoria Jeff Kennett. As one political commentator observed in 1998—

From the moment Mrs Hanson emerged on the political stage, Jeff Kennett took it upon himself to explain why her policies are misguided.

Who else took that view? Which federal MP said in May 1998—

In relation to my own seat, where there is a One Nation candidate running against me, that candidate will be last.

That was none other than Peter Costello, speaking a full six months before the October 1998 federal election. Peter Costello explained his position by saying—

The future of Australia is built on tolerance and respect ... not some idealised and wrong view of the past.

We on this side of the House have very big differences with Jeff Kennett and Peter Costello, but when it comes to One Nation they were true Liberals who stood on principle, showed leadership and refused to give One Nation any comfort.

By contrast, what has Campbell Newman said about One Nation running in Ashgrove and his position on a preference deal? He abdicated leadership by saying that those are matters that should be put to the party.

Ms Bates: Well, they are.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member who says that the leader of the LNP in Queensland cannot have a principle position when it comes to saying no to One Nation preferences. Thank you, member for Mudgeeraba. Put out the press release. He squirmed out of answering by saying—


There isn't even a (One Nation) candidate and Kate Jones is playing politics again.

All I can say is that Campbell Newman does not know the difference between playing politics and standing on principle. He even tried the wishy-washy line that voters should not flirt with a minor party. Well, Campbell Newman is flirting with a minor party—One Nation. With his refusal to rule out a preference deal with One Nation, what other conclusions can we draw? Let us not forget that Pauline Hanson was a member of the Liberal Party in Queensland. She was its endorsed candidate in Oxley when she made public statements deemed to be racist. When that happened before the 1996 federal poll the then Liberal Party that used to exist sacked her as a candidate.

That is one of the big differences between then and now. Then there were some in the Liberal Party who were true Liberals. But where are the true Liberals on the benches opposite today? Where have they gone since the LNP was formed? Perhaps they are quiet because, as we all know, the LNP was not formed by a merger but by a National Party takeover of the Liberal Party. Who in the opposition will match the standards of Jeff Kennett and Peter Costello? Who will show leadership and refuse to follow the absentee candidate in Ashgrove who is openly flirting with One Nation? I put the question to the member for Mudgeeraba: will you refuse to take preferences from One Nation?

I will always put Ashgrove first, which means putting One Nation last. I will not do a preference deal with One Nation ever. Can Campbell Newman say the same? What will the person who supposedly leads the LNP do when it comes to the other 88 seats? Will he be a true Liberal or will he continue to dance to the tune of the hard men of the National Party who run the LNP in Queensland and have always had a soft spot for One Nation?

Mackay TAFE, Asbestos; Comments by Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.09 pm): I rise in response to the cowardly attack on me by the minister for the building industry which occurred in this place on 4 August—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Stop the clock, please. Member for Mudgeeraba, one of the terms that you used is unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw it.

Ms BATES: I withdraw. I rise in response to the attack on me by the minister for the building industry which occurred in this place on 4 August, when I was absent due to ill health. I was not here to defend myself then, but today I am delighted to be able to set the record straight.

The minister made a number of outrageous comments, including the suggestion that I had made 'serious but unfounded allegations' in relation to asbestos at Mackay TAFE. Further, the minister took offence that I questioned him about the timing of the QBuild tender to remove dangerous asbestos material from this site. The minister stated that the tender was already in place long before I raised these concerns during the Mackay sitting and, to prove this, he tabled a document. But what, pray tell, is this tabled document? It is a one-page extract from the TAFE asbestos register that lists dozens of items all requiring attention. But, importantly, there are no work commencement dates and no target deadlines. What a staggering surprise! There are no deadlines for the removal of this deadly substance, which remains on sites right throughout the state. It seems that, like the other unusual suspects sitting on the other side of the House, the minister expects that his word should be enough and that the tender was some type of happy coincidence, because this tabled one-page extract is his proof. I can assure the House that Queenslanders know that the word of ministers in this place means nothing. But I digress.

The minister's one-page extract is not proof—far from it. If he wants proof, I will give him proof. Firstly, instead of just one page, here is the entire 101 pages of the TAFE asbestos register that lists thousands of asbestos items requiring attention, all without target dates.

Tabled paper: TAFE asbestos register [\[5099\]](#).

But wait, there is more. Here is the entire 13-page childhood care asbestos register that lists even more dangerous items to be removed, again without time frames.

Tabled paper: Childhood care asbestos register [\[5100\]](#).

And here is the mother of all proof. I table for the House the 7,992 pages of the school asbestos register on CD.

Tabled paper: CD containing schools asbestos register [\[5101\]](#).

There are thousands upon thousands of dangerous items to be removed and not a time line in sight. This is what I call proof. It is proof that this tired, 20-year-old Labor government is not serious about removing dangerous asbestos-containing materials from facilities that educate different ages of Queensland residents, from our precious children—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Education, order.

Ms BATES: This is about educating different ages of Queensland residents, from our precious children through to our mature-age students.

Mr Dick: The most open and transparent education department in Australia.

Ms BATES: I take the interjection from the Minister for Education, who should be ashamed. It is proof that the Bligh government never tells the whole story. It is proof that the Bligh government is not interested in reducing the risk of exposure to asbestos by Queenslanders. It is proof that the Bligh government is quite content to play Russian roulette with people's lives. This proof is just the tip of the iceberg. If I showed you all the asbestos items in all the government buildings requiring attention, I would need a Mack truck. This government is not serious about asbestos—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Education will come to order.

Ms BATES: This government is not serious about asbestos and it is not serious about protecting the lives of Queenslanders. Why is this so? It filters down from the very top. In 2005 the then education minister, Anna Bligh, said that removing ageing asbestos roofs in schools was not a priority. I table a *Courier-Mail* article titled 'Asbestos roofs not a priority, says Bligh'.

Tabled paper: Courier-Mail article, dated 9 April 2005, titled 'Asbestos roofs not a priority, says Bligh' [\[5102\]](#).

What can Queenslanders expect from her ministers when the Premier herself said that it is not a priority? We can expect no time frames and no deadlines.


Mr Dick interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Education, I have warned you three times. I now warn you under standing order 253A to cease interjecting. The member for Mudgeeraba has the call.

Ms BATES: We can expect no time frames and no deadlines, just as the minister illustrated with this little one-page extract. The Premier, the then education minister, is quoted as saying that all dangerous asbestos that poses any health risk to our staff or students was removed from schools in the early 1990s.

I return to 4 August, when the minister attacked me in this place. He said that he intended writing to the Speaker to refer me to the Ethics Committee. That did not happen. It was just another scripted stunt designed to avoid scrutiny. If the minister truly believes he can shut me up, he is dead wrong. As a registered nurse I have seen firsthand the horrors of asbestos related diseases, and I will not stand by while the government plays political games with innocent people who deserve better than the no-priority, no-target-date approach to those deathtraps. Today I will be writing to the Speaker referring the minister for building services to the Ethics Committee. Enough is enough; Queenslanders deserve better.

Newman, Mr C

 **Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.14 pm): ‘Campbell the Chameleon’ wants Queensland’s top job. This is the bloke who stabbed the hapless official Leader of the Opposition in the back and recycled another former leader of the opposition, all from the back verandah of the member for Clayfield’s house. This is the former lord mayor who said during the floods that he would stand by the people of Brisbane but at the same time he was plotting to desert them. No doubt he was ordering dessert in a swish, flood-free restaurant as the floodwaters washed away his ratepayers’ dreams. He probably ordered cake as well, although I bet he did not pick up the tab.

Mr Newman told Central Queensland that not enough is being spent on our roads, but what did he say when he was the Lord Mayor of Brisbane? He said that less should be spent in the regions and more should be spent in the City of Brisbane. Again, the chameleon is out there busily changing colours to suit the climate. One day he is red, one day he is green and the next he is blue, but he is always a hypocrite. For him, the truth is a foreign object. He is the sort of bloke who cheats at Trivial Pursuit. Members need just ask the chamber of commerce at Ashgrove. He is so self-obsessed with failure that he resorts to underhanded behaviour at a charity event just to win. His motto is ‘win at all costs, win unfairly’. This fellow says that he is one of the mob, but at the same time he demands to be chauffeur driven to Ashgrove on a few mornings to dupe the locals into believing that he lives in the area.

Ms Jones: He drove to my street.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I take the interjection. Can members guess who was driving him around in a taxpayer funded car? Apparently it was the member for Clayfield. It seems that he has nothing better to do than to drive the chameleon around.

‘Chameleon Campbell’ slithered up Central Queensland to the golden triangle and became the farmers’ champion. ‘There’ll be no mining here,’ he said. But of course ‘Uncle Clive’, who pays for his Italian shoes, suits and ties, pays the grocery bill and probably even picks up the bar tab, pulled him into line. So ‘Chameleon Campbell’ donned the fluoro shirt and the little work boots and he dabbed on a bit of coal dust. When the chameleon is in the farming area he is the farmers’ friend, promising legislative protection. However, when ‘Clive the Miner’ jerks his chain the miners become his priority. He is all things to all people. Therefore, he will let everyone down. He will sell out the farmers or he will sell out the miners, or perhaps even both. Of course, one thing chameleons are good at is hiding, and we see that every week as he hides from the media.

Ms Jones: He will not front a media conference.


Mr SCHWARTEN: No, he will not front a media conference. He used to be the king of the kids down at City Hall, pushing the B-team around, abusing journos, ringing the editor et cetera. But now that he is up against the A-team down here, he is not so sure. Given his Benny Hill impersonations lately, I am sure that his advisers are desperate that he does not show his true colours. We know that he wants to hide from the past; after all, he was given the biggest handout of \$1 billion from a Labor state government and he still managed to create the biggest debt in history for the Brisbane City Council. It was his madcap scheme to provide town bikes, but they have sat so long that they have probably become homes to generations of red-back spiders. Subscribers are leaving the scheme quicker than a gazelle leaving a pride of lions. Ratepayers have had to fork out more and more for that hamfisted scheme. His tunnel vision has seen the company go broke. If you are in one of his tunnels you have a better chance of being struck by lightning than you have of being hit by a car.

The chameleon thinks he can hide away from his statements in the regional press. Obviously, he does not know that our great local paper, the *Morning Bulletin*, is online. He probably thinks we have not even got TV in Rocky, given that it has been so long since he has been there. Last week he told the ‘Bully’ that he would tell us all about his road program after he won the election—in other words, ‘Vote for me and I’ll reveal all.’ That is not only a most devious and deceptive tactic but also an arrogant one with shades of Joh’s, ‘Don’t you worry about that!’

He has had a lot to say about the Bruce, but that is a federal road. According to him, he has all the answers to the problems, but there is no money and there is no plan. The only plan is to get elected and then he will tell us. As I have said on a number of occasions, the only Bruce he knows anything about is Bruce Flegg, the bloke he tried to stab in the back for his seat. He was searching for somewhere far enough away from the angry voters in high-rises in Brisbane who do not take kindly to his rates hikes, which again are the highest in Brisbane’s history. Characteristically, chameleons are not a very brave species. We saw evidence of that when Mr Newman skittered away as far as he could from the affordability pressures he created for unit owners. He lacked the courage to take on the Premier in West End and settled on Ashgrove—

(Time expired)


Sunbus, Fair Work Act

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (12.19 pm): We on the Sunshine Coast have recently seen firsthand how the federal government's Fair Work Act is not able to resolve the ongoing industrial relations dispute between Sunbus and Sunbus drivers who are members of the TWU. I use this occasion to call on our Queensland federal politicians to take our concerns about the failure of the federal legislation to resolve this ongoing industrial dispute direct to the relevant federal minister. During the last sitting of state parliament I met with the Minister for Transport in the chamber and we spoke about this debacle occurring on the Sunshine Coast. Unfortunately, I was informed by the minister that the legislation does not allow her to intervene. Quite frankly, we see the state government is providing money through TransLink, a state government entity, to a company to meet a community service obligation to provide bus services on the Sunshine Coast. The reality is that the bus services are not operating and, as far as I am concerned, the bus company has breached its community service obligation.

Tomorrow at half past 11 TransLink representatives will be providing a briefing to one of the new parliamentary committees, the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee. This is history in the making. I use this opportunity to call on the members of that committee to put questions to the TransLink representatives about what is happening on the Sunshine Coast with this debacle over the failure to provide a regular and reliable bus service. I would hope members of the committee will be able to put questions to TransLink representatives. They should ask for a copy of the contract that they have entered into with the relevant company so that we can see firsthand the terms that TransLink entered into and the community service obligation that the relevant company undertook and was contracted to provide. Another question that the committee members may want to put to TransLink representatives is: what was the reason for the delay in TransLink withdrawing funding from the relevant bus company? What was the trigger that TransLink relied on to withdraw the funding? What investigations did TransLink staff make with the relevant union and with the bus company involved to see what the difference was?

I believe this debacle should not be allowed to happen. This is a very clear example for all Australians to see of how this federal legislation is not able to resolve a difference. It is not able to resolve a difference and some of the most needy on the Sunshine Coast, who rely on public transport, are constantly affected. Now we have a skeleton bus service operating, but quite frankly, it is a disgrace. I use this opportunity to also call on our state Minister for Transport and the Premier to please raise this issue when they next meet with their federal and interstate colleagues to see how we can refine and amend the federal Fair Work Act. The reality is that if the federal legislation cannot resolve an industrial dispute that is occurring in Queensland today, it is high time we took back the power so that our own state legislation can deal with the problem. This problem is not unique to Queensland and it will arise in other parts of Australia too. I look forward to hearing from the Premier, perhaps later this sitting, about what approaches she has made to the Prime Minister to try to amend the federal Fair Work Act so that it can be more responsive to our needs in Queensland.

E-health and Innovation

 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.23 pm): Our government was very proud to host this year's Health Informatics Conference in Queensland and which I had the pleasure of officially opening. It was great to see so many at the conference committed to the health of Queensland and Australia.

With a population of 4½ million in an area almost seven times the size of the UK, Queensland's geographic isolation and decentralised population are challenges that we face here in Queensland. Technology is moving at an exponential rate and is playing an increasing role in how we understand and think about the future of health services. Healthcare and IT professionals working together are continually thinking about new and emerging technologies and how they can benefit the provision of services and what benefits it will bring to future patients.

E-health has such an important role in keeping Queensland healthy and is utilising technology in such a groundbreaking and innovative way. The Queensland government has invested \$243 million in e-health over four years and is already transforming the way Queensland Health does business for the better. For Queensland this is not just about information systems that might provide the right information to the right person at the right time, giving healthcare practitioners fast, reliable and secure access to patient records. More broadly, it is about improving the connectivity between our hospitals and our community providers.

Queensland is investing in information communication technology via e-health and telehealth to bridge distances and to provide extraordinary patient care to every Queenslanders no matter which part of the state they call home. This is, in the fuller sense of the word, transformation of our health services. In order to deliver sustainable e-health solutions, Queensland's e-health future is being delivered by a phased approach with the first stage of the e-health journey already delivering an electronic and anaesthetic record-keeping solution live in 42 sites across Queensland, which allows hospitals to

produce standard, consistent and legible anaesthetic records. Digital breast screening is providing Queensland women with digital mammography in 133 locations across the state, eliminating faults with film. An integrated mental health application is giving mental health clinicians the ability to access and share patient information across Queensland with one system, and there is a lot more happening in that regard.

In a health service area of more than 1.7 million kilometres, telehealth is a new way to bring clinicians and patients together regardless of distance and the spread of health facilities, resources and patients. Queensland leads Australia with the largest managed telehealth network in the country. It improves patient access to services; provides clinical staff with support, education and training; and reduces travel time and costs for patients, clinicians and managers. The growth in the availability of telehealth services can be seen in the increase of point-to-point contacts from 5,000 hours per year in 2007 to 120,000 hours per year now. There are more than 960 videoconferencing systems in operation and telehealth is providing vital links to the best clinicians our state has to offer without the need for our patients to travel, therefore improving patients' access to services and eliminating the stress of travel.

The Viewer is the next step for Queensland Health in delivering a fully integrated electronic medical record—that is IEMR—to Queensland patients. The Viewer is an electronic medical record viewing solution on which authorised Queensland Health staff will be able to view consolidated summary patient information. It is in its early stages of rollout and it is anticipated it will be live in 250 sites by July 2012. An IEMR will be clinically led and delivered by a consultative and phased approach, providing clinicians and supporting staff with a single view of patient records, enabling the delivery of improved patient health and safety.

The public health system is transforming in Queensland, undergoing remarkable reform to bring about much more integrated patient orientated services to people in their communities and closer to their homes. For Queensland Health it is helping to find new efficiencies and collaborations, while for patients it is making access to our services more equitable and improving how our clinicians and patients interact for the better.

Health Security



Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (12.28 pm): Queensland has been and is beset by many health issues, and adding to them will be an ageing population, chronic disease and workforce questions. However, in dealing with those issues, we must not be blind to potential concerns given Australia's placement in South-East Asia and the proximity of New Guinea and Indonesia to Queensland.

In November 2010 the James Cook University published a paper entitled *Protecting Australia's Health Security* which details some of the issues the university sees as needing attention. In dealing with these matters it makes this comment—

Australia's health status will become increasingly difficult to protect as population centres in the tropics grow, as international mobility increases, potentially bringing infectious diseases to our shores and especially as Northern Australia becomes wetter.

The paper then goes on to discuss a number of matters including dengue fever, of which there have been significant outbreaks in Queensland, tuberculosis, Hendra virus, bat-borne viruses, Japanese encephalitis and malaria. At page 26 of the document this comment appears—

Management of these issues is the responsibility of State and Territory health services. Such health services however must be underpinned by vigorous and effective program support. Pathogens are always mutating developing resistance to known interventions and the solutions to many health problems remain to be discovered.

In May 2010 the university published a document entitled *Biosecurity in North Queensland: Challenges and Opportunities*. The paper was authored by Rick Speare and provides an insight into what are the biosecurity risks in North Queensland and what are the opportunities to use new approaches to reduce the risks. Of course it is important not to be alarmist in relation to these matters, but it is equally important to be prudent—firstly, to be aware of them; secondly, to monitor them; and, thirdly, to put in place a system that does protect the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.


In particular, the document provides an excellent breakdown of Queensland's link to Asia and the Pacific and in some cases graphic pictures highlight the necessity to be looking forward to solutions and not to be reactive after it has happened. In particular, it states that the offshore biosecurity challenges include failed health systems pushing diseased Papua New Guinea residents towards the Torres Strait, emerging infectious diseases, poor control of livestock diseases in New Guinea and Indonesia, and the importation of food products carrying pathogens. I have no doubt that there are others, but those I have mentioned should be of real concern.

Thus the report of some weeks ago of the closure of the tuberculosis clinics of Boigu and Saibai islands leads to a significant concern as to what the consequences could be. There has been, and there is, real concern within the medical profession that the closure of these facilities could pose a threat with regard to tuberculosis given the ease with which people can pass from Papua New Guinea to the Torres Strait and on to mainland Queensland.

An article in the *Australian* of 2 June states that between 2009 and 2010 more than 1,000 PNG nationals entered Australia for treatment and 238 were admitted to Queensland hospitals. In addition, 60 PNG nationals were currently under treatment at TB clinics at the islands I referred to. Without doubt, the cost to treat TB patients is expensive. Again, the same article refers to the treatment of a TB patient at Thursday Island costing \$24,588, and at this point in time Queensland spends \$18 million a year on treating PNG nationals. Although not certain, I understand that a resolution to the problem of the closure of the clinics may be close at hand. If not, it is imperative that we as a state put in place the needed protections to ensure Queenslanders, and indeed the rest of Australia, will not suffer as a consequence of short-sightedness.

I have no doubt that Australia's health system is robust, efficient and professional enough to deal with most issues that arise in any First World country. However, it is also imperative that we be proactive in providing the biosecurity essential to ensure that diseases such as tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis and the rest do not even start to get a toehold in the state. This is an issue that we do need to deal with, and I believe that we are short-sighted if we simply turn our backs on this matter when the opportunity exists now to deal with the concern of TB entering this state.

South Stradbroke Island, Artificial Reef

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (12.33 pm): Last week I delivered on an election commitment with the establishment of the South Stradbroke Island artificial reef. I made an election commitment during the 2009 state election campaign following the extension of a green zone off South Stradbroke Island. Moreton Bay is renowned as one of Queensland's most popular fishing spots, yet many people did not know that a popular fishing spot off South Stradbroke Island was included in the Moreton Bay Marine Park zone.

It became clear from my consultation with locals that for recreational fishers and game fish charter operators an artificial reef would not only compensate for the fishing area lost but also provide for a unique fishing experience. I lobbied the Premier for funding that would provide for the design, construction and delivery of six fish-attracting devices and an artificial reef. Following my re-election, I worked hard to ensure local fishers and charter boat operators were consulted on the design and process for the fish-attracting devices and artificial reef. I would like to thank local fishers, bait shop operators and local charter operators for bringing to my attention their local knowledge, their valuable input and their support for this project.

I know that the government also consulted with Sunfish, Ecofish, Queensland Game Fishing Association, the Australian Underwater Federation, the Australian Marine Conservation Society, the Wildlife Preservation Society and the Queensland Charter Vessel Association on the location and design of the South Straddie artificial reef. In delivering on this election commitment I launched the deployment of six fish-attracting devices in April 2010. The fish-attracting devices were purposely built by Brian Kirkby of the Game Fishing Association. I would like to thank Brian for his expertise and for the advice he offered during the development process. I would also like to thank QPWS officer Stephen Hossack for his great work in managing this project and for all his efforts in talking with people about how the reefs will be created.

The FADs are retrieved by marine park staff at the start of the whale migration season and are deployed again in late November for fishers to return to the site to wet a line. Last week the Minister for Environment, Vicky Darling, and I went to the artificial reef site to witness the lowering of the fish cubes that make up the artificial reef. The 20 fish cubes, each measuring four cubic metres and weighing 17 tonnes, have been made of durable materials to ensure they have as little impact on the natural environment as possible. The cubes were deployed approximately three kilometres north of the seaway in an average depth of 22 metres of water in groups across a 208-hectare area.


Built to create a reef that will attract reef fish species and pelagic fish such as mackerel and wahu, the delivery of this election commitment is good news for locals and visitors. The coordinates of the reef can be located on the Department of Environment and Resource Management website, allowing fishers to mark the locations on their GPS units and charts. The fish-attracting device situated some metres north of the reef will complement the fishing experience at this site. This new reef was part of a \$2 million artificial reef program—an election commitment by this government. It has delivered the Harry Atkinson artificial reef, the West Peel Island artificial reef and the East Coochie artificial reef. The reefs complement the green zones, which protect 16 per cent of Moreton Bay to ensure this delicate ecosystem survives.

I am very pleased to be part of a government that is committed to looking after our environment as a priority. Through public consultation and strong advocacy, the South Stradbroke Island artificial reef is a win-win outcome that the community can benefit from now and long into the future.

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

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Health and Disabilities Committee

 **Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (12.37 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Food Act 2006, the Health Act 1937, the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006, the Pest Management Act 2001, the Public Health Act 2005, the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003 and the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 for particular purposes. I table the bill and present the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Disabilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Health Legislation Amendment Bill [\[5103\]](#).

Tabled paper: Health Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[5104\]](#).

The bill makes amendments to seven Health portfolio acts to support policy initiatives that seek to protect the health of Queenslanders and ensure a current legislative base. Most significantly the bill amends the Food Act, the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act, the Public Health Act and the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act.

The purpose of the Queensland Food Act is to ensure that businesses providing food and food services to the public do so in a safe and hygienic way. The Australian and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council is currently working on developing a national framework for a food business rating scheme to allow consumers to easily identify food businesses that comply with safety standards required under the Food Act.

This bill provides an authority in the Food Act to introduce a food business rating scheme once developed by the ministerial council for implementation by local councils across the state. To ensure consistency across the state, the bill introduces a penalty of 1,000 penalty units for not complying with a model prescribed in regulation.

Consistency across local councils within Queensland is important to ensure that businesses are rated the same way regardless of where they are located and to ensure that the community is not confused by different rating schemes with different criteria. This is particularly important for businesses that operate in more than one local council area.

I recognise that this penalty appears to be significant and it would be unfair to impose it on local councils without ensuring that they have adequate notice of new regulations and any subsequent amendments. Therefore, I have directed the Department of Health to ensure that appropriate consultation and notification processes are in place to inform the Local Government Association of Queensland and local councils of new regulations and any subsequent amendments concerning a food business rating scheme.

The amendments in this bill will not immediately result in the introduction of a food business rating scheme. Rather, it allows the uptake of a state-wide scheme once one has been developed by the Australian and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council and consultation on the scheme has been undertaken with Queensland's local councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

The prescribing of the scheme in regulation will enable a more successful translation of what is expected to be highly complex and technical elements into legislation. It will also enable Queensland to prescribe a scheme relatively quickly following approval of the national framework, which is expected to occur in 2012.

The bill also makes minor and operational amendments to the Food Act to provide better responses to suspected intentional food contaminations, to provide a fairer licensing model for mobile food business, to extend the time period for approving applications for auditors to take into account the delays often experienced with obtaining criminal history checks and to update various references in the act to reflect changes to the Food Standards Code.

This bill amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act to ban the sale of certain products and to clarify the statutory requirements for the designation of outdoor smoking areas in licensed premises. The bill amends the tobacco act to ban the sale of fruit and confectionary flavoured cigarettes. The bill also broadens the type of products that are prohibited from sale under the act to include other gadgets and trinkets that resemble tobacco products, such as cigarette shaped pens and lighters.

This builds upon the current prohibition against selling food and toys that resemble tobacco products and is based upon these objects having a similar novelty value to toys. These types of objects normalise smoking to young people and may encourage experimentation with smoking. It is therefore very important that we ban the sale of such items that may have the effect of increasing the number of our young people who take up smoking.

One of the main purposes of the tobacco act is to protect public health by limiting the exposure to cigarette smoke in public places. To this end, the tobacco act prohibits smoking in licensed premises and allows the creation of designated outdoor smoking areas, or DOSAs, where smokers may smoke without interfering with other patrons.

The act outlines the requirements for DOSAs, including the need for buffers that are impervious to smoke to separate the DOSA from other areas. Enforcement of the DOSA provisions has highlighted conflicting interpretations of some of the provisions. To remove ambiguity in the legislation, this bill amends the tobacco act to clarify the original policy intent and to better protect the public health.

Specifically, the bill amends the tobacco act to (1), specify how the required 2.1 metre high buffer between smoking and non-smoking areas of different floor heights must be measured to ensure that the height is measured from the floor of the DOSA and not a lower floor of the non-smoking area; and, (2), remove the reference to 'a thick screening hedge' as an example of a screen that is impervious to smoke, as this has been shown in practice to not meet the intent of a screen that blocks smoke between a DOSA and other areas of a premise. I believe these amendments will better protect the community from the effects of cigarette smoke in public places.

The Public Health Act is amended by this bill to enable a more appropriate response to outbreaks of contagious conditions. At present, the Public Health Act is limited in the action that can be taken when an outbreak of, or exposure to, a contagious condition occurs outside—that is, away from—a school or child-care service. The amendments expand the current circumstances in the Public Health Act that can trigger closure or removal of a child to include such situations where exposure to a contagious condition occurs through, for example, an interschool sports carnival or in the home via siblings attending a different school or child-care service.

It is important to note that these amendments do not broaden the existing powers or change the requirements for activating powers under the Public Health Act. Requirements such as consulting a doctor for advice before removing a child or consulting with the Minister for Education before ordering the closure of a school remain unamended.

The bill also makes a minor amendment to the Public Health Act to enable the chief executive of Health to delegate the power to authorise a public interest disclosure in relation to a notifiable condition to the Chief Health Officer or other appropriately qualified senior officer. On occasion, the chief executive's unavailability has prevented the urgent disclosure of information to people who may have been exposed to infections such as HIV. This amendment will enable the delegated officer to make the notification. However, the amendment will not permit the delegated officer from further delegating the authority to ensure only appropriate disclosures are made in urgent circumstances.

Finally, the bill amends the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act to ensure a stronger interaction with the national registration and accreditation scheme for health professionals. These amendments are consequential to the implementation of that scheme and will enable the Health Quality and Complaints Commission to more effectively deal with complaints about registered health practitioners.

Other amendments in the bill are operational in nature and will provide better support to Queensland Health officers in performing their duties under the various acts that are amended. Queensland has an extensive legislative base that aims to balance the need to protect public health with the interests of the public, relevant industry groups and health consumers. The amendments to health legislation proposed in this bill seek to continue this balance and improve the effective operation of health legislation.

The primary focus of the amendments in this bill is the protection of the public health through improved community awareness of business with strong food safety standards, stronger and improved restrictions on smoking and smoking products, more appropriate authority for containing outbreaks of contagious conditions and strengthened relationships between the overseers of health service delivery. I believe these objectives to be vital to the continued improvement of the health of Queenslanders and I am delighted to commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (12.47 pm): 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.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Disabilities Committee.

MT. GRAVATT SHOWGROUNDS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.48 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill [\[5105\]](#).

Tabled paper: Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[5106\]](#).

The Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988 is essentially unchanged since its commencement some 23 years ago. The legislation has supported community use of the showgrounds over all those years; however, it is now in need of an update to better reflect the society we live in.

The Mount Gravatt Showgrounds is an iconic facility on the south side of Brisbane, in my own backyard in fact. The local community I live in is proud to have such a wonderful asset to enjoy. As the local member for Mansfield, I have a strong track record of supporting the showgrounds and many of the tenants that call the site home. This will never change.

As Minister for Sport, I am responsible for the administration of the showgrounds legislation and I want to ensure it is as strong and balanced as it can be to ensure a strong and positive future for the grounds. That is why I am bringing this legislation to parliament to help strengthen the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act and to make some positive changes—such as guaranteeing the inclusion of women in the running of the grounds. The current act does not provide for any gender balance for the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Trust to reflect the community it is established to serve.

The primary purpose of this bill is to ensure that women will be represented on the showgrounds trust in the future. The bill will also make other minor changes to trust governance arrangements. The purpose of the act is to reserve the site for showgrounds, park and recreational purposes. Over the last 23 years activities at the showgrounds have diversified and expanded to include community, sporting and commercial uses. As a long-time friend of the showgrounds, I have watched them grow beyond the original feature event, the Mount Gravatt annual show, to now include numerous regular events including a variety of community based uses such as the Sunday markets, the Men's Shed and the golf driving range. The trust also has agreements with users ranging from knitters' clubs, sporting groups, dog training, dance clubs, garden clubs, Weight Watchers, and church and senior citizens groups.

Having a broad range of community tenants raises challenges for the management and operation of the showgrounds. It is important that the trust has a balanced outlook to move with the changing needs of the community. In order to help achieve that, it should have an appropriate balance of male and female members. I know that the local community wants to see women guaranteed a role in the management of the showgrounds. I have received letters from 209 people in my local electorate supporting this view. Each one of those people went to the trouble of posting me a letter or sending me an email to express their views, and I thank them for that. At the moment there is no requirement that women be nominated or appointed to the trust and I would hope that all of those in this House would agree that in this day and age that could be seen as sexist and inappropriate. However, there are those who have been hell-bent on campaigning against gender equality. They have shown their true colours by making deliberately misleading statements to local residents and through media comments. One would have to question their motives. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has also written to me outlining that he does not support a gender balance in changes to the act, yet the same council, as part of the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, is required to ensure that there is a gender balance on that corporation's board.

The Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Trust is appointed to manage the operation and development of the showgrounds and it is important it stays in step with modern governance expectations and practices. To this end, the bill requires stakeholders to nominate persons for membership based on the range of skills, expertise and experience appropriate to the management and operation of the site. I fully support the government's Women on Boards strategy and I am committed to achieving a balance of male and female representatives on the statutory authorities for which I have administrative responsibility. Accordingly, the bill requires nominations for appointments to include men and women. Practically, this means that the Brisbane City Council, the Mount Gravatt Show Society and the Queensland government will need to ensure that both men and women are put forward amongst their respective nominations for the trust. This reform supports the implementation of the Women on Boards strategy and promotes a membership better reflecting local community expectations in the 21st century. Each of the three nominating stakeholders will continue to have the same level of representation on the trust.

During the review of the legislation, unfounded claims were made about government taking control of the trust. The bill clearly demonstrates that no such motives ever existed. We have maintained the status quo in terms of representation of the council, show society and community representatives

appointed by the government. In the case of Brisbane City Council, which will continue to be represented by two trust members, one of those nominees must be the local councillor. Instead of being on the trust in an ex-officio role, the local councillor will become a fully appointed member and will naturally be succeeded by future councillors. No other elected representatives will be able to serve on the trust other than the local councillor. The trust will nominate at least two members for consideration as chairperson. The minister will select the chair from these nominations. This reform will help ensure the chairperson represents the community and acts in the best interests of the trust rather than their respective organisations. An additional reform will permit showground lessees, such as the Men's Shed, with the approval of the trust, to continue to access the site during the period of the annual show.

During the review I was appalled by an ongoing LNP-driven campaign to frighten the community by saying there was a secret plan to sell off the showgrounds for housing or commercial development. By introducing this bill, it can plainly be seen that this was nothing more than scaremongering. Those who spread this misinformation should be ashamed that they would try to hide their opposition to women serving on the trust behind false claims designed to upset local residents. Worse, though, in my opinion, are those who label the support of women as tokenism—an incredibly backwards view to hold in 2011. In order for the showgrounds and the trust to move forward and have a fresh start, the bill seeks to dissolve the current membership to allow new appointments based on reformed member nomination and selection criteria. I have great confidence in the future of the showgrounds and commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.54 pm): 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.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 pm to 2.30 pm.

ABORIGINAL LAND AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 November 2010 (see p. 4129), on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (2.30 pm): The Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is an important bill. It must be recognised by all levels of government and all political parties that having a bill that will improve Indigenous people's lives and the lives of future generations can only be an asset to the state of Queensland. As all members know, development in Indigenous communities requires a careful balance. We on this side of the House are committed to providing Indigenous communities with economic development that provides viability, stability and productivity whilst respecting Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the many complex issues that go with those cultures. It is quite easy for South-East Queensland orientated regulations to often be misguided. I am glad that the department has worked well in consultation with Indigenous communities to get a good balance in relation to these important issues that affect Indigenous communities in North Queensland and elsewhere.

However, it is important to understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities live under different circumstances in terms of geography, housing, economic participation and access to services. We must also recognise previous wrongdoings in relation to social engineering and enforced relocation. I understand that officers of the department have worked hard to address those complex issues and have taken them into account for the benefit of future generations. In order to provide the best possible outcome for Indigenous communities, changes have to be made to account for those circumstances and to take into consideration cultural and social needs to provide the best possible outcomes in terms of the quality of life and economic participation of people in Indigenous communities.

More than three years ago—in April 2008—the House passed the first stage of this legislation. This second piece of legislation has been a long time coming. Although I recognise the complexities of the issues and the different communities and the different families within those communities, it is a good result to finally have this legislation before the House. However, I think issues such as these should be dealt with in a timely manner in future to ensure people's perceptions of what is happening within their communities are not put at unnecessary risk.

The first piece of legislation dealt with homeownership, leases, social housing and transfer processes for deed of grant in trust—DOGIT—lands. That legislation aimed to encourage economic development in Indigenous communities. During the debate on that legislation the member for Condamine stated—

The idea behind DOGIT was that the community land would be as secure as possible under Queensland law. If community land was required for a public purpose for the benefit of the local Aboriginal community, there could be no objection to the normal compulsory acquisition or public dedication of land procedures applying. However, if the government wants to acquire community land for a public purpose unrelated to the benefit of the community, that should occur—

and this is significant—

only with the negotiated consent of the local community acting through the trustee prior to legislation.

In this regard I think that has been done. During debate on that legislation other LNP members highlighted the stifling of development in communities as a result of a hindrance to private and commercial investment. Development has to occur hand in hand with local communities as they have to see that this development will give them a significant advantage and hope for the future.

We recognise that remoteness is certainly a factor. But another factor has been the ability of councils to issue long-term leases or grant private and freehold land to third-party proponents. This issue was addressed in the 2008 legislation. The 99-year leases that were introduced were an improvement on the previous 30-year leases, but they still did not provide access by individual Indigenous people to full individual freehold property rights to that Indigenous land if they sought those rights. On the other hand, the compulsory acquisition laws remained, and this created an inconsistent approach.

Some people—whether they be in this House or outside of it—could say that that is an imbalance of natural justice, but people have to be mindful and all political parties have to be mindful that they have to firstly understand the complexities and the unique qualities of Indigenous people before they make statements about freehold land and so forth. It is a unique situation. We have to make sure that the rights of the people in these communities are uppermost in the actions taken by any level of government. The 99-year leases were permitted to be sold only to another Indigenous person for 99 years, to the state for not more than 99 years or to another person who is not Indigenous for a period of only 10 years without the minister's prior consent. There is little added in this legislation in terms of comparable property rights to underpin the basis for the commercial and economic objectives of both pieces of legislation.

The bill that we are debating today, after what I would say is a long delay—three years—covers the second stage of the transfer system and aligns it with the federal Native Title Act 1993. The bill aims to provide more options for land transfers, to improve governance for trusts and to provide recognition of DOGIT landowners on Seisa, Bamaga and Hammond Island. It aims to update a 19-year-old act that was written before the granting of native title and deals with perpetual town leases and future act provisions. I will refer to those issues later, but it is really pleasing to see that recognition, particularly in those three townships, of the ATSI communities and the generations who have lived in those communities in relation to the overall Aboriginal Land Act. Great care has been taken in the promotion of development in these communities to ensure that development is of economic and social benefit to the communities and in no way causes harm or fails community expectations.

The resources in these communities are valuable, whether they are natural or environmental resources, cultural resources, the heritage of the people or the tourism and business opportunities. This bill that is before the House aims to provide a better alignment with the federal Native Title Act. That act has been around for quite some time—since 1993. The Aboriginal Land Act, which this bill amends, is 20 years old. A lot has changed in that time. It is somewhat indicative of this government's attitude to Indigenous affairs that the changes that are contained in this bill have sat around for so long without action. A part of the bill before us also allows the addressing of native title issues under the Native Title Act before the transfer of land. We broadly support the bill but we have a few reservations.

Firstly, there is a need to not view the bill as a solution to a problem in itself. Resources and assistance need to be supplied to these affected communities to see this legislation work. We need to see supplementary and complementary services improved dramatically to help lift the day-to-day quality of life of people within these communities. A lot more needs to be done in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and this legislation is a piece of that equation. We need more attention paid to health, education, land tenure, housing overcrowding, economic participation, cultural preservation, employment, child safety, violence—a whole range of issues—and that is why this legislation, whilst it is good it will be passed, is only one piece of the overall puzzle.

This is a government that, as we know, has failed to meet a number of deadlines. One deadline it has failed to meet is the national remote Indigenous housing program that cost Queensland taxpayers \$3 million and Indigenous communities the chance of accommodation. We have also seen a far greater percentage of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities reflected in the numbers of children referred to the child safety department. We also see that in relation to health outcomes, housing and criminal convictions and other matters within the community. Whilst we have this amendment to this legislation there are still many areas that need to be improved by levels of government and all parties in government. Whether it is said in this House or out of this House, Indigenous welfare needs to be kept at the forefront of discussions. When we talk about poverty we should also talk about Indigenous welfare. We need to ensure that there is a whole-of-government approach because a lot of these people rely on us and what we do.

As I have said, we do have some reservations about this bill. The bill does aim to recognise the rights of the traditional owners of Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island. These Torres Strait Island communities are located on traditional Aboriginal lands. These communities have had a long-standing relationship with these lands over a number of generations. The ownership of these lands has been confused because of the inclusion of these lands under the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. This required the transfer of the islands to the Torres Strait Islander people, which preceded the recognition of continued existence of native title. Under this bill the lands will be transferable under the Aboriginal Land Act. The provisions are not prescriptive of ownership but prescribe consultation procedures which require the minister to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about the use of and access to this land. The legislation will reduce the number of organisations needed by providing for land to be granted under federal legislation registered bodies, specifically Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 organisations known as C(ATSI)A organisations in departmental speak.

The bill also states an objective to improve the governance of existing trusts and to improve alignment with the Commonwealth Native Title Act. Other aims in the bill are to clarify and update the provisions relating to Aurukun and Mornington shires, to deal with future development compliance and to amalgamate provisions relating to Land Court hearing appeals under various sections of the Aboriginal Land Act into one section. The explanatory notes also state the objective to ensure community development can proceed efficiently. The impact of this legislation on that objective is much more subjective and debatable.

Economic development in Indigenous communities is important for quality of life, independence of income, sustainability of community and preservation of culture. Well-managed economic development can deliver individual benefits across communities that flourish. To ensure economic development is well managed it needs to be done in alignment with the community's aims. To contradict these aims damages the community and to override the wishes of the community destroys the heart and soul of the community. While this is true of any community in our state, Indigenous communities are more vulnerable and therefore require more careful treatment: consultation with elders and councils to ensure cultural considerations; working alongside residents to achieve social and economic outcomes.

Housing is a particularly sensitive issue. Housing and a secure home include notions of family and responsibility. Homeownership is repeatedly identified as a priority by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The profile of an Indigenous homeowner fits the employment, economic and geographical status profile of other homeowners. It is essential that healthy, habitable, secure and safe home environments are available to all in our Indigenous communities. It is especially important that these homes are constructed and designed in consultation with the communities. It is very important that they meet the weather conditions in the communities and the cultural significances within those communities. This, however, does not equate to universal homeownership, just as it does not in the wider community. Obviously there are special circumstances.

Access to the housing market, be it ownership or private rental, is needed. Habitable houses to own or rent are necessary. Homeownership is out of the reach of many residents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The reasons are in part caused by tenure issues but also economic ones. There is a need for a range of practical and affordable options. It may include the rent to buy systems that have been successful in other areas. Debt burdens that cannot be managed are not going to create conducive community environments. Overcrowded and destroyed homes are a great negative in terms of community participation and development. As previously stated, that is where design and practicability are needed so that we are actually getting the homes which the community needs, will reside in and have a connection with. It is important that it is not a residence that may fit into some other area around the state.

An essential part of homeownership is fiscal management. The same applies to any potential homeowner. There must be the availability of reasonable finances. There must be a capacity to repay the funds. There must be a clear understanding of the contracts and the many pieces of paperwork in relation to these types of loans, which is further complicated by circumstances where English is not the

first language of many people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I think more could be done in relation to the aspect of understanding not just the loan but the many different levels of government in relation to the paperwork. I think there needs to be a great deal of patience in that regard as well.

If a loan is defaulted does that give a bank, a lending institute or a trust—which are the main lenders in these particular areas—a right of ownership of community title land? Is there any repossession recourse for banks? What incentive is there for banks to issue loans? There has to be confidence in the process. There are provisions in this bill relating to the mortgagee having to sell the land within four years, but it cannot be a catch-all provision. The surrounding issues are complex and will need to be hammered out to avoid any negative consequences on individuals and communities. Everyone has to be responsible for how this is done in the future. There are too many blame games. The negativity that is being spread through media outlets has a detrimental effect on the ground within local communities.

Other issues, such as affordable housing construction, need to be examined in order to provide the most workable and effective outcomes. There needs to be an examination of the quality and the quantity of existing stock. Precautions must be taken over speculative investments altering affordability. We have to work with the communities, not only through the formation of the legislation but also to ensure the success of the objectives of the legislation. The job of legislation is to protect the culture and the people. Action is needed to promote and encourage development. Significant gains in communities can be made by expanding and improving the efficiency of the existing housing program and improving associated infrastructure such as access to water, sewage, other minor infrastructure and local roads.

In addition, new housing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities needs to be designed to meet local needs. Different communities have different needs, whether it be geographical and access issues or economic and social issues. Those issues require specialised answers. In this speech I have alluded to that fact a couple of times. I have lived and worked in Indigenous communities over periods. I know that each community has its own diversity. When you live in a community you learn about the dynamics of the community and that can change from time to time. We need structures. I can give members some examples that relate to stability. I lived and worked on Mornington Island. Whenever I lived in an Indigenous community, I always felt that I learnt and benefited more from the experience than I took from it. I always prided myself on engaging in the communities, particularly in community-based structures. I was not just the police person within the community. I tried to be an extended part of the community by mixing with all people, from young children through to the elders.

I will tell members a story from my time on Mornington Island. I will not mention the gentleman's name, for whom I have a great deal of respect. When it was time to leave that community, I spoke to the gentleman. He wanted to be close, but we were never able to form a close friendship. In my final week on the island I had the opportunity to ask him why. He said, 'Jack, with police, health, education, other government departments—all levels—they come and go. We establish these wonderful friendships and what happens? You leave. That leaving takes away a piece of a person's heart.' Therefore, people in the communities need stability. A perfect case scenario would be for people to work in the communities for further terms so they can build up relationships and trust as well. People in the communities want that, but they do not want to go through the pain of losing a good friend they may never see again, bearing in mind that some of the community members are quite elderly people.

Obviously, distance is an enormous factor for some communities. When we are in Brisbane making legislation, and particularly the legislation that we will pass today, we have to be mindful of some of the complexities involved. I know this from having worked on Palm Island and Mornington Island. When I first arrived on Mornington Island, I met a group of young adults. They were aged over 17 years, which brought them into the adult side of criminality. Those young people lived on an island and they had few opportunities to travel to the mainland. In a simplistic scenario, they knew that if they committed so many indictable offences, they would have so many remands which meant so many trips to Mount Isa. In turn, if they pleaded guilty they would go to jail in Townsville. While that process was being worked through, Indigenous groups and departments would be addressing the young person's health needs. They knew that their medical requirements would be sorted out in Townsville. The young men and young women knew they would be returned to the island. It is a really sad situation when a young person has to go through such a process to achieve other outcomes, such as visiting friends, having health needs met, et cetera.

The Mornington Island PCYC promotes Indigenous participation in the Police Service and other groups on the island. Even in the short time I was there, we were able to organise for children to go to touch finals in Mount Isa. Mornington Island has a particularly strong focus on cultural awareness. I spent many days with the local community when the island was like a shopping centre. It is about stability. The people would know exactly where to get their headdresses, didgeridoos and spears. We need to be mindful of those types of complexities. I know from my own experience that by leaving your comfort zone and going to the communities, you have those experiences and you can gain a little bit of understanding in relation to the issues. I will return to the range of acts to be amended by this bill. One act is particularly applicable to this legislation and other pieces of legislation.

On one island, an issue about alcohol arose between the elderly and the young people of the community. One day, in the middle of the day, I went to a meeting at the cattle yards. Everyone was listening to everyone's words. A beautiful elderly lady got up and spoke about the days when she was in mission school. She told us a story about the community and how the responsibilities lie within the community. She said there was an elderly man standing on the side of a pathway. He bred birds. A young man came along and grabbed one of the birds. He held the bird in his hand and said, 'Old man, is this bird dead or alive?' The old man could not win. If he said it was dead, the young man would have let the bird go and if he said it was alive, the young man would squash it in his hand. As the elders said on that day, the life of the community lies within the community's hand. However, it is important to ensure that the community leaders reflect the community expectations. It is very important that we listen to the communities.

A range of acts are amended, with the bulk of changes being made to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991. The amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 are made to include the Aurukun Shire Council and the Mornington Shire Council under the definition of 'applicable governance'. This amendment ensures the law and order provisions that currently apply to the 14 other Indigenous local community areas also apply to the Aurukun and Mornington shires, which is necessary to ensure the continuation after amendments to the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act.

Similarly, the amendments to the Local Government Act 2009 include Aurukun and Mornington shires in the provisions which allow local government to levy fees and exempt people from fees. The changes to this legislation also allow 10 weeks instead of the current two months to fill a local government vacancy, bringing it into line with by-election vacancy periods elsewhere. Again, changes are made to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to ensure the provisions of applying Aboriginal tradition can include Aurukun and Mornington shire local governments.

A major change under this act is the transfer of land to bodies incorporated under the Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, C(ATSI)A, and not to individuals. This has been done in consultation with the relevant communities and, again, reflects expectations. Changes to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 reflect that future grants will be made available to incorporated bodies. This also provides that all or part of the Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land national park may be revoked if that land has been surrendered to the state by the Indigenous landholder.

The amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 encompass a number of areas. Under this bill the transfer of DOGIT lands will be allowed under the ALA transferrable land provisions. In order to clarify and simplify the legislation, the bill also amalgamates various sections of the act which deal with Land Court appeal hearings into one section. Land Court appeal hearings can often be very complex. Anyone who has gone through that process would know that they certainly invoke a high degree of knowledge. Anything that we can do to bring about efficiency in the process is welcomed. I also thank the people who have engaged in consultation throughout this phase to ensure this legislation is simplified.

There are some operational changes such as the amendment of clause 19, which extends the time for the minister to give notice of intention to make land transferrable from 10 business days to as soon as practicable. I would appreciate if the minister could provide some form of practical example in his summing-up in relation to that particular provision.

In clarification, the bill states that the time for making a claim for claimable land under the Aboriginal Land Act's sunset clause of 22 December 2006 has passed. Claimable land can only include Aboriginal land that becomes transferrable land before that date. Clause 20 is an important amendment that gives the minister the ability to declare part of the land as transferrable, instead of all of a particular holding. This will allow more flexibility, ensuring the preservation of community land and ability for development. This will hopefully assist in achieving outcomes that are not caught up in this current legislation but have the capacity for the future.

Land which contains townships can still be transferred, but the bill gives the minister the authority to require that any land transferred containing a township continues to be used as a township and residents can continue to live on that land and secure tenure interests in the township. Similarly, the amendments provide arrangements to continue appropriate government services to relevant Indigenous communities and allow development to proceed in respect of native title after the grant of land, which again is a positive move. Amendments to this act will provide that land will be transferred to bodies established under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006—C(ATSI)A—rather than to individuals forming a trust. This is to address the complexity of the arrangements of transfer. Also at the end of the day it gives greater accountability and transparency in relation to how those transactions occur. This also provides that future grants of land will be made only to incorporated bodies and not to individual persons and that DOGIT land can be held for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Before any person in this House talks about individual rights and tries to put a blanket over persons within Indigenous and other communities, I ask that they first fully understand what is happening on the ground within communities and also how that affects the cultural sensitivity and the responsibilities within those communities.

Clause 41 of the bill removes provisions providing for the claim of claimable land on the grounds of economic and cultural viability to align the claims with the Native Title Act's recognition of traditional connection. While the explanatory notes state that the cultural and economic viability provisions are never used, it does seem to quite dramatically realign the grounds on which a claim can be made. Other amendments allow the minister to enter into an available state land agreement, an agreement about certain lands with an existing property interest in place. Once again it is a practical measure, but we need to be careful that there is consultation and there is the right balance within those communities.

An interesting amendment provides that the minister is required to have regard to any Aboriginal tradition associated with the land rather than act against it but removes the requirement for the minister to actually act in a way consistent with Aboriginal tradition. This can only be built on by that consultation and interaction within the community. One needs to be mindful of the wording in that particular part of the legislation.


The bill allows vesting of the land in the state, which can then vest the land in another entity. A corporation registered under C(ATSI)A which ceases to exist may see land vested from the Commonwealth to the state. The minister must as soon as practicable transfer the land. I would like the minister to provide examples of organisations, how that would happen and the actual time frames involved in that process.

Clause 61 includes the ability of a trustee to grant a perpetual lease over township land—a town site lease. This could potentially be applied to solve the issues of those townships of Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island where Torres Strait Islander people have lived for a long time in towns on what is traditional Aboriginal land. This clause is good because it recognises both the Torres Strait Islander community and the traditional Aboriginal land component. It is great to see that that consultation has taken effect and that both parties are happy with that result. As people who have visited those communities understand, those communities have been there for a period of time not just because of their own reasons but also because of previous dealings with other governments.

Mortgage provisions are dealt with under clause 66, requiring that the mortgagee must arrange to sell the lease within four years of entering into possession of the lease or a longer period agreed to between the lessor and the mortgagee. Again, this gives flexibility in relation to this process. If the lease fails to be sold in that period it can then be sold by the lessor for an amount not less than that owing to the mortgagee.

Parallel amendments are made to the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 concerning available lands, DOGIT land prescriptions, declarations and transferrable lands. Other amendments are minor, such as amendments under the Liquor Act 1992 to redefine 'community police officer'. Existing definitions are replaced consequentially in the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978 to change the existing descriptions of land lease areas for Aurukun and Mornington shires. Amendments to the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2008 and the Right to Information Act 2009 are to align definitions with the changes to the main bills.

The LNP supports this bill. We do look to the government to continue to improve and support the attention that it gives to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to ensure better social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people. In closing, how we treat and care for our most vulnerable communities is a reflection on all communities in this state and on all Queenslanders. The LNP is happy to see this legislation finally passed, particularly for the benefit of those communities which can now go forward.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.10 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The stated objectives of the bill are to amend the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act to recognise the rights of Indigenous traditional islands at Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island, which are Torres Strait Islanders deeds of grant in trust established on traditional Aboriginal land, and to ensure that the Torres Strait Islander communities established on these lands can continue to prosper; to reduce the number of organisations that need to be established in the community by providing for land to be granted under these acts to bodies registered under the Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, rather than create new land trusts under the acts; to improve the governance of existing land trusts established under these acts; to improve how these acts align with and interact with the Commonwealth Native Title Act; and to ensure that community development can proceed efficiently in communities following the grant of land under these acts.

The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state that the bill also seeks to amend the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act to clarify, simplify and update the legislative framework applying to Aurukun and Mornington shires under this act so that it aligns with and does not unnecessarily duplicate similar legislation applicable to all other local governments generally or to Indigenous local governments

specifically. The bill also proposes to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to provide for the revocation of national parks on land declared as Aboriginal land under the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act.

Several years ago the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act were the subject of a review, the aim of which was to better align these acts with the Commonwealth Native Title Act and to improve the efficiency of their administration. Priority was given to certain amendments which were brought forward in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Bill 2008, which was debated in this parliament in May 2008. The remaining amendments from that review are included and facilitated by the provisions of this bill.

The LNP is particularly interested in providing Indigenous communities with opportunities to pursue economic development that will encourage enterprise and contribute positively to the viability, stability and productivity of those communities. It is important to understand that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities face quite unique circumstances in comparison to other communities across this state. In order to provide the best possible outcomes for Indigenous communities, public policy reforms like this one need to focus on the best outcomes in terms of quality of life and economic participation. Nearly three years ago this parliament passed a bill containing the first tranche of changes proposing to facilitate such outcomes. That bill dealt with homeownership, leases for social housing and transfer processes for deed of grant in trust land and aimed to encourage economic development in Indigenous communities.

As the then shadow minister, the member for Condamine, said during that debate, the idea behind DOGIT land was that the community land would be as secure as possible under the state law at that time. If community land was required for a public purpose for the benefit of the local community, there could be no objection to the normal processes of compulsory acquisition or public dedication of land applying. However, if the government wants to acquire land for a public purpose that was unrelated to the benefit of that local community, that project ought only occur with the negotiated consent of the local community, acting through the trustee, prior to that project progressing.

In my own contribution to that debate in 2008, I highlighted some of the barriers to development in Indigenous communities as a result of obstacles to private and commercial investment. As I said on that occasion, remoteness is certainly a factor in this, but it also had to do with the inability of councils to issue long-term leases or grant private freehold land to third-party proponents. This obstacle was to a degree addressed in the provisions of the 2008 bill. The 99-year leases introduced at that time were an improvement on the provision of the previous capacity of 30-year leases to be issued but still did not afford access by individual Indigenous people to full individual freehold property rights on that Indigenous land.

On the other hand, the compulsory acquisition laws remained in place, creating a bit of an inconsistent approach with other forms of title outside Indigenous title legislation. The 99-year leases were permitted only to be transferred to another Indigenous person for 99 years, to the state for no more than 99 years or to another person who is not Indigenous for a period of only 10 years without the minister's consent. Notably, neither the 2008 bill nor this bill proposes to do anything to address these inconsistent property right arrangements that underpin the basis for the commercial and economic progress that was and is supposedly an objective of both bills.

Today's bill also covers the second stage of the transfer systems and alignments with the federal Native Title Act. The bill aims to provide more options for land transfers, improve governance for trusts and recognition of DOGIT landowners at Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island. It aims to update legislation that was written before the Native Title Act and deal with perpetual town leases and future act provisions. The bill aims to provide better alignment with the federal Native Title Act. This act was passed by the Commonwealth government in 1993. The Aboriginal Land Act, amended in this bill, itself is 19 years old. So a lot has changed in that period of time. A part of the bill before us allows for the addressing of native title issues under the Native Title Act before the transfer of land which should achieve the aim of the bill which is currently before the House, as per the explanatory notes, to improve the efficiency of the mechanisms facilitating the management of these issues. As outlined by the shadow minister, the member for Bundaberg, the LNP broadly supports this bill and does not plan to oppose its progress through the House. But there are a few issues that I want to canvass that follow on from the contribution that I made in 2008.

Arguments in favour of providing more financial support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people usually focus on the state of services and facilities in those communities, levels of unemployment and health indicators in those communities—social and community issues in those areas. Public funding to build infrastructure, create employment, improve health services and address social issues have been the focus of the policy agendas of both state and federal governments on both sides of politics in Australia on the basis that there is an assumed ability to quantify tangible improvements in the material wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The separation of Indigenous Australians from their traditional land is regularly pointed to as a major reason they continue to experience higher levels of relative disadvantage. It is argued that land formed the basis upon which Aboriginal communities were constructed and that this separation

destroyed that economic, social and cultural balance. Therefore, efforts to restore that economic, social and cultural balance amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by re-establishing the close relationship between Indigenous Australians and their land ought to be the way to go. Efforts to encourage Indigenous people to use the land and resources that they have acquired traditional title over to pursue commercial opportunities that will enhance their material wellbeing, stabilise communities and return a sense of independence and responsibility consistent with their traditions and culture should be encouraged. The way in which this land is managed will largely depend on the distribution of property rights. The most widely accepted position is that secure, individualised land tenure is essential for robust economic development.

Traditional ownership is generally considered to be rights held in common. Some believe that this does not mean that significant economic gains cannot be made from land held in common by traditional owners. Some assert that a system securing long-term exclusive property rights through leasehold title arrangements in areas of in-common property ownership can be conducive to encouraging increases in the productivity of the land, a stable environment for investment and, most importantly, substantial improvements in the material wellbeing of the individuals involved.

However, the proposition being advanced in the provisions of the bill that the House is considering is based on the proposition that secure individual property rights is a preferable model. Either way, land tenure is just one aspect of the challenge in front of us in Indigenous communities. Of course we need to pay attention to education, health, housing overcrowding, economic participation of community members, cultural preservation, employment and a whole range of other issues.

The explanatory notes also state that an objective of the bill is to ensure community development can proceed efficiently. Economic development in Indigenous communities also needs to be closely related to quality-of-life issues and preservation of cultural outcomes. It is always desirable for economic development to take place in alignment with the community's aims. This is true of any community that Queenslanders live in but it is particularly true for Indigenous communities. It requires consultation with those communities to ensure cultural considerations are achieved alongside those social and economic outcomes.

Housing is a particularly sensitive issue. It is a central issue that is regularly raised by Indigenous communities on their agendas in order to progress their communities. Housing and having a secure home environment are very important to Indigenous families; this is an important part of their culture. It is very important that secure and safe home environments are available.

Access to the housing market, be it ownership or private rental, is needed. Houses to own or rent can be possibilities or options within those communities. It is acknowledged that there are a range of barriers that stop Indigenous people from entering the housing market. Some of them are tenure issues, and the bill in 2008 and the bill we are debating today go a long way to addressing some of those barriers to participation in the housing market.

There are also a range of economic issues that create obstacles. There is a need for a range of practical and affordable options for Indigenous people in these communities to enter the housing market. One of them is of course their access to finance. Debt burdens that cannot be managed are not going to create conducive community environments. The burden of debt is simply going to put access to those housing opportunities out of reach for a lot of people in the community.

An essential part of homeownership is prudent financial management. The same applies to all Queenslanders. Finance must be available at reasonable rates, and there must be the capacity and the reasonable prospect of the finance being repaid. This brings me to the issue of Indigenous people accessing finance through financial institutions, which is a key part of providing Indigenous people with opportunities to secure a long-term lease over a property in comparable circumstances to non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

I want to raise one issue with the minister. How will the establishment of these property markets in these Indigenous communities be managed, given that there will be a limited pool of potential participants in that market being established in the first instance? It will be very interesting to see how that market establishes itself, given that there will be a limited number of participants in the market and given the similarities and differences compared to the wider property market across the rest of Queensland.

I think the member for Bundaberg mentioned that there must be a clear understanding of how contracts are issued and negotiated and also the obligations on people who take out those loans to access the housing market. If a loan is defaulted on, does that then give the financial institution involved an interest in that title within that Indigenous community? If there is no repossession recourse for that financial institution, what interest is there for financial institutions to issue loans to Indigenous people? What reason is there if they will not have an opportunity to exercise their right to recover the equity in that property should there be a default on the loan? There are provisions in this bill relating to the mortgagee having to sell the land within four years, but this means that Indigenous people will still not be participating on an even footing with non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

These issues are not straightforward and will need to be monitored to avoid any adverse consequences for individuals in Indigenous communities. Other issues, such as affordable housing construction, also need to be examined in order to provide the most workable and effective outcome. There needs to be an assessment of the existing housing stock and its capacity, and standard precautions need to be taken to avoid any possibility of speculative investment working against the affordability of housing in Indigenous communities. There needs to be ongoing monitoring to ensure the objectives of the bill are actually achieved.

The goal of the legislation will be to protect the culture of the Indigenous communities involved while facilitating and encouraging economic development. I look forward to hearing the minister explain how this legislation will do that in view of the absence of comparable freehold property rights, the absence of comparable access to finance and the unique nature of the property market that those Indigenous Queenslanders will be operating in. The Indigenous communities will have a range of opportunities that they did not previously have, and I wish them all the very best in securing better outcomes for themselves, their families and their community as a whole.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (3.27 pm): I rise to support the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I should start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we meet on here today and also the traditional owners of the land which we are speaking about today. Land is at the centre of Aboriginal life, Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal identity. For people who do not have an interest in their land, to speak about that land is a particularly tricky and sometimes inappropriate thing for them to do. When we speak about land and what is happening here in the changes to the land today, we should be particularly careful and respectful about the traditional owners of this land—people whose families have had an interest in the land for over 40,000 years and who in many cases have had to fight other tribes and other people to maintain that interest in that land over time. In many ways, that fight continues to this very day.

Extensive consultation has gone into what are basically the last tranches of amendments to these acts. In some ways, this tidies up a few minor anomalies that I will talk about later, but it also continues to pave the way forward for economic participation by traditional owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the real economy through homeownership and other enterprises.

The review process was particularly extensive, and I want to thank departmental officers for the time and effort that they put into it. It is all right for the opposition spokesperson to come into this House and say that it has taken too long. In reality, you do not want to mess around with these matters. You do want to take your time. You want to make sure that the people you are consulting with understand the ramifications of what is being proposed and that they have time to consult amongst their own people and reach an agreement before they come back to the government. It is a very time-consuming exercise, and I can tell you that Indigenous people do not worry if it takes time. They are not going anywhere. They understand that their land is not going anywhere. Governments may come and go, but they are particularly concerned about getting it right and government is particularly concerned about entering into formal agreements with them to ensure there is agreement and cooperation. The fact that it has taken some time—and that is the only criticism of the bill that the opposition spokesperson can come up with—is a testament to the way that we go about business, particularly land business, with Indigenous people in this state.

The acts being amended by this bill are significant pieces of legislation for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and recognise traditional customary landownership and seek to facilitate economic and social development, and that is why these acts are different to the Native Title Act. That is why the tenure that is provided for in these acts is far superior to the Native Title Act, because it gives people additional rights to land that are not available under the Native Title Act. That is why, for me, the forms of tenure granted under the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act are more significant than the Native Title Act. For me, native title over a particular parcel of land offers only the fingertips in terms of control of that land while the legislation that this parliament has enacted through Labor governments provides much greater tenure and much greater opportunity for those people.

The tenure under these acts is inalienable freehold. That is, the land is held by a trustee for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people particularly connected with the land. Native title does not give people a right to build houses and to put other sorts of commercial infrastructure on land, while this particular parcel of legislation does. The process to identify the trustees is a facilitation process that is inclusive of those people particularly concerned with the land, and those people advise the minister who they wish to be the trustee. Economic and social development is supported by provisions within the acts that enable the trustee to grant interests over the land, including commercial and homeownership leases. As I said, the consultation process for this legislation was particularly extensive.

I first want to talk about a couple of minor provisions of the legislation, in particular in Aurukun changing the legislation to remove some obsolete, redundant and duplicated provisions which appear in other acts of this parliament. In particular, I refer to the provisions of the acts which seek to exclude

people from shire boundaries in Aurukun and Mornington Island. These provisions are basically redundant. They were last used in Aurukun by a gentleman by the name of Daniel Bracegirdle, who is quite a good friend of mine. Daniel was excluded by the Aurukun Shire Council, and I thought unfairly so. Daniel is married to a Wik woman and sought to criticise the council in a public forum and was subsequently excluded under those provisions of the act from being in Aurukun. I do not think that is right. Daniel was entitled to free speech, entitled to criticise the council, entitled to criticise whomever he wanted in a public forum. For me, for him to be excluded in that manner is unfair, and it is therefore right and proper that we now remove those provisions of the act which would exclude a person for what are essentially political reasons.

Other amendments that we have brought into the parliament previously have facilitated 99-year leases for homeownership and 40-year leases for commercial ownership. These have been important provisions, and I agree with the member for Hinchinbrook that we do need to monitor how that is going to progress. In my experience, it is going to progress slowly at first and hopefully it will accelerate over time as people become more familiar and more comfortable with the process. He is right: the crux of the matter is separating what is essentially land that is held in common and trying to break that down so that an interest in the land can be held by individuals without removing the traditional right of those people who hold the land in common. That is the trick, if you like, of what we are trying to achieve here. It is incredibly legally complicated, and we do not want to do it in such a way that the collective rights of those people are diminished or not respected over time. As I say, it is incredibly difficult. It may be that over time those 99-year leases can be freeholded and we will have, if you like, completely changed that tenure from a collective tenure to an individual tenure. However, I do not think we can do that until those people who own those collective rights are ready to do that.

That is the next step in the provision of doing that, but I think we need to move it slowly. We need to do that slowly. We need to do that in a manner that is respectful of traditional culture and traditional ownership, because, quite simply, if we try to do that too quickly people will exercise their collective rights and they will block it in the courts and it would be ultimately unachievable. So things do need to move slowly, member for Hinchinbrook—necessarily so—and people in communities will come to accept these changes. As the economic circumstances in these communities grow and people are better equipped to take advantage of the growing economic opportunities in these communities, then we will be able to see the sorts of further changes that I think he is talking about with regard to his comments on the bill.

Some of the changes that are before the House are important procedural reforms to improving the efficiency of land transfers, improving leasing arrangements, the ability to remove transferable status of land that is acquired for essential community infrastructure or subject to compulsory acquisition or a long-term commercial lease, and amending the resumption powers to reflect the acquisition arrangements that apply to ordinary freehold land.

While 99-year homeownership leases were provided for in some of the 2008 amendments, the bill includes amendments designed to enhance the benefits of taking up these leases. Renewal processes have been changed to statutory right of renewal purposes when the lease will be renewed. This provides greater security for the homeowner and a simpler process for all involved. This should also provide greater certainty for financiers that the member for Bundaberg raised in his contribution. If the financier of a property down the track wants to finance extensions, renovations or a rebuild on a property that only has a certain amount of time left to run on it, the guarantee that the lease will be extended if it is still used for residential purposes will come as significant comfort to those people, as will allowing the lessee to remove improvements and/or be paid a compensation amount if the lease is not renewed, providing certainty and clarity regarding the succession of a lease, and exempting these leases from fees and charges normally incurred in the lodgement of the lease instrument to the land registry. These are important changes that will help facilitate the movement towards homeownership in Indigenous communities.


There are some other things that are going on in terms of the program office that is operating out of Cairns, which will have a suboffice to facilitate the leasing arrangements. These are important changes that in some respects are putting public housing into these communities. By doing the town planning and putting in some of the infrastructure in terms of roads, electricity, drainage and sewerage, that also provides for better private homeownership.

The changes that are provided for in the bill allow the transfer of the Hammond Island DOGIT, the Seisia DOGIT and the Bamaga DOGIT under the Aboriginal Land Act. These are particularly tricky and complicated land use matters. The communities of Seisia and Bamaga were established after 1947, when people from Saibai Island got themselves into ships and moved to Seisia and were granted land there. The name Seisia is an acronym. The six letters that make up Seisia are an acronym of the names of the six families who moved from Saibai Island to establish the community there in 1947. They moved because their island was slowly disappearing. There was a significant weather event that saw two streets disappear from Saibai Island, which is right up in the most northern part of Australia. So they moved to Seisia and later other families moved up to Bamaga. The chief of Saibai Island at the time was a man by the name of Bamaga. So the town of Bamaga bears his name. Those people were moved and

were granted land at a certain time in Australia's history. If that were done now, it would not be considered to be legal given the provisions of the Native Title Act. Some Torres Strait Islanders settled on Hammond Island after the war, when people started to move back into the Torres Strait islands. A lot of people were moved out of that area during the course of the Second World War and when moving back some Torres Strait Islanders took up residence on Hammond Island.

So you have a unique and sometimes politically charged set of circumstances with Torres Strait Islanders living on Aboriginal land and what is now land that is claimable land under the Native Title Act. The negotiations to get a broad range of agreements between these two unique races of people about the use of this land is particularly complicated and can be particularly politically charged. At the moment in Bamaga there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, there is intermarriage between the two communities and there is a whole range of non-Indigenous people who live there as well. As I said, it is a complicated situation. To get to an agreement like we have here today—for those sets of circumstances to be sorted through so that the land can be transferred to the traditional owners so that they get a greater sense of land justice and Torres Strait Islanders get the certainty that they can continue to live on land that they have for the past 60 years—is no small achievement. It is a great achievement. I think it will assist in creating a greater sense of unity that is starting to grow in the northern peninsula area, particularly since the five councils in that area were amalgamated into one in 2008. So I want to congratulate those who have been involved in making that happen. As I said, there can be a particularly tricky set of circumstances there sometimes.

With those few comments, I commend the bill to the House. It is an important step forward for Indigenous people in my community. They are on the path to reform and changes in Cape York and the Torres Strait. There is a greater sense of urgency for people to take control of their own lives. There is a much greater sense of people wanting to get off welfare and to get away from the welfare mentality. They are land rich but asset poor. They know that, if they can get greater control over their land and if they can unleash the potential of that land without at some later stage the bank taking it into possession and giving it to other people, that is the sort of certainty that they need to move forward. Today, we are assisting in unlocking the great potential that those people have in their land so that they can make decisions about their economic future and about how they are going to participate in the economic development of this state.

 **Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (3.45 pm): I, too, rise to speak for a short period to the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I pause for a second to recognise the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered. I am pleased to say that that custom has become fairly widespread at official occasions right across Queensland. It is a fine custom indeed and reminds us of the importance of land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—an importance in their culture and their history that is different from the importance of land to those of us from European backgrounds.

On speaking to these matters, I have to say that it is a formidable task to follow the member for Cook. He is a hardworking local member but, more than that, he has a very deep understanding of how Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people feel about land and about other matters. As a former minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I know well the struggle that it can be for those of us who do not come from those lands and from that culture to truly understand. I can say that there is nobody in this House who better understands Indigenous people and the issues facing them than the member for Cook.

I am pleased to tell honourable members that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people have been front of mind in Cairns these past four days. We have just had the third Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair at the Cruise Liner Terminal in Cairns. It was launched on Thursday by the Minister for the Arts and also the minister who has responsibility for this bill before the House in company with Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley. The Governor has been a strong patron and supporter of the Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair for its now three years of existence. She and many others who were present at the fair over these past four days recognise the huge development that has occurred even between last year's Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair and this year's fair in the development and showcasing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's art. Yes, the fair was focused particularly on artists from the various communities around Cairns and right up through Far North Queensland, including the Torres Strait. But I am pleased to say that representatives of other Aboriginal and Islander communities across Queensland were also present. The promotion of Indigenous arts by the Goss and Beattie governments and now the Bligh government has been successful and has led to what is now an explosion in the creative outpourings of Indigenous people, which is benefiting them certainly in terms of healing, in terms of promoting and keeping alive their culture and, I am pleased to say, in terms of benefiting the artists in their pockets. It is providing a very healthy living for a good number of the artists whose work is so widely appreciated.

In terms of Indigenous arts, although we have made tremendous gains under the reconciliation agenda, unfortunately we cannot say the same in terms of land management. That is why it is so very important today that, through this bill, we take this significant step towards clarifying some of the huge complexity and confusion that has existed around land in Aboriginal communities.

I know this well through our eagerness at the beginning of this term of government, in partnership with the federal government, to spend \$1.2 billion to remedy the overcrowding and housing problems in Aboriginal and Islander communities. All gung-ho we were and ready to spend this huge vote of money to eradicate one of the most serious problems facing Aboriginal and Islander people, that of serious overcrowding. The problem we immediately ran into was the complexity and confusion of land tenures. The state and federal governments, councils within the communities themselves, let alone the people of the communities, cannot build anything when the survey of the community had not been done, when the metes and bounds of blocks of land are not registered and when there is not clarity of who has ownership and control of each land. Not only was there a lack of clarity, but also there were a multiplicity of different tenures, some of them overlapping, and there was no clarity about the priority of these different tenures.

I recognise in this regard the tremendously good work done these last 2½ years by the program office which is based out of Cairns under the directorship of Allen Cunneen. The sorting out of these tenures, the consultation with Aboriginal and Islander councils, the work that has been done with traditional owners as well as the huge professional cohorts of surveyors, planners, builders, housing specialists, architects and designers who have blitzed, as it were, these communities to get a work program going really deserve commendation. I understand that in the last couple of years their progress has been very considerable.

Today what we are looking at is giving further clarity to the issues of land. Land matters so much. There is nothing more important and yet nothing probably holding back Aboriginal people's development in their own communities more than this confusion of land tenures. The broad objectives of the amendment bill are to provide more options when it comes to transferring land, to reduce the need to create new entities to hold land and to improve the governance arrangements for existing land trusts. There have been too many bodies with a lack of clarity as to their particular powers, authorities and responsibilities. Some of them have been highly functional and many others dysfunctional with all grades in between.

This bill also seeks to enable the recognition of the rights of the Aboriginal traditional owners of land subject to Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant in trust at Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island. I was interested to hear the member for Cook give us a small history lesson on the development of Seisia and the naming of Bamaga. The naming of Bamaga after the earlier boss of Saibai Island and the naming of Seisia after the people who became the Seisia community was news to me. It demonstrates to members of the House the huge history there is and the importance of us understanding who the traditional owners are, what their connection is to the land and how far back it goes. The simpler notion that state government agencies have sometimes taken of 'Well, the Torres Strait is out there on the islands and if you are here on the mainland of Australia then that must be Aboriginal land' has been demonstrated to be a nonsense. I am sure that the people, Islander and Aboriginal people, who live in those five communities that make up the northern peninsula area will be pleased indeed with the amendments in this bill.

The bill includes the option of a perpetual town lease. This option was presented to the government by a number of communities. It is important in itself that the option came at the suggestion of the communities themselves. These communities desired to have the town areas transferred to them but recognised that the continued good governance and administration of the town area was a major factor for their communities and for the government. I was pleased to be on Mornington Island last year and to hear directly from members of the land council about the huge issues facing traditional owners, the need to have the land handed back to the traditional owners and yet the recognition that much of the land now forms the township of Mornington on Mornington Island and must, of course, be properly governed and run as any other town in Queensland.

There were mixed views at that meeting. Those views were, as any member who has attended a meeting on Mornington Island will know, loudly and clearly expressed at some length. Murrandoo Yanner led the meeting. Murrandoo is well known to many of us in this House for not mincing his words, for making sure that the history and the importance of the matter is absolutely clear to those of us who do not come from that cultural background or from that territory. He and others discussed the mixed views that there were within the land council about whether the perpetual trustee would be the best way to manage the township area of Mornington. I accept that there were mixed views, but I nonetheless believe that there and in Aurukun the decision to have a perpetual lease, with the council handed the land of the city area to manage for its good governance, is indeed the right solution.

Under the new provisions of the acts, the perpetual leases for townships will be granted by the trustees themselves and they can only be granted to the existing Indigenous local government. That particular element will go some way to settling down the concerns of those who were not immediately in favour of the perpetual lease and the handing back of the township to the council. This is not opening the door to a wide range of organisations having such coverage or taking over such administrative responsibilities, but only to the existing Indigenous local government at that time. The full range of leasing can occur under these perpetual leases—importantly, including 99-year homeownership leases.

I know that there are many members of this House whose image and understanding of Aboriginal and Islander communities has led them to the view that there are not people there who are capable of owning their own home, who would be able to pay off the bank loan or whatever financial arrangement was made. I disagree with them absolutely. In all of the communities now there are significant numbers of people who are well trained in whatever field they have chosen, whether it is dentistry or dental health, government service, planning or building. Some of them have remained in their home communities and live there and work very often for government agencies; some others have moved in a way that they regard as almost temporary to bigger cities such as Cairns or even Brisbane. This does not, however, disturb their connection to their family or to the land in their home community.

I know that there are those who are hopeful that the 99-year homeownership option will mean that as a group members of their family can purchase a home and jointly agree to pay off the necessary loan that will come with that, that there will be help in paying off that loan by the many within the community who are fully employed in well-paying government jobs as well as by others who maintain their strong family and land connections but who may be working, for professional reasons, in other cities around Queensland. It will do my heart good indeed to see these 99-year homeownership leases taken up increasingly in the years ahead. The options in the bill achieve the balance between the need to recognise the ownership of the land through the transfer process on one hand, with the practical need for ensuring the continuing needs of town administration on the other.

One of the other matters in the bill that I would like to speak on is in relation to the Local Government (Community Government Areas) Act 2004 and the changes to that. Previously the Local Government (Community Government Areas) Act 2004 provided for 14 Aboriginal shire and Indigenous regional councils. It excluded Aurukun and Mornington shire councils. This was then repealed as redundant.

Unlike other Indigenous local governments, the Aurukun and Mornington shire councils were established under the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act and had some different provisions within that act. It is high time that those provisions were changed, and that is part of the business of the bill that we are considering in the House today. One matter that was different was the ability of the Aurukun and Mornington shire councils to remove people from their boundaries if they saw fit. This will be no longer within their purview. However, they will still have the ability to control access to different areas within their shire and council areas.

When we discussed the repeal of the bills with the two councils, there was some nervousness that there may be inappropriate activity, whether by residents in the communities or visitors to the communities, whether wittingly or unwittingly in terms of visitors to the communities, on lands that were regarded as sacred or of particular significance to residents such that that behaviour would be inappropriate and even offensive to the traditional owners. That was why they initially argued for keeping the provisions that would allow them to exclude some people from their communities. When we came to discuss more precisely the issue of their powers to manage access to different areas within their community, they accepted that that was a sufficient power to meet their needs and that, in other ways, their provisions should be the same as they are for other Aboriginal and Indigenous councils and other councils right across Queensland.

The bill amends the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 and the Local Government Act. Amendment of the Local Government Act will ensure that a specific revenue-raising provision applicable to all other Aboriginal shires and Indigenous regional councils continues to be applicable to the Aurukun and Mornington shires. Many members of this House who do not have the opportunity to travel to the Aboriginal and Islander Councils very often would have been surprised to be present at the recent round table of the mayors of Aboriginal and Islander communities. Led by the mayor of the northern peninsula area and strongly supported by the mayors of Aurukun and Mornington and other mayors, the focus of the mayors' round table discussions with the department of local government and other state agencies was economic development. At this time nothing on their agenda matters more than ensuring that as councils they have the ability to raise rates and charges. They feel that, like others in Queensland, their people should pay properly for services and that, more broadly, within their communities they have the opportunity to set aside land for things such as industrial development, small shops, motor mechanics' workshops, hairdressers, corner shops or maybe even chemists. That might be modest economic development, but nonetheless it would be significant economic development. Today this amendment bill, in a number of ways, makes possible that economic development within communities.

Therefore, I am pleased to support the bill. The revisions have been a long time coming for good reasons, one might say. Where land matters are concerned, full and thorough consultation is essential and that takes time. Where land matters are confused and complex, much needs to be done in the way of surveying and the finalising of metes and bounds at the physical level, as well as at the level of community support. I am pleased that the bill has been so well consulted on. In fact, some of the provisions were suggested by community members, not thought of by government and put before community members for a tick-off. In its way it will be a cause for celebration, particularly in Mornington

and Aurukun, but, more broadly than that, it is another step in this government's important agenda of ensuring Aboriginal and Islander communities have the wherewithal to develop proudly their land, their planning, their housing and their economic development in the years ahead.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (4.04 pm): The LNP is and will be strongly supportive of measures that lead to economic and community development, particularly within our Indigenous communities. We also strongly support the concept that the people at the coalface of those communities should be thoroughly consulted and involved in the process of change that shapes their community. I note that an earlier speaker, the member for Cook, criticised some members from this side of the chamber for saying that the bill was a long time coming. He indicated that it should have taken this amount of time. In relation to that, I note that the bill was introduced on 23 November 2010. One would presume that the community consultation component was done before the government introduced the bill, which means that it has been sitting on the *Notice Paper* undebated in this place for a full 10 months. Perhaps that is a reflection of the lack of urgency that the government has in relation to these changes.

Mr Reeves: Wasted opportunity.

Dr FLEGG: I take the interjection from the shadow minister that the 10 months that the bill has languished on the *Notice Paper* represent a wasted opportunity when we could have been advancing some of these matters within the subject communities.

The stated objective of the bill before the House is to amend the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act to recognise the rights of Aboriginal traditional owners in Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island, which are Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant in trust established on traditional Aboriginal land, and ensure the Torres Strait Islander communities on those lands can continue to prosper. Obviously, this side of the House supports those objectives.

Several years ago, the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act were the subject of a review, the aim of which was to better align those acts with the Commonwealth Native Title Act and improve the efficiency of their administration. Priority amendments were put forward in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Act 2008, which was debated in this place in May of that year. The remaining amendments are contained in this bill.

As the LNP spokesperson for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I am very excited to be able to contribute in the debate on ownership rights, economic activity, housing and community responsibilities within these Indigenous communities. I believe that we stand on the edge of a precipice. There is a great realisation in the broader community, but more specifically in the Indigenous community, that to be long-term sustainable communities that offer their residents equal rights with other Queenslanders, a safe community in which to live, the opportunities that they want for their children's education and opportunities for employment, these communities must be underpinned by economic viability. Economic viability underpins the success or failure of any community and should be a leading principle in any decisions that are made. We are all aware that some of the communities have profound social problems. It is important that the decisions taken in relation to policy address those problems. The area that we are talking about in relation to security of land tenure, equal opportunity in homeownership and the opportunity to have secure tenure to operate business enterprises is an important component if we are to get some of those problems right finally.

We are increasingly understanding that we must ensure Indigenous Queenslanders share the same rights as every other Queenslanders. In particular I believe that those rights must include the right to own their own home within their own community. I think the days of a paternalistic approach that assumes that, because somebody lives in an Indigenous community, choice should be taken away from them and that social housing should be the only available norm are numbered. At least I hope those days are numbered.

I was shocked in a recent estimates committee to hear the director-general indicate that, as yet, not one Queensland Indigenous person in a community where land is held in community ownership has achieved what we would consider full personal homeownership. I look forward to the day when that opportunity will be just as available to Indigenous Queenslanders should they choose to go down that path as it is for every other Queenslanders.

We all know that we have a lot to answer for in relation to the way Indigenous communities have been treated in terms of the social dislocation that has been wrought on those communities by forced relocation and by the removal of people from their families during the stolen generation. So it is vital that now we make decisions that will change and address that sort of disadvantage. In fact, I put on record now that I would be delighted to be invited for dinner at the home of the first Indigenous person in such a community in Queensland to achieve full personal homeownership. I certainly will not be bringing along the wine if it is one of the communities where that is not permitted. However, I think it would be a proud moment—

Ms Jones: Are you ruling out a deal with One Nation? Ah!

Mrs Kiernan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Ashgrove and member for Mount Isa. You will have your turn.

Dr FLEGG: However, I think it will be a proud moment when we see this right that we all take for granted being extended equally to those in Indigenous communities. I am a bit surprised and disappointed that some of those members opposite are interrupting me on a point such as that. I would think they would be vigorously endorsing my comments about the right of Indigenous people to share in the same right that every person in this room takes for granted as a basic human right—that you at least have the opportunity, should you choose to take it, to own your own home with the rights that attach to it.

Mr Schwarten: If you can afford it.

Dr FLEGG: I take the interjection from the member for Rockhampton suggesting that Indigenous Queenslanders could not and would not afford it, in direct contradiction of the member for Cairns, who said that Indigenous Queenslanders in this community are skilled in some cases and are ready. It is about time we stopped putting down Indigenous people with that sort of attitude and using it as justification for denying them those rights.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I have put up with it for long enough. I do not mind a fair ping, but I never said that. I simply made the point that it is provided people can afford it. Regardless of race or any other aspect, the fact is that homeownership is about people being able to afford it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Rockhampton, that is not a point of order. Member for Rockhampton, take your seat. That is not a point of order. The member for Moggill has the call. It is very hard for me to provide my protection to you in the circumstances. Please stay on track.

Dr FLEGG: The bill before the House which forms part of changes being made in relation to land tenure matters may not of itself be enough to achieve this objective, but any step in the right direction should be supported. We do not oppose a bill simply because it does not go far enough, provided that it is, in fact, a step in the right direction.

Should the circumstance arise that there is an LNP government, Indigenous Queenslanders would see some significant changes in focus and emphasis. The focus in Indigenous communities must unashamedly be economic sustainability, and this should be the guiding principle. Unless a community can offer a future, can offer jobs, can offer education, can offer training opportunities, can offer homeownership, the sort of social problems that we see in many of these communities will never be addressed. I repeat: without those opportunities the social problems that we see in many of these communities will never be addressed. The other guiding principles would be equal rights, particularly in relation to opportunity, and a continuing emphasis on personal and social responsibility. In fact, such personal and social responsibility would be expected.

The whole issue of land tenure in this and previous associated legislation goes to the heart of opportunity. In fact, the test that should be applied to Indigenous legislation, in particular to land tenure and opportunity related issues, is fourfold and all four boxes should be ticked. Firstly, does it promote an economic future? Secondly, does it support the opportunity for better education and training? Thirdly, is it consistent with personal and social responsibility? Fourthly, is it consistent with equal rights and equal opportunities?

Provisions contained in the previous bill that restricted an Indigenous homeowner whose best opportunity to be a stakeholder in his own home was a leasehold opportunity severely restricted the ability of that homeowner to sell his home. While laws restrict the ability of an Indigenous homeowner to sell his property, they make it difficult, if not impossible, for a financial institution to make his dream of homeownership possible by advancing loans to him because the property under those laws would not provide security to the financial institution or the ability to sell a property. Under these circumstances, one would expect financial institutions to give Indigenous communities a very wide berth.

I did note and agree with comments made by the member for Cairns, who acknowledged that there are many Indigenous people who are ready to make these sorts of personal decisions and take that stakeholder role within their communities. It is a very difficult scenario to see how Indigenous Queenslanders who choose to be stakeholders by virtue of owning their own home could do so in the environment where government legislation, in essence, prevents them from selling that property. If you do not have the free right to sell a property that you own, whether it be a 99-year lease or freehold, then a major part of the benefit of being a homeowner has been denied you.

Looking at issues related to land tenure in Indigenous communities, I think it would be helpful to ask the question: if St Vinnie's or Lifeline wanted premises from which to conduct a drug and alcohol program, if a private school wanted to establish and educate students, if a sawmill wanted to create jobs or if an enterprising local wanted to conduct a cultural tourism business, would the land tenure arrangements facilitate such activities? Obviously community consultation and respect for the wishes of communities, for their traditional practices and their heritage, should be important considerations. My sense of it is that many Indigenous communities and their leaders are very aware that circumstances need to exist to build economic and social viability to underpin successful communities. I think the member for Cook acknowledged that also in his contribution.

My colleague the member for Hinchinbrook previously noted that the efforts to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use the land and resources over which they acquired traditional title to pursue economic activities that would enhance their material wellbeing stabilised communities and returned a sense of independence and responsibility consistent with their traditions and culture, and that should be encouraged. I echo those comments. I would say that until you do establish an environment in which Indigenous people can achieve these objectives your laws have failed.

It would be worthwhile to ask the question: if we were dealing with a Third World country, how would we lift living standards, establish security in the community, improve education, provide employment opportunities, provide better housing opportunities and facilitate general community development? I think it would be widely agreed that institutions, in particular the institution of secure ownership leading to security and certainty of tenure, would be high on that list. I think it would be also universally agreed that to build that sort of community infrastructure there would be, as in the case of a nation trying to achieve the same sort of improvement, a need for some sort of outside investment or capital to ensure that infrastructure was there and that entrepreneurs of one sort or another had access to the funds that were necessary to build the businesses that they dream to own.

Finally, insofar as this bill is a step towards improving land tenure opportunities in the subject Indigenous communities it is a step forward and not a step back and is supported, so far as it goes, by the LNP.

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (4.19 pm): I support these amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act and the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act. The reform within this legislation is yet one further step in the Bligh government's determined effort to bring economic security, economic opportunities, land security, land tenure and housing to Indigenous communities in remote parts of Queensland.

We have made a very clear and determined effort through our signing up to the Closing the Gap initiative, through our signing up to the remote Indigenous housing agreement and through the very practical work we are doing through our program office out of North Queensland. One of the secret ingredients in the work that we are doing at the moment is the cross-agency work that is happening in the program office out of Cairns. That is bringing together people from my Department of Communities, the Department of Environment and Resource Management and other areas of government to finally crack the back of some of these complex land tenure issues. We are finally cracking the back of these issues.

Let me tell the House about some of the characters getting around to these communities at the moment scaremongering. Bob Katter, for example, is getting around to Indigenous communities talking up a lot of nonsense about how bad this Remote Indigenous Housing Program is. This program for Queensland is a commitment of more than \$1 billion from the federal government to Indigenous housing over the next 10 years. What does that mean? It means more than a thousand new houses—1,200 or so—to be built and 1,200 or so to be upgraded, and we are well on track with that. That is what it means.

Have members noticed Bob Katter? Have members noticed that his hat is really clean? Has anyone ever seen Bob in a dirty hat? Whenever I see Bob Katter I think he is not a working man; he is a talking man. He just talks. He gets around and scaremongers. It is people like him and his mates such as some of the members of the LNP who have been getting around for years, talking up and scaremongering in these communities rather than actually getting their hands dirty and doing the real action. Let me tell the House that we are getting our hands dirty. We have the processes and programs in place. We are working in those communities, and the program office is a particularly important key to all of this. The program office has staff working on communities, mapping out the subdevelopments that are needed for housing, sorting out the land tenure issues.

One of the great favours Bob Katter gave to the Queensland Indigenous people was the Katter leases. In about 1985 there were hundreds of leases that people could apply for to have security over housing in remote Indigenous communities. But what the national government of the day that Bob was a part of did not do was back up that legislation with support for the processing of these applications. So it is only now that we are actually cracking the back of that one as well. Hundreds of lease applications have sat and gathered dust, and people have not had security over their housing. It is only now that we are able to crack the back of that and actually put in place legal processes to verify those applications, sort out which applications are not valid and offer people security. That is the legacy of Bob Katter. That is the man with a clean hat who gets around and is all talk and no action.

It is a bit like when members of the LNP get around and visit these communities. They promise the world but they do not have a clue what goes on. It is fine to talk up issues like the need for more housing, but what dollars have they signed up to? When John Howard was Prime Minister for 11 or 12 years, what did he sign up to in terms of remote Indigenous housing? It was pretty much zip, because he did not believe in supporting the Remote Indigenous Housing Program. It was only when the federal

Labor government got elected that we actually had more than \$1 billion for Queensland—\$1 billion to provide 1,200 or so new houses and 1,200 or so upgrades to existing houses. You actually have to put money into these programs because these are major economic investments, and the housing—

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Ashgrove, your minister—


Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer. The minister has the call. There will be no crossfire across the chamber. The minister has the call.

Ms STRUTHERS: Housing does not just mean a secure roof over people's heads. It means jobs. It means economic activity. Finally, there is a 10-year rolling program giving people security. In fact, we have a 20 per cent local Indigenous employment target. We have exceeded that. There has been 40 per cent Indigenous employment in our Remote Indigenous Housing Program and related programs in remote communities. This is the way you get economic activity—by getting people into apprenticeships and jobs to build these houses and upgrade these houses and giving them continuity of work.

It is really encouraging to go to places like Aurukun and walk around with the mayor and other community members and see where the subdevelopments have occurred. It is good to go to Palm Island and see the plans for future subdevelopments and see the new housing. It is good to go to Yarrabah and see their plans for more subdevelopments. What is needed before the housing is built, before a brick can even be laid, is sewerage infrastructure and other infrastructure for the subdevelopments. All of that is generating work as well. It is so important that we have these legislative reforms, as we have in this bill, to keep providing security of tenure over the land and to unravel the complexity of land tenure that we have had for years. Conservative governments in the past have not been able to crack the back of this and people like Bob Katter have been getting around talking it up and criticising when in fact they have had responsibility for some of these major problems themselves.

We have a very positive story to tell in relation to remote Indigenous housing. We have a very positive story to tell as a Labor government about our commitment to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage in remote communities. We have certainly paved the way for homeownership. We have a valuation method now that has been agreed to that is not based on replacement value. It is based on a discounted market. Basing those valuations on equivalent remote towns in Queensland will make it much more affordable for people to buy their own home in Indigenous communities. It is important that we have action on these issues, not all talk. The LNP is good at talk and not a lot of action.

 **Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (4.26 pm): I, too, rise to participate in this debate on the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would particularly like to focus on the provisions in the bill that provide for grants of land to organisations incorporated under the Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.

The background to the current legislation is that the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 were enacted by the parliament to provide for the grant of certain lands to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in recognition of the spiritual, social, historical, cultural and economic importance land holds for them. The member for Cook has previously spoken eloquently in this debate about the importance of land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

When land is granted under the legislation, a 'land trust' is formed to hold the land on behalf of the beneficiaries. The legislation has a number of provisions that deal with the operation and reporting requirements of those land trusts. A number of those land trusts do exist in my electorate—the trustees of which I have had interactions with in pursuing a variety of housing issues and aspirations on behalf of those trustees and beneficiaries. Changes to the legislation have resulted from a review of those acts which was undertaken to ensure their consistency with the Native Title Act 1994 and to improve their overall operation.

As I think was mentioned earlier in the debate, native title is held by a prescribed body corporate, and those native title bodies are incorporated under the federal law, the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006. Since the enactment of that act in 2006, numerous other bodies have been established under that act in many communities for a variety of purposes. That has created a number of issues which this legislation attempts to resolve.

One such issue is rationalising the number of organisations and different governance arrangements a community must deal with. Currently, when land is granted under the acts, a land trust is established to hold the land. As I understand it, there are over 70 land trusts currently in existence in Queensland, and, as I have mentioned, some of those are in my electorate. In many cases,

communities are faced with the burden of supporting multiple corporations to hold land, operate commercial activities, manage native title issues and deliver social programs. Normally, particularly in the smaller communities, that occurs with significant overlaps in the membership of those trusts and corporations.

The ability to grant land to bodies—C(ATSI)A bodies—registered under the Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 is aimed at rationalising the number of corporations required in various different communities for those purposes. As a result of the proposed amendments, after 31 December this year no new land trusts will be created to hold the land; instead, land will be primarily granted to bodies—C(ATSI)A bodies—registered under the Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006. Importantly, though, existing land trusts and Aurukun shire and Mornington shire councils—reflecting the unique nature of those tenures—will still be able to have existing land granted to them. Existing land trusts will be able to transfer their assets to a C(ATSI)A body upon application if they so wish.

Other benefits will include: both landownership, through tenure, and native title rights can be held by the one body rather than two; the Commonwealth Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations can provide training programs and assistance to C(ATSI)A bodies with governance matters; many communities are already familiar with the governance requirements under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006; and, importantly, there will be provision for access to Australian government funding grants and training and development programs that would further build governance capacity and administrative capability.

The acts are about returning land to Indigenous people in recognition of their special relationship to land, as has been mentioned by other speakers in the debate, and to promote self-development. The Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 is aimed specifically at corporations for Indigenous people, and the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations provides culturally appropriate support and training.

Holding land through a C(ATSI)A body ensures that the ownership of the land is retained by Indigenous people. During the consultation, retaining ownership of the land was raised by many traditional owners as a key issue. That is not surprising. Allowing ordinary corporations to hold land was generally not supported as it was seen as removing control of the land from the people most concerned with it. The transitional provisions in the bill will permit further land trusts to be established up until December this year. These provisions recognise that certain transfers of land are currently active and that consultation for the establishment of certain land trusts has progressed significantly.

These amendments allow all C(ATSI)A bodies to potentially hold land under the acts. Therefore, any C(ATSI)A body that is established in an Indigenous community may be an appropriate body to hold land under the acts. As a result, it can be expected that there will be a reduction in the number of organisations in Indigenous communities that are involved in decision making and that this will reduce the burden on Indigenous communities to support multiple organisations. So I would argue that these amendments support Queensland's Indigenous communities in managing their assets—in particular their land—and assist them with their development and future prosperity.

In conclusion, I want to touch on a couple of things that have been mentioned by other speakers in the debate. The member for Cairns mentioned the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair that took place in Cairns over the weekend and last week. This was the third Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, supported by the Queensland government. It was a great credit to everyone who was involved in it, not the least being the Premier, who has driven and supported this event since day one. It was an outstanding success which showcased the wonderful art of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from throughout Queensland and indeed other parts of Australia.

I want to go back to an earlier comment I made when I said that I have been working with some Aboriginal land trusts in my electorate to address a range of housing issues. The unmet demand for housing in Aboriginal communities is not an issue that is confined to remote or discrete Aboriginal communities. It is a demand and it is a need that exists in my electorate—and I will not speak for other electorates—and certainly in the community of Kuranda and the surrounding districts. Sometimes the issues that would ordinarily be resolved by governments alone need to be resolved and negotiated with the beneficiaries of Aboriginal land trusts, particularly where it is proposed to build new homes on those Aboriginal land trusts or where there are issues arising from pre-existing dwellings on those Aboriginal land trusts. It is right, proper and appropriate that those issues are resolved by negotiation.

I want to place on record that those organisations, those trusts, do exist and that I am working with them to address a range of housing issues. I have worked with them in the past and I will continue to work with them to address those issues because there is a very strong connection between those beneficiaries, their families and their friends with their country and with the township of Kuranda. It does not matter that alternatives might exist elsewhere; the fact is that Aboriginal people in those areas do have a strong connection with their land, with their country, with their families and with their descendants and they do not wish to move away and live in other areas.

I fully support and understand those sentiments. The land trusts provide an existing vehicle and mechanism for us to negotiate better housing outcomes for people in my electorate, particularly in the Kuranda area. I am determined to continue to work with them to achieve that. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (4.38 pm): The intent of the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 is to further foster the capacity for the self-development and cultural integrity of the Aboriginal people and the Torres Strait Islanders of Queensland. It has a range of amendments. It amends the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act in a number of ways. It recognises the rights of Aboriginal traditional owners at Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island. It reduces the number of organisations that need to be established in a community. It improves the governance of existing land trusts established under the acts. It improves how the acts align with and interact with the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993. It ensures that community development can proceed efficiently in communities following the grant of land under the acts.

The bill also amends the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978—and previous speakers have spoken at length about the meaning of that for communities such as Aurukun and Mornington—and finally amends the Nature Conservation Act to provide for the revocation of national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land), and it is to that particular amendment that I am going to confine my comments. I acknowledge upfront that I am a very latecomer to understanding tenure arrangements on Cape York but am quickly getting up to speed on what they mean and what they mean on the ground, their implementation and their management.

The reference in this legislation to Cape York is to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to provide a mechanism for the revocation of national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). The Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007 created a new type of park called a national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). The underlying tenure for these parks is Aboriginal freehold land. The Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007 allowed Aboriginal Land Act freehold land to be leased back to the state in perpetuity to allow the land's dedication as a protected area. Therefore, it created that new type of national park. At the time the CYPHA—the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act—was passed, there was no mechanism for the surrender of the Aboriginal land underlying that national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). Therefore, and unlike other national parks, the Nature Conservation Act did not provide a mechanism for the revocation of these parks.

Amendments to the ALA—the Aboriginal Land Act—in 2008 permitted the surrender of national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) and therefore it is now possible to bring these national parks into line with other national parks and provide a mechanism for their revocation. These amendments that we are debating today will permit the revocation of national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) if the underlying land has been surrendered to the state by Aboriginal landowners under section 40ZH(3)(a) of the ALA. All or part of a national park may be revoked if that part of the land has been surrendered to the state by the Aboriginal landholder. These amendments, as others have said, are in line with the rest of the act which will mean the transfer of land can only be to incorporated C(ATSI)A bodies, not individuals. In short, this bill today will align the Aboriginal Land Act with the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act. I note that amendments also provide for terminology changes in line with amendments to both the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act.

Before concluding this brief contribution, it is worth noting that under the revenue act passed earlier this year amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act included five Cape York national parks as transferable Aboriginal land, allowing joint state-Aboriginal management of the parks. Mungkan Kandju, Lakefield, Iron Range, Cape Melville and Flinders Group national parks on Cape York Peninsula and defined areas near those parks were all made transferable by that act. Iron Range and Lakefield were also increased in area. One thing I did pick up on during recent travels to the cape was that there are certainly elements within the Aboriginal community that are keen to very much pursue joint management of those freehold land components that have been returned to the Aboriginal communities.

A government member interjected.

Mr POWELL: Understood. I am not disagreeing—

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr POWELL: No, I am not going to disagree with him this time. I guess the challenge is the speed at which communities are wanting to move on those. We understand that national parks are already fairly stretched up there in terms of resourcing and that management plans are not necessarily in place for all of the national parks. I guess the Indigenous communities are keen to see those management plans progress as soon as possible. That gives some certainty and some assistance as to how the Indigenous communities can assist in ongoing conservation work and biodiversity protection of that freehold land.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise to support the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. At the outset I want to acknowledge the significance of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 to

Queensland's Indigenous peoples and commend those persons and agencies that contributed to the review and helped shape and advance the proposed amendments. The acts recognise traditional and customary landownership and seek to facilitate economic and social development. A review of the acts, as has been stated by other members, has been undertaken to ensure their consistency with the Australian government's Native Title Act 1993 and to improve their operation, where possible.

The introduction of these acts by the Queensland government preceded the Commonwealth's Native Title Act 1993 and, though all of these acts recognise Indigenous peoples' interest in land, they are distinctly different in their approach. While the Native Title Act can recognise, amongst other things, an Indigenous person's connection to land, it is only the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act that can deliver to these groups a land tenure—a tenure that can also enable the trustee of that land to obtain an economic gain from the land.


The tenure granted under the acts is inalienable freehold. This land is held by a trustee for the benefit of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people particularly connected with the land. The process to identify the trustee is by way of a facilitation process that is inclusive of those people particularly concerned with the land and it is those people who advise the minister who they wish to be trustee. Economic and social development is supported by provisions within the acts that enable the trustee to grant interests over the land, including commercial and homeownership leases. Since their enactment, some 1.76 million hectares of land throughout the state have been granted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and over 70 land trusts have been established to hold the land on their behalf. These transfers of land under the acts provide recognition of the connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with their lands and a number of these transfers are generating an economic return to the people.

The process for the review has been extensive and inclusive of all stakeholders—Queensland's Indigenous communities, their representatives and other interest holders. This was required to ensure that the objectives of the review met stakeholder expectations and that the legislation continued to deliver positive outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

Amendment of the acts has occurred in two tranches—amendments enacted in 2008 and the currently proposed amendments. Originally, the review of the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act was to occur in unison. However, at the time consultation was occurring with the Aboriginal community the Torres Strait Islander community was focused on their native title claims. Consultation for the review of the Torres Strait Islander Land Act was therefore postponed. In 2009 consultation with Torres Strait Islander communities was completed, allowing for the preparation of the proposed amendments in this bill. The early stages of that consultation process included the establishment of a focus group with key Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The focus group shaped the consultation process that was undertaken.

The review team visited all Torres Strait communities and those at Cairns, Townsville and Mackay, and in some cases more than once. At those meetings the review team presented proposals for amendments and sought community responses to them. The proposing of alternative or other options not canvassed in the state's proposal was strongly supported by the review team. I am advised that the review team's visits were well received, the input to the review was comprehensive and the hospitality given to the team by the communities was exceptional and greatly appreciated. Feedback was also elicited from Torres Strait Islander representative bodies and significant and critical feedback was received. This work culminated in the release of the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 as an exposure draft in May 2010. Comments received on the exposure draft bill from stakeholders and particularly from representative bodies for the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal communities were appreciated and assisted to finetune amendments and deliver upon the aims of the review. The review team's efforts and the input of all of those who contributed should be acknowledged.

Amendments to the acts required extensive consultation to occur with Indigenous communities, their representative bodies and other agencies. Without the stakeholders' commitment and contributions to the review process, the outcomes of the review may not have delivered as effectively on its aims. The amendments proposed in this bill do deliver operational consistency with the Australian government's Native Title Act 1993 and make improvements in their operation. I therefore commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.48 pm): I rise to participate in the debate and to speak favourably on the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 and, in doing so, want to address a number of general amendments proposed to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991.

This bill delivers on the aims of the review of these acts. These two acts are significant pieces of legislation for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They not only recognise traditional and customary landownership but also facilitate, in my view, economic and social

development in Indigenous communities. I have always regarded the legislation, which was passed in this place back in 1992, as giving a sense of purpose and power of self-determination to the people in those communities.

These acts provide for the granting of certain land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by way of a freehold deed of grant. Since their enactment, 1.76 million hectares of land throughout this state have been granted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and over 70 land trusts have been established to hold the land on their behalf. These two acts, which were passed in 1992, have served us well for 20 years. But a review of these two acts has been undertaken to ensure their operational consistency with the Australian government's Native Title Act, which was enacted in 1994, and to improve their operation wherever possible. This review required extensive consultation with Queensland's Indigenous communities, their representatives and other stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the review matched the stakeholders' expectations and that the legislation continued to deliver positive outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

This bill makes a number of significant amendments to the legislation. For example, it provides for organisations incorporated under the Australian government's Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 to hold land granted under the acts as alternative landholding bodies. The legislation also facilitates the continued delivery of services by all levels of government to land transferred under the acts. In relation to a township located on transferred land, the bill provides for a town site lease to be issued by the trustee of the land so as to enable the land to continue to be used as a township.


This bill also introduces a number of more general but nonetheless important amendments to the 1991 acts which achieve the review's objectives. For example, an entity nominated in a Indigenous land use agreement will now be able to be appointed to hold land under the acts without the need to fulfil those consultation requirements, which often take a very long time, that exist currently under the acts to identify an appropriate grantee. This amendment will remove certain duplications in the process. There will be a freeing up of certain lands that now cannot readily be granted under the existing acts owing to existing property interests—for example, where there is a lease for grazing purposes and the holder otherwise agrees to the grant of that piece of land. These specific amendments would therefore allow for the granting of such lands without the need to terminate or surrender the existing interest, as is the case for the moment. However, this action must be initiated by the state and be subject to the agreement of the landowner.

The reporting and governance arrangements for land trusts established under the acts will also be strengthened. These changes include an ability to freeze land trust accounts on the basis of an adverse audit report finding; that land trusts may be requested to provide certain information relevant to their operations, including information on how they made a particular decision; financial information and meeting minutes; and that model rules may be prepared for land trusts as a guide to follow.

In respect of 99-year private residential leasing in terms of homeownership that is provided for under the acts, a statutory right of renewal for leases will also be provided by this legislation. The existing forfeiture provisions will be extended to allow for the lessee to remove improvements and/or to be paid a compensation amount if the lease is not renewed. Provisions are also included to provide certainty and clarity regarding the succession of such a lease. In order to support Indigenous people in seeking a private residential lease under the acts, these leases will be exempt from fees and charges in relation to the lodgement of the lease instrument in the land title registry.

The payment of a statutory amount when mining occurs on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land is proposed to be amended in the regulations to the acts. These amendments will provide that the calculation of the statutory amount for mining royalties will be tied to the consumer price index. The statutory amount is based on threshold values in the regulations that have not been adjusted since the enactment of the legislation in 1991. These changes will ensure a fairer return to Indigenous people.

I believe that this legislation continues to foster the capacity of self-determination, self-development and cultural integrity of our Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islander people. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (4.55 pm): There are 18,000 Torres Strait Islanders living on Thursday Island and the outer Torres Strait islands and a further 10,000 living in five communities on the cape who have mixed Torres Strait and Aboriginal connection. These wonderful Indigenous Australians have served our nation in multiple wars, have built our state and have fiercely protected their traditional homes and customs. Their land and traditions remain under pressure. Not only can we not afford to lose these wonderful natural assets; as Queenslanders we must all stand shoulder to shoulder and ensure their communities receive nothing less than a fair go and a guaranteed home.

I do not accept the argument put today that this group is very patient and, therefore, should have waited and been inconvenienced by the delay in this bill being debated in this House. This bill reviews the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991. It follows a review to align the acts with the Native Title Act 1993. It is the second tranche of amendments to this act following the 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Bill. It specifically addresses the deed of

grant in trust land on Hammond Island, Seisia and Bamaga—the DOGITs—to facilitate the traditional owners' land transfers. In the past, land trusts were created when this occurred. Seventeen are now in existence. This change should diminish this need for land trusts.

Native title is very important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as has been explained today, and with very good reason. Without it they have nothing. To date, traditional owners cannot even own their own home on most parts of the cape and Thursday Island and they want to. Moreover, they want their families, and in particular their children, to do so. Many families live in situations where there are 10-plus people living in three-bedroom homes, often with elderly relatives. The water is turned off for two- to three-hour periods multiple times daily or for even longer. Toilets cannot even be flushed and most homes will have at least two or three children aged 15 years and under living in them. The new \$300 million Commonwealth housing initiative could change this situation, but nothing much has happened yet.

The new 99-year leases that are proposed in this bill will help these people's aspirations. Certainly, the issue of putting land aside for community infrastructure is also a bonus. But all the political doublespeak in the world means nothing when the overwhelming stench of sewage invades the everyday lives of the members of all of these communities. This statement should be taken to imply that, whilst the government here today talks about fostering 'the capacity for the self-development and cultural integrity of the Aboriginal people and the Torres Strait Islanders of Queensland'—and that is from the minister's second reading speech—if this legislation does not make people's lives any better then it is all for nought. This bill will require support to make it worthwhile and workable.

Before anyone gets excited, all of these communities have six major issues in common. They are chronic housing shortage; massive unemployment and underemployment; expensive, near-rationed foods and perishables; a high cost of living, including transport options; water shortages—in fact, soft drink and alcohol are cheaper than the equivalent volume of bottled water in most of these communities; and poor health outcomes with rapidly accelerating diabetes and ischaemic heart disease in particular on a background of unreported and rising rheumatic heart disease. The last problem I mentioned is so great that it may not be able to be corrected within a generation. I have personally researched the issue and have seen firsthand the effects in late 2010. I remain concerned that only the current high birthrate may allow for a significant number of ATSI people to make it into middle age. Already in these communities we are seeing very few adults between the ages of 43 and 58 owing to an early death.

This bill will enable land to be held in a variety of manners other than ordinary freehold and also includes the option of perpetual town leases. This occurred in response to requests by communities for this option. It should enable better governance, administration and utilisation of land in those communities where DOGITs did not allow, or in fact probably prevented. In the community of St Pauls on Moa Island in the outer Torres Strait this has indeed occurred. When discussing what might resolve cape and Islander anxiety over their futures, a considerable number would volunteer reestablishing community rights as opposed to the current almost denial of community rights under an amalgamated Torres Strait Island Regional Council, rebuilding links between the five major cape communities and the Torres Strait and roles of prescribed bodies corporate—that is, PBCs—which hold native title following a determination.

Very reasonably, this bill facilitates, as stated in the minister's second reading speech, the full range of leasing that can occur under these perpetual leases, importantly including 99-year homeownership leases. The minister has correctly stated the need to balance the issues of landownership, increasing ATSI homeownership and the practicalities of administering a community. For those who are unaware, these are communities of between 300 and 500 people in very small areas, living island urban lifestyles but needing to provide everything to maintain themselves—from desalinated water and diesel electric power to sewage treatment to class 5 standard. This, combined with the normal aspirational requirements of modern living with modern telecommunication, is a very tall order. Yorke, Poruma and Yam islands have virtually no mobile phone access, limited transport and rising sea levels. Hammond Island, while relatively close to Thursday Island, has no pier and schoolchildren still wade out into crocodile infested waters to the ferry to get to school. What follows from this, and in greater part what leads from this, is that native title and those prescribed bodies corporate are the keys to getting workable agreements from those groups to re-invigorate these key northern communities.

The minister has correctly stated the reasons for simplifying the structure of landholding entities and, rather than flattening the pyramid, what is being facilitated is to incorporate within existing entities. Therefore, sparse resources are not diluted, the same individuals are allowed to maximise their own efforts and red tape is decreased. The land will have to be registered under the act. Land is critical to all their existences, but equally under this proposed amendment it is pragmatic and more usable. These outcomes are imperative where, strangely, available land is in short supply and, rather than being priced excessively, to date it has been administratively and legally out of bounds. For an island like Poruma or Yorke this can be a nightmare. Saibai, as has been described today, is waterlogged. There were communities that moved from there many years ago, I think it was in 1947, as was mentioned today, and the same issue is critical. Hammond and Bamaga are a little bit better placed.

Regarding changes to the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978, Aurukun and Mornington shires now join the 14 other ATSI shires previously repealed. It will also then improve consistency between ATSI shires, especially in relation to entry and residence in their areas. This act is to be renamed as the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978 and will be situated under DERM and the Minister for Trade. This was in consultation with stakeholders, particularly with regard to the eviction of persons from those areas. Agreement of both councils was reached. This change is fair for a group that is quite different to others and where there have been, historically, troubles between feuding groups, including internally within communities. I think some of the details were raised by the member for Cook today. Additionally, there are areas where there are significant bauxite leases that require stewardship, management and sovereign risk protection. They are also income generators for the locals, the community, the state, the nation and the world. It is a big responsibility and the change was probably justified.

In conclusion, it is embarrassing that it has taken years since this bill was drafted to be brought on for debate in this parliament. It shows contempt for the legitimate aspirations of ATSI people. For a party like Labor, which lectures our side of politics continuously on our insensitivity to ATSI people, to act in this way is beyond hypocritical. It demonstrates a complete lack of moral structure. It is a hallmark of governments that are dead.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (5.04 pm): I rise to speak briefly to this bill. The Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act have both been the subject of a review. Just to give a bit of background, in the first instance the review of both acts was to occur concurrently, but at the time that consultation was occurring with the Aboriginal community the Torres Strait Islander community was focusing on some native title claims. As a result, consultation with the Torres Strait Islander people was postponed.

During 2008, there were a number of amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. One amendment included the power to compulsorily acquire Indigenous land for essential government infrastructure and services. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Act 2008 was proclaimed in July of that year. Because consultation had already occurred with the Aboriginal community, that bill contained significantly more amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act than it did to the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. In 2009, consultation with Torres Strait Islander communities was completed, allowing further amendments to be prepared. The second round of amendments are included in this bill. Included is an amendment regarding Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island, which are currently Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant in trust communities that were established on traditional Aboriginal land.

Mr O'Brien interjected.


Mr DICKSON: Have some respect. Previously, as a result, these lands could not be transferred to Aboriginal people, even though they are the traditional owners of the land. The bill provides three main options for resolving land tenure issues for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal communities living on traditional Aboriginal land at Bamaga, Seisia and Hammond Island. Two of the options include for the land or part of it to be held by a body made up of solely Aboriginal people or made up of both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people for the benefit of all people particularly concerned with the land.

With respect to landholding entities, currently there are 70 land trusts in existence. Previously when land was granted under the acts, a new land trust was established under the relevant act to hold the land. In many cases, communities already had a number of bodies established to conduct a range of activities. The creation of another body would only add to the administrative burden on a community. In relation to landholdings, I note that the government released a discussion paper relating to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act last December with a closure date for submissions being 28 February 2011. The discussion paper outlined how the landholding act currently works. It considered whether the act had done what it was intended to do, what can be improved and how those improvements can be made and how the landholding acts should be aligned with current legislation affecting Indigenous deeds of grant in trust and reserves, including the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act.

The bill amends the acts to replace the obligation on the minister to act in a way that is consistent with any Aboriginal tradition or Island custom and must have regard to any Aboriginal tradition or Island custom. That certainly does sound like a watering down of the obligation upon the minister. The bill contends that where several groups have an interest in the land, it may prove impossible for the minister to act consistently with every group's tradition or custom, therefore it is more appropriate that the minister has regard to the traditions or customs. It is noteworthy that this proposed amendment was included in the exposure draft of the bill that was available for comment and no comments were received on this proposed amendment.

Consultation on the proposed amendments to the Torres Strait Islander Land Act commenced in 2008 and was completed in 2009. A focus group was established and the consultation consisted of advertising on local radio as to the purpose of the consultation and where and when it would take place; a series of two-day workshops were conducted on each community island and also in the mainland

centres of Mackay, Townsville and Cairns; meetings were held with several native title representative bodies and local authorities; and details of proposed key amendments were sent out to all key stakeholders. Meetings were also held in relation to the specific amendments proposed for the communities of Seisia, Bamaga and Hammond Island. These meetings were held with community members and the traditional owners of the land and included the mayor and respective local authorities. On the question of consultation, it does seem that quite extensive consultation has been carried out with the affected communities and I would offer my in-principle support for these amendments.

 **Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (5.09 pm): I rise to support the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. I will address how the reforms in this bill and the 2008 amendments are contributing to improving opportunities for homeownership and economic development in remote communities and how these amendments complement other work by this government in Indigenous communities. In doing so, I commend the work of the member for Cook. I commend him for his diligent work in the consultation that he has done with his constituents and, in particular, for the due respect that he has given to the traditional owners of the land that he has the privilege to represent. I commend him for ensuring that the views of the traditional owners have been clearly articulated to the government.

The Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 were enacted to provide for the granting of certain lands to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in recognition of the spiritual, social, historical, cultural and economic importance land holds for them. The legislation sets out which land tenures are transferable under the acts. The acts were amended in 2008 through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Act 2008. Amendments were predominantly made to the Aboriginal Land Act, but a number of general amendments, such as providing for homeownership leases, were made to both acts.

A review of the acts has been undertaken to ensure their consistency with the Australian government's Native Title Act 1993 and to improve their operation where possible. As part of this review, extensive consultation was undertaken with Queensland's Indigenous communities. Again, I commend the member for Cook for his hard work in ensuring that that consultation was thorough. Consultation was conducted with other interest holders to ensure that the objectives of the review met stakeholder expectations and that the legislation continued to deliver positive outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders. The review of the acts commenced with the release of an issues paper and a comprehensive round of consultation with Aboriginal people and communities, other stakeholders and key government departments.

I am advised that in the early stages of the review the priority of the Torres Strait Islander people was the resolution of their native title claims. It was not feasible to undertake meaningful consultation on the Torres Strait Islander Land Act during that same time. For this reason, the review of the acts was undertaken sequentially, commencing with the Aboriginal Land Act. While the review of the Aboriginal Land Act was underway, significant policy issues emerged and were prioritised accordingly. This resulted in the outcomes of the review being progressed in two tranches, the first being the enactment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Act 2008, which, amongst other things, provides for procedural reforms to improve the efficiency of land transfers, operation of land trusts and the distribution of mining royalties. It also provides for improving leasing arrangements, including the ability to grant long-term leases up to 99 years.


The ability to remove the transferable status of land that is required for essential community infrastructure or subject to compulsory acquisition of a long-term commercial lease is also provided for. In addition, amending the resumption powers to reflect the acquisition arrangements that apply to ordinary freehold land was provided for. With the completion of consultation on the Torres Strait Islander Land Act, the second tranche of the amendments can proceed and is now included in this bill.

The 2008 amendments provided for long-term leases of up to 99 years. This amendment allowed the Queensland government to quickly respond to the Australian government's National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. This has resulted in a significant investment in new social housing and the upgrading of existing social housing following the grant of 40-year leases for social housing purposes.

While the 99-year homeownership leases were provided for in the 2008 amendments, this bill includes amendments designed to enhance the benefits of taking up those leases. These amendments include that the renewal process has been changed to a statutory right of renewal. That is, if the lessee continues to use the lease for homeownership purposes the lease will be renewed. This provides greater security for the homeowner and a simpler process for all involved. The amendments allow the lessee to remove improvements and/or be paid a compensation amount if the lease is not renewed. The amendments include providing certainty and clarity regarding the succession of a lease. The amendments also exempt these leases from fees and charges normally incurred in the lodgement of a lease instrument in the land title registry.

These amendments will complement other work being undertaken by this government in relation to Indigenous communities. Through the work of DERM and the Department of Communities' Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office, a survey improvement program is being rolled out through all communities. This will benefit people wishing to take up homeownership and business opportunities and will assist all levels of government with planning and infrastructure delivery. The Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office is also facilitating the development of land-use plans for these Indigenous lands. These land-use plans will assist councils making planning decisions.

The amendments to the act that facilitate the take-up of leases, the establishment of a leasing support team in Cairns, the work on land-use plans and an improved survey network will all work together to reduce the time it takes to become a homeowner or to establish a business. This work will provide real opportunities for homeownership and economic development in remote communities. A person's aspirations for homeownership and economic opportunities do not differ that much whether they live in Beenleigh, Yarrabah or Bamaga. The ability to hold a secure interest in land is fundamental to both homeownership and economic opportunities. The amendments in this bill, along with other important preparatory work being done by the Queensland government in remote Indigenous communities, will significantly contribute to improving these opportunities. Therefore, I strongly commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise to support the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. In doing so I will address the amendments that relate to ensuring that, following the transfer of land under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, services by local, state and Commonwealth governments to Indigenous communities will be unaffected and land can continue to be used and developed where necessary for the delivery of those services, particularly in township areas. I could easily reminisce for a number of hours about my time on Thursday Island; however, I will save the House that. Suffice it to say, I had the pleasure of teaching on Thursday Island back in the mid-1970s and I understand some of the issues that isolated Indigenous communities face. Certainly it is easier to gain an insight into those isolated communities when you have had the opportunity to live and work there.

I will give a bit of a background on the current legislation. The acts were enacted to provide for the granting of certain lands to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in recognition of the spiritual, social, historical, cultural and economic importance land holds for them. At this stage I acknowledge the member for Cook for his dedication and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I still have a number of friends up there and they hold him in very high regard.

The legislation sets out which land tenures are transferable under the acts, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant in trust, DOGITs. What has initiated these changes? There are 34 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the majority of which are established on DOGITs, for example Bamaga, Hope Vale and Yarrabah. If the township lands on these DOGITs are to be transferred under the acts, there needs to be certainty that government can continue to develop and deliver services and that private and commercial development that is appropriate for each of the communities' needs can proceed.

I want to touch on a couple of issues. The first is transferring township land and the second is perpetual town site leases. The transfer of townships on DOGIT land into private freehold under the acts can present significant challenges and risks, as there are numerous interests in the land to consider, both for current legitimate uses authorised by the current trustee and for future development and community service needs.


Where township land is being considered for transfer, the amendments provide that, prior to transfer, appropriate arrangements must be in place to ensure that access to land and facilities for the delivery of services by all levels of government to a community can continue after the grant of the transfer occurs. These arrangements can be one or more of the following: the grant of a perpetual lease over a town area to the relevant community local government, an Indigenous land use agreement—or ILUA—or other agreements that provide for future access and development that are appropriate in the circumstances. Specific amendments apply to township land. The amendments provide that, if the land to be transferred includes township land, then the land must be able to continue to be used as a township.

The second issue is perpetual town site leases. I have to say that to date no land that includes a township area has been transferred. I admit that there are complex tenure and access issues to address when contemplating the transfer of townships as well as the responsibility of the proposed trustee to be able to manage a township. The amendments provide a new option when transfers include township land. This option was developed as a result of a submission on the exposure draft of the bill. The option allows for the land to be transferred on the condition that suitable arrangements are in place to provide for the continued use of the land as a town site and that the residents can continue to live on and access the land and services provided.

A perpetual lease over the town area, or town site lease, and an Indigenous land use agreement between native title holders, the trustees and local, state and Commonwealth governments are examples of suitable arrangements. A town site lease is granted by the trustee of the land and can only be granted to the relevant Indigenous local council. The grant has to be approved by the minister. Town site leases will be perpetual and are able to be leased for the same purposes that other land subject to the acts can now be leased. The leases will just be subleases. For example, the 40-year leases currently granted to the state by the current DOGIT holder, which is usually the Indigenous local government, would become a sublease issued by the local government as the lessee of the town site lease. In introducing an ability to grant town site leases, the bill provides recognition of the ownership of the land and also addresses the continued development and good governance of a township through the grant of the perpetual lease to the relevant Indigenous local authority who are the current trustees.

I just want to touch on perpetual town site leases and outline the following attributes. Obviously, firstly, they are perpetual in term. Secondly, they are granted by the trustee of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold land and only to the relevant Indigenous local authority. Thirdly, they can only be granted with the minister's consent. Fourthly, the leasing arrangements will be the same as on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold land—that is, subinterests under a town site lease are created as if the lessee was the trustee of the land. Fifthly, existing interests will continue. Sixthly, a town site lease cannot be surrendered without the minister's consent. Seventhly, a town site lease cannot be forfeited. Other options that are available for transferring township land include: firstly, granting separate leases—for example, leases over houses and businesses; secondly, entering into Indigenous land use agreements that provide for a continued development and use of the township; and, thirdly, declaring the land not transferrable, which would result in the current tenure and governance arrangements continuing.

The future success of Queensland's 34 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is reliant on the ability of the owners of these lands to continue to develop and prosper from their lands as well as the ability for all levels of government to continue to support and deliver services to these communities. The amendments that this bill introduces will certainly go a long way to facilitate these goals. I would like to thank all of those involved in the drafting of this bill. I commend it to the House.

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (5.24 pm), in reply: In summing up this debate this evening, I first want to reflect on the sad fact that there are at this time no Indigenous members of this parliament. It strikes me as a sad irony that all of us speak in this House with varying degrees of experience and knowledge but all of us speak from a position of being a step removed from the genuine experience of Indigenous people and, therefore, Indigenous landholders.

In summing up the debate this evening, I will seek to keep my remarks reasonably narrow and refined to the provisions of the bill itself for the simple reason that my experience over very many years of dealing with Indigenous people has been to find that the more you learn about Indigenous culture, the more you are conscious of how very little you know. While it is obviously a great Australian fascination to sit around at barbecues and pontificate about how exactly things might be, I think that we should all be a little bit conscious of the fact that for none of us here is the experience of being Indigenous and, therefore, of being an Indigenous landholder a lived experience day to day.

This bill, while largely technical in nature, is nonetheless a part of a very significant movement towards land justice for Queensland's Indigenous people. The bill which we are reviewing today in large part supersedes the land acts of 1991 which, at the time, during the early years of the Goss government, were a mark of enormously significant land reform and enormously significant land justice for Queensland's Indigenous people. Up until the introduction of the original 1991 bill, it had been almost impossible for Indigenous people to have genuine ownership of what are undoubtedly their own traditional lands. The earlier bill was a revolutionary change in that it preceded both the Mabo judgement of 1992 and the Wik judgement of 1996 and it, at its heart, established a process whereby Indigenous people could make claim for ownership of their traditional lands.

I think it is worth this House remembering that, notwithstanding the terrible injustices that occurred before that time, including the Bjelke-Petersen government's decision in 1985 to seek to legislate to overcome what was seen to be coming through the Mabo appeal to the courts, this House in fact legislated to allow Indigenous people to make claim for their land under a Labor government before the Mabo decision was even brought down. Many of us on this side of the House should take great pride in that.

Since the Aboriginal Land Act was first enacted, a very substantial part of the state has been transferred to Indigenous people in Aboriginal freehold. Of course there has been substantial evolution of the nature of that title and the conditions which evolve around it. The act was comprehensively reviewed earlier in the decade and this is the second tranche of a number of significant reforms which have been brought in to amend it. This second tranche of changes does a number of quite significant

things. Firstly, it generally updates the original act to bring it into line better with the Commonwealth Native Title Act. It establishes processes for proper recognition of Aboriginal land at Bamaga, Seisia and Hammond Island. It simplifies arrangements around who can own land and it brings Aurukun and Mornington Island into line with the other old DOGIT communities.

The member for Bundaberg asked me why we are changing a provision to something that would usually be changed within 10 days to 'as soon as practicable'. That is because some of the papers in those areas are weekly. It also makes some changes around Aboriginal tenure and ownership of land which will be monitored in an ongoing way, in response to the member for Hinchinbrook's question, through my department, and that information will always be publicly available.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Debate, on motion of Ms Nolan, adjourned.

MOTION

Gold Coast, Crime



Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.31 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the Premier and this government for its failure to provide strong leadership against crime and particularly for its failure to take timely action against crime on the Gold Coast.



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.31 pm): It is a pleasure to speak to the motion moved by the opposition leader. There are strong words contained within this motion. It states—

That this House condemns the Premier and this government for its failure to provide strong leadership against crime and particularly for its failure to take timely action against crime on the Gold Coast.

When we look at perception equalling reality, we see the end result epitomised by last night's 7.30 program on the ABC. Last night's program, hosted by Leigh Sales and broadcast nationally, carried a report from Peter McCutcheon. In the introduction to a story that covered recent events on the Gold Coast she asked, 'Is the Gold Coast the most dangerous place in Australia?' If we think about the effects of this show going around the country, and potentially internationally as well, we realise that it will cause massive damage to our reputation. The show itself had Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson, Superintendent Paul Ziebarth and Inspector Steve Flori from the Coomera police district speaking about the recent events on the coast and Operation Seymour. There are real concerns about a show like this looking at what is happening on the Gold Coast. This is exemplified by a recent article by Mike O'Connor in the *Courier-Mail* of 25 July. He wrote an article titled 'Surfers Paradise feels more dangerous than New York as crime spirals out of control'. Imagine what this is doing to our reputation.

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjections from those opposite. This is what the *Courier-Mail* is saying. This is what the people of the Gold Coast are having to put up with. Imagine what this is doing to our reputation nationally and internationally, not just for tourism but also for business.

The Gold Coast has taken a battering in other areas, such as development and retail, thanks to the mismanagement of this Labor government, both state and federal. But those of us who live there—those of us who are bringing up our families there, who work there and who love the Gold Coast—are very concerned. We know all what it has to offer and we know that, whilst perception equals reality, these expressions of concern about violence and crime being out of control are of concern to everyone on the Gold Coast and should be of concern to everyone within Queensland.

Of course there are other significant issues throughout the rest of the state. That is what this motion tonight is about. It is focused on the Gold Coast, but there are issues in today's *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin* about an alleged assault of a police officer at Mount Morgan, issues in Fortitude Valley about which the wives of serving police have written to me and ongoing problems with juvenile justice and gangs in Cairns as well as in other areas such as Townsville and the Sunshine Coast. But the problems are crystallised by what has happened on the Gold Coast. That is why this motion condemns the Labor government for allowing the situation to deteriorate to its nadir—the death of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding on 1 June. This was after a spate of armed robberies, violent assaults and drug related crime. There have been over 100 armed robberies since the start of the year and at one stage on the Gold Coast we had five shootings with three deaths in seven weeks. But what has the state government done, and around that time what did it do?

Paul Lucas, the Deputy Premier and member for Lytton, came to the Gold Coast on 20 July and said, 'We have no crime problem on the Gold Coast. We're not like the USA.' His ignorant comments subsequently left him with his credibility in tatters when even the police minister came to the coast and acknowledged that day that we had a serious problem on the Gold Coast. The police minister said that a police helicopter and police numbers were an operational matter. Then, of course, he acknowledged that there was a problem when he came up with a five-point plan, which again the *Courier-Mail* said on 26 July in its editorial 'has the distinct air of a stopgap measure hastily cobbled together to give the impression of something being done'.

When it comes to the police minister's ability to procure funding, I tried to extricate details of regional funding at the estimates hearing on 19 July. The minister could not provide the details of regional funding in about five hours of hearings but the district figures, which show that there had been a decrease in funding of \$11 million over the two years—

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

Mr LANGBROEK: Stop the clock, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Stop the clock.

Mr ROBERTS: The member is misleading the House. He knows full well that the funding for the Gold Coast region has increased over that period of time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, there is no point of order. Start the clock. I call the honourable member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Of course, the minister acknowledged in his own press release subsequently that there has been a reduction in district funding. He then says—

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock.

Mr ROBERTS: The member is misleading the House. The media release I put out clearly showed there had been an increase in funding on the Gold Coast.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, it is not a point of order. Start the clock. I call the honourable member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to refer to the minister's own press release on 21 July which states—

Mr Roberts said district expenditure in 2010-11 was less than 2008-09 ...

I am prepared to acknowledge that he subsequently has said that a large number of district functions were moved to regional functions in this period. I am acknowledging that. But the problem is that the minister could not give us those details in five hours of estimates hearings. He is hoist with his own petard by being unable to provide regional figures. This is the only region in the state that supposedly had this change made to it. The minister has created the problem for himself by being unable to provide those figures. As Mike O'Connor said in his article—

It's difficult to see the State Government embracing zero tolerance and the massive concentration of public order resources that it requires when last year it cut police funding on the Gold Coast by \$11 million.

Now we have Operation Seymour with 50 officers. The minister has been crowing about its success today in the House saying that this has enabled Gold Coast police to do their jobs, as the 50 police proved that with more police they can apprehend more offenders. Currently police cannot do investigative work because they have too many tasks and too many jobs to go to. Our police want to do proactive policing, targeting crime hot spots, cultivating informants and providing backup to fellow officers.

When we look at police numbers over the last couple of years we can see the problem. There have been 280 police added since 2008-09. There were 10,277 in 2008-09; in 2010-11 there are 10,557. But when we look, as we did at the estimates hearing, at the operational shift allowance we see that the number has actually declined. That has gone from 7,396 in 2008-09 to 7,347 in 2010-11. In the Coomera district the government's own figures show that there were 188 police for over 200,000 people. There is a significant article in the *Police Journal* of June 2011 entitled 'Coomera Cops a Raw Deal', in which the Police Union talks about the Coomera district being called the 'McDonald's district, where everything is half price' because of the fact that it has so few resources.

We also see that drug crime has exploded on the Gold Coast. The number of reported drug crimes in 1999-2000 was 4,625; in 2009-10 the number was 7,694—an increase of 66 per cent. Drug trafficking has exploded on the Gold Coast. Six traffickers were caught on the Gold Coast in 1999-2000 and 22 were caught across the south-east region, but in 2009-10 that number had gone to 43 drug traffickers on the Gold Coast and 57 across the south-east region—a 700 per cent increase in drug trafficking.

Mr Roberts: Talk it down.


Mr LANGBROEK: I say to the minister that we are not talking the Gold Coast down; we want the Labor government to focus on the Gold Coast. This is a government that has ignored the Gold Coast. Government members on the Gold Coast have not stood up for our community—unlike the member for Mermaid Beach, who stood in this place on 2 August, the member for Currumbin and me as the member for Surfers Paradise. We are always talking about supporting our police and giving them the resources they need, but government members on the Gold Coast—in fact this whole government—have ignored the Gold Coast and the government has taken away the last Gold Coast minister. There is no representation coming from the member for Albert, the member for Logan, the member for Broadwater or the member for Southport. They are standing there mute. Now on the eve of an election they are starting to make a few promises and trying to get the voters to come back and vote for them.

Let us contrast the government's poor leadership with the strong leadership of Campbell Newman and the LNP. Campbell Newman came to the Gold Coast on 4 May and stood next to me in a joint press conference and announced a major crime squad for the Gold Coast. That was promised because that was what local police identified they wanted to see if they were given the resources that they deserved. We are listening to local senior police and making sure they have what they need.

The minister said that it was an operational matter and that he is only responsible for resourcing. We have already seen how inefficient and ineffective he is at that. The Premier came back from holidays on Stradbroke Island and said that she had asked the Police Commissioner about it and a few days later it was ruled out. Of course, afterwards, we have now had plans for a major crime squad by Campbell Newman, plans for a police helicopter that the LNP has been promising for five years and plans for more police. In all of those issues, the Labor government has now jumped on the bandwagon and given all of those things.

It is clear that the government is clueless and rudderless because there were no specific plans for the police helicopter and now we have the issue of whether it will actually be suitable for police. That is why we need a change of government. We need a government that will actually listen to its senior police force.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.41 pm): It is with pleasure that I support the motion which was moved by the opposition leader and which the member for Surfers Paradise spoke about with great passion with respect to the Gold Coast. This motion is in two parts. One part deals with the condemnation of the Premier and this government for their failure to provide strong leadership against general crime. The second aspect of the motion makes particular reference to their failure to take timely action against crime on the Gold Coast. I will make my comments today more broadly with respect to the first element of this motion that I am supporting today.

There is condemnation for these Labor Party members because they have gone soft on crime and they were always soft on crime. When we talk about the Labor Party being soft on crime and its inaction, we are talking about a government that has been in power for 20 of the past 22 years—I repeat: 20 of the past 22 years—but it is only now that we are seeing these government members come into this place and pass bills and talk about police helicopters. For 20 out of the last 22 years they have been silent—absolutely silent. They have had no plan to tackle crime. They have always used a quick-fix approach. This quick-fix approach by the Labor Party in Queensland and the Labor Party right around Australia always goes back to what is on the front page of the daily newspapers. They think, 'What's on the front page of the daily newspapers? We'll fix it.'

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Member for Southport, they do not talk about it prior to it being on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. Their approach is, 'Let's not talk about it, but when it's on the front page we'll act on it.' That is not taking positive action; that is taking reactionary processes being driven by a daily media cycle.

The record speaks for itself. From 2007 to 2010, 185 convicted armed robbers and 35 convicted rapists walked free with no jail term. In 2009-10, 45 per cent of all reported robberies, 24 per cent of all reported sex offences and 22 per cent of all reported assaults remained unsolved. We ought not blame the judges; we ought to blame the Labor Party. We blame the Labor Party and Queensland residents blame the Queensland Labor Party because 22 years of inaction has put us in the situation we find ourselves in now.


But there is hope, and it is Campbell Newman and a can-do team. Over here, we are the can-do team; over there, we have a can-do copycat government. We talked about a crime squad. We were told it could not be done but a month later there was a crime squad established. We spoke at the last election about a police helicopter; now we see in the news a report about police helicopters. We talked about tracking sex offenders; now the government is going to track sex offenders.

With all good copycats, you need to know how to deal with them whether you are at school, at university or in parliament. To find out how to deal with copycat governments, I turned to Yahoo Answers. Under the question 'How do I deal with a copycat?' the best answer I could find was, 'I think

the reason she is doing this is because she really likes you. She wants to be like you, like the stuff you do.' Another answer was, 'Just remember when someone copies you in this case it is because they admire you and want to be just like you.' Another answer said, 'If they copy, that's because they think you're really cool and they want to be just like you.'

The Labor Party members opposite come into this place and talk about Campbell Newman on a daily basis and talk about us Tories sitting over here, but I put this back to them: I think they do this because they are jealous, they want to be just like us and they want to go out to Queensland with a plan because the only people in Queensland with a plan are Campbell Newman and the LNP team. Just like any good copycats, I can tell them that we do not want to be their friend and we do not want them to be like us. The only way to get plans in Queensland is to get rid of this mob.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (5.47 pm): I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

- supports the Queensland Police Service for the strong action it continues to take on the Gold Coast;
- notes that the increased resourcing provided by the Queensland government has resulted in significant overall reductions in crime rates on the Gold Coast and across Queensland, including a 47 per cent reduction in the rate of property offences in the South East Police Region, which includes the Gold Coast, Coomera and Logan police districts, in the period 2000-01 to 2009-10; and
- notes that the number of police officers in the South East Police Region has increased 59 per cent from June 1998 to August 2011.

I have to respond to a few of the claims made by opposition members. The member for Surfers Paradise has been out there deliberately misleading the Gold Coast community on funding for police on the Gold Coast. He is claiming that between 2008-09 and 2010-11 there was a reduction in funding for police on the Gold Coast. That is an absolute mistruth, a deliberate deception. In 2008-09, the total expenditure for the two districts which existed in the region at the time was \$123 million. After that, a new district was created in 2009. For the two districts in 2008-09 there was \$123 million and for the three districts in 2010-11 there was \$141 million. This is a significant increase in resources. This just exposes the member for Surfers Paradise and the rubbish that he has been speaking out in the community.

The member for Surfers Paradise claims that a police helicopter has been LNP policy for years. Let us look at what he said on Channel 10 news on 26 July: 'Let's wait for the trial. Then we'll make our promises.' So they are going to wait to see the results of the trial before they commit to anything, which is what the government has indicated we will look at as well.

The member for Surfers Paradise referred to the Gold Coast as being similar to New York city in terms of crime rates. In New York city last year there were 500 murders for eight million people; in Queensland, there were around 50 for the whole state. So with 500 versus 50, I know where I would rather be living. New York is a nice place to visit but I would rather live in Queensland.


Members of the Liberal National Party are an absolute joke when it comes to law and order issues. They talk the talk but never, ever deliver. The joke of the National Party members is what they delivered when they were last in government. There was chronic underfunding of the Police Service, low police numbers and high crime rates. That is the record of the National Party government. That is not just from the last time they were in government here. If we go back to the Fitzgerald era before that we see that there was a constant and ongoing record of chronic underfunding which led to, as I have said, high crime rates.

Since this government has been in power, we have significantly increased police resources—significantly increased them—resulting in many more police on the beat and lower crime rates. I have said these figures many times, but there has been a reduction in property crime over the 10-year period to 2009-10 of 48 per cent and for crimes against the person there has been a 20 per cent reduction as a result of increased resources. The south-east region, which includes the Gold Coast, Coomera and Logan, has shared in this significant increase in resources. Let us look at the total number of police. In the south-east region in 1998 to now there has been a 59 per cent increase in the number of police. In June 1998 there were 898 police while at 1 August 2011 there were 1,429 police officers, an increase of 531 officers over that period. In addition to those figures, over the last two years the Police Commissioner has allocated the lion's share of the police allocation to the south-east region and in particular the Gold Coast and Coomera. In 2010-11, 36 out of 45 officers—almost a quarter—went into that region. In 2011-12 there have been 20 officers into the Gold Coast and 15 into Coomera. Task Force Resolve was created with 18 officers brought in from other regions and has now been made a 20-person permanent presence on the Gold Coast.

The member opposite talks about Campbell Newman's promise of a crime squad. What did he promise? He promised \$4 million over four years—a million dollars a year. Do members know what that would deliver? Around eight detectives. Labor government resourcing has delivered a now 20-person serious and violent crime squad on the Gold Coast compared to around eight detectives that were promised by the LNP. It is an absolute joke!

In addition to the increased resources that the Labor government has funded for the Police Service, there have been a range of additional operations. Operation Seymour has seen a significant blitz and is getting significant results, and I give credit to the local officers in addition to those extra officers that have been put on. I want to mention a couple of others, because this is the issue. It is not just Operation Seymour. The Queensland Police Service has in the past and will continue to target focused operations on the Gold Coast to address things such as break and enters and drug offences.

(Time expired)

 **Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (5.51 pm): I second the amendment moved by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. One of the outcomes of the Fitzgerald inquiry was to eliminate the interference in policing issues by politicians. The interference by politicians prior to the Fitzgerald inquiry took many forms—for instance, the interference that promoted Terry Lewis from an inspector in Charleville to Police Commissioner. We know why that was done. Even at the time of his elevation it was well known and even commented on by previous commissioners that he had a very questionable—and in fact I think this was the term used—and ‘spotty’ history. Spotty indeed! I actually gave away my interest in satire when Joh Bjelke-Petersen made him Father of the Year! Of course we all know of the incident where a young police officer tried to book then police minister Russ Hinze with a traffic fine, only to be threatened with a transfer to the bush. And of course he was also unaware of any illegal gambling or prostitution! That was at the same time that the police were actually supervising the transfer of a roulette wheel in the Valley from one side of the street to the other, stopping the traffic and so on. The media, through the efforts of an honest cop, detailed the corrupt efforts to quash a drink-driving charge against Sir Edward Lyons after a late-night phone call to the then commissioner, of course Terry Lewis.

Mr Kilburn: Ah, the good old days!

Mr LAWLOR: The good old days. That is what those opposite want to get back to. Therefore, the day-to-day running of the Police Service today is properly out of the hands of politicians, as it should be, although the opposition apparently wants to return to those days—the pre-Fitzgerald days or, as someone said, what it considers to be the good old days. It is up to governments to provide the resources through the budget to allow senior executives in the Police Service to allocate the funding to the various regions to enable the police to carry out their duties as effectively as possible.


One criminal act of course is one too many, but we have to be realistic in our expectations about crime. We are not going to eliminate it, especially in larger cities, and the Gold Coast is now the sixth largest city in Australia and therefore has problems which are common to all large cities around the world. It is not just a group, as it was in the fifties and sixties, of sleepy fishing villages, holiday villages, dairy farms and so on.

The Queensland Police Service is better funded now than it has been at any time in Queensland’s history. Police numbers in the south-east region—that is, the Gold Coast, Logan and Coomera—at 30 June 1998 were 862 officers. On 1 February this year the number was 1,424, which included 690 in the Gold Coast district. That is a 60 per cent increase. The member for Surfers Paradise mentioned crime figures, but of course he is referring back 10 years and quoting absolute figures with no reference to the increase in population and therefore there was no context for those figures whatsoever. In armed robbery the state-wide rate has decreased by 51 per cent in 10 years. The south-east region has decreased by 30 per cent in 10 years and the Gold Coast district by 36 per cent. In terms of property offences, the state-wide rate has decreased by 48 per cent in 10 years, the south-east region by 47 per cent and the Gold Coast district by 50 per cent.

Of the 152 positions funded by the Bligh government in the 2011-12 budget, 35—almost a quarter—will go to the south-east region. During the term of this government, police numbers will increase by 600, taking the total number of police officers to 10,600. As is normal post Fitzgerald, the Police Commissioner has worked with his senior executives to distribute these additional positions across the state. Of the 203 additional positions funded by the Bligh government in 2010-11, the south-east region received an allocation of 44 officers. So the south-east region, and the Gold Coast specifically, has been well catered for by the government and by the Queensland Police Service. The figures for both the number of offences and police resources are very positive, notwithstanding what seems to be a spike in the figures just recently and including of course the tragic murder of a police officer.

The Gold Coast has been home for me for 63 years and neither I nor any of my family feel threatened. References in the media to the Gold Coast as the crime capital of Australia are completely unhelpful in addressing issues of crime. We even had the situation of an ex-police officer being quoted as saying that he is too scared to put petrol in his car on the Gold Coast. What absolute hysterical nonsense—hysterical nonsense! As I said, I have no intention of leaving the Gold Coast. I have lived there all my life, as have my kids, aside from a few years overseas.

(Time expired)

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.57 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker Elmes, I congratulate you firstly on your brilliantly fair and unprejudiced conduct of the House and thank you in advance for your indulgence. Only last sitting in this House I highlighted the failure of this Bligh government to address

the upwardly spiralling crime rate on the Gold Coast. I acknowledged the fantastic work of the current force of Gold Coast police in doing the best job possible while underresourced, understaffed and—until the Industrial Commission stepped in to overturn the Bligh government's iniquitous pay discrimination—underpaid. However, Labor and lawlessness go hand in hand in Queensland and its lily-livered, weak-kneed response to escalating and rampant crime on the Gold Coast is to deny the reality with spin, bodgied-up crime figures and soppy legislation giving law-breakers a smack on the wrist and releasing them out into the community to reoffend and reoffend.

When will the Bligh government own up to the Gold Coast community that it has short-changed us for the last 20 years in police numbers for the fastest growing area of the state, the largest tourism visitation of the state—which also includes visiting crims—and the night entertainment hot spot of the state which demands more resources from the police than all of the other state police regions put together? The much lauded Bligh Labor government Criminal Organisation Act of November 2009—two years ago—has not produced one investigation, one arrest or one prosecution of bikie club members for crime related matters. Does this mean that we do not have any bikie club related crime on the Gold Coast? I do not think so. It means what we all know is true—that the Bligh Labor government is soft on crime. As the economic downturn hits hard on the Gold Coast, we can expect an upsurge of drug related crimes as people commit crimes to pay for their drug use. As we have seen in recent months through the media, the Gold Coast is getting a totally bad national and international reputation as a crime capital where it is unsafe to walk the streets.


The other day at a shopping centre in my local area, in broad daylight, a personal acquaintance of mine had a bag-snatching experience, which completely shocked me. The tourism industry on the Gold Coast, which the Bligh government continually neglects, is suffering badly because of this negative publicity. Until the Bligh government commits to more police and police resources on the Gold Coast, the criminal activity will continue to get worse. You only had to watch 7.30 last night to see what a terrible reputation the Gold Coast is getting as a result of a complete lack of interest by the Bligh Labor government in putting more resources into a political area it sees as tiger country. A 50-police, short-term fix for 30 days will not address the problem. It is just more spin doctoring from an out-of-touch, long-term Labor government that is bereft of ideas and has no commitment to making Queensland a better and safer state. I have no doubt that the bikie criminals just took their 30-day annual holidays while the coppers moved into town.

The recent shocking incident with police officer Damian Leeding is testament enough that the criminal element is rife on the Gold Coast. Anywhere that has the high number of nightclubs, sex parlours and entertainment venues that the Gold Coast has—they may even be outlets for drug use and distribution—must deserve a higher than normal allocation of police to contain the illegal activities that are the unwanted spin-off of providing these forms of entertainment.

The Gold Coast has been fortunate to have the guidance of Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson to direct the current police allocation. Paul has served throughout Queensland in a distinguished law enforcement career. I hope the rumour I am hearing is incorrect—that he will be replaced shortly and transferred to another part of Queensland. That would be another classic case of the Labor Party looking for a fall guy to blame for the Gold Coast's current reputation as a crime centre. The lack of commitment by the Bligh Labor government is wholly and solely to blame for our *Underbelly* image and reality and for frightening our community. If the Gold Coast community is serious about protecting its citizens from a rapid increase in crime, it needs a can-do government to bolster a can-do police force and to put in place can-do legislation to put criminals in the can. 'Can Do' Campbell Newman is the man.

The minister has moved a ridiculous amendment. He cannot even do his maths. His amendment notes that the number of police officers in South-East Queensland has increased by 59 per cent. The population in South-East Queensland has increased by one million over the years—an increase of 59 per cent. As a result, there has been no net increase. Thank you, Minister. Go back and get your boys to do some proper sums.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (6.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the police minister and, in doing so, say that as a proud member of the Labor government I am also a very proud member of the Gold Coast and that my family also enjoys living on the Gold Coast. At no time do we feel under threat or as though we are living in a crime capital, as those opposite argue tonight. In 10 years in this place I have never heard such hypocrisy, such hysteria and such misleading use of statistics. You really have to wonder why the members of the LNP who represent the Gold Coast are so ashamed of the Gold Coast. With the Gold Coast's bid for the Commonwealth Games soon to be finalised, I would think that those members opposite would be doing everything they can to talk up the Gold Coast.

Certainly, we are working with the police minister to ensure that police resources are adequate but, given that the Commonwealth Games bid winner will be announced in November, I am very keen indeed that proper and accurate statistics are discussed. Currently, there are 10,500 sworn officers in the Queensland Police Service. Since the Nationals were last in power in 1998 there has been an incredible increase in police numbers of almost 54 per cent—3,700 police around Queensland. When

the Nationals were in power there was one officer for every 507 people. Owing to the significant increase in police numbers by Labor governments, there has been an improvement in that ratio to one officer for every 436 people.

Mr Crandon: Not in Coomera.

Mrs KEECH: So that is a significant improvement in resourcing in the Police Service, particularly over the past 10 years. I note that, although the member for Coomera is interjecting, his name is not on the speaking list. I am really pleased indeed to be talking about Coomera. I am very proud that a police district has been established at Coomera. I am very pleased that on 12 August 2011 the police minister, after consultation with the Police Commissioner, announced 35 extra positions for the south-east region—35 out of the 152 positions funded by the Bligh government in the 2011-12 state budget. In particular, the Coomera police district has received significant additional officers, including the creation of a 14-officer tactical crime squad—something I have been working hard to ensure the Coomera police district received. That is 14 officers, with seven officers allocated in 2011-12 and another seven officers to be allocated in 2012-13. In addition, I am very pleased indeed that the government has decided to create the Coomera district dog squad, with three officers being allocated to the squad this year. I thank the minister for his advocacy of that dog squad. As well, there are two additional general duties officers each for the Coomera and Nerang stations and the upgrading of the Coomera district child protection investigation unit to a senior sergeant officer-in-charge.

While the LNP claims that these additional police resources are evidence that the government is failing to provide strong leadership on crime, my community does not support that claim whatsoever. After the announcement of the additional police for the Coomera Police Station, I was very pleased indeed to attend the Oxenford Neighbourhood Watch's 20th anniversary. It was a big celebration, and the announcement of the additional resources for Coomera was very welcome indeed. Of course, as a member representing a very fast growing area I want to see extra police resources, so I was very pleased to launch my petition for an extra police station at Ormeau. The Labor government is very focused indeed on ensuring that high-growth areas like Coomera have the police resources they need. I commend the amendment.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (6.07 pm): Labor has been in power in Queensland for 20 of the last 22 years. The Gold Coast community—Australia's sixth-largest city, as has been acknowledged tonight—with a growth of five per cent per annum contribution to the national income tax and in the past 10 years a 25 per cent contribution to Queensland's GST income, has received a policing ratio of only 30 per cent of any other major comparable area in Queensland. Currently in the Coomera division we have one police officer to 1,800 people compared to the state average of one officer to 454 people. Additionally, the Gold Coast has no organised crime squad, until recently had no tactical crime squad other than those from Brisbane and, critically, has no drug squad. I say that because over 50 per cent of all of the state's drug offences are committed on the Gold Coast.

Critically, on the Anzac Day weekend in 2009 over 50 per cent of all CADs—computer assisted dispatches—for the police occurred in the Gold Coast region. That percentage relates to call-outs across the whole state. It is no secret that the most recent tragic homicide of a police officer occurred in my electorate of Gaven. Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding left a wife and two young children. Four thousand officers attended his funeral and over 1,100 officers have recently attended one of many fundraising benefits for his family.

The circumstances surrounding the tragedy remain a matter for both legal determination and review. What we know is that the incidence of armed robberies in particular and crime on the Gold Coast has increased significantly. We also know that in my electorate, where there is a 14 per cent unemployment rate and a 40 per cent underemployment rate, there has been a 100 per cent increase in the number of armed robberies in the past 12 months alone. At the Nerang Police Station officers have the highest number of computer-aided dispatches per officer in the region, and I would say arguably across the state, far exceeding that of Browns Plains, Logan and even Surfers Paradise. On the Gold Coast over 50 per cent of all police time is taken up with domestic violence incidents. In fact, two weeks prior to the recent tragedy in my electorate I raised the issue of a spike in domestic violence at Pacific Pines, where a tragedy occurred. I table all my media releases on matters relating to those issues.


Tabled paper: Bundle of media releases issued by Mr Alex Douglas MP regarding crime on the Gold Coast [\[5107\]](#).

Mental health issues primarily due to drugs on some days consume 80 per cent of a policeman's duties. On average they account for 25 per cent across the Gold Coast region. No wonder police cannot do proactive policing. They are not doing this because they are busy managing the crime crisis promoted by Labor. When Labor finally reacted to the crime crisis four weeks ago it put in place only seven of the promised 14 tactical crime squad officers.

The causes of much of the violence and crime on the Gold Coast is and was predictable. Labor's response is too little and too late. The government's spin doctors would have us believe that the current police blitz in Surfers Paradise will solve all of the problems on the Gold Coast, but it is dreaming. Even inexpensive solutions such as permanently funding the drink-safe precinct initiatives and capping the

number of further licensed sex clubs in Orchid Avenue in Surfers Paradise would have made a huge difference, but Labor balked. The biggest failure of this Labor government in tackling crime on the Gold Coast is its recent decision to relocate 500 surplus poker machine licences, presumably \$1, \$2 and \$5 machines, to TabCorp. In 2003 new licences for poker machines were capped. The \$1, \$2 and \$5 machines are primarily where drug money is being laundered. Average punters play 1c and 2c machines. Money laundering is directly related to crime and the promotion of crime locally. Labor will pretend that it did not know the evidence. I publicly stated this information on 7 October 2009 in debate on the Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Judge a government by its actions and not its words. Labor is not only soft on crime; it wants to promote crime for its budget's bottom line. Organised crime launders \$2.2 billion via poker machines and this state only nets \$440 million of it. When Gold Coasters were looking for leadership and action against crime in our community they were ignored by this Labor government. Labor now seeks to play catch-up prior to the election. Police officers are rushing to deal with domestic violence, mental health issues and armed robberies and are exhausted. There is no time to do RBTs and other standard proactive policing operations. This is the end result of massive rationing, undermanning and failed leadership. The minister fails to understand that the increased resources being allocated to Coomera are coming off such a low base. Similarly, the member for Southport has not acknowledged the 10 million tourists we get annually. I am not talking down the Gold Coast because I love it as my home. Labor offers platitudes over real options in crime prevention in Queensland.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (6.12 pm): Negative law and order scare campaigns are always a bit of a winner. They play on people's fears and their genuine concern to protect their family, their neighbourhood and their community. But do they actually achieve anything? The answer is no. For several years now the LNP has been running a scare campaign on this subject that is not based on evidence, nor is it based on results that will lead to a safer community. It is based on empty rhetoric, and for that those opposite should be condemned. This is no more evident than in my own electorate. It is my belief that crime prevention can only really be achieved effectively from the community up. In November 2009 we established the Burleigh Police Community Consultative Committee. It provides residents with an opportunity to work closely with local police on crime prevention projects, share information and lobby for greater resources. This committee has gone from strength to strength. Meetings are well attended and feature guest speakers on a range of issues from property crime and hooning through to identity theft and fraud. Members have taken practical action to address issues such as graffiti through graffiti audits and paint-out days. Community involvement helped me secure funding for a police beat on the Burleigh Heads beachfront, construction of which is imminent.

Local police operations such as Operation Silverlight and Operation Gemini have been effectively targeting crimes such as burglaries and antisocial behaviour, with input from the local community. The drink-safe precinct in Surfers Paradise is another successful initiative. Residents and tourists can now visit the heart of our city and enjoy a night out without feeling unsafe. Operation Seymour has been hailed as a success. During the 24 days of the operation, the combined efforts of Operation Seymour staff and those officers working within the Gold Coast and Coomera districts have resulted in 1,873 people being charged with 2,702 offences. Operation Seymour figures alone show more than 680 people have been arrested on more than 1,000 charges.

What have we heard from the LNP on these great initiatives? Nothing. Not only are LNP members more interested in crippling our community with fear; they do not even want to contribute to the solution. On the subject of forming a PCCC, my LNP opponent stated—

The Consultative Committee doesn't really achieve anything. The committee members suggest target areas and the police don't listen.

I table an article containing that comment.


Tabled paper: Article, dated 26 November 2009, titled 'Police resolve to restore Burleigh' [\[5108\]](#).

It is a familiar term for him, it would seem. He went on to say he would not be involved until the process changes. But that is not all. I was recently directed to an article on the LNP website regarding the construction of a police beat in Burleigh. Considering this is a vital piece of infrastructure and a massive boost to local police resources, one would think that a party that is making so much noise on this issue would have a lot to say, but what have we here? Nothing. This release, which I also table, is lacking any substance. It is a blank page.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 23 August 2011, from a website titled 'Police Beat Burleigh' [\[5109\]](#).

On the Gold Coast we have talented and passionate officers who often go above and beyond what is required of them. Every day they face the worst of what our community has to offer. I want to acknowledge what a great job they do, often in very difficult circumstances. Whether dealing with serious issues or more minor matters, they always carry out their duties in a professional manner. I am proud of my government for what has been achieved, not only in Burleigh Heads but the Gold Coast. I am even more proud of my community. The people of Burleigh decided they were not going to tolerate

crime in our neighbourhoods and they stood up and said 'Enough!' Today I say to the LNP, 'Enough is enough! Stop trampling on our efforts and playing on the fears of the community and help us work together for a safer Gold Coast.'

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.16 pm): In speaking in support of this motion may I take this opportunity to commend the dedication, skills and persistence of all police officers across Queensland in their pursuit of criminals and antisocial behaviour.

Mr Roberts interjected.


Mrs STUCKEY: I would like to put on record that the minister is interjecting as I commend police, which I think is appalling. Theirs is a thankless task to a large degree and in countless cases a dangerous one too. It is the behaviour of this toxic Labor government and its ongoing inaction that stands condemned here in this House today. Instead of leadership we have seen denial; instead of action we have seen excuses. How many times have we heard police minister after police minister and Premier after Premier stand here and praise themselves for having more police officers in Queensland than 20 years ago under a conservative government? Talk about living in the past and not letting the truth get in the way of Labor's typical spin! It does not take too many smarts to realise that Queensland's population has exploded during this time and attracted many millions of visitors, millions never factored into the police population ratio. The honourable members for Nudgee, Southport, Albert and Burleigh revealed that they are way past their use-by date and all put forward impotent arguments in this matter. But the facts tell the true story. As the honourable member for Surfers Paradise noted, on the Gold Coast five shootings have resulted in three deaths in just seven weeks, including the murder of a respected police officer, Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding.

Over the last decade, Labor has presided over a 100 per cent increase in drug trafficking crime. That is right, honourable members. From 1999-2000 to 2009-10 drug trafficking crime in Queensland has increased 100 per cent, with 280 incidents reported last year. In the past three years under Labor, graffiti crime has risen 14 per cent and cost ratepayers millions of dollars on top of crippling living costs imposed by the Bligh Labor government. In the past three years Labor's weak sentencing laws saw 185 convicted armed robbers walk back onto the streets without spending a night in jail and 35 convicted rapists were allowed to walk free. Then there are the backflips due to community pressure: the rollout of the GPS monitoring devices for released dangerous sex offenders which the LNP has advocated for for years and a permanent Major Crime Squad for the Gold Coast has finally been approved but only after the tragic shooting death of a devoted police officer, husband and father.

If one listened to the drivel from Labor members, one would think they are doing a marvellous job and we should be ever so grateful for the police resources that they have so graciously given the good folk of Queensland. Some 100 armed robberies on the Gold Coast this year have not gone unnoticed as media beams the stories across the state, the country and the globe, sending negative messages about our region—a region I love dearly. If one listened to the nonsense coming from the mouth of the Minister for Tourism, one would think we live in nirvana and that Labor's carbon tax will be good for business.

Despite criminals enjoying a free reign under this limp-wristed government, in recent years Labor has voted down 15 private members' bills, all of them introduced by the LNP to improve police powers and provide tougher sentences for criminals. Some of those included the Criminal Code (Assault Causing Death) Amendment Bill 2007, which would have introduced a new offence of unlawful assault causing death and increased sentences for other crimes. There was the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-Up) Amendment Bill 2008 for compulsory community service clean-up orders for graffiti offenders. There was the Child Protection (More Stringent Reporting) Amendment Bill 2010 and the good Samaritan bill. This government even stopped people from helping others in distress.

Labor's treatment of our police is shabby, to put it mildly. The LNP values their efforts and recognises the enormously difficult job they do. Labor has become so focused on itself that it has allowed Queensland to lose its AAA credit rating, slip to No. 3 in the tourism stakes and starve its citizens of appropriate police resources. The LNP and Campbell Newman will work for all Queenslanders, not for ourselves. How dare those opposite accuse us of talking down Queensland when they have successively let it down and voted down LNP legislation that would have made our communities safer.

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (6.21 pm): I rise to speak against the motion and to support the amendment moved in the House by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The opposition's claims are simply wrong. The number of police officers in the south-east region has increased by around 59 per cent since 1998. This government is giving the Police Commissioner increased resources to respond to crime issues on the Gold Coast and police are using those resources to good effect. In fact, just last week I was pleased to advise my community that our region would be allocated 35 of 152 positions funded by the Bligh government in the 2011-12 state budget. Eighteen of the 35 positions will be allocated to the already announced Task Force Resolve, the serious violent crime squad established by the commissioner in June with a temporary allocation of detectives. That squad will be boosted by an

additional two senior constable level intelligence officers, bringing the squad to a total strength of 20. I was pleased that this government will deliver on our commitment to fund the Queensland Police Service to train and employ more police for the district, to enable the creation of a 14-officer tactical crime squad, with seven officers to be allocated in 2011-12 and another seven officers to be allocated in the 2012-13 financial year.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Ms CROFT: In recognition of the growth of the city, a new Coomera district dog squad will be created with three officers being allocated to the squad this year. From the interjections from the member for Coomera, I note that he is very supportive of these additions to his policing district. It is very surprising that he is not on tonight's speaking list. He was shunted by the member for Kawana. It is obvious that he would have spoken only of good things, because this government has delivered more policing for his electorate and he knows that.

I know people want to see more officers on the beat and the allocation of two additional general duties officers each to Coomera and Nerang stations boosts the existing strength for the Gold Coast and supports officers on the front line, no matter where one lives on the Gold Coast. Since my election I have delivered on a police beat for Biggera Waters. That police beat is staffed by two hardworking and dedicated police officers—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Stop the clock. Member for Broadwater, resume your seat. Member for Coomera, this is your second warning. There will not be a third. The member for Broadwater has the call and you have persistently interjected on her.

Ms CROFT: Since my election I have delivered on a police beat for Biggera Waters. That beat is staffed by two hardworking and dedicated police officers who work very closely with the community to address local issues. I delivered on a police beat for Santa Barbara. Although that area is no longer within my electorate boundary, I worked very hard to deliver on that election commitment. I know that the local community is well served by the hardworking officers staffing that beat. Those two police beats support the Runaway Bay Police Station and the work that its staff does. I am pleased our government delivered on this initiative for the Broadwater electorate.

The opposition is constantly claiming that Campbell Newman has the answers. Recently he announced a \$4 million allocation over four years for a crime squad on the Gold Coast. The opposition is so out of touch. With that sum they would be flat out funding a squad of eight detectives per year. They have absolutely no idea. They have not delivered for the Gold Coast and they have no answers for the Gold Coast.

This government has delivered for the people of the Gold Coast in a number of ways. Recently we have seen the great success of Operation Seymour, which is a 50-officer uniformed police task force to blitz criminal and antisocial activity on the Gold Coast for one month. I wish to talk about some of the successes of that squad. This blitz in the Gold Coast and Coomera district has resulted in 1,873 people being charged with 2,702 offences. John-Paul Langbroek continuously misleads the people of the Gold Coast about the amount spent on policing in our region. The expenditure has increased by almost 13 per cent from 2008-09 to 2010-11. In 2010-11 the total expenditure for our region was \$141 million. This government supports the good work undertaken by all police officers.

What we have heard tonight is the constant undermining of the good work our police officers do on the Gold Coast. It is embarrassing—absolutely embarrassing—that we had a shadow minister for tourism constantly running down the Gold Coast and another member who recently met with international delegates running down the Gold Coast again—

(Time expired)

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

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

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Foley, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If there is another division, ring the bells for one minute under standing order 103(4).

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

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

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Foley, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seehey, Simpson, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- supports the Queensland Police Service for the strong action it continues to take on the Gold Coast;
- notes that the increased resourcing provided by the Queensland government has resulted in significant overall reductions in crime rates on the Gold Coast and across Queensland, including a 47 per cent reduction in the rate of property offences in the South East Police Region, which includes the Gold Coast, Coomera and Logan police districts, in the period 2000-01 to 2009-10; and
- notes that the number of police officers in the South East Police Region has increased 59 per cent from June 1998 to August 2011.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 pm to 7.36 pm.

MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee



Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (7.36 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes and I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill [\[5110\]](#).

Tabled paper: Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[5111\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce into the parliament today the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. This bill will ensure our state maintains its reputation as an international sporting hub, capable of holding world-class events. The Bligh government has made certain that bureaucracy and red tape do not get in the way of what many Queenslanders are calling for—home finals for the Brisbane Broncos. It has now been more than 10 years since Lang Park underwent significant transformation into what we now know as Suncorp Stadium. The redevelopment project was a major priority of this Labor government and was based on providing Queensland with an international standard stadium to rival venues in Australia. This remains a priority for us today.

In 2001 the government proposed there would be no more than 24 major sporting events a year which attracted more than 25,000 spectators. Known as development condition 42, this cap was voluntarily imposed by the government at a time when the Brisbane Broncos were the only major team playing home games at Suncorp. To date, this has been a fair and workable agreement that all parties have honoured. However, a lot has changed. In just the last 10 years, an additional 600,000 people have called South-East Queensland home, the Queensland Reds have moved from Ballymore to Suncorp Stadium, and the commencement of the A League has seen an increase in the number of soccer—or football—games held at Suncorp. Ten years ago, it was not possible to predict that the Brisbane Roar would host the A League grand final and be crowned champions, the Queensland Reds would host the Super Rugby grand final and win, we would hold major international soccer—or football—and rugby union matches and we would farewell one of our true sporting icons, Darren Lockyer, all in the same calendar year.

It comes as no surprise, then, that so many people have been flocking to Suncorp Stadium this year—already more than 885,000 in fact. So far in 2011 there have been nine events which have attracted crowds in excess of 35,000 people. Queenslanders enjoy watching live events. We enjoy being part of something bigger and cheering on our sporting heroes, and this opportunity should not be taken away from anyone if it can be prevented.

If we did not introduce this bill and the crowd size limit at Suncorp Stadium remained, it is likely that attendances at high-profile events in 2011, such as soccer internationals and possible Brisbane Broncos finals games, may have to be capped to less than half the stadium, meaning tens of thousands of Queenslanders would miss out on witnessing Darren Lockyer's final matches with the Broncos; the NRL and Football Federation Australia may relocate matches to their opponents' venues in Sydney and Melbourne; Queensland's reputation for hosting major sporting events would be damaged and this would result in a loss of economic benefits for Brisbane and the Queensland economy; and the stadium would be underutilised, which would undermine the government's investment in the stadium.

Our success on the field is something we should celebrate, not something we should be punished for. Just because we are successful and invest more in sport and recreation than any other state or territory does not mean the most significant and attractive events on our sporting calendar should be fenced off to only a certain lucky few or cancelled. The simple fact is that this year has been an extraordinary year with brilliant performances from many Brisbane based teams and a more than usual number of world-class sporting events. For this reason, the bill provides arrangements to ensure games can continue to be played at Suncorp Stadium for the remainder of the year. This bill provides a head of power for a regulation to be made establishing a new limit on crowd sizes for the future. This regulation will be enacted as soon as practical if the bill is passed. This will prove beneficial should all Brisbane based sporting clubs be extraordinarily successful again and will provide for Queensland's growing population and the popularity of these events.


We have also consulted the local community to gauge their feedback and to listen to their opinions and concerns. On top of this, we have also had discussions with stakeholders in the area including the PCYC and key response groups including Stadium Management Advisory Committee, Brisbane Broncos, Queensland Rugby Union, Brisbane Roar, Queensland Ambulance Service, Suncorp Stadium and Stadiums Queensland. Taking this into account, we have decided not to increase the number of events. Instead, we will lift the cap on the number of people, increasing it to a maximum of 35,000 spectators at 24 events. There is not a significant difference in the impacts on the local community between a 25,000-person crowd and a 35,000-person crowd, but the wider positive impacts that these big-ticket events will have for Queensland as a whole are huge.

The Major Sports Facilities Regulation 2002 limits the number of concerts per year at Suncorp Stadium to three. The regulation will be amended to increase this limit to four. The people of Queensland want this and it is not our role to take it away from them.

In closing, 2011 has been an extraordinary year for Queensland in many ways. Even Suncorp Stadium could not escape the ferocity and reach of Queensland's natural disasters earlier this year. Many of us saw the humbling pictures of it inundated by water. But, like the people it now seats, it showed a fighting spirit and determination to come out on top.

Capping the number of spectators in the stadium does not make sense in financial terms or for the community at large. The stadium is a symbol of our strong and resilient spirit and should be available to all. With the Broncos so high on the NRL ladder and assured of at least one home finals match, it is imperative we prevent these matches from heading down south. The Broncos have done their bit; now it is time for the Queensland parliament to do its bit. The NRL finals begin on 9 September and, therefore, it is urgent that this bill be debated in the next sitting week to ensure the Broncos have certainty that they are playing at home. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (7.42 pm): 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.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (7.42 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Adoption Act 2009, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, the Child Protection Act 1999 and the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Family Responsibilities Commission and Other Acts Amendment Bill [[5112](#)].

Tabled paper: Family Responsibilities Commission and Other Acts Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [[5113](#)].

I am pleased to introduce a bill for an act to amend the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008, the FRC Act, to ensure that the Cape York Welfare reform trial, the trial, and the operations of the Family Responsibilities Commission, the FRC, are extended by 12 months.

The bill also makes technical and consequential amendments to the FRC Act relating to the Australian government's changes to the organisational status of Centrelink that were effective from 1 July 2011. In addition, the bill makes technical amendments to the Child Protection Act 1999 to complete the provisions relating to the making of a temporary custody order and the rights, powers and obligations conferred by the order.

The bill also includes amendments to the Adoption Act 2009 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 to allow for the registration of intercountry adoptions that are assessed in Queensland but where the final adoption order is issued overseas. Registering the adoption will enable all children adopted from overseas, under the Adoption Act 2009, to access Queensland birth certificates for the purpose of identification.

The trial commenced in July 2008 under a tripartite agreement between the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The trial aims to build stronger and more resilient communities, re-establish local Indigenous authority, enable children to achieve their full potential, support engagement in the real economy, and encourage individuals and families from social housing to homeownership. The trial operates in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge with the support of local stakeholders.

The FRC is an integral component of the trial. The FRC Act, which established the FRC as a statutory body, is legislated to expire on 1 January 2012 and the FRC is due to cease operations on 31 December 2011. The FRC operates to restore local Indigenous authority and build stronger and resilient communities through attaching behavioural obligations to the receipt of welfare payments. The FRC Commissioner and local commissioners hold conferences with local people who are 'notified' to the FRC for failing to enrol and send children to school, coming to the attention of the Department of Communities for a child safety matter, being convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court, or failing to remedy a breach of a tenancy agreement. Importantly, the FRC Act is administered under the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount.

Key components of the trial include the provision of a range of community services and educational, economic development, employment and housing initiatives. The operation of wellbeing centres; parenting programs; anti-violence, drug and alcohol services; and school attendance case managers are critical to obtaining successful outcomes for FRC clients. Other funded activities focus on school and working age populations and social housing tenants in the four communities.

In the past, the trial communities have been characterised by chronic levels of welfare dependence, social disadvantage and economic exclusion. Achieving progress in addressing these problems will take time and concerted effort.

The process of steadily building stronger and resilient communities and restoring local Indigenous authority is being assisted through the appointment of respected community leaders as FRC local commissioners. These local commissioners hold conferences with community members in response to notification from agencies about school attendance, tenancy agreement breaches, Magistrates Court convictions and child safety issues. The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy is operating in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale and an increasing range of programs and services are being provided to encourage personal responsibility and to develop the individual capacities of community members.

An independent implementation review of the FRC released in November 2010, together with the *Annual highlights report for Queensland's discrete Indigenous communities July 2009—June 2010*, published in December 2010, reveals that, since the FRC began operation on 1 July 2008, all trial communities have experienced relative stability in the levels of reported offences against the person and hospital admissions for assault related conditions, while school attendance has improved or been maintained at higher levels. These real benefits achieved in terms of the safety, wellbeing and welfare of the people in the trial communities, particularly women and children, deserve recognition, and I applaud them. However, embedding changes and building stronger and more resilient communities requires generational change, and this requires longer term commitment.

Extensive consultation to inform the decision to extend the trial for an additional 12 months has been undertaken by the Department of Communities. The outcomes of this consultation process were generally positive. Based on the feedback from the majority of those consulted across all four trial communities and in recognition of the need to consolidate the benefits so far achieved, the extension of the trial until 31 December 2012 is justified.

There is nothing easy about service delivery in remote areas of Queensland and this is exacerbated sometimes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For the trial and the operations of the FRC to reach their full potential, more time and work is needed. The trial will be evaluated in 2011-12, and this extension will allow the best possible assessment of the trial's achievements, particularly as there were some unavoidable lag times with the creation of the FRC and the setting up of services.

I appreciate that this is one of the first bills to be introduced into the House under the new committee system. And, whilst I will not be making a habit of it, I have spoken with the chair to convey the reasons why I would appreciate the committee urgently considering this bill. Accordingly, I seek the committee's assistance with expediting its report.

It is critical that amendments to the FRC Act be passed and given assent prior to the expiry of the current act on 1 January 2012. A significant appointment process to reappoint the FRC Commissioner, local commissioners and the FRC board of management also needs to be completed prior to 1 January 2012. This will ensure the operation of the FRC for a further 12 months until 31 December 2012.


In relation to the amendments to the Child Protection Act 1999, I am advised that there was extensive consultation with the government and non-government sectors during the formulation of the amendments in the Child Protection and Other Acts Amendment Act 2010 and that there was general support for the introduction of the temporary custody order. The amendments in the bill are consequent on the introduction of the temporary custody order and are being made to achieve the policy intent of the order.

In relation to the amendments to the Adoption Act 2009 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, consultation was undertaken with stakeholders from the Department of Communities and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department on the proposed amendments. Officers from the Queensland government and Australian government departments have indicated their support for the proposed amendments.

The community member who raised this issue with the child safety minister has been contacted directly about proposed amendments and expressed their support. Other adoption stakeholders—including Post Adoption Support Queensland, the intercountry adoption stakeholders group and International Social Service Australia—have also been consulted about potential amendments, and I am advised the amendments are supported by these stakeholders.

A lack of a birth certificate showing the child's legal parents can present practical difficulties for both children and parents in the care and upbringing of children and in certain regulated activities when birth certificates are required to be presented. It is expected that there will be community support for the amendments, particularly amongst the adoption community. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (7.51 pm): 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.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

ABORIGINAL LAND AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 2562.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 189—

 **Ms NOLAN** (7.53 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Ms NOLAN: I move—

1 Clause 61 (Replacement of pt 5A (Provisions about particular land trusts))

Page 82, lines 12 to 14—

omit, insert—

'(2) On the grant of the townsite lease—

(a) the continued lease continues in force and is taken to be a townsite sublease; and

(b) the lessee for the townsite lease is substituted for the lessor as a party to the continued lease.'

- 2 Clause 71 (Amendment of s 84 (Use of Aboriginal land preserved))**
Page 114, line 12, after 'trustee'—
insert—
'of the land'.
- 3 Clause 73 (Amendment of s 86 (Access to land))**
Page 115, lines 21 to 25—
omit, insert—
'subject of a townsite lease or other registered interest (*relevant land*)—
(a) subsection (2) applies to the relevant land as if the reference to the trustee of the land were a reference to the lessee of the townsite lease or the person registered in the appropriate register as the holder of the other interest; and
(b) subsection (3) does not apply.
'(6) Subsection (5) does not affect the operation of subsections (2) and (3) in relation to Aboriginal land that is not relevant land.'.
- 4 Clause 80 (Amendment of s 132 (Rights of access to interests preserved))**
Page 136, lines 21 to 25—
omit, insert—
'lease or other registered interest (*relevant land*)—
(a) subsection (2) applies to the relevant land as if the reference to the trustee of the Aboriginal land, or the trustee, were a reference to the lessee of the townsite lease or the person registered in the appropriate register as the holder of the other interest; and
(b) subsection (3) does not apply.
'(6) Subsection (5) does not affect the operation of subsections (2) and (3) in relation to Aboriginal land that is not relevant land.'.
- 5 Clause 89 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 3)**
Page 141, line 17, '1 July'—
omit, insert—
'31 December'.
- 6 Clause 89 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 3)**
Page 141, line 21, '63'—
omit, insert—
'27'.
- 7 Clause 89 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 3)**
Page 141, line 22, before 'under'—
insert—
'on or before 31 December 2011 and'.
- 8 Clause 89 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 3)**
Page 142, line 7, '1 July'—
omit, insert—
'31 December'.
- 9 Clause 89 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 3)**
Page 143, lines 4 to 6, 'the *Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010*,'—
omit.
- 10 Clause 111 (Amendment of s 163 (When a vacancy in an office must be filled))**
Page 155, lines 23 to 25 and page 156, lines 1 and 2—
omit.
- 11 Clause 123 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**
Page 159, lines 4 to 9—
omit.
- 12 Clause 165 (Replacement of pts 4 and 5)**
Page 216, lines 1 to 3—
omit, insert—
'(2) On the grant of the townsite lease—
(a) the continued lease continues in force and is taken to be a townsite sublease; and
(b) the lessee for the townsite lease is substituted for the lessor as a party to the continued lease.'.
- 13 Clause 170 (Amendment of s 81 (Crown's use of Islander land preserved))**
Page 244, line 23, after 'trustee'—
insert—
'of the land'.

- 14 Clause 170 (Amendment of s 81 (Crown's use of Islander land preserved))**
 Page 245, line 10—
omit, insert—
 '(3) for the land.
 '(6) Subsection (7) applies if the Torres Strait Islander land being occupied or used by the State or the Commonwealth is land that is the subject of a townsite lease.
 '(7) Subsections (3) to (5) apply as if a reference to the trustee of the land were a reference to the lessee of the townsite lease.'
- 15 Clause 172 (Amendment of s 83 (Access to land used by Crown))**
 Page 246, after line 12—
insert—
 '(8) Section 83—
insert—
 '(5) If the Torres Strait Islander land being occupied or used by the State or the Commonwealth under section 81(1) is land that is the subject of a townsite lease or other registered interest (**relevant land**)—
 (a) subsection (2) applies to the relevant land as if the reference to the trustee of the land were a reference to the lessee of the townsite lease or the person registered in the appropriate register as the holder of the other interest; and
 (b) subsection (3) does not apply.
 '(6) Subsection (5) does not affect the operation of subsections (2) and (3) in relation to Torres Strait Islander land that is not relevant land.'
- 16 Clause 177 (Amendment of s 129 (Rights of access to interests preserved))**
 Page 267, lines 23 to 27—
omit, insert—
 'townsite lease or other registered interest (**relevant land**)—
 (a) subsection (2) applies to the relevant land as if the reference to the trustee of the Torres Strait Islander land, or the trustee, were a reference to the lessee of the townsite lease or the person registered in the appropriate register as the holder of the other interest; and
 (b) subsection (3) does not apply.
 '(6) Subsection (5) does not affect the operation of subsections (2) and (3) in relation to Torres Strait Islander land that is not relevant land.'
- 17 Clause 182 (Replacement of s 133A (Dealing with particular trust property))**
 Page 269, lines 21 and 22, 'a trustee, other than the State, if the trustee'—
omit, insert—
 'the lessee of a townsite lease if the lessee'.
- 18 Clause 182 (Replacement of s 133A (Dealing with particular trust property))**
 Page 269, lines 24 to 26—
omit, insert—
 '(4) The lessee must ensure an amount equal to the amount received is used by the lessee for housing services for Torres Strait Islanders concerned with the land the subject of the townsite lease.'
- 19 Clause 187 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 3)**
 Page 273, line 27, '1 July'—
omit, insert—
 '31 December'.
- 20 Clause 187 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 3)**
 Page 274, lines 19 to 21, 'the *Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010*,'—
omit.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.


Tabled paper: Explanatory notes to Hon. Rachel Nolan's amendments to the Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [5114].

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 189, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (7.53 pm): I move—


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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (7.53 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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


Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 June (see p. 1968), on motion of Mr Lucas—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (7.53 pm): I rise tonight to speak to the Local Government Electoral Bill. At a time when we hear often in the community the views that today's politicians do not represent the diversity or are not truly committed to their electorates, this bill is about a strong democracy. All of us here in this House have stepped up to the call of public office because we support the principles of strong democracy, we desire that Queenslanders can have better and easier lives, we want strong industry sectors and a strong economy, and we want a good, stable state government to deliver the best outcomes and to set up Queensland for a strong future. We want that because that is why we chose to run for state parliament.

It is no different for those councillors across this great state who stand up every four years seeking election for their local areas. Their commitment and their passion for their community is what drives them. I think those of us on all sides of the House want to ensure that our local councils, our local governments, are populated by strong, committed individuals who have a commitment to their community to make it a better place. That is the goal that we have here in this House and it should be the same goal for local government councillors wherever they may serve.

It is through this local government legislation that we are seeing reform—reform that has been contentious. The minister in his second reading speech cited this legislation as the final stage of the review of local government legislation which started in late 2006. We on this side of the House are thankful that it is the final stage. Councils have borne enough pain.

When the Labor government embarked on its so-called local government reform program in 2007, commencing with its forced amalgamation of local councils across Queensland which cut the number of councils from 156 to 72, it went to the very heart of local representation in our communities. We saw, despite the assurances given by the government, that a new financial imposition was placed on many councils as they undertook the amalgamation process.

The LNP has a strong commitment to handing back power to local governments, not usurping it. We know that local governments are best placed to provide the most practical and appropriate local solutions to local issues. We know that to be most effective councils need to have a high level of autonomy and authority to solve local problems and to manage the growth of local communities. We know that local councils need to have the very best people from their communities standing as councillors and then managing their local governments. The LNP is committed to giving Queensland councils greater autonomy and assistance to plan and undertake their responsibilities to support and grow local communities. The LNP is committed to cutting unnecessary bureaucratic requirements and interference from state governments and providing better support and resources for councils to deliver solutions and services to their ratepayers locally.

That is why at many points of this reform the LNP has strongly opposed this Labor government's approach to local government reform. We opposed the political motivation behind the forced amalgamations and we opposed the cost to local communities—communities that had already been engaged in the SSS process and committed substantial financial commitments to ensuring that that would occur.

We remain opposed to this cost shifting to local governments as we see this government attempt to force councils to do the work of the state, often with inadequate compensation or resources. A great example of this is a bill we have seen introduced into this House—Labor's new waste tax. What we have seen time and time again from this Labor government is that its policies have meant higher costs for councils meaning higher rates for Queensland families. We have seen this on top of this Labor government's cost-of-living hikes in areas such as water, electricity, fuel, car rego, stamp duty—where we have seen a massive increase—and, of course, the waste tax that will be introduced.

Then there is the carbon tax that every member opposite supports and they support the loss of jobs that it will bring to this state. We on this side of the House are committed to reducing the cost of living on ordinary Queenslanders and we hold the view that local councils should have the backing of the state to make local decisions, implement local laws and find local solutions to local problems.

The Local Government Electoral Bill 2011 aims to set out a raft of new rules for running all local government elections in Queensland under a single piece of legislation. It consolidates election provisions currently contained in the Local Government Act 2009, the repealed City of Brisbane Act 1924, the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government (Community Forums) Regulation 2008, which specifically relates to the two Indigenous regional councils administered under the Local Government Act. We took considerable consultation in forming our position on this bill. We consulted with the Local Government Association of Queensland and other relevant stakeholders like the Local Government Managers Association. We spoke to local council mayors. The general view that was expressed to us was that there was nothing in this bill that they could not live with. However, there are some areas of concern that we will be dealing with.

The bill's stated aim is to reduce the legislative burden on local governments, replacing four legislative instruments with one, and indeed we have no problem with this. It is sensible to streamline the legislation and to put it in one place for easy referral and determination. It aligns the procedures for running local government elections with the procedures for running state elections, and again there are no problems or concerns here. Queensland state elections are administered in a robust and fair manner and the rules that differ from local government elections can easily be accommodated by the community. We note that the cost of nomination for council election will rise from \$150 to \$250. Again, this is in line with the state election nomination fee and reflects the LGAQ's view. We also believe this will be an important step in reducing the number of people who simply put their names down for local government elections in running vexatious or grudge-ridden campaigns against particular councils. We note that this bill maintains the system of direct election of mayors and the restriction that confirms that a candidate is unable to run for mayor and a councillor position in the same election. This is supported by the LNP, as it is by many of the stakeholders. It continues arrangements where full postal vote elections can take place, and in a state as decentralised as Queensland this is an important element; divisions can remain within councils based on communities of interest; voting is compulsory; and voting can either be first past the post or optional preferential depending on a council's arrangement in terms of whether it has single or multimember divisions.

A major part of the bill is transferring the responsibility for the conduct and administration of elections from councils to the Electoral Commission of Queensland, the ECQ. We note that in part 2 division 1 clause 8 the bill gives the ECQ legislative power to run all local council elections in Queensland. The bill also enables the ECQ to charge costs back to each individual local council. It is this point with which we would wish to express some significant concerns. By handing power to the ECQ, this bill takes away the option for local governments to run or conduct their own elections. Under the old system, local councils could run their own elections, under strict rules of course, or could contract out the running of elections, again under strict rules, to their choice of contractor at the best price. This will not be allowed under the new legislation. Again, in principle, there is no problem with this because we know that the ECQ is a robust organisation that can be trusted to run good, fair elections and we support its role and outcomes in doing so.

However, one of the key concerns about the increased costs of local government is the cost of this reform. The cost is of concern to councils, particularly the higher costs of running the elections through the ECQ when compared to the use of contractors or their local system. This was raised following the last local council elections. For the first time in 2008 local government elections were held where no council in Queensland conducted its own election. They were the elections that followed the forced amalgamations when councils were specifically directed to use the ECQ in elections taking place under the new boundaries. So the ECQ conducted all of the elections in 2008 whereas in 2004 only the Brisbane City Council elections had been conducted by the ECQ. Many councils expressed concern about the additional cost at the time in comparison to their previous self-run or contracted elections. Councils, quite rightly, want the best value for money for their ratepayers. They want to have flexibility to make the decision on cost versus the level of service, and in principle the LNP wants them to have that flexibility too. We want them to take that responsibility and then make the best decisions for their communities and their ratepayers.

The LGAQ's research revealed that the costs levied on councils by the ECQ for the 2008 elections were, on average, double the costs incurred previously when councils conducted the election. So we know that this bill will impose a significant additional cost on many, if not all, local councils by being forced to run their elections through the ECQ based on the 2008 elections. More than this, there is the inability that this bill imposes on local councils to reduce these costs, leaving them with no alternative but to pay whatever the ECQ determines to be the price. There is no hiding from the fact that this is an additional, unavoidable cost that is being imposed by this state government on local councils and by extension on their ratepayers and the household budgets of ordinary Queenslanders. We do not

support this imposition. Another concern that has been raised is that some councils were simply not satisfied with the level of service provided by the ECQ at the 2008 elections. The Burke Shire Council, for example, passed a motion at its meeting on 20 August 2008 following the forced amalgamation elections. It expressed council's reservations about the conduct of the election in comparison to its own elections held in previous years. In fact, the council resolved not to pay the ECQ election—

... given the debacles experienced during the local government elections in March 2008. Example no booth allocation, postal votes not received on time, postal votes not received at all, people had changed their address on the electoral roll in the prescribed time but were not allowed to vote as this information had not been placed in the updated electoral roll.

These are some of the concerns that this council had from the previous election being conducted by the ECQ. It is very clear that there are serious concerns amongst councils in the way in which elections have been administered by the ECQ. It is the government that is forcing these requirements on councils and it is the government that needs to ensure that these problems do not occur again. In response to these concerns, the LNP strongly supports allowing local governments the choice to severally run their own elections, always under strict rules to ensure a fair and robust election, or to opt for the ECQ. This would include the option for councils to themselves select and pay for a contractor to run the election for them at a preagreed price, not the situation we have in this bill where the cost of the election will be sent after the event and the council has no recourse to those costs.

We note that the bill removes the option for the CEO to act as the returning officer for a local government election in most cases. The LNP has no problem with this amendment in principle. We see that inevitably there would be some level of conflict in a council where the CEO is responsible for the conduct of an election and then is working for those councillors who are elected. We note that there is a clause allowing the CEO to be the returning officer in agreed exceptional circumstances and we understand that the Local Government Managers Association representing CEOs agrees with this as a satisfactory outcome.

I take this opportunity to also highlight part 4 division 2 subdivision 1 clause 26 of the bill, which specifies that a person cannot be a candidate in a local government election while a candidate for a seat in a state election. This is a slightly different clause from the one contained in the Local Government Act that rules out sitting local councillors running for state parliament, but the principle is the same. The LNP believes that local councillors should be able to maintain their council position, going without pay for a period, whilst they are a candidate for a state election and, given the opportunity, we would amend the Local Government Act and any related legislation to reflect this position. We will be moving amendments to that effect during this debate. We think that people who have been highly involved in their communities at the local government level should have the opportunity to run for a state seat and seek election at the next level without the need to resign their position. I find it hard to understand how this Labor government can be so out of touch with the remainder of Australia and the community sentiment when it continues to defend its position on this requirement to resign.

Surely, the Labor Party can recognise that the people of Queensland want the best people they can get to represent them at both council and state government level. Surely, the Labor Party supports ambitious individuals rising through the levels of local government and then, if they choose, moving on to state government. Surely, the Labor Party wants to be saved the cost and trouble of a local government by-election when this kind of resignation takes place, as is needed under the current legislation. And surely, the Labor Party does not want to lose a good local representative when a councillor is forced to resign but fails to win a state seat and then to have the ludicrous situation where that person runs again and is successful at the cost to the ratepayers. It is just common sense.

Last-minute amendments to this bill will make common-sense changes to the conflict-of-interest provisions to local councils. We welcome those changes.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I take the interjections from the member for Ashgrove.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr GIBSON: They are not clear, but she is chirping like a canary. It is difficult to understand.

Ms Jones interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Member for Ashgrove!

Mr GIBSON: I am happy to take the interjections. She just chirps like a canary. It is difficult to hear exactly what she wants to say.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gympie, I would ask you to modify your language as well, please. I would ask everybody to hold fire. We will get through this.

Mr Dempsey: Be kind to the canaries.

An honourable member interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Gentlemen, remember where you are.

Mr GIBSON: I will come back to the bill. These last-minute amendments to the bill make common-sense changes to the conflict-of-interest provisions for local councillors. We welcome these changes. We have been working closely with the LGAQ and local councillors who for some time have expressed some concern about the current system. It was clear that the conflict-of-interest provisions needed to be fixed. Councillors were concerned about the penalties that they faced and therefore were declaring everything as a conflict of interest. This improvement is welcomed but must continue to be monitored, because it is clear that the spirit was not being reflected in the actions of local councils.


This bill also makes minor operational amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985 and the Building Act 1975. We particularly note the changes that are made to the Building Act to improve fire safety in pre 1 June 2007 residential care buildings and to enable pool owners access to their neighbour's yard if they need to modify an existing boundary fence to meet the government's new pool regulations. On examination, these amendments seem to be common-sense changes and we support them in principle. We do wonder, though, why the government has chosen to tag them onto this particular bill.

Pool fencing legislation was rushed in by this government without a consideration of all the issues. Indeed, the concerns that were raised at the time were such that, in regard to that legislation, we were seeing the cart being put before the horse. The government should have enabled this provision to be incorporated in the original pool safety legislation and in the subsequent Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Bill, which was passed by this House only about a month ago. The Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act is already being amended.

I would like to take this opportunity to record strong concerns about the cost of implementing improved minimum fire safety standards in older residential care buildings, including the retro fit installation of sprinklers and smoke compartments. Of course, we all want safe buildings for residents, particularly those older and more vulnerable residents in aged-care homes. But I am concerned about the level of consideration that has been given to the cost for non-government aged-care homes and the time that is needed to implement these standards. The government needs to address these cost issues and to ensure that the burdens that will be placed on these institutions do not send them to the wall, resulting in the loss of aged-care facilities. The key concern is the safety of older people, but the security of tenure of residential facilities must also be a concern. I note in the explanatory notes that a cost of almost \$10 million is attached to the upgrade of 33 Queensland Health buildings to a minimum standard and there is a further \$500,000 for departmental implementation costs.

There are questions that the government needs to answer with regard to the cost for local government-run facilities that are captured by this legislation. Aged Care Queensland has expressed strong concern about the level of consultation and the cost, particularly to regional aged-care facilities. The estimated cost of a retro fit is \$600,000, which will send many of these facilities to the wall. My colleague the member for Mudgeeraba will speak more about these issues as she is the shadow minister who is responsible for this area. This cost will also undoubtedly be yet another uncompensated cost burden that is placed on aged-care providers and on local governments, albeit for the desirable outcome of improving safety for Queensland's vulnerable elderly people.

The LNP believes in empowering local governments. It has consistently raised concerns about Labor's forced changes on local governments and the consequences of disempowering local communities. We have noted our concerns about this bill, but we recognise that this bill is indeed an improvement. It is a step forward in ensuring that Queenslanders who wish to represent their communities at the local government level can do so. The amendments that we will be moving will improve that facility. It will enable local governments to have the choice of running their elections or engaging the ECQ. The amendments will also enable local councillors to take leave rather than resign if they choose to run for state parliament. We will be supporting the bill with reservations and we will be proposing amendments.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (8.15 pm): It is good to be here to talk to the Local Government Electoral Bill 2011. There are a number of issues contained in this bill that can be explored. I would like to commend the shadow minister on his contribution. I felt that he gave a good summary of the LNP's position in relation to local government matters, particularly the electoral issues that have been of great concern to many local government representatives across this state.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr HOBBS: He is a good man. He is going well. He is a very good local government representative and he is very well respected out there in the community.

We have a concern about a number of issues that are contained in this bill. It is not rocket science that there were some serious issues in the last local government elections held in this state. It is quite ironic that this government is now pursuing the situation whereby the ECQ will be the dominant body to run council elections when there was quite a debacle in the last elections. We are not saying that that will happen all the time—I am sure the ECQ will get its mind around the procedures that need to be gone through in relation to local government—but there are a lot of issues in relation to boundaries and

the new addressing system. I had many people express great concern about their postal votes. They did not arrive. In fact, I can recall that some of Campbell Newman's postal vote applications from the Brisbane City Council were even sent up to the Whitsundays.

Mr Ryan: And you expect him to run Queensland. He doesn't even know where his area is.

Mr HOBBS: There you go: even in those days the ECQ knew more about it than we did; they were pre-empting what he was going to do! I am sure those people up there would have been happy to vote for him, too—and they will be happy to vote for him, because he is going to do a great job in this state. I think the ECQ did not have the expertise or the people to manage this situation. You cannot just suddenly go out there and have all the knowledge.

CEOs and councils know their areas. They know the changes of addresses that have been made. In many instances they are the ones who have recommended some of these changes through the department of natural resources. Therefore, there needs to be a few changes made to the addressing system because, frankly, it is not very logical. At least if somebody is a local they have some idea where people live. I can recall an occasion when I went to St George and spoke to the guy in the post office. He said, 'Look, I've got this bundle of postal votes here. I've got no idea where this place is that they are supposed to go to.' It was the name of a station. He did not know where it was. Once I got in touch with the local authority they knew exactly where it was and where the postal votes had to go. We got those people their votes in the end.

Cost is a big issue, as the shadow minister said. It is almost double, and in some cases more. Why is this government intent on forcing upon local government an extra cost that they do not need? There is no rhyme nor reason why local governments cannot, if they wish, run these elections. They have run them for many, many years in the past with very little complaint. In fact, I will go so far as to say that there were more complaints when the ECQ ran the elections last time than when local governments ran them. There are many issues that are not very satisfactory. The big issue is the lack of knowledge of the area. That is particularly important.

The major object of the new bill is to relocate responsibility for the conduct of administration of all local government elections from local government to the ECQ. We do not agree with that. I do not think local governments do. If any member here in this House had spoken to any local government member around this state they would have got the same message. In some of the bigger regional councils it may be more convenient to use the ECQ to run elections. I have no problem if that is what they wish. It is up to the council to decide. If they decide they want to go with the ECQ let them do it. That is certainly their option.

I noticed in the explanatory notes that the government has actually put out an alternative option to retain the local government electoral provisions in schedule 2 of the LGA 2009 due to expire on 31 December 2011. In other words, they can continue to use what we already have. Quite frankly, that probably is the best option. The government has chosen the wrong option. I have no problem if the council wishes to use the ECQ. We have a responsibility to our local authorities to respect their views in relation to how they should run their operation. We give them so much authority and power in relation to how they run themselves and this is one option that they certainly should and can have.

One of the other issues, and the shadow minister did touch on this, is the upfront costs to Queensland Treasury which will initially fund the 2012 local government quadrennial elections. After the elections the ECQ will issue invoices to local government to recoup these funds on a user-pays basis. It really is a licence to print money. There is virtually no avenue of appeal. The shadow minister mentioned Burke Shire Council which refused to pay. But at the end of the day they have to pay up. There needs to be a far better way to manage this situation.

The other issue that the shadow minister talked about, which is important, is the ability for councillors to stand for state parliament. Why can't they stand for state parliament without first having to resign?

Mr LUCAS: Because state members can't stand for federal parliament.

Mr HOBBS: If the minister casts his mind back he would remember that he tried to do that with the federal government as well and it went to court and he lost. When we get into government we will change it. What a magnificent training ground local government is for people to come into state government. It is not rocket science. The reality is that in the past, and I am not sure what the figures are of late because Labor have had a disproportionate number of members in the House, 60 per cent of the councillors who made it to state parliament were conservative. That is the main reason the government changed it. When those opposite had a one seat majority they could not afford to have one councillor come in because it would have tipped the balance of power. Those opposite are absolutely gerrymandering the system. They deliberately did that to deny councillors of Queensland the opportunity to run for a state seat of parliament.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Minister, please. The member for Warrego has the floor.

Mr Lucas: We haven't done anyone in, you've done them in.

Mr HOBBS: Say again?

Mr Lucas: We haven't done anyone in. You did Hajnal Ban; you did John Brent as well.

Mr HOBBS: Nothing to do with that at all.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Gentlemen, this is not a conversation across the floor. The member for Warrego has the call.


Mr HOBBS: Thank you for your protection. I think there is an opportunity here for the government to fix this matter up. The state government is a laughing-stock for not allowing councillors to stand without first resigning. Nowhere has it happened in Australia. In fact, nowhere around the world does it happen. The government is denying people with great skills, knowledge and understanding of government matters throughout their area the opportunity to come in here and represent those communities.

Conflict of interest has been a matter of great concern for many local governments around this state. We know we have to have good strong rules to make sure that there is no conflict of interest. We have to make sure that the councils are run efficiently and fairly. People have to know that their councils are doing the right thing. I think this is over the top and makes it very difficult where there are situations where councillors are members of various organisations. In fact, it is encouraging councillors not to be a part of any community group. We want people to be members of community groups and to be councillors because then they have some grassroots experience. We do not necessarily want people with no experience out there talking to communities and being with community groups. It is important to have an understanding of their needs, whether it is through Apex, Rotary or the local pony club.

Mr Lucas: Or the Masonic Lodge, in your case.

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely. It is the same thing. I think it is very important. As I look around this chamber tonight I see many members here who I know are patrons of various organisations. If those members were a councillor they would not be able to vote on some legislation or some motion of that council. That is not fair. It is not reasonable. Sure you can express your conflict of interest, you can say, 'I am a patron', 'I am a member' or whatever it is 'of an organisation', but at the end of the day you should be able to have some say because you know what is going on in that area, you know the needs of that community and you can do what is best for that community. I think that is particularly important.

This bill has some good points. I will not take that away from it. Some progress has been made through this local government bill and I commend the government for it. However, the minister needs to consider the points we are raising. The shadow minister has put up a very good case. I endorse his comments 100 per cent. I ask the minister to consider those points. If he cannot concede that there is a need, will he please explain to the people of Queensland why the government is taking this course of action.

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (8.30 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Local Government Electoral Bill 2011. I will consider in some detail the amendments in the bill relating to swimming pools, but before doing that I will deal with some of the other matters contained in the bill. I have said before and I will continue to say that local government is the most important level of government in our democracy. Local government provides the people we represent with decisions about what their suburb looks like, what it feels like and what it means to get up in the morning and drive through its streets. For many people, the essence of politics that concerns them is whether the local park at the end of their street is a good place for their kids to play in, whether their bins are collected and whether their street is a safe thoroughfare. We should respect that the services many people seek from government are simple ones and often those services are delivered by local government. That is why it is so important that the people we represent can have faith in local government. That is not always the case. However, we have to continue to make sure that our local government system is beyond reproach.

I represent an area covered by the Logan City Council. For the most part, the Logan City Council does a great job. CEO Chris Rose is a great man and has done much for—

Mr Shine: He's a great success in Toowoomba.

Mr MOORHEAD: I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. His success is also known in Toowoomba. Under the leadership of Pam Parker, the council has worked its way through some tumultuous times since local government amalgamation and it has come out stronger. For the most part, Logan City Council delivers some great services to the people of Logan.

I know that Logan City Council had some concerns about the process of the 2008 election and the requirement that the ECQ run the election. In the past the council had been able to run a more affordable process by making the CEO the returning officer. In our modern system of local government, with strong full-time councillors and organisations that have budgets worth hundreds of millions of dollars, it is time we ensure there is a strong separation between the day-to-day operations of the council and the quadrennial elections. I have no doubt whatsoever in the integrity of the CEO of Logan City Council, Mr Rose. He is a very impressive man. However, I do not think he should be the returning

officer for local government elections in 2012. When one person has oversight of the conflict-of-interest registers, receives complaints about councillors, decides whether those matters need to be referred to the CMC or to disciplinary tribunals and also has day-to-day interactions with councillors, we need the arm's length situation that the ECQ operation can provide us to ensure our elections are not only fair but also perceived to be fair by the people who do the electing.

The 2008 changes have meant a great improvement in that the electoral boundaries within councils are dealt with through an independent process. Previously in Logan the electoral boundaries were drafted by resolution of council. That is concerning. It goes back to a practice that used to occur in this place whereby a resolution of the House would determine electoral boundaries. If a member was causing a bit of trouble for the government, he or she might find that their seat was abolished, amalgamated or something like that. For many years the people I represent were the victims of that sort of gerrymander. The seat of Waterford was created by the 1992 redistribution that tried to correct some of the processes that came about when politicians set their own boundaries. The new independent process has been a good one, and I hope that it will continue for many years to come.

Tonight we have heard much from the LNP about the exclusion of councillors running for state parliament. That exclusion is a great thing and it should continue. For a number of elections now, the poor people I represent have had to put up with councillors spending their time trying to get themselves into state parliament. For example, the member for Beaudesert represented the people of the suburb of Kingston while spending his time in Beaudesert trying to get himself elected to that state seat. He was trying to get himself elected to represent another city. In my view, those examples show why we should require councillors to use council to deliver quality local government services, not to use local government as a stepping stone for other levels of government. Ironically, in my area the councillor for division 3 campaigned hard against the now member for Beaudesert on the basis that he was using council as a launching platform for state parliament, and he is now using local council to run a campaign for the state seat of Springwood. We need to keep the integrity in our local government by ensuring that it is not seen as a stepping stone for something else.

The member for Warrego said that this is a similar situation to the union movement. Prior to being elected in 2006 I worked within the union movement. I assure the House that I was not allowed to spend union members' money to get myself elected. I was on leave. I was required to be on leave. If you are getting paid, there are questions about whether you should declare that as an electoral donation. I assure the House that not one cent of union members' money paid for my time to campaign as a candidate for election. It is a furphy that they will continue to raise.

We have to realise that Queensland is quite different from other states. For the most part, particularly in urban centres, our councillors are full-time professional councillors. The inner-city councils of Sydney have 12 councillors for a few thousand people. Every second person you meet is a former mayor of Leichhardt Council and every third person has been a councillor at one time or other. Those are part-time positions and they represent a very small part of Sydney. In that situation, councillors can run for state parliament at the same time. For a long time, Queensland has had a very strong, full-time, independent local government sector. I hope that can continue.

The bill provides strong disclosure regimes for candidates running for local government office. Local government should have a very high degree of scrutiny on these issues. To be frank, local government can make somebody a millionaire with the stroke of a pen. If you change the town plan for a person, overnight the worth of their property might go from a few hundred thousand dollars to a few million dollars. Often those situations will be called into question by people. We need an independent process to verify the register of interests and an independent investigation process should it find a problem. That process should continue.

Before talking about the swimming pool amendments, I want to quickly talk about the increased fire standards for residential care buildings in the aged-care sector. I represent an area that has a great many nursing homes, retirement villages, residential services, accredited providers where this type of building forms a big part. I am referring to Bethania. The Gold Coast City Council had a very strong policy of promoting aged-care facilities to be centred around Bethania and Waterford. That means that I have seven aged-care facilities in one suburb. Amongst those aged-care facilities, I can see that there has been a significant improvement since the 1997 introduction of the aged-care standards authority. I give John Howard credit for the great improvement in those aged-care standards. It did take kerosene baths to bring about that improvement, but we did get there in the end. You can see a marked increase in the quality of those authorities.

We should continue to make sure that the vulnerable persons who live in aged-care facilities are provided with high-quality facilities. We also need to make sure that federal governments, whatever their colour, are properly funding aged care. For the moment I do not think they are. Aged-care funding does cover much of the recurrent costs quite well. However, the aged-care providers in my area tell me that they find it quite hard to meet those continued capital costs that come from running an aged-care facility.

There is no excuse for having a second rate safety standard in these facilities. The people who live in these facilities are there because they need daily assistance. Often they are not in a position to remove themselves from situations of danger such as fire. I am sure there will be a cost impost, but I

think it is one our community should be prepared to require given the significant vulnerabilities of the people we are talking about and considering the proven success of continuing to promote higher standards of aged care. Prior to 1997 there was always an argument against increasing aged-care standards. It was thought that if the cost was pushed up it would make it less available. There comes a point when we have to bite the bullet and do it properly. Over the last 14 years that success has been evident.

I want to move on to the issues regarding pool fences that are dealt with in this legislation, in particular pool fences as common boundaries. When the first pool fencing legislation was brought to this place a scare campaign was run about how much that would cost and that has proven not to be the case. Again, with these amendments I do not think there is a cause for concern. The bill enshrines the paramount objective of protecting young children from drowning. It does so by streamlining the laws for the construction and maintenance of compliant pool barriers. In doing so, it will widen the safety net that is currently spreading across our state for safer pools.

I would like to take this opportunity to really go into some of the provisions of this bill that relate to pool barriers on common boundaries. Great care has been taken with drafting this bill to mirror the underlying principles of the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act 2011 to the extent that that can be done. Consultation, negotiation, agreement and conciliation are the core objectives of that legislation and are much preferable to arbitration or litigation. The bill recognises that agreement and conciliation should always be the first option for pool owners who wish to have a pool barrier on a common boundary. The easiest way for a pool owner to proceed with fencing work for such a pool barrier is to reach agreement with their neighbours. As is generally the case with dividing fences, I hope that almost all of these matters can be resolved by agreement.

However, the bill does provide an avenue for a pool owner who cannot reach agreement with a neighbour to proceed without agreement where that is necessary. The bill provides that a pool owner may only construct, replace or alter a fence on a common boundary without the agreement of an affected neighbour under some certain prescribed conditions. These conditions act as safeguards to ensure satisfactory outcomes for neighbours of pool owners and minimise disputes between neighbours. The first requirement is that the pool barrier must comply with the current pool safety standard. The standard requires a minimum height of 1.2 metres, but pool owners are likely to choose a height of 1.8 metres for the common boundary because of non-climbable zone requirements. If the fence is 1.8 metres high the standard does not require maintenance of a non-climbable zone on the neighbour's side of the fence. This aspect of the standard recognises that a young child who manages to reach the top of a 1.8 metre high fence will generally not attempt to jump into the pool enclosure from that height.

Second, the barrier must meet the requirements of a sufficient dividing fence as defined by the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act 2011. This ensures that all fences on common boundaries will look alike and be built with similar materials regardless of whether or not they are pool barriers. Further, if the barrier replaces an existing fence, the new fence must be made of similar materials and colours to those of the existing fence. These requirements significantly restrict the type of fence that a pool owner can construct without the agreement of their neighbour. This will reduce the likelihood of disputes arising about pool barriers on common boundaries. Finally, before carrying out fencing work, the pool owner must give their neighbour at least 14 days notice about the proposed fencing work. This allows the neighbour an opportunity to voice any concerns they have about the proposed fencing work before its commencement.

Great care has been undertaken to ensure that the legislation is fair, not unduly onerous and that each party's rights are preserved as far as practicable. For example, this legislation does not alter the law of trespass and a pool owner cannot enter a neighbour's land to carry out fencing work without the consent of their neighbour or authorisation from QCAT. This bill prescribes a fair apportionment of costs for pool barriers on common boundaries. Consistent with the current law, pool owners will be responsible for the costs associated with building a fence that is used to comply with the pool safety standard. Where two pool owners will both use a single barrier on a common boundary, the costs associated with the fencing work required for the pool barrier will generally be shared.

Pool owners will also be responsible for maintaining the portion of the fence that serves as a compliant pool barrier. For example, if the fence also serves as a two-metre high dog enclosure, only the first 1.8 metres are the maintenance responsibility of the pool owner. Finally, although the bill encourages neighbours to attempt to resolve a dividing fences issue informally, it provides an effective mechanism for resolving disputes between neighbours about a variety of issues including the type of fencing work that may be done and who is responsible for paying for the work. Under the bill before the House, if neighbours cannot resolve a dividing fence issue, the dispute may be taken to QCAT for resolution. The bill mirrors a provision in the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act in conferring jurisdiction on QCAT to act as the sole arbiter and a one-stop shop for disputes about dividing fences that serve as pool barriers.

In summary, this bill sets out a comprehensive regime for the use of dividing fences as pool barriers. It successfully balances the competing imperatives of pool safety and the need to foster positive community and neighbourhood relations. In doing this, it ensures that the neighbours of pools are only inconvenienced to the extent necessary to optimise the safety of the young children of Queensland. I think the improvements to the pool safety laws will be a great step forward and this will make it so much easier. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (8.48 pm): A key feature of this bill is giving the Electoral Commission of Queensland the mandate to conduct all local government elections including quadrennial elections, by-elections and fresh elections. Giving the Electoral Commission of Queensland a mandate to oversee and administer all local government elections creates an independent central point of coordination for local government elections. This will increase public confidence in the integrity of elections, a point consistently raised by councils throughout Queensland during consultations during the development of the Local Government Act in 2009.

The 2008 local government elections conducted by the Electoral Commission of Queensland demonstrate the commission's ability to conduct local government elections with professionalism, efficiency and integrity. With the Electoral Commission of Queensland conducting local government elections, the community, in my view, can have full confidence in the continuing integrity of electoral arrangements including the transparency of funding and disclosure arrangements and the processing of nonvoters.

There are a number of people moving into the Ipswich area from other parts of Brisbane. Some move from the Gold Coast, from Brisbane City, from Logan and from Moreton Bay councils. A lot of people mainly move into our area because of the cheaper housing in Ipswich.

Mr Lawlor: And the good representation.

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection from my good friend the member for Southport—and because of the good representation by the state MPs in the area which include Wayne Wendt, Rachel Nolan and me. There are two issues raised consistently with me because my electorate borders Brisbane, which of course is locally governed by the Brisbane City Council.

The first issue that is raised with me consistently by people first moving into our area is the increased cost of rates in Ipswich compared to Brisbane in particular. This is an issue which is of great concern to people who move from the Delfin Forest Lake development to the Delfin Springfield Lakes development. When people move from Brisbane to Ipswich, they talk to me quite consistently about the increase in rates. In fact, they get very concerned about that. Also, there are a number of people who move from the Centenary estates particularly to Augustine Heights and Brookwater. They move into those areas mainly because they have larger blocks of land and they can build their dream homes in those new areas. I was wondering whether the minister would like to comment on that issue.

The second issue that is raised with me consistently by new residents is their belief that they are overgoverned. For example, I will outline my understanding of the Brisbane City Council wards, which are just over the border in Brisbane. At the 2008 elections, in the ward of Richlands, which includes the Delfin Forest Lake development, there were 24,146 on the roll; in the ward of Pullenvale there were 25,421 on the roll to elect their divisional councillors; and in the ward of Jamboree there were 23,954 on the roll. On the Gold Coast in 2008, in division 1 there were 19,600 on the roll; in division 2 there were 20,363 on the roll; in division 3 there were 19,830 on the roll; and in division 4 there were 19,870 on the roll. The Parliamentary Library said that in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area, in division 1 there were 18,840 on the roll; in division 2 there were 18,694 on the roll; in division 3 there were 18,738 on the roll; and in division 4 there were 19,398 on the roll.

In my state electorate there are about five councillors. Some are wholly within the state electorate of Bundamba; some are partly within the state electorate. The Parliamentary Library has done some research for me in relation to the numbers of people on the roll there. In 2008, in division 1 there were 10,601 on the roll; in division 2 there were 9,509 on the roll; in division 3 there were 8,906 on the roll; in division 4 there were 9,129 on the roll; and in division 9, which is partly in my electorate, there were 8,443 on the roll. So people are asking why there is a discrepancy between the numbers of people in the Brisbane City Council, Gold Coast and Moreton Bay wards who elect their divisional councillors and the numbers of people in Ipswich, where approximately a third of the number of people are required to elect their divisional councillors. I was wondering whether the minister would like to comment on this, because it really is an issue in the area, particularly when I have so many people moving across the border from Brisbane to Ipswich and into my state electorate.

Mr Lawlor: Refugees from Brisbane.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, member for Southport. The member for Southport has suggested to me that they are refugees coming from Brisbane to Ipswich. They might even be refugees coming from Southport to Ipswich.

Mr Lawlor: I doubt it.

Mrs MILLER: The member for Southport tells me that he doubts that anyone would be coming from Southport to Ipswich. We welcome all types, even the seaiders if they want to come.

Mr Lawlor: I might visit there myself.

Mrs MILLER: Member for Southport, you are welcome in my electorate anytime, particularly if you want to come to the races at the Bundamba track. We really do need answers to these issues that I have raised, because it is important particularly for the newbies coming into our area.

When I was at university I studied local government law. In fact, I got honours in local government law. I was the first student at QUT to get honours in local government law—in three subjects, actually.

Mr Shine: You've never mentioned it.

Mrs MILLER: I do not think I have ever mentioned it in this House before. Local government is a very important system that we have in Queensland. As the member for Waterford quite rightly pointed out—

Mr Lucas: I got a 6 in local government.

Mrs MILLER: Well, Minister, I got 7s.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! That is enough debate across the chamber. The member for Bundamba has the floor.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection from the minister. The member for Waterford was quite right in pointing out that Queensland is quite unusual in the sense that we do have a system of full-time councillors in this state. I know that colleagues of mine in interstate parliaments are quite amazed that we have the number of full-time councillors that we do in Queensland. In fact, our interstate colleagues in parliaments in New South Wales, Victoria and other areas have quite often commented to me about the fact that their only opportunity to represent people full time is in the state and federal parliaments, whereas in Queensland there is the opportunity to represent people at a local government level.

I would not like to put on record in this House some of the comments they have made to me about this. However, in New South Wales and Victoria colleagues have said to me that it is more a system whereby people want to have full-time jobs and work part-time being councillors in their areas. My brother, in fact, lives in Sydney and he has said to me on a number of occasions that we do have full-time councillors in Queensland, yet in the areas in Sydney where he has lived it works quite well with part-time councillors. In fact, they turn up to committee meetings once a month. It is mainly the chief executive officers and the professionals within the councils who are charged with running the council areas.

If the minister would like to comment on these perceived discrepancies, particularly for new residents of Ipswich, I would be grateful for that so that I can pass those comments on to my constituents who believe that this is a real issue.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Miller, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT



Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.58 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mining Industry, Exploration Permits



Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (8.59 pm): There appears to be no medical or scientific evidence underpinning the two-kilometre buffer zone around areas where mining exploration is to be restricted in towns adjacent to mining leases. Coal dust is lethal. This is why mines have strict safety protocols for their workers. Coal dust is also very light. The slightest movement of air, let alone prevailing seasonal winds, will lift it and carry it kilometres. But this state government does not appreciate the people living in mining communities. My fear is that this irresponsible policy will act as an invitation for mines to operate right up to the buffer zone boundary and that coal dust will be a worse health story than asbestos.


Blackwater and Moranbah are both living under this threat right now. I doubt that Labor's announcement will change this, and I am certain it will not protect beautiful little towns like Capella, Comet, Springsure and Rolleston. There are around 40 towns in my electorate of Gregory that must feel this policy makes their future uncertain.

Do some Queenslanders have more rights than others? Clearly, they do. Actions speak louder than words. Labor's actions are telling every citizen of a small town that they are second-class citizens. What is the purpose of the policy if there is no scientific basis for picking two kilometres? Local governments have been calling for a 10-kilometre buffer. What was the consultation and research process? Was there one? Mining exploration companies are outraged and they have every right to be. Queenslanders may have to pay them compensation for the mining exploration licences issued by Labor and now destroyed by Labor with the stroke of a pen.

Residents in the restricted areas should be outraged too because their health and their property values may also be at risk. All the rest of us should be outraged because the only thing this policy makes clear is that we do not even warrant any rights or protection. But the golden triangle experience for people in Central Queensland has already made that clear in relation to strategic cropping land.

Once again, Labor has failed to look down the track and manage for development ahead of time. It has handed out exploration licences where it should not have. Then in a panic it has inflicted this bad policy from a great height, leaving everyone in disbelief at the incompetence. Unfortunately, we are also left to wear the consequences. I wonder whether we are going to see a continuation of this as Labor goes about promoting its mining tax and also promoting the carbon tax policy that is going to be a slug on the future generations of not only this state but Australia. This is a poorly thought through Labor policy and one that the state government and the federal government should be ashamed of.

Gold Coast Mosque International Food Festival


 **Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (9.02 pm): On 12 June I was privileged to attend the Gold Coast Mosque International Food Festival as the local member and also as the Premier's representative. Present in addition to a large crowd and many stall holders were Imam Imran Husain; Hussein Goss, the President of the Islamic Society of the Gold Coast, whose family has lived on the Gold Coast for over 100 years; the Gold Coast Mosque committee members; and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr Paul Wilson, and Acting Inspector Jim Ploughman. Where else but this festival could you get the chance to sample food from Bosnia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and other Arab countries? This culinary spectacle reflects the diversity of the Islamic world and the vibrancy of our own Islamic community.

I commend the Islamic Society of the Gold Coast for extending an invitation to everyone on the coast so we could all experience the taste and traditions of Islam. This inclusivity is so important. Multiculturalism is one of Queensland's strengths. Queenslanders come from more than 200 cultures, speak more than 220 languages and hold more than 100 religious beliefs. The more we interact, the better we can understand and respect one another and the better we are able to help one another.

Our state relies heavily on international trade. Having access to a rich pool of languages and an understanding of the way people from different cultures engage in trade benefits our state enormously. The Gold Coast is in the running to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Our cultural diversity is one of our major selling points. As a leading tourist destination, we can confidently engage with visitors no matter where in the world they come from.

There are around 7,000 people of Islamic belief living on the Gold Coast and each makes a valuable contribution to our city. I thank the Islamic community for everything they do to encourage understanding, tolerance and religious harmony on the Gold Coast. At the festival Mr Goss also presented a cheque to Deputy Commissioner Wilson as a donation to the fund to support the family of murdered police officer, Damian Leeding. This was the third international food festival at the mosque and the event will get bigger and better. I congratulate all involved in the organisation of the festival.

Excessive Alcohol Consumption

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (9.04 pm): Young men aged between 20 and 40 are binge drinking. Too many who are drinking excessively do not consider themselves binge drinkers but use this as their only source of social interaction. Women in fewer numbers are also binge drinking. In Australia, this is a serious problem medically, economically, socially and environmentally.

Whilst total alcohol consumption is in a long-term decline—being 20 per cent lower than it was in the 1980s—rising binge drinking in men between the ages of 20 and 40 has serious implications for our society, particularly in Queensland. Prices are too low and there are too many liquor outlets. In the 18 to 24 year age group, 10 per cent drink until they are drunk; they are in the high-risk category. Another 10 per cent are in the risky category. Of males aged 20 to 29 years, 17 per cent were most likely to consume alcohol at risky or high levels resulting in short-term harm at least weekly, according to the AIHW report of 2008. Also, 75 per cent of the RTD market—that is, ready-to-drink alcohol, which is the spirits—is consumed by men aged between 22 and 40. RTDs represent 10 per cent of the total alcohol market. Men are not eating correctly and this may explain why the obesity epidemic has slowed in this age group.

What has not changed in percentage terms is the flow-on effects of alcoholism—that being everything from liver disease to sudden death. This is the first generation where the younger generation may pre-decease their parents. There were 1,100 deaths from heart disease alone in the 25 to 45 year age group last year. Alcohol is associated with 5,000 deaths annually in Australia. Australia ranks 14th in OECD countries for per capita consumption of pure alcohol per year—at 9.8 litres.


According to the 2009 Australian government report entitled *State of Australia's young people*, young people do not associate binge drinking with long-term health effects as they do with other risky behaviour such as smoking. Considering both the short- and long-term harm, high-risk drinking or

dependence in Australia is estimated at five per cent of the total population, 15 per cent are considered high-risk drinkers, 65 per cent are considered low-risk drinkers and 15 per cent are nondrinkers. The message to drinkers is not getting out there as it is with smoking. This is a silent epidemic.

More than 70 per cent of the nation's population is negatively affected by someone's drinking in a year, according to Odyssey House in 2010. AERF statistics show that 70,000 Australians are the target of alcohol associated assault; 24,000 of these are adult victims of domestic violence and 20,000 are children.

The economic impact of alcoholism is estimated to be \$36 billion in Australia per year. The lifetime risk of death from an alcohol related injury increases with the number of drinks and frequency of drinking occasions for men and women. Also, the death rate for men is higher than for women at all levels of consumption. Limiting consumption to two or fewer drinks per day lowers a person's risk of death from injury to less than one per cent, even if that person drinks every day, according to the NHMRC report in 2009. To quote Professor Ross Homel in his most recent report, 'We've created this problem. We have a society soaked in alcohol which regards alcohol as the lubricant of social interaction.' Something needs to be done.

Ashgrove Electorate, Preference Allocation

 **Ms JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (9.07 pm): Ten days ago I learned that One Nation had reregistered in Queensland as a political party. At that time, they indicated that their intention was to run a candidate in the seat of Ashgrove. As soon as I became aware of this, I stated publicly what my position on One Nation is—that is, that under no circumstances would I ever do a preference deal with One Nation. At that time, I challenged the LNP candidate for Ashgrove to do the same—that is, to publicly state where he stands on One Nation. Some 10 days have passed and finally, late this afternoon, we saw a short and feeble statement—three sentences—issued by the LNP candidate for Ashgrove.

But this statement fails to articulate Campbell Newman's position on One Nation. What we know is that after 10 days Campbell Newman is still very clearly interested in courting the One Nation vote. At the time when I called for him to state his position, he abdicated leadership. He said, 'These are matters that you should put to the party.' He squirmed and said, 'There isn't even a One Nation candidate so I'm not going to state my position.'

But today, miraculously, after the Premier put pressure on him to actually state his position and after I stood in this House saying that some 10 days had passed and he still had not stated his position, late this afternoon—


Ms Bligh: No, after Tim Nicholls had to state the position.

Ms JONES: That is true. After Tim Nicholls had to front the cameras and state what the LNP position was when its so-called leader has refused, 10 days in a row, to front the cameras or the radio or tell the people of Ashgrove where he stood, he came kicking and screaming. This was a decision that he had to make on principle, yet we still do not know where he stands on principle. What we saw tonight was a short and feeble statement from the LNP candidate for Ashgrove showing once again that he is not fit to be a leader and not fit to be the member for Ashgrove. Let us look at what One Nation stands for. One Nation's policy document states—

Multiculturalism has failed everywhere. It is negative and divisive and a weight that is drowning our once safe cohesive society. One Nation will abolish multiculturalism and the Racial Discrimination Act.

Tonight the so-called leader of the LNP has been dragged by his own deputy leader and by the Premier of Queensland, yet still tonight he has not stated his principle position on One Nation.


TS Walrus Naval Cadets

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.10 pm): Congratulations go to *TS Walrus* and Sublieutenant Tracey Hagan, Australian Naval Cadets. After some 15 years in the Royal Australian Navy, Sublieutenant Hagan took on the role of commanding officer of *TS Walrus* just a few years ago. The *TS Walrus* cadets and unit staff were awarded the prestigious honour of being the best unit within their flotilla recently. Furthermore, they have been nominated for the national assessment for 2011. They are indeed a proud group and what they have achieved in recent times is absolutely outstanding. It was a pleasure to meet up with them again during my recent visit to the flotilla where they were being measured, if you like, for this award that they have been successful in receiving. I again look forward to attending their inspection planned for Sunday, 4 September at which time they will be judged for the national finals against seven other groups. It is once again an opportunity to meet with the cadets, the parents, the unit staff and the committee of *TS Walrus*.

This award comes following the community nominating them for the Dedicated Commitment Award late last year. The Dedicated Commitment Award is an award that I have been giving out to various individuals and now to organisations such as *TS Walrus*. They were the successful nominee

and those nominations came from the community. The award was presented to *TS Walrus* for dedicated commitment to the Australian Naval Cadets. They are a valued community organisation that has helped shape young people into responsible and dedicated young adults. They have provided a safe and friendly environment for these young people to gather and work together as a team while building self-confidence, responsibility and empathy in each individual young person. These attributes will hold these young people in good stead throughout their lives. I am certain that as adults they and the community will benefit enormously because of the dedicated commitment *TS Walrus* staff have made to these young people and the commitment the young people have demonstrated in their community. The staff have put in so much in passing on their valuable skills to these young people, their charges if you like, and at the end of it all they have achieved the pinnacle. It is only a matter of time now before we know whether or not they in fact will be national champions for the flotilla award.

Logan, Police Citizens Youth Clubs


 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (9.13 pm): Tonight I rise to pay tribute to the efforts of the three police citizens youth clubs in Logan and their great work in supporting and strengthening our community. Logan is very fortunate to have two long established PCYCs—one at Beenleigh and one at Logan—and the relative newcomer, the Crestmead PCYC. As well, the people of Loganholme in my electorate have warmly welcomed the Tudor Park Activity Centre for the Logan PCYC. Wherever you are in Logan and whatever social and recreational activity you seek, there is something for you at our PCYCs. PCYCs are much more than gyms and gymnastics, where they started; PCYCs across Queensland have grown to be a significant provider of social services, employment programs and recreational activities.

On Friday, 19 August the three PCYCs in Logan came together for a joint annual general meeting. It was a chance to celebrate a year of success in all three clubs. The best measure of that success is bums on seats, and PCYCs have certainly succeeded in this regard. They provide an inclusive, welcoming place offering a diverse range of activities that have got people through the doors. Not only are these programs diverse; they are also innovative. I am very proud of the Queensland government supported truancy program operated by the Beenleigh PCYC. The program supports local schools and local businesses by providing a physical presence around Beenleigh, ensuring that students are attending school. The program has proven immensely successful in supporting local schools to get students to school. It is only when children are in the classroom that they can learn.

But the AGM on Friday was also a sad time for the Beenleigh community. This was the last AGM with Sergeant Mark Dufficy as manager for the Beenleigh branch. Mark commenced work at the Beenleigh PCYC in 2000. At that time the branch had a membership base of approximately 1,200 members and one ute. There was one utility vehicle for the entire branch. Now that has increased to 13 vehicles, including four buses, and the membership has increased to be in excess of 5,200. Staffing levels were at three persons when Mark founded the club and now, with Skilling Queenslanders for Work projects, they stand at 125. The branch now can boast seven before- and after-school care centres with fantastic reputations.

The Beenleigh PCYC has such a wide array of programs for locals, including 25 sport and rec activities but, more importantly, 27 crime prevention programs. Mark Dufficy has chosen to take a well-earned retirement and, along with the Beenleigh community, I wish him a relaxing and fulfilling retirement. Mark has left a great legacy at the Beenleigh PCYC and the broader Beenleigh community. During his 10 years of service, Mark always ensured that no need would go identified but not addressed. Mark was always around with a solution or an offer of help. I know that many people are not aware of the great personal sacrifice and the great amount of personal time that Mark has made available for the PCYC. Mark is leaving the Beenleigh PCYC in a much stronger place than where he found it. He will be sorely missed as a community leader, a hard worker and a friend to me and many others.

Fraser Island, Tourism


 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.16 pm): I rise to raise the issue of the Tourism in Protected Areas initiative rolled out by the government for lucky Fraser Island announced by the Minister for Tourism, Jan Jarratt. There is a big question surrounding this initiative, and that is: are Fraser Coast tour operators so lucky? I do not think so. I want to talk about the package around the commercial tour operator passenger permit fees, specifically in relation to Fraser Island. Fraser Island commercial tour operators are heavily penalised by the existing fee schedule, and it was my understanding and hope that this inequity was going to be addressed by the TIPA process. That is not so. Tour operators in Queensland operate pursuant to either the Recreation Areas Management Act, the RAM Act, or the Nature Conservation Act, the NCA. The RAM Act in part covers Bribie, Cooloola, Moreton Island and Fraser Island. The Nature Conservation Act covers all other national parks.

The fee structure for commercial tour operators who pay per passenger for a day tour pursuant to these pieces of legislation are different in that in NCA areas it is \$2.85 per person and in RAM Act areas such as Bribie, Cooloola and Moreton it is \$2.85 per person while also under the RAM Act on Fraser it is

\$6.40 per person. Fraser Island tour operators are paying a fee 125 per cent greater than anywhere else in the state. This fee is incorporated into our ticket price and attracts agent commissions of up to 25 per cent and credit card commissions, effectively taking it up to around \$8.50 per day for a tour ticket price plus GST. The fee structure for backpackers has now moved to \$6.40 per person per day for three days—that is, \$19.20—plus a daily camping fee of \$5.15 per person. This compares to the prior fee regime of \$39 per vehicle carrying approximately seven passengers.

So the average fee now earned by DERM from the average backpacker tag-along tourist group based on a per car rate of, say, seven people per car has increased from \$39.35 for a three-day, two-night tour to \$134.40 plus camping fees—an increase of over 340 per cent. I would just like to know why tourists on Fraser Island are so disadvantaged compared to everybody else.

Moreton Bay, Fishing


 **Ms van LITSENBURG** (Redcliffe—ALP) (9.19 pm): Fishing is a large part of the Redcliffe economy, and the state government's placement of an artificial reef north of Moreton Island as one of two new artificial reefs in the Moreton Bay area will bring huge benefits for fishers and for the Redcliffe economy in the next few years. This artificial reef will encourage the development of another concentration of reef ecosystems which will increase the number of fishing grounds in the north Moreton Bay region. The larger number of fish in the bay will enhance the enjoyment of recreational and charter fishers and will increase yields for commercial fishers. Those increased numbers will also ensure that the many businesses geared to supporting the fishing trade on the Redcliffe peninsula will survive and will continue to feed into the local economy.

This reef will also encourage the development of many of the natural corals that have been appearing in the bay in recent years, increasing the richness and diversity of the marine environment. This increased diversity will enable Moreton Bay to continue to rejuvenate and increase the value of the bay as a sightseeing and whaling destination for visitors. With the increasing number of people using Moreton Bay, it is vital to ensure that the ecosystems remain sustainable, because the long-term health of our oceans and shorelines depends on it.

The delivery of this artificial reef builds on Minister Wallace's commitment to rebuild snapper, pearl perch and teraglin stock without the fishing bans which can be detrimental to charter and commercial fishing businesses and disrupt the Redcliffe and Queensland fishing lifestyle, which sees crowds of families getting out on the water or throwing in a line from the beach each weekend. This artificial reef is part of the Bligh government's plan to enrich the recreational fishing experiences for thousands of Queenslanders and to ensure that whaling, sightseeing, charter fishing and commercial fishing have the certainty to grow their businesses as well as share in the extra opportunities that are provided by more fishing grounds. These opportunities will ensure that Redcliffe's fishing related businesses will grow, while cafes, markets and other Redcliffe traders will benefit from fishing visitors to the peninsula and will contribute to an expanding local economy.

These fishing initiatives contribute to the state government's Toward Q2 goals of building a strong economy and a strong and healthy community. More stable businesses, more jobs and better and healthier lifestyles are some of the outcomes that Queenslanders have come to expect from a Labor government. I am proud to be a part of that government which is delivering for Queenslanders now and into the future.

Gladstone Electorate, Services


 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.22 pm): The people of my electorate are very talented and generous. I was going to speak about a number of functions that I have attended over the past couple of weeks. This morning I changed my mind when I heard the Premier and other ministers talking about sharing this state's prosperity. The Premier mentioned the Gold Coast and Cairns, where there is high unemployment and certainly some economic problems.

As a state we are interdependent. That is recognised in measures such as our uniform power tariff. The country is dependent on the city and the city is dependent on the country. But as one of the two areas in this state that is contributing substantially to this current prosperity, I have to again put on the record the concerns of the people of my electorate. If you talk to the people of the electorate of Gladstone and in the Surat Basin area you will find that the vast majority of them would not challenge the need to share prosperity across the state. As I said, the people of my electorate are generous by nature. That generosity has been shown over the past little while through contributions to the policemen's ball, the fetes held by the various schools and the Vietnam veterans' function. Certainly the people of the Gladstone electorate are a generous group, but the pain that people are feeling in the electorate is very real. I think the willingness of the people of the Gladstone electorate to share in that prosperity will be even greater and articulated more clearly when they feel that their critical needs are being met as well.

The people of my electorate are facing extensive challenges in relation to affordable housing. I have heard talk in this chamber about the ULDA and the LNG industry's responsibility to provide housing. That is not challenged. However, it is critically important that this government invests in social housing for those people who are unable to get a loan for a UDA house—who could not possibly get a bank loan but who are being forced out because of the rents of \$600 and \$700 a week that are being charged. In the past week the hospital had five of seven days after-hours surgery covered by Rockhampton. This is completely unacceptable for such a heavily industrialised city. Although a new surgeon has been appointed, that new surgeon—and I believe he is a very good surgeon and one who is very personable—does not do scopes. There has been inadequate provision for that service to be provided. So more people have to travel to Rockhampton to receive services.

I refer also to issues such as road infrastructure at the crossroads and at the Kin Kora roundabout. It is now significantly a matter of safety that that upgrade occurs. So to the Premier and to the other ministers who are already talking about the prosperity of this state and how it should be shared among those areas that are struggling, can I say that there are many people in the electorates who are carrying the cost of this prosperity. They need their needs met, they need them recognised and they need them answered.

Morayfield Electorate, Educational Facilities

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.25 pm): The Queensland and Australian Labor governments are continuing to work together to deliver real results for our young people. This is no more obvious than in the schools of the Morayfield state electorate. Recently, I participated in the official opening of a new Science Centre for the 21st Century and a new Trade Training Centre at Morayfield State High School. From the outset, I must acknowledge the significant funds provided by the Australian Labor government for these two outstanding educational facilities for the young people of the Morayfield state electorate.

The Australian Labor government provided \$1.36 million to construct the Morayfield Trade Training Centre and \$1.97 million to construct the Science Centre for the 21st Century at the Morayfield State High School. The construction of these new facilities was project managed by the Queensland government. I was very pleased to be joined at the official opening by Senator Mark Furner, school patron Lynette Devereaux, school principal Janelle Amos and past school principals Sharyn Donald and Brad Fox.

As I mentioned earlier, the Morayfield Trade Training Centre cost more than \$1.36 million to build. It will provide invaluable trade training facilities to the students of Morayfield State High School as well as students from neighbouring high schools—the Caboolture and Tullawong state high schools. This trade training centre has been purpose-built to deliver light construction trades training. Through this centre, students will be able to gain qualifications in bricklaying, carpentry, painting and decorating, plastering and tiling. They will learn valuable and in-demand skills that will improve their chances of employment after school.

I would like to congratulate the three schools involved in the trade training centre for developing strong partnerships with other community organisations, including Construction Skills Queensland and Biga Training. These partnerships will ensure the centre's facilities and training programs are appropriate to support the skills needs of local industry.

The Science Centre for the 21st Century is another exciting facility for the students of Morayfield State High School. The new science centre is supporting the Queensland Labor government's focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in schools. I congratulate the school for developing a strong partnership with QUT that will allow students in the local area to make the most of this wonderful facility. In addition, this new science centre will support the school's focus and success in the area of robotics. As honourable members would have heard, I am very proud of the students of Morayfield State High School who came second in the International Robotics Championships last year.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.28 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, Hincliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Swarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson