



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2012

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Madam Speaker (Hon. Fiona Simpson, Maroochydore) read prayers and took the chair.

### ASSENT TO BILLS



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

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

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

Date of Assent: 17 February 2012

"A Bill for An Act to amend the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997, the Queensland Competition Authority Regulation 2007, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Building Act 1975, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Land Sales Act 1984, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Building Boost Grant Act 2011 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to provide for protection of a person against violence committed or threatened by someone else if a relevant relationship exists between the persons, and to make amendments of the Criminal Code, the Evidence Act 1977, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2000 for particular purposes, and to make minor or consequential amendments of this Act and other legislation as stated in a schedule"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 and the Liquor Act 1992 for particular purposes"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

17 February 2012

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 17 February 2012, from Her Excellency advising of assent to bills [19].

### COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a commission under the public seal of the state authorising me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office to such members as might hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the commission to the House.

The Clerk read the following commission—

Queensland

*Constitution of Queensland 2001*

**To the Honourable FIONA STUART SIMPSON, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.**

I, PENELOPE WENSLEY, Governor, acting under section 22 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, authorise you to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office that is required to be taken or made by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 16 May 2012.

*By Command*

(Sgd)

C Newman

*RECORDED in the Register Patents, No. 48, page 115 on 16 May 2012.*

(Sgd)

Clerk of the Executive Council

*Tabled paper:* Commission, dated 16 May 2012, authorising the Hon. Fiona Stuart Simpson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, to administer the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office [136].

## GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor on Wednesday, 16 May 2012 delivered a speech to parliament of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy. I table a copy for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Governor's Speech—The opening of the first session of the Fifty-Fourth Parliament [20].

## REPORT

### Auditor-General

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report to parliament No. 1 for 2012—improving student attendance*. I table the report for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Report to Parliament No. 1 for 2012—Improving Student Attendance [21].

## APPOINTMENTS

### Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees

**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.32 am), by leave, without notice: I move—  
That Dr Mark Robinson be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### Panel of Temporary Speakers

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in accordance with standing order 11, I advise that I have appointed the following members to the panel of temporary speakers: the member for Gladstone, the member for Ipswich, the member for Kallangur and the member for Toowoomba North.

### Ministry

**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.33 am): I wish to advise the House of ministerial arrangements. I inform the House that, during March and April 2012, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor accepted a number of resignations and a number of appointments to the ministry.

In addition, on 12 April 2012, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed 11 parliamentary secretaries as assistant ministers. I table the relevant gazettes for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Copies of the relevant government gazettes appointing the current ministry [22].

I also seek leave to incorporate the details of the appointments in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

### CHANGES IN MINISTRY; APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT MINISTERS; AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, on 26 March 2012, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor—

(a) Accepted the resignations of—

The Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH, as Premier and Minister for Reconstruction;

The Honourable ANDREW PETER FRASER, as Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade;

The Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS, as Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State;

The Honourable GEOFFREY JAMES WILSON, as Minister for Health;

The Honourable NEIL STUART ROBERTS, as Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services;

The Honourable STEPHEN ROBERTSON, as Minister for Energy and Water Utilities;

The Honourable CRAIG ANDREW WALLACE, as Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure;

The Honourable CAMERON ROBERT DICK, as Minister for Education and Industrial Relations;

The Honourable TIMOTHY SEAN MULHERIN, as Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies;

The Honourable STIRLING JAMES HINCHLIFFE, as Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining;

The Honourable RACHEL GENEVIEVE NOLAN, as Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and The Arts;  
 The Honourable ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK, as Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs;  
 The Honourable PHILIP GERARD REEVES, as Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport;  
 The Honourable KAREN LEE STRUTHERS, as Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women;  
 The Honourable JANICE HEATHER JARRATT, as Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business;  
 The Honourable SIMON DAVID FINN, as Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology;  
 The Honourable CURTIS WARREN PITT, as Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and  
 The Honourable VICKY ELIZABETH DARLING, as Minister for Environment.

- (b) Accepted the resignations of these persons as members of the Executive Council.  
 and

- (c) Appointed—

The Honourable CAMPBELL KEVIN THOMAS NEWMAN to be  
 Premier  
 Minister for Education and Industrial Relations;  
 Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining;  
 Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs;  
 Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure;  
 Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business;  
 Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State; and  
 Minister for Energy and Water Utilities;  
 and

The Honourable JEFFREY WILLIAM SEENEY to be  
 Deputy Premier, Minister for Reconstruction, Minister for State Development and Trade;  
 Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies;  
 Minister for Environment;  
 Minister for Health; and  
 Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services;  
 and

The Honourable TIMOTHY JAMES NICHOLLS to be  
 Treasurer;  
 Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and The Arts;  
 Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology;  
 Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport;  
 Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and  
 Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women.  
 and

- (d) Also appointed those Ministers to be members of the Executive Council.

I also inform the House that on 3 April 2012, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor—

- (a) Accepted the resignations of—

The Honourable CAMPBELL KEVIN THOMAS NEWMAN as  
 Minister for Education and Industrial Relations;  
 Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining;  
 Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs;  
 Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure;  
 Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business;  
 Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State; and  
 Minister for Energy and Water Utilities;  
 and

The Honourable JEFFREY WILLIAM SEENEY as  
 Deputy Premier, Minister for Reconstruction, Minister for State Development and Trade;  
 Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies;  
 Minister for Environment;  
 Minister for Health; and  
 Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services;  
 and

The Honourable TIMOTHY JAMES NICHOLLS as  
 Treasurer;  
 Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and The Arts;  
 Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology;  
 Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport;  
 Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and  
 Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women.

and

(b) Appointed—

The Honourable JEFFREY WILLIAM SEENEY to be Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning;  
 The Honourable TIMOTHY JAMES NICHOLLS, to be Treasurer and Minister for Trade;  
 The Honourable LAWRENCE JAMES SPRINGBORG, to be Minister for Health;  
 The Honourable JOHN-PAUL HONORE LANGBROEK, to be Minister for Education, Training and Employment;  
 The Honourable DAVID FRANCIS GIBSON, to be Minister for Police and Community Safety;  
 The Honourable JARROD PIETER BLEIJIE, to be Attorney-General and Minister for Justice;  
 The Honourable SCOTT ANTHONY EMERSON, to be Minister for Transport and Main Roads;  
 The Honourable BRUCE STEPHEN FLEGG, to be Minister for Housing and Public Works;  
 The Honourable JOHN JOSEPH McVEIGH, to be Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;  
 The Honourable ANDREW CARY POWELL, to be Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection;  
 The Honourable ANDREW PETER CRIPPS, to be Minister for Natural Resources and Mines;  
 The Honourable MARK FRANCIS McARDLE, to be Minister for Energy and Water Supply;  
 The Honourable DAVID FRANK CRISAFULLI, to be Minister for Local Government;  
 The Honourable TRACY ELLEN DAVIS, to be Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services;  
 The Honourable ROSSLYN MARY BATES, to be Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts;  
 The Honourable STEVEN LANCE DICKSON, to be Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing;  
 The Honourable JANET ANNE STUCKEY, to be Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games; and  
 The Honourable JOHN MARK DEMPSEY, to be Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier.

and

(c) Also appointed Ministers Springborg, Langbroek, Gibson, Bleijie, Emerson, Flegg, McVeigh, Powell, Cripps, McArdle, Crisafulli, Davis, Bates, Dickson, Stuckey and Dempsey to be members of the Executive Council.

In addition, on 12 April 2012, in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed the following Parliamentary Secretaries—

Lisa Nicole France MP to be Assistant Minister for Natural Resources and Mines;  
 Timothy Leonard Mander MP to be Assistant Minister for Sport and Racing;  
 Christopher Karl Davis MP to be Assistant Minister for Health;  
 Gavin Ryan King MP to be Assistant Minister for Tourism;  
 Steven James Minnikin MP to be Assistant Minister for Public Transport;  
 Robert Molhoek MP to be Assistant Minister for Child Safety;  
 Ian Bradley Walker MP to be Assistant Minister for Planning Reform;  
 Deborah Kay Frecklington MP to be Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform;  
 David Kempton MP to be Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs;  
 Saxon Rice MP to be Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education; and  
 Roberto Anthony Cavallucci MP to be Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

I would also like to inform the House that on 23 April 2012, also in accordance with the Constitution of Queensland 2001, Her Excellency the Governor—

(a) Accepted the resignations of—

The Honourable DAVID FRANCIS GIBSON, as Minister for Police and Community Safety; and  
 The Honourable JOHN MARK DEMPSEY, as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier.

(b) Accepted the resignation of—

The Honourable DAVID FRANCIS GIBSON as a member of the Executive Council.

and


(c) Appointed—

The Honourable JOHN MARK DEMPSEY, to be Minister for Police and Community Safety; and  
 The Honourable GLEN WAYNE ELMES, to be Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier; and


(d) Appointed—

The Honourable GLEN WAYNE ELMES to be a member of the Executive Council.


### Leader of the House

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.34 am): I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made, and the honourable Speaker informed accordingly, for Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach, to be appointed Leader of the House.

### Government Whips

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.34 am): I have to inform the House that Mr Vaughan Johnson has been appointed Chief Government Whip, Mrs Rosemary Menkens has been appointed Senior Whip, and Mr Ted Sorensen and Ms Tarnya Smith have been appointed deputy government whips.


### Opposition

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.34 am): I table for the information of the House details of the opposition appointments.

*Tabled paper:* Details of opposition appointments [23].

## MOTION

### Order of Business

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.34 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That for this day's sitting, unless otherwise ordered, the order of business and time set out in the schedule circulated in my name be adopted.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS AND TIMES FOR

#### THURSDAY 17 MAY 2012

##### (1) Order of business

Government Business until 1.00pm

1.00pm—2.00pm—

Lunch break

2.00pm—2.30pm—Preliminary Business

Preliminary business until 2.30pm or earlier, comprising:

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

(If Preliminary Business completed before 2.30pm, Question Time will commence earlier and continue for 1 hour with starting times for all other items, except the dinner break, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.)

2.30pm—3.30pm—

Question Time

3.00pm—6.30pm—

Government Business

6.30pm—7.30pm—

Dinner break

7.30pm until adjournment moved—

Government Business

##### (2) Maximum time limits


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

Subject	Relevant Standing or Sessional Orders	Time
<b>Address in Reply Debate</b>	SO 47	
—Mover		20 minutes
—Other members		20 minutes



<b>Adjournment debate</b>	SO 56	
—Total time		30 minutes
—Each member		3 minutes
<b>Bills—Government Bills</b>		
Introduction of Bills (Explanatory Speech)	SO 129	1 hour
First reading	SO 130	No debate
<b>Government Bills reported on by a committee</b>		
Second reading debate	SO 138	
—Minister		1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		1 hour
—Members of the relevant committee		20 minutes
—All other Members		10 minutes
—Minister in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146 & SO 147	
—Mover (Minister)		No limit
—Other Members (on each question)		3 minutes
<b>Government Bills declared urgent and not referred or not reported on by a committee</b>		
Second reading debate	SO 129, SO 37 & SO 138	
—Minister		To speak once only as per SO 129 for 1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		1 hour
—Other Members		20 minutes
—Mover in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146, SO 147 & SO 156	
—Mover (Minister)		No limit
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)		1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes & 2 x 5 minutes
—Other Members (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
<b>Questions Without Notice</b>	SO 113	
—Question time (total time)		1 hour
—Member asking question		At discretion of Speaker
—Minister answering question		3 minutes

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the honourable the Premier, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasion.

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): It is an honour and a pleasure that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the First Session of the 54th Parliament of Queensland—

May it please Your Excellency—We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this State and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the First Session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our careful consideration, and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and prosperity of the people of this State.

I want to assure all Queenslanders that we will work hard every single day to make our state a better place to live. It is humbling to stand here today as the Premier and leader of the first ever LNP government. We are a new, enthusiastic government made up of members with energy and passion. I acknowledge the work that has been done to bring us all together as a united LNP. Queenslanders can be assured that they now have a can-do government that knows what its role is and, most importantly, what it stands for.

In making our case to Queenslanders for election we made five pledges: one, to lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste; two, to deliver better infrastructure and better planning; three, to revitalise front-line services for families; four, to restore accountability in government, which has been so sadly lacking and has caused Queenslanders to lose faith in their leaders; and, five, to grow a four-pillar economy to provide better opportunities for all Queenslanders in all walks of life.

Unemployment is too high for a state with such potential. We have set an ambitious unemployment target of four per cent within six years. Our plan will free us of debt, red tape, impractical ideology and indecision. To succeed we need to build a broader, stronger Queensland economy based on the four key pillars of agriculture, resources, tourism and construction. In agriculture, we have set a target to double Queensland's food production by 2040. We can do this by improving education, skills, technology and practices. We will protect strategic cropping land through statutory regional planning and we will go further to identify and develop new areas for intensive food production.

My government will deliver investment certainty for the resources sector and we will facilitate major projects instead of impeding them. We will protect Queensland's environment by raising the bar on environmental performance and by cutting unnecessary environmental red tape and ideology.

Queensland's economy will not be a one-trick pony anymore with the plans that my government has for the tourism sector. On our watch, tourism will be revitalised and again be a major economic driver. We will protect the Great Barrier Reef and our natural attractions. With a new industry focused approach, we will sell Queensland tourism in new markets in China, India, South Korea and the gulf.

I know that I do not have to remind members that the opportunities in property and construction evaporated under the previous government. We recognise that property investment is critical to Queensland's economic recovery and to delivering affordable homes for Queensland families.

A can-do Queensland is about giving communities the power locally to have a real say in their future. We believe, therefore, that local governments should have a bigger and more important role. You cannot properly run communities in a state the size of Queensland solely from an office in George Street. We will therefore give councils every opportunity to build local economies and better services and amenity. We will also, of course, hold local councillors properly accountable.

At the other end of the scale, my government will demand a better deal from the federal government. I believe that the federal government must live up to its responsibilities. Queensland cannot continue to bear the weight of duplication and red tape. The federal government bears responsibilities such as returning Queensland's taxation revenue through infrastructure funding and better social security measures—and I must particularly name the Bruce Highway and the National Disability Insurance Scheme as clear, unequivocal examples.

In the meantime, we will get on with the job here of delivering on our five key pledges. We are a can-do government. We are also a must-do government in terms of rebuilding Queensland's economy and finances to deliver the high-quality health, education and training, police and emergency services that Queenslanders so richly deserve.

It is a privilege and an honour to be the 38th Premier of our great state. My 37 predecessors came from very diverse backgrounds. Some served for just days and some served for many years. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who held the office for over 19 years, was the longest serving Premier in our history. His government built this state into an economic powerhouse that led the way for our country for so long. While we recognise Sir Joh's many achievements, another long-serving but often overlooked Premier should also be acknowledged.

Sir George Francis Reuben Nicklin, the former member for Murrumba, will probably be recalled by only a small number of members as it is now more than 40 years since he left office and more than 30 years since his passing. Frank Nicklin enrolled in the Army in 1916 and served with great distinction in the First World War, being awarded the military medal for bravery. He was elected as the member for Murrumba in 1932, the year that Labor's 25 years in office began. In 1941 he was elected Leader of the Opposition and he held that demanding office for 16 years. But in 1957, after the Labor Party split, he led the Country Liberal coalition to victory. He won four elections in all and did so with increasing majorities until he retired from politics in January 1968. At that time he held the record for the longest period as Premier. He led a strong cabinet and government after many years in the political wilderness. He insisted on high standards of ministerial conduct and his attention and commitment to matters of probity set a new benchmark for government. He was widely known, including by his political opponents, as 'Honest Frank'. He led wholly by example.

Frank Nicklin's long political career and his decade as Premier were hallmarked by integrity, humility and dedication to service. His greatest achievements as Premier were undoubtedly the opening up of the state's coal and bauxite industries and turning Queensland into a great mineral exporting state as well as a great agricultural state—two of the four pillars that we are so focused on to make Queensland strong again. He died on 29 January 1978, just 10 years after his retirement. If I as Premier of Queensland can live up to the standards of my eminent predecessors, I know that I will have worked hard and with honour for the people of Queensland.

I have always believed that involvement in politics, no matter at what level, is all about service to the people. It is all about service to the community. It is about helping people who just need that nudge in the right direction, who need advice about who to talk to and where to look and who often just need help with finding their way through the maze of bureaucracy to find the person who can provide the solution they are after. I believe that people do want to help themselves, do things for themselves, work hard and provide for their family and loved ones but that sometimes, sadly, inappropriately, government just gets in the way. I know from the many stories that come across my desk and that I hear firsthand that finding a way through the maze of bureaucracy can be everything from annoying to downright frustrating and, in some cases, extremely upsetting and troubling. That said, I also believe that government is there to provide the things that private firms or organisations cannot provide or do the things that people cannot do for themselves, but only if it makes things easier, not harder. It is about providing a safety net, not a complex maze.

In the spirit of service to the community, I will ensure that my government and the public servants who work for Queenslanders will not laud it over the people or boss them around with a heavy or high-handed approach or with a government-knows-best attitude. As Premier, I believe that the best ideas should result in less regulation, lower taxes and fewer laws, but, most importantly, my philosophy says that the people of Queensland will always, always, always come first.

I am privileged to represent the Ashgrove electorate in this parliament. The electorate was established by the 1959 redistribution. The first member for Ashgrove was Mr Doug Tooth, who was elected into the seat at the subsequent 1960 election having previously served as the member for Kelvin Grove since 1957. Mr Tooth was a distinguished member of the Liberal Party but he was also a strong coalition supporter. I am sure that he would be pleased with the election of a united LNP government. Doug was instrumental in establishing The Gap State High School at a time when there was no other state high school servicing the Ashgrove-Gap area. He also held ministerial office, serving as health minister for a record 10 years until his retirement in 1974—and someone is looking worried! So today, as the seventh member for Ashgrove, I salute the first member, Sir Seymour Douglas Tooth, a proud Liberal and a dedicated coalitionist.

I arrived in the Ashgrove electorate in January 1986 as a young Army officer posted to the Army barracks at Enoggera. It did not take too long at all to fall in love with the Enoggera, Ashgrove, Gap, Alderley, Newmarket, Gaythorne and Mitchelton areas—living and working in and being part of the community. I met my wife-to-be, Lisa, outside the 2/3 Field Engineer Regiment officers mess in August 1987 at the barracks and it did not take me too long to fall in love with her, too. We purchased our first home in Ashgrove in 1991 and were married in the base chapel in July that same year. Not long after that we brought our baby girls home from the Mater Hospital to our first home in Warmington Road, Ashgrove. Indeed, our eldest daughter, Rebecca, was christened in Ashgrove. Both Rebecca and Sarah have thoroughly enjoyed their formative years in the Ashgrove community and are proud members of the Ashgrove Dance Studio family, run by Wendy and Judy Lowe since January 1996.

I am very conscious of the privilege the people of Ashgrove have accorded me and the trust they have placed in me to be their representative in this parliament. When they were considering their vote, the Ashgrove residents knew that they were electing more than a local member but, first and foremost, someone to stand up for them in this parliament. I thoroughly and wholeheartedly embrace the significant responsibility of representing the people of Ashgrove whilst also discharging my duties as Premier. To the people of Ashgrove I pledge to be a passionate and effective representative. That is the promise I made to them and that is the promise I will keep.

By working with local residents and listening to the people of Ashgrove we have developed a strong plan: deliver the best fix for the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street with proper community consultation; provide improved road safety for local schoolchildren by installing flashing school-zone lights at Newmarket and Payne Road state schools; upgrade the intersections of Glen Retreat Road and Samford Road and Irvine Street and Samford Road to improve safety and reduce congestion; provide fare relief for commuters by offering free unlimited go-card travel after nine trips per week and get 15-minute train frequencies on the Ferny Grove railway line in off-peak periods; provide an amenities building for GPS Rugby and Valley Cricket Club at the Ashgrove Sports Ground; secure more funding to support the school breakfast program at the Mitchelton State High School; build a new school hall at The Gap State High School and teaching facilities at the Ashgrove State School; and install new lighting on the Payne Road State School sports oval.

However, upgrades and amenities aside, what I also want for Ashgrove is to play my part in nurturing and supporting the amazing sense of community. It is a community that loves its sports and has nurtured many of the nation's best rugby players. It is a community with a sense of and respect for our history, led by the Ashgrove and Gaythorne RSLs. It is a community with a strong commitment to religion as symbolised by our beautiful churches and places of worship. It is a community that is supportive and inclusive as characterised by organisations such as the Picabeen Community Centre, which has been supporting local families for many years from its base in Mitchelton. And it is a community with a robust population of small businesses, such as Milk and The Grove, which are some of my locals.

The 2012 election campaign was hard fought. The community spoke in a very clear way. I am so proud that our vision for this state so overwhelmingly resonated with Queenslanders. Today I must acknowledge the following people for their relentless efforts during the campaign: Bruce McIver, our president; James McGrath, our campaign director; Gary Spence, our vice president; Michael O'Dwyer, our state director; Daryl Fennel—we are glad he is still with us; Mark Brodie; Ben Myers; David Moore; Matt McEachen; Kylie Jacobson, who has been promoted to senior media adviser again; Carly Blaik; and Diane Balke.


It would be an understatement to say that my entry into this parliament as Premier has been unprecedented. At this point I want to thank the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer for their unwavering support, friendship and leadership during this unique period. Thank you so much. We are a team. We won office as a team and, along with the 77 other members of the LNP government, we will work hard for all Queenslanders as a strong and effective team.

I thank Lord Mayor Graham Quirk for being prepared to serve the people of Brisbane and I congratulate him on his recent election victory. I also acknowledge the following people for their efforts and support during the Ashgrove electorate campaign: Councillors Geraldine Knapp and Andrew Wines; Rob Hutchinson, my campaign director; David Hutchinson, my deputy campaign director; Carol Cashman, my campaign manager; and all the key coordinators such as the Conry family, John Goss, Selwyn and Robyn Clark, Rachel Parry, Lorraine Jones, Andy Russell, Tony Farrell, Jenny Noble and, of course, all the other LNP members.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge and thank the people of Ashgrove, everyone who volunteered, the families who welcomed Lisa and I into their homes and the many people who may not be members of the LNP—and there were so many of them—but who wanted a positive change for Queensland and so supported our local campaign in Ashgrove. I will not let you down. I also give special mentions to Jeff Wall, John Miller and the elder statesman—he knows who he is—for their advice and support.

I acknowledge my family. To my father, the late Kevin Newman, I have always been sad that you were not here to see all of this, to talk about the issues and to provide advice. I thank my mum, Jocelyn, for her guidance, love and support. I thank my sister, Kate, and her family. To my father- and mother-in-law, Frank and Elizabeth Monsour, your quiet dignity and stoicism during a trying period is admired by all. To my daughters, Rebecca and Sarah, over 10 years you have grown up in a political household and yet you have grown into wonderful young women. Finally to Lisa, my best friend and the love of my life, thank you for all that you have gone through, for all that we will go through and for the love and support you have always given me. I could not do it without you.

I will conclude by once again thanking the people of Ashgrove and the people of Queensland for entrusting the LNP with getting this great state back on track. I am excited, I am honoured and, with this great team, we will deliver.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.55 am): I begin by seconding the motion as moved by the Premier and congratulating him on a great first speech in this Queensland parliament.

As members would realise, this is not my first speech in this parliament, but it is my first speech from this side of the parliament. It is my first speech as part of an LNP government that extends across both sides of the parliament. Those of us who have been in this parliament for a long time would understand the significance of my looking across the chamber at the members from Murrumba, Stretton and Springwood, knowing that they are LNP members. Over the next three years our focus is to make sure that the voters in electorates such as Murrumba, Stretton, Springwood, Lytton, Logan and a whole range of other electorates where people have voted for the LNP for the first time vote for us for a long time to come.

I congratulate all of the new members who make up this LNP government. After so many years it is wonderful to stand here and see so many of you joining us in this parliament. The people of Queensland have placed in us a huge trust and responsibility. For 14 years we were in opposition. For 14 years we sat on that side of the parliament in opposition and a relay of leaders have brought us from that point in 1998 to where we are today. I acknowledge them, because they did some hard yards. I acknowledge former leaders such as Mike Horan, who is not here. He retired and left this parliament with the respect of everybody. I acknowledge his deputy at the time, Vaughan Johnson, and leaders such as Bruce Flegg, Mark McArdle and Lawrence Springborg, who did so much to bring the LNP together. I acknowledge John-Paul Langbroek. They are the people who served the cause and who brought all of us who make up the LNP government to this point today.

I think all of us would agree that the one person whom we must acknowledge more than all in terms of the leadership that it took to get us to this point is the member for Ashgrove and now the Premier of Queensland. On 22 March 2011 he took the momentous decision to leave his position at the Brisbane City Council and move to state politics. The leadership that he has shown since has been a significant part of the reason why so many LNP members are in this chamber today. It was a bold move. Some said it was crazy brave. A lot of people said it would not work—quite a lot of people said it would

not work. I remember coming back into this chamber on the Wednesday, the day after the leadership of the opposition had changed. The glee on the faces of those who sat on the government benches was something that I will never forget, but there are not too many of them here today.

They have met the political fate that they so richly deserve because we were able to bring to this state parliament a leader with experience, a leader with a track record, a leader with the respect of all Queenslanders and a leader who was able to build on the foundation of those who had gone before him in the leadership roles of the LNP to ensure that we could bring into this chamber a government—an LNP government—with a strength, a determination and a passion that this chamber has never seen before.

There are lots of things about those first few months that I will save for the book that I will one day write, and nobody else will read. No-one else had better read it; it might be libellous! But there is one thing that I want to acknowledge today and that is the role that Tim Nicholls played. When Tim and I had a lonely discussion in a deserted coffee shop on Racecourse Road on a Sunday afternoon in late March it was very clear to both of us that if we were going to support Campbell's move then Tim had to put aside his own personal leadership ambitions. I congratulate Tim on the decision that he made and on the role that he has played in the leadership team that has led the effort since then. Tim, Campbell and I have formed a unique bond and I think it is a very strong bond that will be at the centre of the LNP government as we go forward. I want to recognise Tim's courage and selflessness today.

It is a huge task that the LNP government face. We have been left a legacy of failure, dysfunction and debt. I do not think that any Queensland government has failed to the extent that the previous Labor government that occupied this chamber failed. They left a legacy that will live on in infamy for generations. We saw a long list of crises as the end result of the maladministration of that government: the health crisis and the payroll scandal, Dr Patel, the fake Tahitian prince, the water crisis, the wasted billions of dollars on the water grid, the rusty desalination plants, the Traveston Dam, the destruction in the Mary Valley, soaring water prices and power prices that Queenslanders will struggle with for years, the kids in care crisis, the Bruce Highway crisis—the list goes on and on and on.

**Mr Johnson:** And the state of local government.

**Mr SEENEY:** Not to mention what they did to local government in Queensland; I thank the member for Gregory for reminding me of that. It is too easy to forget. The list of failure and dysfunction is so long that it is so easy to forget.

I think the first thing the few remaining members of that government who now constitute the opposition in this parliament should do is apologise to the people of Queensland for the extent of that failure. Only then would they recover any respect from me or from any Queenslanders that was lost due to the extent of their failure and the extent of the suffering that they have inflicted on so many Queenslanders. The other thing that they should apologise for is the election campaign. The election campaign that was waged in Queensland in the run-up to the last election was unprecedented in my view and in the view of a lot of political commentators. What the failed Labor government tried to do was to cover its own failure and its own ineptitude by personally attacking not just the then candidate for Ashgrove but also his wife, his family and his wife's family. It was unprecedented and it was disgusting. It disgusted Queenslanders from Currumbin to Cook. It disgusted everybody. It is one of the reasons there are only seven members of this opposition in this parliament.

I am pleased it did not work for a lot of reasons. I am pleased it did not work because, had it worked, it would have become the norm in Queensland politics. It would have become the accepted way of operating in Queensland politics, and that would have been a tragedy for all of us who understand what politics should be about. The fact that it did not work hopefully will mean that nobody will try such despicable tactics again. I say quite genuinely to the Leader of the Opposition and her much diminished team that if they want to recover any respect in this parliament and in Queensland then the first thing they should do in this parliament is not just apologise for their track record of failure but also apologise for the way they ran the election campaign and for what they tried to do to Lisa Newman and her family.

There is no doubt that we as a government have a mandate. We have a mandate for change. We have a mandate to repair the damage that was done by so many years of Labor. We have a mandate to develop and to build Queensland. We have a mandate to build the four pillars that the Premier has spoken about this morning and that he spoke about so often during the election campaign—to build the four pillars of resources, agriculture, construction and tourism. In the weeks since the election, that is exactly what we have been doing.

Across government our ministers have begun the job of doing what we said we would do—that is, delivering on our promises. In a methodical, determined, workmanlike way we will deliver on the promises that we gave to the people of Queensland. We will develop the coal seam gas industry in a responsible way that makes up for the maladministration of the previous government, that brings to every Queenslanders the benefits that that industry can bring but that safeguards the environment, that safeguards the rights of landholders and that protects regional communities. We will develop the resources industry in general across Queensland because it is the resources industry in particular that gives Queensland its great comparative advantage over other states and gives Australia its great

comparative advantage over other countries. We will do these things in such a way that all Queenslanders will benefit. We will do them in a way that will prove that we can administer the state and the business of the state in a way that will allow the business of the state to grow.

One of the things that the previous government never seemed to understand is that if you are going to spend money you have to earn it first; you have to earn the money first before you spend it. The fact that they did not understand that led in a very real way to the \$85 billion worth of debt that will forever be their legacy. To address that legacy we have to grow the business of the state, and that is the focus of the portfolio that I have been given. We have reconstituted the department of state development. We have refocused the role of the Coordinator-General; we are unashamedly about ensuring that the Coordinator-General can use the powers in the state development act to coordinate the development activities across the state and ensure that we can grow the business of the state.

We have already taken steps to deal with the mess that the previous government left in the Galilee Basin. The lack of planning of the Galilee Basin infrastructure is breathtaking when you understand the degree to which it is now confused. We have established the gas fields commission. We have established the Bruce Highway action group. We have met with the federal government—with Tony Burke—to avoid bureaucratic duplication. We have appointed a 'go to' person for the construction and development industry. We have worked to simplify the planning process. We are refocusing the UDLA and empowering local governments across Queensland to do what they do best: make decisions for their communities. All the things that I and my colleagues have talked about in this chamber for years and all the things that the Premier talked about for the 12 months when he was our leader outside the parliament are now being actioned, one at a time, methodically, workmanlike and determinedly. We will do what we said we would do. At the end of the three-year term I think all of the 78 members who sit in this chamber will be proud of what we as a government achieved.

At this point I want to thank some people. Members who know me know that I do not do this very often. My wife asks me, 'Why does everybody else thank everyone in their first speech in parliament but you never do?' It is because I have had so much else to talk about. But today I want to thank some people because, after 14 years in this parliament, this is undoubtedly the high point of my career and I want to thank the people who helped me get here.

First of all, I want to thank my wife, Therese. Thirty-two years married—34 years married, sorry. I will be in trouble for that tonight! Thirty-four years married and for 20 of those years I have been in public life, either in state politics or in local government. Everybody knows that it is our partners who bear the brunt of that. I acknowledge her for the great tower of strength that she has been. I acknowledge my kids—Dan, Helen and Tom. They are all grown up now, but they all grew up with their father as a politician or a councillor in a small country town, and that is a tough gig, so I acknowledge them.


I want to acknowledge some people who have been part of the Monto branch of the now LNP ever since we started together as a group in what was then the Young Nationals. Peter and Mary Sharp, Neville and Narelle Galloway, and Robyn and Robert Ogle have been part of my political life from day one. I acknowledge all of my electorate council people who were there at my preselection 14 years ago—Jimmy Tucker; Orla Hansen; Ken and Val McInnes, who were here yesterday; Ted Kirk from Gayndah; Gil and Michelle Smith; and old Bill Roberts and Percy Iszlaub from Murgon and Wondai respectively who used to say that they never thought they would live to see another LNP government. They not only lived to see it but they lived to see a great one.

I also acknowledge the colleagues who have served in this parliament with me since I came here in 1998. There have been some tough times. Some of them are still here and some of them have gone. I thank them for the support. I thank them for the tolerance they showed when they could not support me. I apologise for the times that I have upset people—and that is a long list, too. But I acknowledge that they will form the core of experience that will make this LNP government great. So I want to thank all of my colleagues who have served in this parliament.

Also, Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge your election. You, too, have been a colleague for many years. I want to acknowledge your elevation to the position of Speaker. I want to assure you of my support—of our support—and hope that the relationship we build in this parliament will be a good one and will contribute to the role of the parliament and the good things that this parliament can provide for the people of Queensland.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I hope that this government can provide hope for all Queenslanders but especially for regional people. I have unashamedly all of my political career—all of my career in public life—been about country towns and country people, and I hope that this government can deliver for country towns and country people. I am sure it is something that the Premier understands, because he and I have spoken about it many times. I am sure it is something that the cabinet ministers, if they do not understand it now, will come to understand. Things are different in country towns and things are different in regional Queensland and sometimes we have to be well aware of those differences in the regulation and the legislation that we deal with in this House.

I hope that in the future people will talk about the LNP government that was elected in 2012 as a government of integrity, a government that brought change, a government that was known for its achievements and a government that delivered on its promises. That is what I will be focusing on, and I hope that the other 77 members of the LNP government will join me in that task. I once again congratulate the Premier along with my good friend Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, who will not exchange electorates with me no matter how many times I argue with him. I look forward to working with them and all of the LNP members in this government to make those things a reality.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.15 am): Madam Speaker, it is yet again an honour to be elected and supported by the residents of the electorate of Clayfield in this the 54th Parliament of Queensland. Whilst in this turn of the electoral cycle I have been fortunate indeed, I am always conscious of the adage that if one does not win one's seat then it is all for nought! That is certainly the case and something that weighs heavily and sits in the back of my mind every three years. So at the very outset, I thank all of those hardworking electors in Clayfield who supported me and my local LNP team and our vision for Clayfield and our vision for Queensland at the ballot box on 24 March last.

I reviewed the booth numbers from election day, because I had a slight 'wager' with the now member for Ashgrove about the outcome. I want to thank all of those electors in all of those suburbs that make up Clayfield for trusting the LNP and me to deliver for them. I urge them to continue to support me, as I am sure that is a wager with the member for Ashgrove that will come back to haunt me in due course. I think the member for Indooroopilly had a side bet on that one as well.

Madam Speaker, I also express my appreciation to Her Excellency the Governor for her felicitous attendance at the opening of this the 54th Parliament. Over the term of her stewardship the Governor has, with Mr McCosker, I think established a warm and enduring friendship with the people of Queensland. From her travels in the cape to her foray into stone sizzled steaks at Beef Week in Rockhampton, the Governor has involved herself in all aspects of community and business life in this great state. I have personally enjoyed both her company and her wisdom at the many events she has hosted and at which we have been in attendance, and I look forward to an ongoing strong relationship with Government House. I particularly look forward to further engagement with Her Excellency in my role as Minister for Trade.

Having listened attentively to Her Excellency's speech on the opening of parliament which will be circulated, I must say that I find myself in complete agreement with her government's agenda for this term and will of course strive to implement in full force and in accordance with the clear mandate of the electorate those excellent policies that have been developed for this government.

Madam Speaker, I also extend my congratulations to you on your elevation to the position of Speaker. It is indeed another seminal moment in Queensland's parliamentary history, and indeed in the rich tapestry of our political life here in Queensland, to see Queensland's first female Speaker. Madam Speaker, I listened to your introductory speech, as I am sure most members did and as I believe you would have wanted. One of the great issues, of course, for the Speaker is the protection of the rights, liberties and powers of the parliament. Madam Speaker, there are of course tensions, as you said, between the executive and the Speaker and, as you said, this is no bad thing.

Madam Speaker, while changes were made in the last parliament to the way aspects of the parliament are run, I think it is important for all members to understand that no changes were made to the power of the Speaker to protect the powers, rights and immunities of the parliament and the parliamentarians. Madam Speaker, that power to protect is given, and always has been given in my view, by the parliament itself. It is not a right that belongs to any one person or office. It is a right of the parliament to protect itself and its powers—originally a right to protect itself against unwarranted intrusion by the Crown and, in more recent times, by the Crown in right of executive government.

Like the right of lawyer-client privilege, which belongs to the client although claimed by the lawyer, the right to protect the parliament is the parliament's although exercised through the Speaker. I think it is again important to look at the act itself, which says that nothing derogates from any power, right or immunity traditionally held or exercised by the Speaker on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. Madam Speaker, you may rest assured that your role remains as valid and as vital as it ever did in ruling in this chamber, and it is a power that I will support to the full.

I must say that I look forward to your rulings, I hope. As the last member to be ejected from the last parliament—and I suspect I may have taken one for the team—I also look forward to your exercising the great quality of mercy to those who are on the very rare occasions a little overenthusiastic in debate, and I of course refer to the member for Warrego and the member for Gregory in no small measure in that respect.

I wish to reflect on the new government and the election campaign, because it was in that campaign that our promises were made to the people of Queensland, that we were questioned, that we were tested, and in the fire of which our steel was forged. While the main protagonists from the late government may have departed, either voluntarily or otherwise, the stain of their campaign is as hard to

remove as beetroot on a white shirt front. The previous government deliberately and with malice aforethought sought to turn the last campaign into a referendum on the personal integrity not just of the member for Ashgrove but also, disgracefully, on his entire family. The entire Labor Party—those left in this place and those that are out of it—are and were condemned by that disgraceful campaign. With no basis in fact, with not even a grain of truth, an edifice of untruths, speculation and salaciousness was constructed in order to save a decrepit, desperate and dysfunctional government.

The people of Queensland passed their judgement on those opposite and on their campaign on 24 March 2012, and that judgement in all its glory is far more damning than the harshest editorial or commentariat comments could ever be. It pays to remind Queenslanders that the Australian Labor Party will say and do anything in its quest for power. If those opposite think that either Queenslanders or we have forgotten, I am here to say, 'We will remind you and we will remind you every day of the disgrace of that campaign.' We will ensure that the bar is never lowered as it was by the Australian Labor Party in the 2012 state election campaign for Queensland. In talking about the disgraceful, negative campaign run by the Australian Labor Party, it is imperative that we contrast it with the positive campaign run by the Liberal National Party here in Queensland—a positive campaign to get Queensland back on track.

They say that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. I can point to three people who met on a small, suburban back deck in Hendra just over 12 months ago with me to talk about how we would achieve success. I am of course referring to Campbell Newman, to my great friend Jeff Seeney and to Ben Myers. We met together because we wanted to make sure that Queensland had an alternative to that decrepit, dysfunctional and tired Labor government. We came together as people, some of whom we knew well and some of whom we barely knew. We came together and we made some fairly hard decisions in a very short period of time.

Out of that meeting on a small, suburban back deck a great friendship has been formed and a great team has been formed. I think that will be the enduring hallmark of this government: the teamwork and the bringing together of people from different backgrounds—whether you are a farmer from Monto, an engineer for the Army or a lawyer from Clayfield, or indeed any of the members of the LNP from Currumbin to Cook and from Bribie to Boulia. We are a team that comes together and which represents the strength, the wisdom and the power of Queensland.

After that meeting on that back deck, the rest, as they say, is history. One of the enduring legacies of that meeting was to campaign on an agenda for change. Madam Speaker, as you know, we set about putting together our positive plans for change: positive plans for a Queensland with a bright and positive future; plans to cut waste to deliver front-line services; plans to lower the cost of living for families; plans to deliver better infrastructure and planning; and plans to restore accountability in government. These were the themes that reflected what all Queenslanders we spoke to wanted addressed. These were the things that mattered every day to everyone—heartland, not ephemeral, things; things that make a difference to the quality of life of Queenslanders.

Those themes were underpinned by a desire by Queenslanders to see a government that would work to reduce unemployment and to grow the economy so that we could deliver the things that Queenslanders want, not to grow an economy for its own sake but because of what it delivers—jobs, job security, a better standard of living and opportunities for us and for generations to come. That was the positive campaign that we ran in contrast to that of our political opponents. I want to thank all those in the LNP who helped get our positive message out because in the heat of the campaign there are always questions, there are always comments and, of course, there is an abundance of free advice. It takes some intestinal fortitude to hold the line and to maintain the discipline when some would want you to react to every bad story or every new theory put forward by the pundits and the so-called experts—to be like the captain of the cricket team who places their fielder where the ball was last hit, not where the ball may well be hit.

So let me thank those people who helped us maintain that discipline. Firstly, I thank David Moore, who came to help us in opposition as a great chief of staff. I rang David on the day that the leadership changed over a year ago and said, 'Are you available to help?' He said, 'I am with a client in Canberra. Would you mind if I think about it?' I said, 'No, is there a plane you can get on and get back here?' and he did. He joined our team initially for a week and stayed for a year. I do not think he regretted a moment of it—well, a couple of moments perhaps. Nonetheless, he was a great chief of staff. He was never at a loss for a response. He had an incisive policy mind, and I am sure that many other things await him in the future in the application of those skills and that ability.

I thank James McGrath, our campaign director, who was tough but tough. He kept his cool and only occasionally wanted more money from a very tight policy budget. He directed the campaign, he kept the team going, he worked more hours than there are in a day, I think, and managed to keep both the administrative wing of the party and the political wing of the party in conversation—no easy thing on some occasions.

I thank Gerard Benedet, our deputy campaign director and now my chief of staff, and invariably—and this is no bad thing for someone who works for the Treasurer—the man sent out to bring campaigns back into line over spending. Gerard did a great job in making sure that the campaign worked.



From the LNP team I also thank Mitch Redford, Matt McEachan, Rachael Power, Kate Wilson, Amy Ladner, Harriet Nunan, Caroline Sheehan, Suzie Curtis, Carly Blaik, Di Balke, Hanna Melendez and Kylie Jacobson—whose infectious laugh would often be heard down the other end of the phone just when a bad question was about to be asked. She would say, 'I don't think that Campbell wants to do this one, Tim, would you mind doing it?' and she would laugh at the end of it.

I also recognise Mark Textor. If and when a history of researchers and pollsters is ever written, Mark Textor—'Tex'—will rank in the first order throughout not only Australia but the world. He has advised campaigns and most successfully recently advised on the re-election of Boris Johnson as the Mayor of London. During the course of that campaign I came to trust and rely on Tex—as I think we all did—and his calmness, his clarity and, if I might say at times, and it was needed, his caustic wit. They were an essential ingredient in the success of our campaign and I think those of us who dealt with him came to call him a friend.

There are of course the staff from the old opposition office who brought it all together: my executive assistant, Kim McInnes, whose double entendres and infectious good humour are legendary throughout the old opposition office and I am sure will become more so in this parliament; my policy adviser, Mark Gorter, who has been unceremoniously stolen from me by the member for Indooroopilly as his chief of staff but who worked tirelessly on making sure all of the numbers stacked up; my good friend, Joe Owen, who helped us with the economics; and all who joined the great adventure that we started just over 12 months ago.

I also want to congratulate all the new members who are here today, and as I look across the room that is a big congratulations and I am very happy to be able to give it to you all. Rarely does such a seismic shift in a parliament occur. I can remember when the Leader of the House and I were elected only six years ago that there was certainly no seismic shift occurring at that stage of the proceedings; it was more like a speed bump. There are 51 new members here today. Many of them are from the LNP, but I also acknowledge those new members who have joined the opposition and the crossbenches. Many of you have fought long and hard to get here, and I do hope you enjoy your time here. To all those who join the government benches, can I say welcome. To those opposite who are new—and I mean directly opposite—I look forward to the contest that I am sure we will have over the next three years. I trust that all new members enjoy and learn from the great opportunity and privilege they have been given by their electorates to serve them here in the Parliament of Queensland.

I looked back at my first speech in preparing for today's speech, and I reflected on the words I used then and the people I thanked then. I looked at the reasons I stood to be elected in this place, and upon reading those words I find them as true today as they were six years ago: to ensure that the opportunities this state offers for us and for future generations are developed in the best way possible; to make sure that the great benefits that are ours, by either active providence or hard work, are utilised in the best way possible; a belief that government is not the answer for all the problems; a belief that the individual, self-reliance, business and small business are the only true ways to grow a sustainable economy, sustainable employment, prosperity and wealth for future generations; and to give individuals the right to express themselves, whether through work or community, in the highest and best way that they choose fit—not in the way that the dead hand of the state sees fit.

As we gather here today at the opening of this parliament, I want to rededicate myself to those principles that I outlined in my first speech, the reasons that I put myself, my family and my friends through the rigours of election campaigns, the reasons that we come here each and every day to deliver on those outcomes. It is important that we remember why we are here; it is important that we remember what we have pledged to deliver on.

Let me conclude by thanking the last little batch of people I want to thank, that is, my own campaign team, the people who have been with me for a long time: Bill O'Chee, who was my campaign director; Annie Reid, who is here in the gallery today and who has been my campaign secretary now for more years than either she or I would wish to count; and Darren Barlow, my campaign treasurer who has made sure my finances added up, and they always have. I thank my long-suffering electorate staff. Ros Cutting, after 13 years, has finally grown sick of me and has decided to retire. She is here today as well. I am not quite sure how much of my results in those booths, Mr Premier, is as a result of Ros's work rather than mine. She has been a stalwart and a friend over all those 13 years in both council—

**Mr Johnson:** Just because she barracks for the right football team.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** That is right—despite supporting the same team as the member for Gregory. I also thank Kirk Stubbs, who joined my team a year ago and was my on-the-ground campaigner. There are other people: Mark Brodie, whom the Premier has already mentioned, and I thank him for his friendship, support and many other things in between; Daryl Fennell, my great friend, and many in the LNP would know that we thought he was going to die from leukaemia but he came back in a true miracle—a true miracle; Andrew King, a good friend of mine who supported the team; our long-suffering neighbours, Paul and Kylie Edwards, who looked after our three kids whenever we needed to go to that

next function and that next event, who had our kids dropped on them morning, noon and tea; and Ernie Ginn, who is known to many people and who at 92 still came out and handed out how-to-vote cards at the Hendra State School, a booth that we won for the first time in 25 years.

It is an emotional time. It is a great time to be here in Queensland and to be part of the new LNP team. I am honoured by the obligation presented to me as Treasurer and Minister for Trade. I thank the people of Queensland for the honour of working for them to get Queensland back on track. I thank all my colleagues on the LNP team. I look forward to delivering for Queensland over the next three years.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the honourable Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

**Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (10.35 am): I stand here today a very humbled and honoured new member for Toowoomba South and newly appointed Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in this Newman LNP government. To say that the past six weeks has been eventful would be an understatement, but I very much look forward to serving as a member of this parliament, as a minister of the Crown and, most particularly, as the member for Toowoomba South. I therefore confirm my allegiance here today to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her representative, Her Excellency the Governor, Penelope Wensley, and my loyalty to this parliament and to the electors of Toowoomba South. Madam Speaker, I especially acknowledge the Governor's address in opening our parliament yesterday and I sincerely congratulate you on your appointment to the high and respected office of Speaker in this House.

The 2012 Queensland state election was unprecedented in terms of the clear decision made by Queenslanders for a change of government. For my part, I am certainly proud that my result in Toowoomba South represented 71.5 per cent on a two-party preferred basis. I sincerely thank the electors of Toowoomba South for placing their faith in me. At the same time, I recognise that, as a candidate succeeding the only retiring LNP member in this past election, the foundation for my campaign was set on the record of my predecessor, the honourable Mike Horan. I have been very fortunate to have known Mike and his wife, Helen, for some years and he was and is a great friend and mentor to me, as is Helen to my wife, Anita. During the last six weeks, I have come to recognise that Mike retired from this place as one of the few members who was genuinely liked on both sides of politics. He was certainly revered on our side as one of those who played an incredibly important role over the years in the genesis of this new LNP government of the 54th Parliament of Queensland.

I have had the pleasure of knowing all of my predecessors in Toowoomba South: the late Peter Wood, member from 1972 to 1974 and former Deputy Mayor of Toowoomba City Council; the late John Warner, member from 1974 to 1986 and Speaker of the House; Clive Berghofer, member from 1986 to 1991 and Mayor of the Toowoomba City Council, businessman and renowned philanthropist; and, as I mentioned, the member over the last 20 years, Mike Horan.

My success in this campaign is due to the efforts and support of a number of important people. My campaign team—led by a campaign manager of enormous intellect and capability, Mrs Cynthia Hardy—is among the most dedicated, driven and endearing teams of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I thank many friends and extended family, especially my parents, Mary and Tom, and my mother-in-law, Cel, who supported and encouraged me through that journey. I enjoyed the support of the entire LNP party organisation—from our president, Bruce McIver, and our regional chair, Pat Weir, through to the volunteers who stood with me in the electorate rain, hail or shine.

I have already been joined by a dedicated professional team led by my Chief of Staff, Bruce Mills, and Kevena Franklin in my electorate office. I thank my children—Meghan, Kevin, Bridget, Annabelle, Marita and Tessa—who put aside their university, school, sport, music and even their social lives to walk that journey with me, and they were perhaps my greatest source of motivation and inspiration throughout the campaign. Finally, I thank my wife, my partner, my best friend, Anita, who prompted me to make the final decision to run and then sustained me throughout. As I thank and acknowledge them all, I recognise that I am indeed a very fortunate man.

Toowoomba South has significant features and issues within its own boundaries and yet a sense of shared responsibility for the broader region given our catchment of southern Queensland and the northern parts of New South Wales to our south. We have in the order of 20 schools, 28 church communities, 14 aged-care facilities, numerous child-care centres, 16 shopping centres and 19 sporting complexes and facilities. We have one of Queensland's largest livestock selling centres, the iconic Picnic Point on the edge of the range and the East Creek and West Creek catchments that were the scene of flooding devastation in our city in January 2011. The seat extends from the range and our CBD west towards the Royal Agricultural Society's iconic Toowoomba Showgrounds and south to the University of Southern Queensland. We have residents who work in rural industries, in agribusiness, aged care, education at all levels, health, food and other manufacturing, tradespeople, professionals, government services and retail. We are a region facing significant growth challenges, be it the need for resources for our growing school populations and numerous aged-care facilities; the pressure that we bear together with other communities along the Warrego Highway, especially as it cuts a swathe through

the heart of our city carrying produce and supplies to and from the west; the balance that we must find between agriculture, mining and other land uses; and the need for flood mitigation and CBD infrastructure development.

Toowoomba, like much of regional Queensland, is ready to play its part in rebuilding the Queensland economy. We are willing to share the burden of challenges with the rest of the state, but we must ensure that we are not left with all of the costs, all of the pressures. We will simply seek our fair share of the benefits flowing from the development of our great state. Our local economic profile indicates that our local economy continues to be based on the mainstays of agriculture, education, health, retail and an increasing contribution from the energy sector in more recent times. In this regard, I am very pleased to see the strong statements in today's Toowoomba *Chronicle* from my good friend His Worship the Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council, Councillor Paul Antonio, wherein he explains that Toowoomba is open for business and has the potential to be an economic powerhouse. From the glory days of Southern Cross Windmills, Defiance Flour, KR Darling Downs to the current business leaders of Wagners, Easternwell, FK Gardner and Sons, Heritage Bank and the University of Southern Queensland; from Steel Rudd to Geoffrey Rush; from Duncan Thompson, Jason Little and Tim Horan to Will Power in international motor racing, we boast of national and international leaders in the arts, sport, commerce and education—all of whom we are justifiably proud.

It is fair to say that one's political ideals are forged through their life experience. I grew up on the Darling Downs and in Toowoomba South, attending primary school and secondary school before moving on to study business at the University of Southern Queensland. Prior to coming to this place, I have been fortunate indeed to enjoy a most satisfying career in agribusiness, including Elders Pastoral in North Queensland, Cargill Australia in the grain belt extending through to Central Queensland, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in the early 1990s and the federal Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. For the past 15 years my colleagues and I have operated a management consulting practice working for Australian businesses and industries in every continent of the world. It has been enjoyable to work through those roles in the cane and beef industries of North Queensland; the grains industry throughout Southern and Central Queensland; the seafood industry in Moreton Bay and Bundaberg; the pork industry in the Burnett; in regional development roles in Western Queensland; in value-adding in the food processing and packaging, wool, vegetable and cotton industries; in irrigation and engineering; and in energy development best practice activities in the Surat Basin. I know through this experience that Queensland industries, particularly regional, have a tremendous potential for wealth and employment generation, not only in my home, the rural and regional centre of Toowoomba, but throughout the entire state.

Like us all, I have benefited from the wonderful education opportunities offered in Queensland—in my case, from Jondaryan State School to my beloved Downlands Catholic College in Toowoomba to a business degree at the University of Southern Queensland, an MBA at Bond University and in more recent years postgraduate studies at the University of Queensland School of Agriculture and Food Sciences. But as I consider the careers of my wife and me to date, our family and the challenges that lay ahead, I must recognise the efforts of our forebears. My paternal great-grandfather, Patrick McVeigh, carried salt with his own horse team in the late 1800s to feed workers on the Grandchester to Toowoomba railway, and he and my maternal great-grandfather were among the first selectors on the Darling Downs. Whilst I would love to go back in time and seek the advice of both my pioneering great-grandfathers given my current position, it would be just a little embarrassing to have to share with Patrick that the Toowoomba rail line is much the same now as he saw it being built almost 150 years ago.

PJ Skerman's book *Guiding Agriculture Queensland, 1887-1987* reveals that in his opening speech of the parliament on 19 July 1887 Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave said he had been advised by his ministers that they had authorised the establishment of a Department of Agriculture. In the address-in-reply, the Hon. WF Taylor moved and the Hon. Horatio Wilson seconded that the department be established, with the Hon. AJ Thynne appointed as the first Minister of Agriculture. A later Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. DF Denham, announced an apprentices in agriculture program in the early 1900s to be operated at the Hermitage Farm near Warwick, which remains an important grains research station under my department to this day. It was there that my great-grandfather and my grandfather Thomas McVeigh, like other farmers in the local community, assisted in instructing those apprentices free of charge. It is therefore satisfying indeed that not only am I charged with the responsibility as Minister for Agriculture to re-establish a dedicated department of agriculture under the Newman LNP government but that I also look at reinvigorating agricultural education and research activities at centres like Hermitage where my own forebears played their part over 100 years ago.

I reflect too on the legacy of my mother's father, James Meara, a leading Darling Downs farmer, grazier and businessman and the longest-ever serving mayor of the former Clifton shire council. It was significant for me to sit in the same council chambers he did during my role with our regional council in recent years. It is especially poignant for me that in the gallery today, together with my wife, my mother, my sister and my campaign manager, I have my father, the Hon. Tom McVeigh, a former federal member for Darling Downs, later Groom, and Minister for Housing and Construction as well as Home Affairs and Environment in the Fraser-Anthony coalition government of the 1970s and 1980s.

After marrying in Townsville, my wife and I spent the early part of our careers—mine in agribusiness, as I said, and hers in teaching—throughout Queensland before settling our own family back in my home town of Toowoomba. With her forebears involved in grocery and produce supplies in her home town of Charters Towers, as well as mining and railways activities, and mine, as I said, in farming and grazing, Anita and I have an appreciation of both regional and metropolitan Queensland. We have an appreciation of the rewards of hard work and enterprise, of study and dedication, all of which was instilled in us by our own parents—Kev and Cel Phillips and Mary and Tom—given their farming, small business and industry association backgrounds, as well as a shared passion for conservative politics in our great state.

As I do so, I acknowledge the example of my late father-in-law, Kevin, focused as he was on his small business, church and community service, including quiet support of the local Indigenous community such that he was referred to on the front page of the *Northern Miner* newspaper at his untimely passing some years ago as 'Charters Towers very best friend'. I have been fortunate to work with others in continuing such legacies through involvement on the board of Concannon College at the University of Southern Queensland; our local chamber of commerce; the Toowoomba regional economic development board; the Condamine Alliance natural resource management body, where we have focused on environmental custodianship of the Condamine River catchment; sustainable forestry development initiatives; our Indigenous heritage; our regional RSL advisory and Australia Day coordinating committees; and as a councillor with the Toowoomba Regional Council.


Although at times there will be—and should be—spirited political debate and ideological differences in this House, I look forward to pooling my experience with that of others in this chamber and joining with every member in making the very best contribution I can to the 54th Queensland Parliament. In closing, I reiterate that I am very proud to represent Toowoomba alongside my colleague Mr Trevor Watts, the new member for Toowoomba North, as we take over from our predecessors the honourable Mike Horan and Kerry Shine—both well-respected local members from our region. I recognise that it is a challenge to represent the interests of one's electorate at the same time as serving as a minister of the Crown, especially in a first term. Toowoomba, though, is where I am from. It is a place that I love, I am humbled to represent it in this parliament, it has a great affinity, of course, with the cabinet role I now hold and it has so much to offer to the future of the state of Queensland. Therefore, as I prepare to represent my electorate in this parliament I reflect on the closing lines of the poem *Toowoomba*, written by George Essex Evans in 1900. It states—

The vision of a city, wide and splendid,  
Crowning the Range's wall,  
And o'er thy sweeping plateau, far extended,  
Welcome for all!

I thank the House for affording me the opportunity to make my maiden speech and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the honourable Minister for Local Government, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and he should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (10.52 am): Madam Speaker, I thank Her Excellency the Governor for the speech she has delivered to parliament. My presence in this place is the result of many and varied contributions over the years. I want to start today by placing on record my thanks to some of those people. I am here because a middle-age Italian man made a decision in 1960 to head to North Queensland, leaving behind his loving family for a year, to work in a field cutting cane. I am here because a first-generation Australian and his young migrant bride made countless sacrifices to educate a bright young girl who would later become my mother. And I am here because of the incredible support of my wife, Tegan, and children Georgia and Nicola, who have always supported their dad. Tegan did not fall in love with a journalist, a councillor or a member of parliament; she married her high school sweetheart, and she has stuck by me through a series of demanding careers. Every day I remind myself how fortunate I am.

But I am also here for other reasons. I am here because of a strong country upbringing which taught me that people matter. I am here because of the discipline I received at Canossa Primary School and Gilroy Santa Maria College in my home town of Ingham. I am here because of the skills I learned working in the media—an often criticised but valuable pillar in our great democracy. I am here because of the baptism of fire I received as the first non-Labor councillor to walk onto the floor of the Townsville City Council chambers in nearly half a decade. The dark years of waking up to yet another political threat dressed up in a legal letter, in a cauldron where the only kind of privilege one is afforded is iced water, steel you for any challenge that can come your way. I learned a thing or two about politics in this arena, but I fall back on a principle that I was brought up with: do as you would be done by. I can assure the honourable members opposite that they will not be subjected to the treatment that I received when I was on the other side of a large majority.

I am here because of the opportunity I had to make a contribution to the growth of my city as deputy mayor. I am proud of what I achieved, especially in my role in overseeing Townsville's CBD renewal process, but I am equally pleased to have been involved in the establishment of parks in the part of the city that now makes up the electorate that I represent.

But there is one overriding reason I am here: I have been given this opportunity because of the people of Mundingburra. While I was humbled to be part of a team offering real change and a fresh start, I hope they also saw in me someone willing to have a crack for them. In Cranbrook and Douglas, it was many of the same faces that afforded me a chance as a very young man to represent them on the council over eight years ago. In suburbs like Aitkenvale, Annandale, Gulliver, Heatley, Kirwan, Mundingburra, Rosslea and Vincent, they supported me again after helping me top the poll in 2008 ahead of 48 other candidates in the local government elections.

As much as each member in this place would like to think their election is the most important in their seat's history, in Mundingburra I cannot for one moment pretend that to be the case. In 1996 it was the seat that changed government when a by-election was called after the Court of Disputed Returns overturned a 16-vote win by incumbent Ken Davies over his Liberal challenger, Frank Tanti. The Labor Party changed candidates to the then Mayor Tony Mooney, Mr Davies ran as an Independent, and after what was the most watched by-election in this state's history the government of Wayne Goss was brought down. I cannot even pretend to be the most colourful member for Mundingburra. That honour goes to Tom Aikens: a one-time hard-drinking larrikin who was known for riding his bicycle throughout the electorate.

The seat of Mundingburra provides the greatest snapshot of life in Townsville. There are some magnificent Queenslanders, predominantly in the suburb that bears the seat's name. Nearby Vincent was developed in the late 1960s to cater for the newly arrived troops after the construction of Lavarack Barracks. Heatley, Gulliver and Kirwan have been created over the years by a string of local developers. Annandale, a magnificent suburb started in the late 1970s, still offers some of the city's finest dwellings. Next door, a part of Douglas was developed around the same time when it was used as a land ballot by the Townsville council exclusively for first home owners while in more recent times a section developed by Delfin, known as Riverside Gardens, has raised the bar for development in our city since the late 1990s. The town centre is based around Aitkenvale, which will house the city's first Myer department store. Aitkenvale itself is a great snapshot of the old and the new, with many quarter-acre blocks as well as units and town houses.

The greatest feature of the electorate is the mighty Ross River. It is an incredible resource used for rowing, skiing, swimming and fishing, but for most it is the backdrop for our morning and afternoon walks. The three weirs all touch into the electorate: Black Weir into Douglas, Gleeson's between Cranbrook and Douglas, and Aplin's between Mundingburra and Annandale. I have moved seven times since first coming to Townsville in the mid-1990s for university, but I have never once resided outside of the electorate. It is where we shop, it is where our kids go to school and it is where we wish to stay.

I know the territory well and I believe that I have a handle on what local residents want from this government. First, they are proud that the hospital is located in Douglas, but they want a medical institution that is as highly regarded as the people who work in it. The local hospital boards will be a breath of fresh air. The progress of the paediatric intensive care unit under the watch of the new Minister for Health, the member for Southern Downs, is warmly welcomed. I am proud of the role that I played in securing this funding and I thank the member for Caloundra for his strong advocacy when he was shadow health minister.

My constituents want better roads. People in Townsville love the fact that the city is coming of age and is growing, but that needs to be growth on our terms. Nothing will give me more pleasure than to be able to deliver funding after this year's budget to the Townsville City Council to upgrade Blakey's Crossing—a project that has been caught in the middle of political games for far too long. But there are many other key intersections that will need upgrading during my time in this place and as the local member I will pursue those projects with vigour.

These are just two of the local issues I campaigned on, but there was a bigger story than those who supported me locally. There were people who made a decision to vote against the Labor Party for not just the first time in their lives, but for the first time in three generations of their family—people like Rod who I met doorknocking in Vincent. To Rod and people like him I send a personal message: we will not let you down. I aim to be part of a government that grows the economic pie so all can enjoy it. We will not abandon our traditional supporter base of business and agriculture, but we will understand that the role of the worker is paramount to a strong economy. We will also be a government that does as it says before and after elections. I hope our record in marching towards delivering our commitments in the first 100 days of office is proof of this.

While I feel comfortable serving as an elected official, I am not a political apparatchik. I did not grow up dreaming of being a politician and I never got involved in university politics. As a young journalist, politics regularly left me more disillusioned than inspired. My palate was whet by a great man—a great Queensland—by the name of Ian Macdonald who took a chance on a young journalist

who was working in a television station and was looking for a new challenge. It was Senator Macdonald who encouraged me to run for council—a decision that would ultimately cost him a staff member. But in the world of egos and agendas that exist in Canberra, Ian Macdonald has always been a man who has recognised the greater good. Perhaps that is due to his strong country values. Perhaps he is someone who can see the bigger picture. I would like to think it was the fact that he started his time in elected office in local government, something I will expand upon in a moment.

I ran for state parliament for two reasons. First, I have a passion to see things happen in my part of the state. For too long my city has given more than it has got in return. In a city where, as a result of its diverse economy and a will by its business community to make things happen, governments have had the ability to turn a blind eye, I am keen to see the 'second capital' rhetoric evolve into something meaningful and for Townsville to become the regional powerhouse to drive this state for a generation. But I also made my decision to run because of an assault on local government—the level of government not only closest to the people but the one that has the greatest impact on their lives. As strange as this may sound to those who live, eat and breathe state and federal politics, I would have been just as happy to have continued to serve my community as a councillor in Townsville. There is no greater honour than for someone to be chosen from their community to represent it. To the 73 mayors and 488 councillors across this state, I salute you.

I made my decision to enter this place to help a level of government that has been battered and bruised, a level of government that has increasingly become a delivery agent for failed state policies, a level of government where individual decision making has been taken away in favour of a centralist approach. In principle, I think local decision making is better, especially in such a large and decentralised state as ours. Faced with a choice between a decision by locals or one out of George Street, I would generally choose the one made by council. The forced amalgamations were an example of a government that was fighting a crusade against local councils. There were amalgamations which needed to occur, but for local councils to have a gun held to their heads smacked of a big brother attitude. While it was done under the pretext of financial stability, in some mergers this characteristic ran a distant second to an attack on the people and the communities that the Labor government had seen as a thorn in its side. In many cases what was a genuine attempt by mayors and councillors to fight for their community was portrayed as a political attack.

Perhaps it is youthful exuberance, perhaps a strong admiration for councils, but it remains my view that 99 per cent of people who represent the councils outside of our state's capital leave their party political allegiances at the door. It is a place where ideology runs second to results. Unlike the recent string of local government ministers, I believe that great people with varying political views make region-shaping contributions on the floors of local council chambers. I look forward to working as much with Paul Pisasale and Margaret Strelow as I do with John Brent and Bob Manning. To every council across the state, but especially at home in Townsville, a new relationship is underway.

Can I also briefly pay tribute to Graham Quirk on his resounding win at City Hall. While I have touched on my thoughts about politics at a local government level, when that council has a population nearly twice the size of Tasmania and a budget of \$3 billion, a different type of governance structure is needed. He has been given a strong mandate and I intend to work with him to provide the powers he needs to drive his city forward.

May I also thank personally the man he succeeded, now our Premier. The dignity the member for Ashgrove and his family displayed during the most vile campaign we have seen has been justly rewarded by the decision of the Queensland people. While each member understands the importance that his drive and leadership played in our electoral success, I have an extra reason to be grateful—for being made Minister for Local Government. To become a cabinet minister is a privilege few Queenslanders are ever afforded and to be one of only a handful to do so on day one is a huge responsibility and honour. But while I intend to pour every drop of energy into working with local government and addressing the challenges that lie ahead, faced with a choice between being remembered as a good minister or as a strong local member, I will always choose first to serve the people of Mundingburra. With that in mind, I pay tribute to the former member for the seat, the Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr. While I will let others commentate on her achievements in this place, she left George Street after 14 years of service with her dignity intact. I offer her my best wishes for her retirement.

Can I also thank a great North Queensland, former Townsville mayor, Les Tyrell, on his guidance in my time with council and wish him well in the years ahead. To my campaign team, thank you for giving so much of your time to secure a fantastic result. To Peter Lindsay, a great friend, sounding board and the man I describe as the best and possibly most persistent local member to have graced federal parliament, thank you for your guidance. If anyone knows what it takes to win elections it is him. While I will not name all of those who gave their time, I want to especially thank Michelle Gillum, my former PA as deputy mayor, who has made the transition to the Mundingburra electorate office. To have someone who genuinely cares about the local area and local residents is a great asset. To my neighbouring seat holders, the member for Burdekin and the member for Hinchinbrook, I acknowledge


the great contributions you have already made in this place. As to the new members for Townsville and Thuringowa, the quality of men you both are leaves me in no doubt the size of contribution you will both make to our great region.

Madam Speaker, may I take this opportunity of congratulating you on your election to the Speaker's chair. As the first woman to hold the office since responsible government, I am sure you will not only conduct proceedings fairly but also, importantly, inspire more women to seek elected office. As I enter a new chapter of my life, but more importantly a new chapter for North Queensland, I want to outline a few themes that will guide me. I am the product of two people who believe in the value of hard work. My mother, along with my sister Belinda, run a small retail business in Ingham. My father, a migrant educated to just grade 8, has built a large and successful cane farm on the back of blisters, tenacity and an appetite for risk. My friends, many of whom have been a part of my life throughout school and my time at James Cook University, have always kept me balanced. Time and again they lined my electoral booths handing out how-to-vote cards. Most of them have no political leanings at all, but have done it to help a mate.

It has been all these relationships which have made me who I am: a proud yet progressive regional Queenslander who believes the greatest gift a government can give its people is not to interfere. While I recognise there are some things that only government can do, in our thirst to control every aspect of people's lives we have lost sight of the fact that, if something can be delivered by the private sector, on most occasions it will be done more efficiently and effectively than by government. Faced with a choice between restrictive regulation and accepting that an open market will produce errors but more good will be done than harm, I choose private enterprise. I have watched this House in horror in recent years where those in power have thought that their level of empathy should be judged by finding another way to transfer money from one group to another. I do not own a 'Save the Whale' T-shirt and I did not buy a Kony 2012 wristband, but I would like to think my sense of real social justice is as strong as anyone's. But it is social justice where those who cannot look after themselves are given a helping hand and those who fall on tough times are given a hand up. However, I do not believe in constantly taking away pieces of the pie from one group to give to another in order to convince the social critics we are governing for everyone. If you continue to do that, eventually the baker picks up his apron and goes and bakes elsewhere. I believe in growing the pie, ensuring everyone can share in a strong economy, but making sure those who put in the most effort are entitled to enjoy the fruits of this success. This effort might be measured by a father's long nights in a lonely office or it might be seen in a small donga in a mining camp while your husband and child await day 14 to roll around to see mum. Whatever form it takes, it must come with reward.

I will finish where I started, by thanking my friends and family for getting me here today. I intend to leave this place proud of the contribution I make. But this North Queensland boy will never forget where it is he has come from. I will work tirelessly to ensure the things that government need to do are done well. But I will do it always with the understanding that the role this place plays in people's lives is not as life or death as its inhabitants often think it is. Faced with a choice of whether the great contributions to this state have been in workplaces across Queensland or in George Street, Brisbane, it is with pride that I choose the contribution of quiet, hardworking and family-loving Australians like that deceased migrant cane farmer. I thank the House.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the honourable member for Rockhampton, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.09 am): I rise to speak in the address-in-reply debate. This is a unique experience not only because I have the honour of representing the people of Rockhampton and making this speech on their behalf but also because the opposition has been reduced to so few newly elected members. This is not something we as a party intend to see repeated. Many friends have suggested that a maiden speech might be something of a daunting task in such circumstances. I have replied that often such things are informed by your life experiences. Does it compare to being present at the significantly premature induced birth of your first child, who is present in the gallery today, or to the experience of being a shiny new 21-year-old platoon commander standing in front of experienced Vietnam veteran infantrymen, seeking to convince them of your worth as their new leader? I suggest not really. I have approached this speech with one purpose—that is, to ensure that I represent myself in a rational and honest fashion.

I take this opportunity to thank the people of Rockhampton who supported the ALP and me in keeping the seat Labor. As the editor of the *Morning Bulletin* editorialised, the LNP had a small swing of 4.3 per cent, the lowest in the state, which shows that while Labor voters swung away from us, with good reason, they did not embrace the LNP.

I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my father, Bill, my wife, Kim, my daughters Sarah and Bonnie, and my sister Diana. A statement of appreciation is hardly adequate for Kim and my three daughters, especially Sarah who stepped up to the role of campaign director in the most trying of circumstances. Kim has stuck with me through thick and thin for reasons that often escape me. She

walked away from successful business and sporting careers to marry me and become a military camp follower, and she has been there with me ever since. My brother Robert also made every effort for me during the most tense periods of the campaign. The saying is that blood is thicker than water and no man could wish for any better family support or loyalty.

It is indeed sad that my late mother, Desma, is not here too. She once told me that one of her proudest moments was to witness my graduation parade as a newly commissioned army officer from the Officer Cadet School at Portsea. I suspect today might have engendered similar emotions, as I am sure my father understands at this moment. I need to say that my values and principles have been shaped by the example of two parents, both state schoolteachers, who with somewhat dogged determination persisted in laying the foundation of my character. Perhaps I was not the most receptive of students and, admittedly, there have been times when my choices would not have been encouraged by my parents. However, at least at those times I understood the implications of such decisions and that appreciation of consequence and acceptance of responsibility are largely due to the example set by and expected from my parents. They gave me the latitude to make mistakes, to follow my own star and to choose the path that ultimately led me here. My father always encouraged me to have a go and not to be overly consumed by personal doubts.

I can trace my family roots as Queenslanders back more than 140 years. My great great grandfather, Edward Byrne, sailed his barge from Brisbane to the Burnett River and in the early 1870s operated the first barge across the Burnett River. To this day the Byrne family remains well known in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay region. I am the product of many generations of regional Queenslanders and I am proud of it.

I want to thank the members of the ALP in Rockhampton who assisted and advised me from the moment I decided to contest the preselection. I thank people such as Robert Schwarten and his family who were collectively instrumental in my decision to seek to represent the people of Rockhampton in this chamber. I thank Davey Thomas, who was my Rock of Gibraltar through the entire campaign. He never once failed me in thought or deed. I thank Kirsten Livermore, Craig Brown, Chris McJannett, Charlie Broughton, Ann McDougall, Roseanne Mathewson, Marilyn Tynan, Noel Keegan, Dan McIntyre, Justin Kann, Melissa Newton, Karen Horstman, Debra Wickerson, Rees Banks, Greg Belz, Barry Large and, last but not least, Barry Thompson from the Queensland Teachers Union. They all provided me with assistance at critical stages.

It is not just Labor people and family whom I have to thank. Old Army and Defence comrades such as John Phelan, Steve Grant, who was my last regular Army sergeant major and who has had the misfortune to work with me for almost two decades, Cameron Hurtz, Scott Mackie and Scott and Leesa McGinnis—Scott is an ex-US Navy submariner—all provided me with support when I needed it. Everyone in this chamber knows that politics is a team sport and the most important team is your local one. Without my family, those friends and party supporters I would not be here making this address.

As I said, my journey here began with parents dedicated to quality public education. They ensured their children got not just the benefit of the best formal education experiences but also the understanding that a good society is based on compassion, generosity and one's best endeavours to help create equity of opportunity, thereby ensuring we get the best economic and social outcomes by maximizing human capital. The strength of this state is its people and empowering our constituents through quality education must be our overwhelming priority. If we want a highly flexible and intellectually robust society, then the first step is a quality education. That journey took me from school in Bundaberg, to a Queensland Rail electrical apprenticeship in the Ipswich Railway Workshops and three decades of regular and Army Reserve service. The latter stages of that service overlapped a further career in the Department of Defence managing highly complex and at times controversial activities in one of the most environmentally significant tropical military training establishments in the world. I served overseas on active duty and commenced my military career as an airborne officer with the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, where I was introduced to my bride. Yes, that means that she supports the Blues on State of Origin nights.

However, I point out to honourable members that I was not parachuted into preselection, as I won a local plebiscite in order to be here. Again I thank those party members who put their faith in me back in May last year and the singularly critical support rendered by Robert Schwarten. Many in this chamber know Robert and I will not go into a resume of Robert's background. I must also acknowledge my opponent in that pre-selection, Mr Matthew Flanagan. Matthew demonstrated extraordinary integrity at a difficult moment, simply on the basis of a matter of personal honour. I mention it now because I want that fact to be known and recognised.

I am well aware that in the history of this parliament no Labor opposition has been represented by such a limited membership in the chamber. Honourable members must remember that the Australian Labor Party is the oldest social democrat political party in the world. Many times our opponents have crowed about the final demise of the ALP. This will not happen. One may well ask why I say that. Further, one may well ask why an ex-Army officer, from a profession renowned for its conservative



tendencies, is a passionate member of the Labor Party. As a once career soldier who rose to a modest senior rank, became an ALP branch president, a candidate and, ultimately, a Labor MP, I reply that the majority of citizens who have served and continue to serve this country are working-class people. There are working-class soldiers, sailors and airmen buried in war cemeteries all over the world and no-one should be surprised that people such as me, who hail from that very stock, are supportive of Labor philosophies. As an officer the first rule is always to put the wellbeing of your people ahead of your own interests and I believe this to be one of the essential differences between genuine high performance groups and the also-rans. It is never about you!

The motto of my first unit was 'Duty First'. I have always believed strongly in this motto and have adopted it as a motto for life. I am not a free market fundamentalist. I do not accept that greed is good and I remain a committed opponent of the selfish 'affluenza' infecting our society. I support balance in all things. We have become a society where the sensible questioning of the circumstances of the uber-rich immediately draws howls of class warfare and class envy. That is nonsense and is really a case of Australians being force fed foreign mantras. Australians believe in human equality, especially with respect to social, political and economic affairs. That is what it means to be truly an egalitarian society and the notion is embraced by the vast majority of our people and the Australian Labor Party.

The political tipping point for me was the election of the first Howard government. This first term really got me energised about politics. I participated in a brutal and ill-considered reform program within the ADF. I give a word of warning: not all reforms are for the better. This particular program was nothing short of an abomination and saw the lives of normal, hardworking, loyal people turned upside down for no other reason than the implementation of a conservative ideological position. It was this experience and an intimate appreciation of the facts and implications that encouraged me to join the Australian Labor Party once I had separated from the Army. It seems that my generation of Portsea graduate Army officers possesses a certain amount of political fire in the belly. Mal Brough, who is well known to many on the other side of this chamber, served with me well before he was known to them. He was a Portsea boy in the class behind me. I also note that another classmate, Andrew Nikolic, is preselected federally for the Liberal Party in Tasmania.

There seems to be a bit of a trend there, so I am happy to balance out the political spectrum, so to speak. However, we all share a common notion of duty and service and, on that basis, seek to lead our communities. Genuine leadership in all circumstances is demonstrated most importantly by self-sacrifice in the face of difficulty for the good of the majority. When it comes to leadership I have always measured myself against the quote attributed to Erwin Rommel from 1938 when he was the director of a military school addressing assembled cadets. He said, 'Be an example to your people, both on duty and in private life. Never spare yourself, and let your people see that you don't, in your endurance of fatigue and privation. Always be tactful and well mannered, and teach your people to be the same. Avoid excessive sharpness or harshness of voice, as this usually indicates the man who has shortcomings of his own to hide.'

Manners cost nothing. I have always measured people against this basic behavioural benchmark and at times harshly judged myself in the same fashion. Vicious, nasty, loud and overly aggressive behaviour is always the signature of the intellectually or morally corrupt coward. Unfortunately, these undesirable qualities have been seen by some as useful in public life and have undoubtedly degraded the political discourse in this state. I suggest that this is one of the factors shaping the broader community's generally low regard for politicians.

Every member of this chamber should commit to raising people's opinions about the political process and politicians more generally. Despite some of the fantastic leadership models that the Army provided me, I have been guided in most things, as I said, by my parents. They valued the fundamental rights that we have, particularly the right to equal opportunity regardless of circumstance. This is the compass that was preset for me as a young apprentice, a soldier, a father, a husband, a son and now as an elected Labor MP. Perhaps I have not always stayed the course, though I have tried to strengthen and improve myself as a result of my various failings. This is a function of self-awareness and force of habit.

Of course, I am well aware of the Tarago jokes at our expense, and that is fair enough. I prefer to think of Labor in this chamber as the 'significant 7'. Maybe that is something for cartoonists to contemplate in the future. As our leader has said, we owe an apology to those Labor voters whom the previous government pushed into the laps of our opponents. Those opponents now boast unprecedented numbers in this place. All I can promise is that I have committed myself over the next three years to giving our traditional supporters a reason to vote Labor again.

We have been resoundingly defeated at the polls. 'Belted' is a more accurate term. However, it would be a factual misrepresentation to condemn every facet of Labor's record. Labor made some very substantial investments and progress in areas such as education, disabilities, child protection and environmental protection. These achievements were before my time so I will not be dwelling further on the past. As we have already seen this morning, I am sure that the government will be reminding us enough over the next 12 to 18 months about their recollections and, I dare say, interpretations of the

legacy of this period. Ultimately and in time, a measure of objectivity may prevail and the examples of uplifting teachers' salaries to parity with those of other states and creating a prep year so that our kids have the same number of years at school as those in other states may be given due recognition. I am not prosecuting an argument that somehow the electors got it wrong—the votes are in and have been tallied; Labor has been measured and found wanting—but I must propose that Labor was not a failure on all fronts.

Likewise, I do not believe that every idea or initiative that emanates from the conservative side of politics represents evil incarnate. My role in this chamber is to promote good public policy. Too often the blunt instrument of political necessity has overwhelmed or substantially compromised the development of good public policy in this great state. There will probably be some friction around the edges of the definition of good public policy. This should be expected as a product of the diversity of opinion present in this chamber. However, my point is that Queenslanders are sick and tired of the argument for argument's sake, of the spin generated simply to distract and divert from the essential facts of the matter. They deserve better than that. If this chamber is ever to be redeemed in their eyes, then an outbreak of honesty might be worth a go. The people of Queensland expect every MP in this chamber to act in the best interests of Queensland. I believe that good public policy should be supported and acknowledged, regardless of its source. I hope to be able to work with the government, where those opportunities present, for the betterment of this marvellous state.


I guess it is normal for those opposite to be buoyed by their success and to be full of confidence. After all, nothing is sweeter than victory. But there is an old saying that it is not the size of the dog in the fight; it is the size of the fight in the dog. I can assure all present that the opposition is up for it. As a history enthusiast, I have to advise those who think they are unassailable because of the numbers that there are plenty of examples where, against heavy odds, small teams, pure of purpose, have defeated whole companies. The *Magnificent Seven* remains one of the classic movies for this very reason.

Some in this chamber admire Napoleon, and there are many things to admire. However, he once said, 'God is on the side of the big battalions,' and look what happened to him ultimately. I am more inclined to agree with Voltaire, another Frenchman, when he said, 'God is not on the side of the big battalions but on the side of those who shoot best.' As I often pointed out to my soldiers over the years, there is a reason the Army puts sights on their rifles. It is so that when they pull the trigger they hit the target. This parliament certainly provides us, the Labor opposition, with a target-rich environment and we will be from time to time, metaphorically speaking, pulling the trigger as an agile opponent.

I now turn to what is a most important priority for me—that is, the electorate of Rockhampton and one of the promises our side made during the recent campaign. Foremost was a pledge to provide funding for the Rockhampton Meals on Wheels to construct new premises on land gifted by the Rockhampton Regional Council. This is not a luxury; this is not something that can be ignored by government. I can say without reservation that it is an issue beyond politics. This is not just about providing a few meals to pensioners; it is about keeping people out of aged-care homes. It is not only essential to their health and wellbeing outcomes; it is also saving the taxpayer the huge cost of subsidising nursing-care beds. It is socioeconomic soundness by any measure. Also, I must point out to all that this project has as many implications for the seat of Keppel as it has for Rockhampton. I offer to work with the member for Keppel to bring this project on. It is appropriate and important for this government to dispel growing concerns about a partisan agenda and provide modest support to projects like the Meals on Wheels in Rockhampton where the merits are so patently non-partisan and obvious.

I suggest that the community has had their fill of promises that can never be delivered, of 'five-second sound bite' public policy debate and the never-ending distortion of political discourse. I know that I am contesting Cicero's basic rules of politics, but I submit that the time is up for such approaches. The party I respect, that I joined and that I believe in has strayed from its path and not only has been cut down by its political enemy but also has endured an epidemic of fratricide. Today we are but a few holding the bridge. However, the fact is that we represent over 600,000 Queenslanders who voted for us. We as an opposition owe it to them to stand up and fight for the principles we believe in, and we will.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the next member, I wish to acknowledge visiting school groups today: Emmaus College Jimboomba, represented by the member for Beaudesert; Samford Valley Steiner School, represented by the member for Ferny Grove; and also Fairholme College Toowoomba, represented by the member for Toowoomba North. Before calling the honourable member for South Brisbane, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for South Brisbane.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.29 am): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and can I add my congratulations on your election to the important role of Speaker of this House. It is both historic and, looking around this chamber, one might say timely that a woman has been elected for the first time as Speaker of this House.

I rise for the first time in this place, the people's house, both buoyed by the honour of representing the interests and concerns of the community I love and grounded by the responsibilities and challenges that lay ahead for me and my fellow Labor members. As only the second Labor member to give a

maiden speech from the opposition benches in 25 years, I am conscious of the enormous responsibility that I now assume: firstly, to serve my constituents and to work for their interests tirelessly; secondly, to respect the democratic outcome of the last state election but to contribute to delivering to the people of Queensland a strong opposition that can hold the Liberal National Party's massive majority to account; and, lastly, to work hard to rebuild and restore the Labor Party in Queensland.

My first acknowledgement is to the traditional owners of the land on which we gather—the Jagera and the Turrbal peoples. I pay my respects to their elders past and those present, many of whom reside in the electorate of South Brisbane. South Brisbane boasts strong cultural and ethnic diversity that has flourished alongside a respectful recognition of the local Indigenous population. Unfortunately, just this week we have seen a breakdown in this normally harmonious situation with the forced eviction of Indigenous people from Musgrave Park.

Musgrave Park has long been a very important gathering place for Indigenous people across southern Queensland. According to local elders, as Moreton Bay was developed by Europeans, sacred bora sites were destroyed, denying young Indigenous men their important rite of passage in learning ancient customs and being initiated into adulthood. Musgrave Park became the site for a new bora ring, attracting those who were removed from their country looking for family, looking for community. Despite past evictions and past laws banning Indigenous people from the area, Musgrave Park has and always will hold immense cultural significance for Indigenous Queenslanders. It is a connection that no leader with a 21st century conscience should seek to diminish.

For 36 years Musgrave Park has also been the home of Paniyiri, a wonderful celebration of Greek culture and a public acknowledgement of the significant contribution that Greek migrants have made to the local community of South Brisbane and the larger community of Queensland. Paniyiri is important to residents in Brisbane, and many families, like mine, look forward to attending every year. I wish to acknowledge the efforts made by the Greek community and the festival organisers who have worked hard to make Paniyiri one of Brisbane's best cultural events.

Shamefully, yesterday, locals woke up to a complete lockdown of the Musgrave Park precinct, with more than 200 police officers brought in to evict 30 protesters. By anyone's assessment, this is not a measured response but an overreaction. Premier Newman and Lord Mayor Quirk could have chosen reason to resolve this situation but instead they chose force—overwhelming force. These scenes have not been seen in Brisbane since 1984, when Indigenous citizens who were merely gathering in Musgrave Park were forcibly evicted under the order of the then Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. As the rest of the nation watched in horror the events of yesterday morning, many local residents expressed their outrage to me that in a matter of three days Queensland had been taken back 30 years.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to be elected to this parliament as the member for South Brisbane. I am acutely aware of the historical significance of this particular area of our great city. In 1859 the order-in-council establishing independent government in Queensland had only 16 electorates. South Brisbane is one of only two that can claim uninterrupted continuity from the original 16.

South Brisbane is one of our state's smallest electorates, with the Brisbane River defining a large part of the electorate's boundary. Because of its natural boundary of the river, proximity to the CBD and key cultural and recreational facilities, South Brisbane boasts nine of the 15 bridges that cross the Brisbane River. And while locals enjoy living so close to the majestic snaking bends of the river, we also lament the devastation she inflicts when her banks are breached and our streets are submerged. Of all the major flood events to affect Brisbane—1841, 1893, 1974 and 2011—all have affected the history and distinctiveness of the South Brisbane electorate and our community.

Madam Speaker, like so many other Queenslanders, I was out and about during January 2011 helping family, friends and local businesses save belongings and then clean up. I found inspiration during this terrible time from two sources: firstly, the random acts of kindness from complete strangers, particularly young people who lent a hand in the hard work of cleaning up—from those on high land who stored the furniture and valuables of those who were to be flooded and from those Queenslanders who accommodated whole families displaced by flooding and supported them for weeks on end. In this moment, this quintessentially Queensland moment, while the world watched in pity, Queenslanders displayed their true grit and their incredible compassion.

During this time I, like most other Queenslanders, also found inspiration in the leadership of my predecessor for South Brisbane, Anna Bligh. In this new parliament, the 54th Parliament, and in this new chapter in Queensland's political history, much will be argued and rebutted about the former Premier's legacy to Queensland. Indeed, we have already heard of this this morning. But it is unarguable that during the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history Anna Bligh provided Queensland with the strength and leadership we needed to endure, recover and rebuild our state—a fact acknowledged and acclaimed even by the new Premier.

Madam Speaker, another important feature of the South Brisbane electorate is its ethnic diversity, which I referred to earlier. It is a characteristic that is particularly close to my heart as I am a proud product of this cultural melting pot. Along with some 30 per cent of the current South Brisbane

population, my late grandparents and parents migrated to Australia from another country. At the time they arrived in Australia the White Australia Policy was still our nation's overarching migration position, and by the time the Whitlam Labor government finally abolished it I was one.

During my school years, Australia embraced the policy of multiculturalism, and I lived this throughout my childhood growing up in Fisher Street, East Brisbane. Our neighbours to one side were a family from the former state of Yugoslavia and the neighbours on the other side were Russian immigrants. The wave of Vietnamese refugees post the Vietnam War saw many families resettle in West End alongside the large and well-established Greek community.

Multiculturalism has served Australia well and South Brisbane is a microcosm of its success. The many people who visit the West End and South Bank precincts do so to experience a broad range of ethnic cuisines and cultural experiences just as thousands will this weekend for Paniyiri.

Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the special contribution of a number of local multicultural and ethnic organisations that have contributed to making multiculturalism a success in South Brisbane: the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, the Multicultural Development Association of Queensland, the Greek Orthodox Community of St George, Annerley and District Community Centre and the Brisbane Lebanese Maronite community.

As a second generation Lebanese migrant, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of key Lebanese descendants to the city of Brisbane and Queensland—from David Malouf's contribution to literature, which has attracted many awards including the recently defunded Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, to the Hon. Sam Doumany, the first state member of parliament of Lebanese descent who took his seat in this House as the member for Kurilpa and was from the other side of politics.

Like other diaspora, the Lebanese are hard workers and they contribute greatly to their communities and I want to acknowledge them here today. We are small in comparison to our cousins in Sydney and Melbourne, but we are a close-knit community that works hard to continue to keep Lebanese culture and tradition alive in Brisbane.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to note the contribution to the cultural diversity that local artists, retailers and organisations make to the fabric of the South Brisbane community. The recent and hasty actions by the new government has given them much cause for concern. From local writers who are disheartened by the fact that Queensland now holds the new inglorious honour of being the only state in Australia to not have a government sponsored program to reward emerging Queensland writers and great Australian literature; to Sisters Inside, who have recently been advised that they no longer have access to the small amount of funding they have relied upon to provide crucial support to help in the rehabilitation of women prisoners in Townsville. Many organisations are greatly concerned that this is a sign of things to come—that governing with care, fairness and compassion will be completely outweighed by the massive Liberal National Party majority. As their state member, they will always have in me a strong advocate for the important work that they do.

The South Brisbane I live in is unrecognisable from the one I grew up in. The South Brisbane I remember from my childhood had a maximum security prison operating in its heart, it had a stretch of derelict riverbank that invited squalor and crime, and, apart from church and family gatherings, nothing ever happened on a Sunday. Today South Brisbane boasts some of our nation's best cultural and recreation facilities in the Gallery of Modern Art and South Bank. Boggo Road continues to evolve as one of the inner-city's most exciting mixed-use precincts; pedestrians and cyclists have access to more river crossings in the Goodwill and Kurilpa bridges; and construction of dedicated busways has revolutionised public transport in Brisbane.

Our emergence as a modern inner-city precinct has not happened by chance; it has happened by choice. It has been Labor choices driven by Labor values that have indelibly changed Queensland, Brisbane and my electorate of South Brisbane for the better. It was the Goss Labor government that brought to life the vision of South Bank. It was the Beattie Labor government that built and delivered the Goodwill Bridge and GoMA, forever changing the dynamics of the area across the river from the CBD. It was the Bligh Labor government that built the Kurilpa Bridge—the world's largest tensegrity bridge, an international, award-winning display of the best from science, art, engineering and architecture.

It has been the vision of the past three Labor governments to coax Queensland out of the 1950s, where the last long-term National Liberal government wanted us to stay, and have us emerge as a more confident, better educated, better skilled and more compassionate state. Largely, due to that, we have seen massive levels of migration from southern states which has had a very big impact on the inner-city through increased development. South Brisbane residents have taken on a reasonable amount of increased density and worked hard to reach a compromise over the past few years for sustainable increased development in the West End, Kangaroo Point, Woolloongabba and South Brisbane precincts. All of this hard work and compromise by residents has been thrown out the window as Lord Mayor Quirk and Premier Newman now review agreed local neighbourhood plans in order to further increase high-rise development—an announcement conveniently made a matter of days after the South Brisbane by-election.

There was no ambiguity in the outcome or the message delivered by Queenslanders on 24 March this year. This is our system of democracy and it is the system I will defend, regardless of the outcome. There has never existed a perfect government and nor will one ever exist. The wear and tear on government, as former Prime Minister Paul Keating coined, is inevitable, and after more than 20 years the former Queensland Labor government certainly had its share of wear and tear. However, I am enormously proud of a number of key achievements delivered by Labor in this state. These include effectively managing the Queensland economy through the global financial crisis; creating hundreds of thousands of jobs during this time when the private sector could not; delivering the biggest infrastructure program in the country year in, year out; producing important infrastructure including rebuilding and upgrading every hospital throughout Queensland; delivering a surplus seven years out of the past 10 and only going into deficit to absorb the worst effects of the GFC and to keep Queenslanders in work; delivering the best workplace health and safety laws and the fairest and most efficient workers compensation system in Australia; massively expanding quality early education services including a universal prep program and kindergartens; increasing the Disability Services budget by nearly 500 per cent to help Queenslanders with a disability and their carers; introducing an acknowledgement to the traditional owners in the Preamble of the Queensland Constitution; enacting laws to protect the pristine wild rivers throughout Queensland; legislating for the end of sand mining on Stradbroke Island; and ending broadscale tree clearing through regional forestry agreements.

These are merely some of the achievements Labor in this state has delivered, for which I am proud. Every Labor member in Queensland should feel proud of being associated with the transformation and modernisation of our state. To the 35 former Labor members who sat in this chamber, who contested the last election and lost, I am enormously proud of your contribution to this Labor legacy and to your communities.

The Labor Party undoubtedly finds itself in difficult circumstances. However, as a party with a 120-year history, we have been here before and we have rebuilt and reformed to come back stronger and better. We owe it to Labor members and supporters to be diligent and honest in our rebuilding efforts so we can stand up for the values that they look for in Labor. Standing up for fairness in the workplace and advocating justice for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. Delivering opportunity and prosperity through education and training, jobs and a strong economy. And ensuring that our environment is protected for future generations. The Labor Party is part of a political movement that is acutely aware of its responsibility to this state and this nation.

The other important part of our political movement is the trade union movement—the foundation of our fair society. Without unions, Australians would not have a minimum wage or annual leave, superannuation or paid parental leave, workplace health and safety or workers compensation. These are basic entitlements in Australia but they are considered unattainable to most working people in many other countries including the United States. These reforms—now widely accepted—did not happen overnight and they did not happen without a lot of effort on behalf of wage earners. They should all be protected because, as WorkChoices showed, many of them can be lost at the stroke of a pen by a conservative government.

As the first person from my large extended family to attend university, I know too well the value of a good education in transforming lives. I have not only worked hard but I have been lucky. I was born to parents who, despite not having much of an education, valued it and encouraged us to complete senior schooling. My first thanks today goes to my Mum, Yesmine, who is in the gallery. When mum arrived from Lebanon, she had no English skills but a huge work ethic. Not only did she learn English on the job; she also raised five children and some 40 years later continues to work in a fruit shop. If I contribute even a quarter of her hard work and diligence to duty and family in this House and in the South Brisbane community, then I will have acquitted myself honourably.


I want to also acknowledge my late father, Victor Trad. His sacrifices and courage are the strong foundation of the success and happiness that my siblings and I enjoy, and for that we are eternally grateful. To my siblings and their spouses, many of whom are in the gallery today—Marilyn Trad and Damien Atkinson, Lorene Trad and Byron Head, Naji and Sandra Trad and Fina Trad—thank you for your constant support and strength.

To my principal partner in life, my husband, Damien van Brunschot, your advice has never let me down. Your faith in me has never wavered. Your optimism and enthusiastic support propels me each and every day. Our sons, Leo and Vincent, deserve special acknowledgement—Leo who completed his last NAPLAN test today. I know they will always balance out the highs and lows of this job with their particular challenges and their unconditional love.

For their longstanding friendship, support and work on my campaign, I place on record my thanks to Alan and Adrian; Penny and Jo; Cecilia Anthony and Ashley Hogan; the bookclub ladies who this year will celebrate our 10th anniversary; the new leader of the Labor Opposition in council and my friend, Milton Dick, and Susan McGrady; the Leader of the Opposition, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and all opposition members and staff. I thank you for your diligence, hard work, guidance and support. To Andrew Dettmer, Gary Bullock, Julie Bignell, Bill Marklew and Jim Valery, thank you for your leadership and support through good times and bad.

Madam Speaker, any casual observer will know that no political party can claim to own a seat regardless of its margin. When I embarked upon the South Brisbane by-election, I knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, to win. In two previous conservative landslides—1929 and 1974—both of which were smaller than 24 March, South Brisbane was won by the conservatives. The fact that Labor won is testament to the hard work and dedication of my campaign team and the local Labor community. I particularly want to thank my campaign director, Sarah Warner, and ALP organiser Shannon Fentiman. To Claudia Whitton, Paddy Keys-Macpherson, Ellie Desmarchelier, Chloe Moss, Leon Naoumis, Peter Shooter, Cath Rafferty, Tim Quinn, Jane Austen, Tina Langford, Louise Kelly, Kevin O'Brien, Susan Ellison and Angus Sutherland, I simply say thank you. Winning would not have been possible without your voluntary efforts. I also wish to record my thanks to the Gabba councillor Helen Abrahams for her assistance during our combined elections.

To the people of South Brisbane, thank you for entrusting me with your confidence. I hope that you will find my thoughts to be just, my actions good, my speech honest and my disposition even and transparent. I humbly look forward to serving you in the years to come.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.49 am): I rise today with the greatest honour to present my address-in-reply to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland's speech at the opening of the 54th Parliament and this most auspicious occasion. Her Excellency executed her official duties on behalf of the Queen, being the head of this parliament, the Commonwealth of Australia and her namesake the state of Queensland with the greatest of distinction, poise and grace. I thank Her Excellency for making this such an historic occasion in so many different ways.

First and foremost today, I would like to congratulate the member for Maroochydore on becoming the first female Speaker in Queensland. This is the supreme exultant position of the parliamentary roles in the Queensland parliament, and I am sure that Madam Speaker will uphold the office of the Speaker with the utmost of integrity and decorum for which she is already renowned. I do not underestimate the huge task that is before Madam Speaker with such a new and diverse Legislative Assembly that the people of Queensland have elected to this special place, but without a doubt Madam Speaker will oversee a very fair and equitable parliamentary process that the members of this House require and the people of Queensland deserve.

I would also like to congratulate the Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman, on his elevation to the position as the highest elected representative of the great people of the state of Queensland. The people of Queensland have spoken and it is a monumental day for Queensland. Today is not the day to talk about the specifics of his journey to achieving this the highest office, but I would like to mention that his tenacity, work ethic and strength of character over the past 12 months are just a few of the most impressive qualities I have ever seen in an individual, and my political oversight has carried me through almost 25 years in local government and state politics.

Queensland is in great hands and the Premier has a strong deputy at his side in the member for Callide, the Hon. Jeff Seeney, as well as a hardworking Treasurer in the member for Clayfield, the Hon. Tim Nicholls. I congratulate them both. Their united, focused and unrelenting efforts have delivered the unprecedented 78 LNP members out of 89 seats in this parliament—hallelujah. I also congratulate all of the ministerial and parliamentary appointees with whom I will be working very closely, including the member for Gregory as the Chief Whip, the member for Burdekin as the Senior Whip and the members for Hervey Bay and Mount Ommaney as the deputy whips.

The mandate that the people of Queensland have given the Premier and his Liberal National Party team is the clearest message possible that Queenslanders demanded change. I am very excited to be part of this team as Leader of the House, and I am very excited to be part of that vehicle for change in Queensland. Expectations are great after the mandate given and the change in direction of Queensland that has been bestowed upon us, and we must fulfil our responsibilities to the best of our abilities as guardians of the state of Queensland.

The 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic* brings to mind similarities between that event and where Queensland was heading under the previous government. It is our duty to turn the ship around with a new captain and his crew, and we are extremely well placed to see Queensland develop, grow and prosper for all Queenslanders. I would like to think of myself as the captain's first mate, but I think 'navigator around the decks of Parliament House' is the more appropriate nomenclature. Under the previous government and 'Captain' Bligh, the good ship *HMAS Queensland* was heading towards the financial iceberg that would have seen the very way of life that Queenslanders expected and deserved diminish. It will take a long time to get Queensland back on the right course, but the 'Newman' as captain has already started off in a flying fashion with his 100-day program.

I would like to thank the Premier for having faith in me to carry out the duties of the Leader of the House in the 54th Parliament of Queensland. My role as Leader of the House is to be responsible for executing the management and arrangement of government business in this parliament. I do not take this responsibility lightly and I will ensure that I carry out my duties with the utmost diligence, integrity

and careful consideration of each and every member of this House. On the conservative side of politics I follow former leaders of the house including: Tony Fitzgerald, April 1976; Neville Harper, September 1989; Lin Powell, 1987; and others. Most recently I follow from our opponent's side the former member for Sunnybank, Judy Spence. With the make-up of the 54th Parliament being 78 LNP members, seven Labor members, two Katter's Australian Party members and two Independents, I understand that my job will be a challenging one with so many new and diverse members.

I am so proud to belong to a party that embraces diversity in all of its members, as this has created a parliament that will truly be a representation of all members of our community and all aspects of the private sector. We are truly blessed in Australia to live under a Westminster system of parliament. Even though it may have some flaws, it is still the best democratic parliamentary system in the world. It is a system that lets the people have their say by voting in who they want, and it then gives them the ability to be part of the democratic process through the parliamentary system, which includes a consultative and community-engaging committee process. I am so pleased that we now have a government which will ensure this process will be succinct, with its parliamentary requirements and responsibilities, and will bring back the traditions of open and accountable parliamentary process.

There has been a dramatic shift in business confidence in Queensland since the LNP's monumental win on 24 March 2012. This has been a welcome relief for the backbone of our communities—that is, the small business owner. They have waited for this day and they can breathe a sigh of relief because they will get the support they need to grow and develop their businesses for the future.

The LNP is committed to the four-pillar economic plan with the key priorities of tourism, agriculture, resources and construction, and this will be done by cutting red tape and regulation. The one problem for Queensland businesses and the community currently is the disastrous federal budget that the Gillard government handed down recently, with no tax relief, no red-tape relief and no support for businesses, which are the biggest employers of Queenslanders. We need a change of government federally to see Australia thrive like it once did and support the policies and mandate of our new LNP government. Liberal National Party governments are good for business; Labor governments are bad for business and employment.

I will now speak about my fabulous region of the Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach. I will unfortunately have to reject the overtures from the member for Gregory to swap seats over the three months of summer; it is not possible, member for Gregory. The new LNP government has been great news for the city of the Gold Coast. People have told me that confidence in the business community has already turned a corner and it is on the up and up. With the Commonwealth Games heading our way in 2018, we will see a financial injection from government, business and the tourism sector which will be of great benefit to our region.

We have a new and exciting Gold Coast City Council which is committed to working in conjunction with the LNP government, and I congratulate Mayor Tom Tate on his election to the very important role of mayor of the Gold Coast City Council. He follows a long line of wonderful mayors. Thank you to the constituents of Mermaid Beach who voted to return me to the parliament of Queensland. I want to also acknowledge the people of Mermaid Beach who did not vote for me and assure them that I will represent their concerns in the parliament just as vigorously. I would like to thank my wife, Ruth, my son, Louis, and my daughter, Jess. Without their continued support I would not be able to be here. We are a very close family. My wife and I support our children in everything they do and they support us in everything we do as parents.

I would like to thank each and every one of my supporters and volunteers for their hard work on the 2012 Mermaid Beach campaign. The 2012 state election made Queensland political history, with 78 LNP candidates sweeping into office in an outstanding and overwhelming result, and each of the hardworking volunteers across the state of Queensland has been part of this historic victory. In the seat of Mermaid Beach we increased our margin from 10.8 per cent to 26.05 per cent, which means we received the sixth highest percentage of the vote in the state on an individual seat basis. This is due to the dedication, commitment and hard work of all of the volunteers who helped on our campaign.

I want to make special mention of my electorate staff. Fiona Ward has been with me since virtually day one of my political career and she does a wonderful job. My assistant electorate officer, Jaqi Kair, who has been on maternity leave but who will be back later in the year, has done a wonderful job in helping the constituents of my electorate. We help all of them as much and for as long as we can. Gemma Corles has taken over that role for the last 12 months, and she has done a wonderful job in that position.


I now want to offer a few words to the newly elected members on both sides of the House, and I do this both in my new role as Leader of the House and as, along with the Treasurer in the 2006 draft, a fairly recent parliamentarian to the Queensland parliament. In the cut and thrust of politics, I would suggest to all members not to lose sight of the very reason that you are here and you must at all times

remember to respect your colleagues. You might not agree with them, but you must respect your colleagues because they got elected just the same as you did. In their electorates they are just as popular as you are. You need to respect your staff because they will be your greatest asset in the community. You need to respect all of the staff here in the Parliament House precinct because they are here to help you, and they do a wonderful job. There are literally hundreds of former members who would tell you of the wonderful support that they have received during their time in this House.

Above all, all members need respect for the electorate and the community that gave you the utmost admiration and respect in giving you their vote to represent their community needs in the important role as their representative in the Queensland parliament. If you remember honour before honours you will always have the best of your community at the forefront in your mind as you go about your everyday lives serving the people of your electorate as their representative in this House. We are in a very special place and it does not matter if you are the brunt of barbecue jokes or the brunt of media assertions that you do not do anything or you are overpaid and underworked and all of those issues. You are an important part of the highest legislative place in Queensland. There are 89 members and it is your duty to appreciate that very high honour and act accordingly at all times.

In conclusion, I am honoured to be re-elected to this House as the Liberal National Party member for Mermaid Beach for the can-do LNP government. I will endeavour to represent the people of Mermaid Beach with a strong and dedicated focus on the needs of my electorate. I would encourage any Mermaid Beach constituents to come and see me with any state issues that concern them or for any assistance that they might need over the next three years.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Thuringowa, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Thuringowa.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (12.03 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the House. I congratulate Madam Speaker on her appointment as the first female Speaker in the Queensland parliament and of course the first LNP Speaker in the Queensland parliament. I want to pledge my loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II and her representative in Queensland, Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, and to the constituents of the Thuringowa electorate. I feel very honoured to be able to address the parliament as the member for Thuringowa. I deem it a great privilege to have been elected to this position and I am instilled with a sense of deep loyalty to the constituents of the Thuringowa electorate for having placed their trust in me.

I am also here today in no small way due to the support of many people for whom I have great respect and admiration and whose support I am very privileged to have. At this time I remember my friends and extended family and I thank them for the guidance and direction they have given me in my life. May our friendship continue and remain strong and long lasting. I ask the House though to forgive me if I indulge on this occasion in giving special recognition and thanks to some people. I thank the honourable member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, John Dywer, Jane McNamara and Des and Jacko Barr for the support and encouragement they gave me during the early days when nominating for preselection and later during my campaign in the seat of Thuringowa for the LNP; to the members of the Thuringowa SEC and the executive for selecting me to contest the seat and for their 100 per cent support from day one; and also to the many LNP shadow ministers who visited Thuringowa and provided us with their support and assistance, especially the member for Hinchinbrook and now Minister Andrew Cripps. I thank you all.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my campaign team in Niki Lyons, Robin Scottney-Turbill, Tom Darlington and Peter Sandery. They all demonstrated the difference between an interest and a commitment when you believe strongly in something or someone. Special mention must be made of Tom Darlington and Peter Sandery for their support and guidance to me 24/7 during a long campaign. The mentoring, friendship and advice they gave me provided me with a better understanding of politics and the political process. They were with me every step of the way, whether it was Peter by my side doorknocking on the hottest summer days or Peter, Tom and me sitting back discussing the history of Queensland politics. The many hours I spent with them both helped get me here today.

I must also thank the former federal member for Herbert, the Hon. Peter Lindsay. His wealth of political knowledge and skills was invaluable to me during the campaign and I thank you, Peter. Mention must also be made of my North Queensland colleagues—the Minister for Local Government and the member for Mundingburra, David Crisafulli, and the member for Townsville, John Hathaway, who are also in the House today. From the beginning of the campaign, David, John and I worked together in a united way which resulted in the three of us successfully claiming the three long-held Labor seats. We will continue this unified front to ensure our region gets its fair share.

To my former employer George Booth at Booth Pastoral Services and the staff, a big thank you for allowing me the time to chase my dream of getting into parliament and for help in so many other ways. To my mother, Pauline Cox, to whom I am forever indebted for all she gave and sacrificed for our family, her unselfish love and commitment to her children and her usual hands-on approach to life in getting things done, I thank you. Also to my siblings, Les, Kellie and Andrew, I thank you for your support



and help not just during the campaign but also throughout my life. Les generously put in countless hours over the phone and advised me firsthand from his knowledge of the workings of state politics. Thanks to my younger brother Andrew, who was very much hands on assisting me with everything from letterboxing, putting up signage, manning polling booths on election day to even taking up child-minding duties for Janine and me.

Finally, words cannot express sufficiently my thanks and gratitude to my wife, Janine, and our children, Harry, Georgia and Dugald. You have all been very supportive and patient with me over the past 18 months when at times it must have seemed to be a very selfish endeavour on my part to enter the Queensland parliament. Your love and support never wavered. You are my drive but, more importantly, you are my life.

First and foremost, I am a family man and I believe that our society can only be truly strong if it is built on the foundation stone of good family values. I believe in the sanctity of marriage and the right to raise children in a safe and loving environment where they can get the best possible education. I believe we should treat the older members of our community with the respect that they have earned. Grandparents and elders are, after all, the bedrock of the family unit. I also believe in reward for hard work. From a very young age I learnt about hard work, as my father died when I was 10 and the children in the family had to step up and fill the breach to help our inspirational mother keep the property running. We succeeded because we were resourceful, hardworking and we believed in helping ourselves and not relying on others to carry us. It was a lesson that has shaped my endeavour since then. However, another lesson from that time was to show compassion for those who are less fortunate and, when needed, to speak up on their behalf. It is that belief that has led me here today with the ambition of representing my electorate and making a difference for my community. It is my firm belief that taking responsibility for helping others and not just looking out for No. 1 is what makes a truly valuable member of society. I believe in being honest, not only to others but to myself with regard to my beliefs.

Thuringowa is the second fastest growth area in Queensland. It is in a prime position to benefit from this growth and to reap the advantages, but the expansion must be matched by good governance and infrastructure development. To cater for this growth, we need to increase education facilities, we need to improve the traffic network and we need to support the front-line operations of our emergency services.

Thuringowa encompasses a large area of new housing estates and any growth in industry and commerce throughout the region places a strain on our present resources. Thuringowa has a mix of private and government enterprises, small business, tradespeople, professionals and Defence Force personnel and it stands in good stead to remain a high-growth and self-sustaining area. The people of Thuringowa need a strong voice if they are to capitalise on this growth. We are the home of the North Queensland Cowboys at Dairy Farmers Stadium. The team is currently in the top four of the NRL and is aiming for a 2012 premiership—sorry Vaughan. We are also part of the support base for the Townsville Crocs and the Townsville Fire, who made the play-offs this year in the NBL and the WNBL respectively. Sport plays a large part in the lives of our locals and initiatives such as Get in the Game for children will help ease the burden of fees and costs on struggling parents. May I take this opportunity to welcome an additional infantry battalion to Townsville. 3RAR is now based at Lavarack Barracks and its arrival has enhanced the strong military presence in our city, which is home to the largest Defence Force establishment in Australia.

I joined the political fray as the LNP was being formed and, while proud of my rural heritage, I endorse enthusiastically this unified conservative voice. I have many friends who come from the opposite side of politics who I also have learned much from when it comes to looking after others rather than just ourselves. While campaigning in Thuringowa, it became very evident that my constituents want their member to be active and involved at the local level in community events. The residents of Thuringowa have also emphasised to me the need for action on juvenile crime in our area. The LNP government's plans to increase policing levels and introduce an early intervention program for juveniles will go a long way towards addressing these problems. Early intervention programs that emphasise civic pride without peer pressure together with programs like boot camps will go long way towards repairing the divides caused by juvenile crime in the community. More resources will need to be directed towards these issues.


Like all Australians, the Thuringowa residents are experiencing increased pressure from the rising costs of living. They welcome our efforts to curtail increases in car registration and service costs. Health has been a serious ongoing issue over the past couple of decades in the region and, along with my constituents, I have welcomed the LNP's promise of a paediatric intensive care unit at the Townsville Hospital and other improvements to health services. The Townsville area has the highest per capita recreational boat ownership in Queensland. I have no doubt that a fair proportion of these owners are Thuringowa residents who are trying to cope with the shortage of boat ramps and car/trailer parking areas. This issue will become a bigger problem as the population increases and I will be working with my colleagues to address it. My vision for Thuringowa is for a vibrant community that works together to achieve results. As their representative, I will strive to be actively involved and assist them in their decision making.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is at this time that I wish to draw your attention to the exploits of an early pioneer, George Elphinstone Dalrymple, who was active in my region in the mid part of the 19th century. George, unlike some of his colleagues, was not an explorer with a narrow view. His vision for the north included pastoralism, tropical agriculture and mining and he did his best to develop all three—not unlike the present day LNP's vision of a four-pillar economy. The LNP has outlined the need to focus on the four pillars of mining and resources, tourism, construction and agriculture to enable economic recovery and growth. Nowhere is this vision more important than in North Queensland and Thuringowa.

A major constraint facing George Dalrymple in the 1860s was the tyranny of distance from the seat of government in Brisbane. There was no real concept of the issues facing an emerging North Queensland or recognition of the economic potential of the region. Unfortunately, some 150 years later it seemed as though the north was again facing the same disconnect from a southern focused government. The policies of the past government had been driven by social engineers who tried to control all levels of government. They had forgotten the role of the three levels of government and ignored the economic drivers for development. The LNP understands the different roles, and we have said we will give the power back to local councils to make relevant decisions. We need to lobby federal governments irrespective of their side of politics for a fair return to this state in recognition of Queensland's contribution to the nation's coffers.

It is time now to focus on the economic potential of my region and turn that potential into an economic reality. My long-term ambition is to promote the sustainable development of North Queensland. I believe the focus needs to be on the areas of water, energy, infrastructure and food production. The importance of these areas have been emphasised by the effects of the recent natural disasters on both urban and rural communities as well as major industries such as mining and agriculture across the state. To the detriment of Queensland, and in particular North Queensland, the previous government forgot that if you choose to stop feeding the goose, the eggs will no longer remain golden.

In closing, I wish to state that the point we need to get right in a good government is the recognition of the significance of local, state and national issues and the need for balance between them. It is a recognition of the unique role that each level of government has to play in contributing to the welfare of the individual and in ensuring the security and prosperity of their community for future generations. I believe good government provides support, not direction; assistance, not hindrance; and policy, not politics. I look forward to representing the people of Thuringowa and working with them to deliver that security and prosperity. Never look back. It is that which is in front of you that you need to see. May I say to the members of the House to take note of the shortness of my speech, as that it will probably be the last time.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (12.15 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, may I congratulate you on your appointment. To be returned to your electorate as their representative is one of the greatest honours that a community can bestow upon an individual. I have had the great privilege twice in my life. Having won a by-election then losing the subsequent general election only months later, I clearly know what it is like to climb a mountain and then fall off it. I would say to any member who so asks that they should never take the privilege for granted, nor assume that people's attitudes are slow to change.

The public were rightfully sick of what they were being told to accept by the previous Labor government. Tragically for Labor, it has been told 77 times now that its attitude was unacceptable. Perceptions are one thing, but reality is a harder taskmaster. If the outcome of such a massive change is something other than what was promised, then the public reactions will be swift and terminal for probably too many. To hold the public trust, we all have to do more than just replace prior members in name. Queenslanders' expectation of our government is to reduce the cost of living, reduce government waste, enable them to look to a person rather than a machine and to get out of their way as they do their business.

The parliament faces more challenges than ever before—not only because our financial structure is so dire but also because the global commodity prices have fallen 25 per cent in the last 12 months after a boom. Queensland has a commodity-driven economy, whether we like it or not. The times ahead look very worrying. The LNP plan outlined at the recent election reflects that situation and is an appropriate response to it. We often get the politicians and the policies that reflect the time in which we live. That said, in this 54th Parliament the LNP has a greater monopoly on power in this state. This implies even greater attention to integrity, responsibility and audit or we will fail too. It is a triumph of democracy that these things can occur without civil insurrection. The mere fact that the transition of power occurred so civilly after a spiteful election campaign gives me great hope for the future. Forgiveness is often the greatest unacknowledged human virtue.

Politics is a connect of ideas. The former Labor hierarchy strode far too far away from the views of everyday people and, sadly, with now seven members it will struggle for their communities, electorates and the aspirations of the 530,000 Queensland voters who supported them. I put it to honourable members that we all need to think outside the square and go to where we have not gone before. My great friend and colleague the member for Gregory spoke yesterday on ABC Radio about the need to be

fair to all of our parliamentary colleagues and, by default, to all Queenslanders. For me, the last great floods—and I have heard this mentioned before by the now member for South Brisbane—and also the cyclones in the north were a great reality check. Too many lives will never be the same. Many here worked far from home or at home to do what they could. In many overseas countries it was not missed how here in Queensland, Australia, complete strangers made personal sacrifices to help other complete strangers who were in need. This is the Australian way and it is part of our great belief in a fair go for all. I worked in Emerald, Alpha, Bundamba and then went through the Downs to Theodore. I was one of many helping in their own way. I think we need to help one another more than ever before in this parliament. I ask members to go out of their way to be helpful and forgiving.

Labor supporters are our constituents, too. Their members are hopelessly outnumbered and our newly drafted parliamentary committee system could fail if participant members on those portfolio committees do not act totally impartially or do not seek to connect with those stakeholders with whom we have not traditionally linked. In difficult times, by drawing in all those views and counsel we might get through the challenges ahead. I would implore all members to find out the detailed views of their constituents—what is it about any legislation that troubles them—and address those concerns either within the committee system or directly so as to fill those gaps that occur where there is an imbalance of representation.

For all new members there will be times when there is conflict, there will be potentially embarrassing moments and possible fears regarding their own future chances of promotion. If you put the interests of the constituents first then you are never wrong, nor should you be penalised for being their representative. It does help to remember that we are all in it together. Do not always put yourself first. Business may be war but politics is about coalitions of support. It is not about you; it is about them.

For me, 'them' refers to my electorate of Gaven, a beautiful part of the Gold Coast hinterland closely linked to Nerang River and the headwaters of the Coomera River. Things are very tough there due to the depressed Gold Coast economy—although it was great to hear some good news from the member for Mermaid Beach. The Gold Coast economy has had it very tough. Its construction industry and the uncertainty of the times are worrying for the future. For many, the hope of spin-offs from the 2018 Commonwealth Games—and six years is not too far away—cannot come soon enough. For my constituents I will do everything I can to deliver a lot more than Metricon Stadium, which abuts the eastern border of my electorate.

Under a new Liberal National Campbell Newman government I am proud to announce that we will reduce the cost of living starting with measures introduced in parliament this week. Reintroducing the principal place of residence stamp duty concession will have the ability, pending intergovernmental support, to stimulate some growth in the Gold Coast property market. I congratulate the incoming government for implementing this as quickly as possible.

Police resourcing has been hotly debated on the Gold Coast over the past few years, and I will always continue to fight for my electorate and ensure the region, which has long missed out, gets its fair share of state resources. Bus timetabling is an issue that I have campaigned on over the last three years, and under our government I am pleased to see that public transport affordability is being addressed. I look forward to meeting with the minister to plan how best to meet the growth and future transport needs of our city, in particular east-west travel.

As a local GP over the last 30 years I have seen the epidemic of failure in our public health system and staff morale at record lows, not only in our health system but across the whole Public Service. We must ensure that our new government can boost work ethic and ensure systemic success. The health minister, the member for Southern Downs, Mr Lawrence Springborg, and I spoke this morning in great detail of just how good Queensland Health is. One should never think about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We are very well served by a wonderful organisation. We just have to make sure that together we get it working. I would implore everyone to actively participate in the new hospital boards that are coming in and try to make sure they work so that regional areas, and even the big areas like metro south, metro north and Brisbane, start working efficiently together.

Many of the families in my electorate will greatly benefit from the introduction of the sporting club registration subsidy. This comes at a time when struggling families most need assistance and relief with daily living costs.

I want to thank my campaign director, Mr Phil Lovell. Phil volunteered his time endlessly to help me with tasks on a daily basis. Most know that the management of not only a campaign but also a politician is a most unenviable task and is a very difficult job for volunteers at the best of times. I would like to mention and thank some of the humble volunteers who worked on my campaign.

I would like to thank Gloria James, Jane Ru, Rohan Seneviratne, Rhys Selby, Jankin Hay, Gordon Walker, Glen Case, Ted Cameron, Bev Hellyer, Steve McCabe, Bronwyn Breadmore, June Kennedy, Brian Morris, Pam Ryan, Mel and Meg Funk, John Collins, Ray and Lisa Stearman, Barry and Val Moore and Terry Selfe. Thank you to everyone else on the campaign team—the list is too long to read out—

who worked tirelessly and often behind the scenes and, of course, thank you to the broad group of people who worked for the SEC both in my electorate and in the region. I would like to thank all those who assisted me over the past parliamentary term, in particular Helen Treherne and Anne Stafford, who have volunteered many hours in my office. To my electorate officers, Mrs Bev Malseed and Susannah Stearman: thank you very much.

I could never have got to a third term without the great help of my wife, Susie, who is the former councillor for division 7 on the Gold Coast, who endured nine months of very difficult treatment for breast cancer about 18 months ago, during my most recent term, and then, sadly for her, was defeated in a very hostile and bruising Gold Coast mayoral campaign. I certainly hope that that is reversed in a couple of years. My four now-adult children, Caroline, Alex, John and Helen, have spent a lifetime with parents campaigning as Nationals and latterly the LNP. I sympathised with the member for Callide when he described how his three children have spent a lifetime with this as well. It is a rather interesting experience, and one wonders whether as adults they will be affected for the better or for the worse by it. It was good to hear what John McVeigh said about his father, the Hon. Tom McVeigh, setting a great standard for his future. We should think that our futures are mutually assured by what we do as parents and by setting examples.

It has been a privilege to serve as the first non-government chair of the PCMC. I thank the former members—Mr Evan Moorhead, former member for Waterford; Mark Ryan, former member for Morayfield; Mr Steve Wettenhall, former member for Barron River; and Grace Grace, former member for Brisbane Central—for what they did. It was a very difficult task. It is a role that is sometimes misunderstood by many people. The CMC is now fully staffed and the new chair, Mr Ross Martin SC, has kindly accepted our request to serve a five-year term. We are very fortunate indeed to have him serve. We thank him for what he has done so far. We are also very fortunate to have Mr Paul Favell SC as our new parliamentary commissioner. For many years we were unable to fill that position. We are very lucky to have Paul. He has fallen into the role very well and is giving us great service.


I would also like to thank the now retired CMC chair, Justice Martin Moynihan, who during his time suffered two strokes but continued intermittently to serve with great attention to detail and made the CMC a much better organisation in that time. I also thank the retiring CMC Senior Counsel John Callanan, who is one of the unsung heroes. That name is not heard very much, but Mr Callanan served two terms with great distinction and Queenslanders were very lucky to have him serve in the way he did. We want to thank both Martin and John and the other retiring members for what they have done. To Warren Strange and our full complement of part-time commissioners and all the senior staff, I give thanks. To Brook Hastie, Michael Gorringer, Mitchell Kunde and Iolene Kokay in the PCMC: thank you very much for assisting me.

The CMC is now well placed for the future. It has addressed many of the internal concerns that some felt were limiting its success. Morale, outcomes and efficiency have dramatically improved. Complaints referred have a far better path to resolution. The PCMC has reciprocated and addressed its deficiencies. Our three-year statutory review sets a blueprint for an even better future. It is my sincere hope that the Attorney-General embraces all its recommendations. He has three months to respond. I also ask all members to embrace the CMC and also the role of the oversight committee, the PCMC.

To those who may well serve on the PCMC in the future or may be wondering what actually goes on, the CMC and the PCMC have a critical role in both the oversight and the management of corruption and as a major crime investigation organisation dealing with major crime linked to the Australian Crime Commission. We need your wholehearted support in a very difficult area. I would ask you to speak highly of the organisation because it has a very difficult role and ensures security for our future.

In conclusion, universally what the people of Queensland wanted was change, but they also wanted something better. Most would add that they did not want to lose what they still had and that they did not want the government to say one thing and then do another. Most, if not all, did not want to plan for one outcome and then have an end result which is altogether too hard or worse than what they started with. I said in my maiden speech that change is what the public sought, together with access to basic needs. That is what they pay their taxes for and we should never forget that they are paying mightily for it. If we believe in democracy then no-one should ever not practise it. It is more than just receiving a vote or voting; it is about actually going through the practice of delivering on a democracy. It is also about collective responsibility, sharing and listening to other views, even if those views are difficult and you have to try hard to understand them.

The public has given the LNP a great opportunity. It is ours to squander if we are vindictive, unforgiving and parsimonious. With trust comes responsibility. We need to respond to those people who placed 77 individual members of our party in this place. Jointly we need to do our best because half-measures will not cut the mustard.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (12.30 pm): It is always an honour to serve and it is a privilege to be in this House. To again have an opportunity to provide an address-in-reply to Her Excellency's speech is an honour. I pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her representative in Queensland. We are fortunate to have an individual of such integrity and calibre as the Governor of Queensland. In my maiden speech in this House I said—

Those of us who have made the pilgrimage to parliament share many common ideals and make significant sacrifices ... we are committed to the institution of parliamentary democracy. We also have our own visions for a better future for our state and the wellbeing of our fellow Queenslanders. Those visions vary, as do our philosophies and the policies we would pursue to achieve them.

Those words are as true today as they were in the 52nd Parliament when I rose for the first time to make my maiden speech.

There has been much said—and much more will be said—about the election that we experienced this year. The chattering classes have raised concerns about the size of the LNP's majority in this House. I struggle to understand how what represents the democratic will of the people of Queensland is anything of concern. It is not excessive; it is what the people of Queensland voted for. It behoves all of us in this House to act in a manner that ensures that the institution of parliamentary democracy is preserved. When we are in this chamber it is not our party membership that unites us; we are united as members of our respective electorates. We stand tall, representing those parts of Queensland that we have the privilege to represent, being their voice in this House.

Often the broader community does not realise how much of the work of this House is bipartisan. Those of us who have been here for some time know that what is shown on the six o'clock news does not reflect a full day in this chamber. Often bills are debated and passed with support from both sides of the House. I am sure that tradition will continue in this House. I reflect upon the comments that my colleague the member for Gaven made with regard to the success of the previous parliament's committee reforms and how they worked. It is with some pride that I, along with the member for Bundamba, served on the previous Transport and Local Government Committee, which handed down every report without a dissenting report. That did not mean that members of the government got away with putting forward just their views; nor did it mean that members of the opposition could just obstruct. What it did mean—and I take great pride in this—is that our committee put aside our party memberships and worked to the best of our ability at looking at legislation. There was good legislation that we wanted to improve; there was bad legislation that we did not believe this House should see. The Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill was one of those pieces of bad legislation—

**Mr Walker:** Hear, hear!

**Mr GIBSON:**—and I know the member for Mansfield was involved.

The 2012 election result is an historic one. It will be analysed ad nauseam, political scientists will make their reviews and in three years time there will be another election. Much will be said about 2012, but much more will be said about how the 54th Parliament carried itself as a result of this election. My thought with regards to this election result is that the responsibility that the people of Queensland have entrusted to the LNP is one that cannot, nor will it, be taken lightly. There is much that we in the LNP can learn from Labor. We must never breach the trust that the people have placed in us, like Labor did; we must never stray from our core philosophy, like Labor did; and we must never put the pursuit of power ahead of good governance, like Labor did. In this House we have an opportunity to make a difference—we have a great opportunity to do so—but in doing so we must be always cognisant of the responsibility the people of Queensland have placed on each and every one of us.

I congratulate the Premier on his outstanding election victory in Ashgrove and for his leadership both from outside this parliament and now from within. As the Deputy Premier has said, there was a time when people laughed at our decision. The election result shows that the decision that was made was the right one for Queensland, for Ashgrove and for the LNP. I echo the thanks to all within the LNP for their great work in this campaign. Their victory highlighted what can be achieved by the conservative side of politics when we are up against the formidable Labor campaign machine. I also express my thanks to my own campaign team in Gympie. They know who they are. Without their support and guidance, our election victory in Gympie would not have been assured.

As is the case with each new parliament, there are those who do not return. Whilst I disagreed with many in the former Labor government, I also respected many who served. I thank them for their service to Queensland. I am comforted in the knowledge that their electorates will be equally well represented by the new LNP members.

I congratulate our new Speaker on her historic election. It shows that you do not need quotas to bring female representation to any place. What you need are good individuals of character and calibre who will stand up and be recognised on their merits. Our Speaker can take great pride in the fact that she was elected because she was the best of all of us to be the Speaker of this House. As many have done before me, I recognise the previous Speaker. He was indeed a breath of fresh air in this House. Those who did not have the opportunity to sit here and hear his rulings, see his wisdom and understand his guidance missed out on something that was truly special.

As I reflect on my past years in this parliament, I recognise that in time I will be remembered for many things, some of them related to my failings, but I hope that most will be for what I have achieved. I will always be proud of my involvement in the deaf community. In this House I will continue to champion their issues and provide them with a voice, because as the child of deaf parents I know firsthand the

challenges that they face. They are the challenges that deaf and hearing impaired people face every single day as they get up and go about their work. Deafness is a hidden disability. It is not one that you can easily see and, therefore, often it is overlooked. Invariably those in our community who are disabled are the most disadvantaged. As politicians from all sides we have a responsibility to support them in whatever way we can.

Locally, the people of Gympie have provided me with a great honour to serve them again in this House. I would like to once again echo the wise words of the former member for Gympie Jacob Stumm in this chamber in 1897 when he said, 'When party obligations come into conflict with pledges to constituents they must give way to the constituents.' These were wise words in 1897 and they are wise words today in 2012. The people of Gympie will always have my commitment, first and last.

The old adage of 'as you sow, so shall you reap' has meant that Gympie residents have reaped what has been sown over 20 years of incompetent Labor mismanagement. After the election and the LNP victory I was asked my views on the Bligh Labor government. I said that they were not a bad government; they were an incompetent government, and I believe that today. I have only to look to my electorate to see the legacy of their incompetence.

My region faces higher unemployment than other parts of this state and what did Labor do to protect or preserve jobs? Nothing! My area has a particularly special environmental area, the Mary Valley and the Mary River. What was Labor's approach to that environmental jewel? To threaten it with environmental mismanagement! My region has one of the worst stretches of highway in Australia, the section of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra. What was Labor's approach over 20 years to trying to fix it? To play petty games with Canberra and fumble around rather than actually get on with the job! If we had seen them getting on with the job, we would not have seen section B built before section A. Any one of the prep children in this great state of Queensland could tell them that A comes before B, but the Labor administration could not grasp that simple concept.

I look forward to an LNP government that will address these issues. I note with great pleasure that the Deputy Premier visited the Mary Valley just last week to talk about how we can rebuild that community. That is in comparison with the former Premier who, on 9 October 2009, promised that she would visit the Mary Valley and never did. In Gympie we chalk that up as one more broken Labor promise.

My community feels a great sense of pride in being known as the town that saved Queensland. Whilst in 1867 the young colony of Queensland facing bankruptcy was relieved at the discovery of gold in Gympie, the real value of Gympie has come from its people since then. We have provided much to this state and to our nation. Gympie, of course, provided the first Labor Prime Minister with Andrew Fisher. We have provided a military general and statesman in Major-General Sir Thomas William Glasgow, one of the great people who led Australian forces in World War I. Since those years we have also provided many other great men and women who have served and continue to serve—some in public roles, some in quiet unassuming ways—but all of them bring about a great difference in this state.

My community shows its strength best during times of adversity. As the Mary River floods, it is a sign to the people of Gympie to band together and to unite with each other in their adversity to minimise the impacts. Each time that river floods, whether it be once a year or three times a year, neighbours, strangers, individuals, friends, colleagues, workers and bosses work together side by side to ensure that the impact on the community from the flooding event is as minimal as possible. That is what makes my community a great community.

No discussion of Gympie would be complete without mention of the Gympie Country Music Muster. At this point I must declare for the record that I am a member of the Gympie Apex Club. It is a great club and provides a great community event. I note that last year our Premier visited the Gympie Country Music Muster and had a fantastic time. I extend an invitation to all members of this House. If they want to actually hear some decent country music they should give me a yell. I could probably hook them up with a ticket or two and we can get them out to the muster in the Amamoor State Forest. I say to the Manager of Government Business that if parliament clashes with that week I may be seeking leave, but I will discuss that closer to the time.

Gympie has many other great attributes such as the Mary Valley Heritage Railway. It is not well known that second to QR, that railway carries the most passengers of any railway in Queensland. It covers one of the longest tourism rail routes, 43 kilometres.


**Mr Johnson:** Do you know who saved it? The last coalition government!

**Mr GIBSON:** I take the interjection of the member for Gregory. It is as a result of government support—the previous coalition government—that this railway continues to operate. It is also due to the support of great volunteers, individuals, former railway workers and people who have had no experience with the railway—all of them have stepped up to ensure that the Rattler can continue to go forward. On the Queen's Birthday long weekend this year the annual Race the Rattler event will be held. I did that for my 40th and swore at about the four-kilometre mark that I would never do it again. I have kept that promise. However, it is a great tourism attraction. At a time when tourism is doing it tough across this state of ours, it is again something that as a community we must step up to protect.

The businesses within Gympie continue to evolve and adapt. We were a mining town. Then we became a logging community. We moved on to dairy and now we reflect all of those elements and others. But we are a town that is fragile. We are a town where businesses do it tough, and on 1 July they will do it even tougher. The carbon tax that will come in will hit our major businesses and major employers in a way unlike in other parts of this state. We have companies like Nestle and Laminex who rely highly upon their electricity. An increase in charges will result in them needing to change their business operations. It is a fool who says that this carbon tax will not cost jobs. Our community cannot afford to lose jobs when we are already facing higher unemployment than the rest of Australia. It is our community that binds itself together through adversity. It is my community that steps up when it is required to do so. It is with a great deal of honour and respect that I stand in this House to be their voice.

Each time we have the opportunity to campaign, we do so as a contest of ideas. I wish to thank the other candidates who ran against me in Gympie because our campaign was a dignified one, unlike what happened in Ashgrove. Our campaign was a contest of ideas and it was one in which we could debate, discuss and then put forward our platform to the people to make their choice. I congratulate all who put their hand up for public office on their willingness to do so. There are also those people who, during campaigns and also during our life, make sacrifices. It is our families who pay the greatest price and to my wife and to my children I say thank you. They are the reason that I am here.

In my 2009 speech on the address-in-reply I quoted the great Roman philosopher, statesman and political theorist Cicero. I would like to conclude my speech today with another great quote from this thinker of his time which is as relevant today. Cicero said, 'The more laws, the less justice.' Let us not feel that our time in this place must be absorbed by passing more and more legislation that makes it more and more difficult for Queenslanders to get on with living their lives. We do not need to pass more laws for there to be more justice. We simply need more common sense.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (12.49 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to participate in the address-in-reply for the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I congratulate Madam Speaker on her appointment to the very high office of Speaker and I congratulate you too, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, on your appointment. You have put many years into this parliament and I am sure you will take pleasure in the role that you have. I commit myself to work hard for the electorate of Warrego and in fact for all Queenslanders. I certainly thank the electors for having faith in me to serve another term. To the LNP branches particularly in my area who work so hard and to all the people who worked in the booths: they put in a fantastic effort and they do so on a regular basis, so I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

I have seen many changes in this place since 1986. The political cycles come and go—the wind blows one way and then the wind blows the other way. I have been three times in government and two times in opposition. There is one thing worse than being in government and that is being in opposition, and we have been there a few times. But many of us did it and we did not whinge about it. We used to always attack the government and say that what they were doing was wrong even when in many instances it was right. But at the end of the day we worked hard, we listened to people, we travelled the length and breadth of this state and we formed policies. We formed policies that from today are going to be implemented by this government. As you heard during the last election campaign, a lot of those policies were developed over many years and they have been honed and pull together philosophies that we believe will take this state forward very, very quickly.

I want to congratulate all the new members who are here in this chamber. It is a fantastic effort by everybody. It is a great privilege to be here. There are not very many of us who do get the opportunity and the privilege. Many try to come into this place but few succeed. To those who have made it, I congratulate you on the wonderful effort and the team that you have had behind you to do it.

It has been a very difficult task to pull together the LNP team. This is the first time since the National Party formed government back in the late seventies and early eighties that we actually have a government from the conservative side that is one team—the LNP—as the Premier said earlier this morning. I think it is very important to have one team. In the past we had two teams—a coalition. We have put a lot of work into this and it is important that we keep it this way—a strong, united, conservative government in this state.

The Labor record and legacy is abysmal in this state. Generations of Queenslanders will pay dearly for the debt, the forced council amalgamations, the demonising of agriculture, the demonising of landholders, the abuse of land tenure, the bureaucracy that has been foisted upon everybody and the vegetation laws that were abused. For example, landholders were taken to court and when the government lost they would appeal and the landholders were taken to court again, and when the government lost again they would appeal again and the landholders were taken to court again. The government never gave up. They used the government purse to persecute landholders.

Let me talk about water management in this state. Generally speaking, a lot of the water management plans done in this state are legal but only just. There is only one water management plan that has been done in this state—and that is the one done for the Condamine-Balonne water

management area—that I can say is accurate. The reason it is accurate is that we had a hell of a fight in that area and we ended up getting in an independent panel to peer review the water management plan, and so we ended up with a figure that is about right. But that took 15 years to get because we were blocked all the way through. People's lives have been held up. People who owned water licences and who had water entitlements could not use them. Banks have been held back and, as a result, finances have been held back all because of inaction and because they did not use the government well.

We need to change the way we do government in this state. We need to change it dramatically from what we have seen. Queensland is a resource rich state with enormous potential. We must open Queensland up for business again and those small businesses will provide the jobs and the revenue. We have to fix things like workplace health and safety. When I talk to local businesses, they say that they have been stifled in everything they do. Coming in on the Warrego Highway we now have all of these stop-go people. In fact there was one section of road I came through where there were four stop-go people and there was a one-tonne ute with a sign that said, 'Follow me,' then there was a ute behind him—I am not sure what it was doing there but it went in behind the group as the cars went by—and there was a spare ute there as well. So there were three one-tonne utes and four stop-go people for two machines on the road. How can we afford this? It is absolutely ridiculous. What is the cost of running that? If you use signs, they do not argue back, they are not paid overtime and they work 24 hours a day! It is simple. It is not rocket science. Let's make it work.

Litigation laws have to be changed. Look at what has happened in the medical field. Doctors are leaving. I had a great doctor in Dr Jim Baker. He was the famous flying surgeon based in Roma. He passed away recently. He once said to me that with every mail he opens he fears that that is the day the letter will come. He hoped that every kid that he brought into this world made it to 17 years old because then they were off his books. We cannot afford to have that. New Zealand have fixed their system—well, they have improved it—and we need to as well.

We must of course give people natural justice. We do not want to change that. We do not want to take away people's rights. But people must do the right thing. They must fix up their fences, install grids, provide access and not set traps for people. But at the end of the day we need to ensure that common sense prevails. If a sign says, 'Don't go through the door,' and you go through the door and you fall over, well whose fault is it? If you break into someone's house and you fall through the skylight, whose fault is it? Presently it is the homeowner's fault. How bad is that? We need to be able to do something about that.

We must grow agriculture. We have to have some security. It is one of our four pillars. We have to double agricultural production in this state.

My electorate of Warrego is a large one. It is the same size as Victoria. It reaches just west of Dalby and to the South Australian border.

**Mr Hopper:** Good neighbours.

**Mr HOBBS:** I have some good neighbours too. I take the interjection. I have a lot of neighbours actually. I often talk about the fact that with one more redistribution I could fish in Cooper Creek and the sea in the same electorate. But I do have some great neighbours out there and we work really well together. It is a huge area.

There are a lot of things that I want to see done in my area that I am sure other members would like to see reflected in their areas as well. Take roads for example. All our roads are bad. It is just that some are worse than others. The Warrego Highway is a good example where there is an enormous amount of traffic. There is convoy after convoy of road trains going out there now, with the biggest trucks you have ever seen in your life. Even your brothers would be jealous of the size of some of those trucks going out there, Vaughan. They are giants. We love to have them but we have to have facilities to take them. What about rail? There is a rail line that goes out there and the grass is growing over it. More freight goes by road than by rail. We used to have five freight trains a week that would go from Brisbane through to Roma and Charleville.

**Mr Johnson:** Quilpie.

**Mr HOBBS:** And to Quilpie, and now there are none. There is the Westlander twice a week. There is a perfectly good railway line there but it is not used. When we get a big wet season the grass grows over it before a train gets there. It is just ridiculous. The biggest freighters on the Warrego Highway is Queensland Rail. We have to change that and I am sure we can.

Coal seam gas, CSG, is a huge industry and one that we want, but we have to manage it better. The policies that we are going to put in place will do that. We have to give certainty to landholders. We have to be able to provide security of water—that the water that is used and extracted will not in any way be to the detriment of our underground supplies, our Great Artesian Basin and suchlike. We have a strong policy that will resolve those issues, and we need to ensure that that is put in place sooner rather than later.



When it comes to floods, members have all heard about the floods and have all had them in different parts of their electorates. I have had a few too. Roma had three floods in two years, Mitchell was flooded again the other day and Charleville has had numerous floods. In most of those cases, particularly with Roma and Charleville, flooding of those towns is totally preventable. So we have to put in place mechanisms—and we have—to resolve those issues. While the previous government came out and were helpful at the time the flood occurred, it was disappointing that as soon as the media moved off so did they. That was it. We have to make sure that we are there for the long haul, and we can be. I will give members an example. So far it would have cost about \$100 million to fix the homes in Roma; it would cost about \$10 million for a levy bank. It is not rocket science, is it, to know what to do? And that would solve the problem entirely. That figure may vary but it is roughly that.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## PETITIONS

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

### **Nambour Hospital, Car Park**

**Mr Wellington**, from 178 petitioners, requesting the House to build a multi-storey car parking facility at the Nambour Hospital [24].

### **Anakie State School**

**Mr Johnson**, from 288 petitioners, requesting the House to provide funding and facilities for a co-located kindergarten at the Anakie State School and to re-open the children's day care facility at Sapphire [25].

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—

### **Bicycles, Registrations**

301 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a system of registration for bicycles [26].

### **Koala Protection, Alma Park Zoo**

58 petitioners, requesting the House to purchase the land at Lot 8-48 Alma Road (Alma Park Zoo) for future koala preservation [27].

### **Telegraph Road, Rail Crossing**

183 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently provide funding to upgrade the Telegraph Road Rail Crossing to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety for local residents [28].

### **John Muntz Causeway, Bridge**

1,994 petitioners, requesting the House to build a new bridge at the John Muntz Causeway to increase safety and alleviate the bridge becoming inoperable during weather events [29].

### **Motorcycles, Licensing**

76 petitioners, requesting the House to overhaul current motorbike licensing laws and implement tougher regulations to obtain a motorbike licence through QRIDE [30].

### **Mining Explorations, Exclusion Zones**

245 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the buffer zone between urban areas and coal mines or exploration from two kilometres to a minimum of five kilometres [31].

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

### **Wynnum Road-Hawthorne Road, Red Light Camera**

The former member for Bulimba, from 95 petitioners, requesting the House to install a red light camera at the intersection of Wynnum and Hawthorne Roads [32].

### **Prostitution Laws**

The former member for Mount Coot-tha, from 17 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to restrict prostitutes from operating in suburban, residential neighbourhoods and to ensure residents can directly contact the owner of a rental property to discuss the operation of prostitutes on their property through disclosure of current contact details for premises under such use [33].

### **Warrego Highway, Upgrade**

**Mr Hobbs**, from 69 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade the Warrego Highway [34].

### **Pacific Motorway, Upgrade**

The former member for Springwood, from 180 petitioners, requesting the House to bring forward the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway between Eight Mile Plains and the Logan Motorway in time for the Commonwealth Games to be hosted by the Gold Coast in 2018 [35].

### **Mining Explorations, Exclusion Zone**

The former member for Maryborough, from 355 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the buffer zone between urban areas and coal mines or exploration from two kilometres to a minimum of five kilometres [36].

#### **Waste Transfer Stations**

The former member for Stafford, from 49 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce legislation to stop development applications for operating Waste Transfer Stations within a safe distance from hospitals, businesses and residences and areas sensitive to the environment such as waterways [\[37\]](#).

#### **New Chum-Dinmore Landfill Sites, Expansion**

**Mrs Miller**, from 260 petitioners, requesting the House to reject any applications to address the expansion of waste industries in the New Chum/Dinmore landfill sites from 50,000 tonnes per year to 1,900,000 tonnes per year [\[38\]](#).

#### **Office of the Public Advocate**

**Mr Wellington**, from 298 petitioners, requesting the House to restore the Office of the Public Advocate to its original status and identify what additional powers the office needs to enhance its effectiveness [\[39\]](#).

#### **Finance Industry**

The former member for Waterford, from 1,182 petitioners, requesting the House to take all practical steps to support and encourage a strong and comprehensive finance industry in Queensland by ensuring jobs are not sent offshore to third party providers [\[40\]](#).

#### **Justice Act, Victims of Crime**

**Hon. Seeney**, from 71 petitioners, requesting the House to conduct a major overhaul of the ineffective Youth Justice Act 1992 with particular reference to the enforcement of restitution and compensation to victims of juvenile crime [\[41\]](#).

#### **Motorcycles, Licensing**

**Hon. McArdle**, from 1,427 petitioners, requesting the House to overhaul current motorbike licensing laws and implement tougher regulations to obtain a motorbike licence through QRIDE [\[42\]](#).

#### **Public Road Reserve, Protection**

**Hon. Langbroek**, from 220 petitioners, requesting the House to consider the permanent closure of the Public Road Reserve from Clifford Street, Surfers Paradise to Fern Street and First Avenue, Broadbeach to ensure the protection of the dunes and beach vegetation and the safety of concerned residents; and to consider alternative measures to improve transit for pedestrians and cyclists [\[43\]](#).

#### **Boats, Registration**

The former member for Kallangur, from 40 petitioners, requesting the House to consider registering the outboard motor and not the boat [\[44\]](#).

#### **Body Corporate Act, Smoking in Units**

The former member for Redcliffe, from 144 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate under the Body Corporate Act to protect non-smoking residents in unit blocks from smoke from adjoining units [\[45\]](#).

#### **Body Corporate Act, Smoking in Units**

The former member for Redcliffe, from 52 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate under both the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Act and the Body Corporate Act to protect tenants and residents in unit complexes from environmental tobacco smoke from adjoining units [\[46\]](#).

#### **Legend International Holdings, Fertiliser Plants**

**Mrs Menkens**, from 122 petitioners, requesting the House to reject the application in its current form for the Legend International Holdings proposed fertiliser plants and reposition the plants in a more sustainable area away from the waterways that feed Mt Isa and the Gulf Region [\[47\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4)—

#### **Racism, State Laws**

1,940 petitioners, requesting the House to commit to legislate to ensure the State has the toughest laws to enable the banning and punishment of Neo-Nazis and other race hate proponents' activities [\[48\]](#).

#### **Port Douglas CBD, Security Cameras**

93 petitioners, requesting the House to assist in the funding of security cameras in the Port Douglas central business district to deter violence and assist police in the prosecution of offenders [\[49\]](#).

#### **Daylight Saving**

1,711 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Standard Time Act 1894, or supplement the Act with daylight saving legislation, to ensure Queensland's time zone is aligned to all Australian eastern states for the full 12 months of the year [\[50\]](#).

#### **Childers Hospital, Resources**

86 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that the Childers Hospital is resourced with a doctor present 24 hours a day [\[51\]](#).

#### **Insurance Industry, Claim Settlements**

150 petitioners, requesting the House to take immediate action to improve the performance of insurers and the settlement of insurance claims following a natural disaster event [\[52\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE 53RD PARLIAMENT

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received after the last sitting day of the 53rd Parliament on 16 February 2012, and prior to the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament on 19 February 2012, were tabled on the dates indicated—

17 February 2012—

- [6544](#) Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan, February 2012
- [6545](#) Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan: Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2012
- [6546](#) Document, dated 31 October 2011, titled 'Three Year Review of the Operations of Gold Coast Institute of TAFE and Southbank Institute of Technology', prepared by NovumAVI for Queensland Department of Education and Training
- [6547](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Inquiry into the Chicken Meat Industry Amendment Bill 2011: Summary of submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6548](#) Letter, dated 14 February 2012, from Mr Robert Setter, Associate Director-General, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation to Mrs Carryn Sullivan MP, Chair, Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee regarding the Chicken Meat Industry Amendment Bill 2011
- [6549](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Report No. 9—Protecting Primary Production Amendment Bill 2011
- [6550](#) Deed of Amendment No. 1 of the Southern SEQ Distributor-Retailer Authority Participation Agreement
- [6551](#) Community Affairs Committee: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6552](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 8—Quarterly Report on Subordinate Legislation tabled and considered between 1 October 2011 and 31 December 2011
- [6553](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 4—Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6554](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 5—Education and Training Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6555](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6556](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Surat Basin Rail (Long-term Lease) Bill 2011: Submission received in relation to the inquiry
- [6557](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 7—Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6558](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 10—Building Boost Grant Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6559](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 9—Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 and Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6560](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Review of the Meaning of Fundamental Legislative Principles: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry
- [6561](#) Health and Disabilities Committee: Report No. 7—Oversight of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission
- [6562](#) Letter, dated 17 February 2012, from the Chair, Health and Disabilities Committee to the Commissioner, Health Quality and Complaints Commission regarding the report into the oversight of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission
- [6563](#) Letter, dated 11 November 2011, from the Chief Executive Officer, Health Quality and Complaints Commission, to the Chair, Health and Disabilities Committee regarding a request for information
- [6564](#) Letter, dated 23 November 2011, from the Chief Executive Officer, Health Quality and Complaints Commission to the Chair, Health and Disabilities Committee regarding a request for additional information
- [6565](#) Letter, dated 20 December 2011, from the Chief Executive Officer, Health Quality and Complaints Commission to the Chair, Health and Disabilities Committee, regarding the report on the Health Quality and Complaints Commission organisational review
- [6566](#) Health and Disabilities Committee: Report No. 8—Quarterly Report on Subordinate Legislation tabled October 2011—December 2011
- [6567](#) Deed of Amendment No. 2 of the Southern SEQ Distributor-Retailer Authority: Participation Agreement
- [6572](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Gassman Development Perspectives Pty Ltd on behalf of Visy Industries Pty Ltd at 298 Staphylton Jacobs Well Road, Staphylton
- [6573](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited at 85 Sippy Downs Drive and 186 Stringybark Road, Sippy Downs [Volume 1 of 3]
- [6574](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited at 85 Sippy Downs Drive and 186 Stringybark Road, Sippy Downs [Volume 2 of 3] [Available on CD only]
- [6575](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited at 85 Sippy Downs Drive and 186 Stringybark Road, Sippy Downs [Volume 3 of 3]
- [6576](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited on the Corner of Como Road and the Bruce Highway, Toobanna [Volume 1 of 3]

- [6577](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited on the Corner of Como Road and the Bruce Highway, Toobanna [Volume 2 of 3]
- [6578](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Woolworths Limited on the Corner of Como Road and the Bruce Highway, Toobanna [Volume 3 of 3]
- [6579](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by FKP Commercial Developments Pty Ltd at 41-55 Railway Terrace and 50A Cribb Street, Milton [Folder 1 of 2]
- [6580](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by FKP Commercial Developments Pty Ltd at 41-55 Railway Terrace and 50A Cribb Street, Milton [Folder 2 of 2]
- [6581](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Project Services, Property Group, Department of Public Works, and Congress Community Development and Education Unit (CCDEU) at 349 Flaggy Road, Cooktown [Folder 1 of 2] [Available on CD only]
- [6582](#) Report by the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas), pursuant to s 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application by Project Services, Property Group, Department of Public Works, and Congress Community Development and Education Unit (CCDEU) at 349 Flaggy Road, Cooktown [Folder 2 of 2] [Available on CD only]

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS TABLED DURING THE 53RD PARLIAMENT

The following statutory instruments, received after the last sitting day of the 53rd Parliament on 16 February 2012, and prior to the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament on 19 February 2012, were tabled on the date indicated—

17 February 2012—

- [6568](#) Sustainable Planning Act 2009: Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 42
- [6569](#) Sustainable Planning Act 2009: Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 42, Explanatory Notes
- [6570](#) City of Brisbane Act 2010, Local Government Act 2009: Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 43
- [6571](#) City of Brisbane Act 2010, Local Government Act 2009: Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 43, Explanatory Notes

#### PAPERS TABLED PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 54TH PARLIAMENT

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received after the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament on 19 February 2012, and before the constitution of the 54th Parliament on 15 May 2012, were tabled in accordance with s 59A of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and Standing Order 31, on the dates indicated—

24 February 2012—

- [1](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 7—Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2011: Interim Government Response

29 February 2012—

- [3](#) Letter, dated 28 February 2012, from the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (Mr Hinchliffe) to the Clerk of the Parliament regarding the Geothermal Energy Regulation 2012, Subordinate Legislation No. 6

2 March 2012—

- [4](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 7—Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2011: Interim Government Response

13 March 2012—

- [5](#) Health and Disabilities Committee: Report No. 6—One Funding System for Better Services Bill 2011: Interim Government Response

16 March 2012—

- [6](#) Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry: Final Report, Volume 1, March 2012

- [7](#) Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry: Final Report, Volume 2, March 2012

19 March 2012—

- [8](#) Keperra Investigation Report: Keperra Railway Station Fatality, Saturday 7 May 2011

17 April 2012—

- [9](#) Island Industries Board (IIB) operating as Islanders Board of Industry and Service (IBIS)—Annual Report for the Financial Year ended 31 January 2012

24 April 2012—

- [10](#) Health Quality and Complaints Commission: Report, Volume 1, titled 'Doctor Right: A special report on credentialing and defining the scope of clinical practice for doctors employed by Queensland Health'

1 May 2012—

- [11](#) Report on the administration of the Environmental Protection Act 1994—Annual Report 2010-11

10 May 2012—

- [12](#) Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee: Report No. 86—Three Yearly Review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission, dated May 2012

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENT TABLED PRIOR TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 54TH PARLIAMENT

The following statutory instruments, received after the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament on 19 February 2012, and before the constitution of the 54th Parliament on 15 May 2012, was tabled in accordance with s 59A of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and Standing Order 31, on the dates indicated—

29 February 2012—

[2](#) Geothermal Energy Act 2010: Geothermal Energy Regulation 2012, No. 6

## PAPERS TO BE TABLED 17 MAY 2012

The following papers, received on the dates indicated after the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament on 19 February 2012 and before the constitution of the 54th Parliament on 15 May 2012, to be tabled by the Clerk—

19 February 2012—

[53](#) Proclamation (Dissolution of Parliament) dated 19 February 2012

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The Clerk to table the following statutory instruments, received after the last sitting day of the 53rd Parliament on 16 February 2012—

Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011—

[54](#) Health and Hospitals Network Regulation 2012, No. 24

[55](#) Health and Hospitals Network Regulation 2012, No. 24, Explanatory Notes

Legal Profession Act 2007—

[56](#) Legal Profession Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 26

[57](#) Legal Profession Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 26, Explanatory Notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

[58](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 27

[59](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 27, Explanatory Notes

Police Service Administration Act 1990—

[60](#) Police Service Administration Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 28

[61](#) Police Service Administration Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 28, Explanatory Notes

Corrective Services Act 2006—

[62](#) Corrective Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 29

[63](#) Corrective Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 29, Explanatory Notes

Ambulance Service Act 1991—

[64](#) Ambulance Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 30

[65](#) Ambulance Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 30, Explanatory Notes

Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993—

[66](#) Education (Capital Assistance) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 31

[67](#) Education (Capital Assistance) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 31, Explanatory Notes

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, Education (General Provisions) Act 2006—

[68](#) Education Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 32

[69](#) Education Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 32, Explanatory Notes

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—

[70](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 33

[71](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 33, Explanatory Notes

Explosives Act 1999—

[72](#) Explosives Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 34

[73](#) Explosives Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 34, Explanatory Notes

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

[74](#) Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 35

[75](#) Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 35, Explanatory Notes

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[76](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Driver Licensing) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 36

[77](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Driver Licensing) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 36, Explanatory Notes

Motor Racing Events Act 1990—

[78](#) Motor Racing Events Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 37

[79](#) Motor Racing Events Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 37, Explanatory Notes

Housing Act 2003—

[80](#) Housing Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 38

[81](#) Housing Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 38, Explanatory Notes

## Public Records Act 2002—

- [82](#) Public Records Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 39  
[83](#) Public Records Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 39, Explanatory Notes

## Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- [84](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 40  
[85](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 40, Explanatory Notes

## Environmental Protection Act 1994—

- [86](#) Environmental Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 41  
[87](#) Environmental Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 41, Explanatory Notes

## Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

- [88](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 44  
[89](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 44, Explanatory Notes

## Land Act 1994—

- [90](#) Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 45  
[91](#) Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 45, Explanatory Notes

## Professional Standards Act 2004—

- [92](#) Professional Standards (New South Wales Bar Association Scheme) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 46  
[93](#) Professional Standards (New South Wales Bar Association Scheme) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 46, Explanatory Notes

## Professional Standards Act 2004—

- [94](#) Professional Standards (Victorian Bar Professional Standards Scheme) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 47  
[95](#) Professional Standards (Victorian Bar Professional Standards Scheme) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 47, Explanatory Notes

## Legal Profession Act 2007—

- [96](#) Legal Profession (Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules) Notice 2012, No. 48  
[97](#) Legal Profession (Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules) Notice 2012, No. 48, Explanatory Notes

## South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009—

- [98](#) South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring-Retransfer Framework) Notice 2012, No. 49  
[99](#) South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring-Retransfer Framework) Notice 2012, No. 49, Explanatory Notes

## Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- [100](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Plants Harvest Period) Notice 2012, No. 50  
[101](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Plants Harvest Period) Notice 2012, No. 50, Explanatory Notes

## Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

- [102](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 51  
[103](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 51, Explanatory Notes

## Dental Technicians Registration Act 2001, Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Act 2001, Occupational Therapists Registration Act 2001, Speech Pathologists, Registration Act 2001—

- [104](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 52  
[105](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 52, Explanatory Notes

## Public Trustee Act 1978—

- [106](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 53  
[107](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 53, Explanatory Notes

## Legal Profession Act 2007—

- [108](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 54  
[109](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2012, No. 54, Explanatory Notes

## MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk to table the following ministerial papers—

## Attorney-General (Mr Bleijie)—

- [110](#) Strategic Review of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman, by Mr Henry Smerdon AM  
[111](#) Office of the State Coroner—Annual Report 2010-11

## Minister for Housing and Public Works (Mr Flegg)—

- [112](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 7—Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2012: Government Response

## Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek)—

- [113](#) Public report of office expenses Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011  
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (Ms Bates)—

- [114](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 12—Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 9 for 2011—Acquisition and Public Access to the Museum, Art Gallery and Library Collections: Government Response

## MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Gaven (Mr Douglas)—

- [115](#) Non-conforming petition regarding Beaudesert-Nerang Road speed limit and the installation of crash barriers and/or turning bays

## REPORT BY THE CLERK

The Clerk to table the following report—

- [116](#) 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—

**Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*

*'Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Act 2011'*

*Insert—*

*'Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Act 2012'.*

**Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*

*'Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2011'*

*Insert—*

*'Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012'.*

**South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*

*'South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2011'*

*Insert—*

*'South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012'.*

**Clause 91 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 8) \***

At page 130, line 20, '2011'—

*Insert—*

*'2012'.*

\* The page and line number references relate to the Bill, prior to amendment.

**Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*

*'Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2011'*

*Insert—*

*'Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012'.*

**Schedule (Acts amended) \***

At page 119, line 4, 'is the subject of, or was carried out under,'—

*Insert—*

*'is the subject of, or was carried out under,'.*

\* The page and line number references relate to the Bill, after amendment.

**NUTTALL, MR GR**

**The CLERK:** Honourable members, I advise that on 12 May 2011 the Legislative Assembly found Mr Gordon Nuttall guilty of 41 instances of contempt and ordered that Mr Nuttall be fined \$2,000 on each count and that the sum be paid within 12 months of 12 May 2011.

I further advise that, as required, notice of the Legislative Assembly's order of 12 May 2011 was served upon Mr Nuttall by the Sergeant-at-Arms on 19 May 2011. I table an affidavit of the Sergeant-at-Arms as to the service of documents and copies of documents served upon Mr Nuttall.

*Tabled paper:* Affidavit of Service, dated 19 May 2011, served by the Sergeant-at-Arms on Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall at Wolston Correctional Centre and attachments A to D [\[117\]](#).

I further advise that, as of today's date, payment has not been received. Finally, I table a copy of items of correspondence received by me from Mr Nuttall, solicitors acting on Mr Nuttall's behalf and solicitors acting on behalf of Mrs Nuttall.


*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 14 May 2012, from Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall to the Clerk of the Parliament attaching a letter dated 30 April 2012 from Mr Nuttall to the Clerk regarding payment of fine [118].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 16 May 2012, from Richardson McGhie, solicitors to the Clerk of the Parliament, regarding the fine imposed on Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall [119].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 17 May 2012, from Alex Mackay & Co., solicitors and attorneys, to the Clerk of the Parliament regarding the fine imposed on Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall [120].

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Newman Government


 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.07 pm): Section 10 of the Financial Accountability Act 2009 requires that I prepare and table in the Legislative Assembly a statement of the government's broad objectives for the community. My government's No. 1 priority is getting Queensland back on track. This means restoring the economy, easing the cost of living and cutting government waste. It means planning to build better infrastructure and improving health, police, education and other front-line services. It means restoring accountability to government and getting back our AAA credit rating.

Our target to reduce unemployment in Queensland to four per cent within six years underpins all government policy. Therefore, the objectives that we have for the community are as follows: we have committed to getting Queensland back on track and we pledge to, one, grow a four-pillar economy; two, lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste; three, deliver better infrastructure and better planning; four, revitalise front-line services; and, five, restore accountability in government. Our commitment to getting Queensland back on track through these five pledges will immediately replace the previous government's statement of objectives for the community.

With regard to reporting and accountability, my government will report our progress towards achieving these objectives in the publicly released first 100-day action plan, 30-day and 100-day achievement reports, and in six-monthly public reports on the status of implementing the government's 2012 election commitments. As responsibility and accountability for achieving the objectives rests with relevant ministers and chief executive officers of their departments, each department's annual report will also record their progress towards the objectives. I table the statement of objectives.

*Tabled paper:* Department of the Premier and Cabinet document titled 'Getting Queensland back on track: Statement of objectives for the community' [121].

### Uncle George Mye


 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.09 pm): It is with great sadness that I advise the House of the passing on 26 April 2012 of Mr George Mye, a widely respected elder statesman from the Torres Strait, aged 85 years. I would like to join all other community leaders who have paid tribute to Mr Mye, also known as Uncle George to many in his local community of Darnley Island or Erubam Le.

Everyone who knew Mr Mye would testify that, throughout his years of dedicated community leadership since the 1960s, his values of respect, integrity and loyalty have encouraged and inspired others. A lifelong friend of the late Eddie Mabo and a former chairman of Darnley Island, Mr Mye was central in the push for the Torres Strait Islands to be granted independence. Mr Mye's advocacy for autonomy eventually led to the formation of the Torres Strait Regional Authority in 1994. In 1992 he became the leading champion of the campaign started by Eddie Mabo to gain legal recognition of Indigenous ownership of traditional lands in the Torres Strait Islands. Mr Mye's death came just six weeks before the 20th anniversary of that landmark Mabo decision—which will be 3 June 2012—and it will be a major milestone in recognising native title in Australia.

Mr Mye's MBE and Order of Australia are testament to the high regard in which he was held nationally and internationally for his commitment and dedicated leadership for Torres Strait Islander peoples. A member of the Erubam Le Traditional Land and Sea Owners Corporation, Mr Mye's notable achievements also included addressing the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in New York in 1987 and in Geneva in 1995. Mr Mye will be missed by many people. On behalf of the government and all Queenslanders, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to his wife Jennifer, his son John and his wife Riti and their five sons, his sister Florence, his extended family and the Torres Strait Islander community for their loss.



## CSG Industry

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.11 pm): Coal seam gas is already an important part of Queensland's energy supply, and its expansion will be an important part of Queensland's economic future. The industry is on track to deliver an estimated 18,000 jobs and to inject some \$60 billion in capital investment into the state economy. Royalty revenue and economic growth from this industry will be substantial and will bring benefit to people right across the state no matter where they live. The money that is earned from this industry will build our roads, our schools and our hospitals and improve our communities.

Justifiable community concerns have been clearly expressed about this industry both before and during the recent election campaign. In fact some candidates tried to take political advantage of this issue during the election campaign. The LNP made its position very clear: we support the expansion of the CSG industry in a responsible way and we have promised to ensure that it does develop in a responsible way. The CSG industry's interests must be balanced against those of landholders, communities and the environment.


We have been given a resounding mandate to carry out our commitments, and we have begun to do just that. Several weeks ago, I appointed the well-respected head of the Surat Basin engagement group, John Cotter, as the Gasfields Commissioner. We are asking the public for nominations for the other commissioner positions and for submissions on the powers that this new commission should have to restore public confidence in the industry. Mr Cotter will be given ombudsman-like powers, but we await to see the submissions from the community before proceeding further. Public submissions close next Friday, 25 May, after which we will legislate to establish the commission. I urge the community to be involved in this process. We need fair-minded people who can work with others to reach reasonable decisions that advance the wellbeing and prosperity of Queensland, while at the same time ensuring that the growth of this relatively new industry occurs in a balanced way with partnerships between communities, landholders and gas companies.

Today, one of the constant doomsday predictions about CSG—that it would put the entire Great Artesian Basin at risk—has been shown to be alarmist. The Queensland Water Commission's independent scientific study of underground water supplies found that there would be only relatively small impacts on the Great Artesian Basin and no long-term impact on that extremely valuable water resource, the Condamine Alluvium. Its draft report released today in Toowoomba finds just 85 of some 21,000 bores across the Surat Cumulative Management Area would be affected by the CSG industry in the next three years—85 out of 21,000 represents 0.3 per cent. The report predicts that in the longer term, over five years, only 2.4 per cent of bores will be affected. The report suggests that the overall impact therefore is relatively small, but every bore is important to a bore owner and every bore that is affected will be made good. Laws will require the CSG companies to do just that, and the Gasfields Commission will be an important part of making sure that those laws are enforced.

This report provides some very inconvenient findings for some of the alarmists out there whose real agenda has been to attack the fossil fuel industry per se. Unfortunately, what the report did not look at was the re-use of the extracted water because the water does not simply disappear. It can be treated and re-used for irrigation or other agricultural purposes or it can be reinjected into the groundwater systems, mitigating the extraction impacts and boosting the long-term sustainability of important irrigation aquifers such as the Condamine Alluvium.

This government wants to work on all of these issues in cooperation and consultation with those involved. This is in stark contrast to our predecessors who in the case of the CSG industry, as in so many other areas of state administration, left a concerning and costly mess through their sheer indecision and ineptitude. Let me assure the House that this government will be inclusive, we will be decisive and we will act to ensure that all Queenslanders benefit from the balanced, careful development of the CSG industry.

## Queensland Economy

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.16 pm): I wish to inform the House of Queensland's economic outlook. After 14 years of continuous Labor mismanagement, Queensland's finances are in a sad and sorry state. This year, the state's debt will top \$62 billion and we are headed towards a debt of \$85 billion in 2014-15. That is \$85 billion that will be on the credit card of each and every Queenslanders. It is a figure that we are committed to seeing not blow out any further—something that 14 years of Labor was unable to do.

The LNP government was elected with a mandate to fix the state's finances, grow a four-pillar economy and regain the state's AAA credit rating—a credit rating that was lost because of the carelessness of the ALP government. A key part of regaining that credit rating and our path back to economic recovery is our commitment to actually growing the economy and not seeing it decline as it declined under Labor. We will have a four-pillar economy based on tourism, resources, agriculture, and property and construction.

We also committed to cut waste and deliver better front-line services for families, to introduce better planning and infrastructure, to restore accountability in government and to cut the unemployment rate down to four per cent over six years. We have committed to reducing the cost of living for Queensland families and businesses by freezing the cost of electricity, by reintroducing the principal place of residence concession, by freezing car registration and by reducing government expenses by up to 20 per cent. We have an economic plan to get Queensland back on track and we are in the process of delivering that plan. We took to the election a fully funded and fully costed suite of policies, unlike our opponents who produced two A4 sheets of paper.

But we realise the enormity of the task in front of us. Given what we have inherited and the rapidly changing global environment, the work is going to be hard and it will require some tough decisions. At the moment there is a great deal of uncertainty in global markets, particularly in Europe, where many countries are in the throes of recession. Political uncertainty in Greece sends shudders through economies around the world. The re-emergence of the debt crisis in the Eurozone, a sluggish American recovery and further limits on availability to capital will make it even harder and this will influence future growth predictions.

We are also experiencing a high Aussie dollar, although in recent days it has fallen below parity with the American dollar which has impacted on many of our strongest exporting industries, including two of those four pillars—tourism and agriculture. Today we also saw a salutary warning. The Chairman of BHP Billiton, Jac Nasser, made it clear that future investment in Australia and in Queensland is continually being put in jeopardy, particularly by the actions of a federal Labor government that has no regard for the economy, no regard for the jobs of Australians and no regard for investment in Queensland. Continual changes like the mineral resources rent tax, the carbon tax and other actions taken by this federal Labor government will imperil investment that we so sorely need here in Queensland, and this was a warning that was also issued by Tom Albanese from Rio Tinto only two weeks ago.

Investment in resources is not something that can be played around with on the whim of the backroom boys down in Sussex Street or Peel Street in the Labor Party. These are enormous decisions that require certainty and stability over time. We cannot risk the future prosperity of our state. We cannot risk the future prosperity of Australia with a government like that led by Julia Gillard held hostage to the Greens. But for the time being growth for Queensland's forecasts remain up-beat, driven for the time being by record investment in LNG projects. But it is salutary to bear in mind that that investment can change. Our government has a plan to help drive those investments and ensure all of the people of Queensland benefit from those major projects. To do that, we need to cut back on the red and green tape that has at times strangled those industries and endangered Queensland's reputation as a safe place to invest, but we will not do so at the risk of endangering our most productive farmland and our most valuable environmental assets. This government—a Newman can-do government—wants to get back in the business of delivering infrastructure and projects that will grow the Queensland economy. It is only through conservative economic management, prudent expenditure of taxpayers' funds, returning the budget to surplus and investing in future productive infrastructure that Queensland can get its finances back in shape and chart a path to a return to the AAA credit rating.

## Public Transport



**Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.21 pm): The Newman LNP government has moved to deliver real cost-of-living relief for Queensland families who use their car or public transport in South-East Queensland. In the final months of her time as transport minister, the Leader of the Opposition delivered the worst levels of customer satisfaction for affordability ever for public transport users in South-East Queensland while at the same time she was expecting passengers to pay an extra 15 per cent each year, leading to some of the highest public transport fares in the world. Is it any wonder that passengers were walking away from public transport and getting back in their cars?

The LNP has a clear plan to make go card travel in South-East Queensland more affordable by delivering free trips after nine journeys in a Monday to Sunday week from 25 June. For a regular Monday to Friday commuter, that may mean free travel home on a Friday afternoon and a potential saving of \$150 to \$220 for most commuters who travel in one, two or three zones. For people coming from the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, this could mean a potential saving of up to \$500 a year. On top of this, we will halve the Leader of the Opposition and Labor's planned fare hikes in 2013 and 2014. For those who travel by car, we will also deliver real cost-of-living relief by freezing family car registration. From 1 July 2012, 2013 and 2014 Queensland families will pay the same registration fee as they did in the current financial year. Let us contrast this to paying registration fees under Labor—a \$107.55 increase in four years since 2008 for a standard six-cylinder car, or more than 30 per cent. The LNP understands the pressure that Labor's relentless hikes in public transport fares and car registration fees put on the family budget, and that is why we are committed to cost-of-living relief for families.

Today I spoke to Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale and Ipswich Show organisers about a track closure on the Ipswich and Rosewood lines this weekend at the same time as the Ipswich Show. I let them know that I was disappointed that this maintenance work was clashing with such an important event. As someone who was born in Ipswich, I understand how important the Ipswich Show is to the community and it is extraordinary that the former transport minister allowed this to occur. The track work was scheduled in January 2012—before I became transport minister—under the previous Labor government and under the previous transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition. That was several months before the show date was announced. Unfortunately, because of this erroneous decision by the now Leader of the Opposition, I have been advised that the cost to the taxpayer to reschedule these substantial works at this late stage after the now Leader of the Opposition made the decision in January would be approximately \$370,000. Given this cost, I believe the maintenance work should proceed.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the minister to start to wind up.

**Mr EMERSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been advised by Queensland Rail that all routes are to be adequately covered by buses to assist showgoers.

The Newman government has also taken its first steps to solving a major rail congestion problem through the heart of Brisbane. I recently appointed an expert panel tasked to review the Cross River Rail project and to assist to deliver a realistic solution to this rail capacity crisis after seven years of inaction. The former Labor government had known about the looming crisis in 2016 with regard to capacity on the Merivale Bridge since 2005 and delivered nothing in seven years. Before the election, Labor had an \$8 billion proposal it could not afford. Three weeks out from the election, the now Leader of the Opposition said it was a \$7 billion proposal it could not afford. Just two weeks out from the election, Labor then had a \$6.4 billion proposal it could not afford.

The LNP government needs to be sure that the numbers stack up and that the next major investment in rail is affordable before committing to a multibillion-dollar project. I welcome the comments in the media today by Infrastructure Australia's Michael Deegan backing this approach, saying—

I think it is sensible for a new government to come and do a short, sharp review just to check our view ... I think that is a very positive thing.


The panel will deliver a report on 13 June 2012 that will properly analyse and confirm the problems facing the public transport rail system, consider the options available, assess the business case—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the minister to start to wind up so we can do other government business.

**Mr EMERSON:** Yes, Madam Speaker. The panel will assess the business case already prepared for the project and provide recommendations for consideration by the Newman government. The Newman government will be a passenger focused government improving frequency, reliability and affordability for passengers and it will restore confidence in our public transport network.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Public Service

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.28 pm): My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, how many people are employed in the Queensland Public Service and how many are front-line service roles?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. My understanding—and I stress that it is simply my understanding—is that there are approximately 230,000 people in the Queensland Public Service. But here is the problem: we actually do not know the real figure. Do members know why? Because of the shameless, poor and reckless financial management of people in the previous government, some of whom sit opposite us today. There had such poor financial controls and such poor staffing controls that we simply do not know, and clearly we do not know the split between front-line services and the people who support them. But do you know what? This government is moving with speed to sort out these matters. We make no apologies for having a plan to deal with the cost blow-outs that we have inherited from Labor.

I am surprised that we would have a Leader of the Opposition, so recently departed from cabinet, come in here and ask such an outrageous question when Queenslanders are paying a higher cost of living through higher water prices, power prices and the registration increases that she jammed through the cabinet to pay for the ballooning costs of running Queensland and the Queensland government. This year, we will have a \$2.8 billion deficit unless this team moves to act. That is what we are doing.

Before I conclude, I should talk about the so-called voluntary separation payments. It is a sad fact, as I understand it, that they paid VSPs in the department of transport and main roads under the stewardship of the now Leader of the Opposition. What was achieved? Eight hundred and eighteen employees took the actual package but, in the time since July last year, we have seen the numbers in

the former minister's department go up by 100. Clearly, we have seen poor and reckless financial management. This is the reason Queensland families are paying through their wallets—through their hip pockets. These people opposite are the ones who have caused so much pain and we make no apologies for doing something to sort out the financial situation of the Queensland public sector.

### Public Service

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. Will the minister, in his capacity as the minister responsible for public sector industrial relations, provide this House with the government's definition of front-line public servants?

**Mr ELMES:** I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I think it is a real thrill to get the second question in the new parliament so I am feeling pretty good about myself at the moment.

In answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, front-line staff are the people who are employed by the Public Service who directly communicate and work with the people of Queensland. They deliver a service to the people of Queensland. As the Premier has pointed out, we will, throughout our time in government—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I would like to hear the minister answer the question. There will be order in the chamber.

**Mr ELMES:** We will make sure that those people who are employed in front-line positions across the Public Service are not only guaranteed their employment but also rewarded for the excellent job that they do.

### Newman Government

**Mr JOHNSON:** I know this is a positive question and I know we will get a positive answer. My question is to the honourable the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on the progress of the Newman government's 100-day action plan to get Queensland back on track?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the member for Gregory for his very pertinent question, because I heard the opposition interjecting and making comments about action. This government is all about action. It is all about delivery, and there is no better way to examine that than to look at the promises we made in our little booklet—the 100-day action plan for Queensland. We have just passed the halfway point of those first 100 days and we are getting on with it. We have a list and we are going through that list one item after another, consistent with our promises—ruling them off and implementing them. Every item that we promised in the first 30 days is being delivered. When was the last time you saw a Labor government do that? In here? At the federal level? Interstate? They never do, because what happens before the election has no bearing on what happens after the election. We know that.

We made promises to Queenslanders and we are keeping our promises to Queenslanders. In the first 30 days we issued all government departments with a clear directive that we have a four per cent unemployment target, and that underpins everything that this government will do. We restarted negotiations for a new nurse and midwife enterprise bargaining agreement, and that is basically being delivered. We have taken action to freeze the domestic electricity supply tariff—tariff 11—to ensure we put a cap on soaring electricity bills for struggling families. Again, the Leader of the Opposition and her colleague from Mackay sat there and approved such increases. I say today: shame. For the pain that they have inflicted on Queensland families they should hang their heads in shame.

We have established DestinationQ. This is part of our tourism strategy. Before the end of June I will be delighted to be in Cairns with the Minister for Tourism and other ministers, industry leaders, Tourism Queensland and other stakeholders to sort out the industry and to take it forward—to find the blockers and to deal with those matters. We will be regulating, with the cost-of-living bill that will be introduced this afternoon, to freeze family car registration. We have appointed the Bruce Highway Crisis Management Group. We have begun the transitioning of 50 police from behind desks to the front line and we have started work with the Police Commissioner to recruit those 300 new recruits and put them through the Brisbane and Townsville academies this year. We have already started drafting amendments to reduce red tape. This is a government of action. This is a government of delivery. This is a government that keeps its promises.

### Commission of Audit

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. I note the appointment of former Under Treasurer Gerard Bradley to head the Queensland Treasury Corporation, and I ask: can the Treasurer advise what meetings or briefings have taken place or are planned between Mr Bradley and Mr Costello to help inform the commission of audit?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for his question, because he makes reference to the independent commission of audit—a commission of audit headed by one of the most successful treasurers in Australia's history, Peter Costello, who, unlike the government for which the member for Mackay, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was a member and which lost its AAA credit rating, actually got it back. Who did he get it back from? He got it back from that other doyen—and we heard the member for South Brisbane talk about him as her political hero—Paul Keating, who got two credit downgrades. Not content with getting just one credit downgrade, Paul Keating got two credit downgrades.

What was Paul Keating also responsible for? We remember that Paul Keating was responsible for the I-a-w tax cuts. Honourable members will remember that he put them into legislation and what did he do? He got re-elected and then said, 'Sorry, we have no money.' Who else does that sound like? Have we heard that story before here in this parliament? Let me take everyone back three short years to 2009, when we heard, 'We are going to deliver you the world. We will give you everything you want.' Who was saying that? Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser. Guess what? They got re-elected, came back into power and said, 'I'm sorry, we have no finances.'

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order regarding relevance under standing order 118(b). We have asked a question relating to Gerard Bradley and meetings between him and former Treasurer Costello. I would like to know when the minister may give the answer to that question.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I believe the Treasurer was addressing the issue of the independent audit and the process, but I ask the Treasurer to address the remaining aspects of the question.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Madam Speaker, thank you. I was in fact coming to the end of that sorry tale of deceit that was the hallmark of Paul Keating, Andrew Fraser and successive Labor governments, whether they be in Canberra or here in Queensland. I was just going to reflect on the fact that there were two final broken promises: no asset sales and the retention of the fuel subsidy. They are two other promises that were broken on the way through.

So when I was asked by the honourable the Deputy Leader of the Opposition whether there has been any conversation between Peter Costello, who heads an independent commission of audit, and Mr Gerard Bradley, who has only recently been appointed to head the QTC, I was reflecting on the substantial contrast between that side and this side in terms of delivering on promises, as outlined by the Premier.

For the benefit of members opposite who fail to understand the meaning of the word 'independent', we said that this was an independent commission of audit. It is not the Treasury commission of audit. It is not Tim Nicholls's commission of audit. It is an independent commission of audit. Those opposite may have a different understanding of the meaning of 'independent', but we on this side know what it means. It means that they do what they need to do to sort out the mess that was left behind by a long-term Labor government.

### Mary Valley

**Mr GIBSON:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning on an issue that is close to my heart and to that of those in my electorate. Will the Deputy Premier please inform the House as to what steps the Newman government has taken to rectify the damage done by the former Labor government to the communities in the Mary Valley?

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the member for Gympie for the question. This is an issue that featured in the long list of failures that will be the legacy of the former Labor government. As the member for Gregory reminded me this morning, it is easy to remember just how long that list is. It is such a long list of failures that it is difficult to remember them all, but I know that the people of Gympie and the member for Gympie remember this one in particular because it has had a profound effect on the Mary Valley. The decisions that the former government took in relation to the failed Traveston Dam proposal are still having a profound impact on the community of Gympie, on the economy of the whole region and certainly on the communities of the Mary Valley.

Some of the figures that have come to light since we have had access to all of the information should send a cold shiver down the spine of every Queenslander. Every Queenslander who struggles to get the services that they want from a government, every community that struggles to get the small amount of infrastructure funding that is required for their community should be aware of the amounts of money that were wasted by the former government's incompetence in the Mary Valley. There were some 478 properties purchased by the former Queensland government in the Mary Valley at a total expenditure of \$445 million. The government spent \$445 million of public money buying the properties in the Mary Valley, tearing the heart out of the community there. They spent \$445 million that is sorely needed now to rectify some of the situations right across Queensland. Currently, the Queensland government still owns 469 of those properties. We have 469 properties that the former government paid

\$445 million for. At current valuation those properties are now worth \$225 million. You and I, honourable members, and every person we represent collectively has lost \$220 million because of this single incompetent decision. The interest on the debt runs to some \$30 million per annum. The rental income is just \$3 million.

On the visit that I made to the Mary Valley last week, the strong opinion of local people is that the properties continue to depreciate. I will be working closely with the member for Gympie, the local council, the local mayor, Ron Dyne, and the community up there to put an end to this debacle, to restore life to the Mary Valley community and to recover what we can from yet another Labor government failure.

### Commission of Audit

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. How many days has Peter Costello spent in Queensland, at the rate of \$3,300 a day, to work on the independent commission of audit since he was appointed on 29 March 2012?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the Manager of Opposition Business for his question. Let me say that every day that Peter Costello spends in Queensland working on the independent commission of audit is a good day for the state of Queensland because what he does is continue to discover the failings of the former Labor government in the state of Queensland. Every day that Peter Costello spends up here he is talking to the departments, he is talking to the organisations and he is talking to people like former Under Treasurer Doug McTaggart and Professor Sandra Harding from James Cook University in Townsville and Cairns about the things that the Queensland government needs to deliver to the people of Queensland—things that the former government failed to deliver. When he is up here he is talking to people about how it could be that a government could sign off on a Health payroll system that saw nurses, doctors and wardsmen go without pay, go without much pay—in fact, not know what pay they were going to get.

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order. I ask again for a ruling on relevance under standing order 118(b). We have had the Deputy Premier—

**Madam SPEAKER:** I have heard your point of order. Please do not debate it. I ask the Treasurer to please stay relevant to the question.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I am indeed pleased to see the Manager of Opposition Business learning the rules around section 118 and relevance. I am sure it is a new field of discovery and study for him given his previous experience on this side and his complete and total unfamiliarity with that particular standing order. I am sure he will learn a lot more about the standing orders that he has failed to observe in the last three years.

Peter Costello is travelling up here as and when the needs of the commission of audit require and as and when the secretariat determine that meetings are needed and are taking place. For example, he was up here two weeks ago, as I understand it, to confer with both Dr McTaggart and Professor Harding in relation to some issues. I understand that Mr Costello will also be travelling to rural and regional Queensland, an area shamefully ignored by the current opposition when they were in government, an area where they had no feeling for what was going on, no idea of what the increase in the cost of car registration and the removal of the fuel subsidy meant to the people of rural and regional Queensland. Every day that Peter Costello is up here working on the independent commission of audit is a better day for the state of Queensland.

### Queensland Economy

**Mr CRANDON:** My question without notice is also to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House of Queensland's fiscal position and the impediments to the Queensland economy over the last 20 years?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for Coomera for his insightful and penetrating question, a question to which there will be an equally insightful and penetrating answer. I know it is an answer that the opposition will not want to hear. I can also make that very firm prediction. I also welcome the announced appointment of the member for Coomera by the Premier some time ago to the position of chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, a job I am sure he will discharge ably.

As members know, when the results of the election were known the Premier, the Deputy Premier and I moved immediately on Sunday morning to obtain incoming government briefs. We met with officials of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury and others and received the incoming briefs. Because I had some interest in these matters, I immediately turned to the first page of the incoming Treasury brief for the incoming government. Can members imagine what the first paragraph of the incoming brief said for the Treasury portfolio? I am sure there are members here who would like to know. Am I right? Yes, I am, indeed. As I said, insightful and penetrating.

I have heard the Leader of the Opposition say, 'There's nothing wrong with Queensland's finances. Everything's hunky-dory. It's all good. There's money in the bank and things are going well.' However, this is the sad state of affairs as revealed by the independent officers of Treasury to the incoming government: Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration is an urgent priority for this term of government. That is not the rosy picture that was presented by those opposite during the election campaign. That is not the rosy picture that the former Treasurer and the former Premier continued to tell us. That is not a story of sustainable and sound economic management. It is a story of waste, it is a story of deceit and, for the people of Queensland, under the Labor government it was a story of increased taxes, fees and charges. Let no-one be in any doubt about it: the independent Treasury officers—

**Mr Pitt:** Cuts, cuts, cuts.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Job losses.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I hear some muttering from the other side. I wonder whether they are now saying that the Treasury officers have it wrong. Is that what they are saying? What we know is what was in the first paragraph of the brief, that is, Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government. Shame on Labor!

*(Time expired)*

### Public Service

**Mrs MILLER:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. How many temporary staff are currently employed in the Public Service, how many have had their employment terminated since 26 March 2012 and how many of those positions supported front-line workers?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! We will have order while the minister is answering the question so we can hear it.

**Mr ELMES:** I am delighted to give some insight for the member for Bundamba. Obviously, from the point of view of the raw numbers that the member is asking for, I do not have that information at hand. I will undertake to get that information to her. Over the past couple of weeks some information has been pedalled around the place by the opposition about temporary contracts and people who are employed under temporary agreements—

**Mrs Miller:** No, no. Temporary contracts, temporary staff.

**Mr ELMES:** That extend up to about 10 years. It is part of the mischief-making process that Labor has been putting out there. Most of the people on temporary contracts are on exactly that.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr ELMES:** As the member for Lockyer just reminded me, those people who have been employed on temporary contracts for up to 10 years were employed by the Labor Party in the first place—10 very long years ago. I will get the information for the member. All of those temporary contracts have only one fault: it is those seven members who sit opposite and who represent what is a very sad opposition.

### Violent Crime

**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Minister for Police. Can the minister please outline what steps the Newman government has taken to combat the recent spate of gun crimes and bikie violence?

**Mr DEMPSEY:** Firstly, Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your elevation to the high post of Speaker. I thank the member for Condamine for the question, which relates to a very serious subject. Obviously we have just undergone an election in which Queensland gave the Newman government a clear mandate to get tough on crime. The Newman government is acting quickly to make sure it meets those community expectations. The Queensland public is not prepared to tolerate the recent spate of blatant violent crimes in our community, which has included the execution style murder of a young man and the shooting of an innocent bystander at a Gold Coast shopping centre in the middle of May. The easiest option would be the Labor way—for 20 years it was soft on crime—which is to sweep those horrific incidents under the carpet. That is something that the Labor Party became expert in over the years. That would be letting down the people of Queensland who gave this government a clear mandate to get tough on crime.

To this end we will act to revitalise front-line policing and make our community safe by delivering 1,100 extra new front-line police where they are needed to fight crimes, that is, on the streets with a visual presence; providing up to \$275 million for this surge, with 300 officers to be recruited in the first year; giving a commitment to deliver at least 100 of the 1,100 new police to the Gold Coast and Logan

areas—I have spoken about this with the member for Logan and will ensure that I will visit his electorate and walk its streets in the coming weeks; and moving 50 police each year from non-operational duties back into front-line services, which means that over four years an additional up to 200 experienced police will be keeping our streets safe.

This Queensland government plans to make sure that people who commit the types of crimes that disgust all Queenslanders are given sentences that reflect community expectations. The Newman LNP government is proposing the toughest laws in Australia against illegal firearm trafficking and the use of illegal firearms in criminal activities. Under Labor, Queensland, and particularly the Gold Coast, has become a safe haven for outlaw motorcycle gangs and criminal groups. The LNP has a clear plan to tackle organised crime groups and the criminals seeking to reap economic gain through illegal and criminal activities. We will continue to supply extra officers to Task Force Hydra and we will target the unexplained wealth of organised criminals, which is something that the previous government failed to do.

*(Time expired)*

### **Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**

**Mrs SCOTT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. How many staff are employed in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and how many of those workers are defined as front-line staff?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for her question. I will undertake to get for her the raw numbers that she is asking for. In terms of the number of front-line workers, I will undertake to get those particular numbers for the member.

I take this opportunity to talk about staffing within the Department of Communities. The Department of Communities works very closely with our not-for-profit and other service organisations to deliver services to those in our community who are marginalised and oftentimes are the most vulnerable. It is incumbent upon the department to provide front-line service staff in order to deliver those services. We do a terrific job in engaging with the sectors to provide outcomes for those people. However, we do not support waste. At the moment we are looking across government to see what areas are front-line and what services can be looked at in order to put money towards the front-line services that I am speaking of. Labor's woeful financial management simply bloated the numbers in the department and did it no favours in terms of protecting front-line services. In fact, it is quite amazing that the member opposite has forgotten that the former Labor government sacked 320 front-line police. Whilst that is not my department, we are talking about front-line workers. I undertake to get that information for the member.

### **AJ Lucas**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. AJ Lucas—described by the ASX as one of Australia's largest builders of long-distance gas pipelines and provider of construction, civil and property services—has repeatedly failed to pay local subcontractors working for it to construct water infrastructure to Curtis Island in a timely manner. This failure puts approximately 90 families at risk of financial ruin. Can the minister outline how this major company can be required to honour contract progress payments to small local companies to avert their imminent financial ruin?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. This matter actually came to my attention on Friday morning of last week when I was travelling to Gladstone and I was given a briefing note. I then met with the Gladstone Area Water Board on that day. Upon my return to the office on Monday I ordered a briefing to be prepared on the issues raised by the member. That document in fact came to my table either late Tuesday or yesterday morning. That document raised more questions in my mind in relation to what had taken place with AJ Lucas and more documentation is now with me. I will meet with the member out of this House to discuss what can be done in relation to this matter.

I confirm that I am very concerned about what I have seen to date. I confirm that I have a very clear issue in relation to people in Gladstone not being paid money for work they have undertaken. It is not just the people themselves who are owed money; it is the domino effect that takes place when business providers are not paid money. It is not just that these providers cannot pay their own bills; they cannot meet their own out-of-pocket expenses and, therefore, their suppliers also face a similar situation. I can assure the member that the Newman government, and the Premier in particular, is very concerned about this issue. I intend to take full rein of what has taken place and make certain we deal with these matters as a matter of extreme urgency. I can assure the member for Gladstone that I am very concerned and I will work with her and the government to ensure for everybody that this is resolved.



### Queensland Health Payroll System

**Mrs MENKENS:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister please update the House on the cost to date of Labor's failed Health payroll system? What actions have been taken to ensure that all information has been put on the table?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I thank the honourable member for Burdekin for her question. I am sure the honourable member for Burdekin—herself someone who has worked in the government sector in the past—would very much appreciate the importance of not only being paid the proper amount of money but also being paid. That is certainly not the case for many thousands of health workers who work for Queensland Health. Indeed, what we have seen in Queensland since the implementation of the new payroll system by the previous Labor government is an unconscionable disaster. It has been all about a lack of due diligence, centralisation, a complete lack of attention to detail and also an absolute lack of honesty, transparency and openness for the people of Queensland.

I can inform the honourable member and all honourable members that, instead of a payroll system that was supposed to cost Queensland Health \$49 million a year in delivery, we have a payroll system that to date has cost \$412 million. A couple of weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition said to me, 'Show us the details. Give us the information.' The honourable Leader of the Opposition can wait with bated breath, but not for much longer. Sometime in the next few weeks she will see all of the figures pertaining to what this unconscionable disaster has cost the people of Queensland. Indeed, this will probably go on to be the largest government IT bungle and disaster in the history of government administration in Australia. There is no doubt about it.

I have written to the Leader of the Opposition asking her to tell us what she and her government knew about this. We have commissioned an audit using KPMG which will look at all of the information available to us. They also need the information that was available to the previous government. What was being hidden and what information did it actually have with regard to this, because it just does not stack up? The former Deputy Premier stood before the people of Queensland and said that it would cost \$209 million over three years to fix. That period started a little over a year ago. It has cost \$201 million to date. What is the Leader of the Opposition hiding?

I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition last week. If the Leader of the Opposition has nothing to hide, in the interests of openness, honesty and transparency she should provide all of this information, including cabinet documents and CBRC deliberative decisions, to the auditors so that they can make a proper conclusive decision about how this bungle was embarked upon. The health workers of Queensland are the big losers and they expect the opposition to come clean.

### Public Service

**Madam SPEAKER:** I call the member for Brisbane South.

**Ms TRAD:** South Brisbane.

**Madam SPEAKER:** South Brisbane, I apologise.

**Ms TRAD:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Can the minister inform the House how many IT staff across the Public Service have had their employment terminated since 26 March 2012?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before I call the minister, I apologise. It is the member for South Brisbane. I call the minister.

**Ms BATES:** I thank the member for Brisbane South for her question.

**Ms Trad:** South Brisbane.

**Ms BATES:** Either way, I think it is still south of Brisbane. I thank the member very much for her question. The member is so new that she probably is not aware that my department is actually a new department. We certainly have brought science, IT, innovation and the arts together. However, I can tell the member for Brisbane South that the number of front-line service staff in my department is actually 3,900.

**Ms Trad:** IT staff.

**Ms BATES:** The number of front-line service staff is 3,900. That is the question opposition members have been asking all of my colleagues, which by the way is a question—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible noise to my immediate left. I warn members on my left. I call the minister.

**Ms BATES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your protection. I will continue to answer the question. I do not think anybody, particularly a Labor government, knows exactly how many IT staff there actually are. It had so many staff on contracts and hidden consultancies that it would have absolutely no idea.

I find this question from the new member really interesting given the fact that the previous Labor government presided over debacle after debacle in IT. We have just listened to the Minister for Health talk about how much money the previous government wasted in IT. I am sure that we will uncover many more bodies because it was the Labor Party that spent the last 20 years burying the bodies of ICT across the whole of Queensland.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! There is still too much audible noise to my immediate left. I remind members that I have warned members on my left. I call the minister.

**Ms BATES:** This is the same government whose minister for IT, when asked about the IDES email debacle, told the *Courier-Mail* that the \$46 million that was lent to Public Works by Treasury was not going to be repaid. Does anybody remember what he said? 'It is all the government's money.' Wrong! The former minister was wrong then and the former government was wrong. That money actually belongs to the Queensland taxpayer.

This is not the only debacle that we will uncover. I can assure members opposite that there will be many, many more. There has been the OneSchool debacle with the Agresso financial package. The Treasury one was another debacle. That is on top of the wonderful \$62 billion of debt currently with an interest repayment of \$5 billion a year. Let us put that into perspective. That is \$100 million a week. For those people out in voter land who cannot afford to put food on the table or pay their electricity or water bills, that is \$600,000 an hour courtesy of the Bligh Labor government.

### Education

**Mr MALONE:** My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Will the minister please inform the House of progress towards meeting Queensland's 100-day election commitments to deliver improved education choices to Queensland parents?

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

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I congratulate you on your appointment. I also thank the honourable member for Mirani for his question and say how much of a pleasure it is for me to see that he has been appointed as a committee chair in the Newman government and also to say what a great performance it was by the member for Mirani to defeat a former Labor member in this House who came back and tried to win an election based on an issue that his own government had introduced—fly-in fly-out workers. He tried to campaign against the member for Mirani prior to the election on that particular issue and he received the verdict that the Queensland people delivered. So I congratulate the member for Mirani and thank him for his question, which is about education improvements in Queensland and our commitments that we made in the lead-up to the election on 24 March.

It has been made very clear by the Premier that we will be living up to our commitments. There were significant commitments made in the area of education—whether it was establishing a skills task force, whether it was establishing a scholarship program for women to get them into areas of educational endeavour where they are underrepresented, whether it was to do with more teacher aides. I know that many members are looking forward to those announcements that we are going to make—whether it is to do with 10,000 extra apprenticeships or whether it is to do with establishing a Schools Plan Commission. All of those commitments that we have made, whether they were to be delivered in seven days or 30 days or 100 days or three years, will all be met. One that I want to refer to specifically this afternoon is our commitment to increase the autonomy of local schools by introducing 120 independent public schools over the next four years.

**Mr Newman:** Great initiative.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** It is a great initiative. I take that interjection. This is a program that even the federal government—and Peter Garrett is the federal minister—has its own version of. It is called Empowering Local Schools. We know that Queenslanders want more choice. The member for Mirani asked about choice. That is what this side of the parliament stands for—choice and quality education—because we know that that is what is going to lead to the best outcomes for our children and for the future of our great state.

We will meet our commitment. But we are at the stage—and I have been having ministerial briefings about this particular commitment—of making sure that we consult with stakeholders and making sure that we get proper expressions of interest. We are going to make sure that we deliver this. It will be a comprehensive model. We have looked at some of the issues that happened with the Western Australian model, which has been a resounding success. But there are always issues when legislation is passed in other jurisdictions that we can learn from. We make the commitment that we will learn from what has happened in Western Australia and we will deal with issues such as the transfer system. This is also going to be a voluntary program that schools can apply for. There will be nothing in there where schools have to do it. They will be receiving extra funding. I look forward to providing more details on a further occasion.

### Department of Housing and Public Works

**Mr BYRNE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. How many staff in the Department of Housing and Public Works have had their employment terminated since 26 March 2012 and will the minister guarantee the job security of remaining staff, particularly those in QBuild?

**Mr Seeney:** Robbie Schwarten wrote that one.

**Dr FLEGG:** I am pleased to have a question from the ghost of a minister past. A theme throughout the questions asked by the opposition today is in relation to this government's discipline around recurrent spending. The underlining tenet is that over their years in government the Labor Party allowed recurrent spending to run hopelessly out of control until this state was crippled by an unsustainable budget deficit that they had no intention of ever addressing. The losers from that budget deficit are Queenslanders. They are the 31,000 families who cannot get access to public housing. They are the other Queenslanders who want to access government services and support of one sort or another when those opposite left us in the most parlous economic state of any part of mainland Australia.

The Newman government has set about bringing discipline to recurrent expenditure that not only is necessary but is absolutely essential if this state is to have any sort of future outside of the hands of its financiers. We understand fully the importance of front-line services. We understand fully the work that QBuild and the other many sections of my department do. We understand fully that the problems that this state faces are not the fault of those who work in the public sector; they are the fault of those who sit opposite and their former colleagues.

Our policy will be to rein in recurrent expenditure. The people who will win out of that will be the Queenslanders who depend on this government to have a sustainable financial position. We have not terminated, non-voluntarily, anybody's employment. All we have done is to set about trying to establish a sustainable financial base for this state and my department to go forward and finally be able to address the sorts of urgent needs that we see for Queenslanders in housing—needs that have been created by fiscal incompetence.

### Bruce Highway

**Mr SORENSEN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister please provide the House with an update of the government's commitment to the Bruce Highway and is the minister aware of any other proposals?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question and I congratulate him on his re-election. It is wonderful to see the class of 2009—and I think there are many LNP members here from the class of 2009 who were re-elected. It is great to see.

In terms of the Bruce Highway, the LNP has moved very, very quickly to start to meet its election commitments on the Bruce Highway. It was a great pleasure for me to be in Townsville last month with the Premier and my colleague the Minister for Local Government to announce our Bruce Highway crisis action group. The reality is that the Bruce Highway has been ignored repeatedly by Labor. The reality is that that group has some wonderful people on it. Let me mention a few of them: Geoff Leddy, Chairman of the RACQ; Roz Shaw, CEO from Hawkins Road Transport Pty Ltd and Vice President of the Queensland Trucking Association; and also Chief Superintendent Bob Gee, State Traffic Support Branch, Operations Support Command, Queensland Police Service.

Let me remind the House of what the LNP's commitment is. We have said that we will put an extra billion dollars on the table for the Bruce Highway as long as the federal government step up to the plate. They need to put their \$5 billion on the table over the next 10 years and we will put our billion dollars on the table as well—an additional \$1 billion.

The Bruce Highway is fundamental to this state. It is a lifeline—1,700 kilometres. I cannot believe that anyone in this chamber would be opposed to more money being spent on the Bruce Highway, but I am wrong because there is one person in this House who has questioned additional money being spent on the Bruce Highway. Who is that person? It is the opposition main roads spokesperson. The opposition main roads spokesperson told the *Cairns Post* on 20 April that spending more money on the Bruce Highway was 'mis-spending' money. What does Labor want? They do not want us to spend more money on the Bruce Highway; they want no money spent on the Bruce Highway, no additional money being spent. If the member for Mulgrave is concerned that he has been misquoted, I will read from the *Cairns Post* article of 20 April. It states—

Mulgrave MP Curtis Pitt said the new LNP Government was mis-spending \$1 billion of state money because the Bruce Highway is a federally funded road.

Disgraceful!

### Environment Risk Management Plans

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment. Considering the LNP's pre-election commitment to Charters Towers' graziers that they do not support the environment risk management plans, I table a quote from the *Northern Miner* in January 2012 of a pre-election commitment by the shadow minister for environment in an article in which he stated that the LNP was opposed to the ERMPs and would soon be releasing a policy.

*Tabled paper:* Article in the Northern Miner, dated 13 January 2012, titled 'Reef rules raise grazier ire' [122].

Since there has been no policy release, will the minister advise when the ERMPs, which are an unjust burden on landowners, will be removed?

**Mr POWELL:** Madam Speaker, I, too, wish to congratulate you on your elevation to the chair. I thank the member for Dalrymple for his question and for his continued interest in the work on reef protection, particularly in his electorate and in the electorates of North Queensland.

The LNP, whether in opposition or now in government, has always taken the approach that it is better to achieve outcomes for the reef and for farmers by working with farmers and not asking them to spend hours filling in useless paperwork. We have made the commitment that we will progressively work with graziers and with cane growers to implement best management practice programs in both industries in the catchments not only on the reef but across all of Queensland.

That work has commenced. That direction has been given to my department as recently as this week. We are working with stakeholders. I met with the Australian Sugar Milling Council yesterday and I will continue to meet with stakeholders on this issue. We are looking at what is required in terms of—

**Mr Rickuss:** It sounds like we are succeeding where Katter has failed.

**Mr POWELL:** That is exactly correct. Where Katter has failed, we are succeeding. We are working with stakeholders to progressively implement BMP programs on reef protection and to improve the economic benefit for graziers and cane growers that produce real, on-the-ground financial benefit for the farmers and outcomes for the reef. We will work in consultation with the stakeholders. We are preparing what is required in terms of legislative review. That direction has been given to the department.

I look forward to talking to the member for Dalrymple, as I do the member for Hinchinbrook and all the members representing the relevant catchments that have been affected by what was really an election promise made by the former government in its haste to shore up preferences from the Greens. There was no need to rush to this harsh regulatory process. There was no need to have farmers in their houses filling in paperwork when the government should have been out working with the farmers on extension, on delivering better outcomes for the farmers and for the reef. We intend to reverse that. We are working on the opportunities now. We are doing it with the industries involved, and I look forward to keeping the member informed of that progress.

### Real Estate Industry

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Justice. Will the Attorney-General please advise the House on the difficulties currently facing the real estate industry? Does the government have any plans to address them?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for Gaven for the question. It is a great question with a great answer. In order to give a great, positive answer, we must look at the historical purposes of these plans. During the election campaign, the honourable Premier, other shadow ministers and I travelled the state with respect to real estate red tape reduction. One thing that has crippled industry in this state is red tape. Who is to blame for the strangulation of red tape of business in Queensland? The Australian Labor Party, represented by seven members on that side of the House.

The Liberal National Party is serious about getting Queensland back on track. To get Queensland back on track we have to help business and industry. How are we going to do that? In the portfolio of the honourable colleague to my left, we will get rid of sustainability declarations introduced by most of the members over there. I can recall the debate at the time. I stood in this House and I said, 'I practised in this area. You do not understand it. We will be back in here amending the legislation and we will have versions and versions of that declaration.' What have we seen? We have seen version after version. We can say to industry that the sustainability declarations will be gone and this minister will be introducing legislation.

We can also say to real estate agents, lawyers and consumers across the state that we will streamline sales contracts, making it easier and cheaper to buy and sell property in Queensland. Warning form 30Cs have been the bane of the existence of the property industry in Queensland. We will incorporate those, making it easier for Queenslanders to buy and sell property.

The overall policy strategy is in the honourable Treasurer's portfolio to bring back the concessional rate of stamp duty for a principal place of residence. It was one of the most shameful decisions that I saw during the last three years where the Labor opposition in government took that right

away from Queenslanders. We used to be the state which wanted investment. We used to be the state which called for investment, but the Labor Party strangled it. Its answer at the time was, 'We want to be like all the other states.' I can tell honourable members that I do not want Queensland to be the basket case economy which Labor drove New South Wales to, or other southern states. We want to be the state of investment. We want to be the envy of all other states of Australia. To do that, we have to get Queensland back on track. I am proud to be part of a team led by a Premier who is a can-do man and a can-do ministerial and backbench team where we will do just that.

*(Time expired)*

### **Woombye, Fixed Speed Camera**

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to the position of Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and I ask: will the Minister for Main Roads follow through with the previous main roads minister's decision to have a fixed camera installed at the Nambour Connection Road intersection with Blackall Street, Woombye for the purpose of improving the safety of this intersection?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for Nicklin for his question. Road safety is a very important issue for all of us in this chamber. That is why the LNP committed to a whole series of initiatives, not just on the Bruce Highway and making that a safer road. As we know, the RACQ has said that, if we do not spend more money on the Bruce Highway over the next 10 years, we will see between 300 and 400 fatalities on that road over the next 10 years. That is why it is very important that we make that commitment.

With regard to Roads to Resources, that is about improving the condition of those roads which are affected in the mining sector. That is why the LNP will commit another \$285 million over the next four years to look after those roads and then another \$100 million every year after that to improve local areas whose roads have been impacted by that great mining sector. We have also made a significant commitment to road safety in terms of flashing school zones.

In terms of all the roads across Queensland, clearly we are determined to work with local communities where we can in difficult financial situations, because let us not forget that the Labor Party left this state in a very dire fiscal position. As the Treasurer and Premier have indicated, we are heading towards \$85 billion of debt, a \$2.8 billion deficit and \$100 million a week in interest on that debt. Imagine going back to your communities and saying, 'This week I have an extra \$100 million for your community to work in your area.' Unfortunately, because of the debt, because of the deficit, we cannot afford to do everything, but I can assure the member for Nicklin that we will be working with local communities to provide infrastructure where we can afford it and where it is necessary.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! As question time started two minutes early, the time for questions has expired.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Further Answer to Question; Public Service**


**Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (3.28 pm), by leave: In my response to the question asked by the member for South Brisbane, I stated that the number of front-line staff in my department was 3,900. In fact, that is the total number of all of the staff currently employed in my department. With the amalgamation of several agencies, my department, I am advised, is still determining the number of front-line staff.

**Ms Trad:** So you don't know.

**Ms BATES:** You didn't know. You couldn't answer the question when you were asked it when you were in government.

## **PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (3.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of other acts as stated in the schedule. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

*Tabled paper:* Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill [123].

*Tabled paper:* Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [124].

I am pleased to introduce the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. The bill has two major purposes. The first purpose is to provide formulae in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to determine the size of membership and balance between government and non-government members on the parliament's portfolio committees, depending on the composition of the Legislative Assembly at any given time. The second purpose is to return dignity and prestige to the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly by including the Speaker in the deliberations of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, particularly with respect to the management of the parliament and the Parliamentary Service.

Following the state election the government received advice from the Clerk of the Parliament about the parliament's committee system. In essence, the Clerk's advice contended that the composition of the parliament decided upon by the electors of Queensland dictated that the number of members and the balance of numbers between government and non-government members on the portfolio committees should change so that they could remain workable and function practically in the new parliament.

The Clerk also proposed that certain formulae should be included in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. These formulae will determine the size of membership and balance between government and non-government members on the portfolio committees depending on the political composition of the Legislative Assembly at any given time. The formulae would also remove the need for the parliament to revisit the act immediately after each election if the altered composition of the parliament necessitated change. The government has accepted the Clerk's advice on these matters as providing a sensible and practical way forward.

The bill provides four separate formulae to determine the membership and operation of portfolio committees. These formulae cover all circumstances within which the Assembly could find itself—from the current circumstance within which non-government members comprise less than 15 per cent of the membership of the Assembly up to the circumstances of a minority government within which at least 50 per cent of the membership of the Assembly comprised non-government members.

Historically, the number of government and non-government members on the Queensland parliament's committees has largely reflected the political composition of the parliament at that time. This is also in line with a 1992 recommendation of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. The formula to operate in the current parliament provides that each portfolio committee will consist of eight members, with six members being nominated by the newly named Manager of Government Business and two members being nominated by the Leader of the Opposition. The chair will be the member of the committee nominated as chair by the Manager of Government Business, and a quorum at a meeting will be five members including at least one non-government member.

The government supported the establishment of the portfolio committee system in 2011 when in opposition and supports the retention of the system now in government. There were seven portfolio committees in the last parliament and there will be seven portfolio committees in the new parliament, with their roles and powers unchanged. However, as required by the act, the portfolio committees will be restructured with different names and different individual areas of responsibility in some cases, given the changes to the administrative arrangements of government which my government put in place following the election.

The clearer lines of ministerial responsibility implemented by my government, inherent in having each government department responsible to a single minister, will enable the oversight responsibilities of the portfolio committees to be much clearer in the new parliament—and isn't that a breath of fresh air? Ministers will be responsible to a single committee rather than having their responsibilities split between different committees as was the case under the flawed, unworkable and frankly incompetent administrative arrangements of the former government. The portfolio committees serve an important function in reviewing bills and scrutinising the other actions of government. The changes outlined in the bill will enable the portfolio committees to effectively operate in the new parliament.

In 2011, the parliament established a Committee of the Legislative Assembly comprising three government members and three non-government members. The CLA was given a wide array of responsibilities including:

- the ethical conduct of members, except for the hearing of complaints which are handled by the Ethics Committee or the Assembly as a whole;
- parliamentary powers, rights and immunities;
- the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, that is, the standing orders;
- management of the Parliamentary Service, for example, oversight of the parliament's budget, facilities management for parliamentary committees, maintenance of the parliamentary buildings including electorate offices, and policies for the management of the parliament;
- monitoring and reviewing the business of the Legislative Assembly to aim for the effective discharging of parliamentary business; and
- monitoring and reviewing the business of committees, particularly the referral of bills to committees and, where appropriate, varying the time for committees to report on bills or varying the committee responsible for a bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as you are aware, the Speaker's management and administrative functions with respect to the Parliamentary Service were transferred to the CLA upon its establishment in 2011. Furthermore, with the approval of the CLA, several of these functions were also transferred to the Clerk in the Clerk's capacity as chief executive of the Parliamentary Service. During the debate of the relevant legislation in 2011, the then opposition strongly supported an amendment which would have included the Speaker on the CLA. However, sadly, the amendment was not supported by the former government. Consequently, the position of Speaker was not included as a member of the CLA by the parliament, except for when the CLA was dealing with a matter relating to standing orders.

The government believes that the prestige and importance of the position of Speaker is central to the operation of the parliament. Therefore, the bill provides for the position of Speaker to be included on the CLA for all of its areas of responsibility as a member and furthermore as chairman. The government does, however, see the benefit in retaining the CLA, as it provides members with a greater level of involvement in the management and administration of the parliament. All officeholders presently included as members of the CLA will continue serving in that capacity, providing non-government members with significant involvement in the running of the parliament and the Parliamentary Service.

The bill provides that, while the Speaker is a member and chairman of the CLA and will be able to exercise key input into the deliberations of the CLA, the Speaker will not have a deliberative vote at CLA meetings, except in certain circumstances. These circumstances include questions relating to a matter on which the Speaker must be consulted under section 6(3) of the Parliamentary Service Act 1988—for instance, the budget and personal staffing for the Speaker's office or a matter affecting the Legislative Assembly chamber, such as capital works. The bill also retains the deliberative vote that the Speaker is currently provided with under the act when the CLA is considering matters relating to the standing orders of the parliament.

The current principle of bipartisanship on the CLA will remain, as the chairman will continue to not have a casting vote if a vote is tied at a CLA meeting. This is an important element of the CLA, in that neither the three government members nor the three non-government members voting as a bloc can control CLA outcomes. Any matter that cannot be decided by a majority vote of the CLA will be referred back to the Legislative Assembly as a whole to debate and decide, and these debates will of course be presided over by the Speaker.

The bill provides that the Manager of Government Business is responsible for calling CLA meetings and setting the agenda for the meetings. This is a similar process to that which is followed for the Legislative Assembly as a whole—that is, the Manager of Government Business informs members of parliamentary sitting weeks and oversights the order of business on the *Notice Paper*. The bill also includes amendments to the Constitution of Queensland 2001—the Constitution—and other relevant legislation to formally alter the title of the position 'parliamentary secretary' to that of 'assistant minister'. The government is of the view that the title 'assistant minister' is more reflective of the role and duties of this position than the title of 'parliamentary secretary' and that it is easier for people to understand. This is particularly important as I expect assistant ministers to be assisting and working alongside cabinet ministers to deliver quality outcomes for the people of Queensland. The bill provides that the 11 members appointed by the Governor as parliamentary secretaries on 12 April 2012 shall continue as assistant ministers. The bill also inserts a provision into the Constitution to remove any doubt, if any exists, that an assistant minister is not a minister of the state—that is, an assistant minister is not a cabinet minister.

As I alluded to earlier, the bill also provides for the creation of the new parliamentary position of 'Manager of Government Business' to replace the position of 'Leader of the House'. Similar to the government's view with respect to the positions of assistant minister and parliamentary secretary, the government believes that the title 'Manager of Government Business' is more reflective of the role and duties of this position. The bill also makes provision for the new parliamentary positions of Manager of Government Business, Chief Government Whip and Senior Government Whip to be added to the list of office holders in the Legislative Assembly who are entitled to receive an additional salary. The amount of the additional salaries to be paid to these office holders will be fixed by the Governor in Council and will be published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* and the *Members' Entitlements Handbook*. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (3.42 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.

### Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (3.42 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this day's sitting.

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

**AYES, 77**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Sorensen

**NOES, 9**—Byrne, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

## TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (3.51 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, can I congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. I present a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008, the Duties Act 2001, the Electricity Act 1994, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 and for other purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

*Tabled paper:* Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [\[125\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [\[126\]](#).

The Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 amends legislation to give effect to a number of the government's election commitments, as we have spoken about earlier today. Specifically, it reinstates the transfer duty home concession; it increases the payroll tax exemption threshold; it freezes the tariff 11 electricity tariff prices for one year; it also facilitates the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation; and it removes the requirement for sustainability declarations, as just mentioned by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

The bill also includes an amendment to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 to streamline the information included in agency annual reports, with the aim of producing further agency savings. The Bill amends the Duties Act 2001 and the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to give effect to the election commitments to lower the cost of living for Queenslanders and reduce the payroll tax on small and medium-sized businesses.

The government is determined to implement its election commitments—unlike those opposite who, when they campaign, promise one thing and then in government do and say the opposite. Members will remember the election in which Labor campaigned on asset sales, the removal of the fuel subsidy and the introduction of a waste tax. They will not remember it, because it never happened. We will deliver what we promised, and this legislation is the start.

This bill delivers on our promises to lower the cost of living for families by reinstating the principal place of residence concessional rate of transfer duty for the purchase of a person's home. The concession provides a one per cent rate of transfer duty to the first \$350,000 of the consideration or value of the home, with duty at the general rates applying to any remaining part of the value of the home. The previous home concession was removed on 1 August 2011 by the Labor Party and the general transfer duty rates and the phasing-out point for the first home concession were amended at the same time. To fully reinstate the previous position, the Duties Act 2001 amendments also reinstate the transfer duty rate structure and the first home concession as it existed before 1 August 2011.

The former government's Building Boost strategy was a complete and utter failure. It placed a tax on the family home and did not increase the number of new dwellings being built in Queensland. In fact, the then government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars writing to residents in New South Wales and Victoria and over \$1.4 million in advertising a program that so far has failed to meet a 50 per cent take-up rate.

Homebuyers will therefore once again benefit from lower transfer duty on acquiring their family home, second or subsequent home, saving around \$7,000. The changes will commence on 1 July 2012, as promised, and apply to contracts entered into on or after that date.

The bill provides payroll tax relief for small and medium-sized business by amending the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to increase the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million so that employers with payrolls up to \$1.1 million will be effectively exempt from payroll tax. Increasing the



deduction to \$1.1 million will also benefit employers with payrolls between \$1.1 million and \$5.5 million who will be entitled to a deduction or an increase in their existing deduction. The maximum deduction will be \$1.1 million, which phases out at the rate of \$1 for every \$4 of taxable wages above the \$1.1 million threshold. Again, these changes will apply, as promised, from 1 July 2012.

These payroll tax changes go to the heart of our belief that small business is the lifeblood of the Queensland economy and, unlike those opposite, we value the role small business plays within the Queensland economy. The new payroll tax exemption threshold will mean that approximately 1,200 employers, who would otherwise be paying payroll tax in 2012-13, will not be liable. As a result, approximately 90 per cent of Queensland employers will not be liable for payroll tax. The change will save taxpayers \$40 million in 2012-13 and will reinforce the competitiveness of Queensland's payroll tax regime compared to other states.

The bill will amend the Electricity Act 1994 to implement the government's decision to freeze the current standard residential electricity tariff, tariff 11, excluding the impact of the Commonwealth government's carbon tax, and that will apply for one year from 1 July 2012. To facilitate this, in accordance with the current legislation, it will be necessary for the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, rather than the Queensland Competition Authority, to set the tariff 11 price for 2012-13. To ensure the minister has sufficient flexibility to do this, a one-year transitional provision is proposed to be inserted into the Electricity Act.

In addition, to compensate retailers for the price freeze on tariff 11, the government intends to direct Energex, the distributor, to reduce its network charges for 2012-13. To facilitate this, it is proposed to insert a one-year transitional provision into the Electricity Act to give the Minister for Energy and Water Supply the power to make a regulation in relation to Energex's network charges for 2012-13. Freezing tariff 11 for one year will deliver on a key aspect of the government's commitment to address the rising cost of living for Queenslanders and help ease the increasing pressure on household budgets.

The bill will also amend the Electricity Act to implement the government's commitments to require retailers to display the cost of the carbon price and green energy schemes on household electricity bills from 1 July 2012. Under the amendments, retailers will be required to include a statement prescribed in regulation on residential bills for electricity based on an estimate determined by the Queensland Competition Authority.

Given the government's decision to freeze the standard residential tariff for 2012-13, the first statement will only include information on the impact of the Commonwealth government's carbon tax. However, in later years the cost of the renewable energy target will also be included, as well as a more individualised statement for customers. Giving householders this information is a responsible exercise on the basis of price transparency alone. Queenslanders deserve to know what they are paying for. Importantly, it will also help families to assess whether the Commonwealth's promised compensation measures truly offset the cost impacts of the carbon tax.

The bill will also amend the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 to facilitate the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority. The key functions of the Office of Best Practice Regulation will be to review and publicly report on regulatory assessment statements submitted by government departments for primary and subordinate legislation; publish an annual report on departmental performance against regulatory burden benchmarks; establish a process to review the existing stock of Queensland regulation; and investigate and report on matters related to competition, industry, productivity or best practice regulation at the direction of the responsible ministers.

As one of our 30-day commitments to getting Queensland back on track, this government promised to reduce real estate red tape by scrapping sustainability declarations. Amendments contained in this bill to the Building Act 1975 and Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 do just that. Effective immediately on this bill receiving royal assent, real estate agents and sellers will be relieved of this unnecessary burden.

For most of us, buying and selling a house is the biggest commercial transaction we engage in. For this reason it is imperative that buyers and sellers have absolute certainty about their rights. This is why transitional provisions have been included in the bill to deal with transactions that may be affected by the repeal. Under the previous regime, the law made it clear that a misrepresentation contained in a sustainability declaration would not give rise to a right to terminate the contract. Instead, buyers who relied on the misrepresentation would have a right to compensation. The transitional provisions make it clear that this remains the case even after the repeal of the sustainability declaration.

There is no question that the community is interested in sustainability issues. This is particularly the case with solar hot-water and photovoltaic solar systems where people can save money on their power bills by installing this technology in their homes. In the end it is the market, not a government imposed form, that dictates what is attractive to buyers. Repealing the sustainability declaration will not prevent sellers from identifying sustainable features of their homes when they put them on the market

for sale, nor will it stop interested buyers from taking these features into account when they are comparing the merits of different properties. It will just mean that they are not required by law to do so and they will not be liable to a fine of \$200 if they do not.

Finally, there has been a tendency for reporting requirements to be mandated in annual reports to ensure that agencies comply with their responsibilities and accountabilities. This has resulted in a proliferation of isolated annual reporting requirements in recent years and criticism that annual reports are too long and the information disclosed too diffuse. A number of ancillary items that have been included in annual reports in the past will still be reported on but on agency websites. A minor amendment to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 is necessary to remove the requirement for specific disclosure in the annual report. I again reiterate that what we have promised we will deliver on and that this is the first step—a real step—in providing cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders.

### First Reading



**Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (4.03 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.

### Declared Urgent



**Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (4.04 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill.



**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (4.04 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Treasurer. Labor will be opposing this motion. At the first opportunity those opposite are going to great lengths to show their true colours. The conservative government is showing worrying signs of what the next three years may bring. The core of parliamentary democracy is the role of the Legislative Assembly to analyse and scrutinise law that is put in place. This is the very first bill from the Treasurer. The Premier put one through earlier, but he was so quick on the trigger that unfortunately we were not able to jump.

What we see here is a proposal that because it has gone to, as the Premier said in public statements, the biggest committee of all, anything related remotely to election commitments may well be put through this parliament without going through the committee system. That is the very core of the responsibilities of members of parliament. We are here to represent all of the people of Queensland and scrutinise in detail legislation that is proposed. That is the purpose of the committee system.

This proposal flies in the face of what we heard from the Premier when speaking to the previous bill. Essentially we heard from the Premier about the importance of the committee system. Now we are seeing the Treasurer wishing to put this bill through without it going to a committee, simply because they have gone to the so-called biggest committee of all. This is exactly what we should not be seeing here in Queensland.

We are here to scrutinise legislation and to go through it in detail. You might well get away with an election campaign full of gimmicks and slogans and putting up big-picture stuff, but this is where we get to the minutiae; this is where we get to the detail. It is very important that we look at what is included in the bill. The bill may well have some good points. We would like to look at this bill in detail before voting on it. We would like to see exactly what is in it. Rather, it is being brought on in such a rushed fashion.

What I have previously stated is still correct. This is the first opportunity to see this House operate under these new and unique arrangements. Those opposite are showing their true colours. I think they show contempt for this House and the broader community by saying, 'We do not need the committee system. We will put it through.' This bill should be put through a committee. There is no reason that cannot happen. Those opposite are looking to weaken the committee system. They are basically refusing to put legislation through committees, even though that was part of an election commitment. What is their definition of an election commitment or a campaign initiative? We do not know the answer to that. This is an arbitrary decision by this government. They are obviously going to continue to do this. This is a sign of things to come. It is very disappointing. People on that side of the House and those who come around to the other side of the horseshoe will be very disappointed if they do not think this is what they signed up for. They did not sign up to have things rushed through the House.

**Mr Stevens:** Queensland voted on it!

**Mr PITT:** I take the interjection from the Leader of the House. This is not the way this is meant to be. This is actually an election commitment; it is not a bill that has been put through the House. Committees should be looking at this. They should be scrutinising it.

Those opposite are ramming through this legislation without providing proper detail. This is not just about the opposition, the two members of Katter's Australian Party or the two Independents; this is actually about all of the members of the government, who should be looking at this and asking what part of this is going to affect their electorate. They are not getting the opportunity to put their case forward. This is being rammed through without any negotiation or scrutiny by this parliament. The Premier claimed that they would govern with humility, grace and dignity. It looks as though humility, grace and dignity are the orphans of the LNP. They are off to a very bad start.

**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (4.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the need for this bill to be dealt with as an urgent bill. I took great interest in the comments just made by the member for Mulgrave. If we were not a government that is intent on saving money, we should publish those colossally arrogant comments and send them to every Queensland household, particularly the struggling households in the member's own electorate. We should make it very clear that once again we see what the Labor Party actually stands for: indecision and procrastination. It is so good at taking things to committees.

I spent seven years at the Brisbane City Council. For the first four years I was forced to try to take Brisbane City forward with a huge burden in my saddlebags. It was called a Labor Party majority. I had a Labor-dominated city cabinet. Every Monday for about five hours now Lord Mayor Graham Quirk and I would listen to the nonsense of the Australian Labor Party councillors. Just in the past couple of days, but particularly today, I can see already from the comments made that it is in their DNA to procrastinate, to send things to committees and to never make decisions. On this issue there is an overwhelming need. I see it in their faces. They want to go to a committee, hold hands and sing *Kumbaya My Lord*, while across Queensland families are suffering due to their financial ineptitude and their poor and reckless financial management. We will not tolerate that.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I think I have hit a raw nerve. The member for Mulgrave knows that he is on the end of the hook. He is struggling and jangling, trying to get off the hook. He knows he has committed a huge faux pas. We are trying to save money for families across Queensland, so why should we wait? What earthly reason could there be for waiting? What is so complex about this? For the benefit of the financial illiterates on the other side of the chamber, maybe we should again go through what this is all about. Fundamentally, this bill is about dealing with cost-of-living pressures.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The person who is interjecting was part of the gang about which in recent times a few commentators have said, 'Gee, they should be in jail, particularly that Andrew Fraser guy.' That is what someone said to me; I am not saying it. A well-known media commentator said it to me behind closed doors. He felt that we had seen poor and reckless financial management.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The Leader of the Opposition is interjecting, but she was a party to decisions that created a \$2.8 billion deficit this financial year and that saw motor vehicle registration go up by 30 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition, who was the transport minister, has the absolute temerity to come in here and try to slow down cost-of-living relief.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** What would Labor know about due process? Let us look at its due process. What was the member for Mulgrave doing when the arrangements for the Yeppoon Hospital came through? Maybe he was not in the parliament at that time, but other people were around at that stage. The Yeppoon Hospital was dealt with in one afternoon. What about the local government arrangements, where they completely belted up and bashed up local government? Was that given to a committee for due process? No, not at all! What about the asset sales bill? How long did that spend before a committee? I see the beady eyes looking back at me. They are caught. I will say this about due process: when the Labor Party talks about due process, we go back to the actual spelling of the word 'hypocrisy'. Do honourable members know how to spell 'hypocrisy'? A-L-P! That is how you spell it. How dare they come in here this afternoon and talk about due process. They have no credibility whatsoever.

For the benefit of the financial illiterates opposite, let us look at what they are trying to hold up and what they are trying to stop for Queensland families. Do they want to keep family homes more expensive by having \$7,000 more in tax? Is that what they want? I am waiting for the interjections. Is it a good thing to slow down giving cost-of-living relief to those buying a family home? That is what this sort of unwanted intrusion into the orderly progress of the bill before the House this afternoon is all about. What about the payroll tax exemption? They are probably against that, because when I look across the chamber I am looking for the small business opposition spokesperson. Bzzz! I look around the chamber at my proud team and I see a few people who know about payroll tax, because they have paid it and they know how hard it is to make up staff payrolls each week.

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order. There is a longstanding tradition that members do not talk about a member who is absent from the chamber. I am not sure what that reason may be. Therefore, those comments should be retracted.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. There was no mention at all of assets or any particular member. It was a general comment.

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order. This has nothing to do with assets; this has to do with the fact that there was a reference to the small business shadow minister not being in the chamber. The Premier said, 'Bzzz' to say that she was not in the chamber. That is what this is about.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I have been listening carefully to the Premier's speech. I have not heard anything that, to my knowledge, has impeached on anyone else.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The bill seeks to freeze for one year tariff 11 electricity retail prices—that is, the family tariff. Does the member want higher electricity costs? Does he want families to pay higher electricity prices for longer? This bill is urgent because we want to give cost-of-living relief to families and businesses across Queensland. That is what we want to do.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Again the Leader of the Opposition is interjecting and again I say that every Queenslanders should know about this disgraceful performance this afternoon. We went to an election and said that we would do these things. This afternoon we are trying to do it quickly and efficiently. I know the Labor Party. If we had not brought this bill forward, we would have had the Leader of the Opposition piously asking, 'When are they going to act? They are breaking their commitments. They aren't acting quickly enough.' Over this entire three-year term we will see breath-taking hypocrisy from the ALP, week after week and month after month.

The final thing I will say is this: what is so bad about removing sustainability declarations? What is so bad about getting rid of them as soon as possible? Any real estate agent can tell us what people are doing on their sustainability declarations. If I tabled a blank piece of paper, we would see what people have been providing to vendors, because they have not been filling out the questions. It is an unnecessary piece of red tape or green tape, and it should go. In conclusion, this bill is urgent because these are commitments and they need to be delivered. Through this package we will provide cost-of-living relief and reduce some red tape. I cannot see why the Australian Labor Party does not get it. If this is the way it is going to act over the next three years, all I can say is, 'Thank you very much indeed, because that works for me.'


 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (4.17 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the motion relating to this very important bill that has been introduced into the parliament today. I listened to the Treasurer's speech and I have just listened to the Premier's contribution. He spoke about urgency and appeared to deride anyone who had some concerns about the proposed bill and the urgency of it. My interpretation of the bill is that the scheduled date for commencement is 1 July. The date of 1 July is the scheduled date for applicability to homebuyers, the payroll tax concession, the electricity amendments and—something that I certainly support—the proposed amendments to get rid of the ridiculous red tape and the sustainability declaration. My question to the Premier and the Treasurer is this: if there was so much urgency and they knew exactly what they were going to do, why have they left it until two minutes ago to introduce this bill into the House? Why was the Premier or the Treasurer not prepared to release a copy of this bill once all members of the parliament were declared so that we had an opportunity to read the proposals before we walked into this chamber to debate the bill?

I support the urgency. My understanding is that this legislation is to apply from 1 July. Even so, there were a number of occasions in the past when urgent matters were pushed through previous parliaments and were backdated to ensure everyone was able to access the various concessions. I say to the government that I support what it is proposing in this bill. I do have one concern. If the government is really genuine in saying that it wants to have open and transparent government and it does not want to abuse the numbers it now holds in this House, why did it not table a copy of this legislation earlier than it did today? The reality is that in the past we have seen governments come in here and introduce urgent legislation and contained in the fine print—

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. I firmly believe that the member is under the misconception that this bill is being debated today. The bill will not be debated during the sitting this week; it will be debated during the sitting week of 5 to 7 June. If he cannot read it by then, he is not doing his job as a member.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I call the member for Nicklin and ask him to confine his comments to the motion.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I resume my seat.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (4.20 pm), in reply: I want to speak to the urgency motion. Before the Manager of Government Business—the Leader of the House to me—leapt to his feet, I was going to make the point that there will be time for consideration of

the bill; it just will not be referred to a committee. It will be brought back to the House for debate in the next sitting week, and I think that is perfectly reasonable. It was done prior to the introduction of the new committees. There were many occasions when a bill would be introduced on the first available sitting day, allowed to lay on the table and then be brought on for debate on a subsequent date. I think people are getting fairly hot under the collar about something which those opposite would have had much experience in dealing with.

I also take up a number of comments that the Premier made in terms of the need to get this through to deliver on our election commitments to deliver cost-of-living savings for Queenslanders in the way that we said we would. I also reflect on a number of the comments that the Premier made in relation to bills being pushed through. He mentioned the Yeppoon Hospital bill, which was pushed through on the first day of a new parliament. I remember being in the House as a new member when it was pushed through on that day. I remember the former member for Rockhampton standing up and saying, 'This is an urgent matter that we went to the people with and the committee of the people have told us what they want us to deliver and so we will be able to deliver that.'

I do remember the local government bill that was pushed through by those opposite in one day. I remember because I was the last person to speak on that bill at 4 am when it was pushed through. I remember the asset sales bill that was pushed through during a budget sitting week on one day. I remember that debate going until 4 am. I remember those opposite guillotining debate on the clauses of the bill as we wanted to take them through one by one. I also remember the little trick that was put in that bill. Because it also dealt with the fuel subsidy, which had to be cancelled, there was a provision which said, 'and when this bill is passed, guess what? It will not even be called the fuel subsidy abolition bill anymore.' They were so proud of their work that they actually inserted a clause in the bill to change its name after it was passed. So we turn again to 2009. I remember coming into this place, again on the day after the parliament opened, when the new vegetation management bill was forced down the throats of Queenslanders as the Labor Party paid off its debt to the radical green movement and tried to do in the farmers and the property owners throughout Queensland on the day after they were elected.

They forget nothing and they learn nothing. We remember it and we are doing the right thing. I heard the member for Mulgrave and Leader of Opposition Business say, 'You might have had some slogans and some big ideas out there,' and, sure, we had some big ideas. However, we certainly did not see any coming from the other side. Let me tell honourable members what we had. We had a fully detailed economic blueprint for Queensland to get Queensland back on track and we had a fully detailed costings and savings strategy signed off by Len Scanlan. What did we see from those opposite? A two pager that had to be printed from the *Brisbane Times* website because they never released it to anyone, and they said, 'Here it is'. We handed out—Premier, help me here. How many contracts with Queensland did we hand out? Who from the government side handed out a contract with Queensland? We handed out thousands and thousands of them at railway stations, bus stations and shopping centres throughout Queensland. What did we say we were going to do? We said we were going to cut the waste, deliver better infrastructure and planning, build a four-pillar economy and save families money by freezing the electricity tariff, by reintroducing the principal place of residence concession, by freezing car registration and by getting rid of the sustainability declarations. We have been saying it for a year. What is it that they have not heard in over a year?

This bill introduces a commitment that the people of Queensland want to see introduced from 1 July. I will deal with the comments of the member for Nicklin, and I know he sat down when he realised the bill was going to lay on the table for a little while. He said, 'Why have you delayed it?' The parliament was only opened by the Governor yesterday at 2.10 pm. As soon as it was open and as soon as we had the opportunity, the bill was introduced. It will lay on the table. There will be time for reflection on it and there will be time for people to understand it.

Let me conclude. Here is a speech from the now Leader of the Opposition. On 3 August 2011 when she was discussing an increase in car registration fees she also said this—

That is right. We have to stand up and say to Queenslanders, 'We know there are cost-of-living expenses. We know there are pressures.' That is why we offer a range of assistance, a suite of programs to help Queenslanders where we can.

Members opposite can help Queenslanders by supporting this bill, which freezes electricity prices and does all of those things. Do not stop it. I think there is more to it than this. I think this is part of a cunning plan. I recall that the day after the election the member for Mulgrave said, 'I wouldn't mind being the Leader of the Opposition.' He put his hand up and said, 'I want to be the Leader of the Opposition.' There was a bit of a powwow, a bit of a talk and everyone came together and they all said, 'No, no, no, it can't be you. It has to be the member for Inala.' The member for Inala did the numbers and got up and became the Leader of the Opposition. Then she said, 'There might be a threat coming. The member for Mulgrave might be making a move on me. I will tell you what. Here is my cunning plan. I will suggest to the member for Mulgrave that he get up and oppose something that is going to deliver cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders because that will be really popular. That is the cunning plan.'

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order. In no way have I opposed anything to do with cost-of-living measures. All I have asked is that this urgency motion be opposed.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That is a point of view. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I was not finished. I find those comments offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member has asked for the comments to be withdrawn.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I retract. Here we have a cunning plan by the member for Inala, who wants to protect her position as Leader of the Opposition. Where is the member for South Brisbane? I have not seen the member for South Brisbane.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I apologise. The member for South Brisbane has entered the chamber. Here we have the cunning plan: the member for Inala is putting the member for Mulgrave up as the fall guy for not delivering cost-of-living savings to Queenslanders as soon as they possibly can. I am sorry, member for Mulgrave, you have fallen for the plan. Member for Mulgrave, get behind it and support the urgency motion. Please, for the sake of Queenslanders and for yourself, get behind the plan.

**Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.29 pm): The opposition is not opposed to the bill—we will scrutinise the bill—but what we are opposed to is this urgency motion. As the member for Nicklin says, these changes in legislation will come into effect on 1 July. We have nine—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Member for Mackay, my apologies, but I need to put the motion to the House.

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

**AYES, 77**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

**NOES, 7**—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

## HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Message from Governor

**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.38 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK AND OTHER

LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the *Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011* and the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* and to make minor or consequential amendments of Acts as stated in the schedule.

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 16 MAY 2012

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 16 May 2012, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[127\]](#).

### Introduction

**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.39 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011 and the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and to make minor or consequential amendments of acts as stated in the schedule. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Disabilities Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[128\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[129\]](#).

For me, as a member of parliament and a Queenslanders, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. This bill will significantly change the health landscape in Queensland and lead to the decentralisation of healthcare services across the state. This will in turn lead to improvements in patient care and community involvement and confidence in these critical services.

The bill will amend the act to establish hospital and health boards to oversee hospital and health services throughout the state. To reflect this, the name of the act will be amended to the Hospital and Health Boards Act.

Members would be aware that this has been a longstanding Liberal National Party policy. Today will see this government establish hospital boards in Queensland under a model that will not only deliver health reforms all Queenslanders desire but also ensure that the boards are accountable for the overall performance of the services that they govern. This bill through the provisions which allow for local boards to manage their resources will deliver on this policy. I expect the boards to exercise due diligence in decision making so as to ensure that services are appropriate to meet the needs of their local communities.

The provisions of the current act prohibit hospital and health services from employing staff other than executives. This would not allow hospital and health boards to do their job properly. We cannot expect boards to effectively manage their operations if they cannot even employ staff to work in their hospitals. Under the amendments that this government is proposing, hospital and health boards will be given much greater responsibilities under the legislation.

To this end, this bill will amend the act to enable hospital and health services to employ staff once the service is prescribed under regulation. This will not be automatic and I expect hospital and health boards to be able to demonstrate to me that they have both the capability and the capacity to take on this important and additional responsibility. Once this has been demonstrated, the required changes will be prescribed by regulation and all relevant staff will transfer to becoming employees of that service on the same terms and conditions.

To ensure equitable pay and conditions across the state, the act will retain a state-wide approach to enterprise bargaining and award arrangements. This will require consequential amendments to the Industrial Relations Act so that the departmental chief executive is the employer party for awards and certified agreements.

These changes will mean that hospital and health boards will be able to respond in a flexible manner to meet community and clinical needs. For example, if a hospital has a long waiting list in a particular specialist area, such as gastroenterology, then rather than having the patient wait to see a specialist the hospital will be able to respond by establishing a specialist nursing service staffed with nurses with advanced clinical practice skills to work with the medical and other staff to provide a timely, responsive and clinically appropriate service to patients.

The current act prohibits the ownership of land and buildings by hospital and health services. This government believes that, to operate a health service, boards need to have greater control over their facilities. This government therefore proposes to put in place a process to transfer the land and buildings to hospitals and health services. If this power is exercised, the Minister for Health and Treasurer will of course ensure that the public interest is protected by reserving the right to consent to or reject a proposed sale or acquisition of an asset or loan.

It is essential that there are strong lines of communication between boards and their chief executives and that clear accountability arrangements are in place. To that end, this government is further amending the act. This amendment will require each hospital and health board to establish an executive committee of the board to work with the health service chief executive to oversee strategic issues, such as the service's performance against targets detailed in the hospital and health service agreement.

The executive committee will also be responsible for overseeing a most important component of the accountabilities of the new hospital and health boards—that is, clinical and community engagement. A number of reviews and inquiries into health services in Queensland and nationally have clearly identified that engagement with staff and with the community is a critical success factor for the decentralised management of health services. To this end, I will require these executive committees to oversee three specific areas—namely, the clinician engagement strategy, the consumer and community engagement strategy and the medicare local protocol. This arrangement was sadly missing in the act.

The membership of the executive committee, which is to be chaired by the chair or deputy chair of the board, will include clinical members of the board. This is an important amendment to the bill which will enhance the clinical involvement and clinical leadership within the hospital and health services. I consider that this will, to a significant degree, give effect to a weakness in the act as it relates to clinical involvement in decision making. The chief executive of the service will participate in committee meetings.

Communities have consistently requested a greater say in the running of their hospitals and health services. To meet this need, I propose to amend the act to enable the minister to establish ancillary boards. These ancillary boards will provide advice to hospital and health boards on the operations of specific hospitals or health services within their region. These ancillary boards will be composed of members of the local community who can provide advice, support and expertise on health related matters. This amendment will mean that there is greater community involvement with our health services.

The government is of the view that the current health district boundaries are too large and will require reduction in size to further devolve decision making to more local communities of interest. The establishment of ancillary boards will also allow the progressive establishment of new, further devolved hospital and health service areas as capacity, capability and confidence grows in returning decision making and control of hospitals to local communities.

This bill will also amend the act to support the new national health funding arrangements under the National Health Reform Agreement. All jurisdictions have agreed to introduce legislation to give effect to the agreement. These arrangements will strengthen the accountability and transparency of the funding of public sector hospitals and other health services.

To achieve this outcome, the bill establishes the position of the administrator of the national health funding pool. The role of the administrator will be to oversee the payment of Commonwealth and state funds into a separate state pool account. This will be a critical first step for Queensland as we move forward with activity based funding which I anticipate will lead to greater efficiency of our health services.

One of the administrator's roles is to publicly report on payments into and out of the accounts. This reporting will be done on a monthly basis with an annual report to be tabled in parliament. The revised national health funding arrangements will come into place once all jurisdictions have enacted their legislation, an administrator is appointed and the necessary systems are established for the funding arrangements.

In my time as a member of parliament, the thing that has struck me in my travels around the state is that our health services staff identify with the hospital and health centres in which they work. The amendments that I am proposing in this bill will strengthen this as a consequence of hospitals and health services, firstly, being the employer of our top-class, front-line services staff who deliver outstanding services, and potentially being the owner of the land and capital infrastructure in which they work, and by enhancing clinical involvement in decision making that impacts on healthcare services provided in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.49 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.

### Referral to the Health and Disabilities Committee

**Madam SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Disabilities Committee.

## HEALTH LEGISLATION (HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.50 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Child Protection Act 1999, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, the Dental Technicians Registration Act 2001, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Forensic Disability Act 2011, the Health Act 1937, the Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011, the Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999, the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999, the Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Act 1998, the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006, the Mental Health Act 2000, the Nuclear Facilities Prohibition Act 2007, the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Act 2001 and the Occupational Therapists Registration Act 2001. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Disabilities Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Health Legislation (Health Practitioner Regulation National Law) Amendment Bill 2012 [[130](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Health Legislation (Health Practitioner Regulation National Law) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[131](#)].

In 2009 the parliament passed the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 to establish the national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions. On 1 July 2010, 10 registered health professional groups transitioned to the national scheme, leaving four health professions to continue being registered under Queensland registration systems. The health practitioner regulation national law provides for a further four professions to transition to the national scheme on 1



July this year. These four are medical radiation practitioners, occupational therapists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and Chinese medicine practitioners. Of these four, medical radiation practitioners and occupational therapists are currently registered under the Queensland system. Consequently, this bill repeals the two state registration acts to ensure a smooth transition to the national scheme on 1 July.

The bill makes consequential amendments to all acts that reference health practitioners and other related terms to ensure that occupational therapists and medical radiation practitioners are appropriately included in definitions concerning registered health professions. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1998 to ensure that any investigation or disciplinary action being undertaken with respect to a state registrant before 1 July 2012 can continue to be appropriately dealt with after the registrant has transitioned to the national scheme. The repeal of these two registration acts leaves only two professions registered under state registration systems. These are speech pathologists and dental technicians. Neither of these two professions has been accepted for inclusion into the national scheme.

The bill also amends the Mental Health Act 2000 to correct a definitional anomaly that arose when the national scheme commenced. The amendment updates the definition of 'psychiatrist' to ensure that medical practitioners who are registered to practice in areas of need as psychiatrists are captured. The national law categorises registrants in areas of need differently to the previous Queensland Medical Practitioners Registration Act. This difference has resulted in an anomaly in the definition of 'psychiatrist' that inadvertently meant that many psychiatrists performing functions under the Mental Health Act could no longer do so. This has had the most significant impact in regional and rural services which rely heavily on area-of-need registrants to be able to provide an effective mental health service. The problem has to date been addressed administratively, requiring unaffected psychiatrists to endorse decisions made by area-of-need registrants, but this has proven difficult and can only be an interim measure until the definition is updated. The amendment in this bill simply reverts the status of area-of-need registrants under the Mental Health Act to what it had been prior to the commencement of the national registration and accreditation scheme. This bill makes the necessary changes to Queensland's laws to ensure that the registration of Queensland's health professionals aligns with the rest of Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.53 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.

### Referral to the Health and Disabilities Committee

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Disabilities Committee.

## QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (4.54 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Queensland Art Gallery Act 1987 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Art Gallery Amendment Bill 2012 [[132](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Art Gallery Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[133](#)].


This bill enables the Art Gallery Board of Trustees to establish a committee to carry on the crucial activities of the foundation for the benefit of the community. The foundation was originally formed in 1979 for the purpose of assisting the board to maintain, improve and develop the state collection of works of art and the facilities and operations of the Queensland Art Gallery. Specifically, the foundation was established to attract and encourage donations, gifts, bequests and other forms of assistance for the benefit of the gallery. The foundation has been highly successful in achieving its objectives, with over 1,400 members and \$75,452,294 of donations and other monies raised since its inception. Each year the foundation receives donations, bequests and gifts of artworks from private and corporate donors, and over \$2 million was received in 2010-11. The foundation provides funds to the board for acquisition of artworks and development of exhibitions and programs, the size of which is dependent on donations received by the foundation, returns on investments, the needs of the gallery and artwork available for purchase.

The foundation conducts fundraising activities at the gallery. The foundation is currently governed by a council. In order to regularise its status, it is proposed that the foundation is subsumed into the board and that a newly created committee governs the foundation's activities. Currently the act allows the board to delegate its powers to a committee consisting only of board members. Amendments to the act are required to enable the board to establish a committee with broader membership consisting of both board and non-board members to carry on the activities of the foundation. This approach allows the board to retain control over the management and operations of the foundation given the large amount of government and private funds under management and avoids the need to create a new government body for the foundation. The bill will include within the board's functions the development of the gallery's collection. The foundation committee will deal with any funds agreed by the board to be managed and invested by the foundation committee for its fundraising purposes. The bill ensures that the board will have control and flexibility over the governance arrangements for the foundation committee, including its composition, criteria for membership, responsibilities and meeting procedures. The foundation committee will include at least two board members. It may also include non-board members, allowing foundation members with the capacity to assist the foundation achieve its objectives also to be represented if the board considers that appropriate.

The board will have power to delegate its powers to foundation committee members for the purpose of performing the functions of the foundation committee—that is, to raise funds to assist in the fulfilment of the board's functions. The foundation committee will have the powers necessary to encourage gifts, donations, bequests and legacies of property for the benefit of the board but must not incur a debt. The bill provides that the board is a charitable institution and deems gifts to the foundation to be gifts to the board. Private ancillary funds are the major source of donations to the foundation. However, many of these private ancillary funds are restricted to donating to charitable organisations. The bill specifies that the board is a charitable organisation to ensure that private ancillary funds are able to make donations to the foundation.

In terms of protection to foundation committee members, the bill will extend the protection from civil liability afforded to board members to committee members and also extend liability for illegal borrowing by board members to committee members. The bill will also extend provisions regarding board members who have an interest in matters being considered by the board to committee members who have an interest in matters being considered by the committee. The establishment of a committee of the board to undertake the activities of the foundation is the most reasonable and appropriate way to regularise the status of the foundation and to limit any restrictions on the foundation's ability to receive and deal with donations and bequests. It also meets the preference expressed by existing donors and benefactors for the work of the foundation to be transparent and distinct from the daily running of the gallery. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (4.59 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.

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

**Madam SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (FAIR WORK ACT HARMONISATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.59 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1999, the Industrial Relations Regulation 2011 and the Public Service Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [[134](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[135](#)].

The main objective of the bill is to provide for amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999. This act is within my portfolio and, to the extent that it relates to public sector industrial relations, the portfolio of the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. As well, the bill amends one statute within the portfolio of the Premier, the Public Service Act 2008.

The bill modernises the Industrial Relations Act 1999 to reflect certain key aspects of the Commonwealth Fair Work Act. In addition, the bill requires the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to give consideration to the prevailing economic conditions when determining wages and other conditions of employment. Finally, the bill amends the Public Service Act 2008 to allow a member of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to hear Public Service appeals.

From 1 January 2010, Queensland referred its private sector industrial relations powers to the Commonwealth. This referral consequently reduced the Queensland industrial relations jurisdiction to approximately 245,000 workers, the majority of whom are employed in the state public sector and local government. These changes will also allow us to introduce a number of amendments that are modelled on the federal Fair Work Act 2009 and thus deliver greater harmonisation with the federal industrial relations system.

The bill also delivers on the government's commitment to ensure that our state has a Public Service that it can afford and one that delivers for Queenslanders. This will be achieved by requiring the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to consider the state's financial position and fiscal strategy when it determines public sector wages.

There are six key objectives of the bill. Firstly, the act has been amended to require the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to give consideration, as I have indicated, to the financial position of the state when making a binding arbitrated decision relating to public sector wages. Secondly, a new process has been introduced whereby the Queensland government can brief the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on the state's financial position, fiscal strategy and related matters.

Thirdly, the amendments improve the requirements for the taking of protected industrial action in connection with a proposed certified agreement. These new arrangements mirror the provisions in the Fair Work Act and harmonise the state system with the federal system. Fourthly, the changes introduce a process for employers to request employees to approve a proposed certified agreement by voting for it. Once again, these provisions reflect the current arrangements in the fair work federal legislation.

Fifthly, the changes deliver further consistency with the federal legislation by introducing a power for the Attorney-General to make a declaration terminating industrial action if the action is threatening the safety and welfare of the community or is threatening to damage the Queensland economy—again, mirroring federal legislation. Finally, the changes allow members of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to be appointed to conduct appeals of certain decisions which affect Public Service employees.

I will now discuss each amendment in more detail. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission has an important function in establishing wages through its general rulings on wage and allowance adjustments for award and non-award employees and through its statements of policy on the principles of wage fixation. There are also times when, despite their best efforts, parties to a proposed certified agreement cannot reach agreement. At such times the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission may be required to impose an arbitrated decision on the parties that determines wages and conditions of employment. In order to ensure responsible financial management and return the state's budget to surplus, the Queensland government believes that it is important and in the interests of all Queenslanders that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission is required to consider the state's financial position and fiscal strategy when determining wage outcomes for the Public Service.

I make the very important point that we have not adopted the approach of New South Wales in relation to public sector wage fixation. Our amendments still allow the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission the discretion to determine wage outcomes. However, the commission must give consideration in its deliberations to the state's financial position and fiscal plan.

Currently, the Industrial Relations Act 1999 does not prescribe a clear process for employee balloting on matters in connection with proposed industrial action. These arrangements are inconsistent with the federal Industrial Relations Act, which prescribes a process of balloting and related industrial action. The bill ensures that, once an order approving the balloting of employees has been obtained, there is a consistent process for how voting may occur and when a ballot can be considered successful. The voting process will be conducted by an independent and impartial body, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, with the costs of the ballot being met by the Electoral Commission of Queensland. The changes are not intended to modify the philosophy or underlying policy intent of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 in relation to the facilitation of enterprise bargaining. Instead the changes are intended to ensure that balloting processes are consistent, fair and transparent and reflect the standards set by the federal industrial relations system.

The bill will also clarify that employers have a right to directly request employees to approve a proposed certified agreement by voting for it. Once again, these provisions are consistent with those found in the federal Fair Work Act and will therefore ensure greater harmonisation with the federal jurisdiction.

There may be times when our public services are so affected by industrial action that the public interest will be best protected by the Queensland government intervening to end the dispute. Having regard to the damaging effects protracted industrial action can have on Queensland businesses, workers and their families, as well as the risk it can pose to the safety and welfare of the community, the bill introduces a power for the Attorney-General to intervene and make a declaration requiring the industrial action to cease. Federal laws contain a similar provision, introduced under the previous federal legislative regime and preserved under the current regime and administration federally. The issue of uniformity with the federal jurisdiction aside, intervention by the Queensland government in industrial disputes will not be undertaken lightly and will only be utilised where there are strong public interest grounds warranting such action.

Providers of essential services will benefit from the new provision, better balancing the rights of the bargaining parties against the legitimate interests of the affected parties. Moreover, Queenslanders as consumers of essential services will benefit from provisions such as this which are aimed at mitigating severe disruption caused by protected industrial action. Finally, it will assist the government and the community at large by minimising the incidence of disputation that causes severe economic and social damage.

The Public Service Act 2008 provides that a person may appeal to the Public Service Commission against certain decisions concerning Public Service employment. As the Industrial Relations Act now applies only to the Public Service and local government, there is little merit in retaining two distinct bodies to deal with public sector employment disputes. The government will also refocus the Public Service Commission away from a regulatory function towards public sector efficiency. To assist in that regard, Public Service appeals will now be heard by members of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading



**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.07 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.

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

**Madam SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 58.



**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.08 pm), continuing: I am pleased to continue my speech on the address-in-reply for the 54th Parliament of Queensland. This morning I was talking about general issues that relate to Queensland and then started to cover many of the issues that are very important to me and my electorate of Warrego. A number of years ago one of the most important issues that I found needing attention was the protection of prime agricultural land. The member for Condamine and I met with landholders on the Brigalow flood plain in the Haystack Road area. Those landholders expressed to us their concern that a coalmine was going to be built right in the middle of this huge flood plain. Over many years they had spent millions of dollars trying to manage the water flows by moving fences, changing roads, changing their paddocks and changing the way they did business.

We determined at that time that we needed to protect what we called iconic farming land. It progressed from there. It goes to show that if you persevere with something eventually you get somewhere. With the great support of the local communities the previous Labor government was pushed into doing something about it. It put in place a strategic land management process which identified some of this land. It was very complicated and bureaucratic. A person had to put in an application if they wanted to determine whether they had prime agricultural land and then, for a fee, they would be told whether they did or did not have such land. It was complicated. I am pleased to say that

the LNP government will protect prime agricultural land through a regional planning process that will be simpler. It will ring-fence once and for all the areas where mining and CSG cannot go or will be limited. There will also be protection in relation to how close it can be to dwellings. That is important for future mining or CSG development.

The other issue I want to talk about is the forced council amalgamations, which have caused absolute angst in those communities affected. When the government started to move towards councils being amalgamated many people throughout Queensland thought that it would make them more efficient. Generally speaking, some companies can be better when they become bigger and stronger with better buying power. But businesses are vastly different from councils. The model that was used by the Beattie government at the time was never going to work. Against all the advice that was provided by all the experts it nevertheless went down this track. Now we have ended up with this model where bureaucracy has blown right out and the finances are a mess. Council debt, members might not be aware, was about \$2 billion before amalgamation. It is now nearly \$6 billion. They say it will go to \$23 billion in the next 10 or 15 years unless some changes are put in place.

People in these council areas report that there is no coordination. It has been very hard for councillors. Their role was changed from being a councillor and knowing what is going on to being on a board of directors. I know some councillors who used to come to a meeting once a month where they were given an hour-and-a-half briefing and then sent home. The mayor and the CEO used to run the rest of it. It just did not work. When those councillors were asked about various projects going on in the shire they did not know; they had no idea of the background to it, who was doing the work or when it was going to start or finish.

I grew up in local government and was also a mayor—it was called a chairman in those days—and I knew everything about the shire. I knew who was on the job and where they were working. I had a firsthand knowledge of everything that went on. The situation has to be changed. I am pleased to say that we have a policy that will allow communities that do wish to change the boundaries, or deamalgamate or whatever one wants to call it, a chance to do that.

**Mr Elmes:** Hear, hear!

**Mr HOBBS:** The member for Noosa has been very involved with this right from the start. Noosa is the perfect example. People often say you cannot unscramble an egg and that it will cost too much money.

**Mr Elmes** interjected.


**Mr HOBBS:** Absolute bull, as the member for Noosa says. It is estimated that it will cost \$4 million to deamalgamate Noosa council. It will still have a very viable council for 50,000 people. They will have their own say. The community will be very involved in that.

I also want to talk about the Maranoa bridge. Cast your minds back to the floods we had in Mitchell. The Maranoa bridge was out of action for quite some time. Even now it is at reduced capacity. The flood virtually severed the link between Brisbane and Darwin. Suddenly people could not get their produce and materials through. It caused a great deal of anxiety. I am pleased to inform the House that the bridge is being fast-tracked for renewal. A new bridge will be built beside the other one. It will be a metre higher. It would be nice if it were higher but the trouble is if they make it too much higher it will be much higher than the lowest part of town, so the town would go under anyway. I think that will be satisfactory.

I want to touch on the coal seam gas industry. We support the industry with changes. It does bring a two-speed economy to the towns. In areas such as Chinchilla, Miles, Wandoan and Roma, those industries that are related to hospitality are doing very well. Hotels, motels, pubs, fuel stations and coffee shops do extremely well. There are many others that are suffering. They cannot get staff. To counteract that we have to make sure we do better in relation to 457 visa approvals. In Roma KFC, McDonald's and coffee shops would not operate without people on 457 visas. Many of the engineering works would not operate without these people. We cannot get Australians to work in those areas because they are tied up in the gas industry. Kids are being paid between \$70,000 and \$100,000 a year to go and work in these industries. It is a lot of money to get paid. It certainly has an impact on sawmills and other industries.

Royalties for the Regions is a very important policy that was developed over many years. I am so pleased to see that we are going to roll that out in due course. The people of Queensland will see that we are a government for all of Queensland. The Royalties for the Regions policy will be of great benefit to everybody.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the honourable member for Lytton, might I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and he should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (5.16 pm): Firstly may I congratulate Madam Speaker on her elevation to the position of Speaker. She will make a fine Speaker, I am sure. It is with great pride and humility that I stand here today to represent the people of Lytton who have faithfully appointed me as their parliamentary representative. I am indeed honoured to represent these people and I would like to thank them for choosing me to be their voice. I offer this pledge: their voice will be loud and clear and their representative loyal and hardworking.

It is with the greatest modesty that I stand here before the House today as the first conservative member for Lytton in Queensland's electoral history. I am truly blessed to have had the wonderful opportunity to personally meet and interact with the widely diverse community in my electorate. Not often is this opportunity presented to someone as young as me. I have been privileged to see the enthusiasm I brought to my election campaign not only matched but also surpassed by that of the community. Truly the Lytton electorate is an exceptional one. However long it is I find myself in this place, I will strive to be the very best parliamentarian I can be. My heart and soul will be in this job and my efforts will be relentless.

Faced with the enormous task of representing my constituency, I have taken the opportunity to reflect on not only my journey to this place but also my future journey. In those moments of reflection I have identified four influencing factors that have defined and will continue to define me as a person and a parliamentarian. I have an extensive history with the Anglican Church and I recognised early the value that religion plays within society. With so much of today's culture being defined by influences external to the traditional values upon which our society was initially built, I am constantly reminded of the importance that religious influences can have on a person and a community's moral fabric. During my secondary school years at the Anglican Church Grammar School, I selected the study of religion as an elective subject. Although it is not always the most popular choice or class for teenage boys, I felt it necessary to study the history of this institution that so often forms the foundation of our moral compass and is the yardstick of our society.

Queensland is no longer the Queensland of old. The tyranny of distance is becoming a less formidable barrier for government. The old established styles of thinking are becoming more fluid and the religious make-up of our wider community is changing. To be an effective member I find it essential to understand the cultural and social thinking of an ever-changing community mosaic. I have an acceptance of all religious groups, despite my personal views, and I would hope that all members present with me in this place today have an understanding that the community we serve does not end within our comfort zone. All Queenslanders are entitled to our service regardless of their ethnicity, social or cultural heritage.

I have always had strong political convictions, although my understanding of politics has become more sophisticated over the years. I have never identified with another political party. For me, no other party reflects my views on personal freedom. Mine is a party that says, 'You are free to make your own decisions and to be the masters of your own destiny,' not relying on the government to dictate its citizens' terms. No other Queensland party vouches for the basic freedoms of speech, religion and thought the way the LNP does and no other party can deliver the strong, stable and responsible government that the LNP can at all levels of government in Australia.

Since joining the Liberal Party when I was 17 I have worked on numerous campaigns for local, state and federal elections. I have learnt that commitment, hard work and endurance are essential not only for campaigning but also for government. I do not believe that policy making should only include how a focus group reacts, while ignoring the wider community. I strongly believe in the LNP's deep rooted desire to preserve the individual, to deliver economic stability and prosperity, and to encourage free enterprise with the incentive to be successful, rather than burden free enterprise with taxes and bureaucratic penalties so that success seems always just out of reach.

I come from a modest upbringing and I am grateful for this because it has taught me honest values. To my mother and father, who sit in the gallery today, I thank you. Your influence has imprinted on me a desire to work hard, a sense of community that can never be replaced and respect for others regardless of their story. I always aspire to greatness and without your guidance I simply would not be the man I am today. To you I owe everything. Your financial sacrifices I may be able to repay in time, but your investment in my life emotionally is a debt for which there is no recompense. Ian and Jan, without your love, support, encouragement and wisdom I would not be standing here today, fulfilling my dream of being elected to this great place as the representative for Lytton.

My campaign team's sacrifices and belief in me were enormous. Ours was a small team, but a committed team. Over the 12 months of our campaign, their support was enduring and their belief in me was undying. Truly their contributions were mammoth and I could not have succeeded without their support. At this time I must mention, in particular, my good friend and campaign manager, Warren

Sutton. Warren has been with me every step of the way through the campaign and his part in the wonderful result achieved at this election cannot be ignored. I owe special thanks to those members of the LNP headquarters and the Wynnum-Manly branch who assisted me through the course of my campaign. At times it seemed like this moment would never come. Their hard work and commitment to this cause was immense and their sacrifices displayed a true belief in the Liberal National Party.

I am passionate about Queensland and Queenslanders. I am here to serve my electorate and to serve them with dignity and pride. I will be a member whose philosophy is firmly built on a foundation of service. I will always do what is best for my electorate and I will be honest and hardworking in the service of those who placed me here today. The strong and long-held beliefs of the Liberal National Party that form the basis of the organisation's philosophy will be upheld and I intend to hold accountable those in the government as I expect my constituents to hold me accountable.

Lytton is a great place to live. It has a diverse range of people, natural beauty and a long history that stretches back to the foundation of this great state. Lytton is a special part of Queensland and it is special to me. Suburbs like Hemmant and Lytton are the driving forces behind east Brisbane's economy, and the Port of Brisbane connects Brisbane and Queensland with the rest of Australia and the world. In Brisbane, suburbs such as Wynnum, Wynnum West, Manly, Manly West, Lota and Tingalpa are some of the best and most picturesque places to raise a family.

However, Lytton's greatest asset is not its industrial heartland, port or suburbs; rather, it is the people who reside in this great electorate. This is the realisation I have come to after doorknocking 10,134 homes during the course of my campaign. A quick lesson to those aspiring politicians and parliamentarians out there is one that I learnt from watching those I volunteered for over the years. Some won and some lost their campaigns, but all taught me the same thing: if you want to represent an area, if you want to feel the pulse of a community, you need to connect with it. That is a fairly simple concept and, indeed, one that seems obvious at first, but so often it is forgotten and overlooked by governments that are in favour of their own story. I promise my constituents this: I will never dictate terms to you. I will always listen first and act appropriately.

Despite the very positive nature of the people of Lytton, they have been betrayed. The large mature-age community that calls Lytton home has been left without service. The myriad community groups that include the Wynnum Blue Care Nurses, Home Assist Secure, Wynnum Meals on Wheels and the Wynnum Manly & District Committee on the Ageing work tirelessly to support the community, but they are fighting an uphill battle. I plan to fight for and with them to ensure they are looked after. I do not want the bayside to be known for the run-down Wynnum Hospital, which badly needs government funds due to years of neglect by Labor; I want it to be known for the amazing community services available to its residents.

Before entering parliament I graduated from Griffith University with a double degree in criminology/criminal justice and human services. I have worked numerous jobs in my short life. One was as a community engagement officer for the Acacia Ridge & Districts Community Centre, where I worked closely with African and Indigenous migrant groups in the south-west of Brisbane. I saw firsthand the problems that marginalised people in our society deal with each and every day. These issues range from alcohol abuse, child abuse and homelessness to social isolation.

My latest role before being elected to parliament was that of a deli and seafood assistant in the retail sector. I can relate to men and women who do shiftwork. Although it was not the most glamorous of jobs, I always knew the value of commitment and stayed the course only to leave that job weeks out from the election in order to campaign full time. I also understand the physical and mental toll that this type of work takes and can understand and relate to those members of my community who do shiftwork simply to put food on the table. I also learned the value of living within my means. I simply could not afford to spend extravagantly. The memory of this will stand me in good stead for times ahead, as prudent management of finances is a priority of this government.

The residents of Lytton are some of the hardest working members of our society. Be it the tradies who work out at the port, the shop assistants who work in the Wynnum CBD, nurses, police, firefighters, ambos or any other front-line public servant who works to improve the life of others, I say: thank you and I respect you. To the uni student who works 30 hours a week at the local deli while also studying to gain qualifications to enter a profession I say: thank you and I respect you. To the teachers at Darling Point Special School on The Esplanade who work with students with disabilities each and every day I say: thank you and I respect you. My point is that I will never take for granted those members of our community who work daily to improve the lives of others. People providing front-line services rarely receive the recognition and thanks they deserve. To them I say: I will never take you for granted.

When this community mobilises, the result is an unstoppable force. Although last year's floods left the Lytton electorate largely undamaged compared to other regions in Brisbane and Queensland, it did not stop community groups from assisting those not so fortunate. One group in particular, the Southside Community Craft Group, still comes together regularly to knit clothing and rugs for those who still find themselves battling after Brisbane's worst disaster in a hundred years. Community groups like this

epitomise the spirit and identity that is so clearly a trait of the bayside. I speak of groups such as the Lions Club of Moreton Bay, which was founded in 1956 and has been active in Lytton for over 50 years. As its latest member I can tell the House that, like a good wine, the club only gets better with age.

Barbecue fundraisers are on the agenda and will help raise much needed funds for local programs, and the entertainment concert this Saturday at the Wynnum Manly Leagues Club will be yet another in the wide range of community events designed by locals for locals. Last month I had the honour to attend its Youth of the Year Award where I heard numerous local children speak publicly about topics that matter the most to them. The Lions Club is actively encouraging younger generations to take part in local events and is empowering these people to grow and be the next generation of leaders. True leadership has succession plans and in the Lions Club I find true leadership.

The organisation known as BABI, Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc., which is situated on Bay Terrace, Wynnum, is a great champion of improving the lives of young people who are doing it tough in the Wynnum Manly area. In February I had the pleasure of meeting the then CEO, Di Fletcher, to discuss the role of BABI in the local community. As someone who has worked with young people in the past in a social work framework, I could relate to BABI's mission to promote an environment in which young people can grow and participate successfully in the life of their community. I look forward to working with Di Fletcher and the rest of the staff and volunteers at BABI in helping young people in the Lytton electorate.


As the electorate of Lytton is bordered to the east by Moreton Bay, it would be remiss of me to not briefly speak about the marine ecosystem that we are fortunate to have on our doorstep. The local residents are aware of the need to preserve our unique ecosystem for not only our children but also our children's children. I believe that by working with specific government departments, local fishermen and environmentalists we can reach a balance between preservation of our pristine waters and marine life and the encouragement of the fishing industry so that it can flourish with new tourism opportunities for Moreton Bay.

Like many small businesses around the state, those in the Wynnum Manly area are struggling. Economic growth under the previous government was poor, and that is simply not good enough. Only in Queensland do we see a boom state in debt without a AAA credit rating. It is simply not good enough. The lack of vision for Lytton has left locals scratching their heads, wondering what they have to do to make the government see the potential that they see each and every day. In June 2011 I had the pleasure of touring with the now Premier, Campbell Newman, and his family around the Edith Street and Bay Terrace shops on a Saturday morning. If there was ever an example of constituents being let down by their local member, this was it. The Wynnum CBD holds so much promise but lacks the infrastructure and funding to see it flourish. I will fight to ensure that businesses there get a fair go and are encouraged to grow.

When I look around and see this new LNP team, I take heart that this will be a government for and of the people. Never has there been such a wide array of talented and level headed representatives than now, with diverse histories and stories. This LNP team is made up of tradies, corporate professionals and experienced parliamentarians. I am proud to be the youngest of this group and will bring a unique insight and experience to this team. Yes, I am only 23, but I firmly believe that this allows me to bring fearless ideas and a unique vision to some of the older heads in the government about the potential of young people in Queensland—not you, Vaughan! I can relate to young people both in Lytton and across Queensland. Community groups such as BABI, local sporting groups and Bayside PCYC provide enormous support and opportunities for young people to engage in their local community. As a government we should always look to improve our relationship with the youth by improving youth services. Using an old cliché, the youth of today will become the leaders of tomorrow.

In conclusion, I do not claim to know everything and I understand that there will be times when I will be tested. But I am confident about the team we have in place and I am confident in our leadership. Campbell Newman is a fine man and a fine leader. He has experience in government and in the private sector and will undoubtedly make a remarkable Premier. He surrounds himself with good men and good women and is always looking for opportunities to impact the lives of those he serves for the better. I am truly excited to be part of this change. The people of Queensland have given this parliament a mandate, a mandate that says: do not go down the same road Labor went down. Instead, look for fresh ideas, bring a fresh mindset and get results. I will do everything in my power to be the best man I can be for the people of Lytton and Queensland. I will commit to hard work for their sake.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Order! Before I call the honourable member for Morayfield, might I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesy reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise in this place today for the first time to deliver my maiden speech in the 54th Parliament of Queensland. May I start by congratulating Madam Speaker on her appointment to the position. I am immensely proud to be part of a government that has provided



the first ever female Speaker of the Queensland parliament, a role in which I am confident she will earn our respect as she carries out her duties with independence, neutrality, fairness and of course good humour.

It is an enormous privilege to represent the hardworking and ambitious people of the Morayfield electorate. I thank the people of my electorate for entrusting me with this role. I am truly humbled by this opportunity and the responsibilities that this role will bring. It is an honour to represent one of the greatest communities in our great state. The people of our community have strong aspirations and ambitions in life.

We should never define our success in dollar terms but rather by the happiness that we find in our relationships that we share with our families, friends and of course our local communities. One of the greatest strengths of the Morayfield electorate is the vast number of grassroots organisations that are inspired and created not by government but by the people themselves. These countless groups show their commitment to others and not themselves, and this is the glue that holds our communities together.

The greatest strength of our region is not our economic prowess or personal wealth but our social cohesion, our very understanding of ourselves and our proud sense of community. All of the state was witness to this during the terrible floods of January 2011. I saw firsthand how the community came together to lend a hand—friends, neighbours and strangers all helping each other.

While I am first and foremost proud to represent the local community, I am also proud to be a member of the first Liberal National Party government here in Queensland. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of the member for Southern Downs, the member for Caloundra, Mr Bruce McIver and Mr Gary Spence for having the vision and tenacity to form what is now the Liberal National Party. Without your common commitment to our political cause and traditions I may never have joined a political party and nor would I have found myself in this place tonight.

I am a proud member of a political party that has embraced diversity and recognises individuals based on their merit. Today the Liberal National Party is representative of people all over Queensland. Our ranks encompass a diverse range of people varying in age, gender and work experiences. I myself come to this place being a small business owner, being the owner of a local pizza cafe in Burpengary. I am joined on this side of the House by many men and women whose previous occupations include small business owners, lawyers, journalists, dentists, engineers, medical specialists, nurses, painters and decorators, financial planners, NRL referees, environmental scientists and retail workers in a deli and in the retail sector, among others. We recognise, as Queensland has, that individuals should be judged on the content of their character and nothing else.

As I stand here today I am joined in the gallery by my family and friends, none more important to me than my wife and kids. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my beautiful wife, Leila, and my three children, Jesse, Meeka and Ella, for all their support and encouragement throughout this campaign. To Leila, your unconditional love, your fierce honesty and your endless support are a source of vitality and strength for me. In our vows on our wedding day we made the pledge that we would never stand in front of each other and we would never stand behind each other but we would always stand beside each other, and it is through this partnership in our relationship that we have been able to navigate this current challenge.

To my children, you are the very reason I embarked on this journey. I want you to know that, while this job places demands on me that you may not understand or appreciate as yet, I am doing this to ensure the best possible future for you. I would not have been able to achieve the successes that we have without your support over the years.

I was brought up in a very large family and learnt through this experience what it was like to be a battler. I am glad to have my mother and father, Robert and Lorraine, join me here today. I know that, although we were raised in a reasonably non-political family, they would be happy with what I have achieved so far in my life. My mother and father probably unknowingly always instilled Liberal philosophies in me as they raised me as a child. Dad always instilled in me the Liberal philosophy of 'reward for effort'. He would always tell me that if you worked hard and believed in yourself then you will always be rewarded. This included many mornings waking up at three o'clock to run his son down to the local bakery where I worked, gaining life skills and experience. Dad supported me and nurtured the philosophy and the belief in the value of hard work.

My father inspired my family values—the same family values that I try to teach my children every day. I come from a family where dad was a blue-collar worker, working as a boilermaker, working hard to earn an income to support his five children. I had a mother who took her role as a stay-at-home mother very seriously. I was blessed to have a mother who would always be there and offered unconditional love to us kids, a mother who would always put herself last, even if it meant going without herself. I can only hope that when my children grow up they can recognise these values that my wife and I try to instil in them each and every day.

It was my grounding through the values of my family upbringing that led me to join the Liberal National Party. When I joined the LNP I knew I was joining a party that would provide Queenslanders with a better future, a future of opportunity and a future of hope. I joined the LNP because I wanted to be part of a government that would scrap unnecessary taxes, cut wasteful spending and reduce the tax burden on business. We need a government here in Queensland that is guided by the belief that it does not have its own money; it only has the people's money and that it is held in trust. If Queenslanders are going to have every opportunity to achieve their aspirations, we again need a government that understands that a hand up is always better than a handout. We need a government that understands that opportunity is always better than subsidy. We need a government that recognises that, while it may not have a solution to every problem, sometimes it is the problem. As a member of the Liberal National Party, I believe that we need a smaller government and a more efficient government.

It is our commitment to our party's philosophy that should serve as our guide to an effective government here in Queensland, a society based on opportunity and fair reward for hard work yet tempered by a safety net for those in the community most in need—or, as it is more simply understood in this great state and country that we live in, giving Queenslanders a fair go. It is these principles of government that create a tolerant Queensland, a fair Queensland and of course a prosperous Queensland.

When Sir Robert Menzies was laying the foundation of our modern political movement, a movement that has resulted in the creation of the LNP, he founded it on the ideals and beliefs that are still here today. He spoke about the forgotten people—the hardworking mums and dads, the blue-collar workers like my father, the middle-class people who were often pushed aside for political advantage. The Morayfield electorate is full of these forgotten people. It is full of hardworking people, mums and dads doing the most Australian thing of all—giving it a go, trying to get ahead in life and making a difference in their communities. It is full of small business owners and families investing in an opportunity—true Queenslanders laying everything on the line to invest in a small business, to employ more people and to support the community, to work hard and to look forward to the reward for the risk and the hard work they have put in. We understand on this side of the House that small business is the engine room of this economy, and we will work hard as a government to ensure that opportunity and reward is made possible to all.

I am proud to be part of this can-do government, a government led by a man who was not afraid to be bold, not afraid to take a risk to do what was right—a Premier who may have taken a path to this place that may not have been perceived as the most likely course for an individual to take. In doing so though, he demonstrated to Queenslanders in the most audacious of manners that politics does not need to be practised the way it always has been, that politics can and should be better.

I am proud to be part of a government that has plans to grow a four-pillar economy in construction, resources, tourism and agriculture which will help many businesses grow and offer opportunity. I am part of a government that will reduce the burden on families and business through delivering cost-of-living relief and lower taxation, a government that will offer better planning and better infrastructure and a government that will provide better front-line services to all Queenslanders—services that are expected to be delivered not just from a good government but from an accountable government. I am part of a government with a clear focus on building trust in the community for their elected representatives.

It was the soaring cost of living that the people of Morayfield demanded I wage a war on as I took up my campaign. It was the cost-of-living relief that I campaigned long and hard on, and I am proud to be a member here today now that I will be able to deliver this relief to the mums and dads, the seniors, the small business operators and those with a disability and most in need of financial relief. I am proud to be part of a government that will deliver lower registration for family cars, lower water bills, lower electricity charges and bills, lower public transport costs, which is a key issue in my electorate, lower taxation for businesses through payroll tax amendments and the reinstatement of the transfer duty on the home concession for those purchasing their family home.

I am extremely humbled and excited to be part of this government and our plans to get Queensland back on track. All Queenslanders should look forward with hope and opportunity as we move into the future and once again become the No. 1 state in Australia to live, raise a family, start a business and gain an education.

In order to ensure that Queensland has the future it deserves, we need to recognise that the government will not prescribe its future; it can only help create the society that can ensure this future for Queensland. We must harness the creativity and the capital in our private sector. We must not let down future generations of Queenslanders by failing to effectively plan long-term in a strategic sense—planning that recognises the importance of sustainable development and the balance between growth, infrastructure provision, social cohesion and of course environmental sustainability. If in this planning of Queensland's future we remain committed to these values, we can harness the opportunities of growth in this state. We on this side of the House understand that growth does not need to be a dirty word;

rather, it can be a word of boundless opportunity. As members in this place, it is our responsibility to secure the prosperity of this state not just for today and not just for our generation but for generations of Queenslanders to come.

Whilst we recognise that the challenges before us are great and the financial situation that we have found ourselves in today is unfavourable, we must never waver from our bold vision for this state. We must at every opportunity choose good policy over political pragmatism. Let me once again look to Sir Robert Menzies for inspiration. When Sir Robert Menzies launched the first Liberal campaign, he said—

We need to return to politics as a clash of principles and to get away from the notion that it is a clash only of warring personalities.

I would like to take this opportunity to respectfully thank my predecessor in the seat of Morayfield. Whilst we certainly do not share the same political ideology, we do share a commitment to politics being about local representation and, above all else, a recognition that it is always and should always be not about ourselves but about the people. I thank him for his contribution to the House whilst he served his community in this place.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank those who have supported me in the role as a candidate and now as a member here in parliament. Like all of us, I would not be standing in this House tonight without the support of a great team. I sincerely thank my parliamentary colleagues for their help during the campaign. I also record my appreciation of the professional support that I received from the LNP executive and support staff within the Liberal National Party. This includes my regional chairperson and mate, Mr Greg Newton. I would also like to thank those who have become my political family throughout this campaign—my Morayfield campaign team.

It would be humanly impossible for me to name every single person who lent their time, money, blood, sweat and tears to this campaign. However, there are a few people whom I feel compelled to mention here today for their support—support that has not always been physical or time consuming but personal and emotional support and words of continued encouragement that have enabled me to believe in the task that we were all undertaking.

Firstly, to my campaign manager, Mrs Lisa Armitage. You were the glue that held this campaign together. You were the person who believed in me not for a day and not for a week; you were the person who believed in me for 16 months through this whole campaign. You believed in me and you believed in what we were both fighting for. I thank you for everything that you contributed.

Secondly, to Mandy and Marcus Edwards. You are a truly magnificent couple, friends and definitely true Liberals. This campaign would have never been the same without your professional assistance, time and organisation. I will be forever grateful for the many sleepless nights and sacrifices to your personal family time that you have contributed.

To Noel Hawes, Richard Green and Cary Bielenberg: you guys certainly were the workhorses on the streets with me. Your commitment to the cause, your belief that change was needed in Queensland and your time committed to this campaign is something that I will never be able to pay back to you. I sincerely thank you and everyone for everything you did throughout the campaign.

I would also like to thank my friend and mentor Wyatt Roy MP, the federal member for Longman. I worked with Wyatt on his campaign and it was through his contact that I became enthused with politics. I have observed and admired the way in which Wyatt is now able to make a difference in his local area. Working with Wyatt was instrumental in my decision to stand for preselection in Morayfield and it has led to me standing here today in this place. At my campaign launch, Wyatt finished his address as the guest speaker by saying, 'Let's go make history.' Well, mate, I think it is fair to say that we certainly did that.


There are many more people whom I will remain forever indebted to—a debt of passion, commitment and friendship that I will never be able to repay. You know who you are and as I stand here tonight all I can say is thank you.

In conclusion, I want to say to the people who have placed an enormous amount of trust in me that I can only repay your trust through dedication and hard work. I will use my time in this place—however long that may be—to serve your interests first and foremost. May the words of Sir Robert Menzies again provide a guide for me, when he stated—

What may be before us we do not know, nor how long the journey. But this we do know, that Truth is our companion on that journey; that Truth is with us in the battle, and that Truth must win.

As a newly elected member of this parliament, I think this is a good principle to follow. To the people of the Morayfield area who elected me, I commit to you that I will use this time as the member for Morayfield to add value to your life and not to mine. In the deliberations of this place, I see my first responsibility as my service to you in the public and the community. I thank the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Before I call the honourable member for Kallangur, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Kallangur.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (5.58 pm): I wish to speak this evening about philosophy and society. Society determines how it should live and government should reflect that. We live in a complex community made up of very complex relationships, agendas, agencies and individuals. There is a whole area of science dedicated to the study of structures of society and its evolution. In the history

of the earth, democracy as we know it today is a very young concept. However, within that concept, Queensland is one of the oldest continuous democracies in the world. We have a proud history of non-violence, societal progress, encouraging and participating in robust debate most of the time within the confines of law and common decency, not violence and death as we witness every day in other places around the world. Our society is not static, but it is very much a dynamic organisation. It can get sick. It has had days. It has times of unbelievable achievement and it affects everyone of us as we participate, willingly or not.

Each of us contributes to our communities and each of those contributions affects us in varying ways depending on how we are related to those activities. Ultimately, the way our democracy affects each of us depends not only on how we each interact within our community but on the way others interact in our community as well. We are, to borrow a phrase, a coalition of the willing in pursuit of our own personal ambitions and desires but within the confines of the rule of law.

Our community of Queensland is made up of smaller communities, all intertwined with each other yet still somehow individual. Participating harmoniously in our society means we all must adhere to common understandings of principles and values—some encoded in law, others accepted as ideals. It is we in this place who come together to represent the members of our communities, to reflect and debate these ideals and to determine common presuppositions. It is we who must listen and decipher our community's understandings and then translate them here in this place. We must reflect accurately the thoughts and pulse of the folks who have entrusted us with that responsibility so that our community can continue to grow and morph as our circumstances change and move. I will, as best I can, represent and engage those who have entrusted me to represent them without fear or favour and irrespective of individual political, religious or philosophical presumption. I am sure that I will have many people who will give generously of their time and advice, and I will do my best to listen to them.

In my experience, irreconcilable conflict occurs when two sides of an argument emanate from two different presuppositions when neither will compromise sufficiently to align or co-exist without causing the other serious concern or impacting their presupposition sufficiently that it affects the integrity of the other's argument. One way to facilitate a coming together of different points of view is to seek the common values each side brings to a conversation.

Our state, in the relative short time it has been in existence, congregates around common values forged in historical events and occasions. The guts of pioneering families coming in a ship for months across the sea with little prospect of ever returning to their homes and families has forged a fighting spirit, a tenacity in our psyche. My own family arrived in this country in 1863 and settled in Minden as farmers. Likewise, the Anzac experience—credited with the birth of Australia as a nation—further forged values like mateship, courage, sacrifice and loyalty. Today the Anzac spirit is still forging values in our youth, values like gratitude for the sacrifice of the men and women who fought to maintain our freedoms.

Our community also adopted values from its Judeo-Christian heritage, values like love for one's fellow man. We take joy in the simple things in life. We protect the peace in which we live. We take a lot on the chin and have a character that allows us to endure hard times. We display great acts of kindness frequently. We look for the best in people. We place great value in loyalty. We look up to strong leadership, someone who can control their emotions in a statesmanly manner—someone like our Premier.

It is these values that allows us as a community in Queensland to maintain one of the longest and most established democratic precincts in the world. These values forge common purpose, understanding and goodwill in pursuit of developing a more robust and peaceful community. As a new member in this place, I wish to honour those who have come before me with their leadership and vision. I hope to also contribute to this great tradition so that, as a consequence of my efforts, others in the future will recognise our collective efforts and remember them with good review.

I have lived in six countries for at least a year in each of those countries and I have travelled to many parts of this world, and I believe that Australians have several very acute cultural traits, more so than anywhere else in the world. These traits have evolved because of the way Australia has grown up and serve as a great leveller in our society. The first trait I speak of is an ability to detect and dispense of insincerity. Australians have a way of getting to a point very quickly when they think you are being insincere with them. It is this very trait that in recent years has caused politicians to be viewed very poorly by our community in terms of offering any real value to our society. When we the representatives of the people stop representing them, we have very little value to them. I will work very hard every day to ensure that I remain valuable to my community by ensuring that I am representing them well. I implore all of you here in this place to lift to a high standard of public service, remembering that service implies serving or being a servant. Let us all strive daily to be diligent in our efforts to serve those people who trust us to represent them. I acknowledge those members whose communities have re-elected them. This act shows their trust in you and I hope to learn from you so that I, too, may ensure I am re-elected because my community values my contribution here in this place.

The second trait that I think Australians display more than people anywhere else in the world is a keen sense of fairness. Australians will sacrifice much and give generously if they feel that others are doing the same. If you ever want to see this in Queensland, you only have to look at the efforts of the

mud army or at the way Australians respond to the Salvation Army. I think this is why Australians dislike the carbon tax so much—because, instinctively, they have a sense that the tax is simply unfair. Nowhere else in the world is a people being asked to make a sacrifice that even comes close to the sacrifice that this federal Labor government is asking us to make, especially when there is almost zero impact on carbon emissions and especially given the fact that many jobs will be moved overseas, producing in many instances a greater carbon footprint due to the more relaxed pollution laws in those countries. It is not that Australians do not want to contribute to a solution to the issue of carbon production; it is the fact that the mechanism being used is unfair, and Queenslanders instinctively know this.

In our society we expect everyone to pull their weight, to contribute according to their ability. The families we represent will work hard and do the best they can. What I think they expect from us is simply the same. I do not think they expect us to have all of the answers or even to provide buckets of gold for them. They just want what is fair: their share. They do not want to be lied to. On election day—24 March—the two things people said to me consistently were, ‘Don’t let us down,’ and, ‘Don’t lie to us.’ To me this means, ‘Do your best. Represent us well. Tell us when and why something can’t be provided, and be straight with us.’ You can be assured that I will, to the very best of my ability, try to honour these very reasonable requests as I serve my community.

We who are leaders in our community must be servant leaders. We must lead by example. In the past the example of leadership fell on people like pastors, priests and civic leaders. More and more, however, I think the influence of institutions like the church is, like its membership, struggling. Other leaders, however, are stepping up—leaders like school principals, for example. I think they are more and more becoming those people that communities look up to. In my electorate of Kallangur there is a high school called Dakabin State High School. The principal there is a man by the name of John Schuh. Our community is a better place because this man contributes so generously and passionately to his community in his role as principal. One of the values he brings to his community and a value that he is working with them on is discipline. I have observed his actions and leadership and I want to recognise him as a person I value, and I am proud to call him a friend. I will be glad to learn from him as together we try to provide better facilities for our young people to learn in so they can rise above adversity.

Mr Schuh encourages his community to be disciplined in their efforts to achieve their potential. His own work ethic, integrity and commitment have inspired and are inspiring others around him to work hard, and together they are building a community that they can be proud of. What Mr Schuh is accomplishing is the development of a culture that once again respects its leaders because they respect themselves. Since returning to Queensland to live some six years ago, I have noted with dismay the level of disrespect that exists for those positions within our community that were once seen as pillars of society. Police, ambulance officers, nurses, doctors and teachers all struggle with the very basic tenet of respect broadly as they engage with their community every day.

I stand shoulder to shoulder with the Premier in his desire to raise the level of debate and respect in this place so that it can be an example for people in our community to follow. I welcome robust debate and exchange of ideas, but I also urge my fellow members to exhibit grace, humility and respect for each other as we strive to be examples that our communities can be proud of. Let us strive for the values of discipline in our own daily lives and let us be part of the collective effort across our communities that helps to re-establish broadly the values of respect for those people who serve us in our communities. This is not pie-in-the-sky idealism; it is a very achievable ambition—one that not so long ago our society not only displayed but actively participated in.

I salute the principals, teachers and staff at Dakabin State High School for fighting the good fight and working hard every day for a better community. I challenge every person in this House to put in the same effort. Franklin D Roosevelt said—

We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future.

Our schools strive every day to do this and I salute the effort of teachers as they guide, teach, discipline and educate our most precious of resources, our children.

For our society to function well, every person must participate. Many functions in communities are accomplished only with volunteers. Winston Churchill said—

You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give.

I am reminded of state emergency services, Surf Life Saving, Meals on Wheels, any one of our many sporting and service clubs and our P&Cs. I think a more dramatic example of what Winston Churchill was talking about is the effort by Rotary International to eradicate polio. After 25 years of effort, there is a real possibility that this disease can be eradicated. That would not be possible without the thousands of people focused on this effort all over the world, volunteering their time and resources to their communities. Locally, I hold up an example to my community of people like Don and Olwyn Connolly from Whiteside. This couple has served community focused groups for over 50 years in my area. Even now in their retirement they both participate in several different organisations that make my community a better place to live. I am privileged to have met many fine volunteers—people striving to

make life for themselves, their families and friends just that little bit better. Sporting clubs, service clubs, social groups and faith based groups all contribute in different ways to provide a rich and diverse culture and a community that offers many opportunities. I am proud to be part of a government that has policies that will help facilitate the ongoing efforts of these clubs, groups and organisations.

I think a way that a society or community is able to determine its health is to look at how it treats or deals with its most vulnerable. I am not talking here about people who have a choice and who make bad choices; I am talking about people who, because of their particular circumstance, find life a little bit tougher than do the rest of us. I do not understand why I have such empathy for the disabled and mentally ill in our society and their carers. This group of unique people typically struggle every day for some semblance of normalcy in their life. Most accept their lot in life and choose to do the best they can with what they have been given. Unfortunately, from many angles their starting point in life is at a different spot from those of us who are able and that makes their lives that little bit tougher.

A simple example of that is the cost of transport. To fit out a vehicle to be able to transport a wheelchair has a starting price of \$20,000. I hope to be able to advocate for those folks in my community further on this matter and represent their needs adequately and sufficiently so that this government, of which I am a part, can continue with the efforts that we have already commenced to ensure that our most vulnerable are well cared for and in a manner that reflects our values, especially that great Aussie value of getting a fair go. I ask the federal government to consider the funds needed to get the National Disability Insurance Scheme up and running and to consider reducing any number of other priorities—for example, the NBN—in favour of funding the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

To this end, I will continue to support and uplift local organisations such as Youth Excel, which is establishing itself in Kallangur and which will provide much needed youth and family services, particularly in the area of counselling and organised youth activities. This organisation, in partnership with the local Christian Outreach Centre community and businesses, is an excellent example of what I have spoken about—people giving of themselves for the greater good of their community. I look forward to working with Pastor Doc and Michelle Mitchell in this very important work.

There are several things that on behalf of my electorate I wish to identify as being a high priority—things that I intend to fight for. Transport infrastructure is the No. 1 everyday issue. We need to address the issues of a bridge over Youngs Crossing, the Petrie roundabout, the Dakabin Railway Station and a park-and-ride facility, a Boundary Road bridge over the highway, a noise barrier along the Bruce Highway so that people can sleep at night, better and more frequent bus services and ensuring that the impact of the new Petrie to Kippa Ring rail line supports infrastructure as a positive consequence for my community. Other areas that are important issues are the rebuilding of the Dakabin State High School assets after years of neglect and disrepair. I will also be advocating for more police officers to serve in tactical support roles. I know that, due to the dire financial state the former government left this state in, many of these issues are not going to be realised in the next three years. Nonetheless, I will advocate for them.

Speaking of a fair go, I wish to thank a few people. Firstly, and very humbly, I thank the people of Whiteside, Kurwongbah, Narangba, Burpengary South, Dakabin, Kallangur, Murrumba Downs and Petrie for trusting me to represent them. I especially wish to thank those who placed their trust in me and who voted for a conservative for the first time. I will work hard every day to repay that trust they placed in me.

To my parents—and my father is here—I can simply say thank you. To my mother, who taught me faith and values, and to my father who in later years has been a fantastic mentor and friend, thank you. To my siblings, thank you. I made it. I wish to thank the LNP team in Kallangur for their trust, faith and effort over the last four years as we worked to offer the electorate of Kallangur a real alternative as a representative in this place. However, in doing so I wish to recognise the efforts of former member Mary-Anne O'Neill, who I found to be a thoroughly decent person. I also wish to acknowledge the friendship and counsel of federal members the Hon. Peter Dutton and Wyatt Roy. I value their input and help.

I also acknowledge the collegueship and friendship of the new members for Pine Rivers, Seath Holswich; for Morayfield, Darren Grimwade; and for Murrumba, Reg Gulley. I consider myself to be richer because of their friendship. I also recognise the honourable Yvonne Chapman for her support over the years. I also recognise the fantastic support offered to me by the LNP president and his campaign team, with special mention of Matt McEachan for his friendship, advice, patience and help. Along with the LNP team in Kallangur I also wish to thank the Premier, who, during the campaign, gave an example of leadership that inspired us all to keep going. However, it was the incredible example of the dignity that the Premier's wife displayed during times of extreme and unwarranted public attack during the state election campaign that most inspired our team. Her clear sacrifice and example of leadership was simply admirable.

In closing, I wish to publicly thank my wife for her unwavering confidence in me. We have been married for 23 years and have two boys of whom I am extremely proud. My boys Isaac and Joel deserve a special thankyou for being so patient with me. I recognise their own sacrifice that allows me to serve

the broader community. As to my wife, I have dragged her all over the world. Together we have lived in 26 homes and four countries. We have lived on three continents. Without her unwavering support, I could not have followed my life's path. She is my best friend, she is my lover, my rock and my very faithful wife. Each day I thank God for giving her to me. If I have one prayer that I really desire my Lord to grant me it is this: that I might grow old holding the hand of this very special woman.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Mount Ommaney, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

**Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (6.18 pm): As I rise to speak as the newly elected member for Mount Ommaney, I commence by congratulating Madam Speaker upon her appointment as the first female Speaker of the Queensland parliament. Further, I wish to thank her for her courtesy and assistance in preparing me for the unapologetic responsibility that visits me today.

Our parliament sits at the centre of our way of life as the people of Queensland. Like those who have gone before me, I feel both honoured and humbled to speak here for the first time. Under our system of Westminster government, with its key separation of powers principle, I intend to participate fully in the branch of government available to all elected representatives, namely, this parliament, the Legislative Assembly. I will be guided in part by the words of the famous Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson who counselled, 'Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant.' How appropriate this famous yet earthy quote now becomes when I reflect that one of the four policy pillars of the LNP's vision for the Queensland economy is agriculture. And it is appropriate and salutary too when I reflect upon the lies, deceit, character assassinations and arrogance sown by the discredited and repudiated Bligh-Fraser Labor government. Sitting right here in this chamber is the harvest of that poisoned seed stock; a once-proud party of the working people now reduced to just seven members. They sought a quick undeserved harvest of another term in office. Their silos are empty and their stocks for the next planting are critical. All in this place should find pause for thought at that outcome. But our focus must be on the planting of our policy seeds expressed through new legislation.

I wish to tell members about the vibrant character of the electorate of Mount Ommaney that I have the privilege to represent. Its 30.2 square kilometres covers localities on the south side of the Brisbane River in Brisbane's western suburbs. This electorate, surrounded by waterways, suffered dreadfully during the January 2011 floods. The proud suburbs of Corinda, Darra, Jamboree Heights, Jindalee, Mount Ommaney, Middle Park, Oxley, River Hills, Seventeen Mile Rocks, Sinnamon Park, Sumner and Westlake constitute my electorate. In mid 2011 the estimated resident population of Mount Ommaney was 48,198 people, the majority of whom are well qualified and educated voters. They love to volunteer in good numbers. Two in 10 residents are children; seven in 10 are of working age; one in 10 is a senior citizen; and three in 10 were born overseas with quite a small percentage of them not fluent in English. Families dominate the population, with couple families with children being the most represented family type. For the most vulnerable of our community there are 14 aged-care service providers with a total of 870 places in operation. Over 1,600 people require disability support.

Community infrastructure includes one police station, one ambulance station, one fire station, 10 schools and one hospital. Significantly higher than average numbers of students attend a government school and, conversely, significantly lower than average numbers of students attend non-government schools. There are 2,600 VET students. At the 2006 census health care and social assistance were the largest industry of employment for our Mount Ommaney electorate, followed by retail trade and, third, education and training. Professionals were the largest occupational group of employment of the usual residents of the Mount Ommaney electorate and for employed persons working in the electorate, that being 2,200 persons. Other occupation groups with relatively large numbers of employed persons included clerical and administrative workers and managers. The largest industry of employment for employed persons working in Mount Ommaney is the retail trade, followed by manufacturing and health care and social assistance. Interestingly, in 2008-09 there were 4,002 businesses in the Mount Ommaney electorate with 95 per cent, or 3,780 of them, operating as small businesses. Just 19 are large businesses. There were 427 businesses with a turnover of \$1 million or more and in 2008-09 the professional and scientific technical service industry recorded 648 businesses. Construction was 562 businesses and rental hiring and real estate services were 457 businesses.

And what of the character of Tarnya Smith, elected to speak up for the dreams and aspirations of the constituents of this, her buzzing electorate? What am I made of? Well, I love life. I have always believed that a positive attitude can manage any situation. A strong work ethic was instilled in me at an early age. I firmly believe that hard work, a good attitude and always doing the right thing by others will take you anywhere you want to go in life. I am a woman, daughter, sister, mother, wife, worker, professional and employer. I have known happy hungry times and times of sad plenty. I have rolled up my sleeves and I have rolled out my swag. I love life because I know life. That is why I believe I can make a significant and continuing contribution to the lives of my fellow Queenslanders through this parliament.

As a woman I am inspired by, among others, the story of our first woman elected to Queensland parliament, Irene Longman. Irene Longman's role in Queensland politics stemmed from her natural enthusiasm to make Queensland a better place. One of her two elected brothers was James Bayley, federal MHR for Oxley from 1917 to 1931, the federal seat contested by me during the 2010 election. She convincingly won the previous safe Labor seat in May 1929 and this made Irene Longman the first woman to contest a Queensland state election and the first woman elected to the Queensland parliament. Her principal interest was for the welfare of women, children and the mentally handicapped. As a parliamentarian Irene was responsible, among other things, for changing the way things were done in Queensland. Irene faced difficulties as this state's first female parliamentarian. She was even prevented from using the parliamentary dining room and had to eat her meals on the verandah and search for a toilet. How times have changed! The federal seat of Longman was named in her honour and it is interesting to note that Longman is held by my federal LNP colleague, the Hon. Wyatt Roy MHR, the youngest person ever to be elected to the Australian parliament.

I am the fourth daughter of the five children of John and Norma. My parents have been married for 56 years and have truly been the greatest role model in my life. My father is still running his company and is very passionate and determined about the meat industry. Having spent the last 65 years in the industry, John is a very astute businessman with no formal training. Leaving school at 14, he often says he went to the school of hard knocks to learn his trade. My mother is an amazing woman who is practical and just applies good old-fashioned common sense to every situation. She is very much ahead of her time. She is the kindest person you would ever wish to meet and both have very strong Christian values and have always conducted themselves to the highest of standards. Their motto is that everything they do they do for their family and I admire this.

I am so very proud of my own three children. Natalie is 22. She is working full-time and studying and is very independent. Jonathon, another Gen Y-er is 21 and is an apprentice plumber. Cooper, who is nine, is in year four at a great local state school. I have always tried to lead by example and just enjoy spending time together as a family. As a mother you just hope your children learn the valuable lessons that we hand to them and are happy and healthy in their own lives. My husband Steve is undoubtedly my foundation of love, strength and support and, after many years together, my closest friend. As a graduate from Dubbo South High all I ever wanted to be was a beauty consultant. Little did I know that my first job as a chemist's assistant and later as the Elizabeth Arden consultant at Reids department store on the Sunshine Coast would lead me to travel and work at Elizabeth Arden in the Perfumery Hall at Harrods in London. Waitressing in my spare time provided the extra funds needed to travel overseas and my glamorous Harrods work prepared me for managerial responsibilities in managing two duty free shops at Terminal 1 at Heathrow. It was my encounter there with union officials that piqued my interest in the employer's perspective on industrial relations. I worked and studied in that field for 12 years, principally with health professionals.

Starting up our own small business from scratch in 2005, Steve and I supplied meat to restaurants, cafes and hotels. I opened our retail outlet in Forest Lake with a vision to supply good-quality product, value for money and outstanding customer service. We gained a very good reputation quite quickly and Steve came and joined me in the retail business. We expanded the business in 2009 and added a cafe and applied the same principles. We achieved recognition as the best red meat retailer in Queensland by Meat & Livestock Australia and AgForce and won the local award through *Quest South-West News* as Business Achiever of the Year.

This member for Mount Ommaney, Tarnya Smith, stands for fostering the spirit of patriotism where all Queenslanders are united as Australians in the common service of their country. Therefore, I repudiate federal Labor's divisive and phoney class-war rhetoric. With my LNP colleagues I stand for acting in ways that demonstrate and encourage the fair and equitable treatment of all people by looking after those who are weak, sick, vulnerable, aged or otherwise unable to provide for themselves. That is why I am continuing to advocate strenuously with colleague ministers to retain palliative care beds at Canossa Private Hospital in the face of competing priorities across the state.

I stand for a strong four-pillar Queensland economy in which constant employment at good wages is available to all willing and able to work by being the government that fosters the skills, confidence and desire in our citizens to engage in productive work. I stand for a Queensland in which employer and employee have a sense of common interest and duty by holding each other accountable to a code of ethics derived from our shared principles. I stand for ensuring the rights of all to freedom of association in the workplace.

I stand also for the youth of my Australia, our leaders of tomorrow, being given generous and unconditional encouragement to develop its talent to the full, for a comprehensive system of child and adult education that develops the spirit of true citizenship, for the efficient provision of adequate medical services within the reach of all and for the timely provision of the infrastructure that is essential to the good functioning of a robust and thriving Queensland state economy. Locally, I will fight for an upgrade of the Sumners Road overpass and improvements to local roads to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety. I will also fight to improve our park-and-ride facilities at train stations such as Darra and



Corinda. I stand powerfully for the sanctity of family life which I, a mother of three, see as fundamental to the wellbeing of a society in which every family is able to live and own a comfortable home at reasonable cost with adequate community amenities.

However, there are many things I will not stand for. I am against waste that lines the wallets of fat cats and empties the pockets of ordinary hardworking taxpayers who have told me locally and our government across the state that the key issue is out of control cost-of-living increases. I am against big government and bloated bureaucracy that load cost-of-living pressures onto our family budgets, which are already buckling under the strain. I am against contempt shown towards our small business owners, the engine room of the state's economy. Small businesses populate my electorate. I am against a nanny or welfare state that robs human dignity from our most vulnerable citizens. I am against taking the community for granted and I am against overpromising and under-delivering.

All who speak in this place know with unshakeable certainty that they arrive here because of the significant labours and enduring love of others. Please indulge me as I thank my tireless husband Steve for the gift of his belief in me, my family who centres me with their love and the residents of our Mount Ommaney electorate who have placed their cautious trust upon my shoulders for the honest delivery of our published policies. Without distinction, my electorate office will be their place to find their voice. Humbly I acknowledge my whole campaign team of volunteers whose selfless and unstinting volunteer efforts over the past 12 months are no better illustrated than those of Mr Dave McDonell, chairperson of the Middle Park branch of the LNP. Thank you Dave and team.


As I conclude, I am reminded of the equally earthy wisdom of Stephen Covey, the modern world renowned author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. He identified the importance of beginning with the end in mind by invoking the law of harvest. This universal law holds that in government, as in life itself, we reap what we sow. A highly effective Campbell Newman government, of which I stand as a proud member today, has commenced sowing the seeds of good, honest, fair and clear policies endorsed overwhelmingly by the electors of Queensland. Our carefully planned and eagerly anticipated harvest will restore abundance to the plundered Queensland economy and its long-suffering people who are hungry for the social and economic changes that this mandated government of ours has promised.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.36 pm to 7.36 pm.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Further Answer to Question; Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services


 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (7.36 pm): Earlier this afternoon I was asked by the member for Woodridge how many staff are in my department and how many are front line. I said I would get back to her, and I am doing so now. I can advise that there are approximately 7,000 staff currently employed within my department across Queensland. Regarding identifying front-line positions, my department is working closely with the Public Service Commission to accurately identify those staff and present a true picture. As members would appreciate, we have just finished separating my department from five other areas.


I also want to correct the record. During my response to the question I raised the issue of the former Labor government getting rid of 320 staff out of the police. In my response I was referring to police support staff and not police.

## PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 80.

### Second Reading

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (7.36 pm): I move—  
That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (7.37 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the Parliament of Queensland and Others Acts Amendment Bill 2012. Given that today we are debating amendments to various acts, including the Parliament of Queensland Act, it seems appropriate to remind members of the important role that parliament plays in our democratic process. Ultimately, the main functions of parliament are twofold: to debate and pass legislation to help maintain and improve our society; and to scrutinise the activities of the executive government. Sadly, today we find ourselves

exercising one function to undermine the other. Members must make no mistake: this legislation is an attempt to reduce the level of scrutiny on the executive government and we all know what happens when the executive is unfettered—just let us cast our minds back to the Liberal and National governments of the Joh Bjelke-Petersen days.

Only a few short weeks ago, the Premier was proclaiming that he would govern with humility, grace and dignity. Yet here we are, on the very first day of business in the new parliament, debating a bill that diminishes accountability and subverts the role of portfolio committees. On top of that, the bill has been declared urgent meaning that the government completely bypasses the committee system. There is nothing humble, gracious or dignified in what the Premier is doing with this bill.

What a difference a few weeks and a massive majority make. The people of Queensland will be extremely disappointed that the government has failed to live up to its promises and its principles, opting instead to use its overwhelming majority to avoid scrutiny. Members on the other side of the House have no respect for parliamentary democracy. In the lead-up to the state election Queenslanders were warned that the LNP was prepared to say and do anything to win power and that their words could not be trusted. How prophetic these words have proved to be.

Casting our minds back to the period leading up to the election, we constantly heard about the LNP's five-point action plan. In fact, the Premier addressed this issue today in this House in his maiden speech. He said 'restore accountability in government'—not take away or sideline but restore accountability. Moving forward a few weeks to the very first business day of the new parliament under the LNP government, what do we find? The LNP is moving to wind back accountability by stacking the parliamentary committees with its own appointees. On its own this move is disturbing. However, when judged against the LNP's position just 18 months ago when the report of the Committee System Review Committee was completed, it is a shame—

**Mr Seeney:** Who would you like to nominate?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Are you going to chair this parliament or not?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I hope that the Leader of the Opposition is not making a reflection on the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am not making a reflection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do ask that the leader be given the opportunity to make her speech without too much interjection.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** 'Dignity, humility and grace'.

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise to a point of order. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to be provocative she cannot then stand there and demand protection from the chair. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to make a speech without being provocative she will be listened to in silence. But if she wanted to provoke responses, she was guaranteed to get them.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am always happy when the Deputy Premier gets up on his feet. I would like to see more of it.

When judged against the LNP's position just 18 months ago when the report on the Committee System Review Committee was completed it is a shameful desertion of principle and policy. At the time the review committee's recommendations were being debated the following point was made in this chamber, and I will quote it so that all new members can hear what was said. It was said—

Indeed, the people of Queensland will be the big winners because they will get more from this process. They will have the opportunity to participate in the scrutiny of legislation, to give their views and to provide their expertise. The committee examination process will provide them with a practical overview of the way legislation may affect them and it will allow members of parliament to judge this better. This will result in better legislation coming through this parliament.

Who provided this analysis? Who in this chamber made this statement? The Minister for Health, who sat on the committee, made this assertion when he was debating the report in the parliament. Now the Premier wants to bypass the committee system. The Premier told journalists earlier this week—

I'm saying don't be surprised if we don't just take it straight through and put it through quickly ...

I'm just trying to forewarn you today that there will be occasions, like with this cost-of-living thing, that won't go to committee, because it won't need to. It's very clear-cut, straight up and down.

In just 12 months the Liberal National Party's position in relation to transparency and accountability has shifted completely.

At this juncture it is worthwhile reminding the chamber of some of the extensive background to our current committee structure. This background may be enlightening for some of our newer members. The Committee System Review Committee was established in February 2010 to conduct an inquiry into how the existing parliamentary committee system could be strengthened to enhance accountability. Among the committee's members were the member for Callide, the member for Southern Downs and

the then member for Toowoomba South. Committee members applied themselves to the task diligently, examining parliaments both here and abroad for examples of best practice in parliamentary accountability mechanisms. Public hearings were held, submissions were received and stakeholders were consulted. The entire committee visited the New Zealand parliament in June 2010 to examine our kiwi cousins' approach to parliamentary committees. A delegation of the committee also visited Canada as part of their work. All this activity resulted in a very thorough report being tabled in this chamber on 15 December 2010. Most importantly, the recommendations of the committee enjoyed bipartisan support. The recommendations were hailed as innovative, groundbreaking and the most significant reforms to the Queensland parliament since the abolition of the Legislative Council back in 1922.

The tabling of the review committee's report led to an extended debate in the House in March 2011 about the merits of the committee's recommendations, with many members of the Liberal National Party taking the opportunity to express their support for the groundbreaking changes. In a move that put the public ahead of politics, the then Labor government endorsed the vast majority of the committee's recommendations and took steps to enact these changes. Further extensive debate took place in this chamber in May 2011 when the legislation to enact these changes was discussed and, once again, the Liberal National Party was overwhelmingly in support of the changes.

A close inspection of the comments made by the LNP members at this time shows three overriding principles: firstly, greater scrutiny of the executive was needed; secondly, the changes enjoyed bipartisan support; and, finally, the changes would provide a framework for the operation of parliamentary committees here in Queensland for years to come. Of course, I would hate to be accused of quoting anyone out of context, so I want to remind members and some of those opposite about the committee changes during the parliamentary debate on the report.

The changes made to our committee system were described in this chamber last year as a 'once-in-a-lifetime reform' that would 'completely change the way we operate'. The same speaker noted that the review committee was making significant reforms and recommendations for this parliament for the long term. Which speaker offered these words of wisdom? No, it was not a Labor member.

**Mr Seeney:** Me?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, it was not the member for Callide. It was the member for Southern Downs, and of course he was not alone. Another speaker observed that the proposed committee reforms would be something that 'the next generation of parliamentarians will come to appreciate'. The next generation is here tonight. Who offered this piece of insight? The member for Callide! And what about this quote—

Queenslanders deserve their parliament and its committees to deliver real scrutiny of the executive government.

That was from the member for Surfers Paradise. It is amazing to think that, within the space of a year, these experienced, senior LNP members—now ministers—would completely abandon their principles and walk away from their stated position on these committee changes. All of them were sitting around the cabinet table when it was decided to proceed with these changes to committees. A year ago they stood in this chamber espousing high ideals and principles. Today, sadly, they have walked away from the report that bears their endorsement.

**Mr Seeney:** What changes are you talking about? What are the changes?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The report that bears their name and bears their endorsement. This is what they are walking away from. The fact remains that the principles the LNP seemed so fond of last year are still vitally important to our democracy. The need for an independent committee system capable of greater scrutiny of the executive is still needed. Under the reforms adopted last year this was achieved by a balanced representation on portfolio committees by appointing the nominee of the Leader of the Opposition as chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, and I will come to that later.

**Mr Seeney:** That's not even in this bill. It's a completely different bill. It's in the CMC bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You have not stated what you are going to do about it. Here is your opportunity today to stand up—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It would help if the Leader of the Opposition were to address her comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Here is an opportunity for the Premier and the Deputy Premier to stand up tonight and say whether or not they will support the recommendation of the bipartisan Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee.

**Mr Seeney:** I can tell you that now.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. This has no relevance to this particular—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the Deputy Premier's objection. He has said no, he will not accept the recommendation of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please take your seat.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is referring to the Crime and Misconduct Act, which has no relevance whatsoever to this particular bill, the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill. She is talking about a completely different piece of legislation. Mr Deputy Speaker, in relation to relevance, I ask that you bring her back to discuss matters in relation to this bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I am listening carefully to the Leader of the Opposition and encourage her to address the bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is highly relevant. As a lawyer, if you go back and look at the bill, it amends the Parliament of Queensland Act—

**Mr Stevens:** You're a member of parliament.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Exactly. If you go back and look at the consequential amendments in the schedule, clause 7 states—

This section applies to each of the following provisions of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001* ...

I am being completely relevant. The fact is that the government do not want to discuss this issue tonight because they do not have an answer. The Deputy Premier has made it very clear—and he has put it on the public record here and now—that he will not be supporting the recommendations tabled by the member for Gaven.

**Mr Newman:** You had the numbers. Tell the truth.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. Everybody decided on this. The member for Gaven was appointed by the previous Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Newman:** You had the numbers.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is not about numbers, Premier. It is about accountability, it is about transparency and it is about whether or not you are going to accept the recommendations of this committee.

**Mr Seeney:** I told you we're not, no. What part of no don't you understand?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is a bipartisan committee. This shows how you do not even understand how the committee system operates in this House. When the committees meet—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, again, I encourage you to speak through the chair and I encourage you not to use the word 'you' and I encourage all members of the House to direct their comments through the chair and not use the direct 'you' but the third person. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The former chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, the member for Gaven, was a member of the opposition. He was a member of the opposition appointed by the then Leader of the Opposition. Since then, the all-party committee of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee unanimously determined that the chair should be appointed by the Leader of the Opposition. The Deputy Premier tonight has confirmed to this House that that is not going to happen. So, once again, there is no accountability and no transparency. The government is walking away from its principles, walking away from what it said to the people of Queensland about keeping accountability. It is just walking away and not living up to expectations.

The Premier is treating the public with a lack of respect if he seriously thinks that stacking the portfolio committees will result in greater scrutiny of the executive. The Premier's move to increase the number of members on the portfolio committees to eight and to allocate six of those positions to government MPs can only have one result—watering down accountability in Queensland. By having 75 per cent of the committee positions filled by his own yes-men, the Premier is trying to minimise the opportunity for scrutiny of the government and its legislation.

I acknowledge that the composition of the 54th Parliament represents challenges, but stacking the portfolio committees is not the answer. It is also worth pointing out that by increasing the number of members on the portfolio committees the cost of committees increases because more members are eligible for the \$8,217 allowance for committee work. So less than two months after the Premier wins an election in which cost-of-living issues were at the forefront we find ourselves here tonight in an absolutely extraordinary situation.

The LNP put cost-of-living issues at the centre of their election campaign, and one of the first steps the Premier did today was to introduce a bill on the cost of living. Yet the very first bill that the Premier is debating in this House tonight will increase the cost burden on taxpayers to fund extra salaries for his massive backbench.

**Mr Newman:** Don't worry. We've found plenty of savings.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Did you say 'don't worry about that'? Is that what you said? I take the Premier's interjection. Or should it be a case of just wait and see?

So we had the extraordinary situation of two urgency bills presented, both bypassing the committee system, and which bill does this government choose to debate tonight? Not the cost-of-living bill that is going to benefit Queenslanders but a bill that is going to benefit their own purse. This is an extraordinary situation. I am happy for you to go and explain that one to the public tomorrow. It is absolutely extraordinary what we are seeing in this House tonight.

However, let me get back to the issues at hand. Every member of a parliamentary committee receives an extra \$8,217 a year on top of their base salary. We currently have seven portfolio committees. By increasing the government representation on those committees to six, a total of 42 LNP members will receive this allowance. In addition to all of these committee members are the parliamentary secretaries/assistant ministers that the Premier has appointed—11 in total, an increase of four on the previous government. So that is four extra assistant ministers—four extra salaries for assistant ministers. Let us not forget that 18 cabinet ministers were not enough. So we also have an extra cabinet minister and the costs, the accommodation and the travel that goes with that. I ask the Premier in his reply later tonight to actually detail all of these costs. How much is this costing the taxpayers of Queensland?

**Mr Rickuss:** What's the relevance of this?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Oh, it is relevant. When you throw in the allowances to the whips—now to be called the Chief Government Whip, the Senior Government Whip and the deputy government whips—you realise that in the Newman government everyone wins a prize.

These changes mean that nearly every member of the massive backbench will get extra pay. This decision has nothing to do with democracy. The Premier is strangely silent about finances when it comes to finding extra money for these backbenchers. I call on the Premier to provide an outline of these additional costs to taxpayers in his summing-up speech tonight. Yet he is prepared to cut funding to Sisters Inside and his disability services minister will not pursue the National Disability Insurance Scheme because it is 'not a priority'. If the Premier and the government truly believe in accountability, they would not be stacking the committees so that the government has 75 per cent representation.

Another distinct difference between the existing legislation and the government's proposed new approach has been the partisan way in which it has been developed. The current committee structure was determined by a review committee that was well represented by both sides of politics as well as the Independents. In fact, it was repeatedly highlighted that the members of the review committee boasted more than 130 years of combined parliamentary experience. The point being made was that this vast experience provided insights that would be invaluable in improving our committee system structures. Compare this level of experience with the entire LNP caucus—48 government MPs can now boast a whole three days of experience in government. I doubt that this level of experience is sufficient to justify overturning the work of the review committee.

Despite several requests from the opposition, the government refused to provide the opposition with any details of these significant changes in the lead-up to today's sitting. Instead, more information was released to journalists than was provided to the opposition. Members may be interested to know that after our repeated requests and at least two letters the opposition was finally provided with a copy of the bill at 8 pm last night and we were briefed on the contents of the bill at 9 am today—only a few short hours ago.

**Mr Rickuss:** You're the most overresourced, overfunded opposition in Australia on a comparative basis.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We are talking about accountability and transparency, which is what you went to the election about.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member will cease interjecting please. The opposition leader has the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is about being accountable. This is about what you went to the election about and it is about what you are not delivering.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Again, if the Leader of the Opposition would refrain from using the direct word 'you' and direct her comments through the chair, that would help.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There is no humility, dignity or grace in denying proper scrutiny—hardly the actions of an open and accountable government.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You can change it. You can be open and accountable. You have got every right to do that, and you are the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House has the opportunity to do it.

Another consistent theme of discussions during the process that led to our current committee system was a recognition that changes would stand the House in good stead for many years to come. Yet here we are on the first day of parliamentary business under the Newman government and these so-called long-term reforms are being unravelled. Reforms that took almost two years to develop and implement have been abandoned in the first two months of the Newman government and on the very first full sitting day of parliament.

The Premier—a person new to the activity and conventions of this chamber—has determined that he will be the one to choose which bills will be referred to committees and which ones will bypass scrutiny altogether. He will choose. The Premier will choose. Obviously, principles have a use-by date if you are in the Liberal National Party. It highlights the hollowness of the LNP's commitment to accountability in the lead-up to this year's state election. Of course there were plenty of people who had their doubts about the sincerity of the commitment, but I do not think anybody would have expected him to have done this as quickly as he has. The time frame for breaking this promise is extraordinary.

One of the overriding themes of the 2012 state election was cost-of-living pressures, yet this government's first item of business when it comes to legislative change is to water down the accountability measures that are already in place. It shows that this government, which is less than two months old, has already got its priorities completely and utterly wrong. The Premier is putting his own team's interests—the interests of the LNP—ahead of the public interest.

There is one element of the bill which the opposition is comfortable with. I refer to the sections relating to the role of the Speaker on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, or the CLA. There has been a lot of debate, both written and verbal—

**Mr Newman:** It's your legislation.

**Mr Seenev:** It's our amendment that you voted against.

**Mr Newman:** Yes, you voted against it.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You were not here. There has been a lot of debate, both written and verbal, about the changes made to the CLA last year, particularly in relation to the role of the Speaker. I want to rise above the emotive elements of the arguments that have been put before this House and in the wider public arena and look at this matter objectively. I want to remind everyone in this chamber that the genesis of the establishment of the CLA and its functions was the bipartisan review of the committee system. These recommendations came with the ringing endorsement of the then opposition members of the committee—the member for Southern Downs, the member for Callide and the then member for Toowoomba South. The government indicated that it accepted the bulk of these bipartisan recommendations and proceeded with implementing them. My understanding is that some adjustments in relation to the role of the Speaker were made once the legislation was introduced last year, but the fact remains that both sides of the House were of the opinion that these changes could improve the operation of the parliament.

In hindsight, I think we all agree that in reality any good intentions have not been fully realised. I think there is a general consensus that the role of the Speaker is such that these changes are necessary. I want to make it clear that Labor's opposition to this bill does not extend to the provisions relating to the role of the Speaker. I think the amendments relating to the Speaker's role on the CLA are sensible.

Nowhere during the 35-day election campaign or the 12-month period that Campbell Newman spent as de facto Leader of the Opposition was a change to the committee system foreshadowed. It was not part of the Premier's one-day plan, the seven-day plan, the 30-day plan, the 100-day plan or the first-term plan. Despite this, apparently the structure of our parliamentary committee is the most urgent issue confronting Queensland and the government because it is the very first piece of legislation we are debating under this government.

We all know what the Premier is doing. He wants to minimise the glare of scrutiny over his government. As I said at the start of this debate, this is a matter of integrity and the Premier has fallen well short of acceptable standards. That is why the opposition is determined to do everything it can to keep this government accountable. We will be holding this government to account over its election commitments which are already being broken at a disquieting rate. We will also be working hard to rebuild the Labor Party, to restore the public's trust in our party and to reconnect with the people of Queensland. Already the community is realising the dangers inherent in the LNP's large parliamentary majority. We need to restore the balance to the parliament and ensure that the government is held to account, otherwise we will continue to see flawed pieces of legislation and laws that put political interests ahead of public interests being rammed through this parliament.

I note that there has been no information from the government about the extra cost being incurred through the changes to the committees, the extra parliamentary secretaries and the extra cost to the ministry. The LNP has been silent, except for tonight when the Deputy Premier said that he was not going to be supporting the changes to the CMC committee. However, Queenslanders demand and deserve more. They demand accountability and they demand transparency from their government.

**Mr Seeney:** That's why there are only seven of you left, because that is what they demanded.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Humility, grace and dignity. I am sorry, Deputy Premier, but I do not see from you any sign of humility, grace and dignity. As I stated clearly, the opposition will be opposing the bill but we will be supporting the amendments dealing with the Speaker.

**Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.06 pm): I rise to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. At the outset, I would like to thank the Premier and the Premier's office for arranging a briefing on the bill this morning for the opposition members and staff. It was helpful and instructive. I am indebted to Tim Herbert from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Zoe Wilson from the Premier's office for their assistance.

I feel an uncomfortable sense of *deja vu* in reverse in debating this bill. It does not seem so long ago that we were in this chamber first debating the changes to the committee system of this parliament. The committee to review the parliamentary committee system was established in February 2010 as a result of the integrity and accountability reform agenda. The committee was asked to conduct an inquiry and report on how the parliamentary oversight legislation could be enhanced and how the parliamentary committee system could be strengthened to enhance accountability.

The committee was asked to consider the following: the role of parliamentary committees in both Australian and international jurisdictions in examining legislative proposals, particularly those with unicameral parliaments; timely and cost-effective ways by which Queensland parliamentary committees could more effectively evaluate and examine legislative proposals; and the effectiveness of the operation of the committee structure of the 53rd Parliament following the restructure of the committee system on 23 April 2009. After calling for written submissions and holding public hearings, the committee presented its unanimous report to parliament on 15 December 2010. The government responded to the report on 9 March 2011 and supported the majority of the recommendations by the review committee. A bill was then introduced implementing the approach.

I refer to the contributions made by the member for Callide in the debate on the bill. As a member of the Committee System Review Committee, he described taking part in the review as 'one of the best experiences that I have had since I came into this parliament' and that 'it was a bipartisan approach to the issue of the parliamentary committees'. In fact, during his speech in the debate, the member for Callide used the word 'bipartisan' 12 times. The bipartisan approach of the committee was demonstrated by the recommendation that the committees consist of equal numbers of government and opposition members. This was the case with the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and other committees. This committee was to have six members—three from the opposition, three from the government. This meant that no one political party had a majority on the committee.

This was supported. However, the response did not support the method of resolving a deadlock provided for in the report—that is, refer the matters back to the parliament. Instead, the bill proposed that the chair could have a casting vote. The member for Callide foreshadowed an amendment in the committee and, such was the spirit of bipartisanship, this was moved by the then Premier and passed. That was just last May.

Whatever has happened in just 12 months has confounded me, because 'a true system of checks and balances, a true system of involvement of the talents and abilities of members of the parliament other than those who are in the executive—in the cabinet—so that this place really operates in a modern way and is open and accountable and so that the government of the day is truly held to account', as described by the then member for Toowoomba South, is suddenly in need of dramatic overhaul. The call for every member of this parliament to be aware that under this system there will be a far greater onus on ministers and shadow ministers to lift their game seems to have fallen by the wayside.

We are now debating a bill that attempts to restructure the committee system without the benefit of a review by the bipartisan committee of the parliament. In fact, the restructure will take place without even being considered by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Section 79E(c) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 provides that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has, amongst its responsibilities, standing rules and orders about the conduct of business by and the practices and procedures of the Assembly and its committees. I find this impossible to understand when the member for Callide in the debate of the committee's report said that the proposals in the report will make this place a better parliament for generations of Queenslanders to come. In fact, all members on the then opposition side of the chamber were effusive in their praise of the new system, yet it has not been in operation for even 12 months before being unilaterally changed.

I have real concerns about the PCMC and the proposed nomination by the Premier of the member for Gladstone as the chair. My concern is not about the member for Gladstone herself, who has proven to be a valuable member of this parliament over the years. My concern is that the review committee recommended that the chair be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition. We as a government supported that in principle but wanted to undertake further consultation with the CMC before putting that recommendation into legislation. However, in the spirit of the committee's

recommendations, we, in an act of bipartisanship and cooperation, allowed the Leader of the Opposition to nominate the chair of the PCMC. He nominated the member for Gaven, who chaired the committee for the balance of the parliament. The further consultation we wanted has taken place, and last week the PCMC, chaired by Dr Douglas, in its report on the three-yearly review of the CMC, again recommended that the chair of the PCMC be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

I note with grave concern that an amendment to give effect to this recommendation, made twice by two independent committees, is not included in this bill. It is churlish and quite disingenuous of the Premier to say that his nomination of the member for Gladstone is in the spirit of the recommendation. The express recommendation of the original committee's report and now the PCMC's three-yearly review is that the Leader of the Opposition nominate the chair, not just that it be a non-government member and, as in this case, a non-government member recommended by the Premier or even the Leader of the House. The actual recommendation of the member is to be a recommendation of the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, by making a public statement about who he intends to nominate to the chair's position, the Premier has flouted democratic principles. It concerns me that on this first day of real business of the 54th Parliament we see a cavalier attitude displayed by the man who, for all intents and purposes, will be the Premier of Queensland for the next three years.

My other concerns relate to the increase in numbers on the committees, together with a reduction in the number of opposition members on the committees. I know that within the designated Wednesday morning committee meeting time it would be difficult for the opposition to meet its obligations currently if there were three opposition members on each committee. However, the committee in its report recommended that Friday mornings also be available for committee meetings and that this be considered as part of the normal sitting week. It further recommended that committees be able to meet outside parliamentary meeting times. In its response to the report, our government noted that committees can already meet outside of parliament sitting times and supported the designated committee sitting arrangements. However, none of these options was canvassed before these changes were proposed. It flies in the face of the bipartisan nature of the committee system to not only reduce the opposition's representation on committees but at the same time increase not only the government's representation but also the overall numbers on committees.

The statements by the Leader of the House that the numbers should reflect the make-up of the parliament are just ludicrous. They did not when the changes were made. We did not insist on an extra member because we had a majority in the House. The formula contained in the bill for ascertaining the number of people on the committee and the make-up of the membership based on the election result is farcical. In a parliament where the government holds a large majority, it is even more important that oppositions be able to better scrutinise legislation. This is important for the quality of the legislation, the accountability of government and the proper functioning of parliament and the committee system. In fact, there is an interesting fact contained in the committee's report on page 22, in the schedule of examples of the political affiliations of chairs of committees in unicameral legislatures. In Newfoundland and Labrador there are six committees, five with government chairs and one with a non-government chair. However, this is in a parliament of 47 members of which 42 members belong to the government, four members belong to the opposition and there is one Independent. I urge the government to look at the options set out in the committee's report and to attempt to accommodate the committees in their current composition within the structure that is already available before any changes are made.

I recognise that the Premier was not in parliament when these significant changes were made and may not appreciate the importance of them. He also was not in Queensland at the time of the Fitzgerald inquiry, so I will take the opportunity to enlighten him on what Fitzgerald recommended. He noted—

Elsewhere, the effective and efficient operation of parliament has been enhanced by the setting up of all-party policy and investigatory committees. The committees have become a vital and energetic part of giving effect to the democratic process particularly in respect of complex issues. They serve as parliament's research arm and as an independent source of information to aid proper parliamentary debate. Scrutiny of government legislative activity and of public administration is more effective as a consequence.

He therefore recommended 'introducing a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees to enhance the ability of parliament to monitor the efficiency of government'. EARC, which considered the Fitzgerald recommendations, recommended a parliamentary committee system. In its view, a properly resourced and supported committee system with members from both sides of the House could carry out some of the functions traditionally undertaken by the upper house. Queensland is in a unique position because we have a unicameral parliament. Without an upper house, the committees' role in scrutinising legislation is even more important. As the committee noted—

In the absence of an Upper House in Queensland, it is appropriate there be a strong system of parliamentary committees, with sufficient powers, jurisdiction and resources to successfully and effectively aid and inform the parliament in its role of holding the Executive accountable.

The committee in its report recommended that all legislation go to a committee for consideration and public hearings. This provides members of the public an unprecedented opportunity to comment on government legislation before it is debated and voted on in the parliament. There will of course be instances where it may not be practicable for the committee to review legislation, but I would submit that



that would be a rarity. The committee's report noted the submissions made by the Clerk of the Parliament which referred to a number of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association benchmarks indicating best practice in relation to legislation. These included a presumption that the legislature will refer legislation to committees and that any exception must be transparent, narrowly defined and extraordinary in nature. It also included an obligation on committees to scrutinise the legislation and to have power to recommend amendments and also opportunities for public input in the legislative process.

The statement by the Premier that anything contained in LNP policy would bypass the committee system shows a complete lack of understanding of the committee process. The policies that went to the people before the election were a shell of an outline of what was proposed. They lacked any detail and certainly did not propose exactly how policies would be implemented. As an example, I ask members to look at the policy on car registration and compare it with the bill before the House. Even without reading them, the significant difference in size of the documents should give a bit of a hint. There is a massive difference between a policy and a piece of legislation. Saying that the policy document has been scrutinised cannot replace the thorough examination of legislation that the committee system provides.


I can forgive the lack of knowledge of the Premier in relation to matters pertaining to the committee system. After all, he has never before served in parliament and has never taken part in committee hearings. Perhaps after he has had some experience in these matters might be a better time to look at introducing such sweeping changes to the system. What I cannot forgive is the people who served on the review committee, who came into this House, lauded the changes, who spoke of bipartisanship and reform and pledged their support for the committee's report. I ask them to show some integrity and oppose this bill as being totally contrary to what they have said they believed.

The committees look at bills after their introduction. Members of the public and stakeholders alike see exactly what is proposed and are given an opportunity to comment and propose changes. That can only result in better legislation. I cite as an example the intensive consultation that took place with industry on biosecurity legislation. This was an election commitment of the previous government. As the then minister, I asked the industry and the government to sit down, draft the legislation and I think through that process we got it right. Notwithstanding that it was an election commitment and I had asked the industry to be involved so intimately in the drafting of the legislation, I had no qualms about referring the bill to the committee. There is nothing to fear from ensuring that stakeholders and members of the public have their say on legislation at the early stages. I believe this is a great example of how thorough consultation results in better legislation.

So even if the argument had any merit, which it certainly does not, the change to the committee system contained in this bill was not part of LNP policy before the election. So there is no reason this bill should not have been referred to the appropriate committee for its consideration. As the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli noted in a submission to the committee, consideration by legislation committees would result in 'better legislation, reduced errors which themselves cause delay and hardship, and be quicker and more efficacious in the long run'.

This bill is a travesty. It seeks to undo the reforms that members described as the most important change made to the parliament since 1922 before they have even been given an opportunity to properly develop. The bill reduces the ability of the opposition to play its proper role in the scrutiny of government and it makes a mockery of the openness and transparency that this government has pledged.

I note the statement made by the Premier when claiming victory on election night that his government would act with humility, grace and dignity. Bringing this bill into the parliament shows very little of those traits. I do not support this bill, with the exception of the changes that are foreshadowed for the role of the Speaker.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (8.23 pm): For almost an hour we have been treated to a gobbledegook of misrepresentations, half-truths and irrelevancies. I think what we have seen in the last hour and what we saw in question time this afternoon is a forerunner of what this opposition is going to bring to this parliament. Many people have talked about the fact that the parliament will not function properly because of the reduced number of opposition members. I would suggest, honourable members, that what we have seen this evening and this afternoon would indicate that the only thing that prevents this parliament from functioning properly is the intellectual level of the contributions that are brought to the parliament by the members of the opposition. Any member who comes into this parliament has to do better than just stand up and read a lot of meaningless words that have been written by somebody else—some you-beaut clever Labor student down the street who writes a speech for my old mate the member for Mackay to come in and stumble over. He did not understand the meaning of the words that he was reading, because it was a mishmash of gobbledegook and nonsense.

For the members who were not here for the consideration of the reform bill, let me put on record the facts of the issue. The parliament had a bipartisan committee. The members of the committee made recommendations to the parliament about the implementation of portfolio committees. That was three

months—probably four months—before the end of the last term of the government. The government was in power for 14 years. So for 13 years and eight months, no bills went to a committee—none, zero, zilch. No bills went to a committee for 13 years and eight months. Yet these hypocrites come in here and talk as though it is the end of democracy because, all of a sudden, two bills have been declared urgent. How many bills went through this House without committee scrutiny in 13 years and eight months?

**Mrs MILLER:** I rise to a point of order. As the former deputy chair of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, the Deputy Premier would well know that legislation went to that committee.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! There is no point of order. That is a point of view.

**Mr SEENEY:** It is a point of view and it is an erroneous point of view. The former scrutiny of legislation committee had the responsibility to scrutinise legislation against fundamental legislative principles. It did not have the role of scrutinising the legislation from a policy position and the member should know that. The self-righteous hypocrisy we have seen here this evening is breathtaking.

Let us go back and look at the bill before the House, which obviously the speechwriters who produced the contributions that have taken up nearly an hour of the time of this House did not read. The policy objectives of the bill are listed at the front of what we call the green, which is the explanatory notes for the bill. They are set out in four dot points—

The policy objectives of the Bill are to:—

- set the formulae to determine the size of the membership of the Parliament's portfolio committees—  
and most importantly—

so that they can practically and logistically operate ...

Because of the changes in the nature of this parliament, the committee structure had to be changed so they can practically and logistically operate. Given the changes that have happened in this parliament they could not operate. If members wanted to read a more detailed explanation, it states on page 2—and I will quote it as well—

Following the State Election, the Premier received advice from the Clerk of the Parliament ... that the practicality of the election result dictated that the number of members and the balance of numbers between government and non-government members on each of the Parliament's portfolio committees should change so they could logistically operate.

You do not have to be a rocket scientist to work out that, even with the present numbers, we need 14 non-government members. Under the system that existed before the passage of this legislation, we needed 21 non-government members. Honourable members, there are not 21 non-government members here. There are not 14 members here, let alone 21. The changes that the reform committee put in place also changed the sessional orders of the parliament so that on a Wednesday morning the committees could meet as a representation of the parliament. They were meant to be a sitting of the parliament. When there is not 21 non-government members, the parliament cannot operate in that form. So we have to change the form of the parliament.

The provisions before the House require 14 members. There are not 14 members for the parliament to operate under that provision. It would be irresponsible for any of us not to make the changes that are necessary to ensure that this parliament can operate in the way that it is meant to by that reform committee.

Both the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted extensively from what I and the member for Southern Downs said in regard to that reform bill. It was a bill that had bipartisan support. It was bill that made sweeping reforms to this parliament. It was a bill that ensured that legislation that goes through this parliament is referred to a committee to allow scrutiny by not just members of the parliament but by members of the public. That was following the New Zealand model. But there was always provision in that legislation, and it was often enough spoken about in the debate—which members opposite never quoted—to allow for urgent bills. There were a couple of situations identified very early where bills could legitimately be declared urgent. Of course, the first one of those provisions is process bills—bills that are about process; bills that, for example, change the composition of the parliamentary committees, change the way the parliament operates. They are bills about process. They are not bills that one would seek public scrutiny on. Of course, there had to be a provision for those bills to be declared urgent. The second area where it was identified very early that there needed to be a provision for bills to be declared urgent was at the start of a parliamentary term, because any incoming government has to have a legislative program to populate the *Notice Paper* of this House. Any incoming government has a policy position which it has put to the people of Queensland and which has been accepted by the people of Queensland and which it has not just a right but a responsibility to get on with and to deliver. That is exactly what is being proposed.


The members of the opposition spent a long time talking about the fact that somehow or other it was terrible that these bills were being declared urgent. I make the point that that is not even a provision of the bill. It stretches the boundaries of relevance considerably. This bill has nothing to do with the provision that allows for bills to be declared urgent or the declaration of those two bills as urgent bills. That declaration is not just justified but it was foreseen by the members of the reform committee.

The other part of the gobbledegook that we heard from the Leader of the Opposition and her deputy relates to the structure of the committees. The structure of the committees is a practical response to an election result that was not foreseen by the members of the reform committee. The bipartisan reform committee that we were part of—the member for Southern Downs, the then member for Toowoomba South, the then member for Rockhampton, the former Leader of the House and I think the former member for Yeerongpilly was the other member—could not have foreseen a day when the government would have failed to such an extent that the people of Queensland would have elected just seven members to the opposition. We did not foresee that. If we in the reform committee were guilty of anything it was that we did not foresee the complete self-destruction of a Labor government in Queensland. We did not foresee the horrendous election campaign that that government ran and that resulted in them being rejected by Queenslanders from Cook to Currumbin. In every seat across Brisbane they were rejected because of the election campaign they ran, because of the degree to which they had failed, because of the contempt with which the people of Queensland came to hold them. We did not foresee the extent of that complete implosion. It was not just our side of the committee that did not foresee the extent of that implosion, I think the former member for Rockhampton and the other government members who were part of that committee could never have foreseen it, even though he is still writing the questions for his replacement and sending them down here. We all recognised Rob's handwriting when the member for Rockhampton stood up to ask that question this morning.

Let us have no more of the hypocritical nonsense from the other side. What has been proposed tonight before the parliament is a simple process bill that is about addressing the reality with which this parliament has to deal. It is a simple piece of process legislation that is not just necessary; it is responsible and it should pass through this House without too much debate or opposition at all. The fact that we are here at this time of night debating it is because the members of the opposition are trying to bring within the debate on this legislation a whole range of other things that are not part of the legislation. The issues with the CMC committee are not part of this legislation; they are dealt with by a separate piece of legislation. The questions of whether the bill should be referred to a committee or whether it should be declared urgent are not part of this legislation. They have been dragged into the debate and written into the gobbledegook speeches that we have heard delivered by the members opposite.

Also contained within this legislation, and which the Leader of the Opposition has indicated they would not oppose, are provisions relating to the position and the roles of the Speaker. It is worth putting on record again that what we are doing in this bill tonight is what we promised we would do. Not only did we promise that we would do this, whilst in opposition we moved an amendment in this House to put the Speaker on the CLA as the chair. The government who sat on this side of the House, of which five of these hypocrites were a part, voted against us. I stood over there and I moved the amendment to do what this bill does, to do what the Leader of the Opposition now says that they support. I stood over there and moved the amendment and the Leader of the Opposition stood over here and voted against it. That demonstrates the shallowness of the intellectual contribution that this group of people bring to this parliament. It is not just their numbers that are lacking, it is any credibility in their arguments, honourable members, and that has been shown this morning when they asked a whole heap of questions that should have been questions on notice. They should have been written down, signed and put out here as questions on notice. After all the years in the parliament they did not know the difference between questions on notice, which are supposed to be questions about numbers and data and information that the parliament allows members to ask, and questions without notice. Once again tonight we have seen that complete misunderstanding of the parliament and a complete lack of any credibility.

I would suggest to honourable members that we deal with this quickly and expeditiously. It is a piece of process legislation. It will make the parliament work better. Anyone who has an interest in ensuring that this parliament works better, as every member of that bipartisan reform committee did at the time, would support this piece of legislation. I urge every member in the House to do that tonight.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (8.38 pm): I have been listening to the debate with some interest over the last now hour or so and I just want to reflect on what it is we are actually debating here because we have seen the Leader of the Opposition travel a great distance away from the content of this bill, we have seen the Deputy Leader of the Opposition travel a great deal away from the contents of this bill and I think we need to reflect on what this bill is going to do and how it is going to achieve it. The Deputy Premier has covered off on some aspects of that. We need to go back a little way and reflect on the purpose of the committees.

The opposition seems to think that the purpose of the committees is to gain some partisan advantage, but the purpose of the committees is to scrutinise legislation. It is to enable the members of this House to look at legislation that the executive brings forward and scrutinise it—to call for evidence, to ask members of the public to come in and to actually look at the document in some detail. It is not to have the numbers. It is not to get some partisan advantage. It is there to ensure that the legislation is looked at before it is brought into this place. The purpose of the committees is the scrutiny of legislation.

The current system is broken. It is broken because of the hand that was dealt to this parliament by the voters of Queensland on 24 March when they said, 'We have had enough of the former regime and we want a change.' Today, clearly, we have the result of a recommendation by the Clerk of the Parliament that says the system that was in place was impractical and would not work.

What is occurring here and what is the bill actually doing? There are four items set out on the front page of the explanatory notes. One is to set formulae to determine the membership of the committees. It sets simple formulae to allow for a change in the number of members on and composition of the committees to reflect the vote of the people of Queensland. As the vote of the people of Queensland changes the balance in the House, the number of members of the committee changes as well to reflect the interests of the people of Queensland who send us here.

The second item is to reform the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. As the Deputy Premier has said, it is to implement a policy and a position that we espoused in this place the last time we discussed this legislation—that is, to put the Speaker on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to have a say in the governance, particularly in this chamber, of our actions and what occurs here. It makes a minor amendment in relation to the position of my friend the member for Mermaid Beach, changing his title from Leader of the House to Manager of Government Business. It changes the title of parliamentary secretaries to assistant ministers and also provides for the payment of some extra funds for people in those positions. That is it in its entirety.

This is not some skulduggery designed to undermine parliamentary democracy in Queensland. This is not some cunning plan designed to do the opposition out of a fair say. They have done that to themselves by their actions over the past three years. This is simply a process to ensure that this parliament gets down to business and starts doing the work that the people of Queensland expect it to do. These amendments are about giving us an opportunity to make sure that the committees that are established to scrutinise the legislation brought into this House are able to do that work.

I reflect on some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this debate. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about costs. This opposition of seven has 22 staff and an entitlement of over \$3 million per annum to assist them to do the job of an opposition. If they follow the formula that the former opposition used, to help them do the job they have three times as many staff as there are members in this place. We should also reflect on the jobs and positions held by the members of the opposition. Every member of the opposition gets an extra fee as a result of the positions they hold, whether it is the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or the shadow ministers. They all have whips and they all want a committee position. If costs are a concern of the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition members, any time they want to offer them up we are happy to take them.

**Mrs MILLER:** I rise to a point of order. The member is, in fact, misleading this parliament. The positions that he refers to are existing positions in the members' handbook.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson):** Order! There is no point of order; it is a point of view.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Any time that the people sitting opposite feel that they want to make a genuine contribution—probably the first and best contribution they make to saving the taxpayers of Queensland a dollar—we would be happy to discuss those entitlements with them. We would have no difficulty with that whatsoever. The Leader of the Opposition talked about the number of assistant ministers appointed, carefully forgetting the fact that in 2006 the Beattie Labor government had 11 parliamentary secretaries. Again, the hypocrisy and shallowness of argument in relation to costs is shown for what it is. There is no strength to the argument put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in respect to that.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition talked to us about policy. He said that at no stage during the 35 days of the campaign was the policy in relation to the changes to the membership of the committees espoused by the LNP. I think the Deputy Premier covered the thought process behind that and the fact that no-one really envisaged the result that the people of Queensland delivered on 24 March. I make this point: when it comes to talking about a policy, what you are going to do before an election and delivering it after an election, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would do well to remember—as I am sure he does—the position that his own government took into the 2009 election when the then Treasurer said, 'There will be no asset sales,' when he said, 'Make no mistake about it, we will be keeping a fuel subsidy scheme,' and when he said, 'There will be no new taxes and charges,' yet introduced a new waste levy. With all of those things, not only did the then government not reveal that they were going to do them; they actually denied they were going to do them. That government went a step further and said, 'Make no mistake about it, we will not be doing those things.' Within three months of being elected, we all know what happened: the assets were on the chopping block, the fuel subsidy was gone and a waste tax was on the books.

When we listen to the complaints from those opposite, when we consider the import of the bill and when we consider what it is about, we realise that the opposition's concerns are more about frustration and cheap political point scoring than they are about delivering a committee system to do the work that the people of Queensland expect their elected representatives to do. In short, tonight what we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is nothing more than a whinge.

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (8.46 pm): As the Leader of the Opposition has outlined, we will be opposing the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012 that was introduced by the Premier after the lunchbreak today and that is being debated only hours later. As has been covered earlier tonight, since the beginning of this month I have been in constant contact with the Leader of the House to seek details in writing of the proposed legislative changes that we are debating this evening. Under section 81(1)(d) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, at present decisions relating to the practices and procedures of the Legislative Assembly are to be made by the CLA and not unilaterally by the Premier or jointly with other members of the government. I take on board that advice has been received from the Clerk. I have not seen that advice, but certainly I would be keen to see it at some stage.

A request for a briefing continued, and it was only in the early hours of last night that we received formal notification that this would be the legislation introduced and debated today and that a briefing would be provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet this morning at nine o'clock. Better late than never! Despite that, I sincerely thank Tim Herbert and Zoe Wilson for making time available to brief members of the opposition office, other non-government MPs and me.

This is not just any piece of legislation. It is very important legislation about the very parliament we are working in and the very important committee system that received support from both sides of politics in the previous parliament, that is, until the Premier decided to throw all of that out to suit his own agenda. When the LNP was in opposition they wholeheartedly supported the current committee system. However, in government it seems they cannot bear the scrutiny. Barely a year ago the Deputy Premier, then the opposition leader, stood in this place and said—

As the Premier said in her contribution—and I agree 100 per cent with what she said—this is proposing a new process that will require a cultural change. It will require a change in culture on the part of members of this parliament irrespective of where they sit in the parliament.

It seems the cultural change that is so necessary for the new committee process to work, as touted by the now Deputy Premier, lasted only until the Deputy Premier found himself on the government benches. With this bill the Newman government is saying that it does matter where you sit in this parliament, and obviously when you sit there.

According to the LNP, it seems scrutiny, accountability and integrity is something to be called upon when in opposition and something to be dismissed when in government. As recently as 11 May on the ABC the Deputy Premier said—

The Parliament exists so that the Executive Government, that is the Ministers have to come there and subject themselves each day to the test, to answer questions and to be accountable.

It seems that the Newman government ministers are happy to take the test as long as they have the answer sheet as well. Already today some frontbenchers have failed the 'Seeney test' and all those who have seen the member for Callide in action in this place know that he certainly does—and I respectfully say this—set a high bar. It will be interesting to see how many of them can pass the 'Seeney test' and how many of them are for the high jump.

In late 2009 the then state government released the discussion paper *Integrity and accountability in Queensland*. This discussion paper, which focused on the importance of scrutinising the government, amongst other things, led the then Labor government to create an all-party committee to review the committee system that was in place at the time. The committee received submissions, held public hearings and consulted with community groups and stakeholders. In December 2010 the Committee System Review Committee delivered a report to the parliament supported by all sides of politics. The report made 55 recommendations which profoundly changed the parliamentary committee system. Once again, the member for Callide talked about reforms that the next generation of parliamentarians would come to fully appreciate. Today, however, it seems that all of this means nothing. The report, all the work spent by the members of the committee, the months of public input, the time spent debating the report in the House, the bipartisan way these changes were approached—all of this has been cast aside to protect the government from scrutiny.

The approach that the Newman government is taking to 'restoring accountability in government'—as it professed to do in its election flyers—has been shown up once again today as nothing but rhetoric with the extraordinary move to declare this bill urgent so that it can be rubber-stamped and fast-tracked through this parliament. It is ironic that a bill which is about scrutiny of legislation, and of the government more broadly through the committee system, is itself rushed through the parliament with public consultation cut and examination by the committees ignored. The Premier was reported as saying that it

is unnecessary for a committee to look at policies that were made public during the election campaign. This statement just shows the arrogance of the Newman government and how fearful they are of Queenslanders being able to scrutinise their policies. He went on to say—

They'll be fast-tracked through the parliament and we believe that's fair enough, because we had a very clear agenda which we put to Queenslanders so it will go through as quickly as possible.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that committees will be bypassed completely. The Premier also stated—

Other matters—the new legislation, the new issues—that come up, unless of course there is a real compelling urgency about them, they should go to committee.

They should be debated and there should be public hearings and indeed you'll see that happen.

After the first two bills, including the bill we are currently debating, were put through today as urgent bills, it was refreshing to see the member for Southern Downs introduce two bills that were actually referred to portfolio committees, followed by two others. I will certainly be keeping a keen eye on whether we will see more of the latter over the next three years, instead of what we saw with the cost-of-living bill introduced today. For the record, we opposed the urgency motion surrounding that bill but, more importantly, we oppose the LNP's arrogance in avoiding proper scrutiny of its legislation. Referring legislation to a committee does not mean that it cannot come back before the proposed date for the second reading debate. What it could mean is that the relevant committee could give consideration to and—heaven forbid—value-add to the bill. However, I do not recall the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill, which as we know proposes changes to the committee system, ever being announced by the LNP prior to the election nor it featuring in any campaign literature. The excuse that the election result was not to be foreseen does not cut it.

Within the space of a few days, the Premier has essentially broken his own promise. By declaring this bill urgent, he is saying to Queenslanders that there should not be any public hearings, that there should not be any input from the public, nor should there be any full or open debate. His new motto is clearly 'don't you worry about that'. He is saying that he alone is the arbiter of what was made clear and what was not. Based on this thinking, why even have a committee system if it is not going to be used? If every piece of legislation that is remotely related to election commitments will skip the investigative process of the committee system, then why bother with it? I will tell honourable members why. Even though this LNP government is only six weeks old, it has already set itself on a dangerous trajectory, on a path towards a style of government which we have not seen since the days of the Bjelke-Petersen era. I do not bring up that era as just another throwaway line. I hope we will never see another government in this state that is just as corrupt and self-serving as that of the Bjelke-Petersen government. However, we must be ever vigilant not to allow a 21st century, soft version of the type of behind the scenes, covert and slow centralisation of executive power and marginalisation of opposing views that we are already seeing with the Newman government.

If someone were bold enough to call what was there during the Bjelke-Petersen era a 'committee system', they would find the contempt and disregard with which the conservative side of politics viewed the virtues of accountability and integrity in government. They would find that their idea of checks and balances was three—some could argue—very 'critically important' committees. They were a printing committee, a parliamentary buildings committee and a refreshment rooms committee. It would be laughable if it was not so serious, if it did not play a part in plunging this state into darkness for more than three decades. Sadly, this is not a case of stirring old ghosts. It is not a case of reviving thoughts of a long gone era.

On 2 March this year the following was reported in the *Courier-Mail*—

It is understood Mr Newman told the gathering that Joh Bjelke-Petersen ran the last decent government in Queensland.

His behind-closed-doors comments came only hours after he publicly labelled the same regime corrupt while touring the late former premier's home of Kingaroy.

If this statement is taken in isolation, it may not be given much weight. But together with what we have seen so far—especially today—it is disturbing. It is disturbing to me, to my colleagues in the opposition, and it is sure to be viewed as disturbing by all Queenslanders who value freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

To date, the Premier has increased the numbers in cabinet from 18 to 19; increased the number of parliamentary secretaries from seven to 11 and, through this bill, changes their titles to assistant ministers; increased the number of government whip positions from three to four. There is certainly no hint of 'smaller government' yet. There is a Leader of the House, the honourable member for Mermaid Beach, who, prior to this bill, was the chair of the CLA who will also undergo a name change, and I will talk a little more about that later. Then there are the seven portfolio committees in relation to which this bill proposes increasing the number of government members from three to six and reducing the non-government members from three to two. Not only is the government overwhelmingly in control of the House, it now proposes to potentially diminish the voice of the opposition to one member on certain committees.

Let us be clear about what this is all about. For those who have not been counting as we have been going along I will make it simple: 19 plus 11 plus four plus one plus seven plus 42 equals 77. There might be a couple of double-ups, but out of a possible 77 government members after the election of the Speaker, would you look at that—all 77 will have a job that entitles them to an above backbencher salary. This is not a coincidence. I understand that because there is a backbench with the numbers provided by this unique parliament, keeping the committee numbers the same as they were would have meant creating a class system on the backbench, and that just would not do—or perhaps we should say no can do. Even if we concede that the changes were needed because of the functionality of these committees, that would mean that there would be no reason it has gone from six to eight. Quite clearly, you could still have six people on every committee and reduce the number of non-government members on those committees. There is no reason to go to eight other than looking after and feathering the nests of the backbench. I would like to hear the Premier's comments in relation to that.

When we again look at the Premier's comments that it is unnecessary for a committee to look at policies that were made public during the election campaign, we see that the amount of work being performed by those committee chairs, drawing roughly an additional \$21,000 and members of portfolio committees drawing more than \$8,000 extra, is immediately reduced.

Another matter that I hope the Premier will be able to address in his summing-up this evening relates to the name changes, specifically changing 'Leader of the House' to 'Manager of Government Business'. We were advised at this morning's briefing that this was to better reflect the role and duty of this position, and this statement was confirmed in the Premier's introductory speech. I want to be very clear that this question is not being asked as a reflection on the current Leader of the House, the honourable member for Mermaid Beach. I ask: will the Premier please advise whether this means that the Manager of Government Business—if this bill is passed—will from here on be devoting his attention to the government only instead of being the servant of the whole House, as the position has previously offered?

I also want to ask the Premier whether he can confirm that the assistant ministers will not receive any additional entitlements to those received by parliamentary secretaries, as raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I am interested whether additional salaries are to be paid to the holders of these positions. The bill provides that the additional salaries will be determined by notice in the *Queensland Government Gazette*. In this time of cost cutting and paring down of public sector jobs, I just want the Premier to confirm that no additional salary will be paid to assistant ministers above what was received by parliamentary secretaries.

The Labor opposition will continue to pursue and scrutinise this government, whether it is the swag of broken promises we have already seen or, as we see today, the abuse of power through the government's huge majority. The people of Queensland did send a clear message at the last election. We respect that decision and know the LNP government has a mandate for change. But to be very clear, this mandate was an instruction from the people of Queensland to deliver good government and to make their everyday lives better. The changes proposed by the government are not in the interests of democracy or accountability, and they are certainly not in the interests of the people of this great state. In this already disproportionately partisan House making the one avenue left to legislators in the Queensland parliament to scrutinise the government—our committee system—just as partisan is unwarranted, unjustifiable, and most certainly undemocratic.



**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.59 pm): During the debate of the Committee System Review Committee report in this House on 10 March 2011 I commented that in relation to the position of Speaker all members should take a deep breath and rethink some of the proposed recommendations. It is no secret in this chamber that I fully supported John Mickel as Speaker and that I had a particular cause for concern that the Speaker was effectively sidelined by the CLA with the support of the then government and the then opposition.

I also note our newly elected Speaker's speech to parliament on Tuesday this week when she, in a very frank and fearless manner, called on reforms to the CLA in her role as Speaker. I say good on her. I think she spoke very well. So I believe that it is very good that the Speaker will be the member and chairperson of the CLA for all areas of responsibility because that brings it in line with the House of Commons. Last year I said that I understood that in the British parliament the Speaker of the House by statute is chairman of the House of Commons Commission, the body responsible for the management and administration of the House of Commons. The book *How Parliament Works* by Rogers and Walters states—

Not only does the Speaker have the task of chairing the House, he—

or she—

is also an enormously influential figure in almost every aspect of the way that the House and its administration is run.

So I am very pleased personally with these amendments in relation to the Speaker of parliament and the CLA.

The reason I am pleased is that it rights a wrong. It rights a wrong that we should never have put through this parliament in the first place. I would like to say that I am very pleased that this parliament has taken notice of the Speaker here this week and has also taken notice of former Speaker John Mickel and former Labor speakers like Speaker Fouras and Speaker Reynolds as well, because that amendment should never have been passed in the first place.

I would also like to talk about amendments in relation to the parliament's portfolio committees. I have had extensive experience in this parliament. This is my sixth term in relation to various committees. In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, who is in the chair today, and I have been on many parliamentary committees together. I have been a member and chair of the scrutiny of legislation committee, the chair of the travelsafe committee, the chair of the transport and local government committee and infrastructure committee, and I am also currently the deputy chair of the PCMC. These portfolio committees have worked very well with three government members and three non-government members.

The LNP opposition welcomed the Committee System Review Committee report with great accolades. They loved it. I would just like to quote what some of them actually said in the debate of that report last year. Minister McVeigh in the House spoke earlier about his admiration and respect for Mike Horan, who was the former member for Toowoomba South. This is what he had to say last year—

If you win the election, you have the numbers. You can win every single vote in here and there is absolutely nothing to stop you doing that. But now there will be a handbrake. There will be a way for people to have a say. There will be fair dinkum committees that will be open to the public and open to the media.

Good on Mike Horan for saying those words. This is a quote from another highly respected minister in this House—Lawrence Springborg, the Minister for Health. This is what he had to say last year—

I do not think we necessarily always get good legislation through this parliament. Sometimes legislation is rushed through this parliament—

just like what we have seen today—an urgency motion and the bill is being rushed through tonight—

Sometimes, as we have all witnessed, legislation is introduced into this parliament and by the time we debate it a raft of amendments almost as significant as the original bill has been placed on the table. That occurs because the work was not done in the first instance. These reforms will result in increased responsibility for the executive to get it right in the first place.

And the member for Southern Downs, now the Minister for Health, got it right. Then there is the Deputy Premier, who since this parliament has been formed this week obviously has taken a lot of backflip pills, that is all I can say. This is what he said last year—

It will produce a process that will provide a great deal more scrutiny of the legislation that comes into the House. It will provide a great deal more involvement from members of this parliament. It will provide long awaited opportunities for members of the public to have an input into that legislation. Those three things will certainly contribute to some better outcomes and some better legislation, I think.

So what changed his mind? What has changed his mind is the winner-takes-all approach. That is what it is all about. It has absolutely nothing to do with the workability of this parliament because all of us here are quite happy to work on a Friday. We are quite happy to double up on committees. We are quite happy to be here on a Saturday and I am quite happy, as my colleagues are, to be here on the Lord's day, on a Sunday, as well if we have to be here. We are happy to do it. Many of us have doubled up and tripled up on many of these committees before. So this is what it is about. It is about the winner takes all. It is about pigs with their noses in the trough. That is what it is about.

I would also like to comment on the comment that the Premier has made, which is that if it was an election commitment then he has been to the 'committee of Queensland'. What a load of rubbish! So there will be no review, no transparency, no testing of the legislation, no community or stakeholder input, no consideration by a committee, no scrutiny of the legislation and no report by these committees to the parliament. It is a disgrace in a democracy in 2012.

I have racked my brains to try to work out why this new government has got this wrong. The only thing I can think of is that the government is mixed up in some way between the roles of local government and the roles of parliament, because under the Local Government Act the mayor and the councillors have a committee structure, and that is pursuant to the Local Government (Operations Regulation) 2010 division 2, titled 'Local government committees', which establishes local government committees. Many of us know that these committees could be the works committee, the health and parks committee, the town planning committee or the community and welfare committee. These committees are made up of councillors and they are usually open to the public and they consider reports from officers of the councils. These committees are part of the executive of local government. They are part of the government of local government. The LGA of Queensland in its latest handbook at 6.21 states—

Even though the public has the right to attend meetings there is no right to participate in the meeting in any way unless at the invitation of the meeting.



So what we have here is a situation whereby if a bill was an election commitment it will not go to a committee because we have had the election and therefore somehow it is okay. It is not okay. It is definitely not okay. The key difference is this: local government committees are not and never have been designed like parliamentary committees. They are chalk and cheese. Parliamentary committees are committees of review—committees that are in public, that encourage input, that encourage submissions and they let every Queenslander potentially make submissions and have their say. So I think that this government has no idea what it is doing except with its winner-takes-all approach to it all.

Local government is by definition and in reality a creature of this state parliament. There is the Local Government Act and there are local government regulations. One would now think, however, that this parliament is being modelled on local government committee structures and norms without any understanding of parliamentary practices and procedures, particularly in relation to having three government MPs and three opposition MPs. If anything, can I make a suggestion to this new government? That is, that local government committees should take a leaf out of this parliament's book and, instead of having their committees in private, all of their committees should be open to the public and all of their committees right across the length and breadth of Queensland should also have submissions and discussions and reports just like our parliamentary committee system review recommended.

That is what real, open and accountable government is about at a state parliamentary level and a local government level—not this rubbish about a committee of Queensland. Queenslanders in 2012 simply will not cop it. They will not cop this back to Bjelke-Petersen era of government. They will not cop what we had the other day with the cops over there at Musgrave Park. There were 200 police officers there lording it over our Aboriginal brothers and sisters when a solution could have been negotiated.

I believe that the people of Queensland will never, ever cop again an inkling of the pre-Fitzgerald corruption in Queensland. I know that there are quite a few young members in parliament now, but most of us here remember things like the 'little fish are sweet' quote. We remember how bad it was. Those of us here who went through decades of that corrupt government were ashamed at what we saw on television the other morning. The vision of the police over at Musgrave Park went all the way around Australia and probably around the world, and we were ashamed. Many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Queenslanders were ashamed of that because we were in disbelief. We were also in disbelief at the police out the front of parliament, down the side of parliament and out the back of parliament. It is back to Bjelke-Petersen; that is what it is about.

I would also like to find out what this winner-takes-all approach is all about. It is about you taking over; you think you are the natural party of government. We will see about that in three years time because you are hypocrites. What it is about is all of you over there getting pay rises to get on the committees. That is what it is about. You are hypocrites—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs MILLER:** And you are a bit upset. You are barking mad. That is what you are: barking mad like Bjelke-Petersen.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Member for Bundamba, please address your comments through the chair.

**Mrs MILLER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I did not say that you were barking mad. I do have some standards in this parliament.

Their noses are in the trough and their hands are out for all of the allowances they can get. It is pure and simple greed, on the same day that they have the hide and the cheek to bring in a cost-of-living bill. It is unbelievable—just unbelievable.

I was the chair of the Transport and Local Government Committee, and I would like to talk about how well our committee ran in relation to bipartisanship. A new member of the House here today, Ian Walker, was not only a submitter to our committee—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Will you please address members by their title.

**Mrs MILLER:** The member for Mansfield.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer, will you please cease interjecting.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer!

**Mr Rickuss:** I certainly will, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs MILLER:** Member for Lockyer, you are getting grumpy tonight. Is it past your bedtime, darling? He is just like the Deputy Premier. I am so sorry. Do you need to be tucked up with some Horlicks in bed?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Bundamba, please return to the bill.

**Mrs MILLER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, we really have not had much good debate in this parliament today. I am just trying to keep them awake, the poor little darlings.

The member for Mansfield appeared before our committee in relation to the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill 2011. When this bill came before our committee, I think it is fair to say that the six of us, who operated in an extremely bipartisan way, wondered how many people were going to be interested in the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill 2011. I notice the nod of agreement from the member for Gympie. We decided, in the true spirit of the committee reforms, that we would go out to the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds and find out what it was all about. Lo and behold, who did we have but the current member for Mansfield—Mr Walker, as he was at that stage—providing us with a submission and turning up on the day to give evidence, and we thank him for that. There is no question at all about our bipartisanship. Every one of our committee reports, when there were three Labor members and three opposition members, was unanimous—every single one of them. I would like to thank the committee members for that.

The committee also went to Cairns and talked about Indigenous councils, and we went to Longreach and talked about stock routes. The Chief Government Whip was very delightful and took us out to a stock route. Can I just say to members of this parliament that not many Labor people have much interest in stock routes—that is simply the truth of the matter—but the Chief Government Whip took us out to a stock route and actually gave us an education.


**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mrs MILLER:** Yes, we have a photo to prove it. The Labor members of the committee deferred to our LNP colleagues to provide us with some guidance in relation to stock routes, and we came up yet again with another wonderful committee report which we all agreed to. So all of our committee reports were unanimous.

We also got some absolutely incredible information in relation to our local government report. When a committee operates in a bipartisan way, it gets some purlers sometimes—absolute purlers—and I will tell the House about one of them now. The Local Government Association of Queensland told us that local government debt was \$4.8 billion, which was an increase from \$2 billion three years ago, and that the figure was forecast to rise to \$6.2 billion by the end of June 2012. We sat there like stunned mullets. We could not believe it. Then the committee heard evidence that the Queensland Treasury Corporation had forecast aggregate local government debt to rise to \$22 billion by 2031. So some purlers do come out of the committee process. We did not find out how much the Brisbane City Council debt was, and I wish in retrospect I had asked that. It would have been interesting.

Can I say to the House that the committee that I was chair of and that the member for Gympie was deputy chair of was what we called simply the best committee of this parliament because we left our political persuasions at the door. They never came in. We took a common-sense view about everything. What we have here in this bill is fiddling of the numbers. It is winner takes all. It is a fiddle, and it is going back to past years. It is a time warp. It is back to Bjelke-Petersen. That is what this is about.

In conclusion, where is the formula in relation to having a Chief Government Whip and a Senior Government Whip, for God's sake? We did not have a formula when we won in 2001. We had a government whip and two deputy whips but now you need four. You must be incompetent. Can't you count? The members of this parliament who went to New Zealand and Canada learned nothing, and they should give the money back.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.19 pm): What an act to follow, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham! It is always good to rebut the points of the member for Mulgrave and the member for Bundamba. If I can impart any advice to the new members for South Brisbane and Rockhampton, it would be this: one ought not follow the lead that one has just seen and the drivel that came out of the mouth of the member for Bundamba for the last 20 minutes. If there was hypocrisy in this place at all, we have just had 20 minutes of it thrown at us. Let us deal with a couple of issues. Member for Bundamba, do not leave yet; I have not finished! Tonight the member for Bundamba used this place to attack the member for Mansfield—a new member in this place who has not yet made his maiden speech. It is disgraceful enough that she would not allow at least a couple of days before attacking the member for Mansfield, but let him make his maiden speech first. That is the first point.

The second point I want to make on the member for Bundamba's enlightening contribution is this: she said that she supports the bill in terms of the Speaker's role on the CLA and passionately said, 'Tonight we are righting a wrong. We did the wrong thing and tonight we're righting it.' However, she did not take my interjection when I said, 'But did you vote for it?' Did she vote for it last year when they took the powers off the Speaker? We know that the member for Bundamba did vote for it. When the Liberal National Party opposition came into this place in that debate and moved those very important

amendments to restore some of the power to the Speaker, did the member for Bundamba vote with the opposition at the time? No! She did not vote for our amendments but then comes in here tonight in a storm and says, 'Tonight we're righting a wrong!' She had the opportunity to right that wrong last year and she chose not to, because that is in the DNA of the Labor Party. Its members are hypocrites in that its members had an opportunity in this place to stand up for those particular rights as we do, because the Liberal-Nationals believe in the freedom of the individual.

Whilst talking about the individual—and forgive me for at least 60 seconds to go off track, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham—the Labor Party attended the national conference of unions in the last 48 hours. I saw a comment—

**Mr Newman:** Wasn't that an orgy of self-congratulations!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is unparliamentary.

**Mr Seeney:** Especially in the same sentence as union credit cards!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** For the benefit of *Hansard* and for the benefit of the Premier and Deputy Premier, I will not take those interjections. The chairman of the Council of Unions said a few days ago that the problem with unions—and I suspect the Labor Party because of the affiliation with the union movement—is that they have a crisis of individualism. A crisis of individualism! That is the problem with the Labor Party, and on 24 March it did not get the message.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There are seven sitting opposite, and the one attacking me now still does not get the message. In fact, the one attacking me, the member for South Brisbane, was deputy secretary of the Labor Party in that last state election campaign—and still she does not get it, will not accept the outcome of the election and what the people of Queensland have chosen. But I digress.

I made the point that the member for Bundamba had every opportunity to right that wrong. She cannot now stand in this place in good faith and say that tonight we are doing the right thing because we know we are, but we are doing nothing more than what we tried to do a year ago and move the amendments. We had that commitment and we are fulfilling that commitment tonight.

The member for Bundamba also said that she would be happy to be here on Sundays, Saturdays and weeknights. How times have changed, because only at the beginning of the year how many pieces of legislation were guillotined by the former government? How many pieces of legislation were put into a cognate debate? The member for Mulgrave comes in here tonight whingeing and whining that he did not get a briefing in time. For goodness sake! As they say, everyone rises to their level of incompetence, and the member for Mulgrave certainly did that tonight. This is a 19-page bill. If we take out the explanatory notes and the index, it is about 15 pages. My year 4 daughter would have seen this bill tabled this morning, read it and understood it. Yet the member opposite talks about briefings.

The Treasurer reminds me of a time, member for Mulgrave, not that long ago when the opposition continually asked for briefings on legislation that were never given. We all recall coming in here when a bill was introduced and then later that day or the next day being given a briefing. The member opposite should not come in here and say that he has not had the opportunity to read a 14-page bill and he has not had the opportunity to digest the clauses in the bill, because the hypocrite over there was in the government. He was a minister in the former government.

**A government member:** Not a good one.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Not a good minister; I take that interjection. He was a minister in the former government. The briefings that the opposition requested at the time were either never forthcoming or came at a vitally late stage in the process.

The legislation before the House tonight looks at a few things. It looks to determine the size of committees, and we supported the committee structure. I enjoyed being on the committee that had responsibility for the alcohol related violence inquiry with the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, the honourable member for Mermaid Beach and the former member for Beaudesert for a time until he was taken off that committee and replaced by the member for Surfers Paradise. The committee process does work. The reason we have to adjust and modernise the committee structure is that there is not enough of those in the corner over there to fulfil all of these committees. We cannot have a process where seven people serve on however many committees as possible. In fact, we are actually doing this for the opposition because we cannot expect it to fulfil all of those responsibilities in the committee process. That is the reason. The committee process will continue, and do members know why? It will continue because bills have to pass. This bill has to pass—it is just a mechanical change—to ensure that the bills that we have introduced today and the bills that will be forthcoming can be debated and properly scrutinised in the committee process. This bill has to have urgency attached to it because the government has introduced bills today that need to go through to the committee system.

This bill also deals with the CLA, and I note the contribution of the Premier in his opening remarks and the comments of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I am glad that the Speaker's powers are being restored, and I note that Madam Speaker made mention of that in the opening of parliament over the last two days. That is a good thing—that is, that the powers will be extended to the chair of the CLA, Madam Speaker. That is a good outcome that I would hope everyone in the House would support. The legislation deals with the title of assistant ministers being changed from parliamentary secretaries. The reason the Premier and the government went down this line of assistant ministers is that for too long in the Labor Party parliamentary secretaries were invisible. In fact, I bet your bottom dollar that at election time if you asked who the parliamentary secretaries were in the Labor Party no-one would be able to tell you. In fact, in the three years that I have served in here from 2009 until the March election I could not name anyone on the list of Labor Party parliamentary secretaries. Do you know why, member for South Brisbane? Because they were incompetent, they were complacent and they did nothing. That is the simple reality. They were invisible sitting in whatever seats they did up the back there.

But we have changed that. We have assistant ministers now with specific responsibilities. For instance, the member for Mansfield—and, obviously, I will not talk about how the member for Bundamba talked about the member for Mansfield—has specific responsibility for infrastructure and planning for the grunt department in the Deputy Premier's office to get Queensland moving again. We have changed the name from parliamentary secretary to assistant minister. These assistant ministers are charged with specific responsibilities. As the Premier has indicated time and time again, the ministers and the assistant ministers will be responsible and accountable. If we are not, we will be gone. That is the warning that the leadership team and the Premier and the Deputy Premier have given. That is the first time we have had a Premier say that in many, many years in Queensland.

**Mr Rickuss:** 'What faction is he in?' is all the other Premier said.


**Mr BLEIJIE:** I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer and refer to the comments I made before. The union president said that the crisis in the union is the individual. We do not think that is a problem. We embrace the individual. We want the individual to be successful, because we know that if the individual is successful then their families are successful and the Queensland economy is successful. So we can understand why the Labor Party in Queensland is in the position it is in by having that mentality—that it does not believe in the individual.

I commiserate with my good friend the member for Mermaid Beach, who I think has served for the shortest time in history as the Leader of the House, because we note that on the passing and the assent of this bill the Leader of the House will be known as the Manager of Government Business in the House. I hope he has enjoyed the responsibility that he has fulfilled today with great gusto. It has been fantastic to have him in that role. I look forward to him continuing in his new role.

We have talked about the pay levels and the Premier mentioned it in his speech. I am not going to comment on that. I will let the *Courier-Mail* and the other media commentators comment on the specifics of that matter. Tonight, we are getting done what needs to be done. We have heard lots from those opposite. The only one thing that I regret tonight is speaking a little too early. I am looking forward to the contribution of the member for South Brisbane in this debate tonight. I will try to remain in the House to listen with much interest.

I thank the Premier and I thank the Deputy Premier for getting on with the job. I thoroughly enjoyed the Labor Party members coming in tonight complaining that we were actually doing stuff, because they are just not used to it. I point out to all the new members that this is a big learning curve for them today—and for those new members opposite as well. It is quite odd that we would be in here at this time of night because, by this stage of night, the former Labor government would have guillotined debate on a bill. We will not. We will have this debate tonight.

I will conclude with these remarks. This is an important mechanism change that needs to happen. The Liberal National Party government, under the stewardship of Premier Newman, has lots of work to do to get Queensland back on track, and this is the start. I would anticipate that these committees that were established under the former government, and which will continue under this government with a little restructure, modernised to suit the times, as the Labor Party modernised the committee structure under the old system, will continue to scrutinise legislation and that the members of the public will have just as much say as they have previously in an open, new and transparent world in Queensland politics.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.34 pm): When the report of the review of the parliamentary committee system was debated in this House early last year, I said that it represented a fundamental shift in the way the parliament of Queensland could operate. I observed at the time that, since the Theodore Labor government abolished the Legislative Council in 1922, the Queensland parliament had suffered from a structural weakness that had resulted in a lack of accountability that limited the ability of the parliament to scrutinise the executive. I said that one of the cornerstones of the great system of representative and responsible democracy that Queensland had inherited from the Westminster parliament was bicameralism. That system included an upper house that reviewed legislation passed by the lower house as a check and balance on executive power.

At various times other parliaments founded on the Westminster tradition have discontinued the use of their second chamber for a variety of reasons. However, that move had usually been associated with the establishment of a vigorous committee system so that the accountability and scrutiny function of the remaining chamber was enhanced to compensate for the loss of the upper house. That had not occurred in Queensland until last year. The recommendations proposed by that committee, which were implemented last year, were the most significant steps towards enhancing the accountability and scrutiny mechanisms of the Queensland parliament since these were substantially diluted by the abolition of the Legislative Council in 1922 by the party represented by those opposite.

Last year I canvassed how the new committee system would operate and how the work of the committees would inform the work of this House. I noted in many respects, in terms of the legislative process, that the work of the new committees would be at the centre of the work of this House. I am sure that members of this House who served in the last parliament would agree that this has proven to be the case and that the new committee system served the last parliament well. I am confident that the committee system will serve this parliament well following the passage of this bill.

As I have said before in this House, a strong, active committee system is an asset to any properly functioning parliamentary democracy. A comprehensive system of parliamentary committees provides for greater accountability of the executive by making the policy and administrative decisions of the government open to scrutiny. Committees also provide a forum for investigation into matters of public importance and give members the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of such issues.

I supported the committee reforms last year for two reasons. Firstly, I am a strong supporter of the Westminster system and the concept of parliamentary sovereignty in that system. An enhanced role for parliamentarians in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, including the proceedings of committees, is a positive thing for accountability and scrutiny. Secondly, last year's reforms brought to an end the parliamentary committee system that had been in place since the passage of the Bligh Labor government's Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2009, which in my opinion ushered in some unfortunate changes to the parliamentary committee system that reduced accountability and scrutiny in our unicameral parliament. For example, the 2009 bill amalgamated the former public accounts and public works committees without increasing the resources available to the committee or the number of members on the committee. That amalgamation effectively doubled the responsibilities of that committee while halving the resources available to it and the number of members dedicated to the scrutiny of the executive in relation to public accounts and public works.

Earlier this evening I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Mackay, throwing around the ghosts of the Fitzgerald inquiry. He mentioned the important role that EARC played as a result of the Fitzgerald inquiry. When I first came into this parliament in 2006 I was a member of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee. That committee was a direct descendant of EARC. Do members know what the Labor Party opposition did in 2009 when it was in government? It scrapped the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—the direct descendant of EARC, which was recommended to be established by the Fitzgerald inquiry report. You ought to hang your heads in shame tonight for trying to raise the ghosts of the Fitzgerald inquiry, because you knocked on the head one of the fundamental cornerstones of the result of the Fitzgerald inquiry.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! It would help the order in the House if the minister were to direct his comments through the chair and in the third person. Thank you.

**Mr CRIPPS:** The 2011 reforms, in contrast, significantly enhanced the resources available to parliamentary committees, dedicated time during the course of the parliamentary sitting week for committee work and enhanced the role of the portfolio committees by having them double as estimates committees. The amendments in this bill maintain this critical role for the committee system established by last year's reforms. The only changes pertaining to the committees in this bill relate to practical amendments made necessary as a result of the outcome of the recent state election to ensure the committees can continue to function properly. Indeed, the amendments propose to establish a formula rather than simply amend clauses determining committee membership to appropriately reflect the composition of the House, which should go some way to avoiding the need for future amendments following future elections, and should be supported by all members on that basis. They are fair and they are reasonable amendments made necessary by the composition of the House which was determined by the people of Queensland.

Last year I also expressed my concern that the Speaker was not originally to be a member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly when that committee met to consider matters that were formerly the responsibility of the Standing Orders Committee. That concern was recognised when the bill came before the House and the Speaker was made a member of the CLA when it met to consider issues pertaining to the standing orders. Furthermore, as the Deputy Premier has already mentioned this evening, the LNP in opposition moved an amendment to install the Speaker as the chair of the CLA, but that was opposed by the Bligh Labor government at the time.

The bill before the House today amends the act further to provide for the Speaker not only to be a member of the CLA but also to be a member of the CLA at all times and to chair the CLA at all times. The amendment provides for the Speaker to have a deliberative vote when the CLA is meeting to consider issues relating to the standing orders, to capital expenditure inside the chamber and to the resources available to the Office of the Speaker. The amendment does not propose for the Speaker to have a vote when the CLA is considering matters that do not pertain to the standing orders, directly affect the chamber or the Office of the Speaker. There are perfectly justifiable and sensible reasons this should be the case. When the CLA sits as the Standing Orders Committee it is dealing with matters that directly pertain to the conduct of this chamber where the role of Speaker is central to the fair, accountable and transparent process of debate, inquiry and explanation. As I said last year, the Speaker ought to have a say in those matters, and that was eventually acknowledged when the bill was passed last year.

When the CLA sits to determine matters about the parliament in general, it does so on behalf of all members. The membership is made up of the recognised statutory positions of the parliament in equal numbers from both the government and the opposition in relation to matters affecting all of us as members of this House. Should the CLA in those circumstances be unable to reach a conclusion, the legislation provides that the question returns to the House to be resolved, ensuring that in matters that pertain to the parliament affecting all members the House is the master of its own destiny.

Some people in this place and outside it have suggested that this proposition is somehow a betrayal of the traditions of the Westminster system. That is utter nonsense. If it were true, the Queensland parliament has been offending this notion since it was established. For example, Speakers have never resigned from their chosen political party upon their election as Speaker as they have done and continue to do in the mother parliament at Westminster. There are innumerable incremental changes to the way that the Queensland parliament has operated that puts it at variance with the Westminster tradition we inherited in 1859 as our chamber has faced new and unique circumstances and questions. The Commons and Lords themselves have also evolved over time.

Some critics of the reforms last year claimed it was an unacceptable assault on the position of Speaker that a committee of the House would take responsibility for the internal administration of the parliamentary precinct and that Queensland was entering into some sort of uncharted territory. Again that is nonsense. Part 1, chapter 6 of the 24th edition of Erskine May, the recognised authority on parliamentary practice drawn from the experiences of the houses of Lords and Commons, details the formation of the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Committee. Erskine May states that each house has full responsibility for managing its own internal administration, including financial administration and, indeed, that the clerks of both the Commons and the Lords are the corporate officers for their respective houses. Indeed, as the member for Bundamba mentioned this evening, the Speaker in the Westminster parliament is the chair of the House of Commons Commission because the House of Commons says so in the statute that it has passed, not because of some ancient right conferred upon the office of Speaker.


And yet with these incremental changes in both the palace of Westminster and the Queensland parliament the sky has not fallen in. Parliamentary democracy has not shrivelled up in the palace of Westminster and it has not shrivelled up here in the Queensland parliament. How can this be so if all the fearmongers and the conspiracy theorists are to be believed? It is because of that fundamental concept of parliamentary sovereignty and the well-established principle that houses of parliament within the Westminster tradition are the masters of their own destiny. It is the same reason the House of Commons and the Senate in Canada, the House of Representatives in New Zealand, another unicameral parliament, and, of course, the House of Representatives and the Senate in Canberra are each individually masters of their own destinies which have evolved over time. The members of each parliament have the capacity to resolve how each house will conduct its own business.

Therefore, new members of this parliament can support the amendments in this bill with confidence, knowing that they are supporting amendments which rightly and properly place the Speaker in the position of chair of the CLA and that the Speaker will have a vote on matters pertaining to the conduct of the business of this chamber, which is the Speaker's concern and responsibility.

The Speaker drew to the attention of the House a letter from the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to the former chair of the CLA enclosing a copy of an opinion from Professor Gerard Carney, a well-respected constitutional lawyer. In that opinion Professor Carney states quite clearly that last year's bill made it clear that the authority of the Speaker to control behaviour within the parliamentary precinct is retained, as are the powers of the Speaker under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, such as the powers in chapter 3 in relation to the production of documents and contempt. The two major concerns expressed by Professor Carney in that opinion were that the Speaker was to be relegated to a part-time member of the CLA and participate in its deliberations only when the committee was dealing with a matter relating to the standing orders and that the CLA was to deal with ethical issues and parliamentary privilege without the presence of the Speaker. The amendments in this bill propose not only to make the Speaker a permanent member of the CLA but also to make the Speaker the permanent chair of the CLA. As such, the proposed amendments in this bill should go a long way to addressing the concerns of Professor Carney.

In any event, members of this House should appreciate, especially the new members, that whatever imaginative arguments may be put forward suggesting that some sort of sacred tradition is being abandoned by the amendments proposed in this bill, that in exercising its right to determine its own destiny this House is asserting a right that is just as old, just as sacred and just as central to a responsible and representative democracy.

I have listened with some interest to the born-again democrats opposite. I have not been in this House for as long as some members, but I have been here long enough to see plenty of bills rammed through this House unceremoniously, including so-called budget bills, so-called local government reform bills, so-called Great Barrier Reef protection bills, so-called vegetation management bills—the list indeed goes on and on. So I just say to all the new members present in this House: do not believe them; take the vitriol, the inane ramblings, with a grain of salt. The bluster from those opposite is just that. It is without substance, it is without accuracy and it is without credibility.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.49 pm): I rise to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I do so with some joy in terms of the changes it proposes to the role of the Speaker. However, I put on the record some concerns in relation to the structure of the bill. I believe that it would be inane for any of us to look at the structure and the make-up of the parliament since the election and not believe that changes to the committee system have to occur. The basic maths indicates that there are shortcomings in the ability of 11 people, that is, the non-government members, to fulfil the roles that were instigated by a parliament where the numbers were much closer. Therefore, the practicality of having to change the committee numbers is self-evident.

Government members have interjected to say that this is just a mechanical bill, but I do not believe that. This is more than a mechanical bill. It changes substantially the structure of the committee system. The committee system was touted—and has been for many years—as a very important institution in a unicameral parliament. Indeed it is that and that cannot be shied away from. It may be mechanical, but certainly it is more important than just a mechanical bill.

It is critically important that the community in Queensland has confidence in the processes of this parliament. I believe that one of the reasons we have the numbers that we do is because the community of Queensland had lost confidence in government and reacted stridently. However, the effectiveness and impartiality of the committee system under this new structure—which will be passed; the numbers are self-evident—will be seen in the months ahead. I hope that all non-government members, that is, the official opposition, the Katter Party members and the Independents, can act maturely and responsibly in the committee process and take seriously our responsibilities to the community of Queensland. One of the litmus tests of the changed committee system will be the number of dissenting reports. That will be a test for the community to see whether those of us on the minority side have a sense that the committees are operating as they should—that is, that they are the independent and objective reviewers of legislation.

This is our first sitting day and this bill is being rammed through, if I can use that terminology. Frankly, for what it is worth, in my opinion we have to restructure the committee process to establish the committees and the establishment of the committees is critically important. I have some concerns in relation to the increase in the number of members on a committee from six to eight. I can understand that the make-up of six committee members had to change in terms of the comparison between government and non-government members. Changing it from six to eight exacerbates the risk of partiality creeping into the committee process. It is increased and increased exponentially. Again, that will call into sharp focus the responsibility on all committee members to act independently and objectively. I would be interested in the Premier's response to that. The increase from six to eight does reflect the make-up of the parliament. While that does not justify the increase, it gives more government backbench members the opportunity to gain committee experience, which is very important. I hope that it is not as some of the members of the opposition have intimated, which is that the increase is merely to give backbenchers, myself included, an increase in pay.

The policy objectives of this bill are fourfold. I will address a couple of them. The first objective states—

- set formulae to determine the size of the membership of the Parliament's portfolio committees so that they can practically and logistically operate as the political composition between government and non-government members in the Legislative Chamber changes;

I have dealt with that. The second point states—

- reform the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA) by including the position of Speaker as a member and chairperson of the CLA for all of its areas of responsibility and outlining the circumstances under which the Speaker may exercise a deliberative vote at a meeting of the CLA;

I have already circulated amendments in my name, which will be dealt with in the committee stage of the debate. In the establishment of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, I believe—and I certainly hope—that I consistently opposed the removal of the Speaker from his—as it was at that

time—role in this parliament. I believe fervently that scores were being settled in that process while changes were being made to the parliamentary process, which may have been welcomed. However, fundamentally for me it was more about the removal of the Speaker from areas of responsibility where the Speaker should reasonably be retained. In this bill the amendments go some way to re-establishing the role of the Speaker. I am sad to say that I do not believe they go far enough. Whilst most of the amendments that I have moved—and I am under no illusions, I think they will go down in a screaming heap—

**Mr Gibson** interjected.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** It feels like *deja vu*. When the bodies were on the opposite side, the ones on that side would sit there and say, 'We'll just put it to the numbers.' Yeah right; like that is going to happen! I believe it is critically important that the Speaker chairs the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. For what it is worth, I also believe that the Speaker should have a vote on all matters before the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.


In correspondence that was sent initially to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, because the CLA had not yet been formed, Gerard Carney stated—

To relegate the Speaker to a part-time member of the CLA, only when it is dealing with a matter relating to the standing rules and orders, undermines the status of the Speaker. Of equal concern, it undermines public confidence in the capacity of the Legislative Assembly to deal with issues objectively within a highly partisan political environment. This is so particularly in relation to ethical issues and parliamentary privilege, which are now to be dealt with by the CLA without the presence of the Speaker.

Some of Gerard Carney's concerns are addressed by this legislation, but I do not believe that the amendments swing the pendulum back far enough. As the chair of that committee, the Speaker should be the one who calls the meetings and sets the agenda. That is the normal role of the chair of a committee in this House. I would certainly encourage consideration being given to reinstating that power to the current Speaker. We have all spoken, both publicly and privately, about our confidence in the Speaker, who was elected to that role only two days ago. I believe that members of this chamber equally can trust the Speaker to undertake that further role well and efficiently. There are other matters raised in the amendments that I intend to propose in the committee stage, but I will deal with them at that time.

I thank the Premier for the briefing that we received yesterday morning. Whilst some concerns have been expressed about the lateness of the briefing, I will be honest: the bill was only introduced today and it will be passed tonight, so I think it was fairly timely. It is better than getting briefed tomorrow morning.

Again I state that this bill to restructure the committees is essential given the practicalities of members of this parliament being able to fulfil our obligations. There are self-evident risks in increasing the membership of committees from six to eight. Putting two non-government members and six government members on a committee clearly introduces a partisanship to the committee. This bill will pass. However, in passing it places an enormous responsibility on each and every one of us to take seriously our role as committee members and to act objectively and impartially and, where a bill has potential negative impacts on our communities, to be big enough, bold enough and strong enough to state in no uncertain terms that there are problems with the legislation and to state that clearly and without reservation. I look forward to the Premier's response.

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.59 pm): This bill, the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012, is one of great importance for it will affect how this state is governed into the future. Much has been said over the years regarding the absence of an upper house in the Queensland parliament and it is a matter of public record that in times passed many pieces of legislation could have been improved with a strong committee system tasked with reviewing meticulously every aspect of a bill. No government is infallible but collectively we can improve matters before the House.

Since the Legislative Council was abolished in 1922 the absence of a mechanism of review led ultimately to many of the excesses of the National Party under Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The recent establishment of the new committee system has enabled the cross-party committees to study in detail legislation before the House seeking public comment, submissions from stakeholders, briefings and public hearings. It is a fact that much of the legislation that passes through this House is supported by both sides of the chamber. However, there are often details which need to be deliberated on prior to being debated in the House. The system, as it has operated, has enabled important changes to be made prior to the final debate in parliament. It is often the unintended consequences which, at times, brings legislation back to this House for amendments.

I had the privilege of serving on the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee with chairman Kerry Shine. Aided by our excellent research staff, much was accomplished and reports were produced. I believe all who served during our previous term would acknowledge the strength of this committee system. It enabled members to have greater involvement in legislation and detailed scrutiny of bills.




For our Premier to now sideline this committee system with the suggestion that he has the approval of the 'big committee of Queensland' for his election promises is an absolute nonsense. There were many people who voted LNP at this election with tears in their eyes because they believed it was time for a change and they believed that our government had broken trust with the electors. They were changing their vote for the first time ever. To think that the people of Queensland were ticking off every election promise without the detail necessary within legislation is to completely misread the result and demonstrates the lack of understanding of what should happen in this place. It is often in the detail of legislation that issues and problems in the implementation are uncovered.

Being in government is a huge responsibility and, no, the government of the day does not always get it right. The bipartisan committee system has worked well and has been endorsed by all who served in this place during the previous term. Increasing the numbers of government members on each committee suggests the Premier is wishing to hold sway over every aspect of this parliament. Coupled with this is the reduction in the number of opposition members on each committee. It may be the case that we in opposition are small in number, but the government should recognise that what happens in this place is of great interest to the media, to many in this state who are following with great interest how a government with such an enormous majority treats the trust that has been placed in it by the people of Queensland. It tramples over such issues to its detriment. We will continue to remind the Premier of his promise to rule with dignity, grace and humility.

It was a great privilege to be a member of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. Those in this House who served on this committee will attest to the smooth running of the committee, the greater insights it affords when considering the finer details of a bill and the great benefit of briefings, submissions, public hearings and stakeholder involvement leading to a bill being returned to the House having been scrutinised in great detail. I would like to thank our research officers, who work tirelessly to ensure the work of these committees is carried out efficiently.

The other issue that I wish to mention in my speech is the inclusion of the Speaker on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly as chair of the committee. For this House to operate in an effective way I believe it is imperative for the Speaker to be involved in this important aspect of the parliamentary precinct. In many countries the Speaker of the House is held in higher esteem than ministers of the Crown. For there to be a committee which is virtually tasked with running the parliamentary precinct and to not have the Speaker taking a leading role I believe is in error.

While I support some aspects of this bill, I will not be supporting this bill in total.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.05 pm): I rise to speak on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012, which is necessary given the unprecedented make-up of the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I have sat here all night and listened to the drivel and rubbish being promoted by the other side in their feeble attempt to make themselves relevant in this parliament and relevant to the people of Queensland. I have heard them trying to drag something out of nothing in this bill. This bill is to accommodate their failings. This bill clearly addresses the mandate and the will of the Queensland people. Unfortunately, when the previous parliament, the 53rd Parliament, set up this legislation it did not really take cognisance of the fact that the people would recognise what a hopeless government they had and that they would ban so many members of that government from the parliament. That would make the numbers and the systems that were put in place under the previous legislation impossible to work in the 54th Parliament. That is all we are about here tonight.

There is no super-duper plot. It is not about us using political argy-bargy to get our way. It is all about adjusting these bills to make the parliamentary committee system, introduced properly and with great agreement from both sides of the parliament, to work in this House and work immediately. As all members would be now aware, the parliamentary committee system is the review system of legislation that goes through this House. Quite clearly, that review system has to be put in place immediately—in the first sitting of this parliament—so that we can get to work and start work on reviewing legislation before the next sitting of parliament. To do that, we have to put in place some numbers on these committees that can be physically achieved. When there is the paucity of official opposition representation of seven Labor members, it is very difficult to fill positions across seven portfolio committees and make them work. Even adding the Independents and the Katter party—another four members—it still makes it impossible to give a balanced number of members right across the committees.

So the independent Clerk of this parliament worked out a formula that would not only serve the 54th Parliament, but would also serve the 55th, the 56th and the 57th Parliaments in terms of the number of members required to make these parliamentary committees efficient and workable. It is not about the political argy-bargy and using one's numbers on a committee.

Members who sat on parliamentary committees in the 53rd Parliament would realise that members of those committees used their best endeavours to ensure that the legislation before them was appropriate and proper to go before the government. In fact, in one committee on which I sat there

was agreement between government members and non-government members to make changes to the legislation that had been put forward. I thank the member for Coomera because he was a member of that committee. Bipartisan changes were recommended for the government's consideration. The then government of the day rejected some recommendations from those portfolio committees which had been agreed to by way of a bipartisan approach but it accepted one of those recommendations to change its legislation for the better. These portfolio committees are all about making better legislation to come before this House, making people more informed and giving the public a better chance to have genuine input into this proper system of review of legislation in the House. All members from both sides of the 53rd Parliament agreed that that was the right and proper thing to do.

Unfortunately tonight's agenda has been hijacked by an opposition desperate to make itself relevant. It has come forward with all sorts of spurious ideas of political skulduggery in terms of pushing our numbers and our way and our will over the poor little Labor Party, reduced to seven poor little members. That is not the intent of this legislation at all. It was the independent Clerk of the Parliament who suggested that eight members would be better for the review system for now and forever in terms of the 53rd, the 54th, the 55th and the 56th parliaments, and that is what this legislation will put in place.

I saw it as an obligatory task to seek amendments on behalf of the people of Queensland to ensure representation on the committees which would reflect the mandate that the people of Queensland have given. I concur wholeheartedly with the Premier's comments on the important amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act and thank him in leading the debate on this bill, which is the first piece of legislation to be debated in the House of the 54th Parliament of Queensland. This is an historic occasion and to be part of this Queensland history is a very, very great honour.

The mandate that the people of Queensland have given the new government has made it impossible to continue with the current committee system without amendments, including individual changes or changes to the working model that is currently in place. While the current parliamentary committee system works well, as it gives the Queensland public an opportunity to lodge submissions and, more importantly, to be actively involved in the public consultation process, it was a model that could not work with the dramatic changes in the make-up of the House of the 54th Parliament. Don't blame us: it is the people of Queensland whom the opposition should hold responsible for changing the numbers in this House.

As Leader of the House, I have investigated all possible options to accommodate the rare imbalance of government members to non-government members, and the changes are in the form of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012, which is being debated here tonight. The objectives of the bill are to change the committee make-up for the 54th Parliament to accommodate the results of the 24 March election which were that the people of Queensland gave us a new Queensland government. With 78 members in the new parliament, the change to the committee process is of necessity due to the overwhelming numbers on the government side. This is not a vindictive move, as the opposition would like to label it, but a move that has been created out of the will of the people of Queensland.

The other objectives focus on changes to the Speaker's role, to be included as a member and chairperson of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I heard roars of agreement from the opposition members saying that that is a wonderful thing and that what they did when they were in government was completely wrong. Well, it is nice for them to say sorry again. They are very good at using the word 'sorry' without any sincerity. Every time they get booted out of somewhere or get something wrong they say 'sorry' and move on to do the next dumb thing.

We on this side are all about getting results oriented outcomes, and the outcome we need in this sittings is to pass this legislation so that those parliamentary committees can begin operating and start to review. There have been all sorts of complaints that there has not been enough time and that this bill should go to a committee. The Independent members were talking about this bill not having been referred to a committee. If we do not set up this new numeration on these committees then we will not have a portfolio committee system in place for the next sitting of parliament, and that is our absolute No. 1 duty so that we can pass legislation to fix up this state of Queensland as quickly as possible.

Further, on a side note, fast-tracking this bill is necessary so that the changes to the legislation that are needed, due to the mandate that the Queensland people have given the government, are made as soon as possible to ensure the important review role of the parliamentary committee system can be fulfilled.


I would certainly like to cut short my speech on this particular piece of legislation tonight because, quite clearly, we have been going over and over—

**Mr Newman:** Yes, you should be the 'leader of the House'.

**Mr STEVENS:** That is right. I should be the 'leader of the House'. I would like to say how good it was that the committee system went through these important changes in the 53rd Parliament to put in place appropriate mechanisms so that we can actively debate and thoroughly review the legislation that passes through this parliament.

I would like to thank the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, for his invaluable help and assistance with these changes to the committee system. His experience with the historic processes and changes and his absolutely genuine knowledge of the proper functioning of the parliamentary committee system has enabled the government to put in place legislation that will deal appropriately with the committee system for the 54th Parliament and parliaments to come.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the necessity of the changes to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and urge the opposition to stop playing petty politics in their meagre little grab at relevance and to join us and vote for these important changes as they will deliver a model that will be used not only for this current parliament but also to accommodate any changes that might occur in the future of the Queensland parliament if the Labor Party is ever finally recognised as a believable organisation that somebody could vote for down the track. These changes are in line with the cost-cutting agenda of Can-do Campbell Newman, Premier of Queensland. It is about removing unnecessary red tape to get on with the job. We need to put these changes into effect immediately.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.17 pm): Tonight the Leader of the House hit the nail on the head. This is a bill to put in place the committee system that is so critical for the daily work of this parliament. Everybody around this chamber acknowledges that the committee process is absolutely pivotal to the effective running of parliament and the effective scrutiny of bills that come before the House.

All this bill does is update the committee system. After taking into account the wise words and advice of the Clerk, we have formulated a system that puts into effect, practically and logistically, a committee system that will deliver right throughout the term of this government. That is an important process. It is a wonder that the opposition cannot grasp that simple nut of what we are trying to do. They are trying to make a mountain out of a molehill with this. We are simply updating the system to ensure we put in place a committee system that we need.

Today the opposition made much of the government ramming through this bill. I can recall that when this parliament resumed after the 2009 election campaign, if I am not mistaken, the first bill that this House dealt with was the Greens payback bill. I recall it was the Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009. That was a bill to pay back the Greens for the support they gave the Labor Party during the 2009 election campaign. Despite the fact that this state was going down the gurgler at the rate of billions and billions of dollars, the first act of loyalty of the then government was to the Greens. That was their first and only priority. It did not matter that people could not make ends meet. It did not matter that people were out of jobs, that children were not able to get a proper education, that roads were not being built and that hospitals were not being taken care of—as long as the Greens got their payback bill through as the first bill.

**Mr Hopper:** Nineteen seats with their preferences.

**Mr McARDLE:** I take the interjection from the member for Condamine. It is a bit hypocritical for opposition members to stand here today and claim that we are trying to ram a bill through the House when their history from 2009 proves that they thought, 'We'll forget the economy. We'll forget the roads. We'll forget the infrastructure. We'll pay back the Greens as our first call of business.'

I listened with some interest to the Leader of the Opposition's speech from my room downstairs. It is amazing how they have learnt new terms since the election in 2012. I heard the terms 'democratic process' and 'parliamentary democracy' leap from the lips of the Leader of the Opposition. These are novel and new terms for the opposition.

**Mr Bleijie:** They are unheard of.

**Mr McARDLE:** They are unheard of; that is quite correct. They are heralding a new era in the use of the English language from those in the opposition ranks. Two of the members of the opposition were in fact ministers in the Bligh government which, along with the Beattie government, rammed through bill after bill after bill after bill. They guillotined bill after bill. They cut debate down to the very core to suit their own purposes. So when we hear the phrases 'democratic process' and 'parliamentary democracy' we have to think it is a road to Damascus, that something has happened to turn it all around.


**Ms Bates:** They are channelling.

**Mr McARDLE:** They are channelling, I have been told. The Leader of the Opposition said that 48 members of the opposition had only three days experience but were still able to sit on committees, as if their past experiences in their businesses and their lives did not give them the qualifications to sit on a committee and judge whether a bill before the House was justified or whether it should be altered. It appears to me that opposition members believe that the only way you get ahead in this parliament is if you go to school, you go to university, you join a trade union, you join a member's office or a minister's office and then you become a member of parliament. There are no real life experiences there, as opposed to our members of the LNP.

When we look around this room here tonight, we see members with years and years of small business experience and hard work. They have brought all of those years into this parliament, and I tell those members now that every single one of them has every right to be on a committee because they have passed the one test required—that is, they have lived a full life. They have earned the right to pass judgement on a bill. Shame on the opposition for criticising those 48 members of the LNP just because they have sat in here for only three days. What hypocrisy when their pedigree is based upon nothing but working for a member of parliament or a trade union and then coming in here. That is their pedigree and that is what the people of Queensland said on 24 March 2012. That is one of the reasons they were sacked—because they did not understand what went on in the real world outside.

I am getting the wind up here, but I want to quickly comment on the role of the Speaker and of returning dignity and prestige to that office. That office, simply by itself, has dignity and prestige, but those attributes may increase or decrease depending upon the person who holds the office. The current Speaker, who was selected only earlier this week, has those attributes in abundance. In my opinion, John Mickel was the best Speaker I have ever had the pleasure to appear in parliament with. He was a man who had dignity and character. He cherished the role of the Speaker and he understood what it meant. I feel that anything we can do to increase the dignity and respect in that role only enhances the dignity and respect of this chamber in the eyes of the people of this state.

It is with great pleasure that I support the bill before the House tonight. I congratulate the Premier on bringing this bill into the chamber with the clear understanding that it is a machinery bill that puts in place the critical components to make the committee system in this House work effectively so that we can deliver for the people of Queensland what they want to achieve—a better outcome, a better parliament and a better life for themselves.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (10.25 pm): I have here 19 pages. That is all this bill is, yet what we have seen from the opposition tonight is their incompetence and their inability to understand just 19 pages of legislation. Heaven help us when we come to debate complex bills because it is clear tonight that neither the Leader of the Opposition nor any other opposition member to date has accurately read this bill or bothered to comprehend it. This may come from laziness after spending years in government when they never wrote their own speeches but were instead given notes which they regurgitated. After listening to the Leader of the Opposition tonight, it is clear that she never got past about page 12 or earlier. She was fixated on what she referred to as the stacking of the committees, yet this bill is designed to ensure that the committees have representation whatever formulation this parliament takes.

The Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill is a bill that brings about responsible change. I think all members of parliament are aware that the previous changes were criticised. Our former Speaker spoke very widely about his concerns about the diminution of the role of the Speaker. Indeed, we heard concerns raised by a former judge of the High Court, by two former Queensland Labor Speakers, by Speakers from other jurisdictions, by the former Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans, and by the current Integrity Commissioner. They all expressed reservations about the role that had been stripped away from the previous Speaker.

This bill, as the member for Bundamba quite rightly identified, goes some way to rectifying that wrong. This bill will ensure that the Speaker of this House has their responsibilities and powers returned. We have not heard much from the opposition with regard to what this bill does. They are still stuck in their spin cycle. They are trying to portray this piece of legislation as if it is something bad, while failing to recognise that it fixes the errors of the previous administration.

We have heard much from the opposition with regard to the make-up of the committees and how the bipartisanship of our committee system will no longer work. As the member for Bundamba quite correctly pointed out, the committee that she was the chair of and that I was the deputy chair of worked incredibly well, but that was not because the numbers were three and three. It worked well because all members of the committee decided to make it work, and that would have been the case regardless of whether it was one and five, whether it was three and four or whether it was four and two. That is the approach that we as parliamentarians must take going forward. The numbers on the committee and whether they are government or non-government are irrelevant because the committee represents the parliament. Indeed, it is not the make-up of the committee that will ensure its bipartisan nature; it is the members of the committee that will ensure the committees are able to work well.

We have heard opposition members express their concerns this evening about how they will not be reflected on the committee. Indeed, the member for Bundamba, no doubt in a moment of enthusiasm, said that she is prepared to work even on the Lord's day to see the committees work.

I bring to the attention of those opposite a section from standing orders that very clearly they have not read. For their benefit I draw their attention to section 209 of standing orders which reads—

Other members may participate


A member, although not a member of a committee, may, by leave of that committee, participate in both its public and private meetings and question witnesses.

Those members opposite have by virtue of our standing orders the opportunity to be on any committee. Indeed, if all seven of them wished to, they could trot down to a committee and say, 'We want to be involved in this hearing.'

**Mr Newman:** I'd like to see that!

**Mr GIBSON:** I take the interjection from the Premier, because I would like to see it too. If they are genuine in their complaints tonight, we will see all of them seeking leave to be on other committees. We will see all of them trying to be involved, or perhaps what will happen is that common sense will prevail and they will realise that the workload that they espouse to is not humanly possible. They will not be able to attend to their electorates nor to their shadow responsibilities and also be involved in their committee responsibilities if we do not make these changes tonight.

We have an opportunity to correct a wrong. We have an opportunity to improve the committee system. Over 20 years ago the Fitzgerald inquiry brought about reform. The committee reforms last year also brought about reform. We should not wait another 20 years as Labor would have us do in order to leave us in the mould that we have now. We should be willing as a parliament to constantly review—look at the situation, look at our composition and decide how we need to improve the committee system. The committee system in this bill will ensure that the public still has opportunity to present and be heard. We heard the member for Bundamba mention the involvement of my colleague the member for Mansfield. We could have former members of parliament appearing before these committees and indeed other ways. I commend this bill to the House. It is timely, it is an election commitment and it is something that we said we would do.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (10.31 pm): I rise to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. I am also pleased that my presence on the speaking list has piqued the interest of the member for Kawana. I am going to go out on a limb here and predict that he probably will not agree with what I have to say. As a newly elected member to this House, I have participated in the excellent induction course organised and conducted by the Clerk and officers of this parliament. I put on record my thanks to those officers for all of the work and effort that was put into the induction of the record number of new members to the 54th Parliament. One of the areas we focused on was the current parliamentary committee structure that was recommended in a bipartisan review committee of the former parliament. Sadly, I note that senior members of the new government—namely, the Deputy Premier—who so recently championed these reforms and sat on this review committee are now champing at the bit to start weakening them, particularly the PCMC as he revealed tonight. But first I believe it is important to reflect on the parliamentary committee system and why these reforms are necessary for a better democracy and a more effective legislative process.

The 20th century saw a decline in the committee system that characterised parliaments of the 1800s. This decline was evident prior to the abolition of the upper house. As we know, Queensland has been a unicameral parliament since the abolition of the upper house in 1922, and many members have referred to that here tonight. The upper house was a body that was appointed, not elected, and had a history of protecting the vested interests of the few rather than assent to the legislative reforms delivered by the elected Legislative Assembly. Since that time there was a long period with no real committee system to speak of. The lack of parliamentary scrutiny and built-in checks on executive power was one factor in the emergence of the corrupt Bjelke-Petersen regime that Queensland suffered under for three decades. It was not until the Fitzgerald inquiry and the election of the Goss Labor government that real reforms to this parliament occurred. Commissioner Fitzgerald made the point in his report that throughout the world parliamentary democracies serve their constituencies better and function with far greater transparency when a comprehensive system of committees was in place. The early 1900s saw the establishment of the modern committee system. Over the years hard work was undertaken by members of parliament from both sides of politics to scrutinise legislation and help improve the impact of laws on the people of Queensland. The committee system developed further with the establishment of permanent statutory committees under the Parliamentary Committees Act, the evolution of the estimates committee and select committees established on an ad hoc basis where particular issues or investigations arose.

The changes finalised in 2011 built on this progression of committees to strengthen the role of the committees and the legislative responsibilities of all MPs. Here tonight much has been made of the fact that it took the Labor Party a long time to pursue these reforms, but we did pursue these reforms in a transparent and bipartisan way, and the opposition at the time was part of that process. These changes were undertaken with much consultation, deliberation and consideration. The changes received widespread support from inside and outside this chamber. Importantly, and as I mentioned earlier, in 2011 changes received bipartisan support and in fact some of the most strident advocates for the reforms are now sitting around the Liberal National Party cabinet table.

The new government has provided no justification for its proposal to trash these important parliamentary committees, not only through this bill but also the tone of its debate, including quarantining the scrutiny of election policies from parliamentary committees as announced by the Premier. No-one is doubting the mandate that the Liberal National Party has in this parliament, but to say that Queenslanders scrutinised all LNP policies at the last election to the standard required to enact

laws in this state is just ridiculous. It is simply another glib comment that displays a complete lack of understanding of the work and scrutiny required to take policy from motherhood statements of principle and action to legislation that enables change through law and regulation. What is evident is that this government is contradicting the advice of its own members of parliament who in opposition unanimously supported the establishment, composition and role of these committees in 2011.

Premier Newman's direction to weaken the committees is more than just a partisan attack on the opposition. This goes beyond party politics to the very nature of our parliamentary system. Quite simply, the committee system serves democracy in Queensland. Now more than ever, the checks and balances that committees provide are required. It is also important to note that this issue is not an esoteric academic discussion. This is not just a debate about the nature of this state's parliamentary democracy, as important as that is; it is also a debate about whether we as elected representatives—all of us—serve our constituencies to the best of our ability.

The report of the Committee System Review Committee has made it clear that the functions of committees should include consideration of proposed legislation both from a policy point of view and to ensure compliance with fundamental legislative principles. Legislation we pass in this House actually affects the lives of Queenslanders in very real ways. Delivering the best outcomes for the people we serve, whatever side of politics we are from, demands from us the commitment and dedication to scrutinise all legislation that comes before us. We do that so we may find inconsistencies, avoid unintended consequences and, if possible, improve the draft language that comes before us. That is, after all, the basic work required of the legislative branch in our democracy. Alternatively, if we find points of contention where consensus cannot be reached, scrutiny ensures that at the very least when the parliament makes a decision on an issue it does so knowingly, having actually turned its attention to each point rather than allowing hurtful changes to slip through unsighted. No doubt in the months and years ahead we will debate many pieces of legislation where the opposition will have fundamental differences with the government. We will stand up for the values and interests of the people we were elected to serve.

The point of this committees legislation is that even well-intentioned legislation can contain within it errors, weaknesses, contradictions or unintended consequences that will hurt Queenslanders. Throughout my own career and voluntary service, I have found that in the end the product is better when it has input from numerous people and when new ideas are welcomed, not stomped on.

Again, the role of committees as oversight is not an obscure, disconnected concept. The benefits that come from oversight and welcoming input and ideas from others are things that Queenslanders can associate with in their own lives, in their own workplaces, in their own homes and in their own organisations. In the years to come this government may rue the day that it confused a large majority with a monopoly on wisdom and knowledge. We are debating these issues today because, as its first move as a new government in this parliament, the LNP is weakening oversight and transparency and, in doing so, weakening this parliament itself.

To recap, the LNP wants to increase the size of the committees but reduce the number of non-government MPs on those committees. As the member for Gladstone noted, that can only have a partisan effect on the deliberations of the committee. This obviously represents a massive stacking of committees with government members. Meanwhile, the new Premier has said that he will not subject any legislative changes initiated by election commitments to the scrutiny of parliament committees. Therefore, as a result of this legislation we will have larger committees stacked with Liberal National Party members who will be denied by their Premier the ability to give detailed consideration to legislation affecting the communities they were elected to represent. Welcome to democratic reform Liberal National Party style!


**Mr Newman:** Says the branch stacker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I call the member for Rockhampton.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order. I find that comment by the Premier offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not hear the comment, but the member has asked for a withdrawal.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I withdraw.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (10.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. This is my first day in parliament and I have found it quite a revelation to witness the debate in this House this afternoon and this evening. If anybody here had bothered to listen to what I said and to what other members have said in their maiden speeches—

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order. I find the comments made by the Premier offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I did not specifically hear the comments. I was listening to the member for Rockhampton.

**Ms TRAD:** He said—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! However, the member has asked that the comment be withdrawn. I never heard where it specifically came from.

**Ms TRAD:** I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. A number of people on this side of the House heard it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member will take his seat for a moment, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will deal with this point of order first. I was listening to the member for Rockhampton. I did not hear specific comments nor where they came from on this side. I have asked for it to be withdrawn, but I do not know the individual who made the comments.

**Ms TRAD:** I named him.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not hear specifically who it was, so I allow the member for Rockhampton to continue. But should I hear a specific comment from someone, I will ask them to withdraw the comment. There is another point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I was watching the honourable member for South Brisbane. The honourable member did not hear the comment. It was from a third party. So how on earth can the member find a comment offensive when she did not hear it?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is a point of view, not a point of order.

**Mr BYRNE:** As I said, today is my first day of witnessing the parliament in play. If anybody had bothered to listen to my maiden speech and to the speeches of many other members of this parliament, they would have been horrified by what they have seen here this evening. So far the behaviour in this House is back to the worst days of the last parliament.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** This is an example of what I am talking about. How members are supposed to convince the community that this House represents anything adult and civilised is beyond me. It is like we are a room full of jackals carrying on. I ask members to exercise some judgement in these matters.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. There is no relevance to the bill that is before the House in what the member is talking about. I would ask that he return to commenting on the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Rockhampton to address the bill, and I am sure he was coming to that.


**Mr BYRNE:** I certainly am. So far in the debate this evening the member for Gladstone has probably been the most sensible in terms of some of the things that I have heard. There is certainly an amount of agreement, and this debate seems to be around a number of things that are on the margins. When I look at the bill itself and at its various parts, I do not see that the great majority of it is in direct contest. It seems to me to be an argument about the numbers on the committees themselves. If we want to put it all down to one issue, we are looking at a committee structure that has an overwhelming majority of government members. Whether the membership is principled or otherwise, the look and perception is one of a stack. On that basis and based on the behaviour that we see evident in this House itself, the notion of bipartisan, sensible, adult conduct in those committees cannot be assumed.

I urge the House to take considerable caution in relation to supporting this bill in its current form. The reality is that we, as the opposition, suggest that the stack is on, that the committees will be compromised and that the notion of bipartisanship will not be evident, as we see witnessed in this chamber today and this evening. I think the member for Gladstone made the point very succinctly. That is the key issue that I have an objection to. That is why I will not be supporting this bill. As far as I am concerned, if it looks like a stack, it is a stack.

I have 10 minutes of quotes from senior members of the government who are on the record supporting the committee system as it was introduced last year. From what I have heard, no-one in this chamber is contesting that. Also, from what I have heard no-one is contesting the reinvigorated role for the Speaker. So to me, essentially, in simple terms the issue comes down to a stack in the committees. I do not understand why the government insists on making the membership eight members and not five.

If we are talking about efficiency in the work of the committees, we could achieve the same outcomes far more dynamically with three government members and two non-government members. Why have eight members? Why is there such an overwhelming stack in these committees? Why is that message being put out into the community? It can only be what it is. If it looks like a duck and it quacks, it is a duck. That is the reality.

I think the member for Gladstone is quite right. Out of this structure we will see an overwhelming increase in the number of dissenting reports. Sure, this bill will go to a vote in due course. Sure, the bill will go through. Sure, it will be a victory as such from the government's perspective. But the real measure will be how these committees operate, and from the attitudes I have seen in this chamber today, I can only see this thing ending in tears for all. I could read another 10 minutes of quotes of the views of senior government members, but that is not going to change the dynamic. I would encourage those in the government across the chamber to look at this bill and ask, 'Why are we going for eight members on these committees?' It is not about workload. As anybody who has worked on a committee of any substance would know, having more members is more difficult. If we have five members on the committees the ratios can be retained, we can still do the same work and we can get an outcome.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (10.49 pm): We are here to debate the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. In part 3 the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. The bill at clause 16 omits sections 89 to 91. In section 91 it inserts a formula to determine the size and make up of the parliament's portfolio committees and the formula provides that in the new parliament the seven portfolio committees will comprise eight members: six government and two non-government. That is under the current mix of members in this House. If we have a look at the bill itself at 91(1), this section applies to each portfolio committee during a period when the number of non-government members is less than 15 per cent of the number of members of the Legislative Assembly. That, of course, is the situation as we see it now because it actually makes the statement 'this section applies if there are up to 13 non-government members'.

I make the point that one member of the opposition mentioned tonight words to the effect that under the old regime of 51 government members there was never a suggestion of this. If he bothered to read the formulas that are in the bill he would see that with 51 members on the government side it is clear that there is a three-three situation—in other words, exactly the same as the last parliament with the chairperson of the committee having a deciding vote. In all other circumstances the variation is that under 13 members or up to 13 members we have the eight—six-two—scenario with five members forming a quorum with at least one non-government member and if the votes on a question are equal the question is decided in the negative but may be put again at any time. Therefore the chairperson no longer has the opportunity to have a deciding vote in that situation. So too is it the case in the 15 to 25 per cent area where it is 14 to 22 non-government members. It is the same situation; he does not have the deciding vote. It is only in 91B where there is 25 to 50 per cent of non-government membership, which was the situation in the 53rd Parliament, that there are three and three with a deciding vote to the chairperson. If it became a hung parliament or a minority government it goes back to the situation where there are three members and three members and if the votes are equal then it goes to the negative.


There is balance in the proposals by the government in relation to this legislation. We could discuss this issue of bipartisanship all night, but if one takes the definition of bipartisanship that the opposition wants to foist upon us that would suggest that in the old, old system that I was involved in for 2½ years we would never get anything through those committees because it was always four-three. It was always a situation where the government's side had more members than the opposition side. Yet we were able to come to bipartisan agreement in that parliament for the first 2½ years that I was involved, as we were in the last six months when we had the three-three scenario with a deciding vote, remember, by the chair. We still maintained bipartisanship. The definition of bipartisanship, according to the Oxford Dictionary is 'of or involving the agreement or cooperation of two political parties that usually oppose each other's policies'. It does not mean three and three, it means the agreement of two opposing parties.

Our committee system is about giving the people of Queensland the opportunity to put their views about things to a committee, and in this situation a committee of eight—simply that, a committee of eight. Once they have put their views that committee of eight, six and two in this particular scenario because of the numbers in the House, will then discuss and make recommendations to the government of the day as to what the government should change based on the information that has been brought to that committee by the people of Queensland. Those eight members on those committees will be hearing from those people the same stories at the same time and have the same opportunities to ask questions. There is no restriction on the number of questions that any member of those committees can ask. If the members of the opposition want to ask three times the questions, they can ask three times the questions of those witnesses. There is no impediment whatsoever in the legislation around these committees that restricts the number of questions that can be asked by any member of the committee.



At the end of the day, the committee then comes back to the parliament. In my experience over the last three years, where there was always a four-three scenario because the committee chair had a deciding vote, we had one occasion when the committee chair had to make a call. That vote was of no real significance in the scheme of things. That was one vote for all of those reports over three years at a time when the government had the numbers on the committee. That is the situation that we will find ourselves in going forward from here.

If a committee member or the opposition members decide that they do not agree with the committee they have the right to put in a dissenting report. Their voice will be heard in this parliament. The argument that has been going on here tonight with the opposition members saying how unfair it is and how unbalanced it is, is completely erroneous. The bottom line in bipartisanship is not about equal numbers, it is about agreeing and that is what this committee system is all about. As a nominee for a committee chair I can assure members that I will be working hard to ensure a fair and balanced hearing for all people who come before the Finance and Administration Committee and then a fair and balanced discussion within the committee to bring logical recommendations for legislative change to this parliament so then the whole of the parliament can make a decision. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.58 pm): I am very happy to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012 and I certainly support the comments and explanations made by the Premier. As much of this bill does refer to the Speaker's role and position, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Speaker of the Queensland parliament, Fiona Simpson, on being the first female Speaker in the Queensland parliament and at the same time congratulate the Deputy Speaker as well. I know that the Speaker will uphold this vital role with dignity and probity. I have no doubt she will set a high standard of protocol within this chamber. It does seem a rather long time since Fiona Simpson and I were the only two women members in the official opposition of this parliament.

This bill sets out to rectify certain faults within the act that the previous opposition objected to when the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly was formulated. The bill also sets in place changes to the membership of committees in line with the current somewhat unbalanced numbers in this 54th Parliament. Last year, the committee system of the Queensland parliament underwent an historic overhaul to reflect the fact that Queensland is the only unicameral house of parliament in Australia. Under the Parliament of Queensland Act, certain functions previously in the hands of the Speaker were transferred to the Clerk of the Parliament and the CLA. Basically, those were administrative functions with respect to the parliamentary service. Those changes resulted from the recommendations of a bipartisan committee that worked together to create a system that reflected similar jurisdictions in New Zealand and Canada. Under the original legislation, the Speaker did not become a member of the CLA but was present at meetings only when any matters pertaining to standing rules was discussed. Certainly it seemed an insult to the Speaker that he or she was not to be a part of the CLA and the opposition, as we were at that time, certainly opposed that.

The changes produced some controversy within the community. However, in some cases there was not a full understanding of what those changes involved. The legislation did not take away from the Speaker any of the traditional rights and responsibilities that he or she holds within the chamber of parliament, which are outlined in the Parliamentary Service Act. There has been a separation of the role of the Speaker as the employing authority for the parliamentary service officers and employees and this role has been transferred to the Clerk of the Parliament. Under the Parliament of Queensland Act, the CLA has responsibility for deciding policies in relation to parliamentary accommodation and services. This is a role that previously the Speaker had held, but under the recommendation of the bipartisan committee it was transferred to the CLA, which in effect has a more broad approach to this area.


It is important to note that the Speaker's powers in relation to the conduct of the parliament within the chamber and the behaviour of members has not changed. The extremely important role of the Speaker in keeping the traditions and the dignity in parliament is without question. The functions of the Speaker in section 50 of the act remain the same. In brief, the section outlines that all persons entering or upon the parliamentary precinct shall comply with the directions of the Speaker as to the behaviour, demeanour and conduct of such persons. To that extent, the Speaker has absolute power, and so he or she should. However, the fact that the Speaker was not a member of the CLA was an area that we as the opposition did not agree with and I am very pleased that this bill will rectify that omission. That the Speaker not be a member of the CLA was a Labor government decision and, in simple terms, was wrong. Under these amendments the Speaker will not only become a member but also chairman of the CLA, being able to exercise a deliberative vote in all areas that affect the Speaker's role.

As the previous deputy chairman of the CLA and manager of opposition business, I had a great opportunity to watch the development of the new procedures within this parliament. In the two other jurisdictions previously mentioned, New Zealand and Canada, which have this committee system, those committees hold very powerful roles. In this parliament the committees are still in their infancy, but last year it was encouraging to note that in circumstances where amendments to legislation were proposed

by the committees they were acted upon by the government of the day. That proved the effectiveness of those committee processes to be able to hold some government processes to account. I have no doubt that these will strengthen as the community at large becomes more aware of the committee system and the role that the community has to play in that committee system.

This bill has set a formulae to determine the size of the membership of the parliament's portfolio committees so that they can practically and logistically operate as the numbers of government and opposition vary. As we know, various new positions are being formed under the bill, although in some cases they are simply a renaming of the existing positions. Where previous governments operated with parliamentary secretaries, those will be replaced with assistant ministers and the Leader of the House will become the Manager of Government Business. There will be other changes with the naming of the whips.


This evening I have listened to the rather inane arguments of opposition members. I believe this opposition has a lot to learn before it can become a credible opposition. These are completely sensible and workable amendments and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.03 pm): Among other things, the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012 seeks to determine the size of the membership of the parliament's portfolio committees to reflect the new composition of the parliament and restore some of the former powers of the Speaker, which have been eroded over the past 20 years, by establishing the Speaker as chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I welcome a restoration of powers to this position. The role of Speaker must be above reproach and clear in its separation from the executive arm of government. However, a number of concerns were raised about aspects of the bill that do not reflect a healthy separation between the role of committees and the executive arm of parliament.

The March election handed the LNP a record majority. It also gave Katter's Australian Party over 12 per cent of Queensland's primary vote, making ours the third most significant political party in Queensland state politics. Recommendation 15 of the committee system review of 10 December, and supported by members of this government, forms the basis of the changes being proposed in this bill. It states that the composition of committees must 'reflect the composition of the non-government membership in the House'. Considering that Katter's Australian Party comprises 18 per cent of non-government members and represents one-third of a million Queenslanders, it is in the public interest that we should have a determining role in committee composition.

Clause 18 inserts new chapter 5. Division 2, section 91(2)(a) and (b) effectively denies Katter's Australian Party and the Independents the right to nominate members to the committees and is a blatant attempt by the government to dominate the committees to reflect the massive majority it enjoys in this House. The membership proposed by this legislation completely ignores the fact that there is a third political party and that the Independents and Katter's Australian Party make up over one-third of non-government members. This is not favourable to the integrity of the parliament or good governance.

The legislation has been rushed through as a matter of urgency. While it is important to get the work of government up and running, it is also important that we get this right. I do not believe that a committee system in which the number of government members is triple the number of non-government members and one-third of non-government members have no say in the committee composition is in the public interest or demonstrates an interest in accountability, particularly while this government is spruiking cutting waste and striving for accountability.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (11.06 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012. I realise that it is just after 11 o'clock and certainly I will not take my full 20 minutes to speak to the bill. I acknowledge that the bill amends a number of acts: the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, the Criminal Code Act 1899, the Information Privacy Act 2009, the Integrity Act 2009, the Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010, the Public Records Act 2002 and the Right to Information Act 2009.

I have listened to all contributions to the debate today and I will be supporting the government's proposal to have as many members as possible involved in a range of portfolio committees. I think that is sensible as it ensures that most members of parliament have a chance to be involved in the consideration of bills and the making of recommendations to the mover of those bills, be it the government, the opposition, the Independents or the crossbenches, before they are finally debated in the House. Also, my support of the position of the Speaker by extending to that role greater duties as proposed in the bill is consistent with my position in the previous parliament.

I note that, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke about the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commission, a number of government members ridiculed her and said that had no relevance. I say quite clearly that I believe that that has a great deal of relevance because tonight we are considering—and the opposition has flagged—the importance of not just debating the issue of the portfolio committees but also resolving what will happen with the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct

Committee. Members may not know that this month the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee tabled a report that contains 86 recommendations. That committee, which was formed by the last parliament, still exists today. The 53rd Parliament chose who was going to sit on that committee and that committee still operates. Tonight we are talking about the importance and the urgency of forming the new portfolio committees, but no-one from the government wants to talk about what will happen with the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. Members talk about a degree of relevance; I cannot think of a committee that this parliament could form which is more important than that committee. It is much more important than the various portfolio committees.

I will take members to some of the recommendations, and I urge members to read this report, which was tabled only this month. There are 38 recommendations. The 34th recommendation states—

The Committee recommends that section 300(2) of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001* be amended to provide that the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee must be a member nominated as chairperson by the Leader of the Opposition.


Some members may think that is not relevant. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, the Leader of the House ridiculed her for relevance. The Premier said—and I do not know if this is recorded in *Hansard*—that it was all numbers. That goes to the very heart of the importance of this committee. This is not about numbers.

The Deputy Premier spoke about consistency of position. Let us go back to what the Deputy Premier said when he was on that committee which supported the unanimous recommendations that went to the last parliament. That recommendation states—

The Committee recommends that the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 be amended to provide that the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee be a Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

We have heard a lot this week about how the government is not going to abuse its numbers, yet we have heard the Premier say that it is all about numbers. If this government really wants to show Queenslanders that it is not going to abuse its numbers, it will do the right thing and make sure there is proper scrutiny and integrity of the most important committee in this parliament. Let the view of the committee from the 53rd Parliament and recommended by this committee be consistent and upheld in this parliament. What is the government afraid of? Is it afraid of the opposition nominating the person to chair that committee? I do not think it needs to be afraid of anything. We need to have some consistency. My position tonight is consistent with the position I took during the last parliament.

I do not know what the opposition leader is going to do. She talks about the importance of committees, but I believe that this committee is much more important than the portfolio committees. I look forward to listening to the Premier's response to what I have had to say. I am also looking forward to a number of amendments which will be tabled later tonight.

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (11.11 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the second reading debate. Before I make some detailed comments in response to the debate this evening, I make a point about the general thrust of the opposition's approach. I have seen this before over many years in the Brisbane City Council. I said earlier today that they have it in their DNA. There is a political strategy—perhaps it is a tactic, although a tactic is much smaller minded than a strategy, and we have probably seen some pretty small minds at work today. The point is this: they will try to frame the government in a certain way. Even though the government has not really done much yet—I acknowledge that; we have only been around for 7½ weeks—we are already arrogant and hubristic. These are the things that the Labor Party will say. Honourable members will have noticed the references to Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Somehow tree clearing is rampant already, the environment is being destroyed and we are rampaging across the land. Next we will be drilling the Great Barrier Reef! This is exactly what these people opposite will say. It is all spin. It is their political campaign. They sought to do it from 2008 to 2012 with their former opposition leader in the Brisbane City Council, Councillor Shayne Sutton. It did not work. We will not let them make it work because it is the normal spin and nonsense.

We heard the nonsense from the member for South Brisbane. We will hear a lot from that person because in the next few months—maybe six or 12 months—that person will probably be the Leader of the Opposition. It is clear that that is on the cards. The honourable member for South Brisbane clearly has the fire in the belly. After the most dishonest campaign in Australia's political history it is clear that the member for South Brisbane will do and say anything in the cause of gaining political power.

The urgent passage of this bill this evening is required so that the appointments to the parliament's portfolio committees can take effect, allowing them to commence undertaking their areas of responsibility in the 54th Parliament as expeditiously as possible. This is not an attempt to bypass the committee system, as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition. The committees are there; they exist. The numbers have changed. Maybe the opposition leader has not noticed, but the numbers in the chamber have changed.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a number of issues regarding accountability. I can assure the leader that this bill is about maintaining, and indeed strengthening, the committee structure by ensuring that the committees can operate effectively given the current representation in the House and the

numbers that the Labor Party hold. This is not, as the Leader of the Opposition contends, an attempt to stack the committees with government members. However, I acknowledge that they know a bit about branch stacking; they have history. There was the Shepherdson inquiry, but they would have us forget that.

The fact of the matter is that the current legislative requirement that half of the members of the portfolio committee are to be nominated by the Leader of the House and the other half are to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition is unworkable in light of the composition of the parliament decided upon by the electors of Queensland at the 2012 election. Who said that? It was the Clerk of the Parliament. Is the Labor Party now saying that they do not respect the Clerk of the Parliament? Peter Beattie used to tell me all the time how he held the Clerk of the Parliament in such high esteem. We received advice from the Clerk of the Parliament after this unprecedented election result and suddenly that advice is worth nothing. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party for not respecting the views of the Clerk.

The Clerk has raised these concerns with the government and provided advice that a three-three composition of portfolio committees would not provide for a practical operation in this new parliament. The Clerk also recommended formulae to the government which would determine the make-up of the membership of portfolio committees depending upon the political composition of the Assembly, as I outlined in my explanatory speech. The government accepted the Clerk's advice on these matters. I am going to stop right there and again say that I did not dream this up. The Deputy Premier did not dream this up. The Treasurer did not dream this up. No-one else over here dreamed this up. It was done on the advice of the Clerk. Let us dispel this hocus-pocus, this smokescreen from the opposition; it came from the Clerk, not from us.

It should be noted that the actual split of six government members and two non-government members provides 25 per cent representation for non-government members. This is far higher than the 12 per cent representation that non-government members have in the Legislative Assembly as a whole. Ponder that.

The other point to make is that the members of the parliament, by leave, do not need to be members of a particular committee in order to participate in the activities of the committee or to question witnesses. This is provided for in standing order 209, and the member for Gympie told us all about that earlier. Perhaps the opposition was not listening. That is right: lots of words are coming out but not a lot is going in.

The Leader of the Opposition also raised an issue about the membership of the PCMC. The structure and membership of the PCMC is not actually a part of the bill. I acknowledge that in the tables at the back it is a consequential amendment but it is not part of this bill.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Yes, it is.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition that it is. We will march off and we will go and get a lawyer to look at it and we will march it back in here. We will find out that the Leader of the Opposition, who was a minister for many years, clearly learned nothing during her time in the chamber as a minister.

The member for Mulgrave asked if the assistant ministers would receive an additional salary greater than that which they were receiving as parliamentary secretaries. I can confirm for the honourable member that there will be no change to their salaries, and this is outlined in clause 25 of the bill. I will stop right there. Clearly, they have not been reading it. They have had many hours to do so. There have been many hours of debate.

**Mr Bleijie:** It's 14 pages. It's a bit difficult!

**Mr NEWMAN:** No wonder we saw poor and reckless financial management for I do not know how many years. That is how we got a \$2.8 billion deficit—from people who could not even read the paperwork. We know that they did not ask the public servants how they were spending the money and let them off the leash.

**Mr Dowling:** Shame and still no apology.

**Mr NEWMAN:** And still no apology. I note the member for Gladstone's comments that the need for change to the composition of the portfolio committees is self-evident and also that a test to the integrity of the system will be the number of dissenting reports. I also note that the member for Gladstone has said that the Speaker's inclusion on the CLA as chairman goes some way to restoring the powers of the Speaker. However, I note that the member would like the Speaker to have a vote on all issues and call CLA meetings and set the agenda. The bill provides that the Speaker will operate as chairman, presiding over the CLA meetings as the Speaker does in the chamber. Consistent with this, the bill provides that the Manager of Government Business—he will always be the Leader of the House to me—will call the meetings and set the agenda just as the manager does in setting the sitting weeks and arranging the business of the parliament as a whole.

I also acknowledge the member's concerns about the CLA membership not including an Independent member, and I understand that the member wishes to move an amendment during consideration in detail to address this. I note that there are three opposition members on the CLA. It is within their discretion—it is within their discretion—to nominate any member, including a member who is not part of the government or the opposition, as their alternate on the committee. Let us think about this for a second. There are 78 of us, there are seven Labor members, there are two from the Katter Australian Party and two Independents and yet the Labor Party obviously believe that it is still okay that they have three members on the CLA to the government's three with the Speaker. If they really were fair, if they believed in democracy, if they believed in the CLA reflecting the balance of the numbers in this chamber, then they would offer up one of their positions to either the Katter Australian Party or the Independents. So let us see what they do. Let us see where democracy goes this evening. Let us see.

I also note that all members will be able to write to or otherwise approach the Speaker as chairman and raise any matters that they wish the CLA to consider. In Westminster tradition, the Speaker represents all members. Do you know what, Mr Deputy Speaker? I know that the member for Maroochydore will be particularly faithful to that principle. That is why she is there in the chair. The government considers that the bill strikes the appropriate balance between restoring the dignity and prestige of the Speaker and also maintaining the integrity of the CLA as the principal bipartisan decision-making committee of the parliament. For these reasons the government will not be supporting the member for Gladstone's proposed amendments.

We know that the member for Dalrymple is also proposing to move amendments during consideration in detail to provide that the portfolio committee membership include a member who is neither government nor opposition, and I refer the member to my previous comments that the proposed membership is based upon the advice of the Clerk and the government accepts this advice.

In conclusion, I thank members for their contribution to the debate. I sadly have to reflect that the Labor Party have been all about spin as usual, not about substance—huffery and puffery, hocus-pocus, nothing whatsoever. As my former colleague Councillor Andrew Wines, the councillor for Enoggera, who was a visitor here this evening, commented to me, he said, 'Bigger chamber, more people, same Labor Party nonsense just from different people.' And that is so true, so true indeed. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—



**Ms PALASZCZUK** (11.25 pm): I would like to seek some clarification from the Premier. I note that he said that there are no changes to the salary in relation to the name change from parliamentary secretary to assistant minister. But could the Premier confirm for me whether assistant ministers are located within the ministerial offices or are they being provided with separate offices that are outside the ministerial offices?

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is not question time. The purpose of consideration in detail is to consider the clause. Members can ask questions about the clause. It is not an opportunity for a broad-ranging question time about the subject. I would suggest, Mr Deputy Speaker, that that contribution is clearly out of order and should be ruled out of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I am going to uphold the point of order. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that clause 3 is the amendment of chapter 2, part 4, division 2, heading '(Members who are Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries)'. It is to do with changing the name to assistant ministers. Do you want to speak again to that, Leader of the Opposition?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** All I will say in relation to this is that I have sat here for many years and listened especially to now ministers sit here and talk about wide-ranging topics and latitude was given. At the very first opportunity that the Deputy Premier has in this House he tries to shut down debate.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition leader.

**Mr Stevens:** You're reflecting on the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am not reflecting on the chair. I am just saying that we have had a broad-ranging debate and the question still remains.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! On a point of relevance, the opposition leader's comments are not relevant to the clause and I rule them out of order.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—



**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (11.29 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 11 (Amendment of s 81 (Membership))**

Page 7, lines 14 to 16—

*omit, insert—*

'(2) Section 81(1)(f) and (g)—

*omit, insert—*

'(f) a member of the Assembly, nominated by the Speaker, who is—

(i) not a member of the same political party as the Premier; and

(ii) not a member of the same political party as the Leader of the Opposition;

(g) the Speaker or alternate.'.

The purpose of this amendment is to introduce a member of the crossbenches as a member of the CLA. In a casual discussion with one of the government members—and I thank that member for the inquiry—they made the point that this amendment that I am proposing could lack relevance if the make-up of the parliament changed. I think it is a very valid point. An example would be—and I do not actually want this to happen—if the crossbenches in a parliament were reduced to one and the opposition was, say, 30 or 40 and the government made up the remainder of the parliament.

My response to him—and it was not well thought out but it was the response I gave him—was that at that point in time this legislation could be further amended to reflect the reality of this chamber. I think that is probably the most practical response I can give.

The fact is that we have a parliament at this time that is unprecedented. We have 78 government members, seven opposition members, two Katter's Australian Party members and two Independents, and there is no opportunity for either of the crossbenchers to be represented on the CLA. I take the Premier's comments from his summing-up that there is an opportunity for the opposition in an act of bipartisanship to offer one of us to that position. I must say that, irrespective of who is in opposition, hell will freeze over before they have that open-handedness with those three executive positions. The positions on the CLA are senior executive positions from the side of government and very senior positions designated from the opposition. I am saying that it is only reasonable with the parliament made up as it is at present and for the forthcoming three years that the crossbenchers be represented and that this amendment be supported.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I go back to my comments before. They stand. It is three and three under this. The Labor Party opposition is dramatically overrepresented and should do the decent thing and give either a member of the Katter's Australian Party or the Independents a position on the CLA. That is our view. I can honestly say that they will see us being generous and big hearted in the future when such matters come up. Wait and see.

Non-government amendment (Mrs Cunningham) negatived.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—



**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (11.31 pm): I want to further reiterate how welcome it is that the Speaker reassume the position of chairman of that committee. This is not casting aspersions on the current Leader of the House, who is soon to be known as the Manager of Government Business. These pieces of legislation have always dealt with positions rather than personalities—although for many of us who have been here over time we do see that the decisions are often overlaid with personalities. It is appropriate that the Speaker take the chairperson's role in the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, and I thank the government for making that decision.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—



**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (11.32 pm): I move the following amendments—

**2 Clause 13 (Replacement of s 83 (Quorum and voting at meetings))**

Page 8, line 3, 'Manager of Government Business'—

*omit, insert—*

'Speaker'.

**3 Clause 13 (Replacement of s 83 (Quorum and voting at meetings))**

Page 8, line 8, 'other than the Speaker'—

*omit.*

**4 Clause 13 (Replacement of s 83 (Quorum and voting at meetings))**

Page 8, lines 10 to 14—

*omit.*

The purpose of these amendments is to re-establish even further the role of the Speaker in terms of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Again, I reiterate that my comments are not directed at the personalities or the people involved but at the roles that they fill. Gerard Carney responded to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's report and it was subsequently forwarded to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I want to quote what he said, but I just make it clear that in part it does not relate to this legislation but it relates to the previous legislation. He said—

To relegate the Speaker to a part-time member of the CLA, only when it is dealing with a matter relating to the standing rules and orders, undermines the status of the Speaker.

That has been addressed because the Speaker, according to the previous amendment, becomes the chair of the committee. Mr Carney continued—

Of equal concern, it undermines public confidence in the capacity of the Legislative Assembly to deal with issues objectively within a highly partisan political environment. This is so particularly in relation to ethical issues and parliamentary privilege, which are now to be dealt with by the CLA without the presence of the Speaker.

I believe it is appropriate, as with all other committees, that the Speaker calls the meetings and the Speaker determines the agenda. The purpose of this amendment is to reinstall that power or responsibility—call it what you will—to the Speaker; I believe that is appropriate. We all here have expressed great confidence in the current Speaker. We had confidence in the previous Speaker. I call for this chamber's support for my amendments.

Division: Question put—That the member for Gladstone's amendments be agreed to.

**AYES, 10**—Byrne, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Scott, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Cunningham

**NOES, 72**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Sorensen

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendments (Mrs Cunningham) negated.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—



**Mr KNUTH** (11.48 pm): I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 5, pt 3, div 2)—**

Page 10, line 6, '6'—

*omit, insert—*

'5'

**2 Clause 18 (Insertion of new ch 5, pt 3, div 2)—**

Page 10, after line 8—

*insert—*

'(c) 1 member nominated and seconded by members of minor parties or independent members. In the event that a committee member is not nominated by a minor party or independent member the remaining committee position will be nominated by the Manager of Government Business.'

Under the amendments proposed in the government's Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012, the Independents and Katter's Australian Party, which together comprise over one-third of the opposition, do not have a say in the composition of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. To ensure an accurate reflection of the parliament in the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, I move these amendments. The government's decision to ignore one-third of non-government members does not accurately reflect the current composition of the parliament and therefore fails in its fundamental objectives, no matter how much those opposite resent the voice of Queenslanders who came out strongly in support of Katter's Australian Party, which represents one-third of a million Queenslanders.

These amendments to clause 18 of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012 reduce the number of government nominations from six to five to give that one nomination to the minor parties and Independent members of the parliament so that Queenslanders can have faith that the government is not abusing the powers that have been entrusted to it. These amendments grant Katter's Australian Party a democratic responsibility, shared with Independent members, to choose to nominate one of those committee members if they so desire. If we or the Independents choose not to nominate a committee member then the member will be nominated by the Manager of Government Business.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** I will repeat that, member for Lockyer. If we or the Independents choose not to nominate a committee member then the member will be nominated by the Manager of Government Business. I do not believe that a committee system in which the number of government members has increased but one-third of non-government members have no say in the committees' composition is in

the public interest or demonstrates interest in accountability. The only democratic course of action and the only action that will restore the faith of the people of Queensland in the parliamentary process is for the government to support these amendments. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** This amendment refers to the membership and operation of the portfolio committees. I believe that the membership for that was determined to be moved from six to eight. The proposal moved by the member for Dalrymple is to reduce the existing number of members from six to five. Although I acknowledged in my speech in the second reading debate that the numbers in this chamber indicated that the membership of committees had to be reviewed given the physical reality of this chamber, I believe there is some value in the amendment that the member for Dalrymple has proposed in that it would re-establish confidence in the committee process in terms of membership and remove the concern that may be in the community, either real or perceived, that with the committee numbers increasing to eight it could be seen to be unfairly increasing the influence of government in the committee process.

I note the Premier's comments earlier and those of other members who have acknowledged that the advice to change the membership of committees from six to eight on the advice of the Clerk—a person with great experience in these matters. However, I believe that there is value in the recommendation and the amendment moved by the member for Dalrymple and I believe that it is important that it be tested on the floor.

Division: Question put—That the member for Dalrymple's amendments be agreed to.

**AYES, 10**—Byrne, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Scott, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Cunningham, Miller

**NOES, 72**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seene, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Sorensen, Smith

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendments (Mr Knuth) negatived.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 19 and 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 27, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—



**Ms PALASZCZUK** (12.01 am): I move the following amendments—

**1 The Schedule, page 19, line 10—**

*Omit—*

'and (2)'

**2 The Schedule, page 19, after line 13—**

*Insert—*

**'8 Amendments for references from 'Leader of the House' to 'Leader of the Opposition**

(1) This section applies to the section 300(2) of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*—

(2) The provision is amended by omitting 'Leader of the House' and inserting 'Leader of the Opposition.'

As members know, we have previously canvassed these ideas in the House this evening. These amendments relate to amending the reference from Leader of the House to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. The amendments that have been circulated to all members in the House clearly refer to matters that are substantively different from the consequential amendments that are here and have no relevance to this schedule whatsoever. I would ask the Clerk to rule on the proposed amendments for changing references from Leader of the House to Leader of the Opposition. Quite clearly, the change in those consequential amendments about Leader of the House refer to the changing of the name to Manager of Government Business.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): I am going to allow it. Leader of the Opposition?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As we canvassed this evening in the debate in relation to this, the amendment I am moving today is essentially amending the reference from Leader of the House to Leader of the Opposition. Essentially we have here the Crime and Misconduct Act which sets up the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. This is one of the most important committees of this House.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I have 10 minutes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I want to hear the point of order, if the Leader of the Opposition could resume her seat.



**Mr SEENEY:** We are dealing with the schedule to the bill that contains definitions. That section of the schedule merely changes the definition. What the Leader of the Opposition is proposing is a substantive amendment to the CMC act. It is out of order completely to propose a substantive amendment to an act within a schedule that is essentially about defining definitions. It is the difference between a substantive amendment and a consequential amendment. They are vastly different and have to be treated differently. The Leader of the Opposition is clearly out of order. I ask that it be ruled so.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** With respect, and it is getting very late, I am going to allow the Leader of the Opposition to continue. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to deal with it as promptly as she can.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have 10 minutes. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is one of the most important committees established in this House. The composition of that committee had previously been that the Leader of the House put forward four nominees from the government and three members were nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. I would like the Clerk to explain how we can deal with changing the intent of the Crime and Misconduct Act which is completely different to the act that we are dealing with.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Clerk does not explain. I have nine minutes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have ruled on it and I will allow the Leader of the Opposition to finish her statement.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you. There have been three interruptions now and all interruptions have been ruled to be irrelevant. This is one of the most important committees. It is set up by the act. The membership is clearly there. Let me quote recommendation 18, which the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health signed off on—

The Committee recommends that the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 be amended to provide that the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee be a Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

Is everybody clear on that? It then went to the government and the government of the day accepted this recommendation. Then what happened? The Leader of the Opposition at the time, who is now the Deputy Premier sitting here in this chamber, nominated the then member for Gaven who was a member of the opposition team to be the chair of the Crime and Misconduct Committee, which was in the spirit of the recommendations and the spirit of what the government supported. Then what happened? With the election of the Newman government the Premier came out and he nominated the member for Gladstone to be the chair. He said that he had complied with the intent. That is not the intent. It is very clear that the nomination is the nominee of the Leader of the Opposition. The last time I looked, correct me if I am wrong, the Premier is not the Leader of the Opposition. The challenge for this government with its massive majority is to uphold the standards of this parliament. There is no greater decision to be made tonight by this Premier and this deputy. The Deputy Premier not only was on that committee that supported it but also was the person who nominated the member for Gaven in the first instance. You should hang your head in shame for what you are doing tonight. It is completely and utterly wrong. What did you say during my speech earlier today?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I have given you quite a lot of breadth here tonight and I have asked you repeatedly to address your comments through the chair. That is the last warning that I will give you about that.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is a test of integrity. This is a test of accountability. How you vote on this particular amendment is how you are going to be judged as members of this House for the next three years. Democracy demands that you abide by the recommendations of the independent committee. Not only that, we have also had the three-yearly report handed down by the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, the member for Gaven. It is very clear here in black and white. Let me read it out for members—and there are a lot of new members here—so you know what you are voting on tonight. Let there be no mistake: this is one of the most important decisions you are going to have to make in this House.

**Mr Newman** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This just shows that the Premier does not understand the committees of this House. The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee is one of the most significant, if not the most significant, committees of the Queensland parliament and you are treating it with disdain and you do not understand how it operates. The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, chaired by the member for Gaven and constituted by members of this House, unanimously decided—there was no dissent—on this recommendation. Let me read it for members—

The committee recommends that section 32 of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 be amended to amend that the chair of the committee must be a member nominated as chairperson by the Leader of the Opposition.

The three-yearly review by the bipartisan membership of the Crime and Misconduct Committee of this House has endorsed it. So tonight it is up to the government to decide once and for all are you going to back down on what you supported? The Deputy Premier supported the recommendation. The

Minister for Health who sits here was on the committee and he supported it. Will you stand up for your principles tonight? Will you have the integrity? Will you allow the Leader of the Opposition to nominate the chair of this important committee? Tonight, this is the test. It is what is going to be—

**Mr Newman:** Tell us about Gordon Nuttall. Don't lecture us.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Premier does not even understand the functions of the act, but here it is. The Premier should read it. In conclusion, this amendment is in line with the previous committee's recommendations, it is in line with what the government did when in opposition and it is clearly in line with the recommendations outlined by the all-party parliamentary committee. Tonight it is up to members of this chamber to decide whether they support it or reject it.

**Mr SEENEY:** The Leader of the Opposition would have us believe that tonight democracy as we know it will come to an end if we do not agree with her. Honourable members should know that, like most of the contributions that the Leader of the Opposition has made tonight, this is based on misinformation and, I suggest, a downright and deliberate untruth. The only information put forward by the Leader of the Opposition to support her preposterous suggestion was that somehow or other it follows a precedent set when the member for Gaven was appointed to the position in the last parliament. The member for Gaven was appointed because I agreed with the then Leader of the House and member for Sunnybank and the then Premier. The opposition had to provide a non-government member who was acceptable to the government and the Premier and the Leader of the House accepted our suggestion that the member for Gaven would be an appropriate person to fill that position. At the moment, we have a situation where the Leader of the Opposition wants somebody else and will not negotiate on the non-government nominee who we believe would be the most appropriate person. That is the situation.

Democracy is not threatened by this. The only thing that is threatened is the pride of the Leader of the Opposition. The whole parliamentary system is not going to come crashing down. The chandeliers will not fall from the roof if we do not agree to the proposition being put by the Leader of the Opposition. She will have to back down and accept that the non-government member who will chair the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee has to be somebody whom the government accepts and agrees with. That was the case in the last parliament when I negotiated with the former Premier and the former member for Sunnybank, Judy Spence, for the member for Gaven to fill the position. Let us have no more of this nonsense.

I suggest that tonight the opposition is drawing a longbow on a couple of fronts. It is drawing a longbow to move such an amendment within standing orders. It is also drawing a longbow to suggest, as the Leader of the Opposition has, that somehow or other the entire parliamentary system and democracy itself is threatened by this decision. Of course that is a nonsense. I suggest that as a parliament we have a whole range of legacy issues and a whole range of failures from the previous government to deal with against which this particular decision fades into insignificance. However, it is as well that the members in this House tonight who were not here when the previous committee chair was appointed and the people of Queensland who might take a passing interest in this particular issue should know that the previous chair, the honourable member for Gaven, was appointed because we agreed with the government that he was a suitable member to hold that position. That is what the opposition leader has to do tonight: she has to agree with us about a suitable non-government appointee.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I am happy to speak to the proposed amendment, but first, Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek clarification and perhaps your ruling on something. The long title of the bill states that it is a bill for 'an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for particular purposes', and the body of the bill deals with that. It then says 'and to make consequential amendments of other acts as stated in the schedule'. Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my view that it should be open to you to rule that, in order for the Leader of the Opposition's amendment to go ahead, she must seek leave to make an amendment outside of the long title of the bill. That is, the long title of the bill provides amendments for particular purposes, and those are in the body of the bill. The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is an amendment to that part of the bill that is stated to be consequential amendments. Obviously the Leader of the Opposition's amendment is not a consequential amendment; it is a substantive amendment and, therefore, falls outside the long title of the bill. Therefore, the proper process is for the Leader of the Opposition to seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill. That can be decided and then a debate can be held if that motion is successful.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I review my ruling. The long title of the bill is the litmus test for the relevance of amendments. This is a difficult issue, as the title appears to be restrictive of the amendment and the amendment is arguably outside the title. Therefore, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to seek leave under standing order 151 for the amendment to proceed.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I seek leave for the amendment to be moved.

Leave not granted.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I did not hear a call for a division.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Six of us said 'divide'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There was all kinds of noises in the chamber and I did not clearly hear the word 'divide'. I will make a ruling on that: when I called for the noes there was no answer; there were no voices. I did not clearly hear the word 'divide'. The question has been put and agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (12.19 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

**AYES, 74**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Sorensen, Smith

**NOES, 7**—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (12.27 am): 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.

## MOTIONS

### Amendment to Standing Orders



**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.27 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

In accordance with section 88 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and standing order 194, that schedule 6 of standing orders be replaced with the schedule circulated in my name, (Version 2 Replacement) effective upon assent to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2012.

#### Schedule 6—Portfolio Committees

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


Portfolio Committee	Departments within Committee Responsibility	Ministers	Oversight Responsibility
Finance and Administration Committee	Premier and Cabinet Treasury and Trade	Premier Treasurer and Minister for Trade	Auditor-General Integrity Commissioner
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee	State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Energy and Water Supply Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games	Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Minister for Energy and Water Supply Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games	

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee	Justice and Attorney-General Police Service Community Safety	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice Minister for Police and Community Safety	Electoral Commissioner Information Commissioner Ombudsman
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Environment and Heritage Protection Natural Resources and Mines	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection Minister for Natural Resources and Mines	
Education and Innovation Committee	Education, Training and Employment Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	Minister for Education, Training and Employment Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	
Health and Community Services Committee	Health Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs	Minister for Health Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier	Health Quality and Complaints Commission Family Responsibilities Commission Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian
Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee	Transport and Main Roads Housing and Public Works Local Government	Minister for Transport and Main Roads Minister for Housing and Public Works Minister for Local Government	

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.28 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That in accordance with standing order 131(1)(c), the schedule circulated in my name indicating the bills introduced today and not declared urgent be referred to the committees indicated in the schedule with the report back-dates indicated in the schedule.


Minister	Bill	Committee	Report date
Minister for Health	Health Legislation (Health Practitioner Regulation National Law) Amendment Bill 2012	Refer to the Health and Community Services Committee	1 June 2012
Minister for Health	Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012	Refer to the Health and Community Services Committee	1 June 2012
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	Qld Art Gallery Amendment Bill 2012	Refer to the Education and Innovation Committee	11 June 2012
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice	Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012	Refer to the Finance and Administration Committee	1 June 2012

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## COMMITTEES

### Membership

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.29 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the list appointing members to parliamentary committees established by statute or standing orders, circulated in my name be adopted and effective upon the assent of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill.

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### COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

(Effective upon the Assent of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill)

Finance and Administration Committee—Mr Michael Crandon (Chair), Mr Reg Gulley, Mr Ian Kaye, Mrs Freya Ostapovitch, Mr Ted Sorensen, Mr Mark Stewart, Mr Curtis Pitt, Mr Tim Mulherin

State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee—Mr Ted Malone (Chair), Mr Scott Driscoll, Mr Michael Hart, Mr Seath Holswich, Ms Kerry Millard, Mr Bruce Young, Mr Tim Mulherin, Mr Rob Katter

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee—Mr Ray Hopper (Chair), Miss Verity Barton, Mr Sean Choat, Mr Carl Judge, Mr Trevor Watts, Mr Jason Woodforth, Mr Bill Byrne, Mr Peter Wellington

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee—Mr Ian Rickuss (Chair), Mr Jason Costigan, Mr Sam Cox, Mr David Gibson, Mr Jon Krause, Mrs Anne Maddern, Ms Jackie Trad, Mr Shane Knuth


Education and Innovation Committee—Mrs Rosemary Menkens (Chair), Mr Mark Boothman, Mr Steve Bennett, Mr Michael Latter, Mr Michael Pucci, Mr Neil Symes, Ms Anastacia Palaszczuk, Mr Tim Mulherin

Health and Community Services Committee—Mr Peter Dowling (Chair), Mr Steve Davies, Mr Aaron Dillaway, Mr John Hathaway, Mr Dale Shuttleworth, Mr Michael Trout, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, Mrs Desley Scott

Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee—Mr Howard Hobbs (Chair), Mr Darren Grimwade, Mr John Grant, Mr Trevor Ruthenberg, Mrs Tarnya Smith, Mr Anthony Shorten, Mrs Desley Scott, Mr Bill Byrne

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee—Mrs Liz Cunningham (Chair), Mr Alex Douglas, Mr Ian Kaye, Mr Ian Berry, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, Ms Jackie Trad, Mr Peter Wellington

Ethics Committee—Mr Alex Douglas (Chair), Mrs Liz Cunningham, Mr Ian Kaye, Mr Ian Berry, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, Ms Jackie Trad, Mr Peter Wellington

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.32 am): We wish to accept all of the committee names that have been put forward by the Leader of the House, or the Manager of Government Business, although we do oppose the listings for the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. We would like to move an amendment to the membership of that committee.

**Mr Bleijie:** You support them all but you oppose one.

**Mr PITT:** That is correct, Attorney-General. We support the portfolio committees, of which the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee is not one, nor is the Ethics Committee. As this is—

**Mr Stevens:** It is not part of the motion. You have to vote against the motion. The motion is as such.

**Mr PITT:** Well, we are going to have to vote against the motion.

**Mr Stevens:** Okay, take the vote.

**Mr Seeney:** Curtis, it is not dealt with here. This is the portfolio committees. The other ones are by appointment.

**Mr PITT:** The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee is in this schedule. The membership has just been read out. If those are taken out, we will support the nominations. If they are dealt with in another way, we are happy to do so.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! You either have to move an amendment or vote against it.

**Mr PITT:** We will have to vote against it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to. Those of that opinion say 'aye'.

**Government members:** Aye.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Those against 'no'.

**Opposition members:** No.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think the ayes have it.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Aye—oh.

**Opposition members:** Divide.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** A division has been called. Ring the bells.

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

*In division—*

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In calling for the ayes versus the noes, it is clear that the Leader of the Opposition said 'aye'. That will be evidenced by the television. She then put her hand over her mouth and said 'oops'. That was clear to me watching her at that particular time.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** I beg your pardon, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have the floor. I am pointing out to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, without interruption the fact that standing order 107(3) clearly states—

A member having given voice with the "Ayes" or "Noes" shall not, on a division being taken, vote with the opposite side.

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

**Mr STEVENS:** So I expect the Leader of the Opposition, now that a division—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I want to hear the point of order and then I want to hear the Manager of Opposition Business. Finish the point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Now that the other members of the opposition have called divide, I expect the Leader of the Opposition to come to the 'aye' side for this vote.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will now hear the other point of order.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it is also very clear—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It would help if we all just calmed down a little bit. It is late.

**Mr PITT:** I think we on this side heard very clearly earlier the Deputy Premier jokingly say 'nay' when he was meant to say 'no'. I think—

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order again.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr STEVENS:** A point of order on his point of order.

**Mr PITT:** We have not made an issue of that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I would like to allow the member for Mulgrave to finish his point of order and then I will take your point of order.

**Mr PITT:** We have not made an issue of that. I also refer to the earlier instance where four or five members of this opposition clearly said 'divide' and it was not registered. I find it interesting that we can have a ruling based on what someone apparently heard when there have been plenty of interjections not heard this evening and our division call was not heard. Yet this has been very clearly heard and apparently that will be carrying more weight than the witness on this side of the House. I ask for a ruling on that, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order on the point of order by the Manager of Opposition Business is quite clearly the fact that he did not raise a point of order when he felt that the Deputy Premier had said 'aye' at the wrong time and there was no vote taken on the matter. If the Deputy Premier had made a mistake, he would have had to vote with the other side—if that had happened. There is no point of order. I have clearly raised a point of order which is valid. Unless the Leader of the Opposition would like to deny to this House what she actually did then it must stand that she votes with the ayes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, could you clarify for the House what you said? I did hear you say something. Perhaps you could help us understand what you said.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My recollection is that I said 'divide'. That is my recollection of the time.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to defer to *Hansard* but my recollection is that I said 'divide'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! This is what we are going to do. I clearly heard the Leader of the Opposition say something. I was not 100 per cent certain of what she said. I am going to accept what you say you said is what you said. On that basis, we are going to continue with the division.

**Mr Johnson:** What did she say?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not clearly hear what she said. She said that she said the word 'divide'.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am simply going on the word of the Leader of the Opposition because I did not clearly hear, with other noises, exactly what she said. On that basis and giving the benefit of the doubt to the Leader of the Opposition, I think we can finish this very quickly by completing the division rather than continuing with what in my view is starting to demean the House.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: I quite clearly saw and heard the Leader of the Opposition say 'aye'. She then, by denying what I clearly saw, indicates that I am misleading the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am going to ask the Leader of the House to resume his seat for now please. It is starting to become beyond what I think is proper for the House. There was something spoken—whether it was 'divide' or 'aye' I could not tell from here 100 per cent. I am going to make a ruling that we continue with the division, that we finish this, that we move on and that we keep the dignity of the House. Let us have the count please.

**AYES, 75**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

**NOES, 7**—Byrne, Knuth, Mulherin, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

## PRIVILEGE

### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.48 am): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I believe the Leader of the Opposition has misled this House. I will be writing to the Speaker on that matter to refer the Leader of the Opposition to the Ethics Committee to consider this matter.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): It is noted. I am sure the Speaker looks forward to getting that letter.

## MOTION

### Sessional Orders

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.49 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That for this session unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, the sessional orders for the 54th Parliament circulated in my name be adopted, effective 18 May 2012.

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## SESSIONAL ORDERS—54TH PARLIAMENT (FIRST SESSION)

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

1. (a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- (b) The House shall sit on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.
- (c) The House shall sit on Wednesday from 2.00pm until by its own resolution the House adjourns.
- (d) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—

#### Tuesday

*9.30am—10.00am—Preliminary business* (If completed before 10.00am, Question Time will commence earlier and continue for 1 hour with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.)

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

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

10.00am—11.00am—  
Question Time

11.00am—12.00pm—  
Matters of Public Interest

12.00pm—1.00pm—  
Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—  
Lunch break

2.30pm—5.30pm—  
Government Business

5.30pm—6.30pm—  
Private Members' Motion (motion for which notice was given immediately prior to 10.00am to take precedence)

6.30pm—7.30pm—  
Dinner break

7.30pm until adjournment moved—  
Government Business

### **Wednesday**

2.00pm—2.30pm—*Preliminary business* (If completed before 2.30pm, Question Time will commence earlier and continue for 1 hour with starting times for all other items, except the dinner break, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.)

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

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Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

2.30pm—3.30pm—

Question Time

3.30pm—6.30pm—

Government Business

6.30pm—7.30pm—

Dinner break

7.30pm—10.00pm—

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

*From 10.00pm until Adjournment moved*

Government Business

### **Thursday**

9.30am—10.00am—*Preliminary business* (If completed before 10.00am, Question Time will commence earlier and continue for 1 hour with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.)

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Appointments

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

10.00am—11.00am—

Question Time

11.00am—12.00pm—

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

12.00pm—1.00pm—

Government Business



*1.00pm—2.30pm—*

Lunch break

*2.30pm—4.00pm—*

Private Members' Bills—introductions (if any, to be completed by 2.40pm)

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

*4.00pm—6.30pm—*

Government Business

*6.30pm—7.30pm—*

Dinner break

*7.30pm until adjournment moved—*

Government Business

(e) On a Wednesday evening—

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

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

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

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

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

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

*From 9.30am—10.30 am—*

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters concerning privilege

Speaker's Statements

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Tabling of Reports

Notice of motion for disallowance of statutory instrument

Question Time (for remaining time until 10.30 am)

*10.30am—1.00pm—*

Government Business

*1.00pm—2.30pm—*

Lunch break

*2.30pm—until adjournment moved—*

Government Business

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

2. (1) If a committee report is tabled that is not:

(a) a report on a bill pursuant to Part 5 of the Standing Orders;

(b) an annual report of a Committee;

(c) a report on travel undertaken by a Committee;

(d) a report of the Ethics Committee; or

(e) a report by a Committee on subordinate legislation

then a motion shall be set down on the notice paper by the Clerk that the House is to take note of the committee report.

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

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

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

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

**Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements**

3. (1) A member who is not a Minister may introduce a Bill during time set aside in the Order of Business for Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements. In such a case the Member introducing the Bill may either:
- (a) speak on the Bill for the time allotted each member (three minutes) and then incorporate the remainder of their explanatory speech, so long as the speech has been shown to the Speaker in accordance with Standing Orders; or
  - (b) speak for a maximum of 10 minutes, in which case any time spoken in excess of the time normally allotted (three minutes) shall:
    - in the case of a non-Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements; or
    - in the case of a Government Member, be deducted from the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements;
  - (c) speak for any time remaining for:
    - in the case of a non-Government Member, the time normally allocated to non-Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements; or
    - in the case of a Government Member, the time normally allocated to Government Members in the total time allocated for Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements.
- (2) A Private Members' Bill which has been reported on by a portfolio or other committee, will be brought on for debate on the sitting Wednesday evening next following the passage of three calendar months after the tabling of the committee's report on the Bill.
- (3) The House will continue to debate the Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised.

**Condolence Motions**

4. (1) A motion of condolence may be moved as the first item of business after Speaker's Statements in the Order of Business.
- (2) If a motion of condolence is moved in accordance with (1), the debate on such motion will last no more than one hour, after which time the question shall be put.
- (3) After a motion of condolence is moved, debated and resolved in accordance with (1) and (2), the Order of Business for the day shall then resume, with Question Time commencing half an hour after the motion of condolence was resolved and with starting times for all other items, except lunch and dinner breaks, in the Order of Business adjusting accordingly.

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

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

Subject	Relevant Standing or Sessional Orders	Time
<b>Address in Reply Debate</b>	SO 47	
—Total time		28 hours
—Mover		20 minutes
—Other members		20 minutes
—Mover in reply		30 minutes
<b>Adjournment debate</b>	SO 56 and Sessional Order 1	
—Total time		30 minutes
—Each member		3 minutes
<b>Bills—Government Bills</b>		
Introduction of Bills (explanatory speech)	SO 129	1 hour
First reading	SO 130	No debate
<b>Government Bills reported on by a committee</b>		
Second reading debate	SO 138	
—Minister		1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		1 hour
—Members of the relevant committee		20 minutes
—All other members		10 minutes
—Minister in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146 & SO 147	
—Mover (Minister)		No limit
—Other members (on each question)		3 minutes

<b>Government Bills declared urgent and not referred or not reported on by a committee</b>		
Second reading debate	SO 129, SO 137 & SO 138	To speak once only as per SO 129 for 1 hour
—Minister		1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		20 minutes
—Other members		30 minutes
—Mover in reply		
Consideration in detail	SO 146, SO 147 & SO 156	No limit
—Mover (Minister)		1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
—Other Members (on each question)		
<b>Bills—Private Members' Bills</b>		
Introduction of Bills (explanatory speech)	SO 129 and Sessional Order 3	1 hour
First reading	SO 130	No debate
Second reading debate	SO 138	
—All members		10 minutes
—Mover in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146, SO 147 & SO 156	
<b>Where Bill has been considered by portfolio committee</b>		
—Mover		No limit
—Other members (on each question)		3 minutes
<b>Where Bill has not been considered by portfolio committee</b>		
—Mover		No limit
—Other members (on each question)		3 minutes
—Minister responsible for policy area (on each question)		1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes and 2 x 5 minutes
<b>Debate of Committee Reports—each member</b>	Sessional Order 1	5 minutes
<b>Disallowance of statutory instruments</b>	SO 59	
—Total time		2 hours
—Mover		15 minutes
—Other members		10 minutes
—Minister in reply		20 minutes
<b>Dissent to ruling of Speaker</b>	SO 250	
—Total time		1 hour
—Each member		10 minutes
<b>Election of Speaker—each member</b>	SO 39	5 minutes
<b>Extension of Time, by consent of a majority of the House, without debate</b>		
—Motions and Second Reading Debates		10 minutes
—Question Time		2 minutes
<b>Matters concerning privilege</b>	Sessional Order 1, SO 248 & 267	At discretion of Speaker
<b>Matters of Public Interest</b>	Sessional Order 1	
—Total time		1 hour
—Leader of Opposition or nominee		10 minutes
—Other members		5 minutes
<b>Motions</b>	Chapter 15	
—Mover		20 minutes
—Other members		20 minutes
—Mover in reply		30 minutes

<b>Personal Explanations</b> —each member	Sessional Order 1	At discretion of Speaker
<b>Private Members' Motions</b> (Tuesday 5.30pm—6.30pm)	Sessional Order 1	
—Total time		1 hour
—Mover		10 minutes
—Other members		5 minutes
<b>Private Members' Statements</b> (Thursday 2.30pm—4.00pm)	Sessional Order 1	
—Each member		3 minutes
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>	Sessional Order 1 & 2	
—Chairperson of Committee on presentation of committee report		5 minutes
—Member tabling report		2 minutes
<b>Questions Without Notice</b>	Sessional Order 1 & SO 113	
—Question time (total time)		1 hour, Tues, Wed, Thurs. Time remaining until 10.30am on Friday.
—Member asking question		At discretion of Speaker
—Minister answering question		3 minutes

**Dress standards**

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

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.51 am): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 29 May 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (12.50 am): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

**Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane**

**Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.50 am): Last Friday I had the pleasure of being an official guest at the mass to welcome the new Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, the Most Reverend Mark Coleridge. Archbishop Coleridge replaces the well-known and highly respected Archbishop John Bathersby. I take this opportunity to thank the former Archbishop for his 20 years of service to the Queensland community. I also wish him a long and healthy retirement back in Stanthorpe. As many honourable members would know, the former Archbishop was a keen bushwalker, so it was fitting that the previous government named a lookout in his honour. The lookout is on Camp Mountain in the D'Aguilar National Park on Brisbane's north-western fringe. I hope the former Archbishop and other keen bushwalkers are able to enjoy it and the spectacular views of our city that it affords. Archbishop Coleridge has come to us from Canberra where he has been the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn since 2006. He has vast experience in the church, having been a priest for 38 years and a bishop for 10 years. Archbishop Coleridge is also the first to be appointed from outside the state in almost 50 years. I am sure he will be a true Queenslander by the time the State of Origin arrives next Wednesday!


The Catholic Church continues to play a large role in the spiritual lives of many Queenslanders. It and its associated entities also play an important role in our state's social, community welfare and education sectors. I am well aware of that, having been educated at St Mary's at Ipswich. Indeed, it was

my time there that helped teach me the social justice principles of equity, equality and fairness. I also gained an appreciation that, no matter where people come from, people do experience rough times and it is our duty as members of society to provide them with whatever assistance we can.

I also want to specifically mention the role of the parish of St Mark's in Inala, my own parish, and the dedicated members of the parish community. I understand that Archbishop Coleridge visited the school at St Mark's this afternoon. I regret that I was unable to be there, but my duties in this House prevented that. Whilst there, he would have gained an insight into the wonderful people of the parish who always put others before themselves, who always help people in times of need and who always believe in the principles of social justice, of the dignity of the human person, the common good and solidarity.

The church and its various community based services have a long track record of working closely and productively with governments of all political persuasions. I hope that that approach will continue with the new state government. I join with other Queenslanders in welcoming Archbishop Coleridge and wishing him every success during his term of leadership. No doubt he will bring his own unique style to the role of Archbishop. Equally, I am sure Archbishop Coleridge will soon become the recognisable face of the Catholic Church in Queensland in much the same way his predecessor was over the past two decades.

### Gold Coast, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.54 am): I rise to bring to the House's attention the unacceptable rise in bikie violence on the Gold Coast. Bikie violence is now way out of control and I believe Queensland is becoming the honey pot for drug dealers and bikies. The innocent shooting of a shopper at Robina Town Centre in a public place such as this is one of the most deplorable acts the community has had to endure. Thousands of people shop at this centre at any one time and my wife was there the day before. The outcome that occurred on this unfortunate day could have been much worse. Many other shoppers could have been injured or killed as a result of the rampage of this bikie gang member in retaliation of acts against his bikie gang. The drive-by shooting and spray of bullets on a tattoo parlour in Mermaid Beach next to where my wife attended her Pilates class the night before is sickening and disgusting.

These shocking and dreadful acts are square-ups between opposing bikie members and need to be stopped immediately. Zero tolerance is the only acceptable standard for the community. These gangs are involved in drug related crime. It is a fight over money, drugs and gun crime and they need to know that the LNP government is not going to tolerate this behaviour that intimidates and frightens law-abiding citizens in our Gold Coast community. I applaud the work of the Minister for Police and Community Safety for taking the steps needed to address this rising issue. He is someone who is vitally aware of community expectations on this issue and someone who has practical experience dealing with this drug-pushing filth of society. The community expects us to be tough on crime and implement policies that prevent this blatant violence and crime sprees that these bikie gangs are so determined to be involved in.

There is a commitment, as explained by the minister in his answer to a question without notice this afternoon, for 1,100 extra new police on the streets, and 100 are to be designated to the Gold Coast and Logan areas. The community of the Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach demand and deserve protection from these criminals masquerading in pumped-up tattooed bodies deliberately wearing their patches to scare and intimidate the law-abiding citizens that I represent.

The other area which I believe is important to examine is the unexplained wealth of these bikie gangs, something that the LNP government and the Attorney-General in his wonderful capacity will make a priority. Tattoo parlours are money-laundering fronts for these bikie gangs and should be absolutely stopped as the hub to clear their money to try to make themselves into legitimate businessmen. They are the poor man's mafia on the Gold Coast and we must get rid of them.

### West End, Development

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (12.57 am): Excessive development remains a major issue in my electorate of South Brisbane. I am proud to live in and represent an area that cares about its local character and environment, and I know many locals want to see this rich diversity preserved. As South-East Queensland's population continues to grow and change, I acknowledge that inner-city areas will bear the greatest burden of that growth. This means more pressure on our infrastructure, on our environment and on our hardworking local services. This growth must be balanced, however, with increased investment in local services such as schools, community organisations and green spaces. We have a choice about how we deal with population growth. On the one hand governments can choose to work with local communities—preserving the area's unique character, increasing sustainability and enhancing connectivity. This approach works. Studies world-wide show that


population growth can be accommodated by building limits of six to eight storeys. On the other hand, governments can approve the spread of massive high-rise buildings—ignoring the concerns of locals, destroying character and increasing isolation.

Sadly, the Premier has chosen the second option, last month announcing plans to review the local neighbourhood plan with a view to increasing 12-storey buildings in the area of West End south of Davies Park from Montague Road to the river. Make no mistake: this decision is a direct attack on the character of South Brisbane. What is most worrying about the Premier's plan is that it was deliberately hidden from voters in South Brisbane. During the campaign I repeatedly called on the LNP to state its position on development in West End, and it remained silent. Less than a week after the close of the polls, the Premier and the Brisbane Lord Mayor finally revealed their plan for 12-storey buildings in West End, increasing heights by almost eight levels in some areas.

This is a clear sign of the future under a Newman government—a future where high-rise development will be rushed through with no planning and no accountability or community consultation. The local community has already spoken on this issue. Over 496 submissions were made on the current neighbourhood plan when it was proposed and 4,000 residents signed a petition against 12-storey buildings overshadowing their homes. As Lord Mayor the Premier ignored these concerns and he is again seeking to deny the residents of South Brisbane a say in their own community.

Rampant development will not benefit our local community. The only people to gain from Mr Newman's plans are his LNP mates and wealthy developers. I will fight every day in this chamber to ensure that the concerns of South Brisbane locals are heard and that our community remains a vibrant and inclusive place to live.

### Road Transport


 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (1.00 am): In recent times we have again witnessed a blitz by Queensland police and Queensland Transport inspectors on the Landsborough Highway at Longreach on the Thomson River flood plain. Nobody disputes the fact that we are trying to improve road safety in this state, but indiscriminate victimisation of those in the road transport industry because of the noncompliance of road train signs on the front of road trains is absolutely not negotiable.

The fact of the matter is that, because of compliance requirements for road train bullbars, the verticals in those bullbars are less than 600 millimetres. Therefore, the ends of road train signs are cut off by a couple of millimetres on either side. Drivers with these signs are subject to a \$600 fine. These people are professionals. I have called on the minister to take note of this issue and to address it with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and also bring it to the attention of Queensland police.

This is a very professional industry. It is the backbone of this nation. It is comprised of professional people—the same as doctors, lawyers and so on. You cannot just get a road train licence by going to the police station or to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. These drivers are being victimised. They are working men—and women, too—who have families like everybody else. These \$600 fines are totally out of the ordinary. For a type 2 road train with six decks of cattle, one company was subjected to an \$8,000 fine. That adds up to a fair bit of chaff. It is not fair when those drivers have to pay that \$600 fine.

The good side of this issue, though, is that some road transport operators were apprehended for having drugs in their system and some drivers were apprehended for having alcohol in their system. Nobody disputes that we are trying to keep our roads safe, but this is indiscriminate victimisation of an industry that is already doing it tough because of overregulation by former Labor governments and by people who do not have any comprehension of the profitability of these operations. This is putting the boot into an industry that is already on its knees. I call on the Minister for Transport and also the Minister for Police to oversee these operations in future and make sure that we get fairness back into compliance.

### Multiculturalism

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (1.03 am): I wish to share with the House tonight the sheer joy of living and working in our multicultural community. Walking down the streets of Woodridge you may encounter African mothers with their little ones—babies wrapped safely on their backs—young men from Cambodia and Burma on pushbikes or Pacific Islanders laughing together with their infectious humour. When our schools spill their students out onto the streets, it is like a United Nations. They come from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, South America—and, yes, the students in my electorate walk to school in great numbers.

Our ethnic communities in Logan now number in excess of 180. To embrace our multicultural community—and I am speaking of our entire state—is to enhance our knowledge of our world, to increase our understanding of culture and faith and to share in their celebrations and festivals. Last Sunday, Logan City came together to enjoy our annual multicultural festival, Kaleidoscope, with


thousands of visitors, colourful costumes, dancers, drummers, music from so many cultural groups, delicious food and smiling, happy faces enjoying the extravagant display of the riches of our various cultures. I congratulate our Ethnic Communities Council of Logan, Paul Khieu and his team for another successful festival.

In recent times I have enjoyed so many diverse cultural experiences. I joined thousands of people who flocked to South Bank recently to enjoy the Buddha Birthday Festival, where I enjoyed watching wonderful cultural performances. This festival has now become a massive three-day festival. I congratulate the Buddha's Light International Association of Queensland at the Chung Tian temple in Logan City. Recently, Sinai College at Burbank celebrated its independence day, which I attended along with the newly elected member for Mansfield, Ian Walker. There we enjoyed much of the Jewish traditions of our city.

Whenever a festival is held, there you will find families enjoying their traditional culture, their food and their music. The Burmese people of Logan and beyond held their Myanmar Friendship Association new year celebration—their water festival—and it rained and rained. But it was a wonderful day. Another celebration was the Multicultural Business and Community Awards, with many of our Indian, Asian and Middle Eastern businesses represented. I would like to especially congratulate Janeth Deen, who received a special award for her selfless volunteer work which has lifted spirits and made life easier for so many. I have also enjoyed a visit to the Islamic Women's Association at Springwood, where so many services for the whole of the community are carried out with love and care.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, our multicultural communities enrich our lives and make a colourful mosaic of life in Queensland.

### Hervey Bay, Tourism


 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (1.06 am): It is not a moment too soon that our great state of Queensland has an LNP government. My electorate of Hervey Bay is heavily dependent on the tourism industry—an industry that Labor forgot. Over the past couple of years in Hervey Bay we have seen many backpacker businesses close their doors, and I am sad to say that today another one has gone. The backpacker industry in Hervey Bay was once a vibrant, thriving industry and it will be again. It is absolutely no wonder we have reached the point we have as a result of red tape and the silliness that we have had to put up with. We have hit rock bottom. There is only one way to go now, and that is up.

I will give members some examples of the red tape that has strangled Hervey Bay tourism operators. A jet ski operator wanted to go over to Fraser Island and hop off and have a spell. No, you cannot do that. The operator would be classed as operating a tour. That is just absolutely ridiculous and it strangles business. A whale-watching boat used to carry about 60 people. Under the new Tourism in Protected Areas initiative, that boat has now been restricted to carrying 40 passengers. But the stupid part is that that boat can take only 20 of those passengers on to Fraser Island to see the lighthouse and other places for two hours. They then have to put those 20 on the boat and take them back and then take another 20 over and bring them back. If that is not strangling business, what is? One-third of that boat's capacity to carry people—one-third of the operator's income—has gone through some of this stupidity.

Another whale-watching boat operator conducts tours into the Great Sandy Straits out of season. The other day he went up there with a group of people who had hired the boat for a birthday party. Just because two of his passengers swam from the boat to the island, he was checked and told that that was a tour of Fraser Island. Those people had left the boat and actually put their foot on Fraser Island. Can members understand that sort of stupidity? I cannot. That is what is strangling our tourism industry today.

I would like to thank Premier Campbell Newman and Jann Stuckey, the tourism minister, for coming to Hervey Bay to launch the DestinationQ tourism strategy.


### Subcontractors, Payments; Gladstone Harbour, Commercial Fishing

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (1.09 am): Earlier this morning I raised in this chamber the plight that is faced by at least 90 families in my electorate in relation to unpaid subcontractor payments. I thank the several ministers who are cooperating in trying to find a solution to this issue. Those families are already facing significant increases in costs of living without the opposite problem of getting no income from a major contractor to a GOC. Another sector in my electorate that is suffering because of a lack of income are the commercial fishermen. Recreational fishers have seen their opportunity to fish in the Gladstone Harbour diminish almost totally. Commercial fishing was carried out in the harbour, as was prawning and scalloping. We have indeed had a scallop market that was of export quality. We now have quite a number of commercial fishermen who have not had adequate or any income in some instances for over 12 months.

When the port authority first proposed the dredging it was acknowledged that the dredging would have a significant impact on the fishing grounds of commercial fishers at the top end of the harbour. It was stated in the EIS documentation that they would be compensated. None of that compensation has been forthcoming to date. Out of desperation the fishermen established a fighting fund and they currently have a case on foot. They did that not because they wanted to be litigious but because they felt they had no other option. I was hoping that the new government would be able to address the issue of compensation. Indeed, there are a number of commercial fishermen who have gone out of the fishing industry altogether, not because they do not like it—they love it—but because they had no option. One who lives down the road from me had to sell his home. He now fishes out of another port and he and his family have to live at distance.

What I am asking is for the government to reconsider its treatment of the fishing industry. I understand that there is a challenge because of the case on foot, but there are other issues in the commercial fishing industry where the government, on the basis of compassion and genuine need, should be stepping in and assisting these fishermen in their financial distress. One such fishing family, the Ottos, had a full catch that was sent to the Sydney markets refused from sale because Safe Food Queensland and Raptis, who are the delegates down in Sydney that were going to sell at the market, said that the reputation of the fish out of the harbour and the condition of the fish made it unsaleable. That came at a huge cost to this family. I implore the government to look at this need, to look at the people who are involved and to give them financial assistance.


### **William Duncan State School; Gaven Electorate**

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (1.12 am): Recently I was honoured to be a part of the official opening of the upgraded hall and the Learning Innovation Centre at the William Duncan State School. The centre will be an invaluable asset to equip teachers and staff with the resources to ensure each child receives the best start to life. The hall upgrade, mainly soundproofing and new doors, will enable the children to participate in most activities without too much echoing. Our government is committed to adequate funding and resourcing of our education system and providing facilities that will help arm Queensland kids with the skills they need to become our future workers and occupy our universities and become our professionals of the future. William Duncan State School is a hardworking local school which is largely dependent on the support of the whole school community, including parents, friends, teachers, staff and community leaders. I have always enjoyed working with the school, in particular attending its trivia nights, and I look forward to assisting it under a new LNP government. I would like to thank Lorraine Shaw, the acting principal, for her kind invitation to the opening which included previous principals and some surrounding school principals.

Whilst talking about new Gaven initiatives, I am proud to be a part of a community which has participated with me in the following initiatives over the past term of parliament: a Building Services Authority seminar for local owner-builders; a campaign led by bus drivers, commuters and the TWU calling for the overhaul of services—including tabling a petition of 1,783 signatures; a pyjama fundraiser drive, with over 200 pairs of pyjamas and toys donated to children in care across Queensland; thankyou morning teas for Volunteer Week and for our senior citizens, recognising their efforts; law and order meetings with local communities to assist on issues such as hooning and graffiti; a virtual supermarket tour with Diabetes Australia—I implore all members to do that; consultation with community groups on the future use of the existing Gold Coast Hospital site, the relocation of parklands and the Carrara showgrounds development; running a Wrapped from the Heart Christmas appeal every year from the office for those children in need; the completion of the Carrara Health Centre staff off-street car park; and Gold Coast based railway police and rail ticket inspectors with improved rail corridor security and noise protection. These are the more substantial wins and I would implore all members over their time over the next few years in parliament to actually record those things. They need to actually demonstrate what they have done for their community and they need to show that they actually can substantiate what has occurred. I do this every time. It is what keeps your communities ticking.

I would like to thank Cathy Bayliss for her excellent work as the area co-ordinator for Nerang 10 Neighbourhood Watch. I applaud her initiative to restart the Safe House concept. I implore you all to go back and do that because they get a free blue card as part of it. I congratulate Mr Jankin Hay as the Gaven representative of the 2012 YMCA Youth Parliament.

### **Kagara Zinc**


 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (1.15 am): On 9 March this year Environmental Protection Order STAT670 was issued to Kagara Zinc Baal Gammon Mine for the release of acid mine drainage into Jamie Creek which resulted in contamination and fish kills, threatening human health and causing serious environmental harm as it is now flowing into the Walsh River. The Walsh River is the main source of irrigation for the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area. The potential devastation to the agricultural and tourism based economies that depend on the Walsh River will be irreversible. This will



affect Jamie Creek, the Walsh River, Collins Weir and the water supplied to downstream irrigators producing export crops and to graziers producing export beef. With Kagara Zinc entering administration last month, it is vital that this government act with urgency to ensure requirements of Environmental Protection Order STAT670 are undertaken and acid mine drainage from the site is immediately contained to prevent major long-term economic devastation to the industries dependent on the contaminated river systems.

The major concern arising from the mine's financial woes, given the spill and high risk of ongoing contamination of Jamie Creek and the Walsh River, is the apparent failure of Kagara to lodge a \$3,750,572 financial assurance under the conditions of the environmental authority. Baal Gammon Copper Pty Ltd may have some liability for site clean-up but may also just be another shelf company with no real assets. This layered structure of ownership and responsibility may end up being of little comfort to the local residents of the Watsonville and Walsh River communities whose water supply has been poisoned and now must fetch water in from elsewhere. The traditional owners, on top of having a poisoned river, have not received any royalties under their ILUA with the mining company to compensate them for damage to their country and tradespersons and other local businesses are still owed money by Kagara. There is little room here for blame games or stall tactics. The livelihood of hundreds of farmers and residents who depend on this river system for their livelihoods and drinking water depends on this government's capacity to act decisively to contain toxins continuing to leech into Jamie Creek and the Walsh River. I call on the Minister for Environment to actively resolve this serious contamination to these waterways.

### **Vegetable Industry; Toowoomba, Second Range Crossing**

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (1.18 am): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on being elected as the first lady Speaker in this state's history. I acknowledge all of the new members in the House. It is great to see a vibrant and lively parliament. I must acknowledge some of the members around me: the members for Logan, Algester, Ipswich, Ipswich West, Nanango, Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South, Condamine, Southern Downs and Beaudesert. It is great to see the member for Beaudesert, Jonathon Krause, in the House. Aidan McLindon has gone off into the sunset where he deserves to be. I have known Jonathon's family for decades. I still have one neighbour who is a Labor member and it is the coalminer's daughter, the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller. It is good to see that around me I have a good selection of neighbours.

On the weekend I attended the AUSVEG conference in Hobart. The Australian vegetable industry is a great industry. Every year the Lockyer produces something like \$300 million or \$400 million worth of vegetables. Bundaberg is another great vegetable-producing area. In the electorate of Beaudesert, around Calbar, they grow carrots and so on. The vegetable industry is one of those big five-o'clock-in-the-morning industries that people do not even see operate. When we eat in the Strangers Dining Room or the Members Dining Room, the vegetables are put on the tables by the people of our electorates.

Unfortunately, they have been suffering terribly from oversupply and low prices as the export market has almost dried up because of the high dollar and the poor economic management of the federal Labor government. That has cruelly affected some of our vegetable exporters. I used to be a vegetable exporter myself. This is making it difficult for them, has created oversupply in the local markets and has put a lot of pressure on the industry. We have some of the highest interest rates in the world, even though they are now spruiking about them coming down. It is really important that we manage our economy well.

The member for Beaudesert, the member for Ipswich West and I went to see the honourable Minister for Energy, Mark McArdle, about a power issue that will be very important for the irrigators in our areas. Hopefully the minister will be able to review the report and common sense will prevail. It is very important.

One of the burning issues for my area is the second crossing of the Toowoomba range. For the past decade, bereft state and federal Labor governments have not prioritised the Toowoomba range crossing. It is really important, particularly to the vegetable and trucking industries of my area. We want the Toowoomba range crossing fixed as soon as possible.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.21 am (Friday).

**ATTENDANCE**

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Rice, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young