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THURSDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2012



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Seating Arrangements in Chamber

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, before the next sitting week I will republish the seating arrangements in the chamber. Interim arrangements are in place today.

PETITIONS

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

Queensland School for Travelling Show Children

Ms Palaszczuk, a paper and an e-petition, from 728 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately reinstate funding to the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children [[1587](#), [1588](#)].

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

Stamp Duty

Mr Mulherin, from 438 petitioners, requesting the House to abolish stamp duty paid on house and contents insurance and motor vehicle insurance [[1589](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Inala (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[1590](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Ministerial Appointments



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.31 am): This government is open and accountable, focused on creating new opportunities in this great state of Queensland. We want to do the very best job for Queenslanders to get us out of the financial mess we were left by a tired, arrogant and out of control Labor government. We desperately need to get economic activity going and jobs created across Queensland.

We are, therefore, focused on growing the four pillars of our state economy in agriculture, construction, tourism and resources. We are about creating a great state where people can come and take advantage of great opportunities, whether that be for jobs, for tourism, for services—education or health—or for family and lifestyle reasons.

But the challenge is not just in addressing Labor's mismanagement of state finances and the economy. The challenge is to restore faith in the good government of Queensland so that people can again trust and look to their government representatives for leadership, proper local advocacy and health. We are going to restore that faith.

We are open for business, but we are also open and accountable. We will continue to insist on the highest standards of performance from our ministry. Following the resignation of the honourable member for Moggill, Dr Bruce Flegg, from the ministry yesterday, we have taken the opportunity to give new consideration to the best way for our government to serve and deliver better outcomes and opportunities for Queenslanders. We need to remain on a strong footing going forward.

As a consequence, I am announcing the following changes to the ministry. I am pleased to announce that the new Minister for Housing and Public Works will be the honourable member for Everton, Tim Mander MP. Tim will carry on the good work started by Dr Flegg in addressing Labor's 30,000 long public housing waiting list. Mr Mander has proven his ability, enthusiasm and passion during his time as the Assistant Minister for Sport and Racing.

He has worked hard in successfully implementing the government's Get in the Game initiative, in partnership with Minister Steve Dickson. This initiative has been a highlight of Mr Mander's role, with the \$18 million program promoting grassroot community sport and recreation, especially for children.

Mr Mander is also a well-known identity beyond politics through his 20-year career as an NRL referee and six-year tenure as the CEO of a major non-government organisation. In all of these roles he has demonstrated competence, compassion, determination and the ability to make good decisions which will stand him in good stead as the Minister for Housing and Public Works. We wholeheartedly welcome him to the ministry in this senior cabinet position.

I am also pleased to announce that the honourable member for Mirani, Ted Malone MP, is being promoted to a new position as assistant minister working to the Minister for Police and Community Safety, with focus on volunteer, emergency, rescue and fire services. Ted Malone was elected to parliament in 1994 and he has worked tirelessly for his electorate and for Queensland in a number of senior roles in opposition and in government. A highlight of his work has been his time dealing with emergency and community services personnel, and his passion for volunteer services in this space, I believe, is unrivalled.

Ted's background in agriculture and regional issues, including time as the chairman of directors of the Australian Cane Farmers Association, has given him a valuable perspective on the work of volunteers in our community, especially in rural and regional areas in this state. He will bring a vital mix of experience and dedication to this important sector. He is the right man for the job.

With the promotion of Mr Malone, the honourable member for Gympie, David Gibson MP, will be appointed as the new chair of the parliamentary State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. Mr Gibson has proven his enthusiasm in representing the community through his fight to stop Labor's disastrous plan for the Traveston Dam, his advocacy for the deaf community and his strong management of shadow portfolios, including infrastructure and planning.

We welcome these new members to the cabinet, to the assistant ministry and as chair of a committee. I will be making these recommendations to Her Excellency the Governor immediately I leave the chamber today. As with all office holders in this government, I am expecting high standards of performance and behaviour from all of them to help restore faith for Queenslanders in the performance, accountability and integrity of their government.

Regional Planning

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.36 am): Our government was strongly supported by voters across regional Queensland. One of our key election promises to regional Queenslanders was to introduce statutory regional plans that would address land use conflict issues between the agricultural industries, urban areas and the expanding resources industry. Our government committed to delivering certainty to landholders, local communities and industry through the preparation of statutory regional plans and statutory land use maps.

In late June, we announced the start of work to deliver regional plans for Central Queensland and the Darling Downs. There has been a considerable amount of consultation with interest groups, local governments and across a range of government departments and a range of local members which has resulted in the compilation of issues papers as a basis for the planning process. Today, I want to table the draft issues papers for the benefit of all members. They are draft issues papers for the statutory regional planning process for Central Queensland and for the Darling Downs.

Tabled paper: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Issues Paper—Draft: Central Queensland Regional Plan, November 2012 [[1591](#)].

Tabled paper: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Issues Paper—Draft: Darling Downs Regional Plan, November 2012 [[1592](#)].

Tabled paper: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning—Draft Darling Downs Economic Development Strategy: Draft for Stakeholder Consultation, October 2012 [[1593](#)].

Tabled paper: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning—Draft Central Queensland Economic Development Strategy: Draft for Stakeholder Consultation, October 2012 [[1594](#)].

The next step in this process is to discuss the draft issues papers, that I have tabled today, for each of those regions with the regional planning committees and subsequently with all stakeholders. I and staff from my department will be travelling to Biloela tomorrow and Chinchilla next week to meet with the regional planning committees to discuss and finalise the issues papers for each region. Each issues paper is supported by a draft economic development strategy and infrastructure baseline.

The issues papers seek to deliver on our election commitments to address the land use conflict issues by proposing priority agricultural areas be mapped across each region with co-existence criteria to be established for other land uses within those priority agricultural areas. Similarly, town protection areas are proposed to protect the amenity and social values of regional towns, hamlets and rural residential areas.

The initial strategies contained in the issues papers were discussed with stakeholders in Chinchilla, Toowoomba and Rockhampton over the last two months. Between now and the end of the year my department will conduct another extensive round of stakeholder consultation on the draft issues papers and the planning concepts that have been developed to resolve the land use conflicts which have always been the most contentious part of this statutory regional planning.

Feedback from this consultation will be used in the preparation of the draft regional plans for Central Queensland and the Darling Downs which will be released for public consultation in early 2013. We are getting on with the job of regional planning and delivering our election promises to the people of regional Queensland.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer, but I ask members to please keep the noise down in the chamber.

Red-Tape Reduction



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): Madam Speaker, can I join with those members who are congratulating those new appointees on their appointment to the ministry, the assistant ministry and as chair of a committee. I encourage them to continue their congratulations—just do it quietly and listen!

The Newman government, as the Premier has said, was elected with a mandate for delivering certainty, cutting red tape for Queensland businesses and getting on with the job of growing the Queensland economy. Under Labor, business in Queensland was allowed to stagnate as the government of the day introduced reams of regulation which stifled business productivity and investment returns. Unlike Labor, the Newman government understands that time equals money and that complying with unwarranted and unnecessary red and green tape comes at a significant cost to business—small and large. That is why in the lead-up to the March election we committed to reducing red tape and regulation in Queensland by 20 per cent, to allow private industry in Queensland to conduct business and generate wealth for the state.

The Newman government is already making significant progress in achieving that goal. We have already implemented, or are implementing, more than 200 red-tape reduction initiatives across government. For example, we have started implementing a 28-point plan aimed at reducing project assessment times by 50 per cent, allowing projects of major state significance to get up and running as quickly as possible. We have also moved to repeal Labor's waste levy—a \$373 million tax on business—and we have removed the need for everyday Queenslanders selling their homes to fill out an onerous sustainability declaration. But, despite these steps forward, there is still significant work to be done.

The government recently received the Office of Best Practice Regulation's interim report, a report which outlines the framework for reducing the regulatory burden in Queensland. The Newman government set up the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority to help drive regulatory reform and help restore transparency and accountability. The office's interim report outlines areas for immediate review which are based on feedback from the business community. Some of these areas of review include vegetation management regulation that increases costs and prevents efficient use of property; land sale and property development regulations that promote rather than reduce red tape; and tourism restrictions related to the use of national parks and wild rivers. It also lists eight medium-term priorities for the government to consider.

I point out that the Newman government is already focusing and progressing reforms in several of the priority areas identified in the report. There are a range of recommendations made in the report which the government is still considering. But perhaps this best sums up this government's position regarding red tape: there must be an overall net public benefit before we introduce any new regulation. That is where the Labor Party went wrong, where the Labor government went wrong, and that is why the Newman government is acting so decisively now.

Industry and the community have long been calling on governments to reduce the existing stock of regulation. We are acting and in doing so making it easy for businesses to invest in Queensland, knowing they have a government that works with them, not against them, to reduce the regulatory burden.

Juvenile Justice, Boot Camps

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.42 am): It gives me an immense amount of pleasure to announce that the Kokoda Challenge Association and Safe Pathways have been selected to run the Newman government's first two-year boot camp trial. The Kokoda Challenge Association has been selected to deliver the Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp on the Gold Coast and Safe Pathways has been selected to run the Sentenced Youth Boot Camp in Cairns.

After announcing a two-year trial of two youth boot camp programs on 20 August 2012, an open tender process was used to identify service providers to deliver these boot camps. These organisations were selected from more than 20 tenders across Queensland and, given that the calibre of applications was high, the final decision was not an easy one to make. Based on the specifications outlined in the tender process, the Kokoda Challenge Association and Safe Pathways demonstrated that they are best equipped to operate our two boot camps.

Many of you will have heard of the Kokoda Challenge Association, whose patron is Victoria Cross recipient Keith Payne OAM. Kokoda Challenge Association has been running youth camps for almost seven years and will deliver the boot camp program from their property at Lake Maroon. The early intervention boot camps will focus on helping young kids who are at risk of choosing a life of crime, and Kokoda is well placed to deliver this program.

Safe Pathways has almost 20 years experience in providing human services and delivering residential care to youth at risk in Queensland and the Northern Territory. This makes Safe Pathways an ideal service provider to operate the sentenced boot camp for kids who are already in the youth justice system but need help to make better life choices.

The design of these boot camps is the result of significant community consultation. I have now held two ministerial roundtables at Parliament House where community groups and departmental representatives were invited to discuss the structure of the boot camps. Both boot camps will provide participants with discipline, structure and physical training but will also focus on health, education and family issues. The most important aspect of these camps is to ensure the offenders' families are involved in the rehabilitation process. These camps will not be easy but will provide an alternative to the revolving door of the youth crime created by the former Labor government.

The Newman government is committed to changing the culture of youth crime, and to achieve this young people must be held accountable for their actions. My department will now work closely with the service providers to ensure that the youth boot camps are up and running by early January 2013.

The Newman government is serious about youth justice. That is why we are changing the way we deal with young people. We will not revert to the failed Labor policies of the past. We will try new initiatives like the boot camps to get this great state back on track once again.

Australia Zoo

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.45 am): Madam Speaker, can I start by acknowledging and congratulating the members for Everton, Mirani and Gympie on their recent elevations.

The Queensland government today will commemorate Steve Irwin Day and show our commitment to investing in our environment for the future by signing two memoranda of understanding with Australia Zoo. Later today I will join Australia Zoo Director, Terry Irwin, to sign a memorandum of understanding for the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program and a memorandum of understanding for the conservation of wildlife in Queensland. I applaud Australia Zoo for the positive and highly productive relationship they have with the Queensland government to deliver for the conservation of wildlife in Queensland.

It has now been 10 years since signing the first memorandum of understanding, and much has been achieved. The Crocs in Space research initiative developed a world-first project for satellite tracking estuarine crocodiles in Queensland. Enormous knowledge has been gained about crocodile behaviour, movement and populations as a result of this partnership. There has also been considerable collaboration on koala research, rescue and rehabilitation through Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's Moggill Koala Hospital.

The renewed memorandum of understanding will provide enhanced opportunities for the department and the zoo to achieve tangible wildlife conservation outcomes. The Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program currently has 45 rangers across Northern Queensland caring for our pristine waterways and protected species, and our government has committed to adding a further 30 in Cape York and another 10 in Western Queensland over the course of this government.

The memorandum of understanding outlines a framework for undertaking a range of collaborative activities between the rangers and Australia Zoo. Several of our ranger communities are working directly with the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York assisting in flora and fauna surveys, including crocodile management. Recently rangers worked with Australia Zoo and staff from my department to deliver a junior ranger activity to school students in Cape York Peninsula.

The signing of both memoranda demonstrates the Newman government's commitment to participating in a cooperative approach with Australia Zoo to further wildlife conservation, environmental management in remote communities, research, education and rehabilitation.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.47 am): Last weekend marked the first anniversary of Queensland winning the right to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast—the first regional Australian city to be granted host status. These games, and the associated infrastructure development, will generate up to 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs and provide an estimated economic benefit of \$2 billion to this state. So it is important that we get it right.

One of the first things the Newman government did was appoint a board to ensure we had the right people in place to deliver this important event for Queensland and the Gold Coast. The board were tasked with the job of reassessing all the decisions made during the bid process and to review the budgetary position. And I am happy to say, Madam Speaker, I stand before the House confident that we will deliver an exceptional event on time and on budget.

As the Premier said yesterday in this chamber, last weekend, together with Mayor Tom Tate, we announced the redevelopment of the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre—two years ahead of schedule. This means that we can host the 2014 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships on the Gold Coast as well as other major swimming events in the lead-up to the games.

This will allow us to showcase our great city well in advance of the 2018 Commonwealth Games in a way that no other city in the world is able to. We will soon verify the short list of qualified contractors who will be invited to tender for this vital piece of games infrastructure. Also to be finalised soon is the business case for the athletes village to be constructed at the Parklands site. GOLDOC recently moved into new offices in Southport to cater for the ever-increasing workforce.

From a legislative standpoint, the Deputy Premier has introduced the Economic Development Bill that will establish the Commonwealth Games Infrastructure Authority. This body will oversee the planning and development of infrastructure of the games in accordance with directions from my department.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, we have achieved a lot in a short period but we have a long way to go. With just over five years until the opening ceremony, the Newman government is in a very good position to deliver the best Commonwealth Games ever. I wish to thank everyone who has assisted to date and make special mention of Mr Nigel Chamier, Chairman of the GOLDOC Board.

Get in the Game

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.50 am): I would also like to congratulate the members for Everton, Mirani and Gympie. I think they will all do a fabulous job.

As members of the House may know, on 29 September the Newman government launched our innovative sports funding program Get in the Game. While the previous Labor government seemed fixated on spending large amounts of money on projects and programs that would service a very few, the Newman government is focused strongly on our grassroots. Get in the Game is all about participation. It is about getting more young Queenslanders more active, more often and in more places.

Get in the Game assists participants directly as well as clubs through funding streams known as Get Started, Get Going and Get Playing. After only one month, the support shown on the ground has been quite staggering. I am pleased to inform the House that, as of the beginning of this week, more than 1,250 people have attended Get in the Game information sessions right across Queensland. These sessions have enabled people on the ground and at the local level to find out all they need to know about the initiative, to understand it, to ask questions and to learn how they can apply. Ninety-five people attended the Gold Coast session alone, while in Rockhampton some 70 people were present. I had the privilege of assisting in my electorate of Buderim, where 90 people attended. Again, these are just examples of how strongly received Get in the Game has been in the state of Queensland.

I am quite astonished that 1,050 clubs have now registered to be part of the Get Started program. This program will see more than 40,000 vouchers worth up to \$150 distributed to children who can least afford to join, or may otherwise benefit from joining, a sporting club. The previous Labor government saddled Queensland with a monstrous debt and a legacy of ineffective funding programs across the sports landscape. However, Get in the Game illustrates the Newman government is taking a strategic and well-researched approach to funding sport, targeting the grassroots level to drive participation for all of our young people in the state of Queensland. I also endorse what the tourism minister said earlier. We need our young people ready to compete in the Commonwealth Games in 2018, and I ask all members of the House to get in the game.

Solar Bonus Scheme

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.53 am): I join with others in congratulating those members on their elevation into the ministry and elsewhere this morning.

In July the Newman government made changes to the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme. These entailed capping the number of people able to receive the generous 44c per kilowatt hour feed-in tariff and for new customers after 9 July introducing 8c per kilowatt hour for electricity exported from their solar photovoltaic systems. Modelling of the 2011 application rates indicated that the 2028 cost of the scheme would have been more than \$1.8 billion. The changes made by the Newman government will shave \$300 million off this cost. At the same time the government asked the Queensland Competition Authority to inquire into what would be a fair and reasonable feed-in tariff going forward in regard to the 8c tariff only.

There have been some concerns expressed that the QCA inquiry was seeking to reduce the feed-in tariff for people receiving the 44c rate. I can assure parliament and Queenslanders that the former government locked this 44c rate in until 2028 and there are no plans to change this. Unfortunately, the former government failed to explain to the people of Queensland who is going to have to pay for this 44c feed-in tariff. It is everyone else on the electricity grid.

Updated modelling by the Queensland Competition Authority projects that the scheme will add more than \$90 to average power bills in 2013-14 and up to \$240 in 2015-16. These costs are approved to be passed through and onto Queenslanders by the Commonwealth government's Australian Energy Regulator. The impact of policies such as the Solar Bonus Scheme reflect the constant theme that we are seeing from Labor and Green party policies that impact significantly on electricity prices. Those opposite refuse to get real about the cost of living. Federal Labor's renewable energy target of 20 per cent renewables by 2020 will cost consumers an increasing addition to their power bills.

According to Origin Energy's Managing Director, Mr Grant King, federal Labor's renewable energy scheme 'has cost households \$3.2 billion over the last two years alone'. Mr Kevin McCann, Origin Energy's chairman, has recognised that—

Homes and businesses will bear the cost and are likely to be unaware of that. In addition, there will be technical build and grid impact issues that must be carefully considered.

The Labor Party like to pretend it is the party of the battler but its public policy only hurts those who are already struggling. Federal Labor's carbon tax will add up to \$190 to the average household power bill next year. Its Solar Bonus Scheme subsidy is driving the cost of power bills ever higher and indeed through the roof. The Newman government is a government that is saying what needs to be said and standing up for Queenslanders. I think those opposite know what their policies do to families, and I suspect that is why they cannot face the issue in this House.

MOTION

Child Protection Commission of Inquiry

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.56 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House:

1. Notes that the following former ministers have agreed to not object to the production of documents required by and produced to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, those documents having been prepared for the former ministers and which are proceedings in parliament pursuant to section 9 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001:
 - Hon. Wayne Goss
 - Hon. Anne Warner
 - Hon. Dean Wells
2. Ratifies the production of the documents by the former ministers and guardians of those papers;

3. Resolves that the former ministers and guardians of those papers have not committed any contempt by producing the papers;
4. Notes that other documents have been identified as being both relevant to the commission of inquiry and documents that are likely to be proceedings in parliament pursuant to section 9 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, but the ministers for whom they were produced are unable to be identified and thus their consent to produce them is unobtainable;
5. Ratifies the production of the documents by the guardians of the papers, the ministers for whom they were produced being unable to be identified; and
6. Resolves that the guardians of those papers have not committed any contempt by producing the papers.

I wish to advise the House that this motion is very similar to motions moved in 2011 to endorse the release of documents to the Floods Commission of Inquiry. By way of background to this matter, the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry has issued two summonses—one to the Acting Director-General of JAG and the other to the State Archivist. Departmental chief executive officers are considered the guardians of documents held by their departments and are also considered the guardians of documents held by Queensland State Archives pursuant to the Public Records Act 2002.

Crown Law advises that the summonses compel the production of, amongst many other documents and records, some parliamentary papers. Further, Crown Law has identified them as documents that are likely to be proceedings in parliament pursuant to section 9 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. In order to provide them to the inquiry to assist it in its investigations, the former ministers—the Hon. Wayne Goss, the Hon. Dean Wells and the Hon. Anne Warner—for whom the parliamentary papers were created have been contacted and their consent has been obtained to provide those confidential parliamentary papers to the commission of inquiry.

There are also some further documents that are compelled by the summonses that Crown Law advises, on the face of them, are likely to be proceedings in parliament pursuant to section 9 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 but that despite their best endeavours Crown Law and the State Archivist cannot ascertain for whom those other parliamentary papers were created. The House is asked to endorse the production of the parliamentary papers to the commission and to resolve that there is no contempt by the former ministers or the guardians of the documents in the provision of the documents to the commission of inquiry.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.00 am): Further to my advice yesterday, I wish to advise the House that the Acting Minister for Housing and Public Works will be Minister McArdle until other arrangements are made.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts



Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.00 am): I rise to make a personal explanation in relation to a statement made by the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts in the chamber on 13 November 2012. At 1 pm on that day, the minister made a ministerial statement which included the following statement—

At the estimates committee hearing on 16 October I was asked by the member for Mackay if I would table a copy of the lobbyists register kept in my ministerial office. I was asked to do so immediately, and a staff member in my ministerial office was asked to print a copy of the register and fax it through to parliament so that I could comply with the request.

I believe this statement to be a reflection on me and I seek to correct the record in respect thereof. At the Education and Innovation Committee's consideration of the 2012-13 budget estimates held on 16 October 2012, I asked the minister if she was prepared to table her lobbyists register 'today'. The minister did not respond as to whether she was prepared to do so, so I again asked if she was prepared to table the register 'by the end of proceedings today'. After the minister expressed some doubt as to the ability to do so depending on what staff were still in her office, I asked if she was prepared to take the question on notice and she agreed to do so. This exchange is recorded in the official transcript of proceedings on pages 61 and 62.

As you would be aware, Madam Speaker, standing order 183(3)(b) of the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly provides that, in relation to questions taken on notice during an estimates hearing, the answer or additional information 'is to be given by a time decided by the committee'—

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, is this a matter of privilege or a personal explanation?

Mr MULHERIN: A personal explanation.

Madam SPEAKER: Could you please put the facts and wrap up.

Mr MULHERIN: Yes. It continues, 'or if no time has been decided by the committee, within 48 hours after the close of the committee's hearing'. Minister Bates was therefore required to provide the response within 48 hours after 8.30 pm on the 16th. Her statement in the House that I asked her to table the lobbyists register immediately is therefore completely untrue. The minister must necessarily have known it to be untrue because she was in the estimates hearing—

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am going to ask you to take your seat. You are debating an issue and this is beyond a personal explanation.

Mr MULHERIN: It was a personal explanation. My reputation has been impugned.

Madam SPEAKER: I asked you to put the facts quickly. I remind members that if they are seeking to use standing orders they should do so in a timely and appropriate way. They should put the facts quickly and not debate issues in the House.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (10.03 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 13 of the Health and Community Services Committee. This report examines two pieces of subordinate legislation tabled between 22 August and 30 October 2012 considered by the committee. The disallowance dates for these regulations are 13 February and 7 March 2013. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. The committee recommends that the House note the legislation. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 13—Report on subordinate legislation tabled between 22 August and 30 October 2012 [[1595](#)].

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (10.04 am): I table the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's report No. 12 titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 August 2012 and 11 September 2012*. The committee recommends that the House note this report and the committee's conclusion that the five regulations considered in this report raise no issues of fundamental legislative principles.

Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 12—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 August 2012 and 11 September 2012 [[1596](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (10.04 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, Subordinate Legislation No. 153 of 2012, tabled in the House on 11 September 2012, be disallowed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.05 am): My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. As the minister for IT, will the minister outline how three extra entries relating to Mr Luke Myers appeared in her updated lobbyists register when her original explanation was based around the failure to print one tab of an Excel spreadsheet?

Ms BATES: Can I firstly congratulate the members for Everton, Mirani and Gympie on their new appointments. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am delighted to take this opportunity to also provide an answer to the question that she asked yesterday. On Tuesday, I tabled in this House the lobbyists register for my ministerial office as it existed at the time. It has been made available to the opposition and to the House. As I said in my ministerial statement to this House on

Tuesday, I believed the register to be complete as of the day I tabled it. I explained to the House on Tuesday that the register I provided to the estimates committee on 16 October was later discovered to be incomplete. I drew that to the attention of the House as soon as I became aware of the fact.

Between the tabling of the unintentionally incomplete register at estimates and the tabling of the document on Tuesday, every effort has been made to ensure that the register is accurate. In the interests of ensuring total openness and accountability, it was checked and it was double-checked. The comprehensive register tabled on Tuesday, to the best of my knowledge, is exactly that—comprehensive. The ministerial code of conduct requires ministers to give accurate and truthful information to parliament and to correct any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity. I have always done this and I will continue to do so.

There is no legal requirement to maintain a register. It is simply a request from the Integrity Commissioner that one be kept. I am fully committed to complying with the Integrity Act but, nevertheless, this is all members of the opposition seem to be focused on. They are not focused on science, ICT, innovation or the arts. They are not focused on the economy. They are not focused on getting Queensland back on track after their disastrous record in government. They are not focused on health, education, or law and order. All they are focused on is lobbyists registers.

I am working to get Queensland back on track. I am working to fix the mess that Labor left this state in. I am about getting the policy settings right. What the opposition did not get and they never will get is that this was done in the interests of openness and frankness. Instead of applauding the fact, this opposition tries to make some scandal out of it. The scandal is that they still do not get it. Even after Gordon Nuttall, Con Sciacca's success fees, Michael Choi's lead foot and Merri Rose's crashed car, they still do not get it.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Under the Public Records Act 2002, will the minister explain to the House what are the ministerial responsibilities for keeping accurate public records?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, that falls into the category of asking for an opinion or an interpretation on statute. I would ask you to reword your question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. As the Public Records Act 2002 falls within the minister's responsibilities, can she outline to the House the objects of that act in relation to keeping accurate public records?

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I have taken advice and, with regard to the standing orders, this is out of order because it is still asking for an opinion or interpretation in respect of the application of the act.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Speaker, I asked her to clearly outline the objectives of the act.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. With respect, Leader of the Opposition, this comes down to how you phrase the question. I have given you a second opportunity to correct it in respect of the standing orders. I refer you to standing order 115 and I rule it out of order.

Schoolies Week

Mr HART: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House about government initiatives in support of key schoolies destinations that attract our year 12 school leavers holidaying together?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Burleigh for his question. I know he is a passionate advocate for the people of his electorate and his community. I know that he will be taking a keen interest, along with our other Gold Coast members, in the Queensland government's schoolies community safety response.

It is an exciting time of life for our year 12 leavers who, like my own daughter, have reached an important milestone. I say to young people across the state: congratulations on completing year 12 and having this beautiful vista of life opening up with wonderful opportunities. They are going to set out on the next phase of life and they will have those exciting opportunities on offer. But, first, they will be celebrating those 12 years of schooling and the friendships forged during that schooling journey, including those challenges I referred to earlier that they will face and overcome.

The Queensland government's Safer Schoolies initiative is bringing together government, council and community organisations in support of key tourist destinations that attract our year 12 leavers holidaying together. This year we expect more than 33,000 year 12 school leavers to visit the four key destinations of Airlie Beach, Magnetic Island, Yeppoon and, of course, the Gold Coast. On the Gold Coast, the central tourism precinct attracts more than 30,000 schoolies each November.

The Queensland government's schoolies community safety response will be delivered in the week of Saturday, 17 November to Friday, 23 November. Police, emergency services, security personnel, volunteers and officials will be maintaining a highly visible presence providing schoolies with medical assistance, general support and advice when needed. Their work is much appreciated by schoolies and their families as well as the communities which host schoolies celebrations.

Our Safer Schoolies initiative is supported by a state-wide communication campaign, which emphasises the messages of safety and responsibility for attending school leavers, parents and the community. A key element of the campaign is the inschool schoolies information sessions, which are currently underway in more than 220 Queensland schools, again focusing on safe and responsible behaviour. I do encourage all members to take time to look at a dedicated government website at www.schoolies.qld.gov.au, which has a wealth of information for school leavers and, importantly, for parents. I do ask our school leavers to be safe and watch your mates. I also encourage them to have a great time but a safe time as they embark on schoolies 2012.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Will the minister provide an explanation as to how she arranges her office to comply with her obligations for keeping accurate public records?

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. Obviously my office complies with everything necessary under both the archivists legislation and also the Integrity Commissioner. I cannot help but note that the Leader of the Opposition in particular, who has always been out in the media and has never met a camera that she did not like, has spoken a number of times in this place about some things that do not really make much sense to me, such as the question about correcting the record as a minister. There have been some pretty wild and misleading claims coming from the Leader of the Opposition over the last couple of days. Yesterday even the member for Bundamba raved on about the number of times that I have corrected the record since I have been the minister. Let us get the story straight. I can confirm that I have only corrected the record twice since becoming a minister. The first time was on 17 May, which I think was the very first question that was ever asked of me in this House as a minister. I misspoke the number of front-line employees in my department. Obviously, we were going through a machinery-of-government change, so those figures changed on a fairly regular basis. The second time, of course, was on Tuesday this week.

Sadly, we are used to members of the Labor Party embellishing things. For instance, they misled the people of Queensland over the sale of assets. They misled the people of Queensland about the true state of our public finances. They misled the people of Queensland over keeping the fuel subsidy. With a record like that, how can we trust a thing that they say ever again? This is a party that uses smear and half-truths to win support. We saw it throughout the worst, grubbiest election campaign in Queensland history in which the Premier and his family were constantly attacked. It was pathetic behaviour. Might I say that one of the architects of the dirtiest, filthiest campaigns ever seen in Queensland is sitting opposite. It is the member for South Brisbane. It backfired and it will backfire again. I call on those opposite to have a really good, hard look at themselves and at the way they are coming into this place—

Mr Newman: They do, because it is coming soon.

Ms BATES: I take the interjection from the Premier. The author of the dirtiest, filthiest campaign ever in political history sitting opposite has not learnt her lesson.

(Time expired)

State Development

Mr LATTER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development. With the Prime Minister in Queensland yesterday for a cabinet meeting, can the Deputy Premier inform the House of the impact that the Gillard Labor government is having on Queensland's state development?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. It stands in stark contrast to the questions that have been asked in this place this morning by the opposition. It stands in stark contrast to the questions that they ask in here day after day after day. Seldom have we seen an opposition that has demonstrated its own incompetence quite as comprehensively as the group that sits opposite. They have the biggest staff-to-member ratio in Queensland's history—22 staff for seven members—and they still cannot come in here and ask questions about anything that is even pertinent.

The Prime Minister was in Brisbane this week for a cabinet meeting. It does shine the light on the performance of the federal government and how it is affecting Queensland and on the efforts that we are making to grow the Queensland economy and to get Queensland back on track. Members here have heard me talk repeatedly about the problems that we have with Tony Burke, a member of the federal cabinet, and the difficulties that he presents that make it more difficult for us to grow the Queensland economy, to get the projects approved that we need to grow the business, to earn the money to be able to provide the services and meet the expectations of the people of Queensland. One would think that when those sorts of efforts are being made we would see some assistance from the federal government. But we see nothing of the sort.

When the federal Treasurer delivered the Commonwealth Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook on 22 October 2012 it was obviously keenly anticipated by my colleague the Treasurer. Like all of us, he was disappointed to see that, on a direct comparison with the Commonwealth budget, payment for specific purposes had been revised down by \$174 million in 2012-13 in a total of \$756 million over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16, a \$400 million overall reduction in Education and a \$348 million reduction in Health, both of which are included in the \$756 million reduction in payments.

What did we hear from Julia Gillard's colleagues in Queensland? What did we hear from the group that sits opposite? Absolutely nothing. They are not interested in health issues or education issues. They come in here day after day and ask stupid questions that are of very little consequence to the economy of Queensland. At the same time, their federal colleagues are slashing hundreds of millions of dollars from the Queensland budget, and they do not care.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat.

Mr SEENEY: Just like their Labor colleagues in Canberra—

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, take your seat. I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I refer the minister to the plain English guide to the Public Records Act 2002 which states that one of the objectives of the act is to 'facilitate the documentation, management and preservation of government business through full and accurate records, irrespective of the technological or administrative environment in which government business is conducted'. I ask: in relation to her lobbyists register, will the minister guarantee that her office has fully complied with the requirements of the Public Records Act? I table a copy of that plain English guide.

Tabled paper: Queensland State Archives, Public Records Act 2002, A Plain English Guide [\[1597\]](#).

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. Here we go again. With the Labor Party it is just slur after slur. I have already complied, and I will continue to comply, with all legislative requirements and also recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner about what we as ministers need to provide.

As I said, this is another slur from the Labor Party, which just is not interested in policy. It is not interested in the efficient and effective running of government. It is only interested in trivia and smear. It is the same broken record: no substance, just spin, smear and innuendo. When those opposite were in government they were embroiled—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, take your seat. I appreciate that there is an exchange across the chamber and that members are responding, but the interjections across the chamber are unacceptable. I ask the minister to address the question and I ask for the members on my left to cease their interjections. I call the minister.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have answered the question.

When they were in government, what were they doing? They were embroiled in the Shepherdson inquiry. What did they do? They employed one of the major players in electoral rorting in Queensland, Mike Kaiser. What was his job? His job was to be the chief of staff to the then Premier. They protected Gordon Nuttall. They even recalled parliament to absolve him of any wrongdoing.

Mr Newman: They did indeed.

Ms BATES: I take that interjection. Why did they recall parliament? To protect their mate for lying to parliament. They had scandal after scandal—from Michael Choi's lead foot to Paul Lucas blaming his driver for speeding. And let us not forget Karen Struthers and her drink-driving charge. What happened to her? She was promoted! They held private parties in Queensland Transport trains—

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order relating to relevance. The question related specifically to the Public Records Act 2002 and her office's compliance with that. I seek your guidance in terms of the minister's answer.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I am going to ask you to stay relevant to the question and to wrap up if you have answered in respect of the relevant provisions of that question.

Ms BATES: As I have mentioned before and I will continue to mention, every member of the Newman government will be accountable and will ensure they comply with every legislative requirement and recommendation.

Lobbyists Registers

Dr ROBINSON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House if he is aware of the operation of the State Archives as they relate to the previous Labor government's register and the activities of former state Labor members?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. You know, sometimes in politics people overreach. What we have seen over the last two days from the opposition is a clear case of overreach. I have here State Archives guidelines which state very clearly that a contact with lobbyists register basically is a public record that should be lodged with State Archives. I table the documents.

Tabled paper: Queensland State Archives, General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records: QDAN249 v.6, p.11 of 149 [1616].

Tabled paper: Extract from Queensland State Archives website and related document, titled 'Public Records Brief, A recordkeeping update for Queensland public authorities—July 2012, Recording contact between government and lobbyists' [1598].

I thought, then, that we should just inquire as to what records State Archives hold of the previous government in relation to their lobbyists registers. I have here advice from a member of staff. His email of 10.11 am today states—

I have today confirmed with State Archives that they do not have Contact with Lobbyists Registers for former Labor ministers.

This is despite advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. An email from Mr Ian Street states—

In accordance with the Ministerial Handbook, at the time of the change of government ministerial records should be transferred to State Archives.

What we see here is that the people opposite, who have been going on for two days about whether every single phone call was recorded, failed to comply with the law.

Mr Nicholls: And now they are blaming Ministerial Services!

Mr NEWMAN: And now they are blaming Ministerial Services. I will move on.

I was also interested in the activities of certain former Labor members. I refer to the website of a company called Diriger Consulting. The website states that one of the things they do is 'navigating government processes' and that they draw on their 'multiple longstanding government, business, media and community networks to achieve success'. The principal consultant of Diriger is one Di Farmer. But I checked the lobbyists register—and I table the document here—and found that Di Farmer is not a lobbyist who is registered. Neither is Diriger Consulting.

Tabled paper: Extract from www.diriger.com.au, page titled 'Home' [1600].

Tabled paper: Extract from www.diriger.com.au, page titled 'Our team' [1615].

But there is more. Stirling Hinchliffe also has a website. It is a bit more oblique, but he talks about his 'extensive connection across business, industry, government and community organisations throughout Queensland and Australia'. It looks like a lobbyist and smells like a lobbyist, but is he registered? It does not appear so. I table the document.

Tabled paper: Extract from stirlinghinchliffe.com, pages titled 'About', 'Experience' and 'Capabilities' [1599].

Hypocrisy from the Labor Party!

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Ms TRAD: My question is also to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask that the House allow the member to ask the question and be heard in silence.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for keeping order within the House. Given the minister's refusal yesterday to answer this question, I will ask it again. Will the minister confirm that the latest version of her lobbyists register, which she tabled on 13 November, is accurate? Will she confirm that she has not had additional meetings with lobbyists, either formal or informal, that do not appear on the register?

Ms BATES: I thank the member opposite for the question. Obviously she did not listen to the answer to the first question, but let me outline things a little bit further. It may come as a shock to the opposition that ministers and their staff do regularly meet with people. They regularly meet with companies who have in-house government media relations people and if they meet with lobbyists then they are on the lobbyists register. So I actually do meet with people so that we can move this great state forward. I actually do do my job and I am a minister who has a very large mess to clean up. I will continue to meet with relevant stakeholders in my portfolio. I will meet with whomever I have to so that I can get Queensland back on track. I will continue to have my staff register all contacts with lobbyists as requested by the Integrity Commission and I am fully committed to complying with the Integrity Act, but I ask those opposite: put your money where your mouth is! Put your money where your mouth is and table your contacts with lobbyists. Give your lobbyists register by the end of today so that you can be held—

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I ask that you direct your comments through the chair and refrain from using the term 'you'.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again I challenge members of the opposition to put their money where their mouth is and table their contacts with their lobbyists by the end of today, as the Premier has asked on numerous occasions, so that they are held to the same high levels of accountability as we are. Again today it has been confirmed in an email to the Premier's office from the State Archives that it does not have information about contact with lobbyists for former Labor ministers. This is despite advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in an email that said—

In accordance with the Ministerial Handbook at the time of the change of the government, ministerial records should be transferred to State Archives.

So those opposite—the members for huff, puff and bluff—should front up, put their money where their mouth is and table details of every lobbyist that they have met with since they lost government.

Bligh Labor Government, Aged-Care Facilities

Ms MILLARD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the previous Labor government's decision to sell off land from the Brighton Health Campus, formerly known as the Eventide Aged Care Facility, and I ask: is the minister aware of any plans by the Queensland Labor Party to facilitate the state government's exit from aged care?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for this question and, like other members of parliament in Queensland on the LNP side, she has been trying to tell the truth with regard to the previous government's stance in terms of aged care in the state of Queensland. It may actually interest members of this place to know that, when we look at the snake-oil salesmen and the carpetbaggers opposite, including Wayne Swan, who has been running around the place, Labor indeed did actually have a plan to sell off aged care in Queensland.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: What I have here is the Labor Party policy show-and-tell bag, and I prepared a couple earlier for the seven members opposite. What do we actually find in this bag? We actually find a briefing note in this bag to Paul Lucas from April 2009. This briefing note said—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I appreciate that your contribution is drawing a reaction across the chamber, but I will ask members to cease their interjections. I also ask the minister not to display the bag as it is a prop. He can read from the contents.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I will just remove its contents, Madam Speaker, and I will hide the offending item for a moment. In this briefing note to the health minister in 2009 it actually reminded him that—

On 16 February 2009, Cabinet endorsed a Queensland Health proposal to re-orientate five of its owned and operated residential aged care facilities subject to the provision of detailed implementation plans by October 2009.

Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit is one of those. As we go through the show bag, we see what reorientation actually means. It says—

Re-orientation refers to moving away from providing nursing home care to other types of care such as rehabilitation or transition care.

Further to that, they have actually prepared a range of documents within the department.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for South Brisbane, what is your point of order?

Ms TRAD: I would really like the honourable member to table the documents he is referring to.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Madam Speaker, we are going to do better than that: we have got one each—the whole lot of them!

Government members interjected.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The Table Office is going to love you for tabling all of that. There are multiple copies?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Well, Madam Speaker, I am happy to table mine; they are the individual ones.

Tabled paper: Paper bag labelled 'Queensland Labor: Policy Show (and tell) Bag' [1601].

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Queensland Health's Re-Orientation of Selected Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) Questions and Answers' [1602].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health Brief for Meeting, dated 30 April 2009, from District Chief Executive Officer, Metro South, to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, subject title 'Meeting with David Miles' [1603].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health media release, July 2009, titled 'Options to be investigated for State-owned nursing homes' [1604].

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, to Hon. Justine Elliot MP, Minister for Ageing, from Paul Lucas MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, and Murray Watt MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, regarding future options for residential aged-care facilities [1605].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health pro forma letter, subject title 'No. 9 Staff Letter—selected re-orientation RACF', regarding residential aged care [1606].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health pro forma letter, subject title 'No. 10 MP Letter—selected re-orientation RACF', regarding residential aged care [1607].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health pro forma letter, subject title 'No. 8 Representative Letter—selected re-orientation RACF', regarding residential aged care [1608].

Tabled paper: Queensland Health pro forma letter, subject title 'No. 7 Resident Letter—selected re-orientation RACF', regarding residential aged care [1609].

Tabled paper: RTI Release: RTI Document No. 30—Ministerial Charter of Goals Deputy Premier Report, dated 31 March 2012, page 30 of 39 [1610].

Madam SPEAKER: Okay. I call the minister.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Not only that, they went and prepared a whole range of stakeholder engagement letters including one to the residents, and I table that as well; including a representative letter to go to the unions, and I table that as well. We also have a staff letter from my show bag where they have actually prepared one of those, including a detailed engagement strategy as well. Paul Lucas, the former minister for health, also prepared a letter to the then—

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the member for South Brisbane under 253A. There are too many interjections across the chamber and I call the minister.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The former minister, Paul Lucas, also prepared a letter to the then federal minister for ageing saying that he was considering its application to these eight facilities including Parklands Townsville, Ashworth House Zillmere, Eventide Sandgate, Moreton Bay Nursing Care Wynnum and Redland Residential Care. On top of that, he also had a draft media release. Maybe he lost these on top of his other 400 briefing notes! What we also have in case the honourable members opposite say that they were not going ahead with this—and this is actually as elusive as the Dead Sea Scrolls—is an FOI release from the former opposition leader, John-Paul Langbroek, where it was actually in the charter of goals for the then minister for health, Paul Lucas, in 2010.

(Time expired)

Newman Government, Ministers

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier advise how many direct contacts his ministers have had over the past eight months with powerful LNP factional war lord Santo Santoro—

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The member has a right to be heard in silence in asking the question. I will allow the member to finish asking the question.

Mrs SCOTT:—or representatives of his consulting firm?

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. In terms of the question, clearly it did not identify any particular person in relation to the Premier's control as the Premier. It said 'powerful people'. It is just an absolutely ethereal matter.

Madam SPEAKER: I am going to allow the question. The Premier is able to answer that question as he sees fit, and I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, I do actually need to seek clarification. Are we just talking about 'powerful' Santo Santoro or other 'powerful' LNP figures? Can I just clarify if it is him and others or just him?

Madam SPEAKER: The question was interrupted when it was being asked. I will ask the member to repeat the question.

Mr Cripps: What's Bill Ludwig's title?

Mrs SCOTT: Will the Premier advise how many direct contacts his ministers—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Member, resume your seat. I now warn the Minister for Natural Resources under 253A. I call the member for Woodridge to repeat the question.

Mrs SCOTT: Will the Premier advise how many direct contacts his ministers have had over the past eight months with powerful LNP factional war lord Santo Santoro or representatives of his consulting firm?

Mr NEWMAN: I just wanted to clarify if it was about other powerful LNP people, but we are talking about his firm's lobbyist capacity.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of Opposition Business under standing order 253A. You will allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, they ask the questions but they clearly do not want to hear the answers. That is an issue that is covered obviously by the lobbyists register. Every minister is maintaining a lobbyists register, we have heard today. We do not know if the former Labor government maintained a lobbyists register. Why do we know that? Because State Archives did not have their lobbyists registers.

In relation to my own contacts with Mr Santoro, that is something I probably can try to answer right now. I have had no meetings where he has come to lobby me. He has made contact with my office and in writing we have replied on a particular matter. I have seen him at various social functions, but we have never discussed matters to do with clients.

Perhaps for the Leader of the Opposition's benefit, though, I just make the point that the Leader of the Opposition has had far more to do with him at these various social events. I table the function that the US Consul—

Tabled paper: Stakeholder Engagement Implementation Plan [1611].

Ms Palaszczuk: And Con Sciacca was there as well.

Mr NEWMAN: Con Sciacca, a former Labor heavyweight as well. This is the thing: we need to know who they are meeting with. The people of Queensland surely deserve to know, because this is—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I now warn you to cease your interjections, or I will start naming you under the standing orders. Allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr NEWMAN: The Leader of the Opposition and her team are supposedly the alternative government. Mind you, 'supposed' is loose. I seek the indulgence of the House on that terminology 'alternative government', because we have seen no policy for many, many months, no focus on the real issues. The Leader of the Opposition was there at the US Consul General function and a cheerful participant in the raffle drawing, as we have heard.

But wait, there is more. The opposition leader was also at the Dutch celebration this year. Santo was there, too. Was the Leader of the Opposition—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier was at that same function.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I warn you under standing order 253A. I ask the Premier to wrap up the answer and to stay relevant to the question.

Mr NEWMAN: My point is this: based on the evidence before me today I can unequivocally say that in the last nine months the Leader of the Opposition has probably had as much direct contact with Mr Santo Santoro as I have had. I guess that makes her perhaps—I do not know? Does that make her a bad person? Maybe she could tell us all later on today.

Queensland Economy

Mrs MENKENS: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House about the true debt position of the Queensland government? Are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for the question because, unlike the member for Mulgrave, the member cares about the state of Queensland's finances and the importance of telling Queenslanders the truth. The member for Mulgrave and that cohort of debt deniers over there continue to deny that their party left the state with a \$65 billion debt. He has no interest in hearing the truth. I have been trying to elicit a question from the member for Mulgrave. It is one of those rare occasions where I almost feel like I should write him the question and he can ask it of me so that we can at least have some proper economic debate in this place given the importance of economic growth. I have been trying to get a question out of him. Since we came to government, there have been 31 sitting days and in that time, fellow members, would anyone have any idea how many questions the member for Mulgrave has asked me? For 31 sitting days, he has asked me a grand total of eight questions in that time. The first conservative government budget in 15 years—the most important budget in a generation, a budget that sets Queensland back on track and back in the black—and how many questions has the member for Mulgrave, the so-called shadow Treasurer, asked me about the budget or about the numbers in the budget? How many questions has he asked me in this place?

Mr Stevens: One.

Mr NICHOLLS: One question all the way through. Instead of asking questions in this place and coming in here and trying to find out what is going on, the member for Mulgrave seems to want to ride on the coat-tails of certain people. He wants to ride on the coat-tails of the unions. Perhaps he wants to ride on the coat-tails of those well-known economic geniuses Mr and Mrs Walker, who the former Treasurer of this place called low rent, and others who do not understand. But he also seems to want to ride on the coat-tails of certain other misinformed commentators on the state of Queensland's debt. I heard those misinformed comments last week.

For the benefit of everyone, just in case they do not understand the numbers—perhaps they cannot add up to a billion or two or something like that—Labor's own midyear forecast forecast \$65 billion worth of debt. That debt includes \$32.6 million held by government owned corporations and \$30 billion held by government departments.

An opposition member: What about net debt?

Mr NICHOLLS: Then they say, 'What about net debt?' It has been asserted that this figure includes the state's superannuation liability, which is what they are talking about over there and the debt raised by local governments. This is, in fact, totally incorrect.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer's time has expired.

Mr NICHOLLS: Madam Speaker, it is a pity.

(Time expired)

Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Scheme

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. After a pre-election indication that water charges would not exceed CPI plus \$2 to relift growers in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme, growers have been hit with an up to \$44 per megalitre increase in the volumetric charges. Will the minister make a decision to give relief to the exorbitant water charges applied by this government to relift irrigators of the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. As the member is aware, I was in the Mareeba region not that long ago and spoke to a number of people there in relation to the cost of water. My department is, in fact, looking at this issue as we speak. I appreciate that the irrigators and other people using water in agriculture in that area are very important to the region and also to the economy of this state. I am quite happy to talk to the member offline about this issue at any time.

While I am on my feet, this gives me the chance to talk about water generally in this state, what this state government is doing and I think also, importantly, the legacy left behind by the former government with regard to water. We know that when we came into government we were landed a basket case in relation to the water grid in this state and, indeed, water problems right across Queensland. The Premier made it quite clear that we were going to move to arrest and turn around this issue as quickly as possible. In the south-east corner we have moved towards amalgamating the bulk water entities into one entity so that we can get better cost efficiencies running through the south-east.

We have also made the commitment quite strongly that in the south-east we will deliver a one-off \$80 rebate to people in the first quarter of 2013. It is a commitment because this government understands that the supply of water, not just in the south-east but right across Queensland, is pivotal to growth economically and the community as a whole. That is why we are also looking at a 30-year water plan to ensure that we look far into the future to deliver water right across Queensland. The 30-year water plan will, in fact, not just be a snapshot in time; we want to look way beyond that. The member understands more than I do the importance of water, particularly in his area. I hope that he makes a contribution to that plan in the near future.

As I said, the water grid is an issue that we still have to deal with—an issue that brought with it a significant debt of some \$9 billion, an issue that the amalgamation of the bulk water entities will in some part deal with. But can I say this: why that debt arose and why the situation arose very clearly is the incompetence of the former Labor government. It did nothing when the drought hit. It had not put in place any infrastructure or any form of assistance to people in the south-east corner. That left a catch-up in a period of three, four or five years. Now, every Queenslanders is burdened because of that \$9 billion debt and will be for some considerable period of time to come.

However, this government is committed to making certain that we get long-term relief for the people right across this state. I encourage the member to talk to me about Mareeba. We will sit down and work out what we can do to assist his constituents.

Vocational Education and Training

Mr DILLAWAY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Will the minister please inform the House of the Newman government's commitment to revitalising Queensland's vocational education and training sector in order to address skills shortages and increased productivity in the state's economy.

Mr LANGBROEK: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, one that I have been pleased to advise the House about earlier this week. The Newman government's commitment is to the two fours: a four-pillar economy and a four per cent unemployment rate. A very important part of that is making sure that it is business as usual in our TAFEs. Last week I received the report from our Skills and Training Taskforce which was chaired by Michael Roche from the Queensland Resources Council. Unlike those opposite, we honour our commitments. As part of our commitments we have pledged to respond to the report by the end of the month—not a year after, but by the end of this month. Not like the federal government that has the Henry tax review from which they have picked and chosen particular elements that have not worked out properly; not like the Gonski education review where the whole nation is waiting for some sort of certainty as far as education funding—but by the end of the month. That is because we are determined to fix the problems that we have been left with. We are not running away. We are not seeking a quick fix. We are not looking for a *Courier-Mail* headline. We are working steadily and positively to help young Queenslanders find work by skilling them and training them in genuine jobs that will help to make our economy more productive.

It is clear that the danger to our TAFE system is from Julia Gillard and the federal Labor government. We have problems in our TAFE system with industrial relations and we have problems with infrastructure. We have heard this morning from the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer about the fact that we have had health funding cuts, we have had education cuts, we have had GST cuts and we have had numerous cuts in the Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook from the federal government that is giving us less funding. Because of the Productivity Places Program which expired in June the federal government is giving us \$50 million less for training this year. That is why we have to look at our training dollars and make sure that we are spending them as efficiently as we can. That is why we are going to respond by the end of the month. We need to make sure that the assets are used effectively, not campuses that are closed for business at night and that are used less than a third of the week by staff who are paid full-time wages to work 21 hours a week. Who left us with these conditions? Those opposite and their Labor mates in Canberra.

Julia Gillard and the tertiary education minister Chris Evans are playing a very dangerous game with Queenslanders. We have even had the unions calling on the federal government to stop giving us their \$300 million a year. That is endangering the very people they claim to represent. It is irresponsible. It needs to stop. It is because of an upcoming federal election. We need to have positive action on behalf of the training sector. This government is committed to making sure we have vibrant TAFEs supported by this government, supported with more contestability and, most importantly, giving industry, students and workers what they want: real jobs in a vibrant economy.

Madam SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Bundamba, I wish to advise the House that question time will finish at 11.05 am.

Former Minister for Housing and Public Works

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to revelations from Dr Flegg's former media adviser that the Premier's office was provided with copies of emails between Jonathon Flegg and Dr Flegg's office. Given that three days have now passed since these revelations and the Premier has had time to check with staff, will the Premier advise when he was first made aware of these emails?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. I will try to recall to the best of my ability what the time line was. I became aware of a series of emails that Mr Hallett was going to talk about or release I think it was on the morning of his press conference, on Tuesday. I was not aware of the contents of those emails until yesterday. That is my best recollection.

Mr Hallett appears to have actually released more detail and more content in the period since he actually did his press conference. But the bottom line here is that we had a press conference from Mr Hallett at around nine o'clock on Tuesday and by 2.30 yesterday, as honourable members know, Minister Flegg had resigned. I just want to contrast this with the way it happened with the former mob. Did that ever happen?

A government member: With the Health payroll it didn't.

Mr NEWMAN: With the Health payroll? We have been through it all today. I could go through it all again, but I thought I would introduce something new to the debate on ministerial accountability because I have here, and I will table it in a moment, an article from 7 October 2010 where Anna Bligh instructed two of her ministers to repay \$4,265 each to the government after they breached political advertising guidelines with a mail-out. The article states—

The Queensland Premier yesterday said the glossy brochure—in which junior minister and Inala MP Annastacia Palaszczuk was pictured spruiking the Bligh government's passenger rail extension—was 'unacceptable' and a 'clear breach' of government regulations on advertising prohibiting party political material.

The article states 26,000 pamphlets were distributed across Brisbane's western suburbs at the direction of the transport department, although—guess what?—transport minister Rachel Nolan denied knowledge of the brochure. But a fellow minister was in the document. Here is a situation where the Leader of the Opposition, who was a former minister, was ordered to repay money. The former Premier said it was a breach of the guidelines and what happened? Did that minister fall on her sword? Did the transport minister Rachel Nolan fall on her sword? Did they take ministerial accountability? Did they observe the Westminster principles? Well, alas, I must inform honourable members that they did not. We have all known for seven months that the way to spell hypocrisy is A-L-P. I table the document.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 7 October 2010, titled 'Bligh orders MPs to repay \$8530 for advertising breach' and related material [\[1612\]](#).

Lobbyists Registers

Mr KRAUSE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Are you able to access any of the previous records of the former Labor government?

Mr NEWMAN: I rise to inform the House that I do not have access to the ministerial office records of a past government of a different political party. Current ministers will normally be able to see the ministerial office records of former ministers of the same political party provided the need to do so arises in the course of their current ministerial duties. There may be exceptional circumstances in which it might be appropriate for us to seek the agreement of the former Premier concerned before affording access to ministerial office records of a previous government to anyone not otherwise entitled to see them. The agreement of a former Premier or the current leader of the relevant political party would be sought.

There is an important point here today. I have demonstrated, I believe to the satisfaction of the House, that the archives requirements are very clear that there should have been the lodging of the former ministers' lobbyists records with State Archives. State Archives has informed my office this morning, and I have told the House this, that they do not have those records. So we see the biggest own goal of recent weeks from the opposition going on and on and on about whether the lobbyists record was filled out when we do not even have access to theirs. Do these things exist? Where are they? And why is it so important? I will tell you why it is important.

Ms Palaszczuk: You won't even table your ministers' lobbyists registers.

Mrs Miller: Santo could do it.

Ms Palaszczuk: You're a hypocrite.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the member for Bundamba to cease interjecting and I will name the member under standing orders if she does it again. I also wish to warn members on my left. There was some unparliamentary language that was yelled out and I cannot tell who did it, but I would ask you to refrain from that.

Mr NEWMAN: That is why this is so critical. I note that there are many students in the gallery today and I acknowledge their school. This is very important, because \$1.2 billion worth of taxpayers' funds have been blown by the colleagues of those who sit opposite. Indeed, some of whom were members of that cabinet and were involved in the decisions. What I want to know and what the people of Queensland need to know is who lobbied people such as Rob Swarten? Who lobbied people such as Paul Lucas? Why were certain decisions made in relation to the Health payroll system? The people of Queensland need to know. However, we have found out there are not even records, as required under the law, lodged with the State Archives. Isn't that interesting? What happened? Were they shredded? Were they deleted; del* *? Did they put the shredder software on the hard disk and get rid of those electronic diaries and lobbyists registers? The people of Queensland need to know. I wish to talk a bit more about this—

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (11.01 am): I move—

That the Premier be further heard.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the members of the House for their indulgence. We need to know, because any lobbying activity on the Health payroll system is critically important. Today I issue a challenge: I say to the Leader of the Opposition, firstly, find those records and submit them.

Ms Palaszczuk: You haven't released your ministers' lobbyists registers.

Mr NEWMAN: They make interjections all the time, but there is no accountability from opposition members who were part of a former government that presided over the biggest disaster of public finance since the submarines, as we heard yesterday. Here is the challenge, and I ask members opposite to listen carefully, please: first, they need to find those lobbyists registers and not just their own, because some of them were ministers. I ask them to but find Anna Bligh's, find Paul Lucas's and find Rob Swarten's. The member for Rockhampton is on good terms with him; he could go and get them. I ask them to find Andrew Fraser's. As part of my first challenge, I ask them to lodge those registers with State Archives before 5 pm today, in compliance with the law of Queensland.

My second challenge is this: having lodged the registers, they need to release them to the people of Queensland so that we may all know who lobbied the former government and who sought to influence the whole range of decisions in relation to the Health payroll. We would like to know that. They need to do that. They need to be open and upfront in a way that they have never been in the past. This week we have given them a lesson on accountability, openness and ethics. They need to take notice of that, not for themselves, but for the people of Queensland because, after all, they are supposed to be the alternative government of Queensland.

Graffiti

Mr CRANDON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister please advice the House on how the Newman government is honouring its election commitment to tackle graffiti across Queensland?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes to answer.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I thank the member for Coomera for the question. The commitment has been delivered. Earlier this month it gave me great pleasure to go with the member for Ipswich West to his part of the world and launch this initiative with his council. A great relationship is forming between the members for Ipswich West and Ipswich and their local council. It is great to see that such a relationship can work. It does not always happen like that. During estimates we saw another local member tip the bucket on her council, which is in stark contrast to the great relationship that has been formed in Ipswich.

We have set up a graffiti hotline. People can phone in or access the website to lodge a complaint. As we said during the election campaign, we will spend \$2 million a year assisting local communities in cleaning up graffiti. What options did we have? There was one of two options. We could go with the centralist model, which is to set up a little flying hit squad based in Brisbane, who with their backpacks could try to scramble to do things. Alternatively, we could empower local communities. That is the option we took. We have partnered with local councils, based on their size and need. We asked them if they would like to be part of it.

Today, I can advise the House that, for the first time, all 73 local governments have come on board with an initiative without being bullied and without being pressured. They were given an option, they have come on board and they are partners in this. That is in stark contrast to what we have seen for many years. Why is it important? If you talk to organisations such as the Australian Institute of Criminology, they will tell you that if you do not get on top of these problems early they can lead to far greater things. It does not matter if it is a pedestrian bridge in Logan or a picnic table in Cardwell; locals are proud of their communities. They want to make sure that they can feel safe. They want to make sure that, at all times, they can look around their part of the world and feel proud. We now have a government that understands local communities and will work with councils to deliver on the ground.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: I wish to acknowledge the schools visiting today: Palm Beach State School in the electorate of Burleigh, Kolan South State School in the electorate of Burnett, Ironside State School in the electorate of Indooroopilly and Gladstone West State School in the electorate of Gladstone.

DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 November (see p. 2634), on motion of Ms Davis—

That the bill be now read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

 **Mrs SCOTT** (11.07 am): The committee heard from a number of stakeholders about the importance of transparency in the pricing of services. Value for money, which is limited in the first place for people with disability, is extremely important and safeguards should be placed in legislation. As recommendation 6 states—

The committee recommends that the Minister inform the Legislative Assembly of the measures that will be put in place to maximise transparency of prices and ensure adequate standards of services purchased by people with a disability who receive self-directed funding.

It is our job to provide a certain level of protection for people with a disability and their carers and families.

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is really important that we have safeguards for people with a disability, particularly those with more significant impairment. Under the current legislation, government funding can be given only to approved organisations or providers. In October, Queensland undertook a process to select host providers to hold the funds for people who choose to self direct. I really need to restate here, in terms of self direction, that this is an option for people to come in. It will not be something that people with a disability will be compelled to participate in. That is all about choice, which is also what this bill is all about.

Organisations that were interested in developing a host provider model were asked to provide a description of their model, their target demographic, their geographical boundaries and their fee structures. That information was provided to the department. Soon this information will be available on the website of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. I think I have answered the question during my reply, but I am always happy to speak to the member later if there is something further she would like to ask.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

 **Mrs SCOTT** (11.11 am): In relation to clause 7 there are number of issues that have not been addressed by the minister in the bill, including the training and resources that will be necessary for some people with a disability and their carers to manoeuvre through the complex financial accountability requirements. It is objectionable for people with a disability and their carers to have to comply with some of the financial accountability standards without, at the very least, providing some support to them in the form of training or departmental resources. The requirement for training to be provided should be enshrined in this bill to give people with a disability and their carers certainty and support in dealing with these matters.

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for her comments. Again, I think I have addressed that in both my second reading speech and my reply. We are committing \$1.27 million to training for people with a disability, their families, their carers and service providers in order that there are not those issues that the member described. It is really important to provide information to people with a disability

and their families in order that they are well prepared and have all of the information at hand in order to make a determination as to whether they might like to participate in self-directed funding. I move the following amendment and table the explanatory notes to the amendment—

1 Clause 7 (Insertion of new pt 5A)

Page 6, line 8, 'appointed'—

omit, insert—

'or an administrator'.

Tabled paper: Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes to Hon. Tracy Davis's amendments [1613].

Mrs SCOTT: The opposition supports this amendment as it reflects recommendation 2 of the committee's report. This change is important as the bill currently provides that a 'relevant person' is a person nominated by the adult, a guardian appointed for the adult, an attorney appointed by the adult or a member of the adult's support network. The Guardianship and Administration Act provides that an administrator appointed for a person with a disability can include the Public Trustee for financial matters. The opposition welcomes this amendment.

I would also like the minister to advise the House what assurances she can give in relation to recommendation 3 of the committee's report. It was pointed out by Ms Richards of Micah Projects during the public hearing—

The ability of the Public Trustee to change decisions without regard for the person is concerning, whereas the Adult Guardian has a very different focus. They will consent to what they believe is in the best interests of the person. The Public Trustee looks strictly at dollars.

We believe this is an important point to clarify as there will be potential issues between the Public Trustee's financial obligations and duties and the individual's preference for services.

Ms DAVIS: I thank the member for the question. Again, I feel that I answered that in both my second reading speech and my reply. I am very pleased that we were able to adopt the recommendation of the committee. The amendment in terms of adding 'an administrator' is important. I think what is really important about our committee system is that legislation can be reviewed and those things that add value to the legislation can be considered. We were pleased to be able to adopt the committee's recommendation in that regard.

I think it is really important that the Public Trustee's office handles the administrative matters of people, including those with a disability. Often times that is in concert with either the family or an appointed person and/or the Adult Guardian. I think the Public Trustee's office employees, in concert with those other people charged with the responsibility of looking after a person with a disability, will do the right thing by the person with a disability. I do not think that we need to enshrine anything further in legislation.

Whilst there may be some anecdotal evidence that the Public Trustee looks for the cheapest price in some areas, there is also anecdotal evidence to the contrary. I believe that we have hardworking officers in the Public Trustee's office who will look after the best interests of people with a disability should they choose to self-direct fund. The reality is that there may be quite a large cohort of individuals whose funds are managed by the Public Trustee who may not choose to self-direct fund.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 and 9, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (11.17 am): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (11.17 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.

GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 September (see p. 1806).

Second Reading



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.18 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its consideration of the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on 6 November 2012. The committee made one recommendation—that is, that the bill be passed. The government is happy to oblige. I thank the committee and the chairman, the member for Condamine, for its great consideration of this government bill. I thank them for their time. I know that the government is keeping that committee very busy with lots of legislation within this portfolio.

I acknowledge those who have made submissions on the bill to the committee and I will now address some of the issues raised in those submissions. The committee received eight submissions which all addressed only specific parts of the bill. Seven of the eight submissions indicated support for those amendments that they addressed. Submissions received from the Adult Guardian, the Public Trustee, the Queensland Law Society, the Endeavour Foundation and National Seniors Australia all expressed support for the amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 that will give the Public Advocate two additional powers to enable it to carry out its systemic advocacy functions more effectively.

However, National Seniors Australia sought confirmation that the confidentiality of client information be maintained and used only for the purposes set out in the act. National Seniors Australia also submitted that it was important that these amendments be evaluated to ensure they are effectively delivering better outcomes for clients. The Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 at section 249A currently prohibits the use of confidential information gained under the act, except in accordance with the act. Further, the bill includes amendments that make it unlawful for the Public Advocate to publish information that will lead to the identification of a person, without a reasonable excuse. These provisions will ensure the confidentiality of personal information is maintained.

In relation to the issue regarding evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed amendments to deliver better outcomes to vulnerable clients, it is expected that these amendments will deliver an immediate practical benefit to the Public Advocate who will be able to access information not previously available. Also, if the Public Advocate has concerns about the effectiveness of the amendments, the Public Advocate will be able to raise these concerns directly with me, as the Attorney-General, or raise the concerns in the annual report or a report under the proposed new section 209A of the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000.

The Public Trustee of Queensland stated he has no objection to the amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968. The Electrical Contractors Association supported the amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002. However, I note that the submission by the Electrical Trades Union to the committee did not support the amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 because the Electrical Trades Union views the proposed changes as a retrospective step driven by the need to cut costs.

The change from a 'commissioner' to a 'chairperson' does not alter the functions of the Electrical Safety Board, which is an 'independent body' that gives advice and makes recommendations to the minister about policies, strategies and legislative arrangements for electrical safety. With regard to the statutory role of commissioner, this role was created in 2002 to manage the transition into the new electrical safety environment created under the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and to facilitate the work of the Electrical Safety Board and three statutory standing committees.

Over the past decade the commissioner has overseen enhancement of the electrical safety legislation and, subsequently, the workload of the commissioner position has decreased over time. For example, the role was initially undertaken on a full-time basis, then discharged on a three-day per week basis since 2007, with a further reduction in workload over recent months in the prelude to the conclusion of the past commissioner's term in early November 2012.

The functions of the chairperson will essentially be the same as those of the commissioner, including managing the activities of the Electrical Licensing Committee and advisory committees as these are board committees. While the use of the term 'commissioner' may have been appropriate in 2002, the government considers that with the reduction in the role's workload, the term 'chairperson' better reflects the functions of the position.

Additionally, in relation to the functions of the safety education and equipment committees, many of their functions have been increasingly addressed as part of the community engagement and equipment safety functions within the Electrical Safety Office. Moreover, a range of electrical safety matters including safety education and safety of electrical equipment are also addressed as part of the department's representation on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council. Therefore, while the proposed changes do deliver savings, they do not compromise safety outcomes. Additionally, they also reflect a proven model based on that of the Workplace Health and Safety Board, which balances the needs of all stakeholders including business, government and the community.

In their submission, the ETU also expressed their discontent that these changes were introduced into parliament without prior industry consultation. Consultation external to government was not undertaken in relation to these proposed changes as these amendments are not expected to result in any reduction in electrical safety outcomes and are in line with the government's focus of reducing red tape and cutting back on expenditure. As I mentioned at the time I introduced the bill into the Legislative Assembly, the bill delivers cost-savings measures and improves the efficiency in the operations and practices in certain areas of government.

The Public Advocate will be given additional powers to carry out its functions more effectively. These powers include a right to access information in certain circumstances and to prepare a report on systemic issues which is to be tabled by the responsible minister. These new powers will lead to an improvement in the way government and non-government services are being delivered to vulnerable Queenslanders.

The amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 will finally, and once and for all, remove administrative funding for political parties and Independent members and is estimated to save the people of Queensland \$18.2 million over the next four years. The Electrical Safety Act 2002 amendments, as I discussed earlier, achieve substantial ongoing savings to government while maintaining safety outcomes.

The amendments to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 will improve the operation of the tribunal and were strongly supported by president of the tribunal in his submission to the committee. The amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968 are required to enable the 2011 Commonwealth government amendments to the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) to be effective and to facilitate the voluntary transfers of trustee company business and compulsory transfers of trustee company business to the Public Trustee of Queensland, with the Public Trustee's consent.

The bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to ensure the offence under section 33 of the Bail Act 1980 is not subject to the offender levy. This exclusion is consistent with government policy concerning offences to which the offender levy should apply. Overall, this bill represents the government's commitment to get Queensland back on track. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.26 am): I rise to make a contribution on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This is an omnibus bill and contains amendment to a raft of legislation across a wide range of areas. I note the comments by the Queensland Law Society in its submission to the committee on the consideration of the bill that commends the Attorney and the drafters on making it evident from the short title of the bill that it is actually an omnibus bill. However, the committee itself has previously raised concerns about this issue, and its main concern was in relation to members who, when faced with a bill that covers vastly different and unrelated pieces of legislation and that covers a diverse range of policy areas, may feel they are restricted in how they respond.

Some of the matters contained in this bill are noncontroversial and are of little significance and most members would be comfortable supporting them. Other matters, however, are of some significance and might be expected to elicit a range of views on the policy intent. Members then might be opposed to some matters and support others and therefore find it difficult to vote on the bill as a whole. I note that the committee in its report concluded that the matters contained in this bill are relatively noncontroversial therefore the problem is not so significant in this case. I disagree with the committee in this respect and again note that a bill of this nature breaches the fundamental legislative principles contained in section 4(2)(b) of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 in that it fails to have sufficient regard to the institution of parliament.

The bill is titled the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the major changes are in relationship to the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000. This was legislation introduced by the Beattie Labor government to create the role of the Public Advocate and the Adult Guardian and to create a scheme for the administration of the affairs of adults with impaired decision-making capacity.

The Webbe-Weller report recommended merging the two offices of the Public Advocate and the Adult Guardian. Queensland is in fact the only jurisdiction where the individual advocacy and systems advocacy are undertaken by two separate statutory positions. It was originally the intention of the government to adopt this recommendation. However, after further consultation with the sector, it was

decided by the previous Attorney-General to maintain a separate Public Advocate position. Both the government and the opposition went to the last election with this policy intent. In fact, the Attorney, as shadow Attorney, made much of the importance of this role.

That was why we were so concerned as an opposition earlier this year when the appointment of the Acting Public Advocate expired and the Attorney failed to appoint a replacement for a few months. It left this very important position unable to fulfil any of the roles that are only able to be performed by the Public Advocate. This includes intervening in Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, coronial or other proceedings involving people with diminished capacity.

This meant that for more than three months no-one could carry out those roles. If the Attorney genuinely considered this role to be so important, how could he leave it empty for so long and how could he have left those vulnerable Queenslanders with no-one to act on their behalf?

Mr Bleijie: How long did you have an acting arrangement in place? For years. We were the first ones to appoint a full-time advocate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! The Attorney-General will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not actually debating this at the moment; I am giving a response.

Mr Bleijie: I will respond all right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I understand that the Attorney's own department alerted him to the problem in early June but still he failed to act. He is saying across the chamber that some acting arrangements were put in place. I am happy for him to raise these issues at length—

Mr Bleijie: No, I said, 'How long were your acting arrangements in place? Years.'

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker?

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: In addition to failure to appoint a replacement in a timely fashion, there was another more pressing problem. Apparently the department was also concerned that the agency was understaffed, the full complement of seven staff having been reduced to just three, with two of those remaining on contracts which were soon to expire, but I am quite sure the Attorney will be able to expand on that a little later as well.

In relation to this issue, the Australian Catholic University public policy professor Scott Prasser criticised the inaction of the Attorney-General. A *Courier-Mail* article dated 26 July 2012 entitled 'Vulnerable Queenslanders are being left without a voice' states—

'I find it extraordinary they haven't got that in order, given it's a statutory position, Prof Prasser said. 'Either the last person in the position should have been given an extension, or they should have started a process of reappointment before the due date.'

I was pleased to see the Attorney finally appoint a new Public Advocate in August this year and we welcome Ms Jodie Cook to this very important position. However, there was a quite unusual aspect to the Public Advocate's appointment, and this is an unusual process matter. I note from the Attorney-General's diary that my office obtained under RTI there were four entries on 26 July 2012 for the Attorney to attend interviews for the position of Public Advocate. It appears from the diary that the Attorney may have sat on the interview panel and I would ask whether or not that was the case. It may be; it may not be. I just want some clarification in relation to that matter.

Mr Bleijie: Yes, I did. Does it matter?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General can reply later on. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Attorney just indicated across the chamber that he did indeed sit on that panel. I also note the amendments to protect the confidential information of individuals who might be the subject of a report by the Public Advocate. New section 209A provides that the report should not contain information likely to result in the identification of an adult with impaired decision making. Certainly protection of a person's confidential information is of paramount importance and I welcome this amendment.

I also welcome new section 210B, which prohibits the Public Advocate or any member of the Public Advocate's staff from publishing information to the public that is likely to result in the identification of the person to whom the information relates by a member of the public. But I am concerned that it only applies to the Public Advocate or a member of their staff. There will certainly be other people who might have access to this information and therefore be capable of publishing it to the public. If a person were in breach of this section by giving the information to a media outlet, for example, there is nothing to prevent the media outlet from publishing the material.

I note that section 142 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 prohibits the disclosure of confidential information by a designated person, but that did not stop the publication of some confidential information about a female patient at the park under a forensic order. I know that this issue was raised at an estimates hearing and I note that the Minister for Health is here. My recollection is that the director-general was going to further look into that matter.

Mr Springborg: I was looking down. I did not hear the first part of what you said, sorry.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would probably help the chamber if the Leader of the Opposition was not seeking direct answers all the time across the chamber and stuck to her speech.

Mr Bleijie: I would have thought your 22 staff would have had it sorted out for you. An overresourced opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Attorney has interrupted on a number of occasions.

Mr Bleijie: You have been asking me questions!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition when making her speech has the opportunity to take interjections or not take interjections according to standing orders, and I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition consider that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The next set of amendments relates to the Electoral Act 1992, which removes the provision of administrative funding to political parties and Independents. The measures which are being repealed were inserted last year as part of the Electoral Reform and Accountability Amendment Act 2011. The Attorney-General announced in his introductory speech to the bill that he would be releasing a green paper. The opposition will not be opposing these amendments and we look forward to the green paper process.

This bill also amends the Electrical Safety Act by abolishing the position of Commissioner for Electrical Safety, abolishing two of the standing committees he chairs—the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee—and creating a position of chairperson to oversee the functions previously performed by those committees and to chair the Electrical Safety Board. The commissioner's role was established as a result of an independent task force that made recommendations to increase electrical safety in Queensland after a significant number of electricity related deaths in Queensland. This position is an independent one and has a significant role in advising the minister. It is important, therefore, that the independent nature of this role be maintained.

The Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Licensing Committee have been undertaking important work since the act was implemented under the guidance of the commissioner. As a result, we have seen some extraordinary improvements in electrical safety outcomes in Queensland. The Electrical Trades Union made a substantial and well-researched submission to the committee on this aspect of the bill, and it is to be commended for its diligence and thoroughness in this regard. As the relevant part of its submission outlines on page 5—

Immediately prior to the introduction of the Act in 2002 and subsequently, the government and the ESO was involved in a massive public awareness campaign about the provisions of the Act and the need for people to work more safely. As a result of this the number of fatalities in the industry dropped dramatically from 10 in 2000/01 to 1 in 2002/3.

Unfortunately, this dramatic reduction has not been maintained. However, looking at the Fatalities in Queensland as a result of an electrical incident, the moving five year average has gone from a figure consistently between 3 and 4 in the 1990's to 1.16 for the period 2006-2011. Queensland has gone from having a five year average higher than the national average to one that has consistently been lower than the national average.

The fact that this change began in 2002, that is, the year that the Act commenced, suggests there is a direct link between the changes brought about with its introduction.

I am concerned that no consultation was undertaken with stakeholders before such important amendments were included in the legislation. I am also unconvinced by a bald statement in the explanatory notes that 'these amendments are not expected to result in any reduction in electrical safety outcomes'. Without any research, without any consultation, without asking stakeholders who have been engaged with this legislation for over a decade since it was introduced what they think is the best way forward, the government is happy to just abolish these positions and hope for the best.

I note what the Attorney-General said during the estimates hearing about the wonderful education work that has been undertaken by the Electrical Safety Office to make people more aware of their obligations under the legislation and how they can improve safety outcomes. But this is being done under the present structure and it is not possible to merely state that this will continue under an alternative scheme. And how do we know? One death of a Queenslanders as a result of an electrical safety accident is one death too many. I hope this short-sighted legislation does not result in any increased deaths.

In his introductory speech the Attorney spoke of the substantial ongoing savings to government that the amendments will achieve. The explanatory notes state—

There are significant expenses (especially travel) associated with safety education and equipment committee meetings.

Yet according to the ETU submission it is its understanding, and I bow to its more in-depth knowledge on these matters than I have, that—

Of all of the committee members, the ETU understands that the only costs for the Electrical Equipment Committee are flights from Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton. There is no payment of travel allowance, there is no overnight accommodation provision, there is no provision of lunch. Given the clear benefits to the community of this committee, the cost of flights (presumably in the order of \$1000 per committee meeting) seems more than reasonable.

That does not appear to be the significant expenses outlined in the explanatory notes, and I hold grave concerns when safety is reduced to a dollars and cents argument. I wonder what cost the government places on the life of a Queenslanders. The only basis I have found in the explanatory notes or the committee's report, or even the submissions, is a statement in the one-page submission of the Electrical Contractors Association that—

The ECA is ... confident that the proposed amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 will not reduce the inspectorate's capacity to respond to incidents and complaints nor in any other way compromise the electrical safety of electrical workers or the wider Queensland public.

I think my concern is well-founded when we have seen the absolute decimation of the workplace health and safety inspectorate in the budget this year. This government is of the firm view that worker safety is the sole responsibility of the federal government. What assurances do we have that there will be no reduction in the inspectorate and the education staff of the ESO under this new model? I ask the Attorney to give an assurance during his address in reply that there will be no decrease in the number of people employed by the ESO as a result of these changes and no reduction in funding. As the ECA themselves pointed out in their submission—

We anticipate that the resources previously dedicated to maintaining the position of a commissioner and permanent committees can then be utilised to fund activities specifically targeted at maximising electrical safety, such as education, training and public awareness campaigns.

Will the minister guarantee this will be the case?

Another issue of concern in these amendments is the reduction in mandatory qualifications required for the new chairperson position compared with those for the commissioner. The commissioner was required to have an electrical trade or qualification and professional experience in electrical safety; the new chairperson of the Electrical Safety Board does not require a trade or qualification but merely requires professional experience in electrical safety. The department has responded to this by saying that it broadens the 'pool of persons'. That is certainly a glass half-full approach, but I think we prefer a narrower pool of people with a higher skill set and more in-depth knowledge of the industry and certainly some hands-on experience in the industry. I wonder what professional experience in electrical safety would meet the requirements of the new section. I would ask the Attorney-General to please outline the minimum standard of professional experience he would require before he would appoint someone to that position just so that we can be reassured that there will be no reduction in that role.

The next amendments relate to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 in relation to the imposition of the offender levy. They seek to include an exception for a breach of bail offence under section 33 of the Bail Act 1980. The original bill creating the offender levy exempted a breach of bail offence under section 29 of the act and section 33 was missed. This just clarifies that both offences are excluded from the operation of the offender levy.

The proposed amendments to QCAT were included in the Law Reform Amendment Bill 2011 that was introduced into the 53rd Parliament and lapsed when the parliament was prorogued. They allow legally qualified members to perform certain functions that could previously only be performed by judicial members—the president, a Supreme Court judge, the deputy president and a District Court judge. These include orders to transfer a matter to a more appropriate forum under section 52(7), power to grant injunctions under section 59(4) and power to make declarations under section 60(5). It also allows former judges who currently sit on QCAT as senior or ordinary members to exercise the powers that can only be exercised by a judicial member.

There are also consequential amendments to a couple of acts as a result of these amendments. The Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 is amended to ensure that the judicial member who constitutes a tribunal under section 68 of the act is a Supreme Court judge, not a legally qualified person in accordance with the amendment. The Legal Profession Act 2007 is also amended to allow the president of QCAT to appoint a former Supreme Court judge to constitute a tribunal under the act. At present, only a sitting Supreme Court judge is able to. This is in line with the amendment to QCAT.

Similarly, the amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968 facilitate the voluntary transfer of trustee company assets from one trustee company to another under the new national framework. They also allow the compulsory transfer of trustee company assets to the public trustee by ASIC. The Registrar of Titles can then register the transfer of an asset or liability where ASIC issues a certificate of transfer under the scheme. These amendments, which are necessary to give effect to the national scheme, are not controversial.

The opposition cannot support this bill because we are opposed to the abolition of the position of Electrical Safety Commissioner and the change in status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Licensing Committee. Unless we can be assured that there will be no reduction in electrical safety in Queensland based on empirical evidence and not the opinion of the Electrical Contractors Association, we cannot support these changes.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (11.45 am): As chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I would like to thank the staff and members of the committee for their work during the examination of the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The committee was fairly concerned with the omnibus nature of the bill. This relates primarily to members feeling that, if they are not able to vote for or against such a bill in its entirety, they are limited in their actions. However, we saw many bills in previous parliaments where governments would sneak in something very contentious with some very good things and it was very hard to vote against that bill. It is possible there are issues when bills such as this are presented. They may contain a number of unrelated matters and unrelated amendments of varying significance, some of which a member may agree with and others which the member may disagree with.

This bill implements a pre-election commitment to draft legislative amendments to install the independent Public Advocate as a statutory authority. The committee received three submissions which specifically mentioned being supportive of the relevant provisions in the bill that relate to the strengthening of the role and function of the Public Advocate. In his submission, the Public Trustee also noted its full support of the provisions relating to the independence of the Public Advocate. In relation to the right to information, the committee acknowledges the importance of the role of the Public Advocate and notes the recent history concerning the existence and role of the Public Advocate. The committee is pleased that the bill proposes to implement a number of key recommendations of the QLRC 2010 review in relation to the Public Advocate.

The bill amends the Electrical Act 1992 to remove administrative funding for political parties and independent members. Administrative funding was introduced by Labor in 2011. For political parties, it is paid twice a year—before 31 January for the period from 1 January to 30 June, and before 31 July for the period from 1 July to 31 December. Independent members are also entitled to administrative funding. The initial administrative funding for a six-month period was a maximum of \$20,000 for each elected member who received at least four per cent of the formal first preference votes at the last general election. This amount is increased annually on 1 July for movements in the consumer price index. Independent members are entitled to claim for actual administrative expenditure up to this amount within three months of the end of the relevant period. If passed, the effect of the bill will be that payments for the period 1 July to 31 December 2012 will be the last administrative funding payments to political parties and Independent members. As Independent members claim after the end of the relevant period, the bill includes a transitional provision which allows those members to claim for that period despite the repeal of the provisions.

The committee is not aware of any issues associated with this aspect of the bill. Indeed, the committee did not receive any submissions in relation to the removal of this funding. In relation to cost-saving strategies implemented by the current government, the committee considers that this amendment clearly shows that the government is leading by example. The removal of these provisions will ensure that funds are directed to more appropriate areas and this will achieve greater outcomes for the people of Queensland. The committee commends the government for taking this step and notes the comments from the Attorney-General at the recent estimates hearing in this regard. Those comments can be found in the *Hansard*. I will not read them to the House at this time.

Amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 are to replace the statutory commissioner for electrical safety with the position of chairperson and to remove the standing committee's status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee. This delivers sufficient cost savings while continuing to support electrical safety outcomes.

The committee has considered the policy objectives of the amendments as set out in the explanatory notes and information provided by the department and is satisfied that proposed changes will meet the stated policy objectives. The committee accepts that persons will still be able to raise issues independently of the department and that, while the appointment requirements of the new chairperson are set at a lower threshold, this will broaden the pool of persons who may apply while still requiring the minister to be satisfied as to the suitability of the person who is appointed. The committee is also satisfied that matters of ongoing safety have been considered by the government in proposing these amendments. In particular, the committee notes that many of the safety functions have already been addressed in the Electrical Safety Office as part of the department's representation on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council and that industry and members of the community are represented on the Electrical Safety Board. Further, if required, it is noted that the affected committees can continue as an advisory committee under the act. Finally, while consultation with community bodies is to be encouraged, the committee acknowledges that the government gave due consideration to the extent of the consultation it should undertake having regard to matters of safety and government policy and considers that matters of safety will not be compromised by the amendments proposed in the bill.

In relation to the Legal Profession Act 2007, the committee considers that these amendments are necessary to support the changes to the QCAT act provided in part 8 of this bill. As to the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, again the committee considers these amendments are necessary to support the changes to the QCAT act. As to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the committee is not aware of any issues regarding this aspect of the bill and the committee supports these changes.

As to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the committee notes that these amendments have the support of the president of QCAT. The committee also supports these amendments together with the consequential amendments noted. The committee considers that they will enhance the responsiveness of QCAT to its users. The committee does not consider there is any reason the amendments should not proceed.

As to the Trustee Companies Act 1968, the committee has not identified any issues in relation to this aspect of the bill, nor have any issues been raised by anybody affected by these clauses, including the Public Trustee of Queensland. The committee supports the amendments and considers the amendments must be passed to provide ongoing certainty for trustee companies operating in Queensland under the national arrangements.

In relation to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, the committee notes that these changes are necessary because of the amendments proposed to the Electrical Safety Act 2002. In relation to minor and consequential amendments, the committee has also reviewed this clause and the corresponding schedule and is satisfied that no issues arise from the proposed changes.

There were a number of submissions: from the Office of the Adult Guardian Queensland, the Electrical Contractors Association, the Electrical Trades Union of Employees, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Public Trustee of Queensland, the Endeavour Foundation and National Seniors Australia. I commend the bill to the House.



Miss BARTON (Broadwater—LNP) (11.52 am): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I start by acknowledging my fellow colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, led very ably by my colleague the member for Condamine. I thank also the secretariat for the great work that they have done not only in assisting the committee with the submissions that we received but also in the preparation of the report. I would also like to thank those who have taken the time to make submissions to the committee. I believe that we as a committee have a very important role to play in how legislation comes into this House and is debated. I think the ability to make submissions is a very important part of our democracy and I thank those who take the time to do so for that.

The changes that this bill will introduce go toward honouring the Newman government's election commitment to the people of Queensland to stop the economic waste and mismanagement that had become so common under the former failed Labor government, to introduce cost-saving measures and to improve accountability and efficiency in government. It also honours our pledge to the people of Queensland regarding the independence of the Public Advocate. Strengthening the independence of the Public Advocate will ultimately see the services that are delivered to the vulnerable people of Queensland by government and also by non-government entities improve as well as the efficacy of their delivery. For those who are unaware, the Public Advocate plays a very important role in making recommendations to government about how we might best be able to help adults with impaired capacity and make sure that their voices are heard.

I am a very strong believer that we as a government and all of us here in this place as individual members have an obligation to stand up for the most vulnerable in our society. I believe that this must include adults who do not have the capacity to be advocates for themselves because of some impairment. This is why strengthening the office and the independence of the Public Advocate is so critical. One of the positive outcomes of these changes will be the increased access to information that was previously inaccessible. This will increase the information available to the Public Advocate as they determine the recommendations that they make. This could only be a good thing for Queensland and Queenslanders. Critically, it is also important to note that the personal information that might be gained by the Public Advocate will be protected and will remain confidential under provisions in these amendments.

I believe that it is very important that we have a strong guardianship system that has effective safeguards for the benefit of the vulnerable Queenslanders in our society. The changes that we are making will ensure that the Public Advocate is able to be what it needs to be and, importantly, is able to be what it should be. Queensland will now have a full-time, permanent Public Advocate and a full-time Adult Guardian. Previously, these appointments had merely been on a temporary basis. I think that it is great to see full-time, permanent appointments so early in our first term. I congratulate the Attorney on that.

This amendment bill also includes changes to the Electoral Act and will see the administrative funding for political parties discontinued. As Queensland works towards getting the state back in the black, seeks to repay the debt left by the Bligh-Fraser Labor government and seeks to regain our AAA credit rating, some tough decisions have had to be made and this is one of them. We will also see changes to the Electrical Safety Act. One of the first things we are doing is replacing the Commissioner for Electrical Safety with the chairperson whose role is based on the model as set out in the Work Health and Safety Act. We will also see the removal of the nominated standing committee status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee. This will help honour our government's commitment to reduce red tape and reduce economic waste and mismanagement.

This bill also sees amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act as a follow-up to the offender levies that were recently introduced. These changes will ensure that those whose offence is simply a breach of the Bail Act will not be charged a levy as that was never the intention of that legislation.

There have also been changes to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act so that we can ease the burdens being experienced by judicial members. This government has identified opportunities for widening the pool of tribunal members who are able to make orders of a procedural nature and for using former judges as judicial members.

What is so critical for me personally about this bill is the changes that we have made in the Office of the Adult Guardian and also in the Public Advocate. As I said earlier, I believe that it is imperative that as a government we can ensure that those who do not have the capacity to advocate for themselves have someone who is strong and is able to advocate on their behalf and is able to truly represent them. I feel that this government has taken great strides towards this, and I commend the Attorney for the great work that he has done in this area. It is something that I am particularly passionate about—helping vulnerable people. I am so pleased to see the work that we are doing in this area. I thank the Attorney again. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise in support of the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, introduced to this parliament on 11 September 2012 by the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the member for Kawana. This bill has a similar theme to a number of pieces of legislation that the Newman government has introduced to parliament since being elected in March 2012, a theme where the people of Queensland wanted a better way of doing things—streamlined, more efficient, less costly—and a responsible way of governing. This bill delivers on the promises of the LNP. This bill helps untangle and dismantle unnecessary Labor red tape and provides legislative cohesion and accountability.

Firstly, the bill changes the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000. As part of its 100-day action plan the government committed to commence drafting legislative amendments to install the independent Public Advocate as a statutory authority within the first 30 days. What has the Attorney-General done? Tick. The Public Advocate is already established as an independent statutory officer, but the additional powers will strengthen the Public Advocate's independence and ability to perform its functions.

Responses submitted to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee indicated support for the amendments. There were supportive submissions from the Endeavour Foundation, National Seniors Australia and the Public Trustee. The Public Trustee of Queensland is stated as saying—

The strengthening of the role and function of the Public Advocate, including its independence is a matter which I fully support.

Once these amendments commence, they will have an instant and practical benefit to the Public Advocate, who will be in a position to assess personal and statistical information from a range of sources which were not previously accessible.

This bill also changes the structure of the Electrical Safety Act 2002 as well as the model of the Electoral Act 1992. The amendments give effect to the announcement of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade on 2 August 2012 that administrative funding for political parties and independent members would be removed. This is expected to result in savings of approximately \$3 million per year.

With regard to the Electrical Safety Act 2002, these amendments recognise the diminishing role of the statutory office of the commissioner and deliver significant cost savings while continuing to deliver electrical safety outcomes. The change is also timely, as the current commissioner's term expired on 4 November this year and he has indicated that he will not be seeking reappointment. The amendments will also remove the statutory commissioner position and replace this with a new chairperson role on an as-required basis. Also, the minister is able to establish advisory committees as and when required, providing flexibility regarding committee composition and workload requirements. These amendments will achieve savings of approximately \$94,000 per annum, based on the current figures, when compared with the cost of continuing the current arrangements.

It should be noted that a submission to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee was made by the member for South Brisbane's mates the Electrical Trades Union. Not surprisingly, their submission was not supportive of the bill. My only guess is that that is because the bill severs some of

the unnecessary apron strings left over from the previous Labor government. Importantly, a submission to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee was made also by the independent Electrical Contractors Association which states—

The ECA supports the government's move to improve efficiency and accountability in the systems and practices of government. We are optimistic that the proposed changes to the *Electrical Safety Act 2002* contained in the *Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012* will be a positive step forward in this regard. The ECA is also confident that the proposed amendments to the *Electrical Safety Act 2002* will not reduce the inspectorate's capacity to respond to incidents and complaints nor in any other way compromise the electrical safety of electrical workers or the wider Queensland public.

In short this means that, like on so many other occasions since forming government, the LNP has delivered a better, more cost-efficient way of delivering important outcomes at less cost to taxpayers.

This bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 and the Trustee Companies Act 1968 with the goal of providing better outcomes by streamlining processes and providing a more accountable structure. Importantly, the bill removes restrictions under the QCAT Act on the exercise of certain stated powers of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Opportunities have been identified for widening the pool of tribunal members who are able to make orders of a procedural nature and for the use of former judges as judicial members—common-sense changes, I think. These amendments will improve the operation of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Provisions in the corporations and other legislation amendment act 2011 facilitate the voluntary transfer of trustee company business from one trustee company to another and for compulsory transfers to be made to a state or territory Public Trustee even if not a licensed trustee company. Amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968 facilitate these transfers.

I commend the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the member for Kawana, for the work associated with bringing this bill to the House. This bill helps untangle and dismantle unnecessary Labor red tape, provides legislative cohesion and delivers better outcomes for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (12.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. It gives me great pleasure to rise on this occasion as I, too, am a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

The bill amends the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 to provide additional powers to the Public Advocate to strengthen the independence of this office to provide systems advocacy. The bill will provide additional powers such as to compel the providing of information from individuals so that the Public Advocate may have access to better information about matters relevant to the systems advocacy functions and apply sanction for instances of noncompliance, prepare reports to the minister where required on systems issues; and require the minister to table such information in parliament. This aspect of the bill delivers on the LNP's commitment within its 100-day action plan. The additional powers fortify the Office of the Public Advocate's independence and ability to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

The bill also includes amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 to remove the provision of public money as administrative funding for political parties and Independent members of parliament saving, as mentioned by the member for Burleigh, the Queensland taxpayer approximately \$3 million a year. I know how \$3 million a year could be used in my electorate. I think that is a very positive step. The public should not be funding political campaigns. Parties and individuals themselves should be doing that through other means.

There are resulting amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to remove the statutory position of the Commissioner for Electrical Safety, as we have heard here this morning, and provide for the alternative role of chairman. They will also remove the standing committee status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee from being nominated statutory committees, with a consequential amendment to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. This will promote efficiency and economy while continuing to support electrical safety outcomes and initiatives. As a former member of the railway, I certainly have an appreciation for electrical safety. I do not accept that these amendments will in any way compromise the safety of workers and others.

The bill contains amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to exclude breach of bail, as an offence under section 33 of the Bail Act 1980, from the imposition of the offender levy, which is a provision under section 179C of the Penalties and Sentences Act.

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal—or QCAT—Act 2009 is amended to remove restrictions relevant to the exercise of stated tribunal powers. It will widen the pool for tribunal members to enable former judges who are ordinary or senior members to sit as judicial members on a wider range of matters, with consequential amendments to the Legal Profession Act 2007 and the Motor Accident

Insurance Act 1994. This will have significant impacts on the operations of QCAT—all positive aspects. The bill will also amend the Trustee Companies Act 1968 to facilitate both voluntary and compulsory transfers of trustee company business to the Public Trustee of Queensland. Provisions in the Corporations and Other Legislation Amendment (Trustee Companies and Other Measures) Act 2011 provides for the voluntary transfer of trustee company business from one trustee company to another and, importantly, for the compulsory transfer to be made to a state or territory Public Trustee. Amendments to the Trustee Companies Act 1968 facilitate such transfers.

Although not an overly exciting bill in comparison to others which have come before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee or, indeed, this House, I believe this bill provides for significant improvements in the way matters relevant are dealt with and ultimately more efficiency and effectiveness for Queensland and Queenslanders. I am of course grateful to the hardworking staff of the committee—Brook Hastie, Sharon Hunter, Ali Jarro, Kelli Longworth and Gail Easton—for their efforts and professional attention to detail in handling the many submissions received. I also thank those who took interest to provide submissions to the committee, because that of course is an important part of how committees function in this place. I congratulate the Attorney-General and his department for the development of this important public policy and I thank my fellow committee members, led of course by the member for Condamine. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (12.11 pm): I rise in support of the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I commend the Attorney-General for the great job he is doing as Attorney-General, not just in terms of this bill but the role of Attorney-General in general. He has done a fantastic job and continues to do a fantastic job in that role. This bill continues this government's legacy of keeping election promises by implementing cost-saving measures that this state badly needs as a result of the previous government's poor financial management. This bill, firstly, creates the Public Advocate as a statutory authority and I am pleased to see the Attorney-General acting on behalf of some of Queensland's most disadvantaged. Tackling these issues takes fortitude, something that the previous government sadly lacked. We on this side of the House believe that spending more does not necessarily lead to better outcomes. Previous programs that previous governments undertook that included pipes without dams and dams without pipes and a Health payroll disaster that is almost beyond comprehension are evidence that just throwing bucketloads of money does not give good outcomes.

This government takes a new approach. We are streamlining processes and increasing the independence of institutions to allow for improvements so that government and non-government organisations can deliver services to Queensland's most vulnerable. The Public Advocate will be given two key additional powers to strengthen its ability to perform its role. The first will be to allow the Public Advocate to access information or documents that the Public Advocate currently does not have access to so that the Public Advocate may be better informed when undertaking the systems advocacy function. The second will be to allow the Public Advocate to report at times on system issues and requires the Attorney-General to table the reports in parliament. This will ensure closer ties to the responsible minister to have better oversight of the tasks and allow greater working relationships.

We are also cognisant of the importance of privacy in these matters. When dealing with members of our community, it is crucial that the people's right to privacy is maintained. That is why the provisions that are designed to protect the confidentiality of any personal information collected during this process have been closely considered and included. The bill is designed to support and advocate for those who cannot make sound decisions on their own. It is vitally important that all Queenslanders have their rights guarded by strong institutional frameworks, especially those who experience impaired decision making. By making these necessary changes, we are giving the Public Advocate the power it needs in order to carry out its role as a strong and independent advocate for those who need it most. It is crucially important that we restore permanency in the role of the Public Advocate, and this is an important step to getting Queensland back on track.

The second part of the bill that I want to speak to are the changes to the Electoral Act 1992. Another pleasing objective of this bill is to remove the administration funding for political parties and Independent members. The LNP has made some very tough decisions in its short tenure to restore Queensland's dire financial predicament. At a time when Queensland was being subjected to record debt and record deficits, the previous government thought it justified to increase payments to political parties. We on this side of the House cannot abide by that and we cannot stand by and watch money being spent on things that will not go to help Queenslanders who are doing it tough. It is very interesting that we as a party have done this. It shows great courage and great initiative. It is also interesting that the media really has not picked up on this. It is often said that those in parliament have their snouts in the trough, but the initiative by the Attorney-General to cut this funding is a clear example that the LNP is not tarred with that brush.

The bill removes administrative funding for political parties and Independent members under the Electoral Act 1992 as provided for under part 11 division 5 of the Electoral Act 1992. Let me remind the House that the LNP stands to reap the best rewards from the current arrangements. There can be no

question about the integrity of the decision of the LNP to lose \$2 million. This is just another example of the lengths that this government will go to to ensure a fair go for all and is part of the government's agenda for getting Queensland back on track. I commend the Attorney and commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.16 pm), in reply: I start by thanking all members of the House for their contributions this afternoon on this important bill, the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill fulfils the government's election commitment to strengthen the role and independence of the Public Advocate, giving additional powers to enable the Public Advocate to carry out its functions more effectively. Firstly, the Public Advocate will be given the power to obtain access to information or documents the Public Advocate currently does not have access to such as policies, procedures of a service or agency, statistical information kept by an agency or personal information about an adult with impaired capacity. The amendments include provisions to protect the confidentiality of the accessed information and penalties may be imposed if there is a breach of those provisions. In addition, the bill also allows the Public Advocate to report at any time on systemic issues and requires me to table the report in parliament within five business days of receiving that report. The Public Advocate will therefore be able to publicly raise at any time systemic issues which the Public Advocate has significant concerns about. These amendments will ensure the Public Advocate has the necessary powers to effectively carry out its systems advocacy functions.

The bill also contributes towards the government's pledge to the people of Queensland to implement cost-saving measures and improve efficiency and accountability in the systems and practices in government. In this regard, the bill amends the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to replace the statutory Commissioner for Electrical Safety position with a chairperson of the board and to remove the nominated standing committee status of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee. The statutory commissioner role was created to manage the transition into the new electrical safety environment created under the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and to facilitate the work of the Electrical Safety Board and its committees. Over the past decade the commissioner has overseen enhancement of Queensland's electrical safety legislation and subsequently the workload of the statutory commissioner position has decreased over time.

The proposed amendments will see the duties of the commissioner continue to be undertaken by the new chairperson. Likewise, the move from commissioner to chairperson will not alter the functions of the Electrical Safety Board, and his role expires in November 2012.

Mr Mulherin: The commissioner did a good job.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is an independent body that gives advice and makes recommendations to the minister about policies, strategies and legislative arrangements for electrical safety.

Similarly, the activities of the Electrical Safety Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee may be continued under the existing advisory provisions. Advisory committees may be established by the minister as and when required, provided flexibility regarding committee composition and meeting schedules to better meet variable workload requirements. These amendments will result in a contemporary board and committee structure best matched to the needs of the stakeholders and the community while also, and importantly, providing value for government. The proposed changes will achieve substantial ongoing savings to the government while not compromising any safety outcomes.

The bill also amends the Electoral Act 1992 to remove administrative funding for political parties and Independent members, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to exclude an offence under section 33 of the Bail Act 1980 from the imposition of the offender levy, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 to remove some restrictions on the exercise of the stated tribunal's powers and to enable former judges who are senior or ordinary members to sit as judicial members on a broader range of matters with consequential amendments to the Legal Profession Act 2007 and the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, and the Trustee Companies Act 1968 to facilitate voluntary transfers of trustee company business and compulsory transfers of trustee company business to the Public Trustee of Queensland with the consent, of course, of the Public Trustee of Queensland.

I thank the honourable members for their contributions to the debate today. I will deal with a few of the matters dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition talked about the Public Advocate and Adult Guardian and raised the issue with respect to the acting arrangements and the short period of time when there was no acting Public Advocate. The situation was that we had a series of acting arrangements and one of the members under that acting arrangement became ill. I thought it prudent that, instead of continuing to go through the acting arrangements, we should immediately employ a full-time Public Advocate and Adult Guardian. So we went about that and had all the relevant advertising, because our election commitment was clear: we were going to restore the Office of the Public Advocate to its rightful place and give it some grunt in its power rather than just being a body that sat there with limited staff and did not have any grunt.

I find it interesting that I would be lectured by the opposition leader for having a short period of time, after coming to government, in which an acting arrangement was not in place. Yet the party that now sits in opposition when it was in government had in place an acting arrangement since 2009, I am advised. Therefore, months and years went by when the previous government had in place acting arrangements for both the Adult Guardian and the Public Advocate. It did not believe in the importance of the role, so it just continued the arrangements. Within six months of this government taking office we now have a permanent Public Advocate in Queensland and we have a permanent Adult Guardian or the first time for months for those two respective roles. I think the people of Queensland can now see that we are serious about those positions. We have permanent roles both in respect to the Adult Guardian and the Public Advocate.

The opposition leader then talked about my diary again, because she has a copy of the diary. She questioned why on a particular date we interviewed four people for the Public Advocate's role. On the one hand the Leader of the Opposition congratulated Jodie Cook for getting the position and becoming the Public Advocate and then on the other hand she questioned why we conducted interviews with four people on a particular day. The Leader of the Opposition asked if I was at the meeting. Of course I was! It was a job interview! I had to appoint the person, so I wanted to meet the person. I do not know how the Labor Party did this, but I know they took no ministerial accountability or responsibility for the appointments they made. They always left it, because if there were any issues they could blame someone else. I interviewed Jodie Cook as well as did a departmental official. In fact, my acting director-general was at the meeting. I interviewed Jodie Cook for the position and a few other people. All nominees for the position were highly qualified, but at the end of the day I formed the view that Jodie Cook was the best person to perform that role. So the opposition leader cannot come in here and congratulate someone on getting a job and then question why the Attorney-General was involved. I like to be involved because I made the appointment. I made the recommendation for the appointment and I think I should have been involved to make sure that we had the best person in Queensland to fill the important role of the Public Advocate.

The opposition leader also talked about how the former Attorney-General decided not to merge the Adult Guardian and the Public Advocate. We spoke a lot about this in the election campaign, because we were always of the view that at all times these bodies should be separate. We should have the Adult Guardian and Public Advocate separate. The opposition comes in here and waxes lyrical about how we both went into the election campaign with this strong view that the two bodies should not be merged. Funny about that, because I have here—and I am going to table it for the benefit of members—the Labor government response to the report, *Brokering balance: a public interest map for Queensland government bodies*—an independent review of Queensland government boards, committees and statutory authorities. Item No. 133 of that report talks about the Office of the Public Advocate and it states—

Pending analysis of a different finding (in favour) of the structural capability of the Public Advocate to perform its essential role in the current guardianship laws review by the Queensland Law Reform Commission due by 31 December 2009, the Public Advocate should be abolished and its functions transferred to the Adult Guardian.

So that is the recommendation. The opposition leader, who is in here now, claims that the Labor Party went to the election with this strong commitment not to merge these bodies. Yet what she did not tell anyone about was this report. So that was the recommendation. What was the then Labor government's response to that recommendation to merge or abolish the Office of the Public Advocate? This is the government's response. Remember, a former Labor government minister said this—

The government acknowledges that the Review's recommendation is consistent with how the role of the Public Advocate operates in some of the other Australian jurisdictions. The functions will continue, but will be carried out by the Adult Guardian.

They were going to abolish the Office of the Public Advocate. They were going to abolish the very office that the opposition leader stands up here today and says, 'We had a strong commitment to protect the Office of the Public Advocate.' That is wrong and I will tell members why it is wrong, because this document that I am tabling now for the benefit of honourable members said that the Labor Party response to that report was that it supported the recommendation to abolish the Office of the Public Advocate.

Tabled paper: Brokering Balance: A Public Interest Map for Queensland Government Bodies—An Independent Review of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities, government response to the report [1614].

It was not until the media got hold of it and ran a campaign in the *Courier-Mail* against the abolition of that office that Paul Lucas then jumped at the opportunity and said, 'We have no intention of doing it.' The opposition leader tries to claim credit today that she was at one with the Liberal National Party going into the election supporting this office when the government response to the report says that it supported abolishing the Office of the Public Advocate and transferring its functions to the Adult Guardian. So the hypocrisy coming from the opposition leader today in trying to tell the people of Queensland that Labor has always supported the independent Public Advocate is wrong. We know it is wrong, because it is in writing in their response when they were in government. What they might say at an election to fool the people of Queensland may be one thing, but the people of Queensland can read it into black and white in the report that I have just tabled.

Interestingly, I see that the Leader of the Opposition is not opposing the deletion of administration funds for political parties. It is interesting because just over a year ago we came into this place and had this great debate about accountability, integrity, public funding of political parties and public funding of administration to political parties and those opposite changed the law at the time. They knew they were going to be voted out of office. The unions got cranky. The donations were not coming in. The unions were not supporting them because of the asset sales. They were not giving the member for Bundamba the money she usually relied on to secure her preselection. So they came into this place, I think it was the day after Gordon Nuttall was here, and debated electoral laws that filled the coffers of the Labor Party because they could not get donations. They have even had to reduce their membership fees to the price of a cheeseburger at McDonald's.

Mr Stevens: Is that with fries?

Mr BLEIJIE: You will not get fries with that, Manager of Government Business. What you will get is the same incompetent economic vandals that this state has seen for the last 14 years. There are seven of them sitting opposite. Three of them can be held directly responsible because they were in cabinet at the time. They were directly responsible for the economic vandalism that this state has seen. I was very surprised when the opposition leader came in here supporting our amendment to get rid of administration funding. There has been much public misinformation that has been put out, particularly from Mr Clive Palmer, about administration and other funding of political parties. Prior to the electoral amendments we saw in this place just over a year ago candidates who ran at election time received on average about \$1.50 per vote as long as they got over four per cent. The Labor Party knew that it was headed for political losses at the election so rather than just keeping the system in place where a candidate gets \$1.50 or whatever it was per vote they changed the whole system to one that we have never before seen in Queensland. The member for South Brisbane is looking at me. She is very interested because I would suggest that this came directly from her office in Peel Street. I can see the member for South Brisbane on the phone to Anna Bligh at the time, 'Hey, look, here is the donations register for the last month. We have dried up, folks.'

Mr Stevens: Was it in the archives?

Mr BLEIJIE: It was not in the archives. 'Donations have dried up. We have to do something. What are we going to do? We will take it from the people of Queensland. Not only will we tax them to death we will take it from the people of Queensland.' Rather than the \$1.50 per vote, they changed the law to really increase it based on expenditure. They capped donations and they capped expenditure to \$50,000 per electorate and approximately \$7 million for a political party. Not only did they cap the donations and cap the expenditure, but they gave themselves some administration funding. How much was this administration funding?

A government member: \$100,000?

Mr BLEIJIE: No, up, up.

A government member: \$500,000?

Mr BLEIJIE: No. \$1 million—\$1 million for six months. That meant that every six months the now member for South Brisbane, but the former deputy state secretary of the Australian Labor Party, would waltz down to the Electoral Commission office and rub her hands together and say, 'Give us our \$1 million, Mr Commissioner.' And the Commissioner would give them \$1 million. Then she would go back, the now member for South Brisbane, the former state secretary of the Labor Party, to Peel Street with Mr Chisholm and say, 'We can get a new cappuccino machine now.' And guess what? None of it was accountable. They did not care how any political party spent the money.

We are righting this wrong today. This impacts on our government's political party more so than the Labor Party. Would you ever have seen the Labor Party come in here and do what we are doing here today, actually defunding a political party and putting it back into the pockets of Queenslanders? I am not only attacking the Labor government for bringing that law, it also impacts on our party, the Liberal National Party, because it will miss out on its \$2 million funding a year, too. We will restore accountability to electoral reforms in this state. The opposition leader asked me about a green paper. I will be releasing a green paper and I will release it when I said I was going to release it—by the end of this year. That electoral reform paper will question all things including donations, public funding and union donations. I am particularly interested in union donations. Not only did the Labor Party change the legislation to hit the hip pockets of Queenslanders and give the Labor Party \$2 million admin funding a year—and the Liberal National Party and Independents a little bit of admin funding as well—they put what they call third-party definitions in the legislation in terms of donations. But guess who was exempt from certain associated entities? Guess who has an exemption under the Electoral Act? The unions! Surprise, surprise, the unions have an exemption!

Mr Rickuss: 'Big Bill' put that clause in.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. I think it is interesting you call out 'Big Bill'. Yesterday at the community cabinet the Prime Minister was at she was referring to Joe Ludwig, her minister, but she introduced him as Bill Ludwig. Isn't it interesting that the Labor Party

always have 'Big' Bill Ludwig on their mind? When I release this green paper later this year I will canvass the issue of union donations, I will canvass the issue of third-party endorsement, I will canvass the issue of third-party entitlements. If a business was associated in some way under the Corporations Act with another business, under the electoral laws they were associated and therefore could give only one donation. But a union has an exemption. There can be 13 associated unions in Queensland all bowing to the Australian Labor Party, Queensland division, but they are exempt from these provisions. I know the opposition leader will be very interested when I release my green paper on electoral reform and accountability. I would tell her to go straight to the pages on trade unions in Queensland and then she can wonder where they are going to get their money from in future. Because they will not get it out of the Big Macs that they sell for the membership of the Labor Party. That will not be enough to sustain them.

We will turn the tide in Queensland with electoral reform and accountability. Today we are saying—and I warn all political parties in Queensland, even our own party—we will not be bullied by political apparatchiks in the offices of political organisations about this administration funding. Yes, it may hurt the political parties, but we will not be bullied by anyone—not in the Labor Party, the Greens, the Liberal National Party, Katter's Australian Party or the Sex Party. We will not be bullied by anyone.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable Minister for Local Government. We will stand up to the Sex Party and all those parties to make sure that we have a reform agenda in this state that Queenslanders can be proud of. I think Queenslanders will be particularly proud that we are abolishing \$2 million in admin funding being paid to political parties so that they can run their political campaigns out of those offices with no accountability. It will hurt the political parties but it is the right thing to do. We are doing it because it is the right thing to do. We have more guts to do it than the Australian Labor Party will ever have. I guarantee, as night follows day or day follows night, that one of the first reforms the Labor Party will make will be to the Electoral Act to reinstate this slush fund that it has given itself. Through this green paper, we will ensure that all these matters are out there in the public domain.

I apologise to all honourable members who made contributions as I have not got to those contributions yet, but the Leader of the Opposition gave me plenty to respond to and talk about, so I will carry on. She talked about the ETU. Would it surprise members to know that the opposition leader commends the ETU? Members will never find me commending a union in this place, but it is no surprise that the Leader of the Opposition commends the ETU. Not only did she say she commends the ETU but also she said she bows to the ETU. I can see the opposition leader, the member for Inala, on her way to her preselection. The ETU members are out the front and she is bowing to the ETU and to all the unions. I can see her bowing to 'Big' Bill Ludwig who, incidentally, the Prime Minister thought was at the community cabinet last night. She forgot that her own minister's name was Joe Ludwig and not Bill Ludwig, because Bill Ludwig is always on her mind. Bill Ludwig is always on the mind of the Queensland Labor Party. Whatever they want to do, first they have to ring 'Big' Bill to make sure that they can do it. I assume he now has more time to talk to them, because there are only seven of them to make phone calls.

Mr Dickson: He's not on the racing board anymore.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is right; he is not on the racing board anymore, so I suspect he has a little time.

Mr Johnson: He will be up to no good somewhere.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection. I suspect that of the seven opposite, the one who will be on the phone to 'Big' Bill all the time would be the member for South Brisbane.

Ms Palaszczuk: Tell us about Clive Palmer.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are many interjections in the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the opposition leader. She is more of a friend to Clive Palmer than this party ever will be and more than any member will be. She sees Santo Santoro more than any of the members on this side of the chamber. I was at the function that she attended with Santo Santoro.

A government member: What about the hat? Was he holding the hat?

Mr BLEIJIE: No, he was not holding the hat. Incidentally, I think the other function that she was at with Santo Santoro was sponsored by his company and she held the raffle hat. She was Santo Santoro's raffle opposition leader.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: No, I would not be that disrespectful, because I would be accused of being a misogynist and all sorts of things. I will not go down that path. I thank the opposition leader for her contribution, which is always enlightening. Really, I think her contributions always give great insights into

how the Labor Party affiliates with the unions in Queensland. They do not get it. They do not get that Queensland has gone past those days of getting the unions to approve everything. The Labor Party has to work out that they should be listening to Queenslanders, not to the bullish tactics of union heavyweights and, for that matter, political party heavyweights.

Ms Palaszczuk: What about Clive Palmer? How's Clive Palmer working—

Mr BLEIJIE: I can assure the House that members will hear more compliments about Clive Palmer from the opposition leader than they will of me. My remaining time is limited, although we have 33 clauses to consider so if I have run out of time I might talk to the clauses, because then I really can finish this contribution and thank all honourable members.

I pay particular tribute to the member for Condamine, the chair of the committee. We are keeping his committee quite busy. I thank all honourable members of the Legal Affairs Committee for all the work that they do. It has always been a busy committee, but it has been particularly busy in the past seven months. They are doing a tremendous job in delivering reports and looking at all the investigative matters. The opposition leader talked about consultation. This bill went to a committee and a committee investigated it. I think eight submissions were put in. I do not think anyone complained about the time. The chairman has explained the committee process. They made a recommendation that the bill be passed. A lot of these matters are really noncontentious in terms of the role of the Public Advocate. We will have a permanent Public Advocate, which for years the Labor Party could not deliver for Queensland. It could never deliver a permanent Public Advocate; it was going to abolish the Office of the Public Advocate.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: You can talk to the business leader all you want, but I am talking to you—through the chair, of course. I am talking to the Leader of the Opposition through the chair. The opposition leader missed my little comment about why I attended a meeting in my office. First, it was my office and I was entitled to be there. Secondly, it was an interview.

A government member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Secondly, it was a meeting; that is correct. Thirdly, she has my diary so she can see it. There is nothing to hide. Fourthly, it was a job interview and I was appointing. I was making the appointment. If I want to make the appointment, I want to know the person I am appointing. I want to know that the person I am putting forward to lead this change in the role of the Public Advocate is the best person for the job. With all respect to public servants, I am not going to hand that to public servants and say, 'You come up with the best person for the job.' I want to be personally involved because the vulnerable people of Queensland do not and should not expect anything less. They want the best person in the role of the Public Advocate.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The Leader of the House may move an extension of time if the Leader of the Opposition is not careful. The role of the Public Advocate is very important. I support Jodie Cook absolutely. I will make sure that her office is fully equipped to handle these most important matters for vulnerable Queenslanders. We talk about accountability. When Jodie Cook gives me a report, I must table it within five business days, not hide it in cabinet like the opposition leader did with the LPITAF money. We will be an open and accountable government. I will table the documents, not hide them as the Leader of the Opposition did.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 63—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Cavallucci, Choat, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gullely, Hart, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, Menkens, Millard, Molhoek, Newman, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Smith, Sorensen

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.02 pm to 2.30 pm.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before commencing private members' statements, I acknowledge Gladstone West State School, teachers and staff. Welcome.

Mr Johnson: Whose electorate is that?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is the electorate of Gladstone, a very fine area.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Community Titles Schemes, Discussion Paper

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.30 pm): The Newman government is today releasing for consultation a discussion paper outlining a proposed model for introducing ordinary, individual, freehold land in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Newman government recognises that Queensland's Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders want to own their own homes so they can participate in the broader economy and have assets to pass on to their families. The discussion paper, *Providing freehold title in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*, is an important step forward in making this option a reality.

The paper outlines the existing land ownership arrangements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and explains the proposed freehold title model and how it could be implemented. I table the discussion paper for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Department of Justice and Attorney-General discussion paper for consultation titled 'Management Rights in Community Titles Schemes' [\[1617\]](#).

The government will consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in relation to the proposed model and seeks written submissions by Friday, 29 March 2013. The Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the member for Cook, will play an important role in this consultation process. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for Local Government in the development of this discussion paper.

It is proposed the option of making suitable areas of a community available for freehold would apply to the 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which are the subject of an Aboriginal shire council or Indigenous regional council. Importantly, the proposed freehold model will not be forced upon communities. It is up to the community to decide.

Communities may also elect to only adopt the freehold model in part of their community. In those areas where freeholding is not being adopted the current land tenure arrangements, including leasing, will continue.

The discussion paper sets out the steps the land trustee, the local government and the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community would be required to undertake to make freehold title available in their community. The government recognises the significance of this proposal and that the key to striking the right policies is direct consultation with the communities that stand to gain so much.

The Premier will today write to key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups to provide them with a copy of the discussion paper and invite them to make submissions on the model by 29 March 2013. The LNP wants to offer residents of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the same opportunity that is available to other Queenslanders—the ability to own their own home and pursue a business opportunity on ordinary freehold land.

Indigenous Communities, Land Tenure

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (2.32 pm): How can it be that in such an expansive and prosperous land as ours the ability to own land is still denied to some citizens? Ownership is not denied by circumstance but by long-established laws which determine that land in some communities cannot be bought and sold. These are the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where freehold title does not exist, or exists in just a few pockets.

In the previous sitting week, we celebrated the life of Mr Deeral, the former member for Cook. He saw almost 40 years ago a better future for Indigenous Queenslanders and had a practical vision for how it could be achieved. The improved lifestyle he saw was based on the ready availability of freehold

land in Indigenous communities—freehold land which could be used for homeownership or business enterprise. He saw four decades ago that welfare was a self-perpetuating problem that created dependence and eliminated enterprise within communities.

There is an inextricable link between social problems and economic disadvantage. The more a community can be 'normalised' through employment and business opportunities, the better the chances of dealing with social problems like alcohol and substance misuse and violence towards women and children. This government's approach to addressing Indigenous disadvantage is to see jobs created and local economies developed which support homeownership and the creation of small businesses. If we can create jobs, most of the rest of the social problems in the community will take care of themselves.

I do not for a moment think that it will be a quick and easy task to make freehold land readily available across all Indigenous communities. There are significant issues for the communities to consider—issues which could have a dramatic impact on their lives. For example, a community that wants to make freehold land available must consider whether native title will be extinguished.

I understand that rights to land for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners have been hard fought over many generations, so the question of extinguishment is a very big decision. Also, once a piece of land is declared freehold, it is then available to be onsold by the owner to someone else—even a buyer from outside the community. If people have their own home on freehold land, they are responsible for paying rates and the maintenance of the property. These are some of the issues to be considered and discussed at length so that each community can come to an informed decision.

We want to work with communities to identify what is best for each one and to what extent, if at all, freehold land can be made part of the community. The provision of freehold land is not a solution in itself but an option and is part of a wider strategy to address entrenched disadvantage within Indigenous communities.

Four decades ago, Mr Deeral had a vision. We owe it to him and all members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to see that vision through.

Indigenous Communities, Land Tenure



Mr KEMPTON (Cook—LNP) (2.36 pm): For the first time in the history of Queensland an opportunity may exist for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to own their own home on their traditional lands in ordinary freehold. This is not the token of paternalistic 'inalienable' freehold forced on communities by the previous government. To wake up in your own bed, in your own house with your own family is so commonplace in Queensland. To say we take it for granted is an understatement.

To most Indigenous people in Queensland this has been an impossible dream until now. If one Indigenous family in one community has an opportunity to build and occupy their own home, we raise awareness of not only the responsibility of homeownership but the infinite benefits that accrue. If we are able to encourage 30 per cent of the community to own their own homes, we reach a tipping point where individual awareness becomes a community awareness. The ripple effect is the creation of a community responsibility around homeownership and, if I am correct, in time exit chronic substance abuse, unemployment and community fatigue and, of course the big one, welfare dependence. My fingers remain crossed.

There is always another side to this story. Torres Strait Islanders refer to presettlement as 'before time'. 'Before time' there was a complex system of land 'ownership'. Specifically, families lived upon certain areas as their own. This ownership was respected and handed down from generation to generation through a complex family interrelationship. There was, of course, no written evidence or title deed. It just was.

Larger areas were owned by everyone and no-one and people were able to travel within these areas and take resources according, again, to a very complex relationship process. Outsiders were often met with hostility. Of course, sovereignty changed all of that in a very short time as the fact of community title was swept away. Twenty years ago the pendulum swung back to an extent, with the historic Mabo decision that debunked the doctrine of terra nullius and partly restored the notion of community title. Mabo did not, however, recognise at law the concept of an individual native title holder's exclusive right to live upon a specific area of land. Let me explain by example.

On a recent visit to the Torres Strait I was approached by a young woman who bought a house for \$50,000, built by her uncle on traditional land. She lives in the house with her children and her husband and is paying the uncle \$500 a month. There is no contract. The problem is she has no title to that house and she is not entitled to obtain one. She cannot mortgage the house nor will it to her children. She occupies it for now by virtue of the respect of her ownership by her community. She worries that over time this might not accrue to her children. The LNP government will give this young lady an opportunity to rectify this anomaly and will provide an opportunity for all Indigenous communities to complete the process commenced by Eddie Mabo—freehold ownership of their own homes. I support the proposed process wholeheartedly.

(Time expired)

Newman Government, Performance

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): The appalling soap opera that is the LNP government continues to roll along with a daily dose of denial, scandal, infighting and blame shifting that, quite frankly, on occasion defies belief. Over the past six days we have seen this government reveal its true colours. We have seen a senior minister deny any wrongdoing only to resign a day later when it became apparent that the truth was about to be revealed. We have witnessed the Premier initially support and defend that same minister only to change his tune within 24 hours.

Mr Johnson: At least he resigned. None of your mob ever resigned—should've done.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have seen another minister attempt to dodge and weave away from the sorts of allegations that have cost her cabinet colleague his job only to leave important questions unanswered and issues critical to the very heart of accountability made light of.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Queenslanders should be under no illusion. While this daily soap opera may be irresistible, providing them with some entertainment every night with a new instalment on the six o'clock news, this is an atrocious way to run government and an atrocious way to run Queensland. These ministers and the Premier clearly do not consider matters of accountability to be paramount. They need look no further than their ministerial colleague the former public works minister, who also clearly considered these matters unimportant. That has resulted in him falling on his sword but only after making the outrageous claim that the responsibility of a minister's office is not with the minister at all but with their staff.

It is critical that ministers of this government keep accurate, up-to-date, truthful records of whom they are meeting with in their lobbyists register. Why? It is simple. It is the job of the lobbyist to approach government with one clear aim: to achieve gain for their clients, often financial. These ministers are the decision makers. They are the people who sit around the cabinet table. They are the people Queenslanders have entrusted to look after their interests and so far they have all been proved to be a miserable failure.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We on this side of the House are not the decision makers. We do not sit around the cabinet table.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Look at this rabble. Look at you all. You are a disgrace!

Mr Crandon: You're a disgrace!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We do not sit around the cabinet table. What we do is ensure that those people who are sitting around the cabinet table remain accountable. That is the function of opposition.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We take it very seriously. This government can look forward to our continual monitoring of this daily soap opera. It can be assured that we take our job extremely seriously, and we will keep each and every one of you accountable in this House day in and day out.

(Time expired)

Springwood Electorate, Events

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (2.43 pm): I want to speak about a few very special people in my electorate of Springwood, but before I begin my contribution I cannot help referring to an 'atrocious way to run government', which were the words that just came out of the Leader of the Opposition's mouth. When the opposition was in office, \$2,000 million was wasted on two projects. That is an atrocious way to run this state—\$2,000 million wasted.

On another note, I would like to speak with appreciation of Nigel and Erika Reed and their daughter Zoe. I recently met Nigel and Erika at the Slacks Creek State School where Nigel had finished walking from Port Douglas in North Queensland to Slacks Creek, south of Brisbane. Nigel and Erika lost their daughter Zoe when she was just 11 years of age to asthma and cystic fibrosis and Zoe's Garden has been established at Slacks Creek State School where many families and friends have gathered to

remember Zoe and to honour her memory and also to thank Nigel, her father, for raising millions of dollars by walking across many continents. He has walked across America and has raised millions and millions of dollars. Well done, Nigel and Erika!

Recently the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, gave out awards for the Buy Smart Competition run by the Office of Fair Trading. Two bright, very beautiful young girls—Chloe and Anna—who attend Kimberley Park State School won the years 4 to 6 segment of the competition. I believe in excess of 400 applicants were received for that competition, and I say to Chloe and Anna very well done, keep up the good work and keep up those smiling faces.

Lastly, I would like to speak about Relay for Life and commend Audrey Turner for the work that she recently did in establishing the first Relay for Life in Springwood. She brought together 21 teams of walkers, and friends and family camped out overnight. In that one day they raised \$30,000 for the Queensland Cancer Council. Well done Audrey Turner and the team that worked with you.

Get in the Game

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): I rise to talk about the Newman government's fantastic Get in the Game initiative. I am determined to get more kids in our community active and involved in sporting and recreational opportunities. Sports and recreation is the heart of our local communities. It not only strengthens our communities but also fosters great friendships and promotes a healthier lifestyle. Those who know me well know that I have a long history of supporting grassroots sports and being involved in our local communities. I am currently a life member of a junior sports club in which I have held executive and volunteer positions, and I have been one of the many parents who has been a committee member, first aid officer, coach, team manager, boundary umpire, ground marshal and even the fruit supplier for the half-time huddle.

Throughout my experience in these many roles, it has taught me that there are many children who miss out on the opportunity to join a local club due to financial situations at home. While I was the treasurer at the Narangba Australian Football Club, I saw firsthand just how tough some mums and dads were doing it and how difficult they found it to afford the registration fees, game day fees and cost of shorts, socks, shirts et cetera. Parents would tell me that they would sooner support government providing assistance with the cost of registration before seeing governments grandstanding with million-dollar projects and photo opportunities.

Get in the Game addresses the situation and provides all kids with an opportunity to have a go. It gives all kids the opportunity to shoot some hoops, to kick a footy or to whack a ball. It is also part of the Newman government's plan to lower the cost of living for families and comes on top of other cost-of-living policies we have already delivered including freezing tariff 11 electricity, the \$80 water rebate, the reduction in public transport fare increases and weekly discounts, the freezing of motor vehicle registrations and the reintroduction of the stamp duty concession when the family purchases a new home, saving the average buyer around \$7,000.

Get in the Game is a three-year, \$18 million initiative that is separated into three sections and supports grassroots sports participation. Get Started will provide vouchers up to \$150 to assist kids in joining a sport or recreational club. Get Started will provide more than 40,000 vouchers of up to \$150 to help with the cost of registration fees. Get Going will see \$10,000 grants paid directly to the local sports club to help them grow through the purchase of new sporting equipment or promoting new membership initiatives. The Get Playing program will provide \$100,000 grants for the clubs to upgrade or replace existing facilities and their infrastructure. I recently held a public forum at the Caboolture Hub, where sports clubs were invited to attend and find out more details.

The forum was a huge success with many sports clubs in my electorate attending and supporting this initiative. I encourage all sports and recreation clubs in my electorate to get on board and participate in this great program. I look forward to working with clubs in my electorate to nurture and develop our sporting heroes and those sporting champions whom we will see in Queensland for years to come.

Nudgee Electorate, Events

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (2.48 pm): I rise today to talk about another one of my favourite subjects and, no, it is not about health.

Mr Bleijie: Apples.

Mr WOODFORTH: No, it is not about apples either. It is about the electorate of Nudgee, but there might be a little bit of health and fitness in here.

Last week I was at Virginia State School with the school's running club, run by parent Ben Ryan. Ben is doing a fantastic job of keeping children active and healthy. He started out with just his own three kids and has built this up to some 60 kids. Last week I joined them in some sprints and running, and I thought I was doing really well keeping up with them until I asked the student running next to me what grade he was in and he said 'grade 2'. That was a reality check.

Ben is now taking it to another level and introducing a healthier diet for the children. He will be working with the tuckshop next year to ensure there is only healthy real food choices available. A big congratulations to Ben but also to the students from Virginia State School who have given up the Xbox for the running track and packets of chips for some fruit and veg.

I am also happy to update the House on the Geebung rail overpass project in the Nudgee electorate. Demolition is well underway, and we are in constant contact with the Brisbane City Council to ensure that this much-needed piece of infrastructure is completed by November 2014. The residents of Geebung and surrounding suburbs know that this completion date cannot come soon enough.

Mr Crandon: Do they still have a polo club in Geebung?

Mr WOODFORTH: I don't think so. It is well and truly gone. I recently had the pleasure of attending school assembly and awards nights including at Geebung State School, where the girls choir sang for the first time on stage and did not miss a beat. Well done to their singing teacher, Miss Penna, who has done a great job with the girls. I look forward to the next awards day in December when for the first time the boys choir will perform.

I have also been visiting other schools over the last month and interacting with principals, teachers and parents. Those schools have included OLA, Wavell primary, Nudgee College junior and senior schools and Virginia State School. I cannot forget the great Earnshaw State College, where great students have come from such as a past school captain from 1994, the member for Pine Rivers. I have just finished a tour of parliament and had lunch with Earnshaw State College's principal Deb Murphy, senior school deputy Richard Tweney, school captains Kyle Smith and Tamasin Smith and vice captains Mana Small and Brittany Foreman.

Last month I had the pleasure of being a guest at the Wonargo Revue performance by Scouts Queensland at their Northgate den. The performances by the girl and boy scouts was nothing short of exceptional. Well done to you all. May I also congratulate the Golden Circle Cannery at Northgate for celebrating their 65th year. It is a truly iconic Queenslander, with their items having adorned the fridges and pantries of almost every Australian home over the last 65 years. Lastly, on the weekend I was able to attend the Banyo RSL Remembrance Day service. It is an honour to represent the government on the day we stop and take a moment from our busy lives and remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Lest we forget.

Singh, Mr G



Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.51 pm): I rise to talk about Mr Greg Singh, who in 2011 passed away at the age of 49 after a short battle with cancer. Greg is survived by his wife, Rae, and children Tabatha, Sam and William. Greg was born in 1961 with spina bifida and the consequences of thalidomide. Greg was often called a man who had disabilities but, having known Greg for a number of years, can I say that Greg never even considered that he had a disability. In fact he became a councillor with the Caloundra City Council in 2004 and held that position until 2008, representing Golden Beach in Caloundra.

Greg had a great love of the Golden Beach State School and in fact his children attended the school. If you had to name what Greg thought was important, the first thing you would say would be his family—his lovely wife, Rae, and his children—followed by his community. He was a man who was dedicated to achieving for other people what he thought they could—and, more importantly, what the community could on behalf of those he represented. Upon his death, the Golden Beach Progress Association, under the leadership of Mick Graham and his wife Jenny Graham—and Mick may be well-known to the Labor members in the parliament; he is a man who may not share the same colour as me but I can assure members he is a man dedicated to the community—set up the Greg Singh Bursary Association to raise funds to help children who went to Golden Beach State School who have a disability or whose parents have a disability.

When Greg's funeral service was held after he passed away, the last song they played—at Greg's suggestion—was the theme from Benny Hill. I am not going to replicate that tune in this House this afternoon under any circumstance; that has been done by other members atrociously in the past. However, I will make the point that that theme implies a light-hearted nature to life. Anybody who knew Benny Hill knew that was not the case—he was quite a serious man—and that was Greg Singh as well. Greg Singh approached life with an attitude of, 'Let's get on with it. Let's have a good time,' but he never forgot his roots nor his community nor his family.

Greg will be sadly missed. Contributions can be made to the Greg Singh Bursary Association through the Golden Beach Progress Association. He will be missed as a man who was honoured in the community and a man who honoured his community in the way that he lived his life, raised his children and also loved his wife. At the end of the day, there are very few people in this world who make a true and real contribution. In my opinion, Greg Singh was one of them.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (2.54 pm): The most disturbing episode of the Newman government soap opera so far has to be the muddling misadventures of the member for Mudgeeraba. The Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts is easily the most incompetent minister in this bungle-prone government. Queenslanders know it, the media knows it, important stakeholders know it. The only person denying it is the Queensland Premier.

Since being appointed just eight months ago, Minister Bates has moved from one bungle to the next. On 17 May this year, just three sitting days into the new parliament, in answer to her first question without notice Minister Bates made an inaccurate statement about the number of front-line staff in her own department and was later forced to correct the record. On the same day, Ms Bates delivered her first speech as a minister, and we all know now that this speech was plagiarised and was a speech delivered by a former Labor minister for the arts. We all know how that sorry episode ended.

On 16 October at the now infamous estimates committee hearing which had to be held late at night when the TV cameras had all gone home, the minister repeatedly ridiculed an elephant sculpture commissioned for GoMA, labelling it a shocking misuse of taxpayer dollars, reckless spending and ridiculous. Then yesterday the minister trotted out in front of the cameras with more front than Myers and more hide than a rhinoceros to welcome the sculpture and bedazzle the cameras with her smile.

Of course we cannot forget the debacle that is Minister Bates's lobbyists register. It is the mysterious case of the missing Excel tab. Even today, Ms Bates claimed she had only ever had to correct the record twice since becoming minister. I table for the benefit of the House transcripts and letters outlining four separate occasions where statements made by Minister Bates have subsequently had to be corrected.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents including extracts from the Record of Proceedings, dated 13 November 2012 and 17 May 2012, regarding ministerial statements made by Hon. Ros Bates correcting the record and two letters from Hon. Ros Bates to the Chair of the Education and Innovation Committee, Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP, dated 18 October 2012 and 30 October 2012, clarifying statements made at an estimates hearing on 16 October 2012 [\[1618\]](#).

So I guess the minister will now have to stand up in this House at the next sitting and correct the record on how many times she has corrected the record. It is simply ridiculous. She is simply ridiculous.

The Premier yesterday dismissed this minister's failures as small issues, but let us make no mistake about it. These are big errors made by a minister in charge of big things. Minister Bates is in charge of the scientific analysis and protections for the Great Barrier Reef. Minister Bates is in charge of the whole-of-government purchasing of IT services. Minister Bates sets the policy framework for innovation in Queensland, which we all know is at the forefront of building a strong and robust economy. And, heaven help us, Minister Bates is also in charge of protecting and promoting Queensland's reputation as an emerging international cultural and entertainment destination. These are big things and this Premier is being negligent in his duties to the people of Queensland by continuing to allow this most incompetent minister to sit on his front bench.

Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise today to share with the House the wonderful work of the Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee, known affectionately in our Chatsworth community as B4C. Since launching in 1997, B4C has been hard at work in the south-east suburbs of Brisbane. From their sustainability centre located in the heart of the Chatsworth electorate, they have coordinated ongoing projects to protect the surrounding bushland reserves at Whites Hill, Belmont Hills, Minnipi and Mount Gravatt. They have also worked tirelessly to rehabilitate the fragile ecosystems at Bulimba Creek, Tingalpa Wetlands and Salvin Park amongst others. These efforts have been rewarded by a number of prestigious awards, including the National River Prize in 2005, two Landcare Queensland awards in 2001 and 2009, and four healthy waterways community group awards awarded between 2003 and 2011.

A key factor in B4C's success is their commitment to developing successful partnerships with the state government, the Brisbane City Council and private enterprise. These partnerships have enabled B4C to deliver revegetation and rehabilitation projects following major construction projects. I commend B4C on this collaborative approach which enables positive developmental and environmental outcomes for our local Chatsworth committee.

I draw your attention, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the Tingalpa Wetlands project—a crowning achievement for B4C which commenced some 15 years ago. Working in partnership with the Brisbane City Council and private enterprise, B4C has successfully rehabilitated the wetlands, which are home to over 200 species of native fauna including koala, squirrel gliders and flying foxes. The rejuvenated wetlands are now used to educate our young people about their local environment and the importance of conservation.

It was my absolute pleasure to join B4C recently for a tree-planting day in the Bulimba Creek catchment. I was overwhelmed by the number of people who volunteered to help with the planting. It is this eagerness and community spirit that makes B4C such an integral part of our Chatsworth community. Each month volunteers dedicate approximately 1,100 hours of their time to aid B4C in achieving their impressive environmental outcomes. These volunteers range from retirees to students and local community groups in the Chatsworth electorate, such as the Scouts, Rotary and Lions services clubs.

I would like to commend each and every one of these fantastic volunteers for their efforts. B4C's mission is to be the thin green line providing the link between people and their natural environment. I have no doubt that, through their partnerships, educational programs and strong voluntary presence, B4C is doing a wonderful job of achieving this mission by making the Chatsworth community appreciate our precious natural surrounds. They are to be thoroughly congratulated on their outstanding work.

Bunya Mountains Care Group



Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (2.59 pm): I would like to recognise in the House another group of volunteers, the Bunya Mountains Care Group. That group's vision of itself is 'the Bunya Mountains for all people for all time'. I would like to put on record their mission statement. It states—

The Bunya Mountains Care Group is a Community Group established to represent the interests of Landowners, Locals and others who treasure the Bunya Mountains with a special respect.

We seek with care to protect and preserve all the unique features of the Mountains and Environs and the long established interests of the people we represent.

We acknowledge the importance the preservation and protection of the Bunya Mountains is for all Queenslanders and Australians.

We acknowledge Bunya Mountain Care Group feel the nurturing spirit of the Mountains.

We acknowledge the historic connection to the whole Bunya Mountain area of Landowners, Local residents and others, past and present.

We seek to ensure that the Bunya Mountains vistas and footprint, all flora and fauna in this Queensland National Park, and Russell Park which is under the trusteeship of the Western Downs Regional Council, are protected and within the stewardship of State and Regional Government.

We acknowledge the right of all Australian citizens to have continuing free access for all time to the Bunya Mountains National Park, Crown lands and adjoining Russell Park.

We support the introduction of Funding Programs to support this statement, and the inclusion of Volunteers working with Bunya Mountains National Park and Regional Government Staff to remove feral Fauna and Flora.

We as Australian citizens believe we have the right to fair and equal representation by Bunya Mountains Care Group and the Bunya Communities on all present and future Federal, State and Regional Government Committees, on all matters pertaining to the Bunya Mountains area.

A member of that group is Jean Sorley, a past councillor from the Wambo shire. There is also Sue Unwin, Di Turnbull, Morris Winter, Carmel Vaughan, Aileen Fleming, Bernice Seton, Kay Nation and Ann Kennedy, and I know all these people personally. Over the term of the last government the Bunya Mountains has been totally inundated by feral pigs, lantana, rabbits and motorbike riders. It is a disgrace. I am pleased to say that Steve Dickson has made a statement on the national park and what he is going to do to look after it. I invite the minister next time he is out my way to come and have a look at the beautiful Bunya Mountains and to meet with this care group.

Melbourne Cup Day; Good Sams Foundation



Mr DILLAWAY (Bulimba—LNP) (3.01 pm): I rise in the House this afternoon to talk about the day that stops a nation. I know that many of my colleagues in this room enjoy a punt and that many of them, including the minister, attended a local race day. It is a day, of course, when we all think that our ability to read the form guide or our lucky numbers are certainties to secure a big, elusive win on the Melbourne Cup. Some members, I am sure, even believe that the system that their grandfather's uncle's brother-in-law passed down the line is sure to come through and they will get that elusive trifecta—one day. But seriously, Green Moon? Who saw that one coming? If honourable members did, they must have relied on a lucky number that was in their stars that day because there is no other way that they could have picked that horse as a winner on Melbourne Cup Day.

I did find some winners on Melbourne Cup Day across the wonderful electorate of Bulimba. They were the volunteers, the organisers, ticket buyers and raffle prize donors who all made the day more than just a horse race. It was about raising much needed funds for some very worthy causes. I had the pleasure to attend Denise's and Jeff's Pink Ribbon National Breast Cancer Foundation morning tea, Bulimba State School's P&C lunch that was raising money for their Learning Potential Program, Norman Park State School's P&C Bites and Bubbles and Cannon Hill Anglican College Foundation's wonderful hospitality—and forgive me for my lack of ability to judge the best fascinator of the day. I was also excited to support the Good Sams Foundation's event at St Peter and Paul's parish in Bulimba.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritans formed in Australia back in 1857 and a large number have and still reside in the electorate of Bulimba. The Good Sams Foundation's primary mission is to provide refuge, education and hope to women and children in crisis. Refuge includes safe houses across Brisbane, including some in my own electorate, that see women and children able to escape domestic violence in a safe and caring environment. The program is unique inasmuch as they have a professionally qualified support worker who helps them get their lives back on track. Education includes workshops to help rebuild women's confidence and self-esteem, networks and an understanding of domestic violence to break the cycle.

The Good Sams also conduct numerous presentations throughout Queensland primary and secondary schools, discussing homelessness and domestic violence. In 2013, the Good Sams will continue to run their free workshop for parents called 'Happy Parents Raise Happy Kids'. This program is specifically for parents to discuss the role of emotional intelligence and the use of positive language, positive focus and understanding children's different communication styles. I will have the pleasure tonight of attending one of the 10 Good Sams schools left across Australia, that being Lourdes Hill College, for their annual awards evening, an evening that I am sure will encapsulate the values of the Good Sams.

I had a great Melbourne Cup Day, even though my horse is still running and I am led to believe it may cross the finish line just before Christmas. All of the events I attended were for great causes. I look forward to again supporting these wonderful initiatives next year.

Bruce Highway

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.04 pm): It is an absolute revelation for me to sit on this side of the chamber and witness the blistering incompetence of this government. This government thinks that it can just spin its way through the first term without the slightest need to provide rigorously tested and grounded decisions in support of honest leadership. It was only during the last sitting of this parliament that the opposition was subjected to the sanctimonious, irrational nonsense from LNP backbenchers and ministers regarding the state of the Bruce Highway. I particularly recall the comments of Minister Emerson lauding his achievements.

But what about the Minister for Local Government? I copped a spray in his adjournment speech while he rambled on about the joys of the Bruce Highway Action Plan. The minister made specific comment of billions of dollars over 10 years. I do not understand why he did not talk about \$10 billion over 100 years for all the relevance it has. The truth is that this financial year the government has committed just \$10 million in additional funding and the same next financial year. Effectively, that means in the first term of this government no real additional money will be committed to the Bruce Highway. There will be no effect on the ground. The entire exercise from prior to the last election campaign to this very moment has been nothing more than spin and misrepresentation.

All was revealed last week by the LNP's federal comrade Warren Entsch. He described this much lauded plan as 'bull'. Someone on the LNP side of politics does not seem to like the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Someone is actively seeking to destroy his credibility and destroy bits of this government. I wonder who has the most to gain from that? There are two deeply concerning aspects to this. The first is the outrageous claims made by this government about what it was 'gunna do' versus what it will actually do, which is nothing, as evidenced by the fact that not even their own federal colleagues will support them. Of course the fact that there will never be a commitment to the Bruce Highway of any description from a federal coalition government is a replay of the Costello era. The second aspect, of course, is the incredible revelation that the leaking of this correspondence represents: good, old-fashioned, full-blown factional war within the illegitimate child called the LNP. This political omelette has been in government for eight months and it has reverted to its natural tendencies of eating its own. It looks to me as though it is not just the police service that is desperately in need of stab vests while on duty; increasingly it would appear that the transport minister might like one as well. Perhaps the Minister for Transport and Main Roads would be safer sitting on this side of the parliament. There is an old saying: never confuse the opposition with the real enemy. That might be a useful palm card for the minister.

In conclusion, it is great to see that Warren Entsch has been honest enough to call a spade a shovel on this matter. No amount of subsequent retractions is going to change what he said.

SES Week; Generator Music Festival

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (3.07 pm): Now for some positive stuff. I want to talk about the Petrie SES. This week is SES Week. The Petrie SES began as part of the Pine Rivers SES in 1978 after council amalgamations. They became a stand-alone group along with six other sections of the Moreton Bay regional SES unit. The Petrie SES currently has 60 members who meet and train weekly at the local facility. Forty members show up every week and those in leadership stay behind after the training, often until midnight, completing administrative functions. What a dedicated group! Funding for

this group is provided from the state government to fund uniforms and training and the Moreton Bay Regional Council sponsors vehicles, maintenance and buildings. The group fundraises for extra equipment. The office is unmanned, but rostered members share the Moreton Bay Regional Council sponsored phone that is on 24/7.

The Petrie team group leader is Stuart Bowhay and Monica Sims is the deputy group leader. During the 2011 floods many of the members were tasked by EMQ to deploy to assist other regions. This year the group received a Queensland flood and cyclone citation of 2011, and I was very glad to attend that ceremony. This Saturday, Stuart Bowhay and Peter Sims will receive SES Week awards for outstanding service. Numerous members from Petrie will also receive the national emergency award as part of this week's celebrations. I strongly endorse these awards and offer my own sincere congratulations. I remind members that people can ring 132500 for SES help.

I now want to talk about an event in my electorate called Generator. This particular event will be called Generator 10. The Generator musical festival is a family camping weekend where local community artists and musicians gather, sharing their creative works and skills performed through professional sound and lighting systems in an outdoor, all-age, family camping festival environment. Alongside the main stage is a GJAM stage. This puts Generator in a new league of outdoor events where profile touring acts are welcome to anonymously join in with local artists and groups as we strive to be a strong supporting platform for professionals and upcoming Brisbane talent.

It is with great pride that I invite people to come and spend their New Year's Eve at Generator. People can go to www.generatorerevents.com.au to book their tickets. It costs \$47 for two days. Bring your family. Camp. At the last Generator event my good friend the member for Morayfield was a guest air guitarist. I am very pleased and very proud, along with my good friend, to invite all members to come and spend New Year's Eve listening to some great music and enjoying the great surrounds.

Pine Rivers Electorate



Mr HOLSWICH (Pine Rivers—LNP) (3.11 pm): As we approach the end of 2012, I take this opportunity to reflect on the ways the Newman government is delivering for Pine Rivers. The residents and businesses of Pine Rivers suffered years of neglect under the previous Labor government, but on 24 March residents of Pine Rivers made a strong statement that we needed a change. It was a strong message to the former Labor administration but also a strong statement to me and the Newman government that Pine Rivers expects better and expects a government that will deliver for our community. And deliver we have.

In only the first eight months of this government, Pine Rivers has been given a taste of just how this Newman government will continue to deliver for our community as we build a better Pine Rivers and build a better Queensland. Small business owners in Pine Rivers have expressed to me their relief that this government is reducing their red-tape burden. This government has empowered Pine Rivers small businesses by lifting the payroll tax threshold, with the promise of more payroll tax relief to come. We have abolished the disgraceful waste levy introduced by the previous Labor government. We are listening to small businesses, consulting with small businesses and working with small businesses. Our government knows that small local businesses, like the ones in my electorate, are the engine rooms of our economy and our community.

Disability services in Pine Rivers have also been given a boost under the Newman government. SCOPE, a disability respite service based in Strathpine, has been given \$920,000 in funding from our government to operate new disability respite services in the Pine Rivers region. This year's budget also provides \$11 million in ongoing disability services funding for this financial year. Schools in Pine Rivers have also received 70 e-tablets to assist special-needs students in improving their educational opportunities.

Pine Rivers is also benefiting from significant government spending on infrastructure projects. The AJ Wyllie Bridge will be reopened in December this year—finally. This project has remained on schedule since our government took office in March, which is more than could be said for the period of time before that. The Mount Mee Road flood repairs have also recently been completed, ahead of schedule. This year's budget also allocated \$7.3 million towards adding a third railway line between Lawnton and Petrie stations and \$3.6 million to upgrade the North Pine Water Treatment Plant. I also look forward to the completion in early 2013 of the new Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, which has been a significant infrastructure project funded by the Department of Communities.

Schools in Pine Rivers have received a total of \$1.2 million to fix their maintenance backlogs. Schools have also received around \$31,000 in additional funding in literacy and numeracy grants. There is still much to do and many years of neglect to be addressed, but this government, even in its early days, is delivering for Pine Rivers and helping our community to build a better Pine Rivers.

Country Racing

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.14 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to congratulate this government on what it is doing for country racing. On the weekend I had the pleasure of the company of Tim Mander and his wife, Gayle, and Kevin Dixon and his wife, Linda, at the Lockyer Race Club in Gatton. I congratulate the government on starting to rebuild country racing after the mob on the other side of the chamber virtually drove it into the ground.

Mr Crisafulli: Decimation.

Mr RICKUSS: Decimation. They drove it into the ground. Next year the Lockyer club will host a stand-alone meeting on 10 June, on the Queen's Birthday long weekend. This will also be a TAB meeting. We hope to promote that meeting and attract big crowds. I will even invite most of the members currently in the chamber to the Lockyer.

Mr Johnson: Will you give them punting money?

Mr RICKUSS: I will even give them punting money. The member for Gregory has suggested that he is going to help me supply the punting money!

These types of meetings are important in terms of the recognition given to country clubs. At any race meeting in Brisbane, most of the horses have come in from the country areas, where they have developed. The rural areas provide a base for these great horses. We have to have local race clubs to train and develop locally born and bred horses into the great sprinters and stayers that we need to keep the industry in Australia viable. Not only that, these country meetings are great social days. I am sure the new minister would acknowledge that the number of young people at the meeting was just astounding. It was a bit of a wet day, but there was a good smattering of young people. We get a great demographic at our local clubs—from grandfathers right through to 18-year-olds. We had a big line-up of fashions on the field, judged by my wife, Ann, and Tim and his wife, Gayle. It was a very difficult choice because there are some beautiful young ladies in the Lockyer, of course.

Mrs Menkens interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: The outfits were lovely—the fascinators, the hats—

Mr Johnson: You were fascinated by the girls!

Mr RICKUSS: I was fascinated, yes. I had the pleasure of having the microphone, so I could give a bit of a running commentary on how good they were looking. There were some great fashions for the young men, too. Of course, we always have the token bogan in amongst the crowd. They also get a run in the fashions on the field. I again congratulate the government on rebuilding country racing.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before calling the minister, I remind members about the standing orders relating to bills before the House. Three speakers have spoken on matters contained in bills before the House. I ask members to take care not to intrude on or foreshadow debate on a bill.

Homelessness

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (3.17 pm): I would like to address the mischievous nonsense spoken yesterday at the National Press Club. The federal Minister for Homelessness, Brendan O'Connor, yesterday had the temerity to cast aspersions on this government and to use vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as his political football. In his address the minister stated that the Queensland government was not committed to tackling homelessness. Wrong. The Newman government is very committed to addressing this challenge, increasing our investment in the 2012-13 state budget and openly engaging in good faith with our NGO partners and the Commonwealth. He also alleged that a request he had made for data from my office had not been met. I wrote to Minister O'Connor on 8 November providing all the data he requested from my department, and even in the format that he requested. Mind you, we still do not know why he wanted it and what he intends to do with it.

The minister went on to say that he was not sure if the Queensland government was committed to a future national partnership agreement on homelessness. Since becoming minister I have engaged positively and openly in all select council business and have appropriately expressed that what we needed to see was what the government intended to do post 30 June 2013 and therefore to examine it. If Minister O'Connor is fair dinkum about wanting to see tangible progress on our efforts to tackle homelessness, he need look no further than the ABS data he himself referenced in his address. That shows that overall homelessness in Queensland has fallen by nine per cent. I am quite sure that our NGO partners would be quite disappointed to hear the negative statements the minister has made and would rather hear what he intends to do about it.

I have been asking for months, as have officials from my department, what the Commonwealth intends to do after the current NPA expires so that the Queensland government can consider any proposal put forward. We have received nothing.

A government member: Because they don't even know!

Ms DAVIS: Correct—that is, until 15 minutes before his Press Club address when my office took a call from an adviser outlining what would be said. So what we have is Minister O'Connor deciding two days before a select council meeting to use the media to fight his battles by announcing his intentions to the nation with no consultation with the states or territories. Madam Deputy Speaker, I can assure you and all honourable members that the Newman government is committed to tackling homelessness in Queensland and we will continue to fight for these vulnerable people. This sideshow yesterday at the Press Club is nothing more than political expediency by Minister O'Connor as he attempts to give the appearance that he is committed to homelessness, but clearly he is just committed to getting through the next election.

Kirrama Range Road



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.20 pm): I rise to speak about the Kirrama Range Road—a road of interest to residents in the Cassowary Coast Regional Council area. For the benefit of other members, Kirrama Range Road was closed in 2006 after it was damaged during Cyclone Larry. The member for Hinchinbrook is correct that it is gazetted as a public road but is not part of the state controlled road network. But in a 2008 letter to the FNQROC, which I table, he argued at length that upgrades and repairs to the road should be funded by the state government, stating—

I remain of the view that the Department of Main Roads and the Environmental Protection Agency ought to fund the repair and ongoing maintenance of the Kirrama Range Road.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 February 2008, from the Member for Hinchinbrook, Hon. Andrew Cripps, to the executive officer of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, Mrs Irvine, regarding the Kirrama Range Road [\[1619\]](#).

Clearly in 2008 the member for Hinchinbrook was being politically opportunistic and used the Kirrama Range Road to attack the then state Labor government. He claimed that the repair and upgrade works on the road should be funded by the state despite it being the responsibility of the former Cardwell and Herbert shire councils.

Fast-forward to 2012 and just six weeks after the state budget was released, with no mention of the Kirrama Range Road project, the LNP has found several million dollars for the member for Hinchinbrook. There is no mention of the road in the new QTRIP released by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. But in response to a growing backlash in the Cardwell area, both at the March election from Katter's Australian Party and because of Campbell Newman's savage cuts to jobs and services, the LNP has conjured up a political rescue package rather than a roads package to bolster its prospects in Hinchinbrook. Finally he had some good news that the state government would provide funding for the Kirrama Range Road on the basis that the Cassowary Coast Regional Council matched \$2.5 million.

But the other part of the story is how this funding deal was put together. It is unravelling by the day. The *Innisfail Advocate* has been tracking the soap opera that is the special committee established to broker the deal. The LNP has made no attempt to inform the public of the existence or membership of this official/unofficial committee. Membership includes the member for Hinchinbrook as well as the mayor of the Cassowary Coast, the councillor for division 1 and also the deputy mayor, who incidentally is also the chairman of the local LNP. There are so many conflicting versions of events as to who was where and when that nobody involved can get their story straight. There are supposedly minutes of the special meeting on 19 October taken by two state public servants, but these remain a secret. But just as important as who was at the meeting is who was not invited—people like Councillor Ian Rule, who has the portfolio of Transport Infrastructure Planning for the Cassowary Coast, not to mention more than 40 years practical experience in road building.

The \$2.5 million announced each from both the state and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council has been pulled out of the air with no cost-benefit analysis. I am not aware of any formal costings for the project by the state government, but we do know it will cost more than \$5 million. The restoration of timber bridges alone may come in at nearly \$3 million. But the member for Hinchinbrook knows from his letter that the entire project had been costed at \$6.6 million by the former Cardwell shire council, and that was in 2008! I call on the member for Hinchinbrook to tell us why he is doing and saying the opposite of what he said in 2008, detail how this deal to save his job was struck and provide notes taken by the state public servants who attended the 19 October meeting. The ball is in your court, member for Hinchinbrook.

Cleveland Electorate, Education Resources



Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (3.22 pm): The Newman government continues to improve the education opportunities for the students of Cleveland with the recent delivery of e-tablets for children with learning disabilities. The Newman government has provided more than 7,000 e-tablets for

Queensland state schools with special education programs as part of the Newman government's \$3.5 million eLearning for Special Needs Students initiative. This election commitment has opened up a wide range of new learning possibilities for students with a disability. The eLearning for Special Needs Students initiative has been rolled out following a successful trial. Other trials interstate and overseas have demonstrated how special needs students have achieved better educational outcomes through the use of e-tablet technology. These e-tablets are right now being rolled out across the state, with many students already receiving them.

While the federal government talks about the NDIS and Gonski without any clear commitment, this government is delivering both in terms of education and disabilities. In my electorate of Cleveland I am happy to state that nine local state schools are currently receiving 98 tablet computers. The schools include Redland District Special School, Bay View State School, Thornlands State School, Cleveland State School, Cleveland District State High School, Ormiston State School, Wellington Point State School, Wellington Point State High School and Birkdale State School. I recently visited the Redland District Special School in Thornlands. This amazing school provides high-quality education for students in the Redlands district who have a disability. It was exciting to see that students are already using this technology enthusiastically and how teachers are putting the devices to good use to cater for the students' diverse learning needs.

The assistive features of e-tablets have enormous benefit for students suffering with a disability, helping them to communicate and to learn in new ways. Children can type words and have the e-tablets verbalise their thoughts. Other students use eye movement to operate the technology, making communication and learning much easier for those who have severely restricted physical mobility. The e-tablets allow students to have greater independence, provide more input into their learning and help to initiate and express their thoughts. Already teachers and parents have enthusiastically supported this technology for the significant benefits it provides. Getting back to the visit to Redland District Special School, I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with students Durim, Matthew, Jessica and Liliya and staff Jenny, Anna, Carol and Helena and thank them for their hospitality. The demonstrations of the practical use of the e-tablets for literacy, numeracy and fine motor skills was illuminating. I thank the minister for this great Newman government initiative.

South East Region SAT Awards

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.25 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to tell the parliament about a wonderful event that just occurred not in my electorate but in the electorate of Albert—the South East Region SAT Awards 2012, and they have absolutely nothing to do with sitting down! Just because they are called the 'SAT awards', that does not mean a thing.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection. It was a wonderful experience because these are the industry awards that highlight the hard work done by the schools in moving young people into employment. The most wonderful part of all was that Helensvale State High School was a shining light among all of the schools that were involved in the SAT awards this year. First of all in Building and Construction one of the three finalists was Jesse Wit, a year 12 student from Helensvale State High School. In Hairdressing—Apprentice we had a finalist in Trudy Dyson from year 12 at Helensvale State High. In IT & Media we once again had a finalist in Jake Carroll from year 12 at Helensvale State High. In Hospitality—Trainee—now listen to this—we had a winner this time around. So there were six young people altogether—four of whom were finalists and two winners. As I said, in Hospitality—Trainee we had a winner in Taylor Richardson from year 11 at Helensvale State High. In Outdoor and Active we had another finalist in Andrew Ravuna from year 12 at Helensvale State High. In Health and Community Services we had a winner in Sophie McLachlan from year 12 at Helensvale State High.

The real crowning glory of this particular event was when we were advised that there were some major awards, one of which was the SAT School Staff Member of the Year Award. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the winner of the SAT School Staff Member of the Year Award 2012 was Paulina Ford, the Industry Liaison Officer once again from Helensvale State High School. So there we have it—seven people who were noted as being finalists and three of those seven were able to pull it off and win their particular area. It was a wonderful event, a fantastic evening and a great opportunity for me and other members, including the minister, to talk with the young people from around the area. I ask those present to congratulate all of those people for their hard work.

Beaudesert Hospital, Maternity Services; Bromelton State Development Area

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.28 pm): It was said in June this year, when the health minister announced the restoration of maternity services at Beaudesert Hospital from July 2014, that there would be dancing in the streets of Beaudesert. I am not sure that there has been dancing yet, but yesterday for the first time in many years Beaudesert Hospital welcomed a newborn, who was born at

Logan Hospital early yesterday, and its proud parents. A few short hours later the little one and mum were settling into Beaudesert Hospital. For the first time in many years mums and bubs from the Beaudesert community who meet the criteria for transfer to Beaudesert Hospital can now receive their postnatal care at Beaudesert Hospital. This is a significant step towards the recommencement of full maternity services in Beaudesert by July 2014, as announced by the health minister earlier this year.

On Monday afternoon I was privileged to unveil a mural created by the Mununjali community to commemorate the return of newborn babies to Beaudesert Hospital. I thank the entire community, but in particular the Mununjali community, for their support and enthusiasm as this LNP government and the Metro South Hospital and Health Board work towards restoring services to Beaudesert Hospital. I said on Monday that it had been far too long since the sound of crying babies had been heard at Beaudesert Hospital. Now they are and I am glad that the minister and this LNP government have been able to make that happen. Work is well underway within the health and hospital service for the restoration of maternity services and a steering committee composed of doctors, midwives, Queensland Health representatives and the Rural Doctors Association among others is already working hard to ensure that the right people are in the right place as we head towards July 2014. I thank all parties for their work and support so far.

In a short time—perhaps as early as tomorrow—the development plan for the Bromelton State Development Area will be gazetted and the state's planning instruments for this area will take effect. I take this opportunity to highlight the efficiency with which this process has been completed since the LNP assumed government. The hold-ups and delays, the interdepartmental paper shuffling and the incessant and continuous delays in input from various departments—all the things that were hallmarks of the hindrance of business and private sector investment of the former Labor government—have been put to the side. We in the Beaudesert electorate now have a large state development area that is ready to go, with large private sector investors looking to subdivide allotments and bring investment, jobs, facilities and infrastructure to Beaudesert. There remains work to do—installing utilities and upgrading road infrastructure—and I have met with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads just this week to tell him that Beaudesert needs a town bypass to support this estate. The government will need to work with the council as well to bring about these works, but the gazettal of this state development plan for Bromelton is a mark of the government's commitment to the economic development of the region. It is a big step forward. I take this opportunity to give credit to Minister Seeney for working with me and all the stakeholders to finalise the development plan in such an expeditious manner.

Townsville, Xstrata Greek Fest



Mr HATHAWAY (Townsville—LNP) (3.31 pm): I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House of the success of the recent 13th Xstrata Greek Fest, which was held in Townsville last month. The festival was held at Riverway. Those members who know Townsville would wonder why I am talking about this event, as Riverway sits firmly in the electorate of my honourable colleague the member for Thuringowa. The Greek fest showcased the best food and entertainment that our Greek community has to offer. It will come as no surprise to members that I am eminently more qualified than my colleague to speak about food.

The festival attracts families from across the region, including as far as Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa and everywhere in between. This year, the festival attracted 36,000 people, which is a fantastic result given that it occurred on the same weekend as the international rugby test between Australia and New Zealand that was played at Dairy Farmers Stadium. The festival provides an array of entertainment, such as live music, fireworks and Hellenic dancers, who showcased the very best of traditional and modern Greek dancing. This year, the entertainment also included a big fat Greek wedding held live on stage, with a beautiful couple choosing to tie the knot in front of thousands of people.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, Greek food is a huge favourite at this festival and, from my point of view, one of the key crowd-drawing attractions. Traditional food such as souvlaki, spanakopita and baby octopus are always a huge favourite as well as my personal favourite, loukoumathes—or honey puffs for us Australians. Members might be familiar with these delicious balls of crispy dough, smothered in honey and coated with cinnamon and icing sugar.

Mr Gibson: They are good for you.

Mr HATHAWAY: They are very good. Every major food group is represented. The festival would also not be possible without the ongoing support from the state government provided through the Events Queensland regional program. This funding contributes towards some of the major expense items, including marquees, big-screen TVs and security. It also assists towards the festival's promotional activity via the media. I should also mention some of the key sponsors who continually support this festival, not the least of which Xstrata, as the naming rights sponsor; Singapore Airlines; the Queensland government; Townsville City Council; McDonald's; Jupiters casino; Force Rentals; Morleys

Funerals; Pickerings; and our local media, Hot FM, the *Townsville Bulletin*, the *Townsville Sun*, ABC Local and Channel 7. On behalf of all the visitors to the 13th annual Greek festival, I thank and congratulate all the sponsors for supporting this great event.

Lastly, I acknowledge and thank the festival coordinator, Bill Malandris, and his band of enthusiastic volunteers who donate countless hours of their time to ensure the festival's continued success.

Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Scheme

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.34 pm): In the past month relift irrigators in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme have received their water bills. Relift growers have now been slugged with an \$18.39 per megalitre increase this year alone, with more increases planned. Farmers with medium to large farming operations, which contribute significantly to the Queensland economy, have been hit the hardest, with a \$44 per megalitre increase in volumetric charges. Before the election irrigators were promised that their irrigation cost would be CPI increased and any increases would be limited to \$2 plus CPI.

The government has made a big song and dance about making agriculture one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy, but the reality is that privatisation and corporatisation is threatening to tear down these pillars. Now, irrigators are realising that the figures quoted by this government prior to the election were nothing but spin and rhetoric. The Queensland Competition Authority has hit the road to give the impression that it wants to hear farmers' concerns and take on board recommendations, but the fact is that if the minister simply follows through on his party's election commitment to cap the water price increase at CPI plus \$2 for all irrigators, then farmers would be relieved of these crippling water costs.

Along with the increase in electricity, the cost of water is a major factor in a farmer's capacity to remain viable. Farmers are out there day in, day out trying to battle the weather, volatile markets, hostile foreign competition and an indifferent government corporation that is interested only in its own survival. There can be no equality or reasonable pricing of water when those who control the delivery of water are profit motivated.

I call on the minister and the Premier to abolish entities such as SunWater and abandon the corporate model of government. The persistent move towards the privatisation of water and energy will only inflate the cost of production. I urge members of the government to fight to regain control of our utilities from the hands of profit-hungry corporations. Farmers cannot pass on the increased cost to consumers. They have their backs to the wall. While the government turns up the cost of utilities on the one side, Coles and Woolworths screw down farm gate prices on the other. I am not talking about facts and figures; I am talking about people's lives. Their livelihoods, their history, their culture and their future is being taken away by the very government that promised to look after them. Primary producers are on their knees and many will walk away at great loss. Unfortunately, as farms close down our food security, the capacity of Queensland to feed itself and the rest of Australia will be compromised. The minister needs to implement the pre-election commitment of a cap on water price increases of CPI plus \$2 a megalitre as promised.

Kids in Care Christmas Appeal

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.37 pm): For many people Christmas is a wonderful time of year. Our family loves Christmas. Typically, it is a time when the family gets together at the family farm or many of my family come and spend some time with us at the beach. But sadly for some we know that Christmas can be a particularly hard time. For more than 8,000 Queensland children and young people who live away from home in order to be kept safe from abuse or neglect, it is an especially hard time. These kids, who live in foster, kinship and residential care, have been put there to protect them from harm. That is why I want to take a minute to speak about the Kids in Care Christmas Appeal. This is a wonderful opportunity for each of us to work with our communities to bring a smile to the face of a child or young person in care. Each year the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services holds the Kids in Care Christmas Appeal to gather public donations of gifts for children and young people in care. This year's appeal opened on 5 November and will close on 14 December to allow enough time to distribute gifts before Christmas.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' website has information about who to buy for along with some gift ideas for different age groups. There is also a register for the gifts required in each region, which will be updated throughout the duration of the appeal to show the response so far and what gifts are still required. The website also lists the collection points for gifts, which include many child safety service centres.

This year ABC Radio is the appeal's media partner and is currently running regular on-air promotion of the appeal and broadcasting interviews with foster-carers, biological children of foster-carers, adults who were formerly in care as well as departmental child safety officers. The Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast studios of the ABC are also collecting gifts for the appeal with ABC Radio presenters also tweeting comments and images to help kick things along.

I am also pleased to say that thanks to Steve Cavalier, the state manager of Harvey Norman, that Harvey Norman stores across Queensland will also be supporting the appeal by acting as collection points right across the state. There is no doubt that this is a worthy appeal. It is wonderful to have the backing of the community to bring a big smile to kids' faces. Gifts are required for babies through to 17-year-olds. They should be left unwrapped and in a gift bag if possible at any of the collection points. I encourage all members of this parliament to get on board and get behind this appeal by promoting it through their local media and their electoral offices and networks. For more information people can go to the Department of Communities website www.communities.qld.gov.au.

Murrumba Electorate, Events



Mr GULLEY (Murrumba—LNP) (3.41 pm): I have the privilege to brag about a great part of the world—Murrumba, a great place—and to highlight some of the great people and organisations in Murrumba. Each Friday summer night at Zammit Oval, Deception Bay Little Athletics Club holds its weekly meetings. On 2 November it was the 'pinkletics' fundraising meeting. I congratulate Adam White and the great committee at D Bay Little Athletics and note that the long pink striped socks have been given to my daughters and are not in my own wardrobe.

I congratulate the North Lakes Quota Club for hosting a Melbourne Cup luncheon at North Lakes Golf Club raising funds for Cystic Fibrosis Queensland. Being the 1988 Hervey Bay quota student of the year, I am familiar with the great contribution that the ladies from all quota clubs make for our community, but especially the North Lakes Quota Club.

Last Friday, 9 November, I had the privilege of attending ROPES' fractured fairytale of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The Redcliffe Opportunities for People's Enhancement is as it is called and does some great work for local handicapped people, including those from my electorate. The night had special meaning for us as my late brother-in-law had Down Syndrome. We had the privilege of watching a stage full of Down Syndrome people enjoying acting in front of a packed house.

Last Saturday was McHappy Day at North Lakes and I wish to congratulate Gary Coyne and his staff for getting into the spirit and for raising funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities. It might have been damp weather but it was bright inside and the young people I met should be congratulated.

The Deception Bay Bombers held their AGM last Sunday. I had the pleasure of being appointed their patron. I was a junior rugby league player, so I found it quite unique to be in a position of patron. I congratulate Mick Coplick, Michael Watt, Fiona Pollard and Lisa Watt on being the new executive and note the great work of Carmel Seagroth as the outgoing Treasurer. This year has been a year of both on- and off-field success but also tragedy for the club with Anthony Hopkins, or Yabba as he was affectionately known, passing from this life whilst playing his beloved rugby league on 21 April 2012.

Being SES week I want to talk about the great work of the Deception Bay SES that operates from its Deception Bay depot and note the good work of the group leader, David. Rarely a week goes by without this group supporting the great community we live in. I know this not from what they tell me but from how often I see them out and about serving society. Murrumba—a great place!

Greenslopes Electorate, Youth Employment Forum



Mr KAYE (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise in this House to speak about an exciting initiative I have the pleasure of partnering in and co-sponsoring. On Monday, 5 November 2012 I partnered with the Multicultural Development Association, headed by Kerrin Benson and graciously assisted by Sally Stewart and Sebastian Ross-Hagebaum; the Queensland Program of Assistance to the Survivors of Torture and Trauma; Penny Cutting, president of the South East Brisbane Chamber of Commerce; and numerous businesses to host a youth employment forum proudly held in the Greenslopes electorate. This forum took the form of a Q&A panel session with six employers forming the panel. About 75 youth from many cultural backgrounds attended, along with other business owners and leaders. I am very grateful to the Hon. Glen Elmes, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier for taking the time to open the forum. His presence was warmly welcomed by all who were in attendance and certainly confirmed the importance of the event.

The youth were able to ask many questions about what employers are looking for from potential employees and how they could better themselves to get that job. Some of the questions asked were about topics such as information regarding Australian workplaces and recruitment processes, formal

and informal networks to get a foot in the door, English language and communication suitable for work, opportunities for local work experience and awareness of workplace practices in terms of cultural dress. The knowledge that was gained by both youth and businesses alike was invaluable. The Q&A session was followed by a networking session and dinner. Tables were set up with an employer at each. The youth were then able to ask specific questions of employers one-on-one.

I am pleased to report to the House that two young people who attended on the night now have jobs as a direct result. About 15 have interviews scheduled for this week. Another employer has committed to hiring more people whom they spoke to on the night. Furthermore, the Multicultural Development Association has formed new partnerships with some of the employers who attended. Many of the young people who attended the forum have said that they are now more aware and confident in their job seeking efforts.

I would like to thank the employers who formed the panel, including Woolworths, McDonald's, the Queensland Police Service, the Greenslopes Private Hospital, All Purpose Transport and Australian Country Choice. I would also like to thank all the other employers who attended for the networking session. Apart from my contribution, sponsorship was also received from some of the other attending employers to make the forum possible and for that I know the young people are very grateful. I congratulate the MDA, QPASTT, the South East Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, Youth Voice and the employers for all the hard work and time that went into preparing and running this forum. I was truly thrilled on the night, but I am even more excited about the success which has followed. We have already begun planning more of these forums and I encourage all members of this House who may be interested in running similar forums to contact me for details. This is a great example of partnerships between private industry, community services and government producing real outcomes. This is what being a local member is all about and it is why I entered politics—to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Logan Electorate

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (3.47 pm): I am pleased today to speak on my electorate of Logan and its constituents. Over the past several weeks whilst attending local school award presentations, holding mobile offices and supporting my local women's basketball team, it was great to see how strong are our community spirit and pride. Recently while attending the Browns Plains State High School academic awards it was terrific to see so many hardworking students recognised for their efforts and achievements from throughout the year. I would like to single out Shannen Mitchell, who received an award for school dux; Jesseka Hartwig, who received an award for the vocational student of the year; and Cassandra Kemp who received junior dux of the year. From the academic hall to the sporting field, students in Logan have excelled. I also had the pleasure of attending the Flagstone State Community College where they honoured their athletic and sporting champions. Students such as Brian Phillipsen and Mel Anderson were both honoured with awards for 2012 senior sportsman and sportswoman respectively. Whether it is in the classroom or on the footy pitch, students in all schools throughout Logan and Queensland should be proud of what they have achieved this year.

Recently I held another mobile office, this time in conjunction with my parliamentary colleague and electoral neighbour Mr John Krause, member for Beaudesert. Held in South Maclean on the border of Logan and Beaudesert electorates, it was a great opportunity to once again speak face-to-face with our constituents.

Mr Symes: That's teamwork.

Mr PUCCI: Our mobile office was a great success with good response from the community and, yes, I will take that interjection from the member. It is great team work. From disability services to transport, we are able to gain good feedback on what needs to be accomplished within the electorate. People were very pleased with the new disability services this government is delivering. Constituents also raised the urgent need for public transport in several areas of the region which, as the House knows all too well, is something that I am very passionate about. The upgrading of the Mount Lindesay Highway was also an issue of concern. These are issues my colleague and I are working hard to accomplish. To know that the work we are doing here in the Legislative Assembly and as a government is directly assisting the lives of my constituents is a wonderful feeling.

People in Logan are proud of where they come from. They are proud of their community and no greater display could be seen than in last week's Logan Thunder women's basketball game. The roar of the crowd was electric. Joined by my wife and two daughters, I watched a great performance by our team. Sadly they were defeated on the day but their sportsmanship was a tribute to their team and the community. Under the on-court leadership of Kirsten Veal and coaching of Jason Chainey, our Logan Thunder fosters the community of spirit in Logan. To attend their matches and be a part of such a vibrant and energetic crowd gave me a great sense of community spirit and pride. I am proud to live in Logan and proud to be a member of parliament elected by such wonderful people.

Newman Government, Achievements; Thuringowa State High School; Tec-NQ

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (3.49 pm): As parliamentary business comes to a close for 2012, we mark the end of our first year in government. The task before the Premier and his cabinet was a daunting one. Saddled with massive debt, the LNP government made a commitment to untangle the mismanagement of the past and set this state on the path to a prosperous and sustainable future. They did so with the backing of many members who entered the chamber like wide eyed students on their first day of school. In the months that have passed, we have all worked hard, coming into the chamber, doing our homework after our committee hearings and trying to avoid the Whip. Encouraged by the people of Queensland, we have learnt a lot and we have opened up this state to greater possibilities for the future.

Throughout the state, thousands of young men and women are facing their future as they move from school to further study and training or directly into the workforce, and they do so with the support of the LNP government. Under the guidance of Minister Langbroek, this government is implementing a new era for education, training and employment by uniting them within a single department.

On Tuesday, 6 November, I was privileged to attend the Thuringowa State High School's awards night. One of three state high schools in my electorate, Thuringowa State High School has a student population of just over 550 students, 75 of whom were graduating from year 12. I was welcomed by the school's new principal, Grant Dale, who is determined to give his students every opportunity to learn and succeed. I enjoyed the evening, which showcased a variety of impressive skills and accomplishments. There was Ben with his wonderful piano arrangement; Shaq, with his sporting achievements; and Natarsha who is dux of the school. This year the student leadership group have excelled in their support of teachers and students.

Olympian Nathan Burgers, a 2012 bronze medallist with Australia's hockey team, was an honoured guest. It was great to see him returning to his old school to hand out awards and encourage the students of Thuringowa. As a sporting hero and a successful businessman, Nathan Burgers is a living embodiment of what young people can achieve and they, in turn, have inspired him to return to Townsville and take up a teaching position.

Two days later, I attended a different graduation ceremony, this time for Tec-NQ. Combining compulsory senior subjects with a trade qualification, Tec-NQ provides an alternative learning pathway. Students study outside the traditional academic classroom and receive up-to-the-minute training with industry experts in fields like spray painting, plumbing, IT and engineering. The graduates are work-ready, equipped with both knowledge and confidence in their trade skills. Tec-NQ maintains a close relationship with an important stakeholder, the employer. I am sure that our state TAFEs will be looking at such models as part of their review. I know their dedicated staff and the team would make sure that that happens.

The young men and women of Tec-NQ and Thuringowa State High School join their fellow graduates from around the state in embarking on their adult lives. They represent the future of Queensland. The LNP government is making the necessary decisions to build on that future. I commend to the House all those who are graduating this week and I call on everyone here to make a commitment that they will continue to work towards a better, smarter state and a brighter future for all Queenslanders.

Gympie, St Patrick's College

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (3.52 pm): This is the time of the year when parents and others from across this great state celebrate with their year 12 children as they graduate from high school. Recently, I had the privilege to be the guest speaker at the commemoration night at St Patrick's College, Gympie. It was a great privilege to look upon those young men and women—which is exactly what year 12 students are—as they prepare to leave school and move into the workforce or further studies. When the Christian Brothers College for Boys was established in 1904 and the Sisters of Mercy High School for Girls was established in 1916—they are the forerunners to St Patrick's College—the community was very different. Now, over 100 years later, St Patrick's is a vibrant school that provides many opportunities to all of its students. It reflects the great community of Gympie. As students look forward to the future, they recognise and link in with what Gympie has to offer.

I was asked to speak at the commemoration night, both as a parent of students at St Patrick's and, of course, as the local member of parliament. As the theme for the night was tied into the Archdiocese of Brisbane's Year of Grace, I was asked to speak about the grace in our community. It is an interesting topic and I was able to put forward some of my own thoughts. As I pondered the topic, I thought that perhaps the easiest way to define it is that you find grace in the big events of life, like the miracle of birth or the unity found in a community after a tragedy. But you also see the grace of God at work when people support each other through times of difficulty and times of joy. I described the grace of God as those moments when you bump into God or have a run-in with him. You may not always

recognise it. People call it coincidence, serendipity, synchronicity, luck, intuition, or inspiration, but whatever label you want to place on it, you cannot deny that every day, in every way, one of those things happens to you. Those moments of grace are not just found in our successes, but also in our failures. In 2012 as we recognise the achievements of some of the finest academic students across all years, they can be rightly proud of those accomplishments and the recognition of it.

I let all the students in on just one dirty little secret of their parents. It is that we worry. We worry about our children's future, their fears, their disappointments and their successes. This is because there was a moment when we all looked into our children's eyes and we saw within them their true potential, and we simply want them to achieve it.

I conclude on a sad note by acknowledging the passing of Father Stan from St Patrick's parish. Father Stan passed away just this week. He will be sorely missed by the whole community.

Gladstone, Philip Street Precinct



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.54 pm): The Gladstone Regional Council was rightly disappointed and dismayed when its Resources for Regions submission was not forwarded to the next step. In particular, the submission related to the development of the Philip Street precinct, which is just up the road from my office. It is quite a significant parcel of land. The intention was and remains to develop a number of facilities in that area. One project was a retirement precinct. We lose many retiring aged couples because we do not have much to offer them in the way of retirement villages for independent retirees. A significant portion of the land was going to be dedicated to such a project, to keep families together.

A second part of the project involved the Gladstone Community Advisory Service, which was going to be moved from what was the old library into this more central part of the community. The service provides programs for people in crisis. It also provides information and guidance for people, including young people. The Neighbourhood Centre was also going to be relocated to the community precinct. Currently, the Neighbourhood Centre is located in an old Queenslander on Toolooa Street. A diverse range of people use that facility.

While the land is relatively flat, the ridge at the top part of the block was to be used for a residential development. The sale of the residential blocks would have helped to offset the cost of developing the rest of the precinct. It was overwhelmingly a community precinct. One major piece of state government infrastructure was the duplication of Philip Street. There is about a 500-metre gap in the duplicated grade separated road, which is right in front of the block of land. No doubt that would have been a contribution from the state.

However, this particular project did not get off the ground. It was submitted with a significant amount of work attached to it. I know that the council is more than disappointed. In responding this week, the minister talked about the money from the social impact management plan going into the Resources for Regions funding, which means that it could be disseminated across the state. I know that it would cause some disquiet if that occurred.

It has been only in the past few months that the Gladstone Foundation has received any funding from the LNG industry. Many people think that a lot of money has been received from the LNG industry for these important pieces of community infrastructure. In fact, there are great gaps in the infrastructure requirements for the Gladstone region, including the Kin Kora roundabout, which is the major traffic queuing area for the community and the Gladstone Hospital, about which I have spoken ad nauseam. This piece of infrastructure is required.

(Time expired)

COMMITTEES

Membership



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (3.58 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the member for Gympie be discharged from the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee and the member for Moggill be appointed to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee; and that the member for Mirani be discharged from the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee and the member for Gympie be appointed chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 2676.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 48, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 49 and 50—

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (4.00 pm): Essentially, the amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 are consequential on the amendments to the Electrical Safety Act contained in part 4 of the bill. We oppose these amendments.

Division: Question put—That clauses 49 and 50, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 65—Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Sorensen

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 49 and 50, as read, agreed to.

Clause 51, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.15 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND HOLDING BILL

Resumed from 21 August (see p. 1536).

Second Reading

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its expeditious consideration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on 29 October 2012. I am pleased to accept the recommendation that the bill be passed subject to a minor amendment and clarifications with respect to clauses and provisions in the bill. I now table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 10—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill, government response [\[1620\]](#).

In response to committee recommendation No. 5—that is, that clause 13 of the bill be amended to change the name of the trust area community reference panel which would be established to oversee resolution of outstanding leasing issues in the trust area with affected stakeholders—I am pleased to advise the House that the government supports this recommendation. The government supports this recommendation so as not to cause community members confusion about the purpose, representation and membership of each community's panel. I will move an amendment during the consideration in detail stage of the debate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012 to implement the committee's recommendation.

Other key recommendations made by the committee were that I, as the minister responsible for this legislation, report back to parliament regarding the ongoing implementation of the act once it is enacted. The government supports these recommendations. A report will be provided to parliament within one year of the act commencing on the number of hardship certificates that have been given under section 26 of the act in response to invalid applications. Another report will be provided to parliament within three years of the act commencing to provide an update on the resolution of outstanding lease entitlements under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985. These reports to parliament would be interim reports prior to the review process that is already provided for in the bill. It requires a review of the operation and effectiveness of the act within five years of the commencement of the act.

The committee in its report also requested clarification regarding the costs of and the timing of surveying requirements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This government is working towards implementing a cadastral survey program for all Aboriginal—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! I am sorry, Minister. Member for Bundamba, you have been observed many times today not acknowledging the chair. I would ask that you please leave the chamber and come back in and acknowledge the chair.

Mrs Miller: I did.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I call the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: As I was saying, the government is working towards implementing a cadastral survey program for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This body of work will be coordinated through my department and that of my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs to implement not only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012 but also other government commitments in relation to Indigenous homeownership and land tenure management reform in these communities. The program of work will include cadastral surveying of the road network, reserves, existing and new social housing dwelling leases and land holding act granted leases and lease entitlements in the 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland. This is already well advanced in many of these communities.

I would further note that the Queensland government has recently proposed to the Commonwealth government that some of the funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing be redirected to enable whole-of-township surveying. This very worthwhile initiative was one of the important matters that was being progressed by me and the member for Moggill as the former minister for housing and public works, and I acknowledge the member for Moggill's work in this regard.

A response from the Commonwealth to this bid for funding is expected shortly. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012 delivers on four initiatives to address land related issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These four distinct initiatives have been consolidated into this single bill because they either relate to actions or outcomes that the state is responsible for in Queensland's Indigenous communities or they relate to improving Indigenous land access or native title matters, both of which fall within my portfolio responsibilities. The first and most significant initiative in the bill addresses and resolves tenure anomalies and issues arising from the implementation of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1995. The bill repeals and replaces the land holding act and amends the Land Act 1994 in order to facilitate and significantly progress government priorities to achieve homeownership in Indigenous communities.

In 1985 the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act was introduced. Until December 1991, residents of an Indigenous deed of grant in trust or reserve could apply under this act for a perpetual lease for residential purposes or a special lease for commercial purposes. Whilst this was well intended, the actual implementation of the act was poor. As such, investigations by my department and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs have identified that only 214 perpetual leases and nine special leases from 697 known applications were granted under the land holding act. Of the remaining 474 unresolved applications, 222 were entitled to be granted a lease and the remaining 252 applications were deemed to be invalid because the processes required under the land holding act were not met.

These outstanding lease entitlements need to be resolved. Where an application was properly made and approved, the state is obliged under the land holding act to grant a lease over the area covered by the application. This bill provides the necessary tools to do that. However, a broad range of current and historical issues now arise when we move to resolve these outstanding applications. Again, this bill provides the state with the necessary processes to resolve these outstanding lease issues by correcting tenure anomalies that arise due to boundary description issues and the construction of encroachments. The bill provides processes to deal with the situation where applicants have built infrastructure on the applied-for site but their application is invalid because the processes required under the land holding act were not met. The bill also allows for the determination of succession arrangements where the applicants are now deceased.

Lastly, it is necessary in the interests of certainty for all concerned to determine the ownership of social housing, dwellings and other infrastructure constructed on leases and application areas. Under the land holding act, the lease and any improvements on the land were treated separately. An individual obtained a lease or an entitlement to a lease over the land in question. The lessee then had to enter into additional arrangements to purchase and obtain the ownership of any improvements on the leased land or entitlement area. The land holding act is dated, cumbersome and inflexible. It fails to offer any of the tools necessary to address these issues. The repeal and replacement of the land holding act was determined to be the only way to resolve these issues.

The second initiative contained in the bill are amendments to the Land Act 1994 to provide for the trustee of a deed of grant in trust, or DOGIT, to subdivide that DOGIT land with the approval of the minister and with a covenant ensuring that all the separate parcels making up the DOGIT land continue to be held by the trustee. The ability to subdivide a DOGIT and create a number of discrete lots will facilitate effective land management of Indigenous communities.

Thirdly, the bill provides Indigenous local governments with the authority to continue to access and provide municipal services from their facilities after the trust land is transferred under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 or Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991. The bill also clarifies the extent of the land that state or Australian governments can continue to use and access in order to deliver their services following the transfer of the land.

Lastly, the bill amends the Land Act 1994 to introduce provisions for the making, registration and notification of Indigenous access and use agreements for rural leases under the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy. The Land Act 1994 currently does not provide any clarity on this matter and, as such, has not allowed interested parties to enter into an agreement where they wish to do so voluntarily.

The bill sets out the requirements for Indigenous land use agreements used for the purposes of the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy. In addition, the bill introduces a five-year, 25 per cent rental concession for lessees who enter into a standardised Indigenous access and use agreement or an Indigenous land use agreement, who withdraw as respondents in the native title claims process and who pay for public liability insurance under the agreement.

In summary, the initiatives in this bill will improve land and leasing arrangements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It should be noted that the Newman government has commenced through the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee an inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland. However, the lease entitlement issues being resolved by this bill had to be addressed, especially before any other reforms that may be recommended by the tenure inquiry as it relates to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant in trust communities.

The amendments in the bill relating to the implementation of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985 are very specific to granted leases, lease entitlements and invalid lease applications from the implementation of the act. They do not relate to any other leases granted under any other act. The bill provides the necessary legislative tools to resolve this longstanding legacy issue in relation to these particular lease entitlements and granted leases. As such, the government has brought this bill forward to ensure these matters can be adequately dealt with and to ensure any future land and lease reform can progress without any unnecessary delays. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.27 pm): The opposition will not be supporting this legislation in its current form and at this time. The opposition supports the broad intent of this legislation to resolve the historical issue of unresolved grant applications to identify potential leaseholders, the location of lots, the granting of entitlements and the subdivision of deeds of grant in trust, or DOGIT.

We understand that 474 unresolved grant applications under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985 need to be resolved with community input. I believe there is some bipartisanship on the general way forward. However, this legislation in its current form is disconnected from the government's inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland being undertaken by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. The terms of reference of this inquiry include assessing 'the needs and aspirations of traditional owners and investigation of whether DOGIT and leases granted under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985 should be converted to freehold'.

This means that the LNP has the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee proceeding with legislation that may require future amendments following a review over the same policy area being undertaken by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, with a final report due to parliament by 30 March next year. There is evidence of an LNP government operating in silos with no proper leadership nor central coordination.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mrs MILLER: This is legislation that imposes changes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land tenure while it is currently being reviewed for further changes by another state government committee, and there is a risk of imposing two sets of changes in a short period of time that will generate needless complexity. As the Cape York Regional Organisations set out in their submission—

Concurrent Parliamentary Committees providing conflicting recommendations to the Legislative Assembly about future land tenure in Aboriginal villages is counterproductive and imposes costs on persons holding or entitled to LHA tenures. Therefore—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Lockyer, the member is not taking your interjections and she is entitled to make her contribution and be heard. I ask that you stop interjecting.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection in this matter and for your ruling. The quote continues—

Therefore AREC should not advance proposals in the Bill and make recommendations about LHA land tenure until SDIIC has reported about future land tenure in Aboriginal villages.

This legislation has not been properly examined by and communicated to the people who are actually impacted by it. While the government has consulted with stakeholders, it has not resourced a proper series of workshops to actually find out what the issues are on the ground in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, I have asked you to stop your interjections across the chamber. Please do so.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer!

Mrs MILLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you once again for your protection in this matter from the member for Lockyer. I am very grateful.

The issue of consultation was raised in submissions from the Cape York Regional Organisations, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Torres Shire Council and Mr Vince Mundraby. Mr Mundraby made a submission to the committee that people in Yarrabah will not be able to understand the process being undertaken and that for tenure resolution to be properly progressed education workshops would need to be undertaken with residents to explain the proposed legislation. I agree with Mr Mundraby that this legislation is not straightforward and is in fact complex to understand.

He further requested that funding be provided to facilitate community meetings and workshops. This position is supported also in the submissions from the LGAQ and the Torres Shire Council, who both argue that an appropriate communications strategy needs to be developed so that all impacted parties understand the process. The opposition supports this position and that of the LGAQ that an umbrella document should be prepared articulating the long-term goals and objectives for land tenure so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding. I acknowledge that the committee has expressed similar support at recommendation 3 of the report on this bill. The LGAQ's call for a planning survey of all Indigenous council areas should be seriously considered by this government.

I would now like to run through a number of other issues raised by stakeholders in consultation that are yet to be resolved in this legislation. The legislation does not respond to the claims of the Cape York Regional Organisations that the consultation provisions around pastoral leases have an 'extremely low level of native title rights'. The Cape York Regional Organisations have set out that the proposed amendments to the Land Act 1994 result in 'a lowest common denominator' approach to the resolution of native title interests on pastoral leases and encourage 'mandatory fixed terms' that remove certain requirements, including allowing the right to bury human remains. Nor has there been a response to concerns raised by the Cape York Regional Organisations that section 60 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 violates the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

A submission from Mrs Jessica Naimo of Chalk and Fitzgerald lawyers, which act on behalf of the Kaurareg people of Horn Island, has also raised concerns that hardship provisions could lead to leases being granted without the input of a native title party where they are yet to be transferred to DOGIT. This could undermine land use planning and may be resolved somewhat through mandating community reference panels in certain situations and requiring the inclusion of all impacted parties. However, the

submission from the Cape York Regional Organisations does not see this as a solution, stating that allowing the minister to be authorised to grant leases and set conditions will complicate land administration. This is because the DOGIT trustee is still the lessor of existing leases.

The issue of who incurs costs is raised by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, the Torres Shire Council and the LGAQ in submissions and consultation. It would not be fair or equitable for either the lease applicant or local governments to be incurring costs around the amendment of lease boundaries and any appeals in the Planning and Environment Court which are a result of this legislation. The concerns around costs are being acknowledged in the committee's report on this bill as a point of clarification.

To conclude, as the Cape York Regional Organisations have set out in their submission, 'progress of the Bill at this point in time, in its current form, is premature'. The opposition is supportive of the submission from the Cape York Regional Organisations that 'the Legislative Assembly not support the Bill in its current form' and that 'the Bill be amended to include only those reforms that are appropriate at this point in time', with prior consultation being extended to the people on the ground in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are directly impacted by this legislation—not consultation after this bill is passed in isolation, as recommended by the committee. The submission from the Cape York Regional Organisations also stated that 'the outstanding issues be addressed through a further Bill which is developed as part of broader Aboriginal land reform processes'.

This legislation is evidence of a government that is operating in silos, with two committees engaging some of the same stakeholders on the same areas of legislation. If the government are serious about consultation, they will respond to the real and genuine concerns in the submissions that I have outlined here today and stop proceeding with this legislation in its current form. If the government are serious about their inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland, they will not pre-empt the findings in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through this legislation.

If the government is not pre-empting the findings of this review, then it risks imposing two sets of changes on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land tenure within a short period. Not only does this have the potential to generate additional costs for these communities and local governments, but it also risks generating more complexity and creating more legacy issues. The passage of this legislation is poorly thought through and disconnected from the other priorities of this government. For these reasons the Labor opposition will be moving that this legislation go back to the committee for further work, consultation and consideration of integration with the outcomes of the review being undertaken by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Pursuant to standing order 141, I move—

That the bill be referred back to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to undertake full and proper consultation and to align this legislation with the government's inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland and report back to the House by no earlier than 30 March 2013.



Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.40 pm): The government will not be supporting the motion moved by the opposition to refer this bill back to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. The reason the government will not be supporting the motion moved by the opposition is that the opposition clearly does not appreciate the nature of the bill before the House, nor does the opposition appreciate the nature of the tenure inquiry being undertaken by the state development committee, nor does the opposition appreciate or bother to take even a cursory look at the content of the discussion paper that the government has released today and that I tabled in the parliament during private members' statements earlier today.

As I explained during my introductory speech on this bill and as I explained once again for the benefit primarily of the opposition members and the crossbench members who provided statements of reservation to the committee report, the necessity for this bill is due to the fundamental flaws in the mechanics of the land holding bill itself. As I explained—twice now—to the House during my introductory speech and my second reading speech, the land holding bill was well intentioned when it was introduced in 1985, but it was poorly drafted and it has not resulted in the outcomes in Indigenous communities that it was originally intended to achieve. The act as was put in place in 1985 does not have the mechanisms required to address the issues that have resulted from the poor implementation of the provisions of the original act. As a result, in the Indigenous communities in Queensland we now have a very concerning situation of encroachments—situations where perpetual leases granted to Indigenous people in a certain place have not been built on; they have been built on parcels of land adjacent to that. We have situations where infrastructure—private infrastructure and public infrastructure—encroaches the boundaries of those perpetual leases. Generally speaking, there are some significant problems and uncertainties that the implementation of these perpetual leases has created.

Furthermore, we know that the applications that were submitted to the government for these perpetual leases in some cases have not been granted where there were legitimate applicants making these applications. So there are outstanding applications—some of them have been outstanding for

decades—that have not been granted to Indigenous Queenslanders who deserve the opportunity to have this perpetual lease. As a result, this government is now seeking to pursue a resolution to these outstanding issues, both in terms of those applicants who have not been afforded the opportunity to secure a perpetual lease that they are entitled to under the act and also to address the issues of encroachment and other issues that have resulted from the poor implementation of the provisions of the land holding bill.

It is baffling to me, quite frankly, because members opposite have had the benefit of an introductory speech by the minister spelling out the intention of the bill and those matters have been reinforced during the second reading debate. As well as that, quite clearly and in an adversarial way, we have sought to explain to those members opposite—and the crossbench members have also put in a statement of reservation—that this bill is designed to clean up a very poorly implemented piece of legislation. During my second reading speech I outlined to the House today that the government is pursuing initiatives to try to deliver a surveying program in these communities to allow for these perpetual leases to be issued so that they generally reflect those perpetual leases that were issued and the perpetual leases that we wish to issue that are outstanding in the future. We have approached the Commonwealth government through its Indigenous Home Ownership Program to provide funds for a large-scale surveying effort in these Indigenous communities. My department and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs are also pursuing initiatives to try to improve the surveying standard in these communities so that we can fix up the concerning problems and uncertainties for people who have existing perpetual leases and for those people who have been denied the opportunity who are legitimate applicants where those applications have not been progressed.

I have explained these things to the opposition and to the crossbench members twice now. I would have thought that they would be able to clearly perceive and delineate between the purpose of this bill—this clean-up operation, if you will—and the general inquiry being undertaken by the state development committee in broad and general terms regarding government owned land, and also clearly delineate that from the intention of the discussion paper that I tabled today in this House to provide Indigenous Queenslanders with the opportunity to finally own their home in freehold title in this state. If the opposition is unable to fathom the logical sequence of events that needs to occur to provide a secure freehold title to someone who wants to own their own home, we are indeed poorly served by this opposition, and Indigenous Queenslanders are indeed poorly served by this opposition. If they cannot comprehend and fathom the logical series of events that needs to occur to provide secure title to people who deserve an opportunity to own their own home, it is a sad day indeed that they have placed politics and their own political agenda above progressing these matters that have been outstanding in this state for many years—far too long. It disappoints me bitterly that the genuine efforts of this government to progress opportunities to provide security for those people who currently experience uncertainty—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr CRIPPS:—and those people who have been denied an opportunity to get a perpetual lease on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land and those people—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr CRIPPS:—who may wish to own their own home in freehold title in Indigenous communities in the future are being hindered by impediments that those opposite are placing for petty political reasons. For those reasons the government—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Bundamba, the minister is not taking your interjections. Please stop.

Mr CRIPPS: For those very genuine reasons the government will not be supporting the motion put forward by the opposition.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise to briefly outline why this motion cannot be supported. It is just outrageous. This opposition should be called the PPP opposition—not ‘public-private partnership’ but ‘politicians professionally procrastinating’, because they perpetually procrastinate on issues. They had 20 years to try to tidy up this issue.

Mrs Miller: It was your bill in 1985.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba.

Mr RICKUSS: Could you please give me some protection, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lockyer has the call.

Mr RICKUSS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am glad of your protection. As the minister has just said, this bill will give Indigenous communities freehold title. The transcripts of the meetings of both of the committees the member referred to show that they all want freehold title. The only way they

can get it is for this bill to progress. We on this side of the House will organise the surveying of these communities so that this issue can be progressed. We cannot progress without this legislation. I refer to the discussion paper *Providing freehold title in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*, released by the minister today. This is the first step in moving this whole process forward. This government wants to make continual advancements for Aboriginal communities. Unfortunately, the opposition has held them back for 20 years. It made no effort to assist them. It is an absolute disgrace.

Those opposite talked about community consultation. The committee sent out 1,600 letters—to all of the Torres Strait Islander residents on the electoral roll. We consulted with everyone in the Torres Strait. We wrote to everyone on the electoral roll, simply because some of the councils were not being overly helpful in terms of some of the issues up there. The community at large wants to get on board with this.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I know that the member for Bundamba gets on so well with her local council and finds that it is very efficient. There will always be issues of representation.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I have asked you to allow members to make their contributions. They are not taking your interjections. Please follow my direction. The member for Lockyer has the call.

Mr RICKUSS: Thank you for your protection again, Madam Deputy Speaker. The whole process is almost inane. Why would you try to move this back and delay the process—a process that will move Indigenous communities forward? I fully support this bill and I fully support the minister's recommendations.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.52 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Bundamba in relation to deferring this bill. I completely refute the statements made by the member for Lockyer in relation to the community by and large being supportive of this legislation. If he had read all of the submissions by members from the community—important stakeholders, leaders in the Indigenous community and their legal representatives—the member for Lockyer would know that they do not support this piece of legislation in its current form. Furthermore, they do not support it in isolation of the current general inquiry into government land tenure that includes land arrangements to meet the aspirations of Queensland's Indigenous traditional owners. That is an absolute misrepresentation by the member for Lockyer.

I refer to the consultation process. As a member of the AREC I participated in the public hearings. I accompanied the chair of the AREC to the Torres Strait to be engaged in the consultation. At this particular point in time I acknowledge with deep gratitude all of the efforts by parliamentary officer Brett Nutley in trying to secure at least five members of the Torres Strait community to attend the public hearing.

Mr Rickuss: How many did you write to?

Ms TRAD: Excuse me, you have had your moment in the sun. Now it is mine.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, please direct your comments through the chair, not across the chamber.

Ms TRAD: Of course, Madam Deputy Speaker. My apologies to you. Having visited the Torres Strait islands for that particular consultation, I can say what an absolutely botched job it was. We arrived when there was a major cultural festival happening and not one single community leader could attend the consultation and sit down with parliamentary representatives and departmental representatives to talk about this significant piece of legislation—not one. Not one could attend.

Furthermore, issues in relation to actually getting to the consultation were exacerbated by the fact that this government has abolished the subsidy for flights for Indigenous people in the Torres Strait, in Indigenous communities. So (1) those who could get there went there for cultural reasons and (2) those who wanted to go could not afford to go because they did not have the means to get there. It was a completely and utterly botched job. For the member for Lockyer to come into this place and claim, with the authority of his position as chair of the AREC, that this piece of legislation has the endorsement of Indigenous traditional owners is completely and utterly untrue.

I know that the minister is very studious and has applied himself to trying to fix up a piece of botched legislation, introduced by the former conservative government of this state. It may be the minister's intention to tidy up some legislative anomalies, but it is not the intention of traditional owners to be subject to the law-making of a government that refuses to take on board their legislative agenda without proper consultation with them. This bill has not been properly consulted on. If you read every single submission from those traditional owners and their legal representatives who have participated in this process you will understand that this bill does not have their interests at heart, that it does not reflect what they want. Quite frankly, for it to be assumed otherwise is completely incorrect.

The statement about tidying up the legislation could in fact be believable, apart from the fact that a little sneaky bit has been added to the end—that is, Indigenous land use agreements. We know what that is all about. It is about making the hurdles for traditional owners even bigger.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms TRAD: This is not about the previous 1985 piece of legislation; this is about making sure that traditional owners have to hop through many more hoops before they can access their traditional land for customary purposes and, ultimately, provide for pastoral lease holders to be given the authority to say yes or no to traditional owners accessing traditional lands for customary purposes. It has been made clear in submissions to this bill that the provisions contained in the amendment bill were not part of fixing up the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act. They were never, ever part of that and they have been sneakily tacked on by this government—and we know why.

If this government were serious about enabling proper ownership of land for Indigenous traditional owners, then it would take on board what Indigenous people have been saying throughout this process and it would defer this bill in order to ensure that the general inquiry into government land tenure arrangements reflected what Indigenous people wanted in Queensland, not what this government wants, which is a tidying-up exercise to fix the mistakes of its predecessor coalition conservative government in Queensland.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (4.59 pm): It is amazing that members of the opposition would move this motion. They have the opportunity in this House to move whatever amendments they may see fit and this motion is an admission that they are the laziest opposition ever to grace this parliament. Instead of getting on with the job and putting forward amendments, we see them shirking their responsibility and trying to defer it back to the committee system when they know full well that when this committee system was designed it was not about being a support structure for lazy and incompetent oppositions; it was about examining legislation. As we have heard, there have been submissions put forward that the bill be amended and yet not one amendment is being put forward by this opposition because it is too lazy to get on with the job.

No other reforms can be implemented until the issue of leases is resolved. That was made very clear through all departmental briefings and the failure of the opposition to acknowledge that shows that it is grandstanding on this issue. There are people who are legally entitled to a lease and this government has no option but to grant them that lease and this bill will ensure that that occurs. What we are seeing today is nothing more than an abuse of standing orders. Standing order 141 clearly states—

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

I put it to this House that the motion that has been moved is not strictly relevant; it is about a lazy opposition that has not bothered to draft any amendments to this bill to reflect any changes that it may wish to make. I urge all members to vote against this motion.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (5.02 pm): I cannot believe what I am hearing from members of the opposition this afternoon. Asking this parliament to refer this bill back to the committee just absolutely beggars belief. I came into this parliament on 2 December 1989 and after the Goss government for six years and Anne Warner, a former member for South Brisbane—

Ms Trad: I know her well.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, and I know her well too.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Gregory, please direct your comments through the chair and not across the chamber.

Mr JOHNSON: I was provoked, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I will respond through the chair and go back to where I finished. In the early days of the Goss government we saw from this crowd on the other side—the Australian Labor Party—paternalism at its best. We saw paternalism when the Labor Party discovered Indigenous communities, when it discovered Indigenous people. They had been there for 2,000 years plus! In the nearly 20 years that the Labor Party sat on this side on the House, what did it do for Indigenous people in this state? It drove them further underground. It dislocated them from their communities. We have seen how alcohol management plans worked. Going back a few years, Premier Peter Beattie appointed me as a member of the Palm Island Select Committee to review the issues on Palm Island and there were two issues that were raised—self-autonomy and homeownership. Up until today those issues have never been addressed in the way that this LNP government is endeavouring to address them after just eight months in government. For nearly 20 years you sat over here and all you did was you bled the Indigenous people of this state to try to get their vote. You prostituted your values in relation to what they really stood for. Black, white and brindle, you used those people for your own political advantage.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory, I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair. Please do so.

Mr JOHNSON: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I am going to make a point here.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. The member has used language like 'prostituted our values'. I regard that as being offensive to me personally and I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory?

Mr JOHNSON: I do not find it offensive and there is nothing wrong with the word.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, the member has found the words offensive and I would ask that you please withdraw it without qualification.

Mr JOHNSON: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker, but sometimes—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Without qualification, member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: Without qualification.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr JOHNSON: Sometimes the truth hurts.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. He just, by inference, referred to that again and I ask for your ruling on that. I find that inference offensive.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: He withdrew.

Mrs Miller: And then referred to it again.

A government member: No, he didn't.

Mrs Miller: Yes, he did.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I ruled that the words were offensive and I asked him to withdraw unqualified, which he did.

Mrs Miller: But he referred to it again.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, my ruling stands. He has withdrawn unqualified and I will not ask him do so again. Please stop your frivolous points of order. The member for Gregory has the call.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I feel like I am under attack here, but I will stand here for the next 17 minutes and deliver the attack that the Indigenous people of this state have wanted to see reversed over the last 20 years since 1985 and those deeds of grant in trust. For the benefit of those on the opposition side, the provisions in this bill for the ILUA for native title parties provide quicker access to their land so they can get homeownership, so they can have freehold title, so they can have businesses, so they can run enterprises of a valuable nature, and that gives them the autonomy to move forward like anybody else in this state and there is not a colour barrier. It is not about their Aboriginality; it is about them being treated as equals, and that is something that this LNP government is going to do.

This is not going to be a paternalistic government like we saw with the Labor Party. We know what has happened over the river in South Brisbane. We know what has happened in other communities right around this state. I represent the Indigenous community of Woorabinda. In the near four years that I have represented those people I have seen them move forward because they want to move forward. They are moving forward because of the policies now of this LNP government. We are seeing better education programs put in place. We are seeing better health programs put in place. We are reviewing alcohol management plans. This is not about whether they want it or not; it is about giving them the opportunity to say, yes, they want it or, no, they do not want it. It is about treating those people as equals.

Mr Rickuss: With dignity.

Mr JOHNSON: Absolutely! I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. It is about treating them with decency and with equality, and that is what it is all about. Whether you are black, white or brindle, an LNP government will recognise you as a human being and will treat you with the decency you deserve and not in the paternalistic way that we have witnessed under the Labor Party in this state for near on 20 years—an absolute disgraceful situation! I have witnessed it and everybody else has witnessed it.

With regard to this land title business, without this legislation these people will have to go through the legal process of getting that land. For a lot of people today the legal process costs an absolute squillion. I think the minister has made that perfectly clear in what he is endeavouring to do with this legislation. That process would be costly, it would be unfair to these people who have been severely disadvantaged over a long period. The process would go on forever at huge cost, huge impost. Again, it would be a retardation of the advancement in society that they want to make. This legislation gives them

quicker access to achieve what they have always wanted—freehold title and an opportunity to progress. That opportunity to progress is going to be well and truly in the event of this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012 being proclaimed.

The Indigenous people who I talk to right around Queensland—not only in my electorate of Gregory and those people living at Woorabinda but in other parts of the state—see this legislation as a real ironclad guarantee of being able to move forward, of getting out of the dark days and out of the doldrums of a black and white mentality, of black being subjected to persecution and a misunderstanding of white man's rule. This legislation is about equality and it is about moving forward. This legislation is about eliminating paternalism and giving those people the rights that they deserve.

I ask the people in the Labor Party to show some common decency towards these people, to understand where they have come from, to understand what they have been subjected to and let them move forward in a bipartisan way—with the support of all people in this 89-member parliament—to give them the opportunity to have a better lifestyle by letting this legislation be passed in this House, letting it be proclaimed in a very short while and letting these people have an opportunity that they only ever dreamed of.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.11 pm): At the outset I must say that I am absolutely appalled by the ridiculous tactic of the member for Bundamba. I am certain that the people of Bundamba are absolutely disappointed by the representation that has again been foisted on them. I am sure they are wishing there were only six members of the Labor Party in the House instead of the current 'magnificent seven', if you would like to call them that.

Somewhere along the line the Labor Party has the idea that if you mention the word 'Aboriginal' it is their people who you are talking about. Quite clearly, the good folk in the electorates of Cook, Mount Isa, Dalrymple, Cairns and Townsville do not believe that for one second. They could not wait to throw them out of those areas which have major populations of Indigenous people.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr STEVENS: The members of the Labor Party should not think that they have this God-given right to talk on behalf—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Bundamba, the member is not taking your interjections. I have asked you numerous times to stop. I now warn you under standing order 253A.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for your protection on this matter, because it is a very serious matter that we are discussing in this motion. Quite clearly, the member for Bundamba, who has moved this motion as a deliberate ploy, has become all of a sudden in this House the Queen of stunts for the Labor Party. She really has no recognition of the importance of this bill to be passed for the betterment of Indigenous people. I congratulate the minister, the Premier and the cabinet on putting forward these matters to make Queensland a better place for Indigenous people. I cannot believe that the Manager of Opposition Business, who represents Indigenous people—

Mrs Miller: Mulgrave.

Mr STEVENS: I thank the member very much. I remember his dad, but I forgot about him. I cannot believe that he does not understand what this bill before the House will do. Even the member for South Brisbane, the brand-new wise prophet of all things in Queensland—a Labor Party guru, a future leader of the Labor Party—believes that the minister on this occasion has worked very diligently and very hard to get a better outcome. So what are we doing here with this motion to delay this bill from going through the House? It is absolutely disgusting that these Labor members, particularly the member for Bundamba, have flown in the face of the system that was put in place by the Labor Party when it was in government. The CLA members, which include the opposition leader, the deputy opposition leader and the Manager of Government Business, put up their hands and agreed for the committee process to work in relation to this bill so that it can go forward and be dealt with in an expeditious, proper and appropriate manner.

So what happens now? The member for Bundamba—the queen of stunts—comes in and says, 'Let's delay this a little bit further. Let's stop the LNP. Let's stop the minister from doing a good thing for Indigenous people. We will throw it back to the committee and delay it'—and get nothing done, like the Labor Party did when it sat in this place for 14 years and prevaricated over getting nothing done in this state to help Indigenous people. They put up some rubbish schemes such as wild rivers to placate their Greens mates and prohibited Indigenous people from getting a better life through empowerment, which is clearly what they are calling for. A good fellow up there called Noel Pearson is working very hard for his community and he speaks the language of economic empowerment.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, the leader is not taking your interjections. I would ask you to please stop.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you. This motion is a deliberate stalling tactic by the members opposite. Quite clearly, it is designed to throw the legislation back for the political purpose of stirring up some members of the community. For just about every piece of legislation that comes to this House there will be somebody in the community who does not agree with it. I can assure members that when the body corporate bill comes to this House there will be a lot of people who will not agree with it. But in a true democratic society, the majority and the views of the government of the day will prevail in the best interests of Queenslanders. However, there will be people who will feel disenfranchised and unhappy with the legislation that was put before the House. There will be Indigenous people who will be unhappy about this legislation that is before the House. There will always be people who are unhappy with legislation before the House. There will not be unanimous agreement from Indigenous people about the legislation that the minister is trying to pass through this House for the overall betterment of Indigenous people.

So what do we have here? We have a deliberate attempt by the member for Bundamba, in her new grandstanding, queen of stunts role for the Labor Party—if you like, the attack dog in terms of the really scary, brand-new persona that she has developed in the 54th Parliament. In the 53rd Parliament she sat up the back of the House and basically did not say boo to any legislation. All of a sudden this member has come forward as the new guru of everything in Queensland. Now, we even have her as the guru of this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill. To me, it is a very sad day for the folk of the electorate of Bundamba to have their member wasting time, grandstanding, pulling silly stunts and disrespecting the chair on many occasions, which has been noticed because of the number of times she has been warned and I think she probably holds the record in this 54th Parliament for being thrown out for the most number of times.

Mrs Miller: No, I don't.

Mr STEVENS: I cannot think of any member who has been thrown out more than this member. What I find very tragic about this whole motion before the House is that it is quite clearly a deliberate stalling tactic. It is a deliberate tactic to throw the legislation back to the committee. Will there be another result out of that committee? Is the committee make-up going to change? I do not think so. I am not aware of any change to the committee system. We will be going back to the same committee with the same people and they will do the same investigation.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Government Business is misleading the House. In fact, there will be a change to the committee. We agreed to the motion earlier today.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for South Brisbane, if you believe that the Manager of Government Business has misled the House, I would suggest that you write to the Speaker.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Given that you have been named earlier today, I would suggest that you cease with the frivolous points of order. The Manager of Government Business has the call.

Mr STEVENS: In relation to the matter that has just been raised by the member for South Brisbane in her uniquely clever style, the numbers on that committee will not change at all. The member for South Brisbane might not realise it, but the Manager of Government Business actually sets the membership on those committees. I am quite clearly not misleading the House at all. It will be going back to the same committee. It will be going back to a committee with the same government members as opposed to non-government members. I am not hearing from the member for South Brisbane that there was anything improper or wrong in terms of legal matters with the dealing by that committee of matters in relation to this bill. Being a betting man as I am, I will give you some pretty strong odds, like about 10 to 1 on, that we will get the same result from that committee, which the members on the other side well and truly know, and they can use it for a further political purpose to jump up and down and say, 'Look at us. We are friends of the Indigenous community', when, in fact, they are hindering the Indigenous community very much by holding up this bill which is trying to get a better outcome for Indigenous people in Queensland. We are trying to get legislation through that delivers a better outcome for Indigenous people.

I think it is an absolute blight on the Labor Party, particularly in relation to their supposed representation of Indigenous people. I think it is a very, very serious destabilising matter that they have come up with in this stunt atmosphere that the member for Bundamba keeps pursuing to try to deliberately stop betterment for our Indigenous people. It is a very, very sad day. I hope that the people of Bundamba remember the paucity of representation that they have received from their local member at the next election.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.24 pm): I was not going to speak to this particular motion, as I thought it should just be put before the House, but what I heard earlier from the member for Gregory disturbed me, to be frank. We heard claims of paternalism against the former Labor government here in Queensland. I really did expect more of him than that. Anyone who has had anything to do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and dealing with matters in the most appropriate and

sensitive way knows that nothing happens quickly. That is not a criticism at all. That is about working in partnership. We recognise that. You might say what is in a name, but we recognised that under the previous Labor government—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I find what the Manager of Opposition Business is saying offensive in relation to my response a few moments ago. One only has to read my material in this House. My contributions have been of a positive nature. I ask him to withdraw that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory, could you please state specifically what you found offensive about his remarks so I might ask that he withdraw that specific statement?

Mr JOHNSON: I find his criticism of my comment offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has found the comments a personal reflection and offensive.

Mr PITT: I ask for a ruling on this. That is considering that we cannot have debate in this chamber. Differing of opinion is not what is at stake here.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: It might assist the House and it might assist the continuation of the debate if you would withdraw.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. There have been a number of issues raised by those opposite this afternoon. The concern that I have is with the broad-ranging issues raised by numerous members opposite that the previous Labor government did nothing in the space of assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this state. I really do find that to be quite alarming.

What I would ask those opposite to do is remember that they are not in opposition any more; they are in government. Anything that we say in this chamber is very important. I ask them to go back and look at their comments made this afternoon and reflect on whether they are actually at all correct in regard to the plight of Indigenous Queenslanders in this state and what was done by the previous government. I ask them to have a very close look at those comments. They might well get away with saying those things in opposition as throwaway remarks, but, goodness me, without referencing particular members, I think people have to be very careful about the language they are using. I think that is very, very concerning given that what we saw from the previous government was a dramatic shift from the sorts of things we saw from the Bjelke-Petersen government in terms of introducing alcohol in a major way and having a funding nexus that was tied to alcohol in those communities. Long memories are what is required by everybody in this House. It is very concerning that we are seeing this sort of language brought forward.

The Leader of the House referenced Noel Pearson's comments and asked what he would think. I will refer to that in my speech when we do get back to this bill, because the organisations he is representing have views that are contrary and there are certainly statements of reservations in terms of the bill. I want to be clear that this bill is not a bill that we are entirely opposed to. That is a very simplistic way of looking at this. If that is the way this is being portrayed, again I think it is a pity about some of the remarks that have made by those opposite today. It is very concerning because this is trying to make a black and white issue out of this bill. It is not an absolute one or the other. This is about consultation.

We have heard them call this a stunt. We call it asking for further consultation. We are calling for additional time to do this properly, given that we know there are other matters that need to be considered very carefully in line with it. The *Torres Strait News* has reported very clearly what the consultation process was around this bill. They were absolutely aghast about the sorts of things that they saw when this committee went up there to talk to people. Fewer than five people, as I understand it, showed up to the consultation. Why? Well, because it was inappropriately timed. It was rushed. This is not a bill that is an absolute must to get through. The minister referred earlier to the work that had been done already in terms of surveying land and communities.

Mr Cripps: A long way to go.

Mr PITT: A long way to go. There is an awful lot still to come. However, this bill could use further work. I will reserve some of my other comments about the bill for when I am speaking to it. I ask those opposite to think about what they are saying in this place before they make their contributions, because making absolutely ridiculous remarks about the previous government being paternalistic and going against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—I am at a loss for words. That is a simplistic view of the world. We have to be very careful about the messages we are sending to Indigenous Queenslanders.

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (5.30 pm): The Leader of Opposition Business should educate the member for Bundamba about the people who live in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. They are not villagers. I think the member ought to apologise to my constituents for calling them villagers. They are hardworking and honest people for whom I have a lot of respect. Talk about trivialising the debate! Our minister has been in here for only a few months, but he has got up and had a go. A mess was left as a legacy to the people I represent and he has rolled up his sleeves and is fixing it.

Labor have an appalling record on land tenure in Cape York. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. For 25 years I have been up there trying to help the people sort out this mess. We are going to clean up that mess. Labor has not delivered one square inch to the people in the Cape York or the Torres Strait. They have not helped economic development in any way with its stalled land tenure policies, old land tenure policies, paternalistic land tenure policies.

We are going to get on with the job. We are going to sort out this freehold issue. We are going to get people back into their houses, as they were before we came along. We are going to get freehold. We are going to clean up this leasehold mess. People are dying before their leasehold issues are resolved. For 20 years this mess has been sitting there and nobody has done anything about it. Our minister went to the department and said, 'Get on with the job.' He sent the committee into the Cape York and the Torres Strait, saying, 'Get on with the job.' What is Labor doing now? It is saying, 'Let's hold it up a bit longer,' yet people are dying.

It is time that we got serious about this debate with Indigenous people. They have the right to community growth and economic development, along with the rest of us. We need to get on with the job. This is just delaying rubbish.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (5.31 pm): I was a member of this committee and I met with a lot of the people concerned. I can tell the House that the member for South Brisbane must have had a different view, because I know a lot of the people were excited about this legislation. They have been hoping that something like this would finally happen so that we can get to the point where we can give those people their rights and their dignity, by giving them the opportunities that they have been wanting. Under the mess—the dog's breakfast—that has been put upon people within those communities, they had no chance of doing that. I point out that this bill complies with the Native Title Act 1993. It does not take away rights from people but provides the tools that will be able to meet people's legal right to have a lease. Up until now, they have not had that right.

To those opposite I point out that the bill has four primary and important purposes, which they seem to forget. The first is to resolve longstanding uncertainties involving leases on deeds of grant in trust, or DOGITs. That is one of the main points, which the minister has pointed out to the opposition five times already, so this is probably the sixth time, but we will keep telling them. I will repeat it now: the No. 1 purpose of this bill is to resolve longstanding uncertainties involving leases on DOGITs.

Secondly, the bill provides local governments—not the villages, but the communities and towns those people live in—continued access to use land and other facilities once transferred under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 or the Torres Strait Land Act 1991. I repeat: it provides local governments with continued access to use the facilities.

Thirdly, the bill allows for the subdivision of the deeds of grant in trust, or DOGITs. Up until now, that has not been able to be done. If it has been done, it has not been done in a way that I expect the member for Bundamba would request as a normal land tenure agreement if she was going to invest any money or purchase land. We should all consider that point.

The fourth main purpose of the bill is to define the requirements for Indigenous land access and use agreements. By entering into an agreement, the Indigenous parties would not have to wait until the resolution of their native title claim to access and use the land for traditional purposes. I will read that point once more: by entering into an agreement, the Indigenous parties would not have to wait, as they have done under Labor, until the resolution of a native title claim to access and use their land for traditional purposes.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.34 pm): I am strongly opposed to this ALP motion. This bill sets the framework for freehold ownership; it will not do anything else. We have to fix up the mess. The bill gives Indigenous people the same opportunities as other Queenslanders. Who else would be happy to have their boundaries disjointed, to have buildings built on the wrong block, to live on land that is not necessarily theirs? None of us would tolerate that in our own areas and I do not see why Indigenous people cannot have the same rights as other Queenslanders. The bill does not give freehold title; it only sorts out the boundary issues and the surveying that needs to be done.

The member for South Brisbane said that there was not enough consultation on this issue. She talked about the trip to the Torres Strait. Yes, there was a cultural event on at that time. I have been going to the Torres Strait nearly every year for the past 15 years. I was up there the week after the committee was there. I was there for many days. People told me that they were very enthusiastic about the legislation. They were keen about it. They wanted to know more about it. They wanted to know how they could help.

Today, what we are seeing is the same paternalistic attitude that Labor has always had. It gives nothing to the Indigenous communities, but it takes their vote. That is all it has ever done. It just takes their vote. When I talk to the people, I wonder why on earth they supported the Labor government. Many years ago I was in the islands and saw that they were still dumping sewage on the beach. That

happened under Labor's watch. The water in some of the wells was brackish and could not be drunk. The people said, 'You taste this water', and it was terrible. The coalition government of the day put together the framework to cover all the dams on the islands with plastic to stop the evaporation so that the people had enough water to get through the winter months. Labor has done nothing. All it has ever wanted is to take their vote.

Why shouldn't those people have freehold title? Why shouldn't we start the process? Why can't they be the same as anybody else? It is because Labor never wanted them to be the same. It just wanted to take their vote and keep them down. We want to enhance their rights and allow them the opportunity to be treated the same as any other Queenslanders.

Division: Question put—That motion be agreed to.

AYES, 7—Byrne, Knuth, Mulherin, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

NOES, 62—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Maddern, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Symes, Trout, Walker, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

Resolved in the negative.



Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (5.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill. I was astounded by the theatrics that have just gone on here and the delays in the debate on this bill. This is a progressive bill that we are debating, and I congratulate the minister on bringing it forward.

The strange part about the theatrics that have just gone on is that when those opposite were in government they were working on a very similar bill. As I have said before, perpetually procrastinating politicians is what we have residing on the other side of the House. That is why nothing got done.

A government member interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. I thank the committee staff who worked extremely hard on this bill. The time lines were fairly tight. I thank the CLA for that. They have done a wonderful job of giving us tight time lines. They have excelled at that.

I congratulate the committee staff who have worked exceptionally well. We went to Cairns and took submissions. We went to the Torres Strait and took submissions. We took submissions in Brisbane as well. The committee recommended that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill be passed. That is an important part of this process—that is, that this bill does get passed.

It is really important that we actually give these communities the right to get some surveyed land blocks and freehold land so they can move forward. It is about giving the councils the right to manage infrastructure appropriately. It is about moving these communities forward. I congratulate the minister for that. He has worked hard to make sure that these communities are going to move forward and develop.

The committee worked extremely hard at its meetings in Cairns, the Torres Strait and Brisbane. As much as people might think it was lovely to go up to Cairns—and it was quite a nice trip—it was a lot of work and it meant a lot of travel. I do not know whether people actually realise, but once you get to Cairns it is a two hour flight to the Torres Strait. It is a long way. Queensland is a very big place. It takes two hours more from Cairns in planes and ferries.

I thank the minister for the discussion paper he tabled today, titled *Providing freehold title in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*. He has put forward a very relevant document about getting freehold title moving forward, and that is what this bill is about.

In relation to the committee's recommendations, I am glad to say that I think the committee system is working really well in this government. It is starting to work really well. The ministers and the bureaucrats are taking notice of the recommendations being put forward by the committees. A perfect example of this is that nearly all of our recommendations have been taken notice of and taken on board. For example, the government notes the recommendation of the committee in relation to setting time frames for parliamentary reports on bills when they involve consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities. That was about the difficulties of communicating with those communities because they are so far away and so isolated. The government is to be congratulated for taking note of that recommendation.

The government response states that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines will consult with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs on providing consultation materials in other languages. In a lot of the communities in the north English is actually their second language. Creole is the main language for a lot of the Torres Strait Islands and there are some

Indigenous languages as well. If we can improve the consultation process through better communication, that is what we want to do. That is what this government is about. It is about making things better for Indigenous communities, not just sitting there and procrastinating. It is about making things better.

The government supports the recommendation that the minister provide the parliament with an interim report on the operation and effectiveness of the act after three years from the date of commencement. That will be the responsibility of the next government. In three years time from the commencement of this legislation, that will be the next government's duty. I am glad that the minister has accepted that recommendation so the next government will have a look at this. There was a five-year time frame in the legislation but a three-year time frame for an interim report to be provided to parliament will be a good check to see that things are going well and to make sure that things are starting to progress and move forward, because that is what we want. Unfortunately, for 27 years or so things have not progressed that well. Unfortunately, governments with the best of intentions quite often do get led astray. So I am glad that that recommendation is accepted.

The next recommendation was in relation to taking into account traditional Indigenous law and custom in determining the owner of a lease when the original applicant is deceased. I did see the Attorney-General in here before; I hope he does look at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 to provide for the ability for traditional laws to be used in relation to wills and how land is handed down from family member to family member. A lot of people in our community do not have wills and it is even a higher percentage for people in the Torres Strait communities. So that will be looked at.

The committee also recommended that the bill be amended to change the name of 'Community Reference Panel' to more accurately capture the composition of the panel. Unfortunately, the name 'Community Reference Panel' did not recognise what we were talking about in the bill. People from the community felt they were missing out on something when in fact those panels were only about people who actually had DOGIT leases. I note that the minister has said that he is more than happy to take that recommendation on board and the name will be changed to the 'Landholding Act Stakeholder Reference Panel'. So congratulations, Minister. I think that name will clarify the situation. That really is important.

The government has also agreed with the recommendation that the minister provide a report to parliament in relation to the number of hardship certificates within one year of the bill commencing. It is important that we hear about the hardship certificates and to see what is going on. I really do want to congratulate the minister for taking a lot of these difficult issues on board. I also congratulate the bureaucrats who have accepted a lot of these difficult issues, because that is what this bill is all about.

There were two statements of reservations: one from the member for South Brisbane and one from the member for Dalrymple. In the statement of reservation from the member for South Brisbane there was talk about the Racial Discrimination Act. That is actually a federal act. I am sure the member realises that we do not actually give legal advice to the federal government; the Racial Discrimination Act is a federal act.

There was also talk about the need for more consultation with the communities. There was talk about certain groups writing in saying that they will offer consultation. With consultation costing \$30,000 per meeting, that is the sort of misappropriation almost of funds that is not needed. The community was advised. The councils were advised. Let us not treat these people disrespectfully. They understand these issues. I note that the member for South Brisbane was critical before about the fact that it was a cultural day. Is the member for South Brisbane trying to say that the Indigenous community in the Torres Strait cannot actually understand two issues at once?

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): What is your point of order?

Ms TRAD: He is misrepresenting what I said. I was not critical of the fact that it was a cultural day. I was not critical of the fact that a cultural day was—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you taking offence?

Ms TRAD: I am taking offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, it would be helpful if you would withdraw.

Mr RICKUSS: I will withdraw. I will withdraw the fact that was a cultural day. The day we were there was actually a cultural day in the Torres Strait. I talked to Mayor Pedro Stephen and several other councillors. I do not know whether I talked to Mayor Fred; I do not think he was there. I did talk to Mayor Pedro. I am sure that he is quite capable of taking in more than one issue at once, whether it be the

cultural aspects of the meetings that were being held that day or our committee meeting. There was conflicting advice about whether it would be a good day to have our committee meeting, but most of the islands had come to Thursday Island to meet on that day. I did not see a lot of cultural activities happening in the morning when we had our committee meeting. Unfortunately some of the councils decided not to attend for their own reasons. I do not know what those reasons were.

I think providing direct mail to every registered voter in the Torres Strait was definitely good consultation. We also took out ads in the papers. I think I was on radio three times. So there was definitely a real effort made to consult, and that is what we did. We consulted widely. We had good results and it had a good effect. I honestly believe that this bill should be supported. It really is going to take the communities further forward. This is the first tranche of a number of bills that will improve this situation. I have spoken to Minister Elmes about supplying some funding for the survey work. I have spoken to Minister Cripps about supplying some funding for the survey work. From what we can see, that is going to happen. All I can say is congratulations to the minister for moving forward with this landholding bill. It will definitely progress the communities.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.00 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 27 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.00 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Juvenile Crime

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (6.00 pm): Last Saturday night residents in the Townsville suburbs of Vincent and Heatley woke to find their neighbourhoods under attack. They reported more than 100 youths, some as young as 10, roaming the street, damaging cars and properties, throwing rocks and leaving behind a trail of destruction and empty bottles. Police recorded 22 calls to 000 from affected residents during the course of Saturday night and Sunday morning. This is the last thing the good people of Vincent and Heatley need as they continue to rebuild their lives after a mini tornado ripped through the area back in March.

My first question is this: where were the parents? My parents would not have put up with this kind of behaviour. Today I have to acknowledge in the chamber my father, Tony, who is visiting from North Queensland. Where were the parents of these children? I do not have a head full of grey hair, but even in my day we had fun but we knew where to draw the line.

Parents need to show some leadership and take responsibility for their kids, but we as a state government must also do better than what we have seen under Labor over the past decade. So what can we do? Firstly, we need more police on the beat. We have committed to putting 1,100 new police on Queensland's streets over the next four years, with another 200 officers to be redeployed from administrative tasks back to the front line. This has already begun. I am confident Townsville will benefit each and every year from extra officers at the coalface.

This government has taken steps to re-energise Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers across the state with a \$1 million investment. We have also listened to the community and launched two boot camp trials. While our city is not on the pilot round, I will fight to make sure Townsville gets a permanent sight if the trial is a success. But we also need magistrates to listen to community sentiment. While we have a long way to go until we get on top of crime, we have already made changes to strengthen our laws. They include a new offender levy of up to \$300 for anyone found guilty in court over and above any penalty issued, an increase in the non-parole period for multiple murders from 20 to 30 years, an increase in the penalty for assaulting police from seven to 14 years, and minimum penalties of \$5,000 and two years disqualification for evading police.

I commend the Minister for Police, who is currently reviewing the evading police laws and will report back to the House early in the new year. This is something we have to look at. We also need to look at our attitude to juveniles who commit crimes. It is not acceptable for us to blame society. It is not acceptable for us to blame a troubled upbringing. If people are doing the wrong thing, they deserve to be

punished. That is the way a society must react, otherwise we will continue to have these problems time and time again. We must send a strong message through tougher law and order, through more police on the beat and through sentences that reflect community sentiment that we must get tough on crime.

Defence Force Personnel, Care Packages



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (6.03 pm): For the past few months I have been collecting care package donations at my office as part of my community care drive for diggers on overseas deployments. On Saturday, 27 October these efforts culminated in a working bee at my office. With the aid of local residents, schools, businesses and other community groups, I am pleased to report that over 300 individual packages—which is roughly 600 kilograms—of food, toiletries and other goods have arrived or will soon be arriving on the battlefields of Afghanistan.

The idea of sending a small package to remind our soldiers of home was first raised with me by a local constituent and ex-serviceman. I certainly thought it was a good one and I am delighted that it also caught the imagination of my electorate. I hope that the crates of Minties, Vegemite, other food and messages of support will help sustain our service men and women through what must be a difficult mission. I only hope that the massive influx of sugar does not get me blacklisted by the Army Dental Corps!

On a more solemn note, last weekend I joined the Holland Park-Mount Gravatt Sub-Branch of the RSLA for the Remembrance Day commemorations, and I could not help but reflect on the men and women who will soon be receiving these packages. I think you would all agree that it is important that the young men and women who are putting themselves in harm's way for our country are not forgotten. That is why I would encourage you to send a small package of your own. Australia Post will deliver parcels of up to two kilograms free of charge to troops in the Middle East, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. Packages should be sent in a BM size box, and a list of approved materials is also available from Australia Post outlets.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the local Woolworths at Mount Gravatt, the Greater Mount Gravatt Lions, St John's Wishart Anglican Church, Mansfield State School, Upper Mount Gravatt State School, Rochedale State School, Pet City at Mount Gravatt, Holland Park and Mount Gravatt RSLA, Modern Baking Co., Kuraby Supanews, Ross Vasta MP, who is the federal member for Bonner, and my colleague Steve Minnikin for their invaluable support.

Mount Isa, Community Shadow Cabinet



Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.06 pm): Members on this side of the House, unlike those opposite, are determined to focus on Queenslanders throughout the state, not just those within the confines of Brisbane and the south-east corner. We are determined to cover each area of the state to reconnect with Queenslanders, to listen to their concerns, to take those concerns on board and to assure Queenslanders that our team is here to take the fight up to this government.

That is why we have taken our shadow cabinet to Rockhampton and Cairns. That is why we have travelled west to Emerald, Barcaldine and Longreach. That is why we have driven the Bruce Highway from Cairns to Bowen visiting all the places in between. And that is why last week we took the shadow cabinet to Mount Isa, one of the key economic centres of Queensland—not that people would understand that from the shameful and flippant manner in which the government has treated this great city.

In Mount Isa, our shadow police minister met with police officers, ambulance staff and firefighters. Our shadow health minister met with rural nurses and doctors. The deputy leader met with the local chamber of commerce and business representatives. The shadow Treasurer met with key representatives of the city's critical mining industry. The Mount Isa Mayor, Tony McGrady, pulled together a varied cross-section of the local community for a civic reception at which we were able to meet and speak with many people from all walks of Mount Isa life. I want to put on record my thanks to the Mayor, Mr McGrady, for hosting us there for that civic reception.

I also had the opportunity to spend some time at Spinifex State College where I spoke to the year 11 students for over an hour. I can say to the House that we have some great future leaders for tomorrow. These young men and women were very passionate and very committed about improving their local community. What reassured me was that, whilst a lot of them wanted to go and study elsewhere, they wanted to learn some skills and bring them back to the heart of Mount Isa.

Whilst I was also speaking with these young leaders, they mentioned to me their concern over the fact that the recreational camp at Magnetic Island had closed. They have undertaken leadership camps there for the last 20 years and they were talking to me about the high cost of now having to go to Brisbane. I would urge the government to reconsider that decision. It is going to have a huge impact on people out west.

In conclusion, I want to say that there is a lot of concern in the Mount Isa community about the fact that they completely missed out with the Royalties for the Regions program. When we are talking about Mount Isa, we are talking about a vast area that contributes to the economic prosperity of our great state. They contribute so much but they live so far away. We need to make sure we put money back into that community so they do not get neglected. The government needs to value the role that those Mount Isa residents play in our Queensland life.

Remembrance Day; Defence Force Personnel; Gaythorne RSL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (6.09 pm): I rise tonight to pay tribute to the service men and women in my electorate and also those who support our service men and women. My electorate of Everton has a high concentration of service men and women, and I want to put on the record tonight my particular admiration of the great work they do and the fact that they put their lives on the line every day for the defence of our country and to promote those democratic values that we all hold very dearly right around the world.

I am sure that I join with many of my colleagues who were involved in the Remembrance Day services on 11 November. It was great to be with the Premier at the Gaythorne RSL to pay our respects, especially to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives for our country and the values for which we stand.

I also want to pay tribute to those who support our service men and women in our community. Ten per cent of the population of Eatons Hill State School in my electorate has a family association with defence service personnel. I would like to pay tribute to Clyde Campbell, the principal of that school, and Gayle Kratzmann, the defence school transition aide, who always put on a great Remembrance Day service and also a great Anzac Day service each year. Of course, last Friday we enjoyed another memorable experience along those lines.

I also want to pay tribute to the Gaythorne RSL. Their president, Mr Merv Brown and his wife, Jenny, make an unbelievable contribution to the community. In the past week I have been involved with three or four examples of the Gaythorne RSL making a contribution to our community. They started up a day club for our more mature aged residents where they can come and enjoy fellowship every week and involve themselves in activities. They sponsored a writing competition for the children in our schools about an Anzac Day experience. As well as that, earlier this year they sponsored a local school \$10,000 towards an educational tour to Vietnam. I thank the Gaythorne RSL. I thank Mr Merv Brown, ably supported by his wife, Jenny, for all the work they do in the community.

Minister for Health; Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.11 pm): This morning during question time we saw another extraordinary performance by the member for Southern Downs, the health minister—the Premier in waiting. The health minister tabled apparently scandalous documents that were supposed to prove that the Labor government planned the widespread closure of nursing homes. However, he did not provide one signed document to prove his case because they do not exist. The fact is that the health minister is the one who is throwing the lives of elderly Queenslanders and their families into chaos by closing nursing-home beds. The minister cannot spin his way out of this one or try to blame the former government. It is time for him to be accountable for the callous decisions he has made.

But instead of being accountable, the LNP government has done the opposite and has legislated and enshrined in law greater secrecy in Queensland. For example, the Local Government Amendment Act 2012 is a free pass for the Lord Mayor, the Premier's mate in City Hall, to run a more secretive and unaccountable council. The new law explicitly prevents opposition councillors from requesting information about matters outside their own wards. This means that major projects like Legacy Way will not be able to be properly scrutinised if they fall within wards represented by LNP councillors. It should be a basic right for councillors to obtain information about matters in any council area. That right remains for every other council in Queensland. Why has Brisbane City Council been singled out? It is because it is the only elected LNP council in Queensland.

The tricky nature of this new legislation, which we opposed, is that these restrictions do not apply to the Lord Mayor or to chairs of committees. It is a law designed only to prevent proper scrutiny by the Labor opposition councillors. It makes it harder to determine just how much of a burden the Legacy Way toll tunnel will be on ratepayers. The disappointing list of new secretive measures also means that major decisions affecting ratepayers that would usually be subject to debate by a full council can be delegated to the Establishment and Coordination Committee, which is made up entirely of the Lord Mayor and LNP councillors. Councillors will even be able to draw two pay packets—their council salary and also a full-time public servant salary. The requirement for councillors to report another councillor's conflict of interest has been removed.

The LNP talk about accountability and transparency, but they deliver the opposite. Just look at how these changes were brought in. There was no attempt at real consultation, and then the minister ignored the recommendations of its own stacked committee. The government denied the council Leader of the Opposition, Milton Dick, a chance to speak at the public hearing. They also ignored Councillor Dick's substantial submission on the sweeping changes that were made to the City of Brisbane Act. It seems that the minister believes that consultation involves just a phone call to his LNP mates on council. Unfortunately, I am not surprised by this behaviour because it simply reflects the low standards of LNP ministers and the low standards that the Premier sets for his government.

Lytton Electorate

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise tonight to highlight how the Newman government's budget decisions will benefit the Lytton electorate. Firstly, the Lytton electorate will make Queensland history as having the very first special school to become an independent special school.

Mr Ruthenberg: Well done!

Mr SYMES: Thank you; I take that interjection. That school is the Darling Point Special School in Manly. I want to put on the record that this could not have been achieved except for the determination of the parents, the principal, the teachers, the education minister and me. We all want to provide a bright future for those students.

The Lytton electorate was heavily assisted in terms of education funding under the school maintenance boost, with nearly \$700,000 of funding going to the following schools: the maximum of \$160,000 Wynnum West State School; Wynnum State High School; Manly West State School; Lota State School, \$74,000—just to name a few. To give an example of just how the school maintenance boost will benefit school communities, I can tell honourable members that the Lota State School had been waiting for nearly 18 months to complete the construction of a brand-new fence around the perimeter of the school grounds.

Mr Ruthenberg: Labor's legacy!

Mr SYMES: Absolutely! It is Labor's legacy. Under this initiative, the school P&C can get a local contractor from the area to come in and finish the work for the school whilst also empowering the local small businesses, which is what I am about. Another great example of how the Newman government is committed to providing better learning opportunities and safety in Queensland schools is the announcement of 15 school based police officers. Brisbane Bayside College received one of them to help build rapport among the students, local community and the police whilst making the area safer. I want to thank the police minister for granting the school this additional resource, which they appreciated at their awards night a fortnight ago.

I must also put on the record my gratitude to the education minister for coming down to my electorate last week to visit Darling Point Special School to see the rollout of the e-tablets initiative. The school received 40 e-tablets. We looked around the school and saw the improvements that they have made to those students' lives. For instance, they are using the iPads and e-tablets in manual arts to record the progress of how many wood blocks they have cut for James Hardie. This brings in \$12,000 for the school community.

Ferny Grove Electorate

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise this evening to give a brief overview of the exciting things that will be occurring throughout my electorate in the coming week. Beginning this Saturday, the Ferny Grove State High School will stage its twilight markets, which is an event that takes a considerable amount of planning. I would like to thank the efforts of the fundraising and social team committee of the P&C for that. The twilight markets will operate between 5 pm and 9 pm this coming Saturday and will consist of family entertainment in terms of rides and so forth. Santa will also be arriving at 6 pm. Clearly, that will not be me in drag. I do not quite fill it out well enough. This is the school's last major event for 2012. I would like to wish them all the very best with regard to the weather. Ordinarily, that is not something we can affect. This year Ferny Grove has been dramatically affected by weather events. The last major fair that they hosted was on the same Saturday as the local council elections. Honourable members may recall that it was quite wet. I wish them all the very best for this event and also all the very best for the graduation ceremonies and so forth that they will have on 12 December.

Also in the coming week, on Tuesday, 20 November, Ferny Grove State School is hosting a significant event. Professor Paula Barrett will be attending the school. She will be outlining in a discussion how we as parents can model brave behaviours in our children. During these sittings and at the last sittings we have heard several mentions by honourable members of social media cyberbullying, which is increasing in prevalence in our communities. Professor Paula Barrett will no doubt be addressing these types of concerns to ensure that our young children can deal with anxiety and that we as parents are able to promote resilience in our children. That is on Tuesday, 20 November at 7.15 pm.

At 6 pm on the same night at the Arana Leagues Club the Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local will host an event called Taking the Pulse. I encourage people to come along to that event to discuss how our health and wellbeing can be affected at a local level and how that may be improved.

Bruce Highway

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.20 pm): The commitment by this government to allocate \$1 billion over 10 years to the Bruce Highway requires full analysis and examination of the causes of damage that makes the Bruce Highway one of the most dangerous highways in Australia. The destruction of rail freight has resulted in heavy congestion of freight, tourist and general traffic.

Considering that the zoning of Queensland designates the coastal route as a primarily tourism based economy, there is a strong argument for any strategic infrastructure improvement plan for the Bruce Highway to also include solutions to divert heavy vehicle traffic inland, where they can better service the resource and production zones of Queensland. With significant funding, the inland route would be capable of connecting Cairns to Melbourne and creating a freight superhighway that would provide a shorter national transport route connecting Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The government has predicted that unless major works are carried out on the Bruce Highway over 400 people could lose their lives over the next 10 years.

I recall that at the time of Cyclone Yasi the Bruce Highway was cut for almost 10 days. When the transport operators and tourists realised that there was an inland route from Charters Towers through to Mount Garnet, the pressure on the Bruce Highway was relieved. That resulted in a convoy of vehicles travelling inland. The transport operators acknowledged that the inland route, especially between Ingham and Townsville, had significantly reduced transport pressure and congestion.

I believe that it makes sense to create an inland highway. Bridges over Snake Creek, the Clarke River and the Basalt River could be upgraded. The inland could be opened up to triple road trains from Mount Garnet to Charters Towers, from Charters Towers to Emerald, and from Emerald right through to Toowoomba and Brisbane.

We are putting \$1 billion into the Bruce Highway over 10 years, but the alternative inland route would make a difference. An inland highway would relieve traffic congestion along the coast, would save a lot of infrastructure costs and would breathe life into rural communities. I believe that this could be the foundation of big things to come.

Kumbia, Race Meeting; Buy Local Campaign; MacLagan Squeezebox Festival

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (6.23 pm): I rise to inform the House about the wonderful occasion of the Kumbia races. Last week I was fortunate enough to host the Queensland cabinet in Kingaroy for a community function and a formal cabinet meeting. I place on the record my heartfelt thanks to all of the ministers who made the effort to drive out to the wonderful South Burnett region and enjoy some of the benefits that our region offers.

One of those benefits is a country race day. It was a fantastic day. We had the Premier on the barbecue and Marg Golinski cooking alongside of him. It was just a brilliant day. Minister Dickson very kindly announced another race day for Kumbia which will be held on 1 June 2013. What a wonderful day that will be. It will add to the country race series which will see me heading off to the Nanango races on 8 December and the Esk races on 22 December. These are wonderful times within the Nanango electorate for country racing.

I also compliment our Attorney-General and the Minister for Agriculture for entering into the Fashions on the Field. The wife of the Minister for Local Government was the judge. She did a wonderful job. The ministers were not fortunate enough to win; however, I compliment Tegan Crisafulli for her work and the contribution she made to the wonderful day that was the Kumbia races. It was a fantastic day. I would encourage everyone to go to our next race meeting there, on 1 June next year.

I also mention the 'buy local' campaign that I am strongly supporting within my local region. My husband has a local coffee shop. We are determined to buy our Christmas presents locally, as we always do. I am encouraging all locals to buy local within all of my towns, whether it be Crows Nest, Toogoolawah, Esk, Kilcoy, Kingaroy or Nanango—in all of those wonderful small shops that we have—to get some business going back into my electorate.

In the time remaining to me I will touch on a wonderful event I went to in MacLagan called the Squeezebox Festival. Anyone who knows MacLagan knows that it is a beautiful part of the world. Roughly 450 people turned up to the MacLagan hall for the Squeezebox Festival. I met people there from Noosa and Cairns. People are coming from all over the country to go to this festival. I would encourage everyone to go to the next Squeezebox Festival on 12 October 2013. It was a wonderful family day. All of the local community groups were able to get involved and raise money.

SES Volunteers



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.26 pm): As the State Emergency Service remembrance week draws to a close, I would like to place on the record my appreciation to the rather large band of men and women who make up the State Emergency Service in the electorate of Gladstone. We have groups that cover the Boyne Valley; the Gladstone city area; Calliope; Boyne Tannum, which is two townships that are joined by a bridge; Benaraby; Mount Larcom; and the Yarwun-Targinie area. Many of these areas are rural, and the SES face a broad range of issues and challenges.

The SES do not just turn out to storms. When there have been significant fires in the region they will act as traffic directors. They will also control any sensitive areas while the rural fire brigade, another volunteer organisation, attempts to control the fires. At accidents they turn out in the day and the night to man detours and to ensure safety around the accident site, not just for those injured and those emergency services personnel who are working at the accident site but also for drivers. They turn out, as we all know, to storms and floods. When the rest of us are at home trying to dodge the wind, the lightning and the thunder, they are putting tarps on roofs in very inclement and challenging circumstances. They are filling the sandbags and making sure that the sandbags can hold back the water. In my electorate, and I am sure in other electorates, they also attend events in a traffic control role, often with a bucket to collect money because they are not fully funded. It is ridiculous, but they have to pay for fuel to turn out their vehicles. These volunteers are critical to our community. They add that level of safety. I think it should never be misunderstood that those men and women in the bright orange overalls are doing it all on a voluntary basis.

While this week has commemorated the SES volunteers, I also want to put on the record my extreme gratitude to each volunteer's family. Those families sit at home when their husbands, wives, fathers, mothers and grandfathers in some instances—I have not heard of too many grandmothers—turn out in the worst possible conditions. These volunteers leave their families with, I believe, a strong prayer that they will remain safe themselves while they are working in the community on a voluntary basis to ensure the safety and survival of the rest of us. There is not more that I could say to the volunteers than a heartfelt thankyou. And to the families: we appreciate your generosity of spirit in loaning these men and women to the community. Thank you.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, 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, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young