



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2012



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

For the sitting week, Madam Speaker acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which this parliament is assembled.

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

The Honourable F. Simpson, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 22 November 2012

"A Bill for an Act to amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Judicial Review Act 1991, the Libraries Act 1988, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010, the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, the Public Service Act 2008, the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Airport Assets (Restructuring and Disposal) Act 2008, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012, the Fisheries Act 1994, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Education and Training Legislation Amendment Act 2011, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Disability Services Act 2006 to enable people with a disability to receive funding to obtain disability services"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, the Electoral Act 1992, the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Trustee Companies Act 1968 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 for particular purposes, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Acts mentioned in the schedule"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

22 November 2012

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 November 2012, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills [\[1659\]](#).

REPORTS

Auditor-General



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General three reports: *Report to parliament No. 3 for 2012-13—Tourism industry growth and development*; *Report to parliament No. 4 for 2012-13—Queensland Health: eHealth program*; and *Report to parliament No. 5 for 2012-13—Results of audit: state public sector entities for 2011-12*. I table the reports for the information of members.


Tabled paper: Queensland Audit Office: Report to Parliament No. 3 for 2012-13—Tourism industry growth and development [\[1660\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Audit Office: Report to Parliament No. 4 for 2012-13—Queensland Health—eHealth Program [\[1661\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Audit Office: Report to Parliament No. 5 for 2012-13—Results of audit: State public sector entities for 2011-12 [\[1662\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT


Matters of Privilege Referred to Ethics Committee

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I refer to three matters of privilege that I have recently referred to the Ethics Committee, specifically the referral of 25 October 2012 concerning an allegation that Mr Michael Caltabiano deliberately misled the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, the THLGC; the referral of 31 October 2012 concerning an allegation from the Leader of the Opposition that the legal firm Gilshenan and Luton acting for Mr Michael Caltabiano intimidated the Leader of the Opposition and improperly interfered with the free performance by the member of her duties as a member; and the further referral of 31 October 2012 concerning an allegation from the Leader of the Opposition that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Scott Emerson, deliberately misled the House on 30 October 2012 in an answer to a question without notice or Mr Michael Caltabiano deliberately misled a committee on 18 October 2012.

I wish to advise the House that I have received correspondence from the chairperson of the Ethics Committee indicating that the committee has, in turn, received correspondence from the chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission advising of a current investigation being undertaken by that body which is related to the matters referred to the committee. The committee has requested that I inform the House that the committee has resolved to suspend its inquiries into these matters until such time that the CMC advises of the outcome of its investigation. I remind members that these three matters remain referred to the Ethics Committee and that standing order 271 continues to apply and therefore members should not refer to these matters in the House.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee


 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 31 October 2012 I received correspondence from the then Minister for Housing and Public Works, the member for Moggill, alleging that the member for Bundamba deliberately misled the House on 30 October 2012 in statements made during debate on the aged-care motion. The member for Bundamba stated—

Now they are being thrown out so that this government can sell a public asset out from under them.

The member for Moggill asserts that the sale of caravan parks does not involve eviction of the existing tenants and that the member's statement is misleading. On 2 November 2012 I sought further information from the member for Bundamba in accordance with standing order 269(5). The member for Bundamba challenges the member for Moggill's assertions. I do not intend to canvass the details of the claims and counterclaims of the parties to the matter. Suffice to say there is considerable examination of fact required to determine the matter. Accordingly, I have decided to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. In doing so, I wish to emphasise that I have formed no view as to whether there has been a breach of privilege but rather that there are sufficient issues in play to warrant the further consideration of the House via the committee. I remind members that standing order 271 now applies and members should not refer to the matter in the House.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 1 November 2012 I received correspondence from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads alleging that the Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the House in a statement during question time on that date. The Leader of the Opposition stated—

I now table a copy of a letter received by my office yesterday which indicates that the transport minister, unlike other ministers, is refusing to release details of his diary and the people he has met with.

The Leader of the Opposition then tabled a letter dated 31 October 2012 from a deidentified officer in the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition relating to a right to information request. The minister contends that the Leader of the Opposition sought to deliberately mislead the House by claiming that the minister refused to release details of his diary. On 7 November 2012 I sought further information from the Leader of the Opposition in accordance with standing order 269(5). The Leader of the Opposition provided counterarguments to the minister's contention. Again I do not intend to canvass the details of the claims and counterclaims of the parties to this matter. Suffice to say there is considerable examination of the fact required to determine the matter. Accordingly, I have decided to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. Again in doing so I wish to

stress that I have formed no view as to whether there has been a breach of privilege but rather that there are sufficient issues in play to warrant the further consideration of the House via the committee. I remind members that standing order 271 now applies and members should not refer to this matter in the House.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Parliamentary Christmas Tree



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am pleased to inform members that the annual lighting of the parliament's Christmas tree will occur this evening, accompanied by carols from the Mabel Park State School choir. I acknowledge the assistance of the member for Woodridge in organising the choir's attendance. I invite members to share in this short event at 7 pm at the porte cochere. There will be a carols performance from the students followed by the lighting of the tree, concluding at 7.15 pm in time for the House to resume.

PETITIONS

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

Maryborough, Palliative Care Unit

Mrs Maddern, from 6,858 petitioners, requesting the House to take all necessary steps to have a dedicated palliative care unit based in Maryborough [\[1663\]](#).

Bimblebox Nature Refuge

Mr Wellington, from 14 petitioners, requesting the House to implement legislative changes to ensure that Bimblebox Nature Refuge is not mined and to not alter legislation that currently protects the Steve Irwin Reserve from being mined [\[1664\]](#).

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

Cooran State School

102 petitioners, requesting the House to retain Jodi Hemphill as a teacher at Cooran State School [\[1665\]](#).

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

Civil Partnerships Act 2011, Repeal

Mr Pitt, from 7,601 petitioners, requesting the House to not consider any measures that seek the removal in any way of the equal rights achieved recently under the provisions of the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 [\[1666\]](#).

Bremer TAFE

Mrs Miller, from 42 petitioners, requesting the House to keep Bremer TAFE as an Ipswich based TAFE, retaining its identity and independence [\[1667\]](#).

Marine Parks

Dr Robinson, from 249 petitioners, requesting the House to halt the current process of establishing marine parks in Queensland and ensure that future marine park boundaries are based on science and environment risk assessment and to review the current marine national parks with a view to allowing sustainable recreational fishing activity [\[1668\]](#).

Workers Compensation Scheme

Mr Mulherin, from 7,409 petitioners, requesting the House to guarantee that it will not change our nation-leading workers' compensation system [\[1669\]](#).

Get Set for Work Program

Mr Wellington, from 1,772 petitioners, requesting the House to reverse the decision to cease funding the Get Set for Work Program [\[1670\]](#).

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

Queensland Health, Royal Commission

176 petitioners, requesting the House to hold a Royal Commission into Queensland Health and its auxiliary bodies, including the Health Quality and Complaints Commission [\[1671\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

16 November 2012—

[1621](#) Queensland Education Leadership Institute Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2012: Erratum

[1622](#) Administration of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988—Annual Report 2011-12

[1623](#) Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: 2012-13 Budget Estimates: Additional information

19 November 2012—

[1624](#) Final report—Rail Safety Investigation—TMR 3947: Cairns Tilt Train derailment (Ingham-Hinchinbrook), 19 March 2011

20 November 2012—

[1625](#) Office of the State Coroner—Annual Report 2011-12

[1626](#) Childrens Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2011-12

[1627](#) QSuper Board of Trustees—Annual Report 2011-12

[1628](#) Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Erratum to Explanatory Notes

[1629](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to an ePetition (1950-12) sponsored by Ms Palaszczuk, from 65 petitioners, requesting the House to take all necessary action to stop the closure of the Holland Park Courthouse which would result in the removal of important services for the local community such as the JPs in the Community Program

[1630](#) Allconnex Water: Final Report—July 2011 to September 2012

21 November 2012—

[1631](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to a paper petition (1998-12) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), from 7 petitioners, requesting the House to reject any changes to WorkCover that could or would adversely affect Queensland workers and/or their families covered by the scheme

[1632](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to two ePetitions (1919-12 and 1922-12) sponsored by Ms Trad and Mr Watts, from 5,377 petitioners and 10,003 respectively, requesting the House to not proceed with any proposals to amend the Surrogacy Act 2010 and to repeal all laws and amend any regulations that allow a single person or a same sex couple to obtain a child by surrogacy

[1633](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to an ePetition (1981-12) sponsored by Ms Palaszczuk, from 2,274 petitioners, requesting the House to keep the Labour Day public holiday in May

[1634](#) Response from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Mr McVeigh) to an ePetition (1989-12) and a paper petition (2007-12) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) and (3), from 1,381 and 644 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to retain the Toowoomba Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Animal Disease Surveillance Laboratory and continue these services at the existing premises with facilities suitable to the requirements of this vital work

[1635](#) Public Interest Monitor—Fourteenth Annual Report for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, pursuant to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 and the Criminal Code of the Commonwealth

22 November 2012—

[1636](#) Electoral Commission of Queensland: Evaluation Report and Statistical Returns—Queensland Election 2012, Saturday 24 March 2012 and South Brisbane By-Election, Saturday 28 April 2012

[1637](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 12—Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012

[1638](#) Office of the Adult Guardian—Annual Report 2011-12

[1639](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal—Annual Report 2011-12

[1640](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 15—Report on the Strategic Review of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

[1641](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 15—Report on the Strategic Review of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[1642](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 16—Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

[1643](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 16—Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[1644](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 17—Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

[1645](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 17—Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[1646](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 18—Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

[1647](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 18—Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[1648](#) State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 14—Tourism and Events Queensland Bill 2012

[1649](#) Response from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Mr McVeigh) to an ePetition (1985-12) and a paper petition (2004-12) sponsored by Mr Knuth, from 655 and 3,109 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to retain the Townsville Biosecurity Unit (Tropical and Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory) and continue the service at a premises suitable to the requirements of this vital work

[1650](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 14—Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

[1651](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 14—Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[1652](#) State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 15—Economic Development Bill 2012

[1653](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 23—South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

[1654](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 23—South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

23 November 2012—

[1655](#) Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 5—Review of Auditor-General's Report 3: 2012 Results of audits: Education sector financial statements for 2011: Government response

[1656](#) Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 7—Review of Auditor-General's Report 1: 2012—Improving student attendance: Government response

26 November 2012—

[1657](#) PA Research Foundation—Annual Report 2011-12

[1658](#) Overseas travel report—Travel to Auckland to attend the Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCoPI), report on overseas travel undertaken by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Mr McVeigh), Auckland, New Zealand 24-26 October 2012

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[1672](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2012, No. 197

Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[1673](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2012, No. 197, Explanatory Notes

Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997—

[1674](#) Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 198

Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997—

[1675](#) Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 198, Explanatory Notes

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005, Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000—

[1676](#) Education and Training Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 199

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005, Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000—

[1677](#) Education and Training Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 199, Explanatory Notes

Civil Proceedings Act 2011—

[1678](#) Civil Proceedings (Postponement) Regulation 2012, No. 200

Civil Proceedings Act 2011—

[1679](#) Civil Proceedings (Postponement) Regulation 2012, No. 200, Explanatory Notes

Drug Court Act 2000—

[1680](#) Drug Court Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 201

Drug Court Act 2000—

[1681](#) Drug Court Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 201, Explanatory Notes

Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2005—

[1682](#) Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 202

Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2005—

[1683](#) Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 202, Explanatory Notes

Work Health and Safety Act 2011—

[1684](#) Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 203

Work Health and Safety Act 2011—

[1685](#) Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 203, Explanatory Notes

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

[1686](#) Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 204

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

[1687](#) Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 204, Explanatory Notes

Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010—

[1688](#) Transport (Rail Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 205

Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010—

[1689](#) Transport (Rail Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 205, Explanatory Notes

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 2003—

[1690](#) Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Endorsement) Notice 2012, No. 206

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 2003—

[1691](#) Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Endorsement) Notice 2012, No. 206, Explanatory Notes

Health Legislation Amendment Act 2011—

[1692](#) Health Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2012, No. 207

Health Legislation Amendment Act 2011—

[1693](#) Health Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2012, No. 207, Explanatory Notes

Food Act 2006, Health Act 1937, Public Health Act 2005—

[1694](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 208

Food Act 2006, Health Act 1937, Public Health Act 2005—

[1695](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2012, No. 208, Explanatory Notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[1696](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2012, No. 209

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[1697](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2012, No. 209, Explanatory Notes

Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012—

[1698](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 210

Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012—

[1699](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 210, Explanatory Notes

Electricity Act 1994—

[1700](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2012, No. 211

Electricity Act 1994—

[1701](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2012, No. 211, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Act 2009—

[1702](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 212

Local Government Act 2009—

[1703](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012, No. 212, Explanatory Notes

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

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

Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson)—

[1704](#) Non-conforming petition regarding United Synergies

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[1705](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her excellency the Governor, viz—

Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

Amendments made to Bill*

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012'

Insert—

'Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2012'.

Clause 35 (Insertion of new ch 6, pt 1, div 4, sdiv 2A)—

At page 26, line 31, '225B(2)(b)'—

Omit, Insert—

'255B(2)(b)'.

* The page and line number references relate to the Bill, after amendments made in consideration in detail.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Changes in Ministry; White Ribbon Day; Apology for Forced Adoptions; Newman Government, Achievements



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.40 am): I lay upon the table of the House the *Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazettes* of 14 and 19 November 2012, which outline recent changes to the ministry, including the appointment of the member for Everton, the Hon. Tim Mander MP, as Minister for Housing and Public Works and the member for Mirani, Mr Ted Malone, Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers.

Tabled paper: Extraordinary Government Gazette, dated 14 November 2012, including ministerial appointments [1706].

Sunday, 25 November 2012 marked White Ribbon Day. As an ambassador, I am wearing this white ribbon in recognition of the oath that I have taken in support of Australia's campaign to stop violence against women. I recognise the many members in this parliament who have done the same and I thank them for that.

I wish to remind the House that at 12.30 pm today I will seek leave to move a motion without notice to deliver, on behalf of the parliament, an apology for past forced adoption policies and practices in Queensland. I hope and trust that all members can indeed be present.

This is a great state with great opportunity. We have set as a government ambitious action plans for the first 100 days and then the six months to the end of December this year to ensure that Queenslanders understand our direction and our determination to get the job done. We have continued our reform agenda by making great progress on 149 action items over the last six months. Delivering on these commitments clearly shows that what we promise we deliver. We are currently finalising our next six-month action plan detailing how we will continue to progress our election commitments and deliver on making Queensland a great state with great opportunity. This plan will be a comprehensive road map for the next six months that sets out the way forward.

With an incredible amount behind us already and a huge amount of hard work ahead of us, I am excited about what Queensland is poised to achieve. The government I lead will ensure that Queensland remains a great place to live, work and raise a family where the cost of living is low. The broad priorities for my government are to attract investment and people to this state, negotiate a fairer deal with the federal government on tax reform and removing duplication in important planning and project approvals and creating a right size and efficient best practice Public Service that serves the people of Queensland in the best possible way. We will deliver a strong four-pillar economy focused on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction and we will empower business by cutting red tape and regulation.

By working with business and industry, the Queensland government can create jobs, opportunity and prosperity, keeping our best and brightest here in this state of Queensland. Right across Queensland, all proud Queenslanders will have access to the best health care and will be able to provide their children with the best education. We will ensure that our communities are safe and that our vulnerable are protected. We will continue to put more police officers on the front line and we will progress further reforms to tackle law and order issues throughout Queensland. We will deliver well planned infrastructure across the state and we will ensure that we have a government that is open, accountable and delivers the results that Queenslanders expect. Our open data revolution will continue, with the ongoing release of new information and datasets on to data.qld.gov.au. My government will begin 2013 with a fresh zeal and an ambitious six-month plan to ensure that Queensland remains a great state with a great opportunity.

Newman Government, Achievements



Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.44 am): In eight short months the LNP government has worked hard to get this great state with great opportunities back on track. From the Southport Broadwater to Trinity Inlet, from the Mary Valley to the Fitzroy catchment, from the Surat Basin to the city, we have taken decisions to grow the business of Queensland, to create the jobs and build the economy for our future prosperity and future generations of Queenslanders. We have fulfilled our 100-day action plan and we are now on our way to achieving the targets we have set for our six-month plan. We have plotted a new course for state planning policies to simplify and clarify the state's interests in Queensland's planning and development framework. Our appointment of an Assistant Minister for Planning Reform, Ian Walker, is guiding reform of the Sustainable Planning Act to make it the most cost-efficient planning framework in the country.


We have also established regional planning committees and undertaken community consultation for the Darling Downs and Central Queensland and Cape York statutory regional plans. The setting up of the GasFields Commission as a statutory body was the key outcome from the 100-day action plan and has provided an avenue for the successful coexistence between agriculture and the resources sector.

We are working to end the travesty of the Traveston Dam with the Mary Valley economic development strategy. We brought common sense to the development of the coalmining industry in the Galilee Basin and ended the totally unrealistic expansion plans for the port of Abbot Point. We have released the draft Great Barrier Reef ports strategy and we have proposed a well accepted solution to water quality issues in the Fitzroy River catchment.

The Resources Cabinet Committee is soon to provide its 100-day report to cabinet on how to ensure that our mining industry is able to operate and grow unshackled by the unnecessary red tape and inefficient, constraining regulation. Soon the regional communities that host or service the resource industries will get their first share of the mining bounty under this government's Royalties for the Regions program. Country towns and country people will finally get their share of the royalties that are paid to this state.

We are guaranteeing our future economic prosperity. Last week, the Coordinator-General approved the Ella Bay integrated resort project—the state's biggest ever tourism development. It is just one of more than 30 major projects that are under active assessment with the potential to attract \$78 billion of investment, create more than 40,000 construction jobs and 20,000 ongoing operational jobs. Today, we are extending those opportunities to often overlooked Indigenous communities on Cape York. Today, we will open the expressions of interest process for the development rights to the Aurukun bauxite resource. We are going to the open market to find proponents with the capability, the capacity and the experience to develop a bauxite mine and the associated infrastructure to the benefit of the people of Aurukun. Our decision has the backing of the Aurukun community and the backing of the traditional owners and has drawn strong corporate interest from Australia and overseas. It will provide the people of Aurukun and nearby communities with the chance to have a real job, to own a real home, to participate in the real economy in a very real way. That is the future all Queenslanders can look forward to under this government—a bright future in a great state with great opportunity.

Queensland Economy

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): Queensland is a great state with great opportunities, but only if the state's finances are sound and well managed. Unlike those opposite, the Newman LNP government will do the right thing by the people of Queensland to ensure that that opportunity is available for them all. Unlike those opposite, we will also stick to our promises. Just 73 days after promising not to sell assets at the 2009 election, the former Bligh government announced that it would sell off \$15 billion in assets, including the shares in QR National. Instead of prudently using the proceeds to pay down its debt, Labor continued to spend at an unsustainable rate jeopardising the financial position of the state. In fact, Labor borrowed another \$2.2 billion after having sold out, adding to that stratospheric mountain of debt that they were accumulating—

Mr Stevens: How high?

Mr NICHOLLS: That went out into outer space, as we know. They borrowed against the shares that they still held.


In the lead-up to the election, we said that we would sell those shares to pay down Labor's debt. In October, we announced that we had sold about half the government's \$821 million shares at a premium, reducing debt by \$1.5 billion. The deal involved the sale of \$1 billion worth of shares via a selective buyback to QR National and a \$500 million placement to a small number of cornerstone investors.

Usually to clear a block of this size shares have to be sold at a hefty discount, as was the case with Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank, but the Newman government was able to secure the best deal for Queensland with the \$3.47 price per share representing a premium to QR National's three, five, 10, 30, 60 and 90-day volume weighted average price of shares—that is, we did better than the market. The sale represents a \$400 million boost to Queensland's bottom line since the initial public offer. It also removes the large government overhang by reducing the government's share ownership down from 33.9 per cent to 16 per cent. Exiting out of the shares in the way we did—in a single, simple, clean trade—not only delivered a massive boost to the state's bottom line, it also increased the value of the government's remaining shares in QR National, providing yet another positive for the people of Queensland.

QR National shareholders gave the buyback the green light earlier this month with a huge vote of confidence of 99.6 per cent in favour of the deal at its AGM last week. That was before it changed its name to Aurizon Holdings. The decision to change its name from QRN to Aurizon Holdings recognises that the company's interests and business is not just here in Queensland and that diversification is part of its growth strategy going forward.

By selling the shares at a premium we have not only paid down the state's debt but also reduced the state's interest bill. The government has no plans to sell down its remaining stake in Aurizon Holdings in the near future. Queenslanders can rest assured that unlike those opposite any future decisions we make will be made in the best interests of the state and all Queenslanders.


Mental Health

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.51 am): Today a new report from the Commonwealth Mental Health Commission says that more than three million Australians suffer each year from mental illnesses. The report, titled *How do you measure a contributing life?*, includes a report card with a long list of recommendations. Many patients entering public hospitals with a mental illness are admitted against their will. The report challenges the need to continue down this path and proposes an increased emphasis on community care. Meanwhile, recent incidents have highlighted the sensitivity of treatment regimes for patients involved in asylum care and efforts to coordinate their rehabilitation and recovery. This is an important debate and, given the role of this level of government in the administration of health, it is important we engage to the best of our ability.

This week a bill to establish a Queensland Mental Health Commission will be tabled in this parliament in line with commitments from the LNP given prior to the 2012 election and in line with the LNP's commitment to deliver a great state a great opportunity. One in five Queenslanders experience mental illness each year and almost one in two will experience it at some point in their lifetime. From the state perspective, services such as housing, education, employment, criminal and youth justice and child protection can be difficult to access and need improved coordination. The creation of the Queensland Mental Health Commission will create an open pathway for improved cooperation and transparency across government and non-government sectors. There will be an increased focus on outcomes and better targeting of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Its main job will be to develop a whole-of-government strategic plan to improve mental health and limit harm associated with substance misuse. Ensuring more options of community care will be a major focus.

In recent months cases of forensic patients absconding from The Park high-security program have highlighted issues associated with the management of patients as they undertake limited community treatment. Insufficient capacity in the Mental Health Act to deal with incidents that may arise will also be addressed in the bill to be debated this week. The role of the Director of Mental Health will be provided a power to suspend limited community treatment and investigate incidents which suggest a risk to a person or the public. New conditions will also be implemented to enable a patient's location to be monitored while on a limited community treatment order. These monitoring conditions will only apply to limited community treatment for a limited range of patients including those under forensic orders and only in a limited number of circumstances. They will be subject to review by the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Target conditions will be specified for the limited community treatment of forensic and classified patients to assist with their safe reintegration into the community. The changes will also enable the publication of identifying information about a forensic patient who has absconded from an authorised mental health service. The intention of these amendments is not to interfere with the treatment of patients with a mental illness, but rather to add an extra set of safeguards to make sure that the use of limited community treatment supports patient care without placing the community at risk.

Public Transport; Bruce Highway

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.54 am): Queensland is a great state that deserves a great transport network. The Newman government has a number of initiatives to improve people's transport options. A key priority is to make public transport more affordable, reliable and frequent. The nine-and-free initiative is one way we are improving affordability. This provides free travel after nine journeys taken each week. We are also lowering the cost of living by halving Labor's planned 15 per cent fare increase. The Ferny Grove rail line now has a train every 15 minutes during the day, Monday to Friday. These more frequent services are great news for local residents. We are also seeing improvements to rail reliability. This is after falling to three-year lows during the dying days of the previous Labor government.

We have also simplified the way public transport is delivered across the state. TransLink will now have responsibility for passenger services across the state. This includes regional airlines, coach and ferry services. Having one organisation means less duplication, better planning and better integration.

The Newman government is very focused on improving the Bruce Highway. We recently released our *Out of the crisis* report. It identifies more than 50 capacity and flood mitigation projects and hundreds of kilometres of safety treatments to be delivered during the next 10 years. These include wider centre lines, audible edge lines, more overtaking lanes, intersection upgrades and upgrades to flood-prone areas. There are a range of projects up and down the coast. We have projects like the Ingham to Cardwell deviation for flood mitigation and the Mackay Ring Road stage 1 construction which is a capacity project. There are many more projects and I would urge people to have a look at the plan which is available on the Transport and Main Roads website. Labor left the Bruce Highway in a crisis, with the RACQ predicting between 300 and 400 road deaths occurring in the next 10 years if we do not take action. The Newman government will honour its election commitment and contribute an additional \$1 billion over the next 10 years. We also need the federal government to come to the table with its share of the funding.

If you are looking for a silver lining to 14 years of Labor, it would have to be that it gives you a lot of opportunity to make things better. We are doing just that as we build a better future and a better transport network for Queensland.

COMMITTEES

Membership



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.58 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That the member for Condamine, Mr Hopper, be discharged from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and the member for Gaven, Dr Douglas, be appointed to the committee as chairperson;
- (2) That the member for Redlands, Mr Dowling, be discharged from the Health and Community Services Committee and the member for Kallangur, Mr Ruthenberg, be appointed to the committee as chairperson;
- (3) That the member for Barron River, Mr Trout, be discharged from the Health and Community Services Committee and the member for Ipswich, Mr Berry, be appointed to the committee;
- (4) That the member for Greenslopes, Mr Kaye, be discharged from the Finance and Administration Committee and the Member for Moggill, Dr Flegg, be appointed to the committee;
- (5) That the member for Moggill, Dr Flegg, be discharged from the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee and the member for Barron River, Mr Trout, be appointed to the committee;
- (6) That the member for Gaven, Dr Douglas, be discharged from the Ethics Committee and the member for Redlands, Mr Dowling, be appointed to the committee as chairperson;
- (7) That the member for Gaven, Dr Douglas, be discharged from the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and the member for Redlands, Mr Dowling, be appointed to the committee; and
- (8) That the member for Gregory, Mr Johnson, be discharged from the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and the member for Beaudesert, Mr Krause, be appointed to the committee.



Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 am): I rise to oppose the motion. What we have seen this morning is clearly an attempt by this government to remove Mr Douglas from the important role of chair of the Ethics Committee and to take him off the PCMC. Those opposite should be absolutely ashamed about what they are voting on this morning. We have seen now that this government is prepared to stop at nothing to tamper with the most powerful independent body of this parliament. The Ethics Committee is one of the most, if not the most, important committees in this parliament.

The Manager of Government Business has given no explanation as to why the member for Gaven has been taken off this particular committee. We know that the member for Gaven has been standing up for his community. We know that he has been challenging the government when it comes to the proposed cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast. We know that the member for Yeerongpilly is not happy with this government. We know that the member for Condamine is not happy. He has jumped ship onto another ship. This is a government in turmoil. This is a government in crisis.

The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee is a very important committee in this House. We know that good, fine members sit on that committee. We know that the member for Gaven has previously been the chair of that committee and has served on that committee in a continuing capacity. Today, I am ashamed to stand in this place when I see what the government is doing to its own members. If anyone dares to make any kind of dissent against this government, we know what happens to them: they get pushed aside and they get pushed off committees. Day in and day out, we see the continuing soap opera that is the LNP government. Day in and day out, we see another episode of it lurching from crisis to crisis. When is this going to end? When is this government going to focus on the real issues and govern for all of Queensland?

Mr Choat: You know all about crisis.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is only one crisis happening here and it is with your government, member for 'Manhattan'. I cannot emphasise too much the importance of the parliamentary Ethics Committee. We know that a range of issues have been referred to that committee, which I am not going to go into now. A number of those issues deal with this government. This goes to the heart of integrity, accountability and transparency in this House. However, there has been no discussion with the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the changes that have been announced today; not one discussion. When was the member for Gaven told that he would be moving from the committees? Has there been any undue influence? The government needs to answer those questions today. Why now? Why has the member for Gaven had to take this path today? Why has he been shoved aside? The government must answer those questions today. The Premier needs to answer those questions today, because he is the leader of the LNP, which we have seen lurching from crisis to crisis. We know that this year there are people who will face an unhappy Christmas because 14,000 people have been sacked. When we also consider those on temporary contracts, 20,000 people may not face a very good Christmas because of the actions of this government.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am hitting a nerve. I will take on each and every one of you, any day in this House. If you all want to interject, you can interject. Today we are talking about integrity, transparency and honesty. I am seeing none of that from this government. Today the Premier of this state needs to give an explanation as to why the member for Gaven, who was the chair of the Ethics Committee, has been thrown off that committee. The Premier needs to explain why the member for Gaven has been thrown off the PCMC.

Mr Seeney: You are making a fool of yourself. Sit down.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Deputy Premier may sit there and laugh. I ask him: how are all the pledges going? We know that there is discontent on the backbench. The government has the largest majority that Queensland has ever faced.

Honourable members interjected.


Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members, there are too many interjections across the chamber.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In conclusion, today presents a prime opportunity for the Premier to stand up and explain why the member for Gaven has been targeted in this way. At the beginning of the year, he was appointed as chair of the Ethics Committee. Why has he been ostracised from that committee? Why he has been taken off the PCMC? They are two of the most important committees in this parliament.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You may think this is a funny matter, but it is no laughing matter when you are tampering with the independent committees of this House.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, make your comments through the chair. Do not use the word 'you'. If you are referring to another member in the House, use their appropriate title.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.05 am): I listened with some interest to the Leader of the Opposition as she proceeded to lecture us on integrity in this House, the integrity of the committee system and how appointments ought to be handled. Firstly, in relation to the member for Gaven, who will chair the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, few people have shown such an interest in legal matters as has the member for Gaven. As a former solicitor myself, I have had many conversations with him in which we have discussed some of the finer aspects of law, parliamentary privilege and the things that happen in this House. I know he has a tremendous interest in what goes on and in the operations of the committees of this House. I can think of no finer person who is willing to accept the position of chair of that committee. He will bring a great deal of intellectual horsepower to it. I know he will do a very good job, as will all the members who have been given new appointments.

Let us not mess around: these changes are being made because there was a rat in the ranks and the rat left. No-one should be under any misapprehension: as I mentioned to some colleagues yesterday, there is a reason why in *Dante's Inferno* the ninth circle of hell is reserved for traitors. It is because they let down their friends and mates, and they rat on them. I know the member for Condamine. He proudly writes in his history that he is a dogger. Well, when you lie down with dogs you get up with fleas. I am sure the member for Condamine will appreciate that particular issue.

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, I ask you to withdraw those comments as they are unparliamentary.

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw. Up in the back corner we have 'Junior', 'Far Knuth' and 'Hopper the Swapper', pretending to be a party.

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, I ask you to refer to members by their appropriate and correct titles.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thought I was, but I will refer to them correctly. We have the contemptuous quisling from Condamine up in the back corner—

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, I ask you to refer to members by their appropriate titles.

Mr NICHOLLS: Indeed, Madam Speaker.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.08 am): I move—

That the member be no longer heard.

Division: Question put—That the member be not further heard.

In division—

Mr Wellington: Disgraceful comments! Disgraceful comments and you think it is a joke. You think it is a joke.

Government members interjected.

Mr Wellington: Mate, I can get elected as an Independent.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Wellington: I do not need a party like you do.

Government members interjected.

Mr Wellington: I can get elected as an Independent. I do not need stooges to support me. I do not need stooges. At least I do not get into the gutter like you do. Get into the gutter! You can't even speak with credibility. The member for Callide thinks that you—

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nicklin!

Government members interjected.


Madam SPEAKER: Order! I have warned members. I now warn the member for Nicklin under standing order 235A for not paying attention to the chair. There are also members on my left—and I cannot individually identify them—doing that also. I warn members that even if a division has been called the Speaker is still in control of House and you are supposed to pay attention. Thank you.

AYES, 11—Byrne, Hopper, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

NOES, 73—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

Resolved in the negative.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! As members resume their seats—and I ask them to do so quietly—I notify the House that as there is an important motion in respect of the apology regarding forced adoptions that is to be debated at 12.30 pm that the time taken on this debate will cut into other business such as question time and potentially matters of public interest.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.16 am): I am grateful for the support of the House and being able to say a few more gentle words about the actions of the opposition in terms of opposing this motion. I have, of course, reflected on the moral calibre of people who depart after giving a guarantee to their electorate and running under a banner.

I have listened to the sanctimoniousness of the Leader of the Opposition in speaking to the changes that are to be brought about. Obviously, those changes are necessary as a result of events over the last 72 hours or so. It has been necessary to appoint people. I understand the member for Gaven is actually someone who, when asked, has taken on the role as chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

To be lectured by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to appointments to committees is quite remarkable. Let us not forget that the Leader of the Opposition is a member of a party that kept Bill D'Arcy in power for a year as it sought to exercise power in this House when there was an equally divided House from 1998 and despite what they knew about him—a convicted paedophile. He was protected by the then government led by the Labor Party.

Let us not forget when Mr Gordon Nuttall was accused of things. What changes did the then Labor government use this House for? What did they do? They changed the law so he could not be prosecuted for lying to parliament. Then they brought the whole parliament back for a special one-day sitting to exonerate him—a person who took bribes and was subsequently found by the Ethics

Committee to be guilty of numerous breaches of the ethics of this House. What did they do? They changed the law and, at enormous cost, reconvened the parliament in order to exonerate him. That is the moral high ground from which the Leader of the Opposition speaks.

What happened when they had their own issues with a certain Ronan Lee? What did they do? They changed all the committees around. What happened when Pat Purcell, the then member for Bulimba, had his contretemps with the SES officers? What happened then? He was held on to and held on to. They changed all the committees.

What happened at the end of 2010 when they had a quick reshuffle and there were a couple of members who were a bit disappointed? They brought us all back again to change all the committees around. When it comes to sanctimonious hypocrisy, there is none better in this place than the ALP.



Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.19 am): I rise to participate in this debate.

Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.19 am): I move—

That the member be not further heard.

It cuts both ways, old mate.

Madam SPEAKER: I remind members that this is cutting into question time and the time for matters of public interest.

Division: Question put—That the member be not further heard.

AYES, 71—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 13—Byrne, Cunningham, Hopper, Judge, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.



Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.27 am): I move—

That the question be put.

Division: Question put—That the question be put.

In division—

Mrs Miller: You can't stop us speaking outside.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mrs Miller: Yeah, you may very well laugh. You'll be laughing—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I warn you under standing order 253A. Members on my right, I also ask that there be no interjections.

AYES, 71—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 13—Byrne, Cunningham, Hopper, Judge, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I advise members that the bells will ring for the duration of one minute if there are any further divisions on this matter.

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

AYES, 72—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 12—Byrne, Hopper, Judge, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.37 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts will be absent from the House this week due to ill health. Minister Langbroek is Acting Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts during Ms Bates' absence.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Public Service, Jobs



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.38 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

- condemns the LNP government's program of mass sackings that has so far directly cost 14,000 full-time equivalent positions,
- notes the Premier's refusal to say how many people those 14,000 FTEs represent; how many additional temporary jobs lost are not included in that figure; or how many jobs have been lost in the community and private sectors as a result of the government's cuts to front-line services, and
- expresses its concern to the thousands of Queensland families who face a bleak Christmas thanks to the government's callous slash-and-burn policies.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Question time will finish at 11.40 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Yeerongpilly



Ms PALASZCZUK (10.39 am): My question is to the Premier. I refer to reports that the member for Yeerongpilly has had difficulty obtaining meetings with ministers, and I ask: will the Premier advise why a backbencher cannot access his ministers but lobbyists have no such trouble?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I note that the Treasurer was asked about this on Steve Austin's ABC radio show this morning, and I believe he provided a pretty good explanation to the people of Queensland through that medium. But I will say this: all members of the backbench have every opportunity to put forward issues of concern in our party room meetings. We have a wonderful party room where people can canvass all sorts of issues and concerns in a very open and positive way. We allocate significant time, and we are allocating more, so that people can debate issues of concern as well. Having been involved in both municipal and now state politics for almost a decade, I must say that I think the party room is working extremely well.

The point that I have made time and time again to members of the cabinet is that the backbench must have its voice and it will have its voice. We are working very hard to ensure that we not only deliver the agenda to get this great state and its great sense of opportunity moving over the next few years but also look forward beyond this term to the things we will do for the people of Queensland should they give us their trust again and elect us for another term in the future. We are always looking ahead to things that we can do better—to the way that we can serve the people of Queensland better and the way that we can keep real control over the finances of government to ensure that we do not hit them with high taxes and charges like those opposite.

I will make another point about the workings of the Liberal National Party. We do not have factions. The mob opposite these days probably does not have factions because it must be rather difficult when there is an issue on the numbers, but we know when we talk about factions that the member for South Brisbane is coming. We know the member for South Brisbane is on the move. We know the member for South Brisbane watched recent polling in the media publicly. We saw the Leader of the Opposition having a bit of a problem in terms of poll numbers as well. The member for South Brisbane is sharpening the knife, getting ready to come forward, and we know that is the case.

On this side of the chamber, as I said, there are no factions; there is only a total enthusiasm and commitment to work every single day for Queenslanders to get the economy going, to create jobs for all Queenslanders, to sort out the incredibly bad state of the state's finances, to get Public Service departments working together as a cohesive team to take this great state forward. It is a great state and great opportunity; that is what we stand for on this side of the chamber. Every single member of the LNP has that opportunity to contribute.

Liberal National Party

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Premier. I refer to the Deputy Premier's statement yesterday demanding pledges of loyalty from LNP MPs and contrast that with comments on radio this morning by the Treasurer that there has been no widespread requirement to produce pledges of loyalty, and I ask: will the Premier explain the apparent discrepancy between these two positions?

Mr NEWMAN: I am delighted to talk about this in a broad sense. I just want to clarify how difficult it is to be in government and say that there are big challenges. I have here some words, which I think are very apt this morning, that I will read into the record. These are the words—

From time to time there will be significant issues and challenges facing the LNP—but these are not solved by walking away for a softer option. They are solved by genuine debate inside the tent with the future decision makers of our state—not pursuing populist ideals or alternate parties which offer no real change for Queenslanders and no plan for getting Queensland back on track.

Who said that? That is right; the member for Condamine. The member for Condamine said that in November 2011 and I could not have put it better myself. Government is tough. It is hard to repair the state of our state's finances after Labor trashed it. It is hard to deal with the fact that we need to find cost savings. It is hard to create jobs and an environment where business can prosper after the decimation of things like the tourism industry, agriculture and construction in this state. However, we are determined to sort out the mess of those opposite. Many of those opposite were involved in the terrible decisions that brought this state into the position that we inherited when we became the government. It is tough being in government. All people on this side of the chamber—the members of the LNP team—know that we have to make these hard decisions. They also know that the only loyalty that really matters is loyalty to the people of Queensland to actually deliver on that important responsibility that we have been charged with. Queenslanders voted for change. They want a team that makes tough decisions, that will deliver them out of the mess that Labor created, and that is exactly what we are doing.

In summary, the loyalty that this team demands is a loyalty to one another, a loyalty to the people of Queensland, a loyalty to the hardworking men and women out there who simply want things to be a bit better for their families and who voted in members who actually deliver as part of a team. That is the loyalty that we demand of all members of the LNP.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier provide an update to the House on the progress of its initiatives in the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping build a better future for Queensland families?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member as I do, indeed, again thank the Leader of the Opposition because it is really the same answer. It is about what we are doing for Queenslanders. From the very first day in office this government has had a laser-like focus on making this state a better place to do business, a better place to work and a better place to raise a family. My team is totally united in its determination to plan ahead responsibly, with optimism, with confidence and we are getting on with the hard job, the tough job, of once again making this state a great state with great opportunity.

Every single action of this government is about delivering on the five pledges that we made to the people of Queensland. My team has delivered on every single promise we made since day one, with 58 actions ticked off within our first 100 days, and we have openly reported on that. I say today that we are well on the way to delivering and fulfilling another 149 points of action in our six-month action plan. Our government has had a focus on driving down the cost-of-living pressures for Queensland families including family car rego, electricity tariff 11, public transport fares and removing the \$7,000 tax slug on the family home that the previous government of which the member for Mulgrave was a part imposed on Queenslanders last year. In September we passed a once-in-a-generation budget that was anchored by our commitment to restore confidence in Queensland, confidence in the government and confidence in the state's finances.

Last week the Coordinator-General gave the green light for Queensland's biggest ever tourism development, a \$1.4 billion integrated tourism and residential community in Ella Bay near Innisfail in Far North Queensland. I do thank the member for Mulgrave for actually standing up and saying that that was a good decision, because it was the right decision. The Coordinator-General has made 85 statutory decisions since taking over the role. These are multibillion dollar projects which are currently at various stages of assessment and which will drive the Queensland economy forward. Our open data revolution continues with the ongoing release of new information on the data.qld.gov.au website. We are getting on with the job of restoring front-line services. We have put more police officers on the front line. We have acted to deal with crime problems in the Cairns CBD. We are investing in education for Queensland children by bringing more teacher aides into prep classrooms. Today we see in the media again more information about our commitment to deal with the \$200 million to \$300 million backlog of maintenance in our schools. In short, this government has been getting on with the job in 2012 with vision and purpose. We have been getting, and will continue to get, the message out to Queenslanders. This is a great state with great opportunity.

Palmer, Mr C

Mr MULHERIN: My question is directed to the Premier. In an interview on 7.30 last week former LNP life member Clive Palmer claimed in relation to the Newman government that 'these books have been cooked by the biggest crooks that have ever occupied office in the state of Queensland'. Given the allegations swirling around this government, including the resignation of a minister this month, how can the people of Queensland have any faith in the integrity and accountability of the Newman government?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Mackay for his question and, indeed, I assure the people of Queensland that we are open and transparent. We have already demonstrated in so many ways that we are prepared to be open in a way that the previous government never was.

It is very interesting when opposition members talk about Mr Palmer, because they are all over the shop. Remember what they said? The former Premier said—

It's not unusual for rich men to buy football teams, as Mr Palmer has done ... What is not common, and what I don't think is good for democracy, is when they buy a political party ... The question you have to ask is what Mr Palmer is getting from this.

And the former Treasurer said—

We now know the price of buying the LNP and that is that Professor Clive F Palmer gets to say what he wants.

He's not only content with having bought the LNP, he's now bought into the public debate.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I hear those opposite laughing. They cannot have it both ways. They were there saying that Mr Palmer somehow had bought us. And when we clearly demonstrate to the people of Queensland that we will not be bullied by people who might have a lot of money, that we will treat people, whether they are boilermakers or billionaires, without fear of favour, what do they do? The Leader of the Opposition gets into the media and actually takes Mr Palmer's side. Come on!

In terms of this suggestion about dodgy deals, it is interesting that the member for Mackay would ask this. I am interested in asking some questions today about his own political donations. I note that Balmoral Group, Fraters Nominees, JLM Transport, Tulla Capital Management, Elders Resources Group and Tulla Group all shared the same PO box, and it appears that Tulla Group Pty Ltd donated twice to the member for Mackay's campaigns, albeit six months apart, and donations total \$14,000. SM Taylor and Crawley Pty Ltd donated the same amount on the same day and have the same postal address.

What about the Leader of the Opposition? The opposition leader declares donations from Oakden Investments and Springfield Land Corporation. Combined, these donations total more than the \$3,000 allowed from one entity. Springfield Land Corporation and Oakden Investments share a PO box. As a side note, given the nonsense they threw at Dr Flegg last week, her return is not exactly the pinnacle of record keeping: 'Advocay Services Australia Ltd' is surely 'Advocacy Services Ltd'.

If those opposite want to throw mud today, I am ready to respond with a lot of detail about what they have not done and what money they have taken and highlight that there are some very serious questions that they need to answer. I welcome questions from them today in relation to Minister Bates. Let us see what they come up with.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr COSTIGAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development. Can the minister provide an update to the House on progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Whitsunday for the question, because it goes to the heart of what our government is doing. We are getting on with the job of delivering the election promises that we made to the people of Queensland one at a time, in a businesslike, workmanlike way—doing what we said we were going to do. The six-month plan is a very important checklist for our government, and it is a very important reference point for anybody in Queensland who wants to see what the government is doing. They should have a look at the six-month plan, have a look at what we said we were going to do, and then see how each of these has been checked off, one at a time. In a workmanlike way, in a determined, professional way, this government has delivered on the promises that it gave to the people of Queensland.

All too often it is that real work of government that is ignored and goes unnoticed in the media reporting that consumes the daily infotainment at times, but it is a real achievement of which this government can be proud and it is a real achievement of which everybody who voted for the LNP at the last election should be aware. We are delivering on the confidence they placed in us. Every member of the LNP government has been part of that effort. Every member of the LNP government has served in our government to arrive at that outcome. Across a whole range of portfolios, a range of election commitments are being delivered one at a time, one after the other.

There are some that stand out for me, and I think for the member for Whitsunday and other members who represent regional Queensland there are some that stand out—none more so than the delivery of the statutory regional plans, our promise to the people of Queensland to deal with that conflict issue between the resources industry and the agricultural industry that was causing so much disaffection because the previous government had failed to address it and failed comprehensively to even understand that there was a problem.

Over the last couple of weeks we have had the second round of regional planning committee meetings, both in Central Queensland and on the Darling Downs, where we met with all of the community leaders. Six mayors turned up at the Darling Downs meeting. We went through the proposals that had been developed during the months of consultation that had led up to that—the issues papers that were identified that will form the basis for the planning exercise that will ensure regional Queensland has a statutory regional plan in place to guide its future.

The other one that stands out for me is the Royalties for the Regions program. For the first time ever, the country towns and country people who bear the brunt of the resources industry will get some royalties back. It is long overdue—

(Time expired)

State Reporting Bureau

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Attorney-General's comments during estimates about the supposed level of dissatisfaction with the State Reporting Bureau which was enough to warrant the outsourcing of this important service and the loss of more than 200 jobs. I table the extract from *Hansard*.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 11 October 2012, pages 19 and 20 [1707].

I now table the response to an opposition RTI request about complaints regarding transcripts which found no documents in the Attorney-General's office relating to this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 7 November 2012, from Acting Director, Right to Information and Privacy Unit, to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition regarding a right to information application regarding documents relating to the Queensland's court recording and transcription services and/or the possible outsourcing of those services. Time period: 3 April 2012 to present [1708].

I ask: what action will the Premier take against the Attorney-General, who has clearly misled parliament about the volume of complaints regarding court transcripts?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Mulgrave for the question. I have to advise him that I personally, when I have been out and about around Brisbane, have talked to people in the judiciary and they have actually said to me what a great idea it is that we are moving this way.

An opposition member: Who said that?

Mr NEWMAN: Members of the profession. I say to honourable members that this is something that has been welcomed because—

Mr Pitt: Who said this?

Mr NEWMAN: There are many jurisdictions around this nation that use outsourced systems and they are delivering, everywhere we look, higher standards of performance and certainly faster response times in terms of transcripts. The senior judicial members who have mentioned it to me have said that they would love to have that level of service.

Mr Nicholls: The High Court of Australia.

Mr NEWMAN: Yes, the High Court of Australia, as the Treasurer says. This is about saving Queenslanders money. It is about delivering a better service for all people involved in the judicial system. I think the Attorney-General is doing a fantastic job in pursuing this as part of the government's reform program.

This again shows the difference between the Labor Party and us. The Labor Party thinks that the more dollars you put in and the greater the head count the better. But that is not the case at all—not when you are taking money out of the hides of hardworking Queensland families. It is about performance. It is about what you need. Judges, barristers, all the lawyers involved in the process and private citizens need accurate, timely transcripts of what has gone on in the courts. If it can be done more efficiently and effectively, it should be done more efficiently and effectively. And it will be done more efficiently and effectively.

I do not know why the member for Mulgrave comes in here week after week and cannot get it. That is what we are about. Ultimately, this is a great state with great opportunity. It becomes even better if we can properly deliver the services that Queenslanders expect and also deliver infrastructure more effectively in the same way. Those opposite did not care about that. The trail of waste and inefficiency is so well known. The things they blew money on, like the Health payroll system, like artworks up in the bush in the middle of nowhere, in the ulu, fake Tahitian princes—

Mr Stevens: Snow skiing.

Mr NEWMAN: Snow ski jumps.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I think I have hit a raw nerve. They stand for waste and ineptitude. We stand for good government and valuing, very importantly, every single dollar we get from taxpayers.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr SHORTEN: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the minister provide an update to the House on progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families in light of the Moody's rating update released yesterday?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Algeester for his question. I thought for one scintillating moment there I was going to get a question from the shadow Treasurer. I thought he might ask me about the Moody's report that came out yesterday. I thought just once he might just chance his arm and roll the arm over to see if he could lob one over at me and have a bit of a crack. He has the Dennis Lillee mo going. I thought, 'Here we go! We've got one! We'll get the sandshoe crusher right on the big toe there.' But I have to say that again I was disappointed. I was disappointed that the member for Mulgrave was unable to even lob up a gentle one to me about the Moody's report, so I thank the member for Algeester—someone who actually wants to know what we are doing for this great state to build great opportunities and what we have delivered in our first six months.

For the benefit of those opposite, who still do not seem to be able to pick it up, I will explain again what we have done. What did we do? What was the first piece of legislation we brought into the House? The cost-of-living bill! What did we address? The rampant rising cost of living driven by those opposite because of their inability to manage the state's finances. So we have frozen car registration for the first three years, we have put in place the principal place of residence deduction, we have frozen the price of electricity in the budget, we are giving every water consumer in South-East Queensland a \$90 rebate, we have removed the waste levy—another impediment on small businesses throughout the state of Queensland—we have introduced the Office of Best Practice Regulation, we have appointed an assistant minister to reduce the reams of red tape, we have programmed in a fiscal surplus in 2014-15, we have had a Commission of Audit deliver a report, and we have stabilised the debt, and that is just the start of what the Newman government is going to do.

Let us not forget what we inherited, because the Premier touched on it and the Deputy Premier touched on it, from the previous government, and I reflect on the Moody's chart. Members can see, as can those opposite—I did not bring seven copies over for them this time, but I will do it—that there is Queensland's debt, that green line heading off. We know where that green line was heading. We know what \$100 billion worth of debt looks like. We know it goes beyond the thermosphere where the satellites are orbiting up there with the space cadets from over there in opposition land. It goes up actually into space for 140 kilometres. That is what \$100 billion worth of debt looks like. The Moody's report makes it abundantly clear where the problems lie—

The financial performance which has persisted since fiscal 2007-08 ... the resultant high levels of indebtedness ...

What else does it say?

... deteriorated over the past five years—

that is when those opposite were in power—

as the state faced mounting cost pressures ...

It continues—

... exacerbated by a lack of expenditure discipline, as spending continued to outpace revenues ...

(Time expired)

Liberal National Party

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that the LNP's approach to managing internal criticism is to kick people off important committees, as in the members for Gaven and Gregory; kick them out of the party room, as in the member for Yeerongpilly; or suspend them from the party, as in Clive Palmer's case?

Madam SPEAKER: I advise the Premier that he can only answer with respect to parliamentary matters. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, I will leave commentary on the party's interaction with Professor Palmer to the LNP, although I will reflect on the statements of the Labor Party in relation to Mr Palmer which are all over the shop. Again just to reiterate what I said earlier, we had a former Premier and a former Treasurer saying that somehow Mr Palmer owned those of us on this side of the chamber. I think

we have clearly demonstrated that it does not matter whether you are a boilermaker or a billionaire: everyone gets treated the same. Everyone gets treated the same by this team. I am sad that the Leader of the Opposition is such a political opportunist that she would go into the media and almost defend Mr Palmer, defend his corner and use his criticisms to try to prosecute a case against the government. This government is intent on building up the state of Queensland. It is intent on getting the economy going, and we are not going to be distracted by any critics. It is always easy to be critical. We are going to get on and do the job that we were elected to do. As we have heard today from different ministers and me, there is a game plan—a six-month plan. There will be a new six-month action plan in the new year and every single day we are about building this state up to actually allow it to fulfil its opportunities and deal with those cost-of-living pressures we inherited from the previous government.

In relation to the way that we manage our party room, again I do not think it is appropriate that I go into the details of that, but I have talked about the amazing spirit of friendship and comradeship that we have on this side of the chamber. Last night we had our annual Christmas cruise. It was a terrific evening—a great Christmas cruise on the *Kookaburra Queen*—and the spirit was fantastic.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Unlike those opposite, it was paid for by us. If it had been the Labor Party, taxpayers would have had to pull out their wallet and pay like the gravy train. Can members imagine the Labor Party Christmas party? The looks of enmity, the jealousies, the whole factional thing with the member for South Brisbane with her hatred and her poison strategy coming out.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Attorney-General. There are too many interjections across the chamber, and I warn members on my left. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: We had a great Christmas party because we are friends and colleagues over here, but I do not know if that is the case for the Labor Party.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the member for Warrego.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr HOBBS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, I warn you for your interjections under 253A. I call the member for Warrego.

Mr HOBBS: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Can the minister provide an update to the House on progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

Mr CRIPPS: I am delighted to take the question from the member for Warrego. The Newman government is delivering on its commitment to reduce red tape for the agricultural sector, which is a key pillar of the Queensland economy. Over 66 per cent of Queensland is managed sustainably by farmers and graziers who hold long-term leases on their land from the Crown. Under the former Labor administration, the process of renewing those leases has been time consuming, onerous and led to a great deal of uncertainty for lessees and undermined investment confidence in agricultural businesses. Under the grubby green deals done by the Bligh Labor government, the state-wide leasehold land strategy was politicised and bastardised.

The Newman LNP government has brought an end to that sorry episode and is looking after the interests of Queensland's leasehold landowners, the bulk of them carving out a living west of the Great Dividing Range. Queensland landholders seeking to renew their grazing lease will benefit from simpler processes and greater certainty through a streamlined State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy. Reforms include a simpler land management agreement that will be clearer and easier to understand. My Department of Natural Resources and Mines has cut the size of these documents by more than half—from 46 pages to just 21 pages—and for more complex leases the agreements will drop in size from 99 pages to just 26. These reforms recognise the good work being done by land managers across Queensland in sustainably managing their properties.

Another key reform of the Newman LNP government will be to remove the link between national park acquisition and the rural leasehold land renewal process. This will restore certainty for landholders and allay fears that good custodians of the land may have their lease acquired or reserved for future national parks rather than being renewed. Landowners with a genuine desire to create nature refuges on their properties will still have the opportunity to negotiate agreements with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, but that process will be completely separate from the leasehold land renewal process.

This new streamlined state-wide Rural Leasehold Land Strategy has delivered on the Newman government's commitment to cut red tape and improve business certainty for farmers and graziers across rural and regional Queensland. We in the LNP are committed to rural landholders in the regional areas of this state. I know that I, along with the member for Warrego, the member for Gregory, the member for Mirani, the member for Cook and the Deputy Premier, the member for Callide, welcome this initiative. We are committed to this great state and providing great opportunities for Queensland's future, particularly in the regions.

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, Membership

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Premier. I refer to changes to the membership of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and I ask: will the Premier advise why the opportunity to make changes did not include a return to the practice of the previous government of having the committee chair nominated by the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Seeney: There's lots of practices of the previous government—

Ms Palaszczuk: You didn't mind it when you were in opposition, did you.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to please cease your interjections.

Mr NEWMAN: There are a few points that I need to make in answering this question. The first thing and the important thing is that I am a bit at sea about this suggestion about the PCMC. There has been no change to the chair of the PCMC—no change at all today.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: That is what the question was about. The chair of the PCMC is the member for Gladstone—a highly respected, Independent member of this parliament.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: For the record, for the *Hansard*, the opposition laughed in unison. I do not think it is funny. I think the member for Gladstone is one of the most decent and honourable people in this place who has been a true Independent for years—unlike, I might add somewhat gratuitously, the member for Nicklin, who really has voted with Labor all his career; the guy who got them into power, kept them in power—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. The comments the Premier made are untrue, false and I ask that he withdraw. I find them offensive.

Madam SPEAKER: The member finds the comments offensive. I ask you to withdraw them.

Mr NEWMAN: If the member finds them offensive, I withdraw them. The point is, I think, well made that the member for Gladstone has been a fantastic Independent member of this parliament. I think it is right and proper that someone who is an Independent—not a member of this party or the other party over there; an Independent—actually chairs this committee. I think it is a very good choice and I see no reason that should change today.

In relation to other changes, why were they made? They were made because, unfortunately, we have a vacancy that we had to fill, because the member for Condamine, for whatever reason—I still do not understand those reasons; having read what is in the media, I do not understand those reasons—has chosen to leave our team. That is unfortunate, given that the member made some very solemn commitments publicly in November 2011 to the people of the Condamine electorate. But I have already covered that in the media in the last few days. So we had a vacancy and we needed to deal with that.

As I understand it, the Leader of the House, in accordance with section 91 of the Parliament of Queensland Act, then sat down and worked out how we would deal with that and approached the member for Gaven and asked him whether he would like to take over that legal affairs committee, in which he has expressed a strong interest in the past.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, they ask the questions. I am trying to give them information. I am trying to give them answers in an open way. My understanding is that the member for Gaven said that he would like to change and, because he indicated that he would like to change, there has been a change. There would have been no change in relation to the Ethics Committee if he had not been agreeable to the matter. I hope that clarifies the situation—no conspiracies here.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister provide an update to the House of the progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

Mr McVEIGH: I thank the member for Toowoomba North, who shares with me the responsibility of representing the Toowoomba region—one of the most significant agricultural regions in our great state. The last six months have been challenging and rewarding, working for this great state that has great opportunity. We have delivered on the LNP's key election commitment to return a stand-alone Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry with a real focus on front-line services that Queensland's primary producers need and deserve. We have cut waste and reduced spending and restructured the department to better serve farmers and particularly those right across all regions of Queensland.

We have bolstered front-line services with new biosecurity officers, including wild dog officers in Charleville, Warwick, Blackall, Nambour and Beaudesert; tick officers in Longreach, Roma and Helidon; crop protection officers in St George, Emerald and Kingaroy; pest and weed officers in Charters Towers and Mareeba; a horticultural officer in Bundaberg and a fisheries officer in Ayr. We started consultation on Queensland's agriculture strategy, a 2040 vision to double food and fibre production. This is about delivering for regional Queensland, regional communities and regional families. We have started our land audit to fully identify farmland suitable for increased production.

We have delivered on our commitment to Queensland's timber industry with a timber plan that sets a clear plan for a key regional industry of this great state. Our east coast inshore net buyback—another key election commitment—is well underway, with \$9 million to reduce net fishing effort and to make our industry more sustainable. We have amended the Animal Care and Protection Act to stop cruel hunting practices of dugong and turtles. Unlike Labor, which happily gave away our wheat breeding program, we saved our barley breeding program from being shipped off entirely to Western Australia. We have signed a memorandum of understanding to deliver an extra \$4.6 million over four years for sugar industry research and development. For beef, we have announced the Northern Beef Research Alliance—a joint initiative between my department, the University of Queensland and the CSIRO.

Queensland is a great state with great opportunity. In the next six months we will be revamping our agricultural colleges—the Longreach pastoral college and the Emerald agricultural college. Labor was happy to see them collapse and fall into disrepair and run up massive losses. I am working on that very closely with the member for Gregory and we will repair Labor's damage in that area. The Newman government is committed to making agriculture a pillar of our economy in this great state with great opportunity.

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee's submission to the advisory panel reviewing the Crime and Misconduct Act. Contained in that submission is reference to unsuccessful attempts by the committee to meet with the Attorney-General. I ask: will the Premier meet with the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee before parliament rises on Thursday evening to hear the matters the committee wanted to raise with the Attorney-General?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Nicklin for his question. For the information of the House, my understanding is that the Attorney-General has met with the chairman, the member for Gladstone, and that is appropriate, I believe. He has met with her. He has also corresponded with the committee and, indeed, that is appropriate. So I fail to see what the concern is here. That is the appropriate way—

Mr Pitt: There are other members of the committee.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of Opposition Business.

Mr NEWMAN: That is the appropriate way forward on these matters.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr CHOAT: My question is without notice is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. Can the minister provide an update to the House on the progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families.

Mr DICKSON: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. I know how much he cares about the future of Queensland and how we are going to deliver on behalf of the people of Queensland. As the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the priorities of my portfolio are hugely important to creating opportunities.

First, the Newman government is rebuilding Racing Queensland after the former Labor government hived off all responsibility of its governance and allowed the industry to be run into the ground. We are rejuvenating country racing. Over the next four years we will spend \$4 million to fund an additional 80 races at Queensland race meetings. Similarly, over the next two years we will provide \$5 million to the Queensland Thoroughbred Investment Scheme—something which, in turn, will allow

Racing Queensland to free up additional prize money. Additionally, I am delivering on our \$110 million racing infrastructure commitment and looking forward to shortly releasing the revised industry infrastructure strategy.

One of our key commitments is opening up our national parks for all Queenslanders and visitors to enjoy. We are focused on reducing red tape by slashing permit classes by up to 50 per cent and allowing a wide range of recreational activities, including horseback riding and mountain bike riding, on existing fire trails. In addition, I am delivering on our DestinationQ commitments by enabling Queensland's struggling ecotourism industry to become a major contributor to the state's economy.

When it comes to sport, we are delivering on our commitment to support sport and recreation at a grassroots level right across Queensland. Our \$18 million Get in the Game program is now open for applications and will provide help to Queensland families by reducing the cost of club registration and funding better equipment and infrastructure. Already over 1,300 clubs covering much of Queensland have applied so that they can get a part of this money that is going to be made available to all of Queensland. Through better planning processes and financial management we are ensuring that all Queensland children have an opportunity to participate in sport by providing better spending in their communities for all clubs throughout the state of Queensland.

Whereas Labor always took the easy way out, we are getting on with the job required to set up Queensland's future. We are going to make sure that all of Queensland will prosper under the LNP government. We have gone out and made big commitments to the people of Queensland. We are reducing water costs by \$80 this year and car registration is being frozen for this term. All throughout Queensland people will prosper. Under a Labor government our debt had gone to \$65 billion. Those opposite should think about that every day they come into this House and try to blacken our names. We are doing the right thing by Queenslanders, unlike members of the Labor government who did the wrong thing every time they came into this House. They set up the cost of living so that it was extremely difficult for families every single day of the week. We are helping families every single day of the week.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier explain why he accepted Dr Flegg's resignation for so-called administrative failures in the former minister's office, yet similar failures resulted in praise for his embattled science, IT, innovation and arts minister Ros Bates?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question. The bottom line is that former minister Flegg came into this chamber and made a personal decision. There was no urging, pushing or request from me. There was no discussion about the matter until he had made a decision. He decided that it was in the political interests of the government to fall on his sword, because this is a state of great opportunity, a state that needs every bit of leadership and teamwork that the government can muster to get it back on track. He did the honourable thing so that the government could get on with that job.

In relation to Minister Bates, frankly, Minister Bates has done nothing wrong. The Labor opposition can attempt to smear her in so many different ways. Let me give an example of how they are hypocritical when it comes to the issue of one matter they had raised: supposed meetings with lobbyists involving the firm TechnologyOne. I wanted to know a bit more about this so I did go and ask a few questions about it. I note that TechnologyOne actually do have a relationship that needs to be aired in this place. In the *Australian* newspaper on 16 June 2009 we see an article on TechnologyOne stating—

It also won a contract last year with the Bligh government of Queensland to develop SmartCab, a new cabinet information system.

We also see another article—I am not quite sure of the date—that talks about TechnologyOne winning a \$2 million contract to revamp Queensland water supplier Seqwater's ICT system. It was therefore with great interest that I noted the return from the Australian Labor Party to the ECQ that declares \$1,638.22 coming from TechnologyOne. That is in the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011. The ALP declared receipt of moneys from TechnologyOne but investment related. This is what I surmise. This is my question: is the Labor Party a shareholder in TechnologyOne? And did TechnologyOne get a contract from the Queensland Labor government when the ALP were shareholders? Will the Leader of the Opposition reveal if they received any donations from TechnologyOne executives? Will the opposition reveal what probity measures were put in place if TechnologyOne were given contracts when the ALP were shareholders?

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr CRANDON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister provide an update to the House on the progress of initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families.

Mrs STUCKEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. What a fine champion he is on the Gold Coast for small businesses and tourism. He understands, as do those of us on this side of the House and in this government on that side of the House as well—that we in Queensland have a great state and it presents us with great opportunity. We are delivering a whole-of-government approach to tourism, one that we took to the election and have proudly gathered together under the DestinationQ initiative. There was not a prouder moment than earlier this year when we held the DestinationQ forum in Cairns, a landmark forum for the tourism industry, the first of its kind in 20 years. We did not see that approach from Labor, did we?

In our first six months we have, as you have just heard from the honourable member for Buderim, started the process of opening up ecotourism in our national parks so that everyone is able to enjoy their natural beauty and make sure we preserve and look after them into the future. We have also launched our Drive Tourism Strategy paper which is open for discussion so that people can explore and discover all of the regions of our great state. Then there was the \$20 million tourism investment strategy that was locked in with consultation from peak bodies and, of course, the department and Tourism Queensland only last week.

We have often talked about aviation in this House and how the skies are buzzing under the Newman government. Our Attracting Aviation Investment Fund has scored some amazing goals. Who could forget only a couple of weeks ago the very first landing of China Eastern in Cairns coming in from Shanghai. What a momentous occasion that was with flights scheduled to be coming into Cairns for many months to come.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: We will not be landing China Eastern in Lockyer. Air New Zealand is coming into the Sunshine Coast again and Scoot and Qantas are coming into the Gold Coast. And, of course, there is Etihad into Brisbane. We are bringing double-digit growth into our airports. I am happy to report that in October my home town, the Gold Coast, had a 15 per cent increase in domestic and 19 per cent in international. That is more than 15 per cent overall. Add to that the very successful 'I Spy' campaign that we ran for only two weeks that has resulted in a 50 per cent boost to bookings over the same time last year across our whole state and a 70 per cent increase on the Gold Coast.

(Time expired)

Vegetation Management

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. I refer the minister to commitments given at the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's estimates committee to absolutely release the crown law review into vegetation management penalties in Queensland, and I table a copy of the transcript for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings* (proof), estimates hearing, dated 12 October 2012—Natural Resources and Mines [\[1709\]](#).

Given this government's commitment to transparency and integrity in decision making, will the minister advise the House why this review is yet to be released but vegetation management protection continues to be wound back in Queensland?

Mr CRIPPS: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. The member asked about the commitment that I gave to release the results of the review into prosecutions and penalties regarding the Vegetation Management Act. I am pleased to refer to the *Hansard* extract that the member refers to. It states—

Ms TRAD: So you will be making the review and the outcomes public?

Mr CRIPPS: Absolutely. When I am satisfied with the results of the review and we have a way forward that will be made public.

If the member for South Brisbane was listening carefully during the previous sitting of parliament, she would recall that I stood in this very place in this parliament and announced the results of the review into the penalties of the Vegetation Management Act, the concerns that I and many people on this side of the House had in relation to the application of the provisions of the Vegetation Management Act and the perceived escalation in penalties that had resulted from prosecutions regarding that act. In relation to the process that that went through, both I and the director-general gave very comprehensive answers to the questions that were put to me by both the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane during the estimates committee process. I refer the member for South Brisbane to the ministerial statement that I made in this place announcing that I would give consideration to the removal of section 60B of the Vegetation Management Act, which provides for a sentencing guide. I explained to the House the very reasons I would give consideration to that change, because of the perverse and sometimes inconsistent outcomes that result from the application of the penalties guide in section 60B in the VMA.

I am very pleased to say to this House that I have given a commitment to try to reduce the amount of red tape and regulation that is imposed on landowners in this House under the Vegetation Management Act and under a range of other pieces of legislation that are my responsibility in this House. I make no apologies for doing so. For far too long, as a result of grubby green deals between the Labor Party and the extreme Greens in this state, we have seen significant increases in legislation, regulation and red tape, which is impacting on sustainability and viability and undermining investment in rural industries in this state. The Newman government will not stand for that. We will continue to support growth in rural industries in this state, because we believe that agriculture is one of the four pillars.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr SORENSEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Can the minister provide an update to the House on progress of the initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how those actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Hervey Bay for the question. The past six months have seen renewed vigour in and emphasis on the Environment and Heritage Protection portfolio. I am particularly pleased with how the department has helped regional Queensland. I wish to outline some of the key deliverables that have covered the breadth and depth of this great state. At the outset I make it clear that my department has a focus on being a strong environmental regulator that strikes a balance with responsible environmental regulation, timely environmental approvals and authorities, and sustainable long-term economic development, which is something that those opposite could never achieve because the word 'balance' was not in their dictionary. We have delivered on just about all of our six-month action plan.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I warn the member for South Brisbane under standing order 253A. She will cease her interjections.

Mr POWELL: On Monday last week, probably for the first time in more than a decade in Queensland, an environment minister was able to walk into the boardroom of the Australian Canegrowers and, with the executive, sign a deed of agreement that will see the implementation of a best management practice program not only in the reef catchments of this state but also across all cane growing areas in the state. This is a new era in working with agricultural industries, not against them, to deliver great environmental outcomes as well as great economic benefits for agricultural producers in the state. Our Everyone's Environment grants program is incredibly oversubscribed. There are more than 200 applications for \$3 million worth of grant funding that we will be releasing before the end of this year. On wildlife management, whether it is koalas in the south-east corner, crocodiles in North Queensland, dingoes on Fraser Island or flying foxes across the state, my department is working with communities to ensure that we get the balance right between conservation, wildlife management and public health and safety.

When it comes to the reef, not only are we delivering through best management practice programs but also we are delivering through working with industry and communities to deliver outcomes, hopefully such as the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership. Last week we had another great meeting as we continue to get community input and at which we announced that Dr Ian Poiner will be the independent chair of the scientific panel. We are also delivering in terms of CSG, with the release of our draft water policy. The period of public consultation on that will shortly close. We have removed a waste tax that was destroying businesses and industries across this state and we are improving our approvals, ensuring that we get the balance right between environmental protection and economic development.

(Time expired)

Curriculum Into the Classroom

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Is the minister aware of the considerable stress being placed on parents and their school of distance education children who are struggling with the severely flawed C2C, Curriculum Into the Classroom, program? Will he please explain what measures will be taken to correct this unsatisfactory situation for 2013?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I point out that for all of his faults and those of his party, at least he is in here asking something about policy. For the first time today in question time, we have someone on the other side of the House actually asking something about a policy that makes Queensland a better place, which is exactly what this government under Campbell Newman, the Premier, is committed to. I am pleased to answer the member's question about C2C. These very significant resources were brought in this year as we seek to deliver the Australian curriculum, not just to people in metropolitan and regional areas but to many students who—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I warn the Deputy Premier and members on my left to please cease your interjections. It is discourteous to the member on his feet.

Mr LANGBROEK: I was referring to the importance of C2C—Curriculum Into the Classroom—resources that have been provided this year in a form to help our students experiencing learning via distance education, so that they do not have just the traditional paper based products. I have been pleased to meet with representatives of the distance education community, including from the Schools of Distance Education Alliance, SODEA, and the Isolated Children's Parents Association. By the way, I note that previous ministers never met with the parents or representatives of the Schools of Distance Education Alliance. Today, after question time, I will be meeting with a representative from the Volunteers for Isolated Students Education, the home tutors, many of whom the C2C resources are meant to assist. We have paper based materials, we have resources through the Blackboard online materials and we also have offline resources provided through MiStick. We have provided extra resources for people who are using the internet. Following representations from home tutors, on 23 September 2012, I announced that there would be a change to the ICT subsidy for distance education families. From 1 January 2013, there is a per student per annum hardware subsidy of \$250 and a per student per annum internet subsidy of \$500 provided for eligible students in geographically isolated areas.

More than that, the executive principal at the school of distance education, Neil McDonald, has worked very hard with parents, many of whom are not teachers and I am happy to acknowledge that. In October, distance education parents and teachers formed a reference group. Sixty people attended that forum. That evening I received very good feedback on it from one of the parents from SODEA. Ongoing feedback is provided to the curriculum hub, which involves the people who are writing those materials. This government remains committed to delivering the best that we can to help those parents who do not want their children to stay back in the fifties, which is what the honourable member and his party represents. Parents want their children to be brought up in a state with great opportunities, because we know it is a great state.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mr MINNIKIN: My question without notice is to Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Can the minister provide an update to the House on progress of the initiatives within the Newman government's six-month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I call the minister. You have one minute.

Mr BLEIJIE: I was happy and now I am disappointed. Let me cut to the chase. This government is about a positive future for Queensland. This government is making sure Queenslanders can realise the real opportunities. This government will not be sidetracked by the 'Far Knuth' puppets in the corner.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: This government will not be sidetracked by the dirty, grubby politics coming from the member for South Brisbane's mouth as I speak.

This government is about the future of Queensland. I am pleased to say that in the short seven months that this government has been in action we have seen some of the toughest laws that Australia has seen in terms of law and order in this state—in this country. We have seen the first Central Coroner for Queensland appointed. Every corner of Queensland is covered by the coroner. We have given \$750,000 to the Women's Legal Service, particularly permanently White Ribbon Day—

(Time expired)

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Answers to Questions on Notice; Ministerial Responses to Petitions



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, standing order 114 requires that answers to questions on notice shall be supplied to the Table Office within 30 calendar days. When the 30th day is not a working day, the longstanding practice that has been adopted is that the answer should be provided by the next working day. I wish to advise honourable members that due to the intervening Christmas-new year closure period, answers to questions on notice asked this week are required to be supplied to the Table Office by Monday, 7 January 2013. Additionally, ministerial responses to any petitions tabled this week are also required to be supplied to the Table Office by 5 pm on 7 January 2013. Matters of public interest will finish at 12.30 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Newman Government, Performance



Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.41 am): I think what we have seen, as evidenced by the government today, is no positive plan for Queensland. There is no future vision for Queensland. What we have definitely seen is a series of instances which can only be described as the season of discontent.

Over the last few days we have seen some dramatic events in this state. First of all, we have seen the member for Condamine, previously a member of the LNP, leave the LNP because he does not believe that his views are being listened to. We have also seen the member for Yeerongpilly express some concerns in relation to matters for his constituency where he is essentially saying that he is concerned that the government is not listening to him.

Can I make it very clear that as I have travelled across the state—and I have just recently come back from visiting Gladstone; I was in Rockhampton last week and I have been to Townsville—I have found that there is a sea of discontent out there. The people of Queensland are not happy with the direction of this government. It is about time that this government seriously focuses on governing and not on the soap opera that they have been able to deliver to Queenslanders over the past four to five months.

Every day Queenslanders are waking up to a brand-new episode. This is not a weekly soap opera; it is a daily soap opera. We just do not know what is coming next. I think it is about time that the Premier showed real leadership and set out very firmly what his vision is for this state. This is what Queenslanders want to know what this government is delivering on. What does this government stand for?

I get back to my travels. As I have been travelling around this state people have been expressing to me deep regret about the direction of this government. I have recently been to Mount Isa and Gladstone. The mayors of both places expressed to me their concern that none of the Royalties for the Regions money has come to them. I met with Councillor Jenny Hill, the mayor of Townsville, on Thursday night. Not one of her proposals for Royalties for the Regions was accepted.

This is a government that wanted to empower local governments. I have time and time again heard the Minister for Local Government say, 'We are giving back power to local governments.' But three mayors have been denied money from this government for the projects that they have put forward. How can we neglect the economic powerhouses of Mount Isa and Gladstone and not give them money for their regions that is needed?

Those opposite may think they are on the right path, but I do not think they are putting this state back on track at all. Queenslanders out there are disappointed. They are disappointed by what they are hearing from this government. They are very very concerned about the jobs cuts. I will not go into that as that is the subject of a motion before the parliament.

I have decided to give the Premier a Christmas present. I have a Christmas present that I would like to hand to the Premier, so I will table it.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents including extracts from the *Courier-Mail* [\[1710\]](#).

Let me go through what is in the Christmas present. It is a series of wrappings that I think the Premier can use for his Christmas presents. I think it is worthwhile recapping the year that has been the LNP government. Let us start with David Gibson. He was the first ministerial resignation.

The next one is public enemy No. 1.

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

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, there is a point of order.

Mr STEVENS: The use of posters and placards has been—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Speaker, they did this in the last parliament.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, take your seat. The member can speak from the items she has. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Who can forget the headline in the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* 'Tin Man Ted'. This is about the Lazy Acres Caravan Park. Disappointment once again for the people up there.

We cannot forget this one. We know that the Attorney-General likes his fairytales. He has been compared to Pinocchio. That is another one. Then we have the three members for Townsville. Who can forget the 'three monkeys' in relation to the Health cuts. They were not prepared to actually speak to the media.

We have then had the interactions of Mr Clive Palmer. How can we forget the showdown between the Premier and Mr Palmer. We know where Mr Palmer is now. He has been ostracised and banished from the LNP. He might come back when Lawrence Springborg is the Premier. We will wait and see in relation to that matter.

This one has to be my favourite—‘Cuts both ways’. I cannot refer to the person’s name because he is currently before the Ethics Committee. Then we have another one. This relates to a minister—and I will not reflect on the minister at the moment—‘Time for a break’. We know who that one refers to.

There is another wrapping that the Premier may like to use for his Christmas presents. Most recently, we have had two front pages for the former Minister for Housing and Public Works. We have to make sure we have the second one as well.

Just recently we have had a member of their own team express dissatisfaction. We have had a member of their own team who has decided to join the Katter party. How can we forget the front page of the *Sunday Mail*—‘Mr Party Hopper’. The piece de resistance, which was the front page today, ‘New MP weighs future’. I have not seen so many front pages in such a long time.

Mr Cripps: Yes, you have!

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I have not. I have never seen so many front pages. We have a great Christmas present for the Premier. He can peruse those over Christmas and reflect upon them. I think it is a good opportunity for each member of this House to reflect on something the Premier said very clearly on election night. That was that he would govern with humility, grace and dignity. I am afraid that in the eight months since the election I am yet to see any of those characteristics displayed by this government. I am yet to see any display of humility. I am yet to see any display of grace. I am yet to see any display of dignity.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Speaker, it is obvious that I am hitting a nerve with members of the government.

Mr Cripps: Haven’t seen any apology from you either about the crippling state of our finances. You were in the cabinet.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister for Natural Resources.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you want to stand up and do an MPI, please stand up and do an MPI, Minister. Please stand up if you want to. Then we saw the extraordinary decision today to move the member for Gaven from the chair of the committee—

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a matter of public importance.

Mr STEVENS: I have taken some advice in relation to a matter of privilege arising out of this matter. The opposition leader is impugning the reputation of the Ethics Committee—

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I am not.

Mr STEVENS:—in relation to comments about the leadership of that Ethics Committee and the movement of—

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I am not. I want to know why—

Mr STEVENS:—committee chairs.

Madam SPEAKER: I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to be careful not to impugn the reputation of the members of the Ethics Committee and imply bias by members. I remind all members to be careful, particularly as the Ethics Committee is a semijudicial body. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is why when I spoke in the debate earlier I wanted a clear explanation from this government about why the changes were made today. We also know that the member for Gaven has been expressing his discontent with this government in relation to the cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast. We know that this party does not tolerate dissent. Why is this government not listening to its backbenchers? Why is this government not listening to the views of the community?


This is an opportunity over the Christmas break for members to go back to their electorates and listen to the views of their constituents. There are people out there who are hurting. There are people out there who are not going to enjoy a good Christmas. There are people out there who have had their

services cut. There are students with a disability who will not be able to get the care that they need over the Christmas holidays. These are the issues that you should seriously consider when you come back to this House next year, because a healthy democracy means that people can express their views, that people can make their views heard in this House and not to have debate shut down.

In conclusion, I know that there may be some people who may be off the Premier's Christmas card list this year. I do not think Clive Palmer will be receiving a Christmas card. I do not think Ray Hopper will be receiving a Christmas card. And it is yet to be seen whether or not the member for Yeerongpilly will be receiving a Christmas card. But let's go into the Christmas season with reflection and come back next year and show the humility, dignity and grace that Queenslanders deserve. Queenslanders did not vote for this soap opera. Queenslanders voted for good government, and that is what Queenslanders deserve. They deserve better than what they have been confronted with over the last eight to nine months.

(Time expired)

Recreational Fishing

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.53 am): Queensland is a great state with great opportunities for recreational fishers. The Newman government is getting on with delivering for recreational fishers in Cleveland and all over Queensland. As promised, we are delivering on the net licence buyback that has great benefit to both recreational fishers and commercial fishers. The Marine Infrastructure Fund established by the LNP government will deliver new boat ramps, pontoons, fishing platforms, artificial reefs and other measures for Queensland's population of almost one million recreational fishers and boaties. And we are working with the state's fishing organisations and clubs to deliver good outcomes. I commend the Minister for Fisheries for his good work in this regard.

We have also stuck to our promise that in government we would not create any new marine reserves nor increase the area of marine national parks—green zones that have unfairly locked out recreational fishers. This is a promise that the government is making good on. We have said 'no more' to international green groups who want to stop sustainable recreational fishing. This government is protecting the rights of recreational fishers in Queensland's state waters. We are also standing with our federal colleagues in opposing the federal government's draconian bioregional marine reserves that will have little real environmental benefit but will destroy the livelihood of hundreds of small fishing business families, damage the Queensland economy and strip recreational fishers of the right to fish sustainably.

I have been an advocate of recreational fishing long before I entered this chamber in 2009. I learned to fish with my father from aged five, and through my marine science degree I learnt how we can fish sustainably. I believe strongly that the rights of recreational fishers in Queensland to access the best fishing areas and to fish sustainably must be secured, protected and restored wherever possible by applying more scrutiny, accountability and evidence based approaches to Queensland's state marine reserve system. The trend to needlessly lock away good fishing areas from recreational fishing activity has now been stopped in Queensland's state waters. But I believe we need to go further and implement approaches that support accessibility and accountability with an evidence base using risk assessment approaches. That is why I was happy to be the sponsoring member to an e-petition tabled today from a recreational fisherman, Tim Whittle, in my electorate of Cleveland that would achieve this aim. The issue is that the rights of recreational fishers in the last five years have been trampled on as governments have caved in to pressure from Greens politics and internationally funded green groups like the Pew foundation.

Green politics has created three falsehoods: (1) that there are no fish left in Queensland and that we are fishing unsustainably; (2) that the Queensland mum and dad recreational fishers are vandals of the sea; and (3) that the only solution is to lock recreational fishers out through the blunt instrument and the one-size-fits-all approach of marine reserve. This myopic approach has resulted in the latest federal government plan to create the world's biggest no-fishing area all around Australia. More marine reserves is all they know, and they are rolling them out without any evidence base that they are best practice. In fact, in the face of recent evidence, they are not working well when it comes to fisheries management—a point that I will take up in the parliament at a future opportunity.

With respect to federal waters, I applaud Tony Abbott for showing leadership, balance and characteristic pragmatism on this issue federally, with the introduction of the private member's bill the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Making Marine Parks Accountable) Bill 2012. The opposition leader and coalition ministers for fisheries and the environment, together with Queensland Senator Ron Boswell and Queensland MP George Christensen and others, have put together this bill and introduced it into the federal parliament to make marine reserves more accountable to fishers and the community. While Tony Abbott is proposing practical conservation that protects the rights of recreational fishers and that supports marine industries, the Queensland seafood industry and local jobs, the federal government is proposing the largest fishing lockout area in the world. I urge federal Environment Minister Burke to reject the controls of foreign international green groups and the Senate Greens and to reverse his job-destroying decision.

And this new round of marine reserves will not be the end. We know that the same international green groups want more. More deals will be done—for example, the temperate east zone from northern New South Wales and waters outside Moreton Bay to Hervey Bay. These will follow, but it must stop. While the process cannot be undone, there needs to be considerably more flexible management options that better meet marine biodiversity and fisheries management—for example, easing restrictions in carefully selected marine national parks. This would have many benefits. This more open approach would assist with getting tourism back on track, it would create more jobs and it would also get our national parks back on track. In conclusion, the LNP is getting on with delivering for recreational fishers.

(Time expired)

Business Development



Mr PUCCI (Logan—LNP) (11.58 am): Quick fixes and short-sightedness—that was the philosophy of the former government. Haphazard approaches to long-term projects and the lack of local business development drove the economy into the ground. Business development—that is one of the main drivers of our economy, not borrowing money or selling public assets. That is not the answer. From Ollies fruit and vegetable shop in Logan to a multinational in Cairns, allowing these businesses to grow in a competitive market requires support from local, state and federal governments, the local community and a wider regional investment market. For that growth to occur, our government is supporting our local businesses through cutting red tape and removing the administrative restraints that prevent local, regional, interstate and national markets from achieving their true potential.

Together as a team we are making it happen. Together we are rebuilding our economy and confidence in our business market. Together we are supporting business development in our state. We understand hard work is ahead. However, in only seven months after the opening of this parliament we have achieved so much. In this short time we have passed up to 32 pieces of legislation—from Health where we established health boards and our Mums and Bubs program to Education where we established the e-kindy program to reach out to our remote and rural communities. We have also provided up to \$160,000 to address the backlog of school maintenance for each school.

In areas of crime and justice, we have made our state safer by implementing a tougher penalty on offenders who assault police. We are putting more police on the beat, and we have expanded our school based police officer program. Our LNP team has made, and will continue to make, Queensland a better place. With that energy and motivation, as a united team we finish what we start. Together as a team we will continue to accomplish the mission and get Queensland back on track.


There are those who seek to divide us—those who seek to drive a wedge within our ranks of government. To them I say: it is all well and good to be a team player during the easy times, but when the difficult decisions have to be made, in the words of Cindy Lauper, 'Your true colours come shining through.' We are here to serve the people of our electorates. They are the reason we stand here today. They trust our team—our LNP team—to better their lives and make their state a stable and progressive community with a real future.

That real future is not possible without a strong business sector. In my electorate of Logan we have hundreds of businesses that support our community and the greater region. From sole traders to local chains to national enterprises, each business plays a vital role in the economic and employment development of our community. A notable business in Logan is CostaExchange Mushrooms. This business is vital to the local economy of my electorate. Employing over 200 workers, CostaExchange forms a key component of our national industry. Being operationally run by Costa since 2006, the mushroom farm has been an integral element of our local economy for over 40 years. Faced with bureaucratic challenges of the past legislature, this pillar of my electorate is forced to assess other options for the future, many of which may have it relocating interstate. The potential of this happening could adversely affect the already high unemployment rate in Logan.

As a state government we cannot help businesses alone. The support Costa needs has to come from not only the state government but also the local council. Logan City Council must play its part in supporting the mushroom exchange. Yet again as a team we must work together to support our community. This may include amendments to local and state legislation, the provision of subsidy schemes or, in Costa's case, the need to address a lack of sewage treatment works in the area. We must do our best to foster and promote local industries.

In September 2011 the reported unemployment rate for the Logan City Council area was 8.1 per cent. With the unforgivable financial position Labor left us in, not only as a state but also as a nation, such a statistic must improve for our community's chances of prosperity in the future. We must continue to encourage business to expand, to employ local workers and to use local resources. Fighting for our local businesses, local community groups and our constituents is what motivates this LNP. This is a great state with great opportunity. This government is getting Queensland out of debt, we are helping businesses create jobs and we are building a better future for Queensland families. I want to say to all my colleagues: have a merry Christmas, happy holidays and a very safe, prosperous new year.

Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.03 pm): Yesterday we saw the latest in a series of unusual outbursts from the Treasurer. The Treasurer issued a media release selectively quoting from Moody's to say that the financial position had deteriorated over recent years. The Treasurer cut the quote short before it mentioned some of the reasons why, including the pressures of rapid population growth and natural disasters. What the great natural disaster and global financial crisis denier of this parliament—the Treasurer—cannot deny is that his government committed to \$4 billion in unfunded election promises. This is more than double the total of the ALP's commitments. The actual cost of these commitments, as we know, is much higher. That is why the LNP's electricity promise to deliver \$120 in savings on every power bill was capped at one year and was comprehensively underfunded.

The Treasurer signed off on these commitments knowing full well the position of the state's finances thanks to the MYFER. The Premier has referred to that fiscal position in the media, and numerous well-respected economists have said that Mr Costello's political audit found no misstatement in the independent Treasury figures. In total, the LNP's first budget makes around \$6.5 billion in new spending decisions and revenue cuts. Quite simply, this means that the credit rating outlook downgrade belongs to the Treasurer. He had the opportunity to take a more conservative fiscal approach but didn't. The Treasurer could have made the decision to rely on natural attrition in terms of jobs rather than impacting on future growth but he didn't.

Members need not take my word for the impacts the LNP's first budget have had on the economy. At the time of the state budget the Commonwealth Bank issued an economic update which stated—


The substantial tightening in fiscal policy announced by the Newman conservative government in its maiden budget ... will weigh on the Queensland economy over the coming financial years and beyond.

This is from the same Treasurer who in January called Queensland an 'economic basket case' and who now describes an economy that is expected to slow next financial year—partly as a result of his budget cuts—as representing 'confidence'. I am not talking down the economy, as the Treasurer did consistently throughout his time on this side of the parliament. I am merely pointing out the Treasurer's hypocrisy. The Treasurer has implied that my quoting ABS statistics for building approvals in a particular month is talking down the economy. Members have never heard me call Queensland 'Spain' or call the economy a 'basket case'.

When it comes to negativity, the LNP takes the first prize in every category, including being in government. The Treasurer also seems to be suffering from a short attention span. His highly resourced office, with more staff than the previous Treasurer and with fewer portfolios I believe, has gone about the task of tallying up how many questions I have asked about what. It is a pity they could not let him know that at the midyear review gross debt was \$62.35 billion, not \$65 billion. To preface the wrong figure by implying that people cannot add up makes this all the more embarrassing. For the benefit of the Treasurer's memory, I did directly ask him 33 questions about the budget and the economy during the estimates hearings. I know that he does not want anyone to go back and look at that transcript, but it is there for all to see. Answers to questions in estimates revealed that the Treasurer has used government worker redundancies to fund election promises, that he had already counted the sale of the remaining stake of QR National into the debt position and that at no point had the government been borrowing to pay the wages of 20,000 government workers.

Queenslanders are fast growing tired of the arrogant rhetoric of a mean and tricky Treasurer who will say anything on a particular day for his own political benefit. The Treasurer likes to talk about belt tightening, but we all know that he cannot. He cannot because of his \$4 billion in unfunded election promises. The recovery in consumer sentiment from the Westpac-Melbourne Institute that followed an earlier drop directly attributed to the state budget is just one example. We in the opposition have a positive vision for Queensland's future and we are continuing to promote the economy. We call on the LNP to do likewise and start putting the interests of Queenslanders first instead of their political ambitions and all of the distractions that are currently happening in this ongoing soap opera that is the LNP in Queensland.

Bovine Johne's Disease

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.07 pm): My department and, in particular, Biosecurity Queensland officers are presently finalising plans for the ongoing management of a beef stud property near Rockhampton after it was confirmed last week that the livestock on this property are infected with bovine Johne's disease, or BJD. Biosecurity staff are on the property today working closely with the owners as they plan the logistics of this response. They are also engaging with the beef industry on this matter, including AgForce Queensland and the Cattle Council of Australia.

I want to reassure people that bovine Johne's disease is a very rare condition in Queensland. Generally we do not have it here, it does not spread rapidly and, most importantly, it does not pose any risk to human health. It is, however, a serious disease of cattle and other ruminant species. The disease lives in the soil. It generally infects young calves but does not become apparent for a couple of years. It can cause chronic diarrhoea and what is known as ill thrift. This leads to weight loss and thinness due to a loss of fat and muscle and eventually death. Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment.

It appears that this herd may well have been infected for many years. The majority of cases here have been from animals imported from other states. The complicating factor is that a lot of cattle have been moved from this property to another 160 properties including major stud and commercial cattle properties in both Queensland and interstate. Be assured that these movements are being traced and risk assessments are being undertaken to determine the potential spread.

Biosecurity Queensland is in the process of contacting affected producers to provide information and particularly to contain the risk of any further spread. I have some very strong advice for those producers who may hold cattle from this particular property. They should seek advice from either their private veterinarian or Biosecurity Queensland. Most particularly, they should not cull these cattle. Doing so could delay resolving the risk of further infection. In the meantime, the property near Rockhampton will remain under quarantine while the matter is dealt with. The good news is that Queensland has a very low prevalence of BJD through requirements that we have for entry of stock into the state and by rigorous control of known or suspected infection.

BJD is endemic in Victoria and parts of South Australia and New South Wales. The Queensland government and the beef industry are working to prevent any further spread of infection with the aim of eradicating the disease from our great state.

Gladstone Hospital



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.10 pm): A comment from a local doctor on the Gladstone GP Obstetrics' Facebook page states—

I attended a very confusing workforce planning meeting last night—for the Gladstone district hospital's public services. It seems that the GDH has been classified as a level 3 hospital, which means it should not have any specialist services (that is, a surgeon, a paediatrician, an obstetrician or a physician), and that anything that the generalist doctors there can't handle should be sent to Rockhampton. However, Dr Mark Mattiussi, district executive director Medical Services, Central Queensland Health Service District did allow that Qld Health did not have the data to say when the hospital would reach a level 4 status and be funded for specialist services. As a generalist doctor, I do not want to work without my specialist colleagues, and certainly do not support the idea that Gladstone District Hospital should be run as a triage service. The Gladstone Mater, at this stage, is not part of these determinations.


This level 3 assessment, which was done some time ago, was only done as a snapshot in time to see where each service stood in the Central Queensland health district. I ask: is there an intention to make that snapshot in time the abiding reality? Previous health administrators, especially Dr Bill Beresford, saw the urgent need to grow services and he commenced that program. Subsequent CEOs, however, have downgraded services, reduced the number of specialist doctors and made it very difficult in the current climate to recruit doctors to the Gladstone Hospital. I would ask where the metrics for determining Gladstone Base Hospital moving from level 3 to level 4 currently sit. Is it available for doctors to peruse? Is it available for the public to peruse given that the services available at the hospital has been a topic of concern and certainly debate for over a decade?

The advice that I received is that in Gladstone our surgeon has been terminated and we only have two specialists on a permanent basis: a physician and an obstetrician, both of whom are greatly valued. Again, the minister has spoken much about the health boards. Our local doctors have been told that the board's only power is to hire or fire the CEO, that it has no power to determine service planning. If that is the case, Dr Martin Mattiussi's comment at the joint public and GP doctors meeting that 'the possibility of Gladstone moving from level 3 to level 4 is pie in the sky' is concerning to say the least.

In the past we were promised that planning was occurring. In the past we were promised that documentation had been drawn up. In fact, I had meetings with the then health minister, Mr Paul Lucas—it feels like years ago. At that time there was planning being done to improve services at the Gladstone Hospital, but obtaining that planning documentation was as easy as finding hen's teeth. Subsequent ministers have also said that there is planning to be done, yet none of it appears to be in existence. In regard to this meeting that was held only a couple of weeks ago about which these comments have been made publicly, again there was no planning process in place. There is no data available in the health department to grow the services at Gladstone yet everybody—even the health minister in this chamber—has talked about the growth in Gladstone and the need for services to improve at the Gladstone Base Hospital. Because of this lack of planning, because of what appears to be a real lack of concern by the Rockhampton health district to grow services in Gladstone, morale at the hospital is low and it will not improve unless there is tangible proof that there is an intention to improve services, to improve doctor numbers and to improve the spread of specialist services available to the community at the hospital.

Gladstone is currently assessed as a level 3.5 based on existing services. With the industry growth, population growth and risk profile, there must be intervention by government and by the current health minister, not just a reliance on the health board, to ensure Gladstone Base Hospital moves to at least level 4 as a matter of urgency with direct planning put in place to move services to a level 5. The staff at the Gladstone Hospital deserve that. They deserve that respect. They deserve that consideration, let alone the community for which this government was elected to represent.

Rural Fire Service, Review

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (12.15 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to talk about the review into the Rural Fire Service, which has been conducting meetings across Queensland. I was very pleased to be selected chair of that committee and I was able to nominate the people for that review committee. They are Mike Garrahy, who is the Queensland President of the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland; Bryan Cifuentes, who is the inspector for the peninsula and gulf region in North Queensland; Andrew Houley, who came from Forestry and then worked in rural fires and is currently the biodiversity and landscape manager in the reef catchments; and Neil Gallant, who is the assistant commissioner for rural operations in Queensland. From time to time I have been lucky enough to 'con' one of my parliamentary colleagues, Kerry Millard, into coming along and listening to the female members of the Rural Fire Service. Most members probably do not realise, but up to a third of the Rural Fire Service is not only run but also operated by women in the community.


We have held meetings across Queensland. We have probably held about two-thirds of them and there is about another third to go. Firstly, we travelled to Toowoomba, then Ripley Valley while the fires were on, into Caboolture and then up to Maryborough. After that we went into Mackay and Bowen. Just last week we travelled to Barcaldine, Emerald and Rockhampton. We have met approximately 1,000 rural firefighter volunteers across Queensland and all of them expressed their concerns about support staff in terms of making sure that they have paid operators, the 'bitsos', the training officers and the support officers that support the Rural Fire Service across Queensland. As we have travelled around Queensland and listened to the relevant issues we have found that a lot of them are very similar. It is all about bureaucracy and red tape; it is about letting them get on with the job, getting government out of their hair and letting them go out and fight the fires when they arise. I believe that the issues that they have brought up before the committee are very easy to fix. Some issues such as those regarding the bureaucracy do need to be handled.

The committee has probably received close to 500 submissions from across Queensland. Next we will be travelling to Charters Towers, Roma, into the Atherton Tableland and out to Cloncurry. That will finalise the travelling around Queensland. After that, we will be holding a meeting with all of the representatives of departments—police, local government et cetera—in one location for at least one day to try to get some consistency in agreements across Queensland regarding the Rural Fire Service.

We are trying to establish some partnerships with Parks and Wildlife, for instance, so that when fires are lit in national parks they are looked after and the rural fires are well aware of what is going on so they can be basically a support component of that type of service. In terms of burning along the edge of roads in the cooler months of the year, rural fires could become land managers or a big part of looking after their patch of country in Queensland—to actually identify the risk areas so they can be burnt out in the cooler months of the year and so they can do their training when the risks are not high. And more importantly, by burning out those high-risk areas there will be less chance of extreme wildfires.

The committee intends to have an interim report done by Christmas and to have a final report ready for the government by the end of February next year. I believe that we are making some great inroads into the issues facing rural firefighters and actually trying to address the issues that really bug them.

Agriculture Industry

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.20 pm): Last week saw the release of the biggest puff piece of policy the agricultural sector in Queensland has seen. *Queensland's agriculture strategy: a 2040 vision to double the value of production* was launched by the agriculture minister to little fanfare. The 2040 vision was the centrepiece of the LNP's agriculture election commitment, yet the 16-page document is one long motherhood statement. It offers no insight into how the LNP government plans to support the agriculture industry. It does not outline what the growth of different sectors will be. It does not even talk about the types of product it is aiming to grow.

There is some talk in the strategy about the importance of a strong biosecurity framework, yet the minister and the LNP government have closed every biosecurity laboratory outside of Brisbane, leaving regional Queensland exposed to an increase in pest and disease outbreak. The document mentions logistics but offers no plans on how the LNP will drive innovation and growth in this vital part of the

agriculture supply chain. The paper mentions improved infrastructure including road, rail and ports, but there is no way an LNP government can achieve this as it has offered not one new infrastructure idea since coming to government.

The so-called vision for 2040 does not even talk about what the agriculture market will look like in 2040, and there is no analysis of population pressures versus arable land. As an example of the vacuousness of this document, I table for the House page 14.

Tabled paper: Document titled '2040 Target: Double Production' [\[1711\]](#).

It shows one of the enlightening diagrams included in the paper about how this 2040 vision will be achieved. You see resource availability going right, productivity going down, production costs going left and markets going up, and in the middle is blurry double vision. What a load of rubbish! I can understand why this piece of puff went down so badly with industry when it was launched last Monday. Dan Galligan from the Queensland Farmers Federation said there basically was not enough information included in this document for them to work with. He said in APN newspapers—

... much more will be required beyond what is outlined in the discussion paper if we are to see this process move to a truly collaborative and strategic action plan, beyond just more analysis.

It is a pretty scathing response from the peak agricultural body in Queensland. AgForce even admits in *Queensland Country Life* that the LNP's agricultural election commitments were purely to shore up the rural vote, with little follow-through on commitments.

In contrast, I take the opportunity to point out that this time last year, as the previous agriculture minister, I launched Food for a Growing Economy, the first food industry plan in Australia. It was a landmark plan which would have more than doubled the value of Queensland's food sector by 2020. So instead of doubling production by 2040, as the LNP aims to do, we were more than doubling the value of the sector in half the time. Any farmer will tell you that they would rather have their product worth more than produce more of it. But it is obvious that the LNP paper has been produced without actually talking to anyone. Food for a Growing Economy, released last year, actually included tangible outcomes.

To create growth and meet opportunities, productivity must increase. Fundamental to productivity growth is research, development and extension taken up at the business level in the form of innovation. That is why, in conjunction with the food policy, we established a \$2 million Food Innovation and Productivity Incentives Program to encourage food industry innovation and productivity. Similarly last year, through consultation with all interested stakeholders during the live export issue, we recognised that the common issue was that greater certainty and long-term security in the industry were needed to drive profitability and productivity. So we established three working groups to address these issues: market access and productivity, multimodal transport, and regulation reform.

The LNP also needs to recognise Queensland's status as an emerging biohub and continue our commitment to developing biotechnology industries and ensuring the state's clean energy future. By 2020 Queensland should be recognised as a leader in the production of biobased industrial products and technologies in the Asia-Pacific region. When in government we anticipated that the sector would contribute up to \$1 billion to our clean and sustainable economy. Biobased products are playing a pivotal role in transitioning a global fossil fuel dependent economy to a cleaner, greener alternative, yet there is no mention of biobased products in the LNP paper.

When in government our plans were always developed through extensive consultation with industry and the community. I suggest that the minister and the LNP engage with the agriculture industry and the community before releasing a flimsy document with no analysis of any sector and definitely no vision for the future.

(Time expired)

Agricultural Colleges



Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise to speak about the Newman government's policy relating to the four-pillar economy. When we came to government on 24 March that policy was about rebuilding Queensland and forging a future for Queensland. One of the pillars of the economy is agriculture. Today I wish to speak about the ag colleges in Longreach and Emerald. I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's contribution today.

The unfortunate situation is that those colleges were run down. The management structure was not there. There was no marketing strategy. There was no policy for future direction. There is no way in the world that those colleges would have survived. But the Premier and the cabinet made a decision. We have an \$8.5 billion Education budget in Queensland. I know that both the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Education have been to Longreach and seen the college there, and the Minister for Agriculture has been to Emerald and seen its college firsthand.

As a result of the Ernst & Young report, we are now in the process of putting in place a strategy that will be very advantageous to rural training and the rejuvenation of those colleges. We saw the bastardisation of the Dalby and Burdekin colleges, and the Longreach and Emerald colleges would have gone the same way. But thank God we have the Newman government in place now that has resurrected them and put in place a strategy to forge a future for these two great organisations.

The Longreach college is the only pastoral college of its type in the world. It is a very sophisticated operation that will provide training to many young men and women, not only from Queensland but from all parts of Australia, who want an agricultural or pastoral education so they can forge a future in the pastoral industry. The Emerald college is a fantastic campus. People like Mike McCosker, Ian Burnett, Donald Brown and the team at Longreach have done a fantastic job in being upfront with the government and showing that leadership that we need to train young men and women in the agriculture industry.

As the Premier said, we put \$8.5 billion into educating young people in the Queensland state school system. Why can these people not also be trained? I applaud both the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Education for making certain we take this initiative forward. It will certainly be advantageous to the industries they will serve for a long time to come.

Both of these colleges in the past have always had a placement rate of between 98 per cent and 99 per cent of their students in the industry, but the beautiful part about it is that the great majority of those young people who come from interstate—whether it is Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales or wherever—stay here in Queensland. It is to our advantage that those colleges function in a professional, fruitful way. I am very pleased and excited about the way that these colleges will move forward and I am very excited to say that the Hon. John McVeigh, the Minister for Agriculture, will be coming to Longreach again next week to look firsthand at the situation and report back to cabinet on what is happening. This is a real plus towards the four-pillar economy for Queensland and especially rebuilding the agriculture industry in Queensland so that those young people can work in the agricultural sector.

Madam SPEAKER: The time allocated for matters of public interest has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Apology for Forced Adoptions



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (12.30 pm), by leave: Shortly I will be moving a motion asking the House to adopt an apology that acknowledges the wrongs that have been inflicted by past forced adoption policies and practices in Queensland. Prior to the debate commencing, I now table a copy of the proposed apology and I ask that it be circulated for the information of all members.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Apology, dated 27 November 2012, for forced adoption policies and practices' [\[1712\]](#).

MOTION

Apology for Forced Adoptions



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (12.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders, the apology for past forced adoption policies and practices tabled and circulated in my name earlier today be adopted by the House.

Today—Tuesday, 27 November 2012—marks an event that will be remembered forever by those affected by forced adoptions, and I acknowledge that there are many of you in the public gallery watching today and also many watching online, both in Australia and overseas. In February this year a Commonwealth Senate committee inquiry found that forced adoptions were widespread in Australia during the 1950s to 1970s and that the emotional damage caused to all those affected remains prevalent to this day. The inquiry heard stories which highlighted women's experiences of being physically shackled to beds, to mothers not being advised of government payments that may have been available to support them to keep their child, that some mothers were not told the sex of their baby and that some were even told that their baby had died when in fact they had been taken for adoption. Today we recognise the lifelong pain caused by their experiences and we want them to know that we are deeply sorry. This was a devastating experience and a very sad time indeed in this state's history. These forced adoption policies and practices have had long-term impacts on the many mothers, children, fathers and extended families who were affected—many of whom continue to be haunted by what happened to them each and every day of their lives. It is clear that the memories of those traumatic events, their consequences and the ongoing sense of loss and distress are still very much with people affected today.

While the apology cannot change what has happened in the past, I am hopeful that the apology will go some way to easing the pain felt by people who have been so deeply affected and will assist them in their healing process. We hope the apology resonates with Queenslanders who, after today, are more aware and more sensitive about past forced adoption policies and practices. There is no doubt that our society today is very different and more tolerant to the one that existed when those practices and policies were in place, and that indeed is a wonderful and appropriate thing. I want to acknowledge the contributions people have made through correspondence and submissions—in person and through attendance—at a consultative forum to the development of the apology. Like many members in this House, I have been deeply moved—personally moved—to hear the individual stories of past adoption practices in Queensland, both in person and by letter. I understand that it is not easy to retell personal stories of loss, anger, heartache and frustration and I applaud the courage of those who have shared their experiences with such openness and indeed honesty. I thank the many people who have contributed personally to the development of the apology.

As Premier, I am honoured to give this apology for past adoption policies and practices on behalf of the people of Queensland and the Legislative Assembly. I will now read the apology that has been tabled. It states—

Apology for past forced adoption policies and practices

Today this Legislative Assembly acknowledges the wrongs that have been inflicted by past forced adoption policies and practices in Queensland.

We acknowledge those who were denied the choice of parenthood, especially the mothers, as well as the fathers and other generations of their families.

To the mothers whose babies were taken and hidden from them, and who were misled, deceived, threatened or forced to relinquish their babies, we say sorry.

You were denied a voice, dignity and care and, in many cases, the fulfilment of your pregnancy was turned into anguish.

We regret the untruths that were told to you and about you, and any illegal acts that were perpetrated upon you.

Today we say that you need not suffer in silence any more.

To the sons and daughters taken from their mothers, we also say sorry and express our deep regret for the trauma that many of you have suffered.

We acknowledge that you were denied the right to experience the bonds between you and your natural mother, father, siblings and other family members because of the practices that took place at the time of your birth.

We know that for many of you this has caused immeasurable pain.

We acknowledge that this experience has impacted on the lives of fathers, siblings and other family members and to them we are sorry.

We acknowledge also the partners, children and others who have supported their loved ones over the years in coping with the grief they endure.

This Legislative Assembly offers its unreserved and sincere apology to all those families forcibly and unlawfully broken apart by these past practices and we acknowledge that your pain and suffering continues.

We acknowledge the shame, guilt and secrecy carried by many for too long in silence, and that when it was expressed often it has not been believed.


Today, in this Legislative Assembly, we place on the record for future generations and say to all those affected, you have been heard, you are believed and you are not to blame.

We will continue to listen to, work with, and support you to heal and we are committed to ensuring these policies and practices are not forgotten and are never repeated.

To all those affected we say sorry.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr NEWMAN: We are joined today by a large number of people in parliament whose lives have been affected by these past policies and practices—mothers, fathers, sons, daughters and other family members. We are grateful that you could be with us for this important occasion in Queensland's history. I feel honoured to lead a government that is prepared to do the right thing in acknowledging a practice of the past that should never have occurred.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.38 pm): The year is 1966. A very confused, very frightened and very pregnant 19-year-old is brought into a hospital through the back door, instructed not to speak to anyone, treated as if she were guilty of some unspeakable, unforgivable offence. Over the following five days she is sedated by staff. She is denied compassion, denied decency and left alone to go through her labour and the birth of her child with minimum support. And then she is intimidated into signing consent forms allowing authorities to take her baby and give him up for adoption. That frightened young girl was Margaret Oakhill-Hamilton and today she is here as we give this long overdue apology to her and thousands of other women like her who were subject to one of the most shameful episodes in our history. These are the women who were betrayed by the hospitals and maternity homes and the government authorities who were supposed to care for them. These are the women who are the victims of a deliberate program of deceit which saw thousands of children literally ripped from their birth mother's arms.

I have met twice with Margaret over the past week and her story could not fail to move the hardest of hearts. It is probably best told in her own words—

I was alone when I saw my son through the nursery window only being 'allowed' to see him after the consent form was signed, never touching, never holding or nursing him.

I was alone when I was discharged from the hospital, broken-hearted and without my son.

I was alone and ever searching for my son for the following years.

24 years later, I met my son and I touched him for the first time and my heart sang.

Like Margaret, Trish's baby boy was also taken from her in 1968. She had not signed consent for this forced adoption but over the past 40 years she has battled for her rights as a mother. That battle has encouraged other women, many now grandmothers themselves, to break the silence of forced adoptions and to hold each government in this country to account for the terrible wrongs of the past. I have spoken personally with Trish and Margaret and Glenda to hear their stories and hear how vital this apology is to them. These three strong women are members of Adoption Loss Adult Support Australia, known to many as ALAS. They have been pivotal through the years in lobbying, along with hundreds of other women, to make the federal government's inquiry into forced adoptions a reality.

The stories that flowed from that inquiry make for confronting reading. I would encourage everyone to read the stories of a generation of forced adoption mothers, their children and also of the repentant health and social care workers who were complicit in this sad chapter in our history. While their stories are harrowing, they are also important in revealing a determination and resilience to fight for what is right. These are stories that recall pregnancies ruined by a system in failure and place rightful blame at the feet of religious communities, health professionals and maternity homes and hospitals. These are the stories that provide a shocking picture of young mothers and fathers misled and intimidated. It reveals a history of forgery in many cases and in many others the basic denial of fundamental human rights.

As I have heard these women's stories, the horrible reality has become apparent. This was not the Australia of a century ago, not stories that happened in our distant past; these stories are part of our recent history and these deeply regrettable practices of medical institutions and governments were allowed to continue through the 1960s, into the 1970s and even into the 1980s. These women had committed no crime, yet they were punished, abused and ostracised in their local communities, even in many cases by their families. They were lied to. They were tricked into giving up their children. They were treated in the most unthinkable way—lied to and browbeaten and bullied into believing that they had absolutely no choice other than to give their children away. It was illegal. It was wrong.

But today, for as much as we can, we can help to right that wrong. That is why the apology we offer these women, their children, their families and all of those affected by forced adoption is so critical. It goes some way towards giving them back some of the dignity that was so cruelly ripped away. We are here today on this historic day to say sorry—to say sorry to these mothers, to their now adult children and to their children's fathers, siblings, grandparents and other family members. Today, to women like Margaret and Trish and Glenda, the Labor members of this place offer our apology for the wrongs done. To unwed young women and their children of the past, we offer our hope that there will be a healing process for the pain, the grief and the guilt experienced.

This is a trauma that has harmed families for generations. By acknowledging that terrible trauma and by remembering the past and acknowledging its wrongs, we hope that you can together continue on your journey of healing.



Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (12.43 pm): I count it a very great privilege to be here in this House today for what is a very historic day for thousands of mothers, children and families in our state. To the mothers who had their babies forcibly removed during those harshest of times in the 1950s to the 1970s, today your heartache, your pain and anguish at having that newborn babe removed, often immediately after birth without even seeing or holding your precious child, is being acknowledged and a long overdue heartfelt apology is given. Nothing we can do, nothing we can say, will ever heal those deep wounds, nor give you back those lost years of nurturing your little one and seeing them grow to adulthood. Whole families felt this loss. Whether they be siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, fathers, this loss left a void in many hearts.

This part of our nation's history reveals very dark, unenlightened beliefs and a harshness towards single mothers that we today find hard to fathom. The secrecy surrounding births and adoption then made it very difficult for any links and contact to occur. Many mothers lived their lives searching—scanning faces in the crowd, fighting to gain identifying information to be released so that contact might be made.

I first became involved in the mid-1980s and 1990s in my position as the electorate officer in Woodridge with an organisation representing many of the adoptees searching for their mothers. Today in the gallery I would like to acknowledge Angela Barra of Ashgrove, who was one of thousands of babies forcibly taken from their mother at birth simply because her grandparents considered that her unwed mother would bring shame on the family.

We hear statistics such as 150,000 babies throughout Australia being forcibly removed over two decades. In Australia, the number of adoptions rose slowly until the 1950s and then sharply increased to that peak of almost 10,000 a year in 1972-73, the great majority being the babies of white mothers—poor mothers before World War II and overwhelmingly single mothers thereafter. The Adoption Loss Adult Support group—ALAS—estimates that between 1945 and 1980 in Queensland 37,766 children were adopted.


I found it really chilling and confronting listening to some of these women's stories. We do not know how many of these thousands of adoptions were forced on the mothers involved. We need to end the silence, acknowledge the wrongs and make up for what has been done. Forced adoption was cruel, unethical and illegal.

The formal apology offered by the government today is an historic milestone in addressing past wrongs. It is, however, the beginning of a healing process, not the end. Forced adoption mothers, many now aged in their 60s and 70s, deserve an appropriate memorial—a physical place where families can meet and reflect on what makes them a family. Current Queensland birth certificates need to be reviewed to consider how best to include both natural parents, where known, for children who are adopted. Integrated birth certificates are in place in other state jurisdictions and national reforms for such documentation are in development. Similar reforms should be implemented in Queensland. A further review of the Adoption Act 2009 may be required to better facilitate information access by forced adoption mothers and their adult children. Such a review may also consider if regulation of contact between natural parents and adopted children is more appropriately managed under access processes of the Family Law Act.

Most importantly, we need to enhance the provision of specialised counselling and support services by appropriately trained trauma counsellors for forced adoption mothers, their adult children and other significant family members.

These social care and mental health clinical services must be provided at no cost to those harmed by forced adoption and these services need to be able to respond to the different needs of mothers, adult children and other family members. There is a specific challenge here for the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to ensure prompt action to meet the needs of those people receiving our apology today.

I have chosen consciously to speak about issues that need to carry forward the intent of our apology. Without meaningful, prompt action to redress the harm done to forced adoption mothers and without sustaining services for women's health care, an apology is just a page of words, however well intentioned. Hopefully a national framework for implementing the recommendations of the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry will guide a consistent response for all state and territory governments. I encourage the government to engage with the community organisations working for forced adoption mothers, their children and families, to give meaning to this apology with concrete action. Our regret is profound and our apology sincere and heartfelt.

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (12.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to support the motion by the Premier. Today we are standing up and saying sorry. We say sorry to those people affected by past forced adoption policies and practices that occurred in Queensland. Today we say sorry to the vulnerable women who were denied the right to parent their child. It can only be remembered as a very dark time in our state's history, an era where society often viewed pregnant women outside of marriage as morally delinquent and therefore incapable of raising a child. These women were not given options to keep their babies. Mothers were judged, shamed, coerced and in some cases threatened into giving their babies up for adoption. Whilst today is a significant occasion for those affected, it is also important that Queenslanders understand that forced adoptions took place and we must never let them happen again. Though not all adoptions were forced, today is about acknowledging those cases of forced adoption where unethical and immoral practices occurred.

Over the past months in the lead-up to this apology today I have met with some truly remarkable people. I have met with mothers who had their babies forcibly removed. I have met now adult children who had been forcibly removed. They have shared their stories with me at such a deeply personal level and have helped me to understand their experiences of loss, trauma and heartache. I thank them so much for their generosity. As a mother I can only but imagine the torment of being forcibly separated from my child. Many of these women have been steadfast in their efforts for an apology to be made and for what occurred all those years ago to be finally recognised and to be believed. These are mothers who gave birth to babies that they wanted to nurture and raise. These are mothers who have lived a lifetime desperately looking for the chance to let their children know that they were wanted and they were loved and they continue to be wanted and they continue to be loved.

For me it has been a journey of understanding: understanding the depth of despair and understanding their lifetime of pain and anger. I saw raw emotions surfacing as those affected reflected on their individual journeys. I saw them grappling with the fact that receiving an apology for the policies

and practices of the past would no longer be a dream, but a reality. At our final meeting I mentioned to one mother that she seemed a different person to the one that I had met on previous occasions. In a letter to me after that conversation she wrote—

The person you saw on Friday is who I am most of the time, but you have also seen the other 'me'. These days not too many people see the young damaged girl I once was, I manage to keep her hidden—with years of practice—and don't allow her to surface.


Her pain, and that of many other mothers, is palpable. Their anguish is triggered by birthdays, by places, or even by seeing or holding an infant. Many have lived their lives looking at the faces of strangers wondering if that might be the child that they gave birth to. As one mother so poignantly said to the Senate committee, she does not only remember in her mind, she remembers with every fibre of her being. For some mothers their birthing experience was traumatic and we have heard of cases that were physically harmful, compromising the mother's own health and wellbeing. Many of these mothers have lived a lifetime hearing that they dwell too much on the past and that they allow their lives to be driven by loss, but who would not grieve at the loss of their own child. The loss had a profound effect on their lives and it is understandable that for many their heartache is enduring.

Today we also say sorry to the many daughters and sons who were forcibly separated for whom the right to be loved and raised by their mother, father and other natural family members was denied. For the sons and daughters who were separated in these circumstances, I hope that the apology provides you with a deeper understanding surrounding your adoption and particularly of your mother's feelings of inconsolable loss. I was very thankful to have the opportunity to speak with many children of forced adoption. Many did not know the circumstances of their adoption until they sought to reconnect with their natural parents and, for many, learning that they had been forcibly adopted has been extremely traumatic.

Those who have suffered because of past forced adoption policies and practices—the mothers, the children, the fathers and other family members—have endured too much for far too long. What occurred was wrong, reprehensible and unlawful. There will be mothers and children hearing the apology today who are supported by family and friends, but there will also be mothers hearing the apology today whose family and friends know nothing of their story. For many it has been a long-kept secret. We hope that today any perceived stigma can now be distanced and that the burden of secrecy can now be eased. We should also acknowledge those who are affected and are sadly no longer with us, for they too deserved to hear an apology.

Whilst today's apology cannot change the events of the past, the most fundamental assurance that we can give is that those wrongs, those forced adoption policies and practices, will not recur. Today and for time to come we must use this apology to serve as a reminder and we must never repeat the policies of the past. Today a commemorative pin is worn in recognition and support of those affected by past forced adoption policies and practices. The tea rose symbolises 'I will remember always' and today in this House we say we will never forget.

We are now in an era of open adoption practices. Society's attitudes have changed and there are stronger support systems in place along with strict legislative requirements to adhere to in the process of adoption. In Queensland people are able to access information about an adoption and the Queensland government provides funding for counselling and support to people affected through Post Adoption Support Queensland and Jigsaw Queensland. Today is an historic and significant day. It is an emotional day and it is a long-awaited day. To those who have suffered the injustice of past forced adoption policies and practices, may this apology help your heavy hearts to be lighter today than yesterday.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.59 pm): On behalf of the crossbenchers, I rise to endorse the moving words already contributed and to affirm our concerns for each person displaced from their families and parents who endured the loss of their children because of policies in place in the past. Every child deserves to be loved, to be secure and safe and to be assured that their family life is sacrosanct and protected unless they, as dependent young people, are at physical, emotional or psychological risk. Equally, each mother and father must be confident that government supports them in their vital roles of nurturing, comforting and loving their sons and daughters.

This apology may not assuage your pain, the separation and the unanswered questions and unknown family connections. We offer this apology not to remove this pain, but rather to recognise it and say to you that each affected person—the mothers, the fathers, grandparents, siblings and families—are each greatly valued. We acknowledge the trauma you have experienced then and since. We offer this sincere apology and wish you and your families healing and peace.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

MOTION

Order of Business



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (2.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business order of the day No. 2 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GASFIELDS COMMISSION BILL

Introduction



Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish the Gasfields Commission. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Gasfields Commission Bill 2012 [\[1713\]](#).

Tabled paper: Gasfields Commission Bill 2012, explanatory notes [\[1714\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Gasfields Commission Bill 2012. I am introducing this bill today to finalise our government's election promise to establish a Queensland GasFields Commission and to provide it with appropriate powers to address community disaffection and the conflict between the agricultural industry and the resources industry. The Newman government has made a firm commitment to improve coexistence between those two important pillars of our economy, agriculture and mining. Establishing the GasFields Commission and providing it with those appropriate powers shows that the Queensland government is moving quickly to achieve better coexistence between onshore gas development and agriculture. We hope this will ensure that we get the best outcome from both of those important industries.

The commission itself has been hard at work since 1 July. This bill formalises its formation and provides it with the powers it requires to undertake the work that we believe it can do. Work already commenced includes conducting an audit of water related science and research activities on CSG; providing advice, guidance and direction on the draft CSG water management policy; undertaking analysis of key elements of the land access review related to improving coexistence; and significant engagement on ground with landholders and industry.

The bill establishes the GasFields Commission as an independent statutory body. It is not an arm of government. It is a stand-alone entity that can provide impartial direction, advice and recommendations to government and industry. The commission consists of the chairman and six commissioners, who will be tasked with setting the direction for the commission and working closely with rural landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry. The commission will review regulations and identify whether legislation needs to be changed. It will provide advice and recommendations to government and it will be a conduit for providing unbiased information to the community. Also, it will bring parties together to resolve issues, partner with other bodies to undertake research where an identified need exists and convene advisory panels as needed.

The GasFields Commission is not just an advisory body. It has the teeth it needs to get the job done. This bill is about ensuring that it has the appropriate powers. The commission can compel government agencies to provide advice and information. This will give the commission the ability to get the evidence it needs to properly understand the issues and make informed recommendations about how coexistence can be improved.

The bill that I am introducing today requires government agencies to consult with the GasFields Commission when developing policy and legislation relevant to the onshore gas industry. That requirement in the bill will be supported by administrative arrangements that ensure that the commission has a say in shaping relevant policies and legislation.

Under the terms of this bill, the GasFields Commission will also have the power to compel information from landholders, gas companies and other entities such as contractors. I considered this advice from commissioners and agree that this power is required to ensure that all necessary evidence would be available for the commission to perform its functions. The compulsory disclosure of all information ensures that the commission will have a complete understanding of any contentious issue and the bill provides that a penalty will be imposed for failure to comply.

The bill that I introduce today also provides for the Gasfields Community Leaders Council, a group made up of senior leaders from agricultural and community groups, local and state government and the CSG industry. This group provides a wider community representation to the GasFields Commission and will ensure that the commissioners' ideas are calibrated and community priorities are met.

The bill that I introduce today is unique in that it has been built from the ground up. It was shaped by landholders, community groups and industries. It was shaped by 55 submissions that were received during community consultation earlier this year. The chairman of the GasFields Commission, John Cotter, and the other commissioners have carefully reviewed all of those submissions, which have provided feedback and input. They have advised me of the functions and powers that the commission needs to get the job done. This bill is a compilation of what the community said was needed to ensure that the GasFields Commission not only was set up but also had the powers necessary to do the job. I thank all of those community representatives for speaking strongly and helping to shape this new body and for their input into the bill that I introduce into the House today.

Delivering legislation to support the work of the GasFields Commission was in the government's six-month action plan for Queensland. Today, once again, we deliver on our promise. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.36 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 133, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

QUEENSLAND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION BILL

Introduction



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.36 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish the Queensland Mental Health Commission and for related purposes, and to amend this act, the Mental Health Act 2000 and the Public Service Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012 [[1715](#)].

Tabled paper: Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1716](#)].

Each year one in five Queenslanders experiences a mental illness, including substance use disorders, and almost one in two will experience it in their lifetime. Disadvantage and social exclusion caused by illness are often more disabling than the illness itself. This impacts on issues of housing, education, employment, criminal and youth justice, and child protection. This disadvantage and social exclusion also significantly impacts on carers, families and support persons. Clinical and other human services provided to people with mental health and substance misuse issues are often difficult to access and navigate and are often poorly integrated. The creation of the Queensland Mental Health Commission will provide for greater cooperation across government and non-government sectors; greater coordination and transparency of clinical services and other human services; promotion of evidence based policy and practice; increased focus on outcomes, recovery, social inclusion and community wellbeing; enhanced focus on promotion, illness prevention and early intervention; and better targeting of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

The main function of the commission will be to develop a whole-of-government strategic plan for the improvement of mental health and limiting harm associated with substance misuse. This strategic plan will be used to guide funding, policy setting, service development and delivery; guide relevant government and non-government agencies in performing functions; aid the Director-General of Queensland Health as the system manager for public health systems in negotiating service agreements with hospital boards; and function as a cornerstone of a shared reform agenda. Achievement of wide-

scale reform requires systematic and collaborative approaches with different agencies that provide different services across lifespan and consumer journey, all working together. The bill will include a number of reporting and reviewing mechanisms to ensure that government departments are appropriately engaging with the commission and supporting the implementation of the strategic plan. The bill will also establish the Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Council to advise the commission on mental health and alcohol and other drugs issues.

The advisory council will be a key mechanism through which stakeholders will engage with and influence the commission. I acknowledge the support from stakeholders and the community in the development of this legislation and thank those participants in the recent consultation program for their valuable input and contributions. It is this cooperation and support from throughout government and the community that will underpin the commission's success in building and enhancing integrated and accessible mental health and substance abuse services across Queensland.

Two recent incidents of forensic patients absconding from The Park high-security program whilst on limited community treatment highlighted insufficient capacity in the Mental Health Act to effectively and immediately deal with incidents that suggest a system issue. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Mental Health Act to rectify the shortfall and to support the role of the director of mental health in administering the act by providing a power to suspend limited community treatment and investigate incidents which suggest a risk to a person or the public; to provide target conditions to the limited community treatment of forensic and classified patients to assist with safe reintegration into the community; and to enable the publication of identifying information about a forensic patient who has absconded from an authorised mental health service.

The amendments include a new power to provide the ability for the Minister for Health, if he or she forms the view that there is a significant risk to the life, health or safety of a person, or to public safety because of an incident or series of incidents, to direct the director of mental health to immediately undertake a review of the risk and determine any action that should be taken. Then the director, if he or she forms the view that there is a significant risk to the life, health or safety of a person, or to public safety because of an incident or series of incidents, may order a suspension of limited community treatment—or LCT—for a forensic, classified or section 273(1)(b) order patient or group of patients. The amendments also provide the authority for the director to review or require a review to be undertaken of treatment plans, approvals for limited community treatment and facility processes and protocols.

These new powers will provide the best opportunity to identify if there is an underlying problem at a facility that is facilitating or resulting in misjudging a risk of a patient absconding. A patient will be able to appeal to the Mental Health Review Tribunal if the patient believes that the director erred in forming a view that a significant risk existed or if the patient believed that the group of patients included under the suspension order was incorrectly defined.

The two incidents also highlighted the difficulties mental health facilities and the Queensland Police Service have in quickly locating and returning forensic patients who have absconded. Consequently, the amendments will build on existing provisions to provide for more specific conditions to enable monitoring of a patient's location while on LCT. These monitoring conditions may be applied by the director of mental health, or an appropriate delegate, and will only be applied where the decision maker considers that there needs to be greater monitoring of a patient's whereabouts whilst on LCT. The monitoring conditions will only be permitted to be placed on LCT for forensic, classified and section 273(1)(b) order patients.

Scenarios that may indicate a greater need to monitor the whereabouts of a patient on LCT may include when a forensic patient who has not had much LCT previously or has only had escorted LCT transitions to unescorted LCT for the first time. Monitoring conditions are to be considered as regular conditions under the act and will therefore be subject to review by the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Finally, the bill eases a current prohibition on publishing identifying information about a forensic patient, which inhibited the police's ability to advise the community or receive assistance from the community to locate the recent two patients that absconded. It is currently an offence to publish such information. The bill adds a defence to this offence if the publication is considered to be in the public interest by the chief executive of the health department. This defence requires a public interest determination and therefore does not undermine the original purpose of the offence which is to protect forensic patients from unnecessary and unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

In exercising any of the new powers, the director of mental health will still be bound by the stringent protections already in the Mental Health Act, which include that the director is required to ensure the protection of involuntary patients' rights as far as reasonably practicable and that any adverse impact on a person's rights or liberties must be the minimum necessary and there must be no less restrictive means available. I would also like to stress that these amendments will only impact on patients who are forensic, classified or section 273(1)(b) order patients and will have no impact on other involuntary patients being cared for in the mental health system.

The intention of these amendments is not to interfere with the treatment of patients with a mental illness, but rather to add an extra set of safeguards to make sure that the use of limited community treatment supports patient care without placing the community at risk. The principles of the Mental Health Act seek to find a balance between the need to provide a safe and effective environment for the treatment of involuntary patients and their reintegration into the community, and the safety and rights of others. These amendments attempt to assist that balance. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.46 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Child Protection Act 1999, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Forensic Disability Act 2011, the Health Act 1937, the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999, the Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Act 1998, the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Integrity Act 2009, the Public Health Act 2005, the Public Service Act 2008, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009, the Radiation Safety Act 1999 and the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, for particular purposes and to repeal the Dental Technicians Registration Act 2001, the Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999 and Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [1717].

Tabled paper: Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [1718].

Dental technology and speech pathology are the only remaining professions registered under the original Queensland health practitioner registration scheme. All other health professions previously registered in Queensland have now transitioned to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the health professions. These two professions have not met the criteria for national registration under the national scheme and Queensland is the only state to register them. Aside from a short time in the Northern Territory, no other Australian jurisdiction has registered speech pathologists. Jurisdictions that registered dental technicians abolished registration by 1 July 2010, after it was determined that this profession would not be transitioning to the national scheme.

When considering these professions for national registration, the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council deemed dental technicians and speech pathologists to have either a very low or no risk to the public and the cost of regulation therefore outweighed any possible benefits to the public. Continued registration of these professions in Queensland is therefore inconsistent with the principles of national registration and is out of step with other Australian jurisdictions.

The scheme also adds a regulatory burden to dental technicians and speech pathologists, who are required to pay for registration to practise their profession in Queensland. In other states and territories, these professionals may practise without these regulatory costs. Abolishing registration will improve workforce mobility by removing the need for interstate dental technicians and speech pathologists to register in Queensland before being able to practise their professions in this state.

The bill repeals the Dental Technicians Registration Act 2001, the Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001 and the Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999. The repeal of these acts will abolish the registration boards for dental technicians and speech pathologists and the Office of the Health Practitioner Registration Boards, which provides administrative support to the boards.

Amendments to the Health Practitioner (Professional Standards) Act 1999 will rescind the provisions that relate to dental technicians and speech pathologists and leave in place, with necessary amendments, the provisions that will continue to apply to professions regulated under the national scheme. Consequential amendments are also being made to Queensland legislation to provide alternative definitions or remove references to the registration of dental technicians and speech pathologists.

This bill is consistent with the government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden and red tape. It is not a statement about the importance of these two professions within the health system. Both speech pathologists and dental technicians play vital roles in the integrated delivery of health care to Queenslanders. I acknowledge that they comprise dedicated and skilled health practitioners whose involvement in healthcare provision is essential for ensuring comprehensive care. Cessation of the registration system merely removes the regulatory burden that is placed on members of these professions. It does not impact on their role or importance within our health services. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.52 pm): I move—
That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.

ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Introduction



Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.52 pm): I present a bill for an act to adopt in Queensland a national law relating to electronic conveyancing and to amend this act, the Land Act 1994 and the Land Title Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 [[1719](#)].

Tabled paper: Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1720](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill into the House. The provisions contained in this bill will apply the Electronic Conveyancing National Law as a law of the state of Queensland and is an important step in Queensland's participation in a national electronic conveyancing system. The implementation of national e-conveyancing is a reform which will provide significant efficiencies in conveyancing practice with benefits for Queensland businesses and the general public.

Queensland has a secure and highly effective system of registered title to freehold land known as the Torrens system. The Torrens system is internationally recognised as being the best and most efficient system of land titling. It is a system of 'title by registration' where the state-maintained register records all legal interests that exist on individual land titles. Those registered interests are backed by a state guarantee of title.

Since 1994 the freehold land register in Queensland has been kept in electronic form. This means that documents prepared in paper form are converted to electronic files to allow faster and more efficient processing for registration as well as efficiencies in searching the register and retrieval of documents. National e-conveyancing will extend the benefits of this efficient electronic processing as it will allow documents to be prepared in electronic form and lodged directly into the electronic register.

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments included the implementation of national e-conveyancing as one of the reforms directed at delivering a seamless national economy. This recognises that many financiers and businesses operate across Australia and that persons or businesses in any part of Australia may be dealing with a financier, or transacting with land, situated in another state or territory.

The e-conveyancing system will provide an online 'hub' through which documents needed for land conveyancing, such as mortgages and transfers, can be digitally prepared, signed and lodged directly into the electronic land register. This system may be used as an alternative to the paper based process. However, the paper process will continue to be available for private persons as well as solicitors and financiers. Use of the e-conveyancing system will be entirely voluntary.

Financial settlement and payment of relevant duties and lodgement fees will also be possible through the e-conveyancing system. However, the state is not involved in regulating the financial settlement aspect of land transactions.

I stress that e-conveyancing is only a system for document preparation and lodgement. There will be no change to substantive land laws and the Queensland Torrens freehold land register will continue to be maintained under the laws of this state.

The efficiencies and savings in e-conveyancing will arise from maximising the use of electronic facilities in the conveyancing process. There will no longer be a need to check paper transfers and mortgages against title searches, as documents created in the system will be checked automatically through an interface with the electronic register.

There will be no need to obtain bank cheques for settlement and no need for financiers and solicitors to arrange physical attendance at a settlement because settlement payments will be made electronically. This will result in time and cost savings in conveyancing transactions for the benefit of the legal practitioners, clients and financiers involved. In addition to these savings, e-conveyancing settlements will not fail because of errors or discrepancies in documents or bank cheques.

As a direct result of these changes there will be greater certainty in this process. Settlements will be successfully completed at the arranged time, avoiding the disappointment, inconvenience and extra expense that some people experience when a settlement 'falls through' or is delayed because of minor errors in cheques or documentation.

The efficiencies will be further enhanced as the system will operate nationally so that documents can be prepared and lodged in the registers of any state or the Northern Territory. For example, where a Queensland resident sells a property in Western Australia and borrows from a bank based in Victoria to buy a property in Queensland, the bank and representatives for the buyer and seller will all be able to log in to the same electronic workspace to create and digitally sign documents, verify information about the properties and certify that everything is in order for settlement. Settlement will then take place through the system at the appointed time, followed by lodgement of the documents in the two relevant state land registries. This means that parties in three states will be able to transact without the use of interstate agents or the need to mail documents for signature.

E-conveyancing will be implemented in phases, being progressively 'rolled out' in participating jurisdictions, commencing with a limited range of transactions in Victoria in early 2013. These transactions, which are the release of mortgages and new mortgages, are planned to commence in Queensland in the second half of 2013. The next phase will introduce a greater range of transactions, including transfers, and should be available in Queensland by late 2014.

Nationally consistent legislation is required for e-conveyancing to operate effectively. All jurisdictions have an electronic transactions act which facilitates many electronic transactions, but these acts do not apply to conveyancing transactions which have traditionally had particular requirements for the signing and witnessing of documents. It was not possible to satisfy these requirements electronically. The participating jurisdictions have agreed on the terms of the national law required for e-conveyancing and have agreed that the national law will be first enacted in New South Wales, as the host jurisdiction, before its adoption in other states and territories.

This bill adopts the national law as its core, supported by amendments required to align it with Queensland land titling legislation. The bill will allow the registrar of titles to authorise the operation of an electronic lodgement network and provides that documents lodged into the freehold land register via such a network will be processed in the same way and have the same effect as paper documents. Further, the registrar would be authorised to set requirements which the operator must comply with and rules which users or 'subscribers' to the system must comply with. Registrars across Australia are developing a common set of requirements and rules, and will apply these in their respective jurisdictions.

Because of the stringency of the rules for subscribers, it is expected that only financial institutions and legal practitioners will be able to become subscribers to the system in Queensland. Financial institutions will conduct transactions on their own behalf and legal practitioners will represent clients and digitally sign documents on their behalf. Under the participation rules, subscribers will be required to create digital signatures using digital certificates which comply with the Australian government's secure 'gatekeeper' regime. The rules and requirements established in the bill are necessary so that Queensland businesses and the public can have confidence in the e-conveyancing system and to

ensure the continued security and integrity of the Torrens freehold land register. The rules also recognise that allowing solicitors to sign on behalf of their clients in this new environment requires new measures to ensure that dealings with land interests have been properly authorised.

The bill also amends the Land Title Act 1994, which provides the legislative framework for the Torrens system of freehold land title in Queensland. The Land Title Act prescribes requirements for document preparation and related matters which until now have applied to paper documents. The amendments will ensure that those requirements are satisfied for electronic documents lodged under the national law. The amendments also provide for a rendered image of the digital document to be used for certain purposes—for example, when a copy of a registered document is required.

Similar amendments are made to the Land Act 1994, which contains provisions for documents and registers relating to non-freehold land tenures, such as leases, from the state. Initially, national e-conveyancing will not cater for non-freehold land dealings. However, these amendments are being made to keep consistency with the provisions for freehold land and with a view to the possibility of non-freehold transactions being included later.

This bill delivers on the Newman government's commitment to streamlining processes in relation to land tenure. We are simplifying, streamlining and cutting red tape to make it easier for businesses and individuals to do business in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (3.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (MOTOR VEHICLE IMPOUNDMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (3.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Corrective Services Act 2006 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of the act mentioned in the schedule. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Motor Vehicle Impoundment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [1721].

Tabled paper: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Motor Vehicle Impoundment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [1722].

I am pleased to introduce the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Motor Vehicle Impoundment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill fulfils the government's commitment to introduce the toughest anti-hooning laws in the nation.

This bill amends chapter 4 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. This chapter provides two schemes for the impoundment and forfeiture of motor vehicles—namely, the type 1 and type 2 vehicle impoundment schemes. The type 1 vehicle impoundment scheme applies to a range of traffic offences commonly associated with hooning. The type 2 vehicle impoundment scheme applies to offences such as unlicensed and unregistered driving. This government has recognised the community's concerns about hoon drivers and has acted to address this menace.

This bill increases the impoundment sanctions for type 1 offences to 90 days impoundment for a vehicle used to commit the first offence and forfeiture of the vehicle if another type 1 offence is committed within five years. This bill includes 'evade police' and 'high end speeding' as type 1 and type 2 vehicle related offences respectively. The nature of these offences warrants inclusion into the vehicle impoundment schemes and highlights this government's commitment to stop inappropriate driving behaviour.

The bill also increases impoundment sanctions for the type 2 vehicle impoundment scheme. The new impoundment and forfeiture sanctions will be:

- a seven-day impoundment period when a second type 2 vehicle related offence is detected;
- an automatic 90-day impoundment upon the detection of a third type 2 vehicle related offence within five years; and
- automatic forfeiture of the vehicle used to commit a fourth or subsequent type 2 vehicle related offence within five years.

The bill will also improve the operational and administrative efficiency of the type 1 and type 2 vehicle impoundment schemes. Both impoundment and forfeiture processes will operate administratively rather than through a court application. Currently, for a vehicle to be impounded for three months or forfeited to the state, an application must be made to a court for an order that a vehicle be impounded or forfeited. By allowing vehicles to be impounded or forfeited automatically, considerable savings for both the police and the courts are made through:

- reducing the time taken by police officers in preparing court applications; and
- reducing court time required to consider applications.

There is a range of other amendments in this bill that provide for more efficiency savings. For instance, traffic infringement notices will be allowed to be issued to offending drivers rather than restricting the vehicle impoundment scheme to proceedings normally started by a notice to appear or an arrest. This allows a defendant to elect to pay the fine rather than appearing in court and results in productivity savings for both the QPS and the courts.

This bill also gives police officers more flexibility in the way that they can deal with vehicles used to commit impoundment offences. Currently, impounded motor vehicles can only be towed and stored at a holding yard. This does not work for regional areas that have no tow trucks or holding facilities to store impounded vehicles. This bill provides police with a number of alternative impoundment options including:

- clamping;
- removal of number plates; and
- the issue of vehicle production notices

These options allow impoundment sanctions to be applied regardless of the differing circumstances that may exist across Queensland.

Another improvement made by this bill focuses on the release of motor vehicles that have been impounded by police. To mitigate concerns that some members of the community may have about the impact of automatic impoundment and forfeiture, the bill provides a mechanism whereby the usual driver or owner of an impounded or immobilised vehicle may apply to the commissioner for its release in certain circumstances.

The commissioner has five business days to decide if a vehicle should be returned to an applicant, allowing vehicles to be returned to persons in appropriate circumstances and within reasonable timeframes. An aggrieved applicant may appeal the commissioner's decision not to return an impounded vehicle.

Finally, the bill amends the Corrective Services Act 2006 by providing that remanded prisoners may only be classified as maximum or high security. This reduces red tape and aligns with the Department of Community Safety's commitment to redirect resources to front-line services.

This bill sends the strongest message to those hooners who think they can use our roads as a racetrack. If you are a hoon, police will impound your vehicle. Police will clamp your car. If you still don't get the message that hooning on our streets is unacceptable, police will crush your car. The community has had enough and this government will protect Queenslanders by taking hooning vehicles off our roads. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (3.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

GOLD COAST WATERWAYS AUTHORITY BILL

Resumed from 30 October (see p. 2189).

Second Reading



Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (3.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its consideration of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. The committee considered the policy merits of the bill and its consistency with fundamental legislative principles. Following detailed consideration of the bill, the committee recommended that the bill be passed without amendment. The government is very pleased with the committee's recommendation. This further supports our aim to involve the local community in decision making to ensure Gold Coast waterways are managed for the benefit of locals, boaties, fishers and tourists in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

The principal objectives of this bill are to promote partnerships between government and the Gold Coast community to improve access and infrastructure for Gold Coast waterways; ensure government policies and programs are aligned with community needs and expectations; and promote the sustainable use and development of Gold Coast waterways for a range of maritime industries, tourism and recreational activities. The bill also paves the way for new high-quality, safe and modern designed, power-assisted bicycles to be used in Queensland and repeals two pieces of obsolete legislation.



Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. At the outset I want to state that the opposition will not be opposing this legislation. However, I do want to make some comments regarding the proposed structure and operation of the new Gold Coast Waterways Authority, or GCWA. The bill also repeals two pieces of redundant legislation and alters the definition of a bicycle in the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to allow for regulations to allow pedelecs, a type of electric bicycle, to be authorised for use in Queensland. I will talk more about these additional amendments later, but I want to begin by discussing the past management of the Gold Coast waterways.

The waterways on the Gold Coast are one of Queensland's best natural assets. We are blessed to have such a beautiful recreational waterway on our doorstep. The Gold Coast waterways are extremely popular with local boaties as well as with people from right across South-East Queensland and northern New South Wales who visit the Gold Coast to enjoy them. The report of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, the THLGC, as well as the submission from Marine Queensland highlighted the popularity of the Gold Coast waterways and the significant levels of ownership of recreational watercraft on the Gold Coast. The marine industry is also an important part of the Gold Coast's economy because it is a base for recreational boating. That high level of use of an environmental asset requires careful management.

The first incarnation of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority was established by the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 1979. It operated until it was abolished in 1990. In 2010 the previous Labor government established the Gold Coast Waterways Steering Committee, which brought together state government, Gold Coast City Council and the boating industry peak body, Marine Queensland, for a collaborative approach to the management of the waterways. It is now proposed that the steering committee will be replaced by a modified and less powerful version of the old Gold Coast Waterways Authority. Before I talk about the structure of the new Gold Coast Waterways Authority, I want to talk about its proposed powers.

The Gold Coast Waterways Authority will be responsible for developing a Gold Coast waterways strategy and, pursuant to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, managing public marine facilities and the use of waterways within its area of jurisdiction, which is the waterways within the Gold Coast LGA. The GCWA will be responsible for exercising certain functions under the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, including setting up and maintaining aids to navigation; maintaining the whole Gold Coast waterways network; monitoring and managing the operation and activities of ships; and monitoring and managing abandoned, stranded, sunk or wrecked ships. Additionally, the GCWA will be responsible for exercising certain functions under the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, including dealing with the discharge of ship sourced pollutants into coastal waters, the provision of reception facilities and the recovery of discharge expenses.

The re-established GCWA will also be responsible for deciding on projects for the state government's ongoing dredging program. The GCWA will be responsible for the collection of certain levies including regulated and non-regulated fees, and all moneys collected will be paid into the consolidated fund. The new GCWA will not be responsible for planning approvals or development assessments for waters and land adjacent to the foreshore other than as a concurrence agency under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. I will talk in more detail about the planning powers of the new GCWA in a moment, but it is illustrative to compare the new GCWA with the old GCWA as well as the Gold Coast Waterways Steering Committee that was established by the previous government in 2010.

During the THLGC hearing, the departmental representatives noted that there were two significant differences between the old authority and the new proposed GCWA. Those two key differences were that the new GCWA has more limited planning and development approval powers and less power to raise its own revenue. The old authority was the assessor for relevant development applications within its area. That power will not be granted to the new GCWA. The Gold Coast City Council will remain the development assessor under the Sustainable Planning Act. However, as I noted earlier, the GCWA will be a concurrence agency for development applications relating to waters or land adjacent to the foreshore within the Gold Coast LGA. Labor believes that this is an appropriate change. As the GCWA is an unelected body, it is more appropriate that the GCC continue to exercise its power as development assessor. I note that Marine Queensland, in its submission, argued that the GCWA should be the lead agency for development assessments. However, Labor believes that empowering the GCWA as a concurrence agency gives the appropriate amount of power to the GCWA over development applications.

The previous Labor government had established a Gold Coast Waterways Steering Committee under a memorandum of understanding in 2010. The three parties to the memorandum of understanding were the Gold Coast City Council; the state, represented by DTMR, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, and DERM, the old department of environment and resource management; and Marine Queensland, the peak industry body. The steering committee was supported by three working groups. Each comprised representatives of the parties to the memorandum of understanding. One group assessed dredging; the second addressed destinations, access and management; and the third group assessed marine industry planning and major development projects.

Dredging on the Gold Coast is always a controversial topic as it is throughout Queensland. The dredging of tidal waters is often required year after year at great expense as the natural tidal flow of water leads to the accretion of sand in waterways. The Gold Coast waterways access needs study of 2008, conducted by the previous government, identified approximately \$18 million in capital works and \$9 million in maintenance dredging to establish the recommended channel network on the Gold Coast with an ongoing requirement of approximately \$3 million thereafter to maintain the network. Under the MOU of the steering committee, indexed funding of \$2.5 million annually was available for the dredging program which was contributed to by both council and the state government. It is worth noting that, in 2010, 98 per cent of boats registered on the Gold Coast could navigate the existing channels. The constant claims for further dredging came from the owners of superyachts, or two per cent of vessels, who could not navigate the channels at low tide only. The value of the steering committee was that it brought industry, government and council together to provide cooperative solutions. It is worth considering whether that model for managing the Gold Coast waterways was really such a failure, as the LNP seeks to claim.

There are some positive aspects of the steering committee model that will be lost when the new GCWA is established. The steering committee had representatives on it from the Gold Coast City Council and Marine Queensland, the peak industry body. Although the new Gold Coast City Council will be represented on the board of the new GCWA by the new Gold Coast mayor, the formal working relationship with Marine Queensland will not continue. Additionally, I think the wider involvement of government departments can bring different perspectives to the management of the Gold Coast waterways. That is why the previous government steering committee had representatives from DEEDI, DERM and DTMR involved in the management of the waterways.

The new LNP government seems to view consultation as a form of weakness, not a strength. It has certainly shown through its decisions to date that it has adopted an attitude that it has an unlimited mandate and that it knows best. The claim by the Premier that the LNP would govern with grace, dignity and humility rings hollow and appears to be nothing more than spin, as we saw earlier today. This government does not want to hear from anybody who might have a different opinion. Witness the member for Condamine. Witness the member for Yeerongpilly. They do not want to listen to experts or science or evidence; they view intellectual rigour and evidence based policy as a waste of time and an impediment to them exercising their massive majority. That is why they do not consult widely. That is why they do not pause to reflect on how their decisions will impact on all Queenslanders, not just now but also into the future. That is why they will establish the new Gold Coast Waterways Authority without any significant input or involvement from any other agency.

I will now discuss the structure of the proposed GCWA. The new GCWA is being established as an independent statutory authority. The GCWA will have a CEO, its own staff and a seven-member board. The CEO will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the authority and its operations. I understand from evidence given to the THLGC inquiry into the legislation by Marine Safety Queensland's executive director, Captain Patrick Quirk, that 16 existing MSQ staff on the Gold Coast will transfer from DTMR to the new Gold Coast Waterways Authority. The remaining MSQ staff on the Gold Coast will perform core safety activities such as marine licensing, monitoring of safety standards and auditing.

The GCWA CEO and staff will be directed by a board of seven members. The board will be chaired initially by former Gold Coast mayor Gary Baildon. The current mayor of the Gold Coast will also have an ex officio seat on the board. The remaining five members of the board will be appointed by the government. The board has the power to make its own decisions subject to this legislation and its terms of reference, but it will also be subject to direction from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

When I look at the structure for the new GCWA, I am frankly surprised that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads has chosen this structure. We know that recently the government abolished an independent statutory authority that oversaw the delivery of public transport services in South-East Queensland. During the debate of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, and even three months ago, the minister railed against the duplication that he claimed to be able to see in the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The minister beat his chest and confected mock outrage when he announced to the House that there was one government body overseeing public transport services outside South-East Queensland and a different body overseeing service delivery inside South-East Queensland. This, the minister said, was an example of wasteful duplication.

So we know that the test for wasteful duplication in government, as formulated by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, is: where two different government entities provide the same service in different parts of the state then wasteful duplication is occurring and must be stopped. Unfortunately, the argument that the minister enthusiastically used against the TransLink Transit Authority is hollow and does not stand up to the slightest scrutiny. Applying the minister's logic, Ergon and Energex, which are two separate entities that distribute electricity in different parts of Queensland, are wasteful duplication. I am sure the government will quickly resolve this wasteful duplication by disposing of both Ergon and Energex as recommended by the recent report by the independent review panel on network costs.

If we again apply the test of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for wasteful duplication, we discover that health and hospital boards, which the LNP government expertly uses to outsource blame for its health cuts, are wasteful duplication. And, unfortunately, if we apply the test of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for wasteful duplication to the new GCWA, it fails abysmally.

The GCWA will discharge some but not all of the responsibilities normally exercised by Marine Safety Queensland. There will now be two different entities providing similar services in different geographical regions. In fact, we will now have MSQ staff on the Gold Coast dealing with core safety activities such as marine licensing, monitoring of safety standards and auditing, as well as the Gold Coast Waterways Authority exercising its powers, as I outlined earlier. Additionally, the executive director of MSQ confirmed during the THLGC hearing that the harbourmaster would also continue to exercise authority on the Gold Coast. Captain Quirk said at the hearing—

The functions of the harbourmaster, the responsibilities of the original harbourmaster based in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, will not be impacted. He already exercises at the appropriate time powers and responsibilities and duties, and that will continue unimpeded. There is a requirement in the bill for the harbourmaster to consult with the waterways authority in exercising those powers. That simply replicates the practices that the harbourmasters use now in facilitating safety outcomes in port corporations up and down the coast, all the way from Brisbane to Karumba. So the powers of the harbourmaster will not be impacted at all.

It is difficult to see how this is a significantly improved structure for managing the waterways on the Gold Coast and whether it is simpler, quicker or will result in better outcomes. The structure certainly fails the minister's own test for what constitutes wasteful duplication.

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads is being duplicitous when he talks about the virtues of giving more power to the GCWA to manage the waterways on the Gold Coast when at the same time he has abolished TransLink and lumped qconnect and TransLink together under one umbrella. The government is sending mixed messages by abolishing statutory authorities and decrying them as wasteful duplication on one day and creating new ones the next.

The THLGC report notes that the establishment of the GCWA will cost \$220,000. Ongoing additional operating costs will be more than \$650,000 a year for the next four years. The minister will likely stand up and say that the GCWA is different and not like TransLink because of the smaller sums of money involved. I say to the minister that if he really thinks that then he should take a look at himself and the government of which he is a part. He should look at the pettiness of the government in the way that it has cut small amounts of funding from NGOs, particularly neighbourhood centres, crisis centres and


recovery centres—even ones in the electorate of Yeerongpilly. They know how to make a small amount of money go a long way. They can help hundreds of Queenslanders for the amount of money we are talking about here. If the minister wants to try to excuse this small amount of money—\$30 million, which eclipses the small amount of money being asked from Queensland for the NDIS trial site—for the Gold Coast Waterways Authority or try to explain that it is somehow different, then he is welcome to try to run that argument but he will convince nobody on this side of the House. I doubt he will even be able to convince himself.

I want to address briefly the planning powers of the proposed Gold Coast Waterways Authority in the context of the proposed cruise ship terminal for the Gold Coast. There is a thorough discussion of this issue in the THLGC committee report, on pages 5 and 6. Suffice it to say, as a concurrence agency the GCWA would have a say in any development proposal involving a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast, unless the project was declared a significant project. Then responsibility for assessing it would be assumed by the Coordinator-General in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, which I assume the Deputy Premier would like very much.

The bill also repeals two pieces of redundant legislation which have been superseded, as the minister quite rightly identified earlier. The Australian Shipping Commission Authorization Act 1977 authorised the Commonwealth government to create the Australian Shipping Commission. The explanatory notes state that the Australian Shipping Commission was abolished in 1989 and the Australian National Line that replaced it was sold in 1999. As a result, the legislation serves no purpose and it is to be repealed.

The second piece of legislation to be repealed is the Brisbane River Tidal Lands Improvement Act 1927. This act refers to a weir on the Enoggera Creek that no longer exists. The explanatory notes state that modern planning laws have superseded the need for this act and the act has no application or use for current or future land development. As a result, the act is redundant and should be repealed. The opposition supports the repeal of these two pieces of legislation that no longer serve any useful purpose.

The bill also amends the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to replace the definition of 'bicycle' and 'motor vehicle' and inserts a new definition of 'power assisted bicycle'. The explanatory notes state that the definition of 'bicycle' will remain fundamentally the same but all matters relating to bicycles with auxiliary motors are moved to the new definition of 'power assisted bicycle'. In this bill the definition of 'motor vehicle' is amended to clarify that a power assisted bicycle is not a motor vehicle. This ensures that the requirement to hold a driver's licence will not apply to people using power assisted bicycles. I understand from evidence given to the THLGC hearing by departmental officials that after this bill is passed it is proposed that a regulation be made to allow bicycles meeting European standard EN 15194 to be used in Queensland. These bicycles are known as pedelecs. The regulation will also continue to prohibit bicycles with internal combustion engines and allow those with electric motors with a maximum power output of 200 watts. The opposition supports these changes and I look forward to seeing those regulations when they are made at a later date. To conclude, I again state that the opposition will not be opposing this legislation. However, we do have some concerns regarding the establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, as I have outlined in great detail. Further, we support the repeal of the Australian Shipping Commission Authorization Act 1977 and the Brisbane River Tidal Lands Improvement Act 1927.


 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (3.30 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak today to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. This bill will re-establish a Gold Coast Waterways Authority, which was abolished in 1980. Its re-establishment delivers on the government's commitment to return control back to the local community. The government will act to improve access to Gold Coast waterways by investing \$30 million to re-establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. The overarching goal is to help restore the Broadwater and surrounding Gold Coast waterways as a hub for recreational and tourist activity. The purpose of re-establishing the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is to provide the best possible navigational access, boating infrastructure and waterways management for the people of the area. The bill also repeals two obsolete acts—the Australian Shipping Commission Authorization Act and the Brisbane River Tidal Lands Improvement Act—and enables regulations to specify types of power assisted motorcycles which are approved or prohibited in Queensland.

A number of issues were raised, particularly the relationship between the proposed shipping terminal and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. The committee in its examination of the bill was told that the authority would not initially have an active role in the establishment of a cruise ship terminal as it will be a concurrence agency. This will occur through an amendment to the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009 that is programmed to occur in due course. As such, the authority will be able to provide input into the development process without displacing existing planning and environmental responsibilities across state and local government.

Under the current system, the Broadwater Marine Project, which includes the potential for a Gold Coast cruise ship terminal, could be declared a significant project by the Coordinator-General in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning under the State Development and Public

Works Organisation Act. The significant project status may, in all likelihood, result in the need for an environmental impact statement to be prepared. The environmental impact statement is evaluated by the Coordinator-General, with input provided by relevant concurrence agencies—for example, the authority. So the committee's recommendation is that it is satisfied that the Gold Coast water authority will not carry the prime responsibility for the planning and/or management of the cruise ship terminal and that the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is to be a concurrence agency in relation to this development on the Gold Coast waterways. Further, the committee is satisfied that the Gold Coast waterways will be able to satisfactorily incorporate the cruise ship terminal development project into its own vision planning processes and documents in an ongoing way.


Another issue that was raised—there were quite a number of issues raised—was the board composition. The board will be made up of a chairperson as an appointed member, the mayor of the Gold Coast City Council and five other persons, each also appointed members. The committee is satisfied that the proposed membership of the board as detailed in the bill is duly representative of the interests of the community and that autonomy from the Department of Transport and Main Roads is appropriate for this statutory body. I want to thank the committee for the work it did on this bill and also those who wrote submissions—and some of them were quite detailed—because they allowed us to have some good debate on this bill, so the bill was scrutinised in detail. The committee secretariat also did a good job and its eye for detail was very good indeed. The committee has recommended that this bill be passed, and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (3.34 pm): I rise to speak briefly on the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill. This bill delivers on a commitment from the government and continues to ensure this great state can deliver some great opportunities for residents and businesses. In terms of consultation, I remind the opposition that we went to the election on this issue and there was broad consultation right across the Gold Coast region. My colleagues from the Gold Coast all support this bill and understand that this was a commitment made throughout the election, so consultation was fairly broad and opportunities for residents and businesses are great.

To be frank, I knew very little about this subject prior to this bill being reviewed by our committee, but I am confident that this is a common-sense solution to a plethora of problems. As has been stated, the Gold Coast waterways are intrinsic to the social, environmental and economic fabric of the Gold Coast. There are approximately 260 kilometres of waterways which are experiencing growing use. Approximately 17 per cent of all vessels registered in Queensland use these waterways. This bill will legislate a common-sense approach to properly managing the future use of these waterways by bringing a focal point to draw together multiple agencies around a common strategy to ensure residents are properly consulted on the future use of the waterways. It just makes good sense. In my view, it is also good for business and the environment as the single focus will ensure a balance between future use and the environment.

The principal objectives of the bill as stated in the explanatory notes are important to restate. The first is to promote partnership between government and the Gold Coast community to improve access and infrastructure to the Gold Coast waterways. The second is to provide for localised decision making and control of Gold Coast waterways to ensure government programs are aligned with community needs and expectations. Again, how much more consultative can you be than that? The third is to ensure the Gold Coast community is represented in determining the priorities of the delivery of navigational access and boating infrastructure projects and the development of waterway management policies and legislation. Again, this is a consultative process. Finally, the fourth is to promote the sustainable use and development of Gold Coast waterways for a range of maritime, industry, tourism and recreational activities. Again, this is looking across the broad spectrum of a community looking at its capacity to generate income, looking at its capacity to enjoy itself and looking at its capacity to be environmentally sensitive to those issues.

This bill is yet again a great example of a government rolling its sleeves up and getting on with the job, ensuring a balanced, planned and deliberate approach to social, economic and environmental issues concentrated around the Gold Coast waterways. We have fantastic opportunities in this great state of Queensland and this government is cutting red tape and, in this instance, providing for real and broad consultation with residents who are able to have a real effect on these outcome and planning issues. Before I finish, I want to thank the secretariat of the committee. As I move on to serve on a different committee, I truly want to say that this group of ladies is fantastic and serve the state of Queensland incredibly well. I simply want to thank them. They work hard—they work awfully hard—and they bring balanced statements to our committee and I truly have appreciated working with them. All recommendations and comments in this committee report had unanimous support, and this bill has my support.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.38 pm): As the member for Broadwater, which is located on the beautiful Gold Coast, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill. I start by saying that I think it is very important that we remember that the waterways on the Gold Coast are indeed the jewel in our crown and, if I might be so bold—and I am

sure some of my Gold Coast colleagues may object and have different opinions—I would certainly suggest that the Broadwater itself is the most beautiful of all the waterways on the Gold Coast and it will certainly reap many benefits from the Gold Coast Waterways Authority.

I was pleased to hear that the Labor opposition members will be supporting this bill, because in the 20 years that they had to do something about the waterways they certainly did not support them then. So it is nice to see that they are finally listening to what the community wants and that they are joining the government in looking after our waterways and considering their future.

As the member for Kallangur rightly said, this was a commitment that we took to the electorate. I remember that day very well. It was 9 March. It was a beautiful sunny day on the Gold Coast—pretty much like every other day on the Gold Coast—and I had the great pleasure to host the now Premier at Harley Park at Labrador. I took him out onto the Broadwater, we had a look at the parlous state of our waterways and we announced what we might do to help return the waterways to their health. I was so pleased to be there that day when we said that we would commit \$30 million to this authority, when we said that we would give back to local people their voices.

One of the most important things about this authority is that it is independent of government. It is a common-sense solution that is giving back to communities their voices. It is giving them control over their own future. It is giving them control over what is effectively their property.

A couple of weeks ago when I was at an event I jokingly said that I wanted to learn how to sail. Someone said, 'That sounds like a fantastic idea.' But I said that I would have to get in pretty quick so that when I fell overboard I did not have too far to sink. I have no doubt that Gary Baidon, who is the chair designate of the authority, will do a fantastic job. The former mayor of the Gold Coast will be a great advocate for the Gold Coast community. He is one of the proudest Gold Coasters I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

I truly believe that this government is committed to returning autonomy to local communities. We have seen it with the establishment of the local health and hospital boards. We have seen the return of control to local schools. We have seen the return of control to local governments. This is just another step in this government saying to the community, 'We think you are the best people to make decisions about your assets.' I am so incredibly proud to be the member for Broadwater at a time when this government is returning control of the Gold Coast waterways to the local community. It is something that local people have been screaming out for for years.

Conservative governments in this state have long been of the belief that the people of the Gold Coast community are the best people to decide the future of their waterways. As I said, I am so very pleased to be the member for Broadwater at a time when we have seen a common-sense approach and we are seeing local people get their voices back and be able to make some real decisions about the future of their waterways.

One of the great things that I think that we will see come out of the waterways authority is increased dredging in the Broadwater. That is something that has been of great concern to my community for many years. Indeed, when I delivered my maiden speech I spoke of the many times that I ran aground on a sandbar with my grandfather. As I said in my maiden speech, at that time I was naive enough to believe that that was all part of the experience. But as I have become a little bit older—and I would hope a little bit wiser—I have come to appreciate that that has nothing to do with the experience but everything to do with the tidal flow. As a government, one of the things that we need to do is make sure that there are authorities in place that have the power to make our waterways safer. One of the great things that will come out of this authority is the ability to make sure that navigational channels are safe. We can make sure that they are deep enough for all waterways users. Whether it is a super yacht or my next door neighbour's dinghy, every person who uses that waterway should have the right to use it with no risk to themselves or their watercraft.

Not only will we see the navigational channels become much safer, I have no doubt they will become a lot clearer. One of the things that this authority will be able to do is make sure that there are navigational aids, markers and buoys that are clearly visible to members of the Gold Coast community and those who use the waterways.

This bill is a great thing for the Gold Coast community. It is this government honouring its pledge. It is this government saying to the community, 'You deserve to have your voice back. We think you should have your voice back and here it is.' This is a great piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr SHORTEN (Algeria—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. The principal policy objective of the bill is to re-establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority in order to promote partnerships between government and the Gold Coast community to improve access and infrastructure for Gold Coast waterways; provide for localised decision making and control of Gold Coast waterways to ensure government programs are aligned with community needs and expectations; ensure the Gold Coast community is represented in determining the priorities for the delivery of navigational access and boating infrastructure projects and the

development of waterways management policies and legislation; and promote the sustainable use and development of Gold Coast waterways for a range of maritime industries, tourism and recreational activities.


A number of members have already gone through the details of the bill, so I will not go over that ground again. I would like to quote from the report, which I think sums up very clearly the objectives that this bill sets out to achieve. It states—

This bill really meets the government's commitment to re-establish the authority to look after the long-term interests of the waterways of the Gold Coast, and it will do that in a number of ways. One is by establishing the authority, which will have a CEO and a fully staffed office and will also be oversighted by a seven-member board. The authority will look after setting a 10-year strategy and direction for management and use of the waterways, and this will cover a number of areas. This will cover issues to do with dredging. It will cover issues to do with management and use of navigational aids. It will importantly also have to do with matters around access and use of the waterways. So the authority will have a key role both in direction setting for the management of the waterways but also some of the key aspects around day-to-day operation, and that will be, as I mentioned, anything from operating a sand bypass system around the dredging to collection of certain fees and levies and management of access and use. So that is the first and key objective of this bill.

As we have heard, this bill was an election commitment by the LNP and the LNP government delivers on its election commitments. We also believe that local communities are the best people to inform our decisions. That is why this bill is so important. It gives the local community a voice in those decisions.

I would like to thank the chair of the committee, Howard Hobbs, who has been a real leader for the last nine months of the committee. I appreciate his advice and the leadership that he has shown. I would also like to congratulate the member for Kallangur on his promotion to committee chair. I am sure that all members of our committee will miss him and his contribution to committee debates. As all members in this place know, committees would not operate without the secretariat. The ladies of our committee work extremely hard given the number of bills that come in front of them and the complexity of those bills. So I commend them for their hard work and I look forward to working with them again next year.

I would also like to commend the team from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, headed by Graham Fraine, who came before the committee and gave us a briefing. Their detailed knowledge of the bill and its implications were fundamental to the committee's understanding of what this bill is going to do. As the committee has recommended, I commend the bill to the House and look forward to it passing.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (3.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012, introduced by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. For me, being on the committee, the two objectives that this bill achieves is, firstly, in line with the government's commitment to reducing red tape and, secondly, to meet our commitment to re-establishing the authority to look after the long-term interests of the waterways of the Gold Coast.


This bill will re-establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, which was abolished in 1990 under Labor. This bill is all about this government keeping its promises and delivering on its commitment to returning control back to the local community, because we all know that the locals know best. The authority will operate at a reasonable cost to the community and the government. It will act as a local waterways manager. It will oversee the sustainable use and development of the waterways. It will achieve this without burdensome costs and excessive bureaucratic red tape, which burdens local businesses and the community.

This government is committed to growing a four-pillar economy which is key to Queensland's economic future. The operation of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is essential to support tourism which is one of our four economic pillars. Some 40,000 of the state's 240,000 registered recreational vessels are held by Gold Coast residents, with more than half of our registered recreational vessels in the state's South-East region. We can therefore draw from that that the Gold Coast is the national centre for the production of recreational craft. Much of this derives from the fact that the Gold Coast has extensive waterways and accessibility to the ocean which needs to be looked after. Our hardworking Gold Coast MPs will be able to tell you that after 20 years of Labor, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will be a welcome breath of fresh air to the Gold Coast region.

It is important that we get this right and that is why we need to ensure that the authority has the relevant powers and resources to do that job. That is why the operational functions formerly the responsibility of the department will now be transferred to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. That will include sand bypassing, dredging and infrastructure delivery and maintenance of the waterway management regulation; it will also include communication, correspondence and other corporate functions.

The Newman government is an accountable government. We believe in accountability in governance. Therefore, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will remain accountable to the people of Queensland. The authority will need to report quarterly to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads regarding its revenue and expenditure. In summary, the authority will review every four years to ensure it remains relevant and effective in improving the management of Gold Coast waterways.

In conclusion, I commend the committee secretariat for doing an outstanding job, as well as our chair Howard Hobbs. This bill keeps our promises and delivers on our government's commitment to return control back to the local community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.51 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of this bill. It is, of course, essential that we direct our thoughts and energies towards the future and the great opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. However, it is also important to recognise that the authority does not embark upon this undertaking using an untested or unproven management model. The simple fact is that the re-establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is really about the Gold Coast taking back the reins of a long acknowledged process of community representation and consultation. Indeed, we are very fortunate to have the calibre of representatives from the Gold Coast in this very chamber.

My confidence in the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is well grounded in appreciation that it will comprise a board of diverse backgrounds and skills uniquely suited to this ambitious undertaking. I believe that by identifying the right balance of attributes among its membership the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Board will manage and develop this natural asset according to the expectations and aspirations of the community that has entrusted them with this responsibility. The authority is based on a model which had already serviced the Gold Coast's unique interests with diligence, efficiency and vision. The Gold Coast's first waterways authority was established almost as an inevitable outcome of the region's exponential emergence as an iconic Australian tourist destination. Historically, the harbour authority for the Gold Coast area, as far south as the Nerang River, was the responsibility of the Port of Brisbane Authority and perhaps while the Gold Coast was a less well known collection of hamlets, being a little used stretch of sand, this arrangement may, in fact, well have suited back then. Australia's emerging identification with what we and the world now recognise as our beach culture meant that the Gold Coast was not going to languish in obscurity for long. Post-war prosperity, the baby boom and desire to get more out of our increasingly available recreation time all spelled opportunities for a forward-thinking Gold Coast community. Clearly, the Gold Coast's truly inspirational vision for the future could not unfold with its waterways management under the control of a remote bureaucratic entity more concerned with commercial port functions than a burgeoning recreational boating sector and so it was that in 1979 the first Gold Coast Waterways Authority came into existence established under specific legislation enacted for this purpose.

When the bill was introduced it was observed that the Broadwater-Nerang river system and other waterways south to the Queensland border were, without doubt, one of the state's and Australia's most popular recreational boating areas. Today, as has already been noted, more than half the state's registered recreational vessels are to be found in the state's south-east. The Gold Coast Waterways Authority's first annual report for the year ending June 1980 noted that in broad terms the authority faced a multiplicity of problems which were perhaps unique in Australia's waterways history. The board noted that the authority was on the doorstep of the City of Gold Coast, one of Australia's fastest growing regions, with enormous potential as a national and ultimately international tourist destination. These were prophetic words indeed, as the ensuing decade so convincingly demonstrated.

It is important also to note that the Gold Coast's extraordinary emergence as the world-class destination it has become was not simply due to a happy combination of climate and topography. A sense of purpose, optimism and aggressive business acumen have all played a part in this phenomenon, and guiding and supporting this was the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. The authority's roles and responsibilities included managing, controlling and planning for the future of waterways, foreshores and harbour works in defined areas extending from Russell Island south to Coolangatta. Specifically, these roles extended to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Gold Coast Seaway and sand bypassing system. This was a particularly pressing responsibility, as securing the spit from tidal and storm surge impact was critical to the long-term development of the region. The Gold Coast Waterways Authority's lasting achievement in securing the site through construction of a sea wall, channel dredging and a sand bypass program set the path for future development and was one of the authority's primary functions. In addition, the authority had responsibility for managing, controlling and planning the conduct of activities on the waterways. Activities were managed and controlled under by-laws made by the authority. These responsibilities, however, were abruptly terminated when the Gold Coast Waterways Authority was disbanded in 1990 by an incoming government that determined that the needs of the Gold Coast would be better served by devolving its functions to various government departments in line with arrangements elsewhere in the state. The decision, need I say, has been rightly questioned by business and community representatives ever since, especially as the authority's demise came just as it was finalising a masterplan for the Broadwater and all other waterways which could well have shaped its future for decades to come.

Critics of the decision to axe the authority reiterated the same argument they had made when they called for the creation of a Gold Coast Waterways Authority in the first place: the Gold Coast had unique requirements that could not be met by remote one-size-fits-all legislation and governance which typifies the approach that the Labor Party seems to adopt and can never seem to forget. These unique requirements particularly centred on the need for community driven and supported decision making,

capable of adapting quickly to take advantage of the Gold Coast's emerging position as a world-class player, particularly in tourism and marine industry. These two areas, so vital not only to Queensland but Australia's economic welfare, were left to languish and stagnate for two decades. This was in spite of increasingly urgent appeals from stakeholders only too well aware that the world economy was becoming increasingly competitive and they were being seriously disadvantaged.


It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest that the reintroduction of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is not just an election commitment fulfilled by the Newman government, but a wrong indeed righted. It is high time that the Gold Coast community's ability to determine its own best interest was given the recognition it deserves. It requires very little imagination, to look at the Gold Coast's extraordinary achievements in its rise from coastal inlet to international tourist destination, to appreciate how efficient and forward-looking the first incarnation of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Board has been. It requires even less imagination to appreciate how much more is waiting to be achieved by this recreated and reinvigorated board.

The new decade beckons and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is already preparing to map out an agenda for the best use and management of the region's greatest asset. Much is being said lately about the Asian century but there is little that will be a surprise to the Gold Coast which has long engaged with and welcomed visitors from all parts of the world. What has already been achieved is considerable and there are many opportunities to be explored and capitalised on by industries hungry for advancement and untrammelled by excessive red tape and remote bureaucracy.

The re-establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will create exceptional opportunities for the Gold Coast tourism industry by aligning waterways use and management with the requirements and expectations of visiting tourists. Thanks to a nationally and internationally acknowledged tourism destination, blessed with unparalleled natural attractions, the Queensland tourism industry is a major contributor to our economy and, indeed, one of our four essential pillars. In a tough world of economic truths, the Gold Coast remains Australia's premier tourist destination, attracting almost 12 million international visitors a year. They are drawn to the city because of its iconic natural attractions and it is supported by wide-ranging and well-established services. Many of those visitors are attracted to the opportunity to enjoy diverse maritime recreational pursuits.

Of course, this is an area where the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will play an important role, both leading through innovation and supporting through its advocacy. I mentioned how the first Gold Coast waterways authority immediately grasped the region's enormous potential as a national and international tourist destination. While much of that potential has now been realised, perhaps beyond even the expectations of the first board, there is neither time nor inclination to lower those expectations. The global economy is a tougher place and traditional tourism markets are shifting, so it makes perfect sense to look to the people with local experience and local knowledge to lay out the best way forward, based on local decision making and a 10-year plan. The Gold Coast community must have the necessary local decision-making powers to determine the long-term management of their waterways.

This government and the members from the Gold Coast area, in particular, share a belief in mutually beneficial partnerships with local government, business and the wider Gold Coast community. This government is in accord with the Gold Coast council's commitment to creating opportunities for stronger social, cultural and economic wellbeing through a strategic waterways plan. A strategic plan will provide an outline of the needs and priorities for the sustainable use, management and infrastructure requirements of the region's waterways and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is the way we will do this. Therefore, it is with great optimism and pride that I support and welcome the return to the Gold Coast of the waterways authority and the long-term viability and prosperity of the region it will serve. I thoroughly commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.02 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. The re-establishment of the authority will deliver on our government's commitment to return control back to the local community. Through the authority's re-establishment, the Gold Coast Broadwater and nearby waterways will no longer suffer from the previous Labor government's neglect. What a sorry saga of neglect we have seen over the past 15 to 20 years, since the abolition of the old waterways authority. As a former councillor with the Gold Coast City Council, I saw much of that neglect first hand. On many occasions we had to deal with issues where nobody really knew just who to go to when a problem or issue arose, or when a ruling was needed in respect of the Broadwater.

As a young child, I had the great pleasure of spending many idyllic afternoons, weekends and school holidays sailing on the Broadwater. I can remember my friends and I swimming across the Broadwater and back, in the days when there were not quite so many boats. We have heard from other speakers this afternoon that now there are some 40,000 registered recreational craft on the Gold Coast. Therefore, the appointment of this board could not have come soon enough. It will bring decent management back to our waterways. It will bring a more coordinated and combined community response, which has been long overdue. It is an absolute shame and a travesty that the former Labor government treated with so much contempt the Gold Coast and the communities that love and share the Broadwater and all that it has to offer.

I turn to some of the challenges facing the Broadwater. For many years we have heard about the issues of neglect in respect of dredging. There has been no consistent, coordinated or planned approach. There has not been a master plan, an ongoing plan or a plan in any way, shape or form for the dredging of the Broadwater. Very little has been done in terms of planning. Over many years all sorts of attempts have been made to bring a more coordinated response to the Broadwater, so that all of the groups that have an interest in it—all of the different organisations, communities members, businesses and industrial groups that want to use the Broadwater and share that space—can do so in a coordinated and appropriate manner.

Issues have arisen around fish habitat and the management of some of the breeding areas. Attempts have been made to bring in special marine zones. What did the previous Labor government do? Very little! Its strategy was simply to divide and conquer. It said, 'We'll create all sorts of entities, give different groups and individuals some sort of responsibility, we'll make sure that nobody really knows who is responsible for what and then we'll let them all fight amongst themselves.' It just sat back with arms folded and treated the Gold Coast and the Broadwater with the same contempt that we always saw from the tired old Labor government of the previous 20 years. That was an absolute travesty.


One of Queensland's and the Gold Coast's greatest assets deteriorated and suffered because of the lack of a coordinated approach. Not only did the Broadwater suffer; we have seen the loss of life on the Broadwater because of the approach of the previous government towards law enforcement, jet-ski management and boating behaviours. Labor's attitude was, 'We'll throw it up in the air and see which level of government and which organisation wants to take responsibility for appropriate behaviours on the Broadwater'. I remember very well in 2004, the residents of Deepwater Point came to see me. They said, 'Councillor, can you do something about jet-ski management and better control of our boat ramps on the Broadwater, because people are turning up at 4 am in the morning, revving their jet skis on the boat ramps and waking up people in the adjoining buildings'. There were no management controls. What did Labor do? It brought in a whole new set of licensing requirements for jet-ski drivers, but no rules around boat ramp behaviour or etiquette. It said, 'To police this better, we're going to make the jet-ski owners put bigger numbers on the sides of their jet skis, so that council law enforcement officers and local law officers can read the numbers from the shore and they'll be able to dob them in and issue some sort of an enforcement notice.' However, that enforcement notice had no real penalty attached to it and there was no ability to track down anyone. Labor said, 'If council wants to get involved in the process instead of the police, because we don't want to send the police out to manage these things, maybe we'll get some better outcomes on the Broadwater.'

We saw all manner of other crazy behaviours from the previous government around development controls. If you were creating a development upstream in one of the catchments that feeds into the Broadwater, who was responsible? Was that a council planning matter? Was that a matter for DERM? Was that a matter for the Broadwater management people, the fisheries people or the department responsible for marine issues? Was the Department of Agriculture supposed to control that? For the past 15 to 20 years, we have seen the addition of layer upon layer of bureaucracy, but no proper outcomes. Last year there was a debate about the issue of bag limits and whether there should be some sort of control around fishing. The previous government even talked about bringing in a special licence. The idea was that they would collect about \$13 million in fishing licence fees, they would waste about \$8 million or \$9 million of that on administration and then, somehow, miraculously, by licensing that and creating more layers of red tape and more layers of green tape, we would end up with more fish in the Broadwater. To my parliamentary colleagues and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I say: enough is enough.

I am absolutely delighted that our government has had the foresight, the passion and the stomach to make some good decisions. I believe that the reappointment of a proper authority—the authority that was removed inappropriately in 1990—will benefit the Gold Coast. It will benefit our tourism industry, it will make the Broadwater a much safer place and it will deal in a strategic, well-thought-out and appropriate manner with all of the issues around the management of the Broadwater. As we look to the future, hopefully in the authority we will have a group of people who have the commitment, the passion, the vision and the wisdom to make some really good decisions about the future use of our waterways.

The electorates of the member for Broadwater and the member for Coomera share boundaries with mine and we all have parts of the Broadwater that are part of our electorates. Our constituents are telling us that they want a better approach to the way the Broadwater is managed. They want the Broadwater protected and managed well for future generations. That will mean that my children, my grandchildren, their kids and future generations can enjoy the kind of upbringing that I had as a young child. I could go out and enjoy the best that the Broadwater had to offer. At the same time, it will provide great opportunities for employment, great opportunities for our city to prosper and great opportunities for the enhancement of our tourism and marine industries.

I commend this bill to the House. I congratulate the committee on the fine work that it did on the review of this legislation and the preparation of its report. I particularly want to wish former mayor Gary Baidon well as he moves to assemble a great group of local Gold Coast people who have a passion for the future of our city and work together to create a much better future for the Broadwater.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.10 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2012. I congratulate the minister for moving quickly to form the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. As far as the people of the Gold Coast and the people in the state seat of Coomera are concerned, it was the most important change needed. For as long as I have been a member of this House, and even before I became the member for Coomera, the people of the Coomera electorate, particularly those in businesses, were telling me that something had to be done about the waterways on the Gold Coast to create economic benefit for the Gold Coast.

Over the first 12 months that I was in office we saw something like 1,200 people lose their jobs in the Coomera precinct. Why? We can blame it on all sorts of things, but one of the reasons was that we could not get bigger boats up the Coomera River to be able to do work on them in the workshops in the Coomera marine precinct. I congratulate Gary Baidon on his appointment. What an excellent choice Gary Baidon is.

Mr Molhoek: Hear, hear!

Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection from the member for Southport. He will be the chair of this authority. The Gold Coast Broadwater has certainly been a passion of his. The locals who will come on board will also have a background and good knowledge of the local area.

I mention the importance of the Broadwater for the economic development of the Coomera electorate, in particular the marine precinct. The Coomera marine precinct is the biggest marine precinct of its kind in Australia, and perhaps the southern hemisphere. We can add to that the fact that we have one of the very few TAFE colleges that teaches marine studies in the Coomera marine precinct. We also have Horizon Shores a little further north. Once again, that is a very large marine precinct. I have had cause to visit Horizon Shores in recent times and have a look through the marina. I came to realise how many small businesses there are in the Horizon Shores area.

The Coomera marine precinct is set to grow with the addition of a huge development. There will be something in the order of \$400 million in investment. Those sorts of developments and those sorts of businesses need to know that they can travel through the Broadwater and they can bring super yachts in for repair. The owners of those super yachts spend millions and millions of dollars.

We have the iconic Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show coming up in May next year. It is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Members should be sure to come along to the 25th anniversary of the boat show.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr CRANDON: Yes, and for the second time we have just had the very successful boat show in the Coomera marine area. It was an expo. There were something like 2½ kilometres of walkways through many boat exhibitions and so forth. I was host on the afternoon of the first day to a Chinese delegation that had come to Queensland. The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games was pleased to open that boat show just a few weeks ago. It really was a fabulous event.

How far is the furthest point from the Broadwater to the M1? Let me tell members. Dreamworld is the iconic playground for many people from South-East Queensland, from the rest of Queensland and from Australia. People have enjoyed so many different events at Dreamworld. Dreamworld is so close to the Broadwater that the catchcry for one of the rides is: 'You can see the ocean if you open your eyes.' That is how high the rides go. You can see the ocean if you are game to open your eyes.

Let me talk about another exciting adventure that the minister responsible for the legislation was involved with. He came down to make a small announcement. We took him off to Dreamworld. We had our colleagues the member for Albert and the member for Broadwater with us as well. We went on the BuzzSaw to experience it. I have to tell members that I do not believe any of us had our eyes open to see whether or not the ocean could be seen from the BuzzSaw. It was a scary ride. In fact, one of us screamed like a girl.

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I am not going to say who it was. I am not going to dob anybody in. I will say it was not the minister because he will punish me later if I suggest it was him. You can see the ocean if you can open your eyes on that ride.

That brings me to another important issue concerning tourism on the Gold Coast and the attraction of the Broadwater. The newest Dreamworld experience is not in fact at Dreamworld. It is at Q1 at Surfers Paradise. Last Monday morning at 7.30 I had the pleasure of going for a climb at SkyPoint Climb. Imagine going to the top of Q1 on the Gold Coast—the tallest residential building in Australia—then going outside the building and then going up quite a few metres more. You are then about 280 metres off the ground.


Members might ask what this has to do with the Broadwater and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. Guess what? From there one can see all the waterways on the Gold Coast from as far north as Horizon Shores all the way down to Burleigh Heads and beyond to the border. I encourage all members to climb the SkyPoint Climb. We might even do a fundraiser next year. We could abseil off Q1 from the SkyPoint Climb. Why not try and do something like that? We could do a fundraiser for one of the organisations that we are so involved with.

I am proud to announce that SkyPoint Climb won the Queensland Tourism Awards category for new tourism development at a prestigious ceremony in Brisbane last Friday night. I had the pleasure a couple of days later to actually do that climb. I can tell members that it is well worth the effort. I encourage all members to go down to Q1 and do the climb. Whilst members are down there they should have a bit of a look around. They should make sure on the way back that they call into Dreamworld and ride the BuzzSaw and the tower to see whether they can see the ocean. They can see whether they are game to open their eyes. What was I going to mention next?

Mr Dempsey: The weather.

Mr CRANDON: We will not talk about the weather. It was absolutely wonderful weather on Monday morning. Thank you for bringing that to my attention, Minister. It was beautiful weather. We saw the storm clouds rolling in as we were going up. There were beautiful breezes as well.

But the important thing for us to remember is that there are 300 kilometres of canals alone on the Gold Coast—300 kilometres! It would take a long time to travel just the canals—forget about the rest of the Broadwater, forget about the rest of the waterways. So how important is it to have a Gold Coast Waterways Authority? It is absolutely imperative. I just want to reiterate the importance of it. Once again I congratulate the minister on the bill and I congratulate the committee on the effort that they put in in developing their report to assist in the completion of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.19 pm): By the look of it, I am the last Gold Coast member to rise to support the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill. This bill was referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, and that committee came back with one, and only one, recommendation—that is, that this bill be passed. We have already heard from other MPs on the Gold Coast and they feel exactly the same way: this bill should be passed. It is time for the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to get on with the work that the last government failed to do over the 20 years or so that it was in power.

This bill will re-establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, which was abolished in 1990, and is another way that the LNP government is empowering and returning control to local communities. We have already heard here today from the member for South Brisbane that she does not think there is much of a problem on the Gold Coast. I think she mentioned that 92 per cent of the boats on the Gold Coast have no issue with the depth of the Broadwater. As a local MP who spends a lot of time on the Broadwater and the waterways of the Gold Coast, I can tell the House that that is wrong. I am sure the other members from the Gold Coast who also thoroughly enjoy our beautiful waterways would agree.

The boating community on the Gold Coast has a saying. People will tell you that they have either run aground or that they have never run aground: those people who tell you that they have never run aground are not telling the complete truth. I can tell the House from firsthand experience, as my family had a boat for the last four or five years that we used extensively on the Broadwater—

Mr Crandon: Did you sink it?

Mr HART: No, I did not. But the Broadwater is extremely shallow in a lot of places and it is not unusual for boats to run aground in the middle of the channels in the Broadwater. I can name off the top of my head probably half a dozen places between Southport and Russell Island where a boat could run aground in the middle of a channel. That is really not acceptable and it is time we did something about that. The local boating fraternity on the Gold Coast would fully reinforce those sentiments.


On the Gold Coast—and I think we have already heard the member for Coomera mention this—we have one of the biggest boating shows in Australia. They have quite large boats there and it is not unusual for them when they are bringing yachts up from the seaway to Coomera to have to get on the side of the boat and lean the boat over so that the keel does not run aground. That happens even when they take those boats in on the highest of tide. They will look at the tide and they will go in in that 10-

minute period when the tide is about to turn. They will go in when the wind is blowing in the right direction. They will take all of those things into account, because it is not unusual for areas near Coomera to be 1½ to two metres deep. If you try to take any sort of boat through there, you are asking for trouble.

It is important to recognise, as other members have, that there are 42,000 registered boats on the Gold Coast. Any weekend you can cruise around the Broadwater and you will see those boats anchored up in every anchorage possible on the Broadwater. Unfortunately you will also see people who are not anchored up but who are hard and fast aground in many areas of that same Broadwater, and it is time we fixed that issue for the boating fraternity—after all, they are paying registration fees and they are supporting the boating mechanics on the Gold Coast. This whole industry is worth about \$420 million to Queensland's economy. It is not something that we can trivially set aside. We have to do something about this.

Also, it is important to recognise that the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will have purview over other waterways on the Gold Coast. In my electorate alone I have Tallebudgera Creek, and I know the member for Currumbin has Currumbin Creek in her electorate. There are severe dredging problems in both of those creeks. Those creeks are navigated by boats on a regular basis. It is not unusual to see 1,000 boats sitting out off Palm Beach Reef when the mackerel are running. Numerous boats have overturned on our bars, and that is exacerbated by the dredging of the channels in both Tallebudgera and Currumbin creeks. Minister Stuckey and I have attended many meetings with the Currumbin VMR. They are adamant that something has to be done about this, and this government intends to do something about it.

With those few words, I commend the minister for bringing this bill to this House in such a timely fashion. Gary Baidon will be, as other members have said, an excellent chairman of this authority. I know that he is waiting to get on with the job, a very important job—remembering of course that the boating industry has a big part to play in tourism on the Gold Coast as well. I know that Mr Baidon cannot wait to get on with the job, and the sooner this legislation passes through this House the better. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.26 pm), in reply: The Newman government continues to meet its election commitments by reinvigorating the Gold Coast waterways by establishing the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. For many years representatives of Gold Coast industry and community have asserted that they are the people best placed to make decisions that will deliver the best outcome for their unique, natural and economic requirements. The re-establishment of a Gold Coast Waterways Authority is a long overdue gesture of confidence in the ability of industry and community on the Gold Coast to work together to determine its own best interests.

This bill is about better Gold Coast waterways and much needed certainty for industry, local community and the many visitors who come to the area to enjoy an internationally recognised top tourist destination. The member for South Brisbane stated that the Gold Coast waterways are one of Queensland's best natural assets. I could not agree more. The purpose of re-establishing the Gold Coast Waterways Authority is to provide the best possible navigational access, boating infrastructure and waterways management for the people in the area. Meanwhile it will cut unnecessary red tape which burdens local businesses and the community.

Under the former Labor government, marine infrastructure on the Gold Coast was neglected, with no clear direction or long-term strategy. The authority will act as a local waterways manager. It will oversee the sustainable use and development of waterways. It will achieve this without burdensome costs and excessive bureaucratic red tape. The structure of the authority reflects the fact that we are giving control of Gold Coast waterways back to the Gold Coast. The board will include representation from the Gold Coast City Council and members with financial, communications, infrastructure, marine and environmental expertise.

The board will determine the best use of the \$30 million for the re-establishment of the authority including improving access to Gold Coast waterways through dredging, maintenance and navigational aids and consultation with local council on boating infrastructure. Further, the authority will absorb the Gold Coast Waterways Steering Committee, established in 2010. That relationship will continue. Some of the working groups are expected to be adopted by the authority to assist in developing a 10-year strategy and interim policy in an ongoing capacity.

It is good to see that the member for South Brisbane recognises the ongoing commitment of this government to reduce red tape by removing obsolete legislation from the statute book. I am also pleased to see that the member for South Brisbane supports the introduction of the pedelecs in Queensland. I would like to thank the member for Warrego for his support of this bill. The committee's consideration of the bill reinforces the value of re-establishing the authority. The member for Kallangur noted that this is a good opportunity for businesses on the Gold Coast, and I agree. It certainly is, as the authority will work to reduce unnecessary red tape. I would also like to thank the member for Broadwater for acknowledging the importance of returning the Gold Coast's most important assets back to the local community.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their contribution to the debate on the bill. Many of the members on the Gold Coast, my assistant minister for public transport—all cited that this was an election promise. We heard from the member for South Brisbane, who talked about a lack of consultation. Surely there can be no greater consultation than taking an election promise to the people and getting them to support it. The people on the Gold Coast and our members on the Gold Coast strongly support this bill.

In closing, I would also like to thank my ministerial staff and departmental staff for their hard work in bringing this bill to the House. As this is probably the last bill for the year, I thank them as a new minister for their guidance over the last seven months as well. I do appreciate that. I commend this bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 134, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.32 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. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.32 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.

WEAPONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 31 October (see p. 2302).

Second Reading



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (4.33 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for their examination of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The committee received two submissions, one from the Queensland Nurses Union and the other from the Queensland Law Society. The committee's report was tabled on 22 November 2012 and made two recommendations. The committee recommended that the bill be passed without amendment. The committee also recommended that I consider a proposal by the Queensland Nurses Union, through a separate review of the Weapons Act, to strengthen the protections for front-line workers in their place of work. The government supports both recommendations made by the committee. I now table the government's response to the committee report.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 17—Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [\[1723\]](#).

I would like to thank the Queensland Nurses Union for their contribution to the examination of the bill and their written submission to the committee. While the submission made by the Queensland Nurses Union is outside the scope of this bill, it raises a very important issue regarding the safety of our front-line hospital staff. The seriousness of this issue has not escaped the government. In line with the committee's recommendation, I will refer this issue to phase 2 of the Weapons Act review for consideration.

I would also like to thank the Queensland Law Society for their contribution to the examination of the bill and also for their written submission to the committee. The Queensland Law Society is opposed to any form of mandatory minimum sentencing on the grounds that it unduly fetters judicial discretion and greatly hinders the court's ability to bring about justice in individual cases.

Firstly, I would like to reiterate that this government is committed to cracking down on gun crime. It is the aim of this government to deliver safer streets for Queensland communities. This bill meets that commitment by ensuring that the penalties imposed meet the community's expectations and act as a deterrent to those who choose to operate outside of the law. However, the bill also achieves a balance between the rights of Queenslanders who own and use firearms and the safety of the greater community. In this regard, a mandatory minimum sentence will not apply to law-abiding gun owners who simply, by human error or by some administrative process beyond their control, find themselves unlicensed, nor will a mandatory minimum sentence apply where a person successfully raises a reasonable excuse. In these instances, the court will have the discretion to determine an appropriate sentence based upon the circumstances of each case.

This bill also recognises that mandatory sentencing should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. The mandatory minimum sentencing regime proposed in the bill dovetails into the existing tiered penalty regime of the Weapons Act. A term of mandatory imprisonment will be proportionately linked to the type of offence committed and the number and type of weapons involved. A firearms amnesty will also coincide with the introduction of the mandatory minimum sentencing regime on 1 February 2013 for a period of three months. The amnesty will allow any person unlawfully in possession of firearms, regardless of their licence status, to surrender these firearms without penalty. Furthermore, any person who is in possession of unregistered firearms will have the option to register those firearms or surrender those firearms under the protection of the amnesty.

This bill is not just about mandatory sentencing. Importantly, the bill supports the government's election commitment to cut red tape by 20 per cent. The bill achieves this through the implementation of a broad range of red-tape reduction initiatives aimed at easing the regulatory burden on law-abiding gun owners. The bill will: double the licence term of category A and B firearms to up to 10 years; double the term of a permit to acquire to six months; double the time frames in which a licensee can renew his or her licence, without being required to demonstrate that they have an adequate knowledge of the weapon they possess, to 12 months; remove the obligation for an approved pistol club to provide an annual participation report to an authorised officer each year; extend the reporting time for a licensed dealer to give an annual return to an authorised officer; extend the reporting time for a theatrical ordinance supplier to give an annual return to an authorised officer; allow a representative of a shooting club to delegate certain functions to other members of the club's governing body or board; remove the obligation for a licensee to take his or her licence to a police station each time a change of circumstance occurs; and recognise an interstate or international firearms licence as a criterion for obtaining a new Queensland firearms licence.

The red-tape reduction initiatives contained in the bill are just common sense. I am committed to cutting the red tape associated with legitimate firearms ownership in Queensland and, with the help of my weapons advisory panel, I expect to identify further red-tape reductions and streamlining of bureaucratic processes in the near future. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. From the outset I wish to advise that the only substantive aspect of the bill that the opposition will be opposing is the mandatory minimum sentencing provisions. I would like to foreshadow that I will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail to retain the discretion on the part of the sentencing judge or magistrate in exceptional circumstances where it is in the interests of justice to do so.

I also place on the record that the Labor Party will not stand idly by and allow gun crime to spiral out of control. Gun crime is abhorrent, and I hold grave concerns about the future direction of crime statistics under this LNP government. The LNP has brought in a number of supposed 'get tough on crime' laws, and today those opposite must recognise that they are responsible for future crime statistics in this state. The minister and his new assistant minister are the ones responsible, despite the minister's habit of blaming enthusiastic bureaucrats, as was the case with the ill-fated Rural Fire Service announcement.

It is worth noting at this point that the Queensland Labor Party set up the Queensland Police Service's illegal firearms team. This team has taken over 60 guns off the street. I commend this team for their great work in making our streets safer. It was during the time that the Labor Party was in government that Task Force Resolve was set up. Those opposite will know by reading the action plan for Task Force Resolve that it was always going to transition into a serious and violent offender squad for the South-East region. I also commend these officers for their work in combating serious armed robbery and firearms offences.

We note that the LNP has continued these measures with the major and organised crime squad incorporating the illegal firearms team, which is effectively the rebadging of Labor initiatives. I assume this means that the LNP supported those Labor initiatives. We heard at the estimates hearing how the LNP was in the process of expanding this squad. We support the Commissioner of Police in his determination that this structure is required within the Queensland Police Service to target these offenders who cause such fear in our communities. I wish these officers great success.

In light of what I have said, I will listen intently to those opposite as we debate this bill, because it would be entirely misleading for them to say that Labor did nothing or little in relation to gun crime and it would be further misleading to say that Labor somehow condones gun crime by opposing the mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment in this bill. What this bill does, though, is provide for a mandatory minimum sentence for certain offences. The opposition does not oppose increasing penalties for these offences, but we do have real concerns, as I said, about mandatory minimum sentencing. It is important that judicial officers, to whom we must entrust the very important role of sentencing offenders in this state, retain some discretion in sentencing. There will always be exceptional circumstances. There will always be situations in which imposing the legislatively prescribed minimum sentence will result in injustice, unfairness and perhaps incredible hardship.

I take this opportunity to express the opposition's deep concern about mandatory sentencing which reflects the concern raised in the submission by the Queensland Law Society. The Queensland Law Society feels that mandatory sentences can lead to serious miscarriages of justice because the individual circumstances of the case cannot be taken into account. I will quote from the society's submission to the committee on this bill because I would not be able to express these sentiments any better than it has. The submission states—

The Society has long maintained its strong stance against any form of mandatory sentencing. In our view, mandatory sentencing laws are unfair, unworkable and run contrary to Australia's international treaty obligations.

The Society opposes the proposed legislation on the grounds that it unduly fetters judicial discretion. The removal of judicial discretion by the proposed mandatory sentencing scheme will greatly hinder the courts ability to bring about justice in individual cases. All cases consist of discreet facts and circumstances. There may be any number of contributing factors that lead to the commission of a crime. A mandatory sentencing scheme would be unable to take these factors into account. Mandatory sentencing laws are arbitrary, contravening the principles of proportionality and necessity because they do not allow consideration of either the seriousness of the offence or the circumstances of the offender. They have the potential to lead to serious miscarriages of justice, exacerbated by virtue of the fact that mandatory sentences, by definition, are not reviewable on appeal. It is our view that judges are in a better position to administer justice through judicial reasoning and comprehensive understanding of the offence and the circumstances surrounding its commission. Therefore, the Society maintains that sentencing decisions should rest with highly trained judicial officers.

The empirical evidence against mandatory sentencing is well documented. There is a lack of cogent and persuasive data to demonstrate that mandatory sentences provide a deterrent effect. Furthermore, these schemes have consistently failed to achieve the stated objectives of deterrence and crime reduction in Queensland, New South Wales, other Australian State and Territory and international jurisdictions.

During her speech in the debate of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill the Leader of the Opposition set out many examples of where the members opposite when in opposition expressed their concern about mandatory sentencing. I do not intend to repeat all of them here but I just say that there were an ample number of them, including the now Attorney-General. There appears to have been a very substantial change of heart on the other side of the chamber about mandatory sentencing. But luckily, some LNP members are still prepared to express their concern about this issue. I was heartened to hear this morning comments made by the member for Yeerongpilly on ABC Radio when explaining the issues that have been of concern to his constituents. He said—

One of the things people have spoken to me about is mandatory sentencing and the importance of the judiciary having discretion.

Our position is pretty simple. Our position has been stated by our members in this House numerous times, and the LNP has not listened to our warnings and has ignored the experts in the field such as the Law Society and numerous academics, having dedicated their lives to understanding crime and punishment, who have pointed out the shortcomings of mandatory terms of imprisonment. We wish for our opposition to be recorded not only in terms of this bill but also in relation to all future bills that may be contemplated by those opposite incorporating mandatory sentencing.

It may be true that mandatory minimum sentencing makes a quick headline in the local paper, but there appears to be great disparity in the views of members opposite—wide-ranging views that would be difficult to reconcile. The path proposed by some of the members opposite, though, is concerning and dangerous. To see this you only have to look at the comments made in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* on 20 November by the member for Keppel, Bruce Young, who was looking to introduce mandatory sentencing for juvenile offenders. He said—

I have discussed this issue with the Attorney-General ... and told him that if the penalties are not deterring our youth and not meeting what our community expects then we will legislate mandatory sentencing.

Clearly, the Attorney-General is on notice from members of his own backbench and they feel as though they can tell him what to do. The Attorney-General needs to come out today and indicate whether he supports the words of the member for Keppel or put him back in his box. We the ALP will vote for what we believe is right, while members of the LNP backbench, like the member for Keppel, should be concerned about some of the decisions being made by LNP ministers and how they will affect them at the next election. Mandatory minimum sentences, especially for children, will only dig the hole deeper and deeper. We will not support mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment because when the first offender is sentenced to an unjust term of imprisonment and something drastic happens to them in prison it will be on the heads of LNP members who vote for these provisions.

The LNP has been warned by the Queensland Law Society about the likelihood of 'demandatorising'. This is where prosecutors downgrade the seriousness of the charge because they know that they will get a guilty plea from the offender. Budgetary concerns in the DPP and prosecutions generally will only make this more likely, and it will be the fault of those who vote for mandatory terms of imprisonment. They will be responsible when prosecutors downgrade a charge because the offender will plead guilty to an offence that does not have a mandatory minimum sentence attached.

The community will be calling out for justice to be done when this person receives a lower than anticipated sentence and the community will only have to look to those opposite to see who has let it down. Sure, those opposite will blame the judges and magistrates for the nature of the sentences. They will demand that the sentence reflects community expectations, but it will be a smokescreen to deflect blame. The community knows that the Labor Party does not think that it can be the judge, jury and executioner. We value the independence of the judiciary and we trust judges and magistrates to make the right decisions when it comes to sentencing offenders to appropriate terms of imprisonment. The community should not trust anyone to determine a term of imprisonment on the basis that it looks good in the headline in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* or the *Courier-Mail*, for that matter. That applies to every one of us, just as it does to the honourable member for Keppel. We have already seen the judiciary express grave concerns about these provisions in relation to hooning offences as demonstrated in Cairns, and that was only for a fine. The government will be in a difficult position of its own making if the judiciary starts to reject mandatory terms of imprisonment legislation because it views it as manifestly unjust. As I will discuss shortly, those opposite may be in bigger trouble if the judiciary actually embraces mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment.

I turn now to the consultation period. This bill was introduced in the House on 31 October. The report from the committee was tabled on 22 November. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee was also required to table four other in-depth and complicated reports on the same day. I can only hope that something did not slip through the cracks in that process. The whole process has been slightly shambolic from the start, and the fact that we are talking about life and death matters like gun crime and safe firearms handling only makes it worse. The announcement of the ministerial weapons advisory panel caused so much concern in the community about the apparent overrepresentation of gun enthusiasts it required Queensland Police Union President Ian Leavers to speak out against it, resulting in the Police Union being represented on the panel. I stated at the time that we would not support any watering down of legislation that makes it easier or quicker for someone to get a weapons licence or a firearm. I said that we would be happy to look at other issues and ways to provide a more timely response to legitimate gun owners and shooting club members but that we would not risk public safety. We must understand the principles and objectives of the Weapons Act 1990, which states—

- (a) weapon possession and use are subordinate to the need to ensure public and individual safety;
 - (b) public and individual safety is improved by imposing strict controls on the possession of weapons and requiring the safe and secure storage and carriage of weapons.
- (2) The object of this Act is to prevent the misuse of weapons.

I acknowledge that farmers and other recreational shooters have legitimate needs for firearms, and I support them. We would never stand in the way of legitimate and responsible firearms owners accessing firearms and do not propose to put unneeded barriers in front of them. We all must acknowledge that in 2011 alone the Queensland police suspended 259 weapons licences and revoked 377 for things like domestic violence, committing violent offences or not being a fit and proper person—for example, having a diagnosed mental health problem. These checks and balances in the system benefit us all.

With regard to weapons licensing amendments in the bill, I want to bring to the attention of the House the amendment contained in clause 9 to section 10A(1) inserting subsection (4) which recognises an interstate or international firearms licence to prove that a person has adequate knowledge of a firearm so they can apply for a Queensland firearms licence. The legislation appears to indicate that a licence will be compared on the basis of the type of weapon handled previously, not the quality of the weapons handling course or requirements of the country in question. Obviously New South Wales and Victoria will have similar requirements to that of Queensland, but the key point that the minister needs to explain to the House is how international standards will ensure the safety of Queenslanders and how these changes will comply with the principles and objectives of the Weapons Act.

The facts are that our kids are backpacking through Third World or even First World countries and they can lob up to a local shooting range and fire a modern assault rifle and get a licence in a foreign country to do so. Will a firearms licence obtained at a shooting range or similar event overseas allow someone to prove that they can handle a weapon safely? Those opposite will no doubt be surprised to know—and I hope that I am not giving them any ideas—that police in Cambodia, for example, actually deputise local businesspeople, including Australian citizens, who own businesses as police officers. They can get an official ID and make arrests. If they can be police with no training, how hard do members think it would be to get a firearms licence? Other countries may have less robust processes than our own. I am sure that if someone desires it they could probably arrange to get an authentic international weapons licence by paying an official in another country without leaving Australia. The act makes no mention of discriminating against such particular countries whose processes may not be acceptable. It is difficult to support this clause with so many questions not being answered that appear to go against the objectives of the act.

I want to raise another concern with the bill. The bill provides that to be sentenced to a mandatory term of imprisonment the person must at least unlawfully possess a firearm to commit or facilitate the commission of an indictable offence. I want to first highlight the words quoted in the committee report in the letter which the footnote states is from the Minister for Police and Community Safety dated 15 November 2012 which states—

A person need not be found guilty of committing the indictable offence to be liable to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment.

This is truly a new frontier in criminal justice for Queensland—the person need not be found guilty of an indictable offence to be sentenced to a minimum mandatory term of imprisonment. Minister, I would love to hear how this is going to work and I thought I had misread the intention until the committee report went on to reveal—

... the offence requires elements of the commission of the indictable offence to be proved, but it does not require a guilty finding or conviction to take place as suggested by the Queensland Law Society.

Again, not being required to be found guilty and being sentenced to a mandatory term of imprisonment! I await the explanation as to how that is possible.

The mandatory sentencing provisions affect people who unlawfully possess weapons and appear to include people whose licence expired more than 12 months ago or people who do not have weapons licences but have in their possession a rifle of their deceased grandparent or parent. A person charged with this type of offence is presently unlikely to go to prison and would likely receive no more than a fine of some sort. Another offence for which people are unlikely to go to prison is an indictable offence such as supplying cannabis. It is even possible and common that a conviction be recorded against someone for supplying cannabis on the lower end of the scale, with the person receiving a fine or a period of good behaviour. Allow me to indulge the hypothetical. Say there is an 18-year-old kid in the country who has his grandad's gun lying around the house while he is dealing small quantities of cannabis to his friends. I am not condoning any of that, but the minister needs to let the House know if this kid would go to jail if found in that circumstance. The prosecution could argue that the kid has the gun in the house because it lets customers and other drug dealers know that this kid is not to be messed with. The gun in effect facilitates or assists his drug dealing venture as it provides protection to enable him to deal drugs so that customers do not rip him off.

Mr Dempsey: Come on!

Mr BYRNE: I said it was hypothetical, but we have to think through this a bit.

Mr Dempsey: You could have found a better hypothetical than that. You don't even believe that!

Mr BYRNE: He does not have to point it at anyone, but the word is out there on the street.


Mr Dempsey: So you're standing up for the people who are drug traffickers now?

Mr BYRNE: I am not standing up for drug traffickers; I am talking about the reality of what is going on out there. From what I discussed previously, the prosecution does not have to prove the offence, but to what standard they have to prove the link between possessing the gun and the facilitation of an indictable offence is not clear and they do not even have to get a conviction.

No way would a magistrate or judge ordinarily send a cleanskin committing these sorts of offences to jail. The minister needs to explain that this young man is going to jail because of mandatory sentencing. Those members who represent regional communities need to have a long hard think about the types of things that might happen to their friends' and associates' sons and daughters. They need to have a long look to see how joint possession of both drugs and weapons works in criminal law. They need to think of 18-year-olds in the country going shooting with their grandfather's or father's gun and then doing something stupid. Let us take section 69 of the Criminal Code, which is the offence of going armed so as to cause fear. Currently, the offence is classified as a misdemeanour with a maximum of two years of imprisonment. Misdemeanours are indictable offences. Young people make bad decisions at times and it is pretty easy to cause fear with a firearm. Are those young people going to automatically go to jail for a first offence for being silly?

The bill also includes category A weapons, which includes air rifles. I look around the House at some of the members representing regional areas. It might be time for them to think back to what they did with air rifles during their misspent youth. I also must inform the members that the old days of the experienced local country cop giving these kids a size 12 up the backside are long gone. What we are about to see is an 18-year-old police officer, keen as mustard, wanting to impress.

I want to stress that I have no problems at all—in fact, I welcome—serious and habitual offenders being sent to jail. It is important that those in society who are dealing in drugs and terrorising people on our streets go to jail. People who are shooting up the neighbourhood in drive-by shootings, people who are shooting at the police, people who are becoming increasingly brazen in committing armed robberies, need to be sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment. But what I support, and what the Opposition supports, is for the experienced judiciary to make the decision on the appropriate term in the context of the seriousness of the offence committed and all of the facts associated with the offence and the history of the offender. Quite simply, if people need to be sent to jail, they should be sent to jail. I for one will not be supporting mandatory sentencing as it is really the Minister for Police deciding what the term will be for those so convicted.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (5.02 pm): I listened with interest to the member for Rockhampton. It is always judicious in a debate to pick on examples here and there as supporting a proposition. There was a time in the past when I had a certain view about mandatory sentencing, but I do not think I have ever had a view that mandatory sentencing ought not occur at all. Circumstances change. I think it was 28 April 1996 when Martin Bryant committed the Port Arthur massacre. An intellectually disabled man had semiautomatic weapons and was able to destroy an entire state by that one act. There clearly needs to be circumstances in which mandatory sentencing needs to be invoked. I cannot sit here and think of every possible example as to why you ought not. It is so easy to pick out of the mix an example here or there as to why mandatory sentencing ought not be enacted. However, we live in circumstances and times that are changing. We now have bikies who are heavily involved in organised crime. We have myriad firearms—legal and illegal. On the other hand we have members of the community who use firearms for sport. Yet people are still dying from firearms in circumstances where the use of the firearm was unlawful. In many of those instances firearms were used to commit indictable offences. Effectively, the major part of this bill attempts to say that the LNP in March, and prior to that, came to the people and said, 'We will implement policy that will be an effective deterrence.'

The member for Rockhampton—and I had difficulty hearing him but I think the substance of what he was saying—

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr BERRY: I take that interjection. Effectively, he was saying that the LNP has taken Labor policy. I do not remember anything being said prior to March 2012 of any policy involving law and order. In fact, I think the only law and order was putting the Premier into the CMC. I think that was the net effect of it all. So in relation to a rational debate, the position is that in a lot of the instances on pleas of guilty a judicial officer does not always necessarily have the full facts in determining sentences. It happens sometimes that people plead guilty and that there is plea bargaining. So as a result you cannot clinically say here today that it is a case where mandatory sentencing is inappropriate. You have to look at it at the time it is implemented. Clearly, the position is, coming to an election with that as a policy and with a clear mandate of that policy by the people of Queensland—they clearly have given that mandate—to be tough on crime, that is going to be implemented in many ways, of which mandatory sentencing is one.


If I might, I would like to detail that with a little more particularity. My point is this: mandatory sentencing per se is not wrong. It may perhaps be if you take a chocolate bar and you get 15 years jail. So it is balancing the rights of an individual with the community's expectations. You have to have that balance at the time and the mandatory sentence has to be proportionate to what you want to achieve. What is the proportionality? It is about deterrence. Our criminal system works on deterrence. We say that if you do a crime then this is the penalty and for most of our criminal law we set the maximum. However, there are instances where one has a clear mandate—and this LNP does—and they are entitled to have it made law.

With respect to what my friend—I was going to say my learned friend—the member for Rockhampton said, in balancing mandatory sentencing with the rights of the individual there is lawful excuse. It brings temper to the argument as to whether mandatory sentencing is appropriate. Sometimes the community needs to tell offenders and would-be offenders, 'We will no longer accept the use of firearms without there being an appropriate penalty.' I would respectfully submit that that is the way the Queensland people now see it.

There have been many instances. I think I can match the particular examples given by the member for Rockhampton with other examples. We have had problems at the airport. We have had firearms being used at shopping centres. There is a perception in our community that certain sections of our community are out of control in relation to firearms. It is appropriate to show the community that we need to take steps to deter those from using firearms.

The legislation is also measured in that there is the cutting down of red tape. We have had long waits for licences. The bill takes a measured approach. It is LNP policy and it is appropriate for it to be implemented. As I said, it is a measured bill that balances the rights with deterrence. I would respectfully submit that it is appropriate.

The bill deals with a number of other matters, all of which go to the sense of making sure that we cut down red tape but at the same time protect the public. I commend the minister for the bill, I commend the committee for doing fine work in presenting the report and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.10 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Can I start by thanking the very hardworking members of the committee secretariat. As many members of this House will have seen this year, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has been particularly busy. I think that certainly is a testament to the commitment that the Newman government has to being tough on law and order. The secretariat has been with us all the way and they do a fantastic job. I would like to put on the record my thanks to them. I am certainly not complaining at all about being kept very busy.

The objectives of this bill are very clear. This bill is seeking to impose mandatory minimum periods of imprisonment where the offences of unlawful possession, unlawful supply and unlawful trafficking of weapons are committed in certain circumstances. These are limited circumstances. The circumstances within which these mandatory minimum sentences will be imposed are quite limited and they have been limited to those circumstances where adults unlawfully carry on the business of trafficking weapons without a reasonable excuse, where at least one of the weapons is a short firearm, where someone supplies weapons without a reasonable excuse, they possess a firearm where it is used in the commission of an indictable offence or the purpose is to commit or facilitate an indictable offence and possess a short firearm in a public place without a reasonable excuse.

This bill also honours our government's commitment to reduce red tape and regulatory burden. There are a range of initiatives in this bill that will be implemented that honour this pledge. They include but are not limited to the extension of licence terms, extended reporting and permit times and also the extension of time applicable to demonstrate knowledge of a weapon where a person's licence has expired.


There was a broad range of consultation on this particular amendment bill. The minister spoke to it in his second reading speech so I will not go too much further other than to say that it is clear that the government was committed to discussing this with the community. The Weapons Advisory Panel met and certainly did consider the contents of this amendment bill.

The member for Rockhampton talked about mandatory sentencing and said that the Labor Party is completely opposed to mandatory sentencing. I think it is very important that we recognise that the community wants us as a government to be tough on law and order. Gun crimes are absolutely abhorrent. I am very concerned that there are people out in our community who take guns out and who use them to commit abhorrent crimes against the innocent and the vulnerable. As a government we have an obligation to make sure that we send a message to the community that this is not okay. We say that if you commit a crime you have to do the time. I think it is very important that we respond to community expectations. I find it rather ironic that the member for Rockhampton talks about how the government waxes lyrical about community expectations. I might suggest to members of the opposition that if they paid more attention to community expectations there might be more than seven members of the Labor Party in the House. I think that it is very important to remember that as members of this parliament we have an obligation to pass legislation that seeks to realise the wants and the needs of our community. I have had so many people in my electorate of Broadwater come to me and tell me that they are dissatisfied by the left-wing judiciary, that they are dissatisfied with lenient sentences and that they are dissatisfied with people walking away after committing serious crimes. As a government we are committed to listening to the community. We are committed to acting on their concerns and we are committed to making sure that we respond. This is one of those very measures. This is a government

that is very committed to tough law and order. We have said time and time again that if you are going to commit a crime you have to be prepared to do the time. It is not acceptable for people to walk around in our communities with a gun. It is not acceptable for people to use guns to commit crimes against people. It is not acceptable for people to illegally traffic weapons.

I think that one of the most important messages that this amendment bill sends to the community is that we will stand up to people who do these things. We will say to them that it is not acceptable and we will say to the judiciary that they need to listen to what the community wants. If someone commits such an abhorrent crime they need to send them to jail for a significant enough amount of time that they will be deterred. One of the things that we have seen time and time again is that lenient sentences do nothing to change rates of recidivism in our society. One of the things that we can do as a government is make sure that tougher sentences are imposed on those despicable people who commit the most abhorrent of crimes. We have seen the government committed to doing this with the two-strike child sex offender legislation and when people commit abhorrent offences of assault against police officers in the line of duty.

I commend the police minister for taking a tough stance, for saying that it is unacceptable and for standing up to those disgraceful people who think that it is okay to commit crimes in this state and to use guns against vulnerable and innocent people. I commend this bill to the House as a great piece of legislation. I will have no hesitation whatsoever in heeding community concerns, listening to what the people of Broadwater want and asking my government to meet community expectations—unlike the Labor opposition. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (5.16 pm): I, too, rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee I am pleased to speak in support of this bill which I am sure will have a positive impact on the community. This bill represents implementation of key LNP election promises. It is pleasing to see yet another example of the Newman government getting on with the business of governing the state in line with the expectations of our community. I very firmly share the sentiments just expressed by the member for Broadwater, who is also a member of the committee. In my electorate of Ipswich West people have had it up to the back teeth with people getting slaps on the wrist and the finger pointed at them by, unfortunately, people who in my view do not have a connection with reality. People just cannot believe some of the sentences that are reported in the local papers, particularly where they relate to crimes that have been committed in the local community. I will not go into any specifics, but my office has received quite a number of calls from people saying, 'I cannot believe that that is all they got.' I think this bill will go some way to changing that and, as I said earlier, bring sentencing into line with the expectations of our wider community.

The objective of the bill is to amend the Weapons Act 1990, the Corrective Services Act 2006 and the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to impose mandatory minimum periods of imprisonment where the offences of unlawful possession, unlawful supply and trafficking of weapons are committed in certain circumstances. The mandatory penalties imposed by the bill will apply to adults who in certain circumstances unlawfully carry on the business of trafficking in weapons, supply weapons where at least one of the weapons is a short firearm, possess a firearm where the firearm is used in the commission of an indictable offence, possess a firearm where the possession of the firearm is for the purpose of committing or facilitating an indictable offence and possess a short firearm in a public place. On that last point, I think there is a growing fear in our community, based on some of the events of recent times, that we are going to have a situation where people will be walking down the street only to be confronted by someone pulling a short firearm from under their jacket. It may sound like something out of an American crime series, but people have a legitimate fear that this is where our society is headed.


Back in April this year the honourable the Premier announced the government's intention to introduce mandatory minimum penalties for weapons offences in an effort to address the unlawful use of firearms. That announcement was made in the context of a growing concern about criminal activity involving the use of firearms, both in Queensland and across the country. Indeed, we have seen some shocking examples of firearms being used in the community and the government is doing something serious to prevent those types of incidents and to punish those responsible. Yes, this is about punishment. It goes back to the old-time view that if you do something there should—indeed, there must—be a serious consequence. In no way does this bill seek the persecution of the many upstanding members of the Queensland public who own a firearm. Its focus is on the possession and use of firearms by persons engaged in criminal activity who, more and more, pose a very real and significant risk to the safety of the community.

The bill addresses the concerns of our community and their expectation that we will be tough on crime and on criminals by ensuring that the penalties imposed meet those expectations and provide adequate deterrence against such conduct. Where an individual is convicted of an offence and a mandatory period of imprisonment applies, any date for parole, release or eligibility that is imposed under the Penalties and Sentences Act and any parole eligibility imposed under the Corrective Services Act does not fall before the expiry of the applicable mandatory minimum term of imprisonment. The bill

also amends the act to ensure that both unlicensed persons in possession of firearms and licensed persons in possession of unregistered firearms may be afforded protection against prosecution when surrendering weapons in compliance with an amnesty declared under provisions of the act. The bill is certainly not intended to erode the rights of licensed firearm owners. I know this is something important to many people in my electorate and certainly across regional and rural Queensland in particular.

Additionally, the bill gives effect to the government's commitment to reduce red tape and the regulatory burden associated with time-consuming and non-essential rules, forms, regulations and procedures. I have been happy to assist a number of people in my electorate who have been left waiting to have applications processed. They are people such as collectors and other enthusiasts such as sporting shooters. The bill reduces the annoying red tape associated with legitimate firearms ownership and applications, and I know it will be most welcomed from that perspective.

Eighteen initiatives have been identified through a review of the act and subordinate legislation. Nine initiatives have been included in the bill, with a further nine to be addressed through policy and subordinate legislation. I look forward to seeing the benefits the bill will provide to our community for its safety and the reassurance it will give to the law-abiding people of Queensland whom it seeks to serve and protect. In particular, that last phrase means a lot to me because it is a recurring theme among the people who come to me to talk about their concerns. They feel that offenders are either not incarcerated at all or they are released after a very short time. In the media we see incredibly serious examples of what can happen, such as particularly unfortunate instances of people running rampant in suburban shopping centres and shooting people. I would hate to think that something such as that would ever happen in one of my quiet localities, such as Lowood or Rosewood. Certainly, it would traumatise any community. I am very interested to see the bill passed. I look forward to seeing the safety benefits it will provide to the community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (5.22 pm): Today, I rise to make a short contribution in support of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill does not erode the rights of licensed firearm owners in Queensland. It sets out to create a greater deterrence for those seeking to unlawfully use firearms in the commission of a crime by the imposition of mandatory periods of imprisonment. This amendment bill delivers on our government's election promise to reduce the red tape and regulatory burden that is associated with the ownership of legal firearms. The bill supports our government's firm position on creating a safer community. Time and time again, we hear that offenders are slapped on the wrist and let go. We hear that there is a revolving door on our court system, that people are charged and let go, they are charged and let go. We have to do something about that situation and this bill addresses the problem. The amendment bill will give the magistrates the ability to impose sentences upon offenders that reflect the fact that a crime in which a weapon is used will not be tolerated.

I have met with all kinds of shooters, including hunters and sports shooters, who are happy that this amendment bill simplifies the administrative protocols that are strangling their recreational activities. My brother gave me my first 410 shotgun for my 12th birthday. I had to complete a hunter's safety course to get a licence to use the weapon. I received the certificate to prove I was qualified to use the gun. I then received the weapon and I enjoyed going hunting for pheasants, ducks and the like with my brothers. I think that it is the right of every young man or woman who wants to do that with their family. If people own land or they are in sporting clubs, they should be able to undertake such activities without having to fill in a mountain of paperwork at some cost.

The bill has been welcomed by a number of community groups, ranging from community organisations to sporting clubs, through the consultation period of the legislation. The possession and use of a firearm while committing a crime has always been a dangerous factor in our community. Both the police and the legal system now have the legislative mechanisms to clamp down on offenders, thus meeting our community's expectations for sentencing offenders. The bill supports our communities. As mentioned, it imposes mandatory sentencing for offenders. It also supports law-abiding citizens who are in possession of firearms.

Following our government's commitment to red-tape reduction, this amendment bill has a total of 18 initiatives, with nine being introduced through this legislation and the remainder to follow in subordinate legislation. The amendment bill extends the term of category A and B licences from five to 10 years and moves the obligation of approved pistol clubs to provide an annual participation report and extends the reporting time for a licensed dealer to give an annual report to an authorised officer. The bill also extends the permit-to-acquire period from three months to six months. Further, the bill recognises both international and interstate firearms licences, allowing many shooters freedom from regulatory burdens when moving to Queensland. Along with many parliamentary colleagues who have served either in the armed forces or in the police service, as a retired marine I know well how to appropriately handle and maintain a firearm. The amendment bill extends to 12 months the time frame in which the holder of an expired licence can demonstrate an adequate knowledge of weapons handling.

The implementation of mandatory sentencing sends a strong message to would-be offenders. As with our government's anti-hooring legislation, under this legislation any offence that is of a heinous nature, such as the assault or murder of a police officer or an offence where public safety is put at grave risk, this government will not stand by and fail to support the legal system in deterring those offenders. As I have said, I have spoken to many of my constituents who are hunters and sports shooters. All law-abiding shooters I have spoken to welcome these changes. They feel that the licence extensions will save time and hassle. However, some of them did have concerns about the mandatory sentencing provisions. The bill makes it clear that if there is a reasonable excuse, the court does not have to impose a mandatory sentence. The explanatory notes to the bill state—

Where a reasonable excuse exists, a person will not be liable to the mandatory minimum penalties that apply for trafficking, supply or possession of a firearm in a public place.

However, the fact that a reasonable excuse is successfully raised does not mitigate a person's liability for the substantive offence. For example, where a court hears an offence to which a mandatory minimum penalty applies, and is satisfied that all the elements of the offence are made out, but is also satisfied that the defendant has a reasonable excuse, the court will not apply the minimum penalties but will still sentence the offender appropriately...

That addresses those concerns. I am proud to support this bill, which protects our community while, at the same time, releasing the burden placed upon law-abiding firearm owners in our state. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.28 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I was a member of the committee to which the bill was referred and we looked at several aspects of it. Principally, the bill removes red tape for good people and increases punishment and penalty for bad people. We all agree that firearms need to be treated with respect. It is the right of landowners and recreational shooters to have access to weapons, as well as people who are training for the Olympics and so on.

At the moment we have a situation where they are bogged down in red tape and regulation. All of the rules and regulations surrounding firearms are in fact inhibiting good people who want to use their weapons in a lawful way and enjoy them—fathers and sons, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons going out and having a good time.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

MOTION

Public Service, Jobs



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

- condemns the LNP government's program of mass sackings that has so far directly cost 14,000 full-time equivalent positions,
- notes the Premier's refusal to say how many people those 14,000 FTEs represent; how many additional temporary jobs lost are not included in that figure; or how many jobs have been lost in the community and private sectors as a result of the government's cuts to front-line services, and
- expresses its concern to the thousands of Queensland families who face a bleak Christmas thanks to the government's callous slash-and-burn policies.

Two days before the election the Treasurer promised Queenslanders that the LNP's election promises would be funded through the natural attrition of government workers—not mass sackings. This promise has been fundamentally broken by this government and it is little wonder that more and more Queenslanders are feeling betrayed. This is a government—elected with a record mandate—that has broken a record number of promises, in record time. The LNP government is setting records for all the wrong reasons.

Just 48 hours before the election Queenslanders were told that the LNP would devise a three per cent employee expense cap and that we need not worry where the LNP would find \$4 billion for their election promises. The Treasurer promised Queenslanders that there would be no forced redundancies. The political Costello report released in June stated that this three per cent cap, to fund election promises, could not be met without cutting budgeted funding in Health, education and communities. Following this, the LNP handed down a budget in September that removed 14,000 full-time equivalent positions from the Public Service through forced redundancies. In addition to this, the government slashed grants programs, including \$368 million in communities, \$120 million in Health and \$60 million for local governments.

Then there are the cuts of \$256 million to Energex, Ergon and Powerlink as this government plans its next big deception on Queenslanders—electricity privatisation—yet again through another Costello report, phase 2. So far we have only been made aware of 500 job cuts in Ergon Energy. None of these job cuts were announced or flagged before the election.

It was only in the estimates hearings that we finally had a vaguely worded admission from the Treasurer that the LNP's funding source for election promises—an employee expense cap—is met by the redundancies of 14,000 full-time equivalent positions. We also asked the government in the estimates hearings to tell us what modelling they had done on the number of jobs that would be lost. The government simply refused to release any such information, despite their constant hollow platitudes about openness and accountability. Either this government does not know and is incompetent or it is engaged in a political strategy of not naming a figure—one that is all about the LNP's electoral fortunes and not about the best interests of Queenslanders.

The Premier did name a figure earlier in the year as he paraded around the state telling everyone that the previous government had borrowed to pay the wages of 20,000 government workers. Under questioning at estimates it was revealed that Treasury had never provided this advice to the government and never provided advice that the government should sack 20,000 workers. Instead it was based on a hypothetical scenario of not growing the Public Service beyond the year 2000, which the Treasurer plucked out of the incoming government brief as something he could spin to fund the LNP's promises.

It is worth noting here that the number of state government workers as a percentage of the workforce has actually dropped in Queensland from 12 per cent in 2000 to 8.9 per cent last year. This means that private jobs in the economy grew faster under Labor, with more than two-thirds of these full-time jobs.

We know for a fact that more than 20,000 Queenslanders have lost their jobs as a result of the actions of this government. This represents more than 20,000 broken promises to Queenslanders. That is why this LNP government continually refuses to disclose the number of people who have lost their jobs.

Not only has the government gone about slashing jobs in the Public Service, it has done it in an appalling way. We have been receiving calls from people who were sent a letter out of the blue saying they could either take a redundancy or join a redeployment pool. These letters have been particularly destructive for some people who have reported being unable to access mortgage insurance if they take a redundancy due to the offer of a redeployment pool. This has forced some people into the LNP's cruel purgatory of a redeployment pool.

Government members who ridicule us for raising this plight should hang their heads in shame. The Premier and Treasurer cannot keep blaming debt levels they knew about before the election for the LNP's decisions. The fact is that the Costello report found no misstatements in Treasury's figures from January and merely made comments based on opinion about Treasury's figures in May—figures for the LNP government. This means that the Premier and Treasurer knew full well that they would need to sack tens of thousands of workers to fund their \$4 billion worth of election commitments. They either knew or they were both grossly incompetent when it comes to the state's finances.

The cuts to jobs that this government has embarked on, and the way that it has embarked on them, are unnecessary and cruel. Not only this, but these savage job cuts are also damaging Queensland's economy and are hitting regional areas particularly hard.

As I mentioned earlier today, the Commonwealth Bank issued a report in September stating that—

... the substantial tightening in fiscal policy announced by the Newman Conservative Government in its maiden Budget ... will weigh on the Queensland economy over the coming financial years and beyond.

I table this report.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 26 September 2012, titled 'Global Markets Research, Economics: Issues', by John Peters, Senior Economist, Commonwealth Bank [1724].

It is an assessment backed up by Queensland Treasury in the budget papers which predicts economic growth to slow next financial year, partly as a result of the LNP's budget cuts. This means that the Premier and Treasurer would have received prior warning on the impacts of the LNP's budget cuts to the Queensland economy. I am sure the Premier and Treasurer did not share this information with other government members.

The Premier and Treasurer talk as if the economy was not growing at all last financial year. It was growing at four per cent, and ahead of the rest of the nation. Since the election, unemployment has risen from 5.5 per cent to 6.2 per cent. Unemployment now sits higher than it did under Labor during the global financial crisis. Let me say that again: unemployment now sits higher than it did under Labor during the global financial crisis. It is now the Newman financial crisis. There are 26,600 fewer jobs in Queensland according to the ABS.

In September, as the LNP handed down its first budget, Queensland lost 21,500 jobs and was the only state to go backwards in October losing another 1,400 jobs. The LNP government's cuts are causing flow-on job losses across the community. These cuts to jobs are hitting particularly hard in regional centres.

As I travel around the state people approach me about someone they know who has lost their job or is losing their job or a local business that has had to close its doors because customers have left town looking for work. Local P&Cs, the SES and rural fire brigades—all of these important bodies in regional communities—are also suffering as families have to relocate in search of a job. The LNP's mass sackings are hurting real people and their families. People are left unable to pay their rent, their repayments on their mortgage and are avoiding the local shops.

To make things even worse, the government has cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program that had supported more than 116,800 disadvantaged job seekers into work over five years. Not only is this unfair and cruel, it is also financially foolish. An independent report by Deloitte Access Economics said the program was expected to generate \$1.2 billion in tax receipts to 2020, far in excess of its costs.

If this government continues down this road it will create a new legacy of the long-term unemployed in Queensland while slashing front-line services to Queenslanders. This Premier will have ghettos of unemployment to look back on, along with his new office tower in the CBD.

We in the Labor Party will fight unnecessary and cruel cuts to jobs and services every step of the way. We have a proud record on jobs having overseen the largest fall in unemployment in the nation—lowering Queensland's unemployment rate from 9.8 per cent under a coalition government to 5.5 per cent. In that time, Queensland created more than 740,000 jobs, with more than two-thirds of these full-time jobs.

I believe that this government will likely vote down this motion today because it simply does not care about employment in Queensland. This is a government without a jobs plan and with a Minister for Employment who is not running any employment programs except an assistance line for sacked government workers. If it was not so serious it would be comical.

As the motion sets out, this is about thousands of Queensland families who face a bleak Christmas thanks to the government's callous slash and burn policies. What we know is that Queenslanders who are now on the unemployment line are going to be competing with other Queenslanders for jobs. Those in the redeployment pool will potentially have to go into other jobs as well. Public servants will have to fight against other public servants for jobs. Then they will be competing with school leavers and potentially others who are leaving tertiary institutions.

This is a crisis created by the Newman government. They knew about their election promises being well and truly undercooked. They knew they had \$4 billion worth of election promises and they now have \$6.5 billion in new spending and revenue cuts. This is exactly the sort of thing that we do not expect a government to do. They were given an enormous mandate, a mandate to do things in Queensland. Queensland expected better of this government. They have let them down. They have let them down every step of the way.

Mr Crandon: They expected a lot more from you, too!

Mr PITT: If this is the sort of thing we can expect to see in this term of government, then I really do not think that we are going to be seeing—


Mr Crandon: You had 20 years.

Mr PITT:—this being a long-term LNP government here in Queensland.

Mr Crandon: \$65 billion in debt—that's what you delivered!

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coomera will cease his interjections.

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, we really must be getting to some of the non-frontbenchers here of the LNP because they are getting very testy today. They are getting testy because they know that they, as well as plenty of Queenslanders, have been duped. They have been conned. This has been one of the cons of the century. The LNP government have a lot of explaining to do. They know that they have done the wrong thing by Queenslanders and now they are going to just sit there watching them have a horrible Christmas as a result.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.40 pm): Politicians and political parties are not defined by the campaigns they run or the elections they win.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms TRAD: We are all defined by what we do when we get here, to the people's house—by what we do with the incredible responsibility our electorates entrust in us and the privilege they bestow. But, even when political parties win and win big, they inevitably cannot have everything they want. So being in government ends up being about choices, about priorities. Who are you in government to serve? Who are you here to look after?

You can prioritise yourself—protecting your own jobs—or you can look after the jobs of everyday Queenslanders. You can prioritise your mates and relatives or you can look after the elderly and the disabled. You can prioritise the big end of town or you can look after the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. Clearly this government has made its choice. It has been a clear choice—sacking thousands of Queensland workers; closing nursing homes; refusing to fund an NDIS trial; and slashing support programs for women in prison, the LGBTI community, people with literacy problems, disabled children and the list goes on.

This government stormed into government but to date has only left a trail of unemployment, despair and uncertainty. Queenslanders know they have been conned by this government. The most recent Galaxy poll revealed that 50 per cent of respondents believed Premier Campbell Newman had lied to the people of Queensland. For someone who preaches transparency and accountability—

Madam SPEAKER: The member for South Brisbane will withdraw the unparliamentary language.

Ms TRAD: I am quoting a poll.

Madam SPEAKER: The member for South Brisbane will withdraw the unparliamentary language.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. For someone who preaches transparency and accountability, that is a lot of political goodwill to trash. And why wouldn't they think they had not been told the full truth when, prior to the election, Mr Newman promised 'public servants had nothing to fear' from an LNP government. Now 14,000 public servants are facing Christmas having lost their jobs and many face a New Year spent on the unemployment line. And this government has the arrogance to pretend like these job cuts will not have an impact on services that Queensland families rely on.

Mr Minnikin: What about the nurses who didn't get paid?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Chatsworth. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Mr Choat interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the member for Ipswich—

Mr Berry: West.

Madam SPEAKER:—West under standing order 235A. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Nurses and teachers have lost their jobs, those who monitor and enforce our environmental laws in this state have been sacked, the people who report and keep our justice system moving have been terminated, and somehow this government expects us to believe this will have no impact at all on our way of life. It is a complete betrayal. This is, and always has been, the defining difference between Labor and those opposite: we are for jobs; they are for job cuts. We are for jobs for everyday Queenslanders and they are for jobs for their mates.

Facing the global financial crisis and the collapse of the global economy in 2009, what did the previous Labor government do? Did they slash jobs? Did we bring infrastructure programs to a grinding halt? No. Labor made a decisive choice to continue investing in programs for the future and that choice meant that we kept Queenslanders in jobs, creating 90,000 jobs in the last term. Indeed, it has been—

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members, there are too many interjections across the chamber that are making it difficult to hear the speaker.

Mr Molhoek: We don't want to hear her.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Molhoek: Madam Speaker, I withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Madam Speaker, I did not take offence. I found it consistent with their behaviour overall. Indeed, it has been Labor Premiers from Forgan Smith to Beattie and Bligh and Labor Prime Ministers from Chifley to Hawke, Rudd and Gillard who have prioritised protecting jobs.

This year the people of Queensland bestowed a great honour on each of us but particularly those in government. Queenslanders trusted the LNP to build a stronger state and to look after their interests. But those opposite have chosen to squander the opportunity given to them; they have chosen indulgence over integrity. They have squandered it by focusing on party infighting and seeking revenge on those who dare voice their own opinions. They have squandered it by ignoring the concerns of Queenslanders and by refusing to engage in meaningful and genuine consultation with the community about the decisions they make. They have squandered it by being beholden to special interests and lobbyists and in doing so breaking their promise of open and accountable government.

The government have chosen themselves over Queenslanders. Our choices in government are governed by our values in life. Labor values equality, we value fairness and prosperity and opportunity for all. We understand that the most effective way of ensuring equality and prosperity is to support an economy where jobs grow, but not just any jobs—jobs that come with a decent salary, jobs that come with security and entitlements, and jobs that require highly skilled and educated workers. That is the defining difference between Labor and those opposite. That is the Labor way.

(Time expired)



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.46 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

'affirms its support for the Newman government's 2012-13 state budget, the Newman government's six-month action plan and its outcomes.'

I did listen with some interest to the comments made by the shadow Treasurer as I can only engage in this debate with him—he won't ask me any questions in the House, as I have pointed out on a number of occasions. I also heard the member for South Brisbane and she said, 'We are defined not by our campaigns but by what we do when we get into this place.' Madam Speaker, she would say that, wouldn't she, as the architect of what is probably the nastiest campaign in Australian political history—a campaign of personal denigration and attack on people, their reputations, their families, their friends, anyone at all—as they sprayed around in desperate measure.

Why did they have to go down that path? Why did they go down that path? Because, Madam Speaker, when you think back about the promises they made before the 2009 election, you will recall they made the promise, 'We will not sell assets.' If we apply the member for South Brisbane's qualities in terms of what defines a political party, what did they do within three months of being elected? They put the assets on the chopping block—\$15 billion worth of assets on the chopping block.

The hypocrisy of the member for South Brisbane, who cannot even remember her own party's history over such a short period of time, is astounding. She is defined not only by the campaign that she took part in—the sleaziest, dirtiest, slimiest campaign that the Labor Party ever ran against people in this state—but also by the actions of that government, which broke its promise within three months of coming to office.

What did they do? They cut the fuel subsidy, they cut back on services, they cut grants to local government and they sold assets. So whichever one of the member for South Brisbane's definitions you want to follow, they broke them all. And that is why the people of Queensland on 24 March this year said, 'We've had enough of that. We've had enough of the sleaze. We've had enough of the innuendo. We've had enough of the debacles—the Health payroll system. We've had enough of fake Tahitian princes. We've had enough of throwing \$110 million at the ZeroGen program.' And they said, 'Give us a government that will act responsibly. Give us a government that will work to get our AAA credit rating back.'


We always knew it was going to be a tough task. When it came to being open and honest and forthright with the people of Queensland about what we were doing, we said we were going to do it. We said, 'This is what it will take to get the state of Queensland back on track and back in the black.'

When we delivered the budget we detailed where we were going to make the savings and how we had also paid for our election promises. We detailed it in black and white, something those opposite never did. When they went to the election, what were they going to do? They were going to spend money they did not have on promises they could not keep. They were going to go into the GST pool, which was revised down by half a billion dollars. So they were already on the path to broken promises.

I also know that they had 41,000 people in their crosshairs according to the Public Service Commission report from June 2011—there it is—13,800 of whom provided front-line services. That is what the Labor Party were not telling the people of Queensland. That is the document from their Public Service Commission from June 2011. When it comes down to qualities that define government, the member for South Brisbane has been caught out yet again.

This government has brought down a budget that will see Queensland back in the black and back on track. Why was it necessary? Because otherwise we would have been downgraded yet again. We know the Labor Party do not care—another \$100 million on the tab. That makes no difference to them

whatsoever. We have delivered a budget that charts a course back to financial surplus, a fiscal surplus in 2014-15. It provides funding to deal with matters: an extra \$800 million for the health department and \$200 million for the maintenance backlog that was left behind by Labor. It deals with the Health payroll system. It deals with the \$75 million deficit in the Department of Community Safety that my colleague the member for Aspley has had to deal with. This budget charts a path to getting Queensland back on track and back in the black.


 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (5.51 pm): I rise to second the amendment moved by the Treasurer. This government's goal is to reform and renew the Queensland public sector to make it the best public service in Australia. The topic of tonight's debate goes right to the heart of discussions currently underway regarding an appropriate size for the Queensland Public Service. In proposing this stupid motion tonight, the opposition has highlighted the cause and effect of the dire financial situation this government inherited from years of Bligh-Beattie irresponsibility. The cause is poor financial management from successive Labor governments between 1998 and February 2012. The unfortunate effect is that, as a result of that mismanagement, we now have to have a debate about what sort of public service we can afford.

For years, rather than being honest with the state about their mismanagement, the Bligh government chose to make heroic predictions about income and sneaky underestimates of expenditure. The result was an increased annual deficit and compounding debt. For the past few years they could not even afford to pay the public servants from consolidated revenue; they had to borrow just to pay the fortnightly wages bill. The people of Queensland are entitled to a public service that provides the services they need and a public service that has a responsibility to deliver those services as efficiently and in the most professional manner as possible. Having more public servants does not automatically equate to a better public service just as having fewer does not mean a less effective public service. We want the best public service that the state can afford and we have set in place a range of initiatives to achieve just that.

The government has a responsibility to utilise taxpayers' money in a way which provides the best possible service to the greatest number of people within existing financial constraints. The previous government did not understand the last part of that equation. That is where the current budgetary problems originated. They saw no problem in driving the state further into debt without even asking themselves: is this the best way to spend the money we have? Financial constraints is a foreign term to the Australian Labor Party. It may as well have been Greek with all the negative financial connotations that go with that. The result is that we are now faced with having to reshape the services government can provide to bring them into line with the funds that we have to pay for them. It is basic economics. If you spend more than you have, then you incur an extra expense, which is the interest on borrowings. If you let borrowings get out of hand, then interest payments can become one of your biggest expenses, and that is the case in this state. Every dollar spent on interest payments is one less dollar available to be spent on staff and services. The lower the debt, the lower the interest payments and the higher the level of public service that can be provided to ordinary Queenslanders.

I understand that the need for redundancies has been difficult for many people. However, this government has sought to treat people with dignity and respect and we have offered fair and reasonable redundancy offers with real taxation benefits. If anyone has a complaint about what is happening now and they are looking for someone to blame, they should look no further than the previous Labor government. Three of the current Labor members who were part of a cabinet which authorised every left wing, loopy idea that came before it are sitting on the front bench of the opposition benches right now.

The focus of this government as far as the Public Service is concerned is to reign in the massive debt and retain as many Public Service jobs as possible. However, we cannot do it alone. We need recognition from public service unions that wage increases exist within a broader environment. Wage negotiations is not just about what workers want but also what the employer can afford to pay. Unfortunately, due to the incompetence of the previous government, we cannot afford the larger wage increases and expensive agreement conditions being sought by unions. New enterprise bargaining agreements have recently been negotiated with teachers, salaried medical staff, TAFE teachers, and Transport and Main Roads employees. Discussions are currently underway with unions on various other EB arrangements which are due for renewal. We have made fair offers in the current circumstances in which inflation currently is at 1.4 per cent and we inherited from the previous government a state debt of \$65 billion which is rapidly heading towards \$85 billion. These are times when restraint is needed from all parties so we can retain as many Public Service jobs as possible. If the various unions are serious about representing their members, the best way to do that is to work with us and find savings, flexibilities and efficiencies in the Public Service so that we can retain as many jobs as possible.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise to speak to the Treasurer's amendment this evening. I start by saying how very proud I am to be a member of the Newman government. We have a Treasurer who has handed down a budget that delivers for Queensland and delivers for the people of Queensland. I am proud to be a member of the Newman government when we have a six-month action plan so that we can deliver real services for the people of Queensland, so that we can make sure that

this great state gets back on track. One of the first things that struck me was the fact that the Labor opposition has no plan to help Queensland. The Labor opposition only has a legacy of debt and deficit. The Labor opposition has no plan to get Queensland back on track, but the Newman government does.

The Newman government budget delivered not only in the areas of Education and Health, but also for police on the beat. This is a budget that delivered for the people of Queensland and for communities right across Queensland. Every single member of this government can be incredibly proud of the things that we have done for the people in our communities and for the people right across Queensland. This is a budget and this is a plan that will get this great state back on track. We are committed to the people of Queensland and its future. This budget that was handed down earlier this year delivered particularly for my electorate. The Treasurer listened to what the people of my community wanted and what the people of my community needed.


I am very proud to be able to stand up tonight and support the Treasurer's amendment because when I think about the things that this government is going to do and when I think about the things that the opposition did when they were in government, I think about the positives that we have coming out of this. When I think about what the Bligh government did, all I can think about is broken promises. I think about the fuel subsidy that they said they were not going to scrap. I think about the assets that they said they were not going to sell. When I think about the Newman government, I think about our commitment to grow a four-pillar economy. I think about our commitment to revitalise front-line services. I think about our commitment to return autonomy to local communities, and that makes me think about the powers that we have just reinvested in local government. I think about the powers that we have reinvested in local health and hospital boards and I think about the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Bill that was passed in this House just hours ago.

When I think about what this government is doing, I think about the future of Queensland. Queensland is a great state with great opportunities and we have a government that is committed to making sure that the people of Queensland can reap the rewards of the great opportunities that we create for them. We are committed to making sure that the budget gets back in the black. We are committed to making sure that people have access to doctors and nurses and we are committed to making sure that those nurses are paid—something which the Labor government failed to do when they were in government.

We are committed to making sure that children in our schools have access to quality education, and that is why we are committed to making sure there are teacher aides in more prep classes across Queensland. We are committed to making sure that Queenslanders do not face the cost-of-living burdens that they faced under the failed Bligh-Fraser Labor government. We are committed to reducing the cost of living for Queenslanders. We have reintroduced the concessional stamp duty rate. We have overseen cuts to electricity bills and cuts to water bills—all because the Newman government cares about Queensland and cares about Queenslanders' futures. This is a government that has a plan. We have an action plan that will get this state back on track, because that is what we are committed to.

We said that we would grow a great economy. We said that we would focus on four key areas: tourism, resources, agriculture and construction. The Premier said last week that when those four pillars of the economy are firing, Queensland is firing. That is why this government and this Treasurer are committed to making sure we grow that four-pillar economy. I believe that it is not the role of government to create jobs but it is the role of government to create an environment within which business can create jobs. That is what this government is committed to—making sure that we can grow a strong economy so that people are able to go out there and find jobs and support their families. We are committed to revitalising front-line services for Queenslanders because we care about Queensland and we care about Queensland's future.

We will grow a four-pillar economy, we will get this budget back in the black and we will get this state back on track, because that is what we said we would do. Unlike the Labor Party when they were in government, we will honour the pledges we made to the people of Queensland. We will not break any promises that we made to the people of Queensland because we are committed to delivering for all of Queensland, because that is the mandate they gave us. We will honour the trust and the faith they put in us and we will honour our pledges and our mandate.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business. In doing so, let me say that the truth has come out at long last from the member for Broadwater. She just said that it is not the role of government to create jobs. Shame on you, member for Broadwater! Shame on you! The member for Broadwater thinks a lot but she does nothing. She does absolutely nothing about creating jobs in this great state. It is proven.

Under this government the unemployment rate—from 5.2 per cent in April to 5.8 per cent in May to six per cent in August before jumping to 6.3 per cent in September—is now higher than it was during the global financial crisis, and it could in fact reach double digits by 2015. This is now a Newman financial crisis. The unemployment rate in Queensland is now the worst in the nation after Tasmania.


The Minister for Health, who is also the 'minister for health cuts and closures', has made a significant contribution to increasing unemployment in this state by sacking the staff of front-line services—the staff of clinical support services—and by slashing grant funding to community health and social care services. While the minister has acknowledged his intention to remove 4,140 full-time equivalent positions for our public health system, he has been less forthcoming about the number of jobs lost in the community sector by slashing \$30 million a year for the next four years from the organisations that provide services to the most needy in the community.

The Minister for Health has not been alone in slashing grants that support jobs and services in community organisations. In fact, the Minister for Community Services and other ministers have been just as busy contributing to increasing numbers of unemployed in the health and community care sectors. Shame on all of those ministers! Many of these job cuts and service closures and downgrades have occurred in rural and regional areas. One just wonders whether people in the electorate of Warrego were aware that the South West Hospital and Health Service board would cut 30 positions within the first 10 months of an LNP government. Were people in the electorates of Cairns, Cook and Barron River aware that the first LNP budget would cost \$13 million worth of services and staff out of the budget for their local hospital board this year and a further \$7 million in 2013-14? Sixteen of our regional hospital and health services face cuts of three per cent of their 2011-12 operating budgets, with West Moreton, which provides the people of Bundamba access to the Ipswich Hospital, having a cut of 4.5 per cent—over \$17 million this year—with more to follow next year. With the Metro North Hospital and Health Services facing a \$50 million budget cut, is it any wonder that their CEO, Professor Keith McNeil, today announced that he is leaving to take up a position in the United Kingdom?

The Premier has told the people of Queensland that his government is not in the business of providing residential aged-care facilities. In a quite bizarre press release last Friday, the 'minister for health cuts and closures' announced that, in addition to closing facilities at Eventide, Brighton and at the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit, he was also now actively moving to close six other residential aged-care services including Parklands in Townsville, Eventide in Charters Towers, North Rockhampton Nursing Centre and Yaralla Place in Maryborough. So were these staff cuts announced prior to the election? No, they were not. In fact, there were two machinery-of-government plans: one prior to the election and another one after. And the nurses and the public servants all went down the gurgler.

While the Premier will be singing *Ding Dong Merrily on High* and, no doubt, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* this Christmas, workers and public servants will be hoping that Santa leaves him a lump of coal as he has been a bad, naughty boy. And talking about this government being a soap opera, let me tell you: they are a weak and ugly government.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.06 pm): I rise in this chamber to change the pitch of the debate to some sensible plane. I rise tonight to talk about the economic mismanagement of the previous ALP government—yet again—which has been well covered since the 54th Parliament was convened. It is a gross understatement to say that those opposite in the chamber did not exercise a great deal of fiscal responsibility—not at all. There was no responsibility, no discipline, no direction for the state's finances. Well, they were headed one way: into the red at a rapid rate.

At the March election Queenslanders gave us an overwhelming mandate to provide better economic management and some much needed fiscal responsibility. It was never going to be easy. After all, the state's finances had been spiralling downwards for the previous five years. It was never going to be an easy feat for the government, especially when on the Treasurer's first day on the job he was presented with an incoming government brief from Queensland Treasury which, for the benefit of the seven aimless souls opposite, I will restate again. In fact, it might be easier to actually cut them the DVD as this has been said over and over again, and they still simply do not get it. But we are not going to be beaten that easily: we will try one more time. So for the benefit of the seven primary school students opposite, let's go. The brief states—

Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is—

follow the bouncing ball—

unsustainable and—

continue with the bouncing ball—

restoration must be an ... priority for this term of government.

We have finally got their attention. Give them all a jelly bean! As if that news was not alarming enough, it gets better. Queensland Treasury Corporation advice reiterated the same view. It said—and I will use a Latin term which will completely bamboozle them: 'inter alia'. I am sure they have a dictionary there somewhere, or one of the interns will. Let's go with the bouncing ball. It said—

The State's debt has reached unprecedented levels. Together with its published forward estimates showing an even greater volume of debt required, Queensland is now in uncharted waters with respect to the volume of debt on issue and the resultant interest bill.

Why doesn't one of them get up and do what they should have done on the first day this chamber convened and simply apologise?

This truly is just testament to the economic mismanagement of the previous democratic socialists opposite. It is easy to spend other people's money. We all know Mrs Thatcher's famous line that when you spend other people's money you eventually run out of it. That is why the ALP appeared to throw a bit of money here, a bit of money there and it will all be fine. The previous member for Yeerongpilly in the previous parliament said words to the effect that it was 'just government money'. That sentence encapsulates exactly the mindset over there—encapsulates it absolutely. They had no idea of how to spend taxpayers' dollars efficiently—no idea whatsoever. Action had to be taken immediately by the LNP government, and I commend the Treasurer for the course of action that he undertook so decisively. Let me give the House a little textbook case here. I refer to the classic example of textbook micro-economics 101. Here is a project management 101 exercise, and the ball is still in play. Let's go!

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. Not to cut the member for Chatsworth off when he is on a roll, but he is talking about financial records. This is a motion about—

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PITT: I ask you to rule on relevance. This is not relevant to either the amendment or the motion that I moved.


Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I ask the member for Chatsworth to address the motion and amendment before the House. I call the member for Chatsworth.

Mr MINNIKIN: In terms of economic maladministration and mismanagement, this is a classic example that was pretty recent in my own electorate. Many members here would know that for many years there was a pressing need for a park-and-ride facility in the Carindale area. At that stage for many years there was crown land on the corner of Old Cleveland and Creek roads. As a classic example, within a matter of weeks of coming into government we actually constructed a park-and-ride facility in Carindale at the corner of Creek Road and Old Cleveland Road. It cost \$1,700 per car park bay. Let us contrast that with the previous two park-and-ride facilities that the previous ALP administration delivered at not \$1,700 per car park bay but—wait for it—\$37,000 per car park bay—\$37,000! Absolute geniuses! I will tell members why they do not get it. I will tell you why: we have looked at their CVs. None of them have come from the real world. When have they stayed awake on a Sunday night working out how they are going to pay people? They would not have a clue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yet again the mere fact that they raise their voices each and every time on economic issues proves their—

(Time expired)

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the opposition's motion and against the government's amendment. It is very easy for government members to talk about cuts in the Public Service and Public Service staff reductions. Tonight in my contribution I want to reflect on the impact this decision has had on the crime-fighting Crime and Misconduct Commission in Queensland. It is easy for governments to blame others. The member for Condamine identified very clearly that this government has lost the plot with its vendetta to attend to staff reductions and staff sackings throughout the whole of the Public Service in Queensland. I am very concerned that the Premier and the Treasurer refuse to take responsibility for destroying confidence in Queensland. Everyone in Queensland has been affected by this government's decision—shop owners or mums and dads or people at home having dinner tonight. Quite frankly, by comparing the decisions that this government has made and the impact of this government's decisions on the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the various reports that have been tabled that are on the public record, I hope other members of the government will think about what I intend to say.

I refer members to the Crime and Misconduct Commission's annual report. I refer members to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee report No. 86, the Attorney-General's response and more importantly the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commission's report to the advisory panel which is currently investigating the Crime and Misconduct Act. In particular, I want to take members to two sections of that report, which is on the committee's website. Under the heading 'Proceeds of crime' the report states—

The CMC's Proceeds of Crime Unit provides a dual benefit to Queenslanders in that it disrupts illegal activity by removing associated financial benefits, and in the restraint and subsequent forfeiture of assets to the State. In 2011-12 the CMC restrained \$20.858m and forfeited \$7.007m in assets.

It goes on—

Given that the unit both disrupts criminal activity and increases state revenue, the Committee considers that this area of the CMC is of particular importance.

This unit is under-resourced at present and its significant workload means that focus is taken away from new matters and directed towards finalising matters already on foot. The queuing of new matters, as outlined in the CMC's Annual Report for 2011-12, provides time and opportunities for suspected criminals to dispose of money and other assets obtained through criminal activity.

I take members to another area headed 'CMC budget and staffing'. It states—

The Committee has particular concern regarding the current staffing issues within the CMC.

...

The total number of staff to leave the CMC between 1 July 2012 and 23 November 2012 will be 57. The Committee is concerned—

this is a bipartisan committee—

that such a reduction in staffing will inevitably affect the CMC's ability to perform its functions effectively.

The Committee notes a 1% budget reduction has contributed to the loss of a significant number of CMC staff. The Advisory Panel should consider the current funding of positions within the CMC carefully to ensure that the CMC has sufficient resources to fulfil its functions effectively.


What was the Attorney-General's response to these committee recommendations? I want to share it with members. The committee's recommendation in relation to combating major crime states—

The Committee recommends that the Government consider the allocation of additional resources to the CMC's forensic computing unit in order to better support investigations of paedophilia and child exploitation material.

The Attorney-General's response was, 'Not supported. Take a submission to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee.' Another committee recommendation states—

The Committee recommends that as a priority the Government allocate greater resources to the CMC's proceeds of crime function in order to assist the CMC in retaining existing staff and attracting new staff while also meeting the demand for new civil confiscation actions.

The Attorney-General's response? 'Not supported. Take the matter to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee.' This morning I asked a question of the Premier about his interest and concern about some of the submissions that the PCMC has made, and what did he say? Effectively he said, 'I'm not interested.' Queenslanders should be interested. Queenslanders should be concerned, because today we also saw this government remove the most experienced member in parliament, the member for Gaven, who has been a chairman of the PCMC for some time and who has more knowledge than anyone else on that committee. We have to ask the question: what is the Premier and the government's agenda? Why should they and why would they want to remove such an important person from such an important committee, today of all days?

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (6.17 pm): With the amount of tripe that has been coming from the other side of the House tonight, I find it difficult to know where to start. I will start with the private member's motion where 'Labor condemns the LNP'. I have some news for you, Labor: the people of Queensland condemned you at the last election. That is what happened. There are seven of you sitting over there, and there are seven of you sitting over there for a very good reason—and that reason is you mucked it up for 20 years. You could not get it right for 20 years!

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, please address your comments through the chair and refrain from using the term 'you'.

Mr CRANDON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The second part of this private member's motion notes 'the Premier's refusal to say how many people'. I am sorry, but the Premier is not refusing to say anything. Before the election he told the people of Queensland that there were 20,000 too many public servants. The fortunate thing is that we do not have to go that far. There are not 20,000 too many. We have been able to find some reductions, but I will tell members what: the Bligh government had 41,000 people in its crosshairs—41,000 people, double the number that we suggested might have to go—but at the end of the day we have been able to pull that figure back.

The third part of the private member's motion states 'expresses its concerns to the thousands of families who face a bleak Christmas'. The people of Queensland, unless you have not noticed, have been facing a bleak Christmas every Christmas for years and years and years, and it is on your shoulders! The reason the people of Queensland put this government into power is that the people of Queensland know that there has to be some short-term pain for long-term gain. Okay, they might have a tough Christmas this year just like they did last year because of the members opposite and the years before that, but they are going to have a good future—the right future for themselves, for their children, for their grandchildren. My grandchildren should not be paying off their \$100 billion debt—\$65 billion projection and climbing, climbing, climbing and \$92 billion of projected debt in a few years time and we would be paying off that for three generations.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. My point of order is that the member for Coomera used the term '\$100 billion debt' which I understand others have had to apologise for.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, take your seat. The member, in the full sentence, put it in context. I will not take frivolous points of order.

Mr CRANDON: Madam Speaker, thank you for your protection. I rise here to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Treasurer. Earlier, the member for Chatsworth—as did the Treasurer—mentioned that Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable. That came from Queensland Treasury. The member did not say that this view is also reinforced by the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which said—

The State's debt has reached unprecedented levels. Together with its published forward estimates showing an even greater volume of debt required, Queensland is now in uncharted waters.

That occurred under the watch of those opposite. Without corrective action gross debt is expected to be \$92 billion in 2015-16.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I thank the member for giving me that nice segue. Gross debt is expected to be \$100 billion by 2018-19. That is where the numbers come from.

Those opposite do not understand that there is a subtle difference between government and business. Government does not create jobs; business creates jobs.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: The members opposite should listen carefully. They can keep on increasing the number of people in their employ, but they are not creating any economic benefit for the state of Queensland. The businesses of Queensland, as referred to by the member for Broadwater, are the ones that create the jobs in this state. Our target is to bring unemployment down to four per cent over the next six years. The major difference between the two sides of this parliament is that the members opposite do not get it; we do.


Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, I will ask you to withdraw that as it is unparliamentary.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw.

Mr CRANDON: Madam Speaker, thank you once again for your protection. I have taken so many notes here, I just want to touch on some of them. I have 30 seconds to go, but I am sorry I cannot address them all. We talked about \$85 billion debt in forward estimates, but let me finish on water assets—\$7 billion or \$8 billion worth of water assets when it should have cost \$4 billion, maybe \$5 billion for the same ones. Do the members opposite know why that occurred? Because they did them on a cost-plus basis. Do they know what that means? You are guaranteeing profits. The bottom line is that we promised the people of Queensland that we would fix the problems and grow the Queensland economy for all Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the opposition's motion tonight and to reject outright the amendment that has been moved by the Treasurer. I cannot quite believe what I am hearing in this House. First of all, we had the member for Noosa say that tonight the opposition has moved a stupid motion. I am sorry to say this to the member for Noosa, but the last time I looked people's jobs were fundamentally important, and the cornerstone of this Treasurer's budget is 14,000 jobs going. Then we had the extraordinary claims in this House by not only the member for Broadwater but now the member for Coomera that the role of government is not to create jobs. I am almost speechless by what those members said. It has always been Queensland Labor that stands up for jobs in this state. It has always been Queensland Labor that has been focused on creating jobs in this state. During the last term of the Labor government, we created over 90,000 jobs. That is what government is about: creating jobs.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There were projects such as improving our health services. In relation to the Southport hospital, over \$1 billion was spent creating jobs. The extension of the Darra to Richlands line and to Springfield Railway Station—what was that about? Creating jobs! We had the expansion of the Cairns Hospital and the Mackay hospital. What was that about? Creating jobs! We had the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project. What was that about? Creating jobs! That is what government is all about: creating jobs, not ripping apart jobs, not impacting on people.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Chatsworth under standing order 253A and I will start warning other members around the chamber. The noise levels are getting up. There are too many interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we head towards Christmas and the end of 2012 and the beginning of the new year, it is time to reflect on the past 12 months and it is a time to look to the future. That is what many thousands of Queenslanders will be doing this week, but a large proportion of them will be looking back on 2012 with a deep sense of regret and towards 2013 with an even deeper sense of regret. In particular, those thousands will be wondering how they will help their children celebrate Christmas, how they will face what will be a bleak holiday period, how they will put their kids through school next year, how they will provide for their families and how they will pay the rent or the mortgage. We know that the LNP went to the last election talking about lowering the cost of living. How can people pay their bills if they simply do not have a job? These are the thousands who have been cruelly and thoughtlessly axed by this callous government in its wholesale slashing of the public sector, in its full scale assault on front-line services and on community groups and in its campaign of fear against some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders, not the least those elderly residents who face an uncertain future as this government plans to close nursing homes.

Today, we heard from the Premier that the LNP members have already enjoyed their Christmas celebration with a jovial cruise down the Brisbane River. I do not believe it was *the Love Boat* and it certainly was not Clive Palmer's planned *Titanic*. I question how many of those opposite who went on this cruise took a moment while on the river to spare a thought for all of those families—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines under standing order 253A and ask for members to cease their interjections across the chamber.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I ask that all members here spare a thought for those families who this Christmas will not have the capacity to enjoy such luxuries owing to the cost cutting that this government has embarked on. I question how many of those opposite are willing to take some responsibility for the thousands of families who have been left distraught and worried about their futures by this spiteful and merciless sacking program.

The members opposite may sit and laugh and they may be dismissive, but they should go back to their electorates and listen, because the message is loud and clear. The member for Yeerongpilly is prepared to stand up and say it publicly. The member for Condamine has already left the boat cruise and has joined the Katter party. There is nothing more important to a family than a job. This motion reflects that the opposition believes that jobs are fundamentally important, that governments are elected to create jobs and not sack people as this government has. I commend the motion to the House.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 69—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 11—Byrne, Hopper, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 69—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 11—Byrne, Hopper, Katter, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House affirms its support for the Newman government's 2012-13 state budget, the Newman government's six-month action plan and its outcomes.

Madam SPEAKER: The House will resume at 7.40 pm. I remind members that we can share the spirit of Christmas with the turning on of the Christmas lights and listening to a school choir, commencing at seven o'clock for the choir and 7.15 pm for the lights at the porte-cochere.


Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

WEAPONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2785, on motion of Mr Dempsey—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.40 pm), continuing: I rise to continue speaking in support of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As I was saying, this bill principally goes to the true difference between the LNP and the ALP. One believes in ridiculous legislation that wraps people up in red tape and is designed to make good people frustrated and to keep them honest and does nothing to punish bad people. The amendments that we are proposing here will allow good people to use their firearms in responsible ways for sporting, recreational and agricultural purposes and will ensure that people who use firearms in illegal ways are punished severely with minimum mandatory sentencing for people who treat their firearms in a dangerous way.


Mr Rickuss: Like the bikie gangs.

Mr WATTS: Absolutely. I take that interjection. If someone is in a bikie gang and they are using these firearms they will be punished accordingly and there will be a minimum mandatory sentence for them. The bill amends the Weapons Act to introduce a minimum mandatory sentence of imprisonment where a person unlawfully and without a reasonable excuse either carries on a business of trafficking weapons where one of those weapons is a firearm, supplies firearms where one of those firearms is a short firearm, possesses a firearm that has been used in the commission of an indictable offence, possesses a firearm for the purpose of committing or facilitating an indictable offence, and possesses a short firearm in a public place including a vehicle.

I fail to see how any of this is breaching someone's rights. As a father of four children, I am very pleased to know that if someone is committing one of those offences with a firearm they will receive a minimum mandatory sentence. I might just add that as a safeguard this does not apply to someone under the age of 18. They will be dealt with through the normal course. I think it is a good amendment. Red tape and bureaucracy is lifted off the backs of people who want to use their firearms for recreational purposes, while ensuring, of course, that there are safeguards in place. People who want to use firearms for intimidation, for committing criminal acts, for intimidating police and generally causing havoc and lawlessness in our society will be punished accordingly. And so they should. This bill sends a very strong message to those people who wish to commit crimes using these weapons in our society. It also sends a very strong message to those people in our society who want to use them responsibly. That is fundamentally the difference between the two parties. We would like to facilitate people who want to be responsible and take responsibility for their actions to be able to do that in a sensible way and we want to punish people who are committing serious offences and acts of intimidation and trafficking in firearms.

The introduction of mandatory sentencing for firearm offences will act as a strong deterrent for those members of society who unlawfully use firearms to engage in criminal activities. I am sure of that. I commend the minister for that. The bill also contains a series of provisions that will streamline the process for legitimate firearm owners to go about their business without compromising the safety of the general public. I think those are the two key issues: good people will have their lives simplified and bad people will be severely punished.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their work and also thank all of the staff of the committee in preparing the report. I congratulate the minister on bringing forward a strong bill that serves the purpose it was designed for. It will help control the bikie gangs, it will help get these guns off the street and it will put bad people who are committing these offences behind bars where they belong. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.44 pm): I rise to speak to the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I have spoken in this chamber, as have others, in relation to concerns about mandatory sentencing. I certainly hold grave fears about the 'three strikes and you're out' type scenario, albeit that the reasons for implementing such legislation could be well intentioned. I think the saving grace in relation to this bill is that the circumstances in which the mandatory sentencing would be implemented are areas where the community concern is high. I do note, however, that the member for Rockhampton has circulated some amendments and I will be very interested to hear the minister's response to those amendments because they do provide an opportunity for a court to exercise discretion where there are exceptional circumstances. In the absence of ameliorating comments from the minister, I will be supporting those amendments. It is hard to clarify or understand an exceptional circumstance in the area of the weapons use that is outlined in this legislation, but certainly I think it is wise to have the opportunity there for a court to consider if there are exceptional circumstances.

Back to the legislation, over the years gun owners in this state have been subject to very harsh legislation. I have been privileged to know quite a number of people personally across the state who have written when the first weapons legislation came to this parliament, who are very concerned about being penalised for the possession of weapons, but non-law-abiding citizens would continue to

purchase weapons on the black market and in other illicit ways with little constraint. In the nineties I sat alone voting against the weapons legislation after the Port Arthur massacre, not because I condoned what happened at Port Arthur—quite the opposite—but because the legislation in the main, especially in the view of the majority of people in this state who contacted me, was penalising law-abiding weapons owners and not the criminals.


This bill amends the Weapons Act and it does introduce mandatory minimum periods of imprisonment, but when one looks at the circumstances in which that mandatory imprisonment will be applied it is difficult to see where an exceptional circumstance could be implemented. It includes a person who carries on the business of trafficking in weapons where one of the weapons is a firearm—because, to be honest, most illicit firearms are gained on the black market. Somebody is trafficking them and if you talk to people ‘in the know’—and I don’t know very many ‘in the know’, if I know any—weapons on the black market are fairly readily attainable if you know who to talk to. The second area is a person who supplies firearms where one of those firearms is a short firearm. We have had concealable weapon legislation in this state since well before I was born. It has been responsible legislation. People who have concealable weapons have to have a genuine reason to have those—either work related, private security or other special circumstances. The third area is possessing a firearm that has been used in the commission of an indictable offence. The fourth area is a person who possesses a firearm for the purpose of committing or facilitating an indictable offence and the fifth area is possessing a short firearm in a public place including in a vehicle.

While, as I have said, I think most people in the community would support this legislation, my only concern is the mandatory nature of the sentencing. I applaud the minister for changes to the renewal process in relation to weapons legislation. One of the greatest issues—it is stronger than an annoyance—brought to me has been the convoluted and often incomplete or inaccurate process of renewing a weapons licence. Certainly if that can be streamlined and the period of renewal required lengthened, as this bill proposes, that will be welcomed.

The other matter that I wish to comment on relates to the possession of a weapon. Clause 15 talks about the offence committed by an adult ‘if the person unlawfully possesses a firearm and uses the firearm to commit an indictable offence’. There is no excuse for using firearms in offences. When we debated the first, second and third weapons legislation changes, there was discussion about the use of firearms in offences. As firearms became, at least initially, more difficult to attain, other weapons of choice have been used, for instance, knives and syringes filled with blood. People who are intent on doing something wrong will find a means of menacing people.

The areas that this legislation intends to address will be welcomed by the community. As I said, I hold concerns about mandatory sentencing. I look forward to hearing the minister’s comments in relation to the member for Rockhampton’s proposed amendments, which give the courts the opportunity to consider exceptional circumstances in relation to the possession of weapons, the unlawful supply of weapons and the unlawful trafficking of weapons. I believe the most likely scenario where exceptional circumstances may be remotely possible is in the possession of weapons. I cannot think of a situation where unlawful supply or unlawful trafficking could be justified in any way. However, as I said, I have an abiding concern about mandatory sentencing and I will be interested to hear the minister’s response.

Again, overall I think the community welcomes any attempts to properly control unlawful weapons. I repeat my comment that many law-abiding citizens are members of gun clubs, work in rural industries and live in rural areas and they have justifiable reasons to have weapons, as do Olympic sportspeople. Over the years, they have been significantly affected by legislation. They believe that it has been inferred that they could be regarded as people who use weapons irresponsibly. I do not believe that is the case. Overwhelmingly, people who have public ownership of weapons behave in a responsible manner and I acknowledge them. I also acknowledge the intent of this legislation. I support it, with those exceptions.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (7.52 pm): Tonight in the House I rise to speak in support of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Put simply, this bill reflects an iron-clad commitment by the Newman LNP government to crack down on the unlawful use of firearms by bringing in mandatory minimum sentencing for serious firearms offences, which is something that people would say is long overdue. As a result, we will have the toughest gun laws in the land and I am sure the good people of Mackay—a great city that I partly represent as the member for Whitsunday—would particularly welcome that, especially those citizens who can remember Mackay’s infamous bkie shootout in 1997, when the city found itself in lockdown.

I remember that day very well. At the time, I was continuing my new career in sports administration as the executive officer of the Mackay and District Rugby League. One Sunday afternoon in late August, we were holding our grand finals when all hell broke loose. I remember police officers—heaps of them—fleeing the grounds to protect our community as two rival bkie gangs started firing shotguns at Cremorne, just across the Pioneer River from the league’s office inside the former Prince of Wales Hotel. Late that afternoon, the old Forgan Bridge was closed, and for good reason. Countless Mackayites will remember just how worried they were as shots rang out across our normally peaceful


city. I can tell members for a fact that when I got back to my office, which overlooked the river, I kept my head down for good reason. For the record, I can say this about bikie gangs: it is not what they wear; it is what they do. In this case, they terrified the community, which is something Mackayites will not forget.

Needless to say, the people who remember what happened on that Sunday afternoon in August 1997 will welcome these measures. I commend the Minister for his stewardship of this bill. If the member for Mackay was fair dinkum, he would tell his Labor colleagues—all six of them—to support the bill, as I am sure he also remembers what happened more than 15 years ago. If the member for Mackay votes against this bill, let it be known that he is soft on crime and does not want to see a safer community.

I have to say that responsible gun owners will also welcome the good work of the minister, who has delivered on his commitment to cut down on red tape when it comes to weapons licensing. We had to do something. In my own electorate, particularly in the rural communities to the north of Mackay such as Bloomsbury, Gunyarra, Lethebrook and Strathdickie, there are many responsible gun owners. Many of those people work the land, many are sporting shooters and many are both, and they are fed up with what has been going on. People such as Oscar Lawrence, Jeffrey Ruddell, Ian Lade—and the list goes on and on, are decent, law-abiding blokes who love to shoot because that is their chosen sport. And guess what? They're pretty damn good at it!

Mr Ruddell is a prominent Whitsundays businessman who also has a canefarm at Strathdickie near Proserpine. Some time ago he contacted me, raising his concerns about the shocking amount of time it takes to process paperwork for weapons licensing. Mr Ruddell has been a responsible gun owner for a long time, yet he was bemoaning the fact that in October he was still waiting for his application for a new pistol licence to be processed, six months after his application first went in. Mr Ruddell needs that licence in his role as a primary producer, in addition to his love for shooting with the pistol club up the road in Bowen, which is the historic North Queensland town named after our state's first governor and nowadays represented by my good friend and colleague the hard-working member for Burdekin.

We have already heard the minister and others walk us through the initiatives being undertaken in relation to red-tape reduction in the area of weapons licensing and I welcome this. It is a start. At the same time, we are ensuring we have the toughest gun laws in the Commonwealth. That is something to be proud of. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I commend and thank the Minister for Police and Community Safety for bringing this bill to the House. I also thank the departmental staff who have worked for a long time on the legislation as well as members of the Weapons Advisory Panel. The committee put a lot of work into its review of the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the perspective of the shooters of Queensland, there has been tremendous input. This is a great thing that is occurring in Queensland.

The Newman government is serious about cracking down on crime in Queensland. It is one of the biggest things we have heard from people. I have been in this House for nearly nine years and the biggest issues to come up every year are law and order and crime. The Newman government is absolutely focused on those issues as well as others.

This bill honours the LNP's commitment to combating crime in this state and it sends a clear message to offenders and would-be culprits. The trafficking, supply, unlawful possession and use of illegal firearms will not be tolerated in this state. That is something we did not hear from the previous government. That message did not go out at all. With the introduction of this bill the government is taking a tough stance on crime. The government is doing what is necessary to protect innocent Queenslanders and reduce crime which was allowed to flourish under Labor.

There are many legitimate gun owners out there in the community. We have so many farmers and sporting shooters. They will have nothing to fear with the introduction of this legislation, and regardless of the claptrap being peddled prior to the introduction of this bill. Prior to this, under Labor they were the victims of a dysfunctional gun licensing and registration system.

The responsible and legitimate gun owners were the ones who have been treated like criminals. They felt like criminals. Whether they have been treated that way or not, that is the way they felt. That is the way the legislation prior to this had been written. They had to comply with the cumbersome paperwork and red-tape, which the previous government was so fond of, as we know, while the criminal element was allowed to run rampant, trading in illegal firearms and running roughshod over Queenslanders.

All the legislation that we saw come in was targeted at legitimate gun owners. It was not targeted at combating crime. Legitimate gun owners were previously bound and gagged by red tape. As part of this bill, consultation was undertaken with stakeholders and a review identified 18 red-tape reduction initiatives. Nine initiatives are included in this bill and a further nine are being addressed through policy and regulation amendments. I commend the government for actually listening—for being out there and listening to what people want.

There are currently 144,000 firearms licences issued for the 551,535 category A and category B firearms registered in Queensland. I am proud to say I am one of those too. I have held a gun licence ever since gun licensing was brought into this—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: Goodness gracious, I am not sure that I will take that interjection, but thank you, member for Gregory.

Extending the term of category A and B licences from five years to a period of up to 10 years is expected to result in processing efficiencies and financial benefits to licensees. This will be a big break. I know it has certainly been welcomed out there in the community.

The bill has a large number of parts to it. I will not go through all of those parts. As I just said, it does extend the term of the category A and category B licences from five years to a term of not more than 10 years. It also removes the obligation of an approved pistol club to provide an annual participation report to an authorised officer. I do not know how many people really look at the sport of shooting and know how important it is right across Queensland and Australia. It is a national sport, but it is often vilified, and it should not be. We have world-class shooters coming out of Australia. Not a great deal is actually given to them in terms of support.

The mandatory penalties imposed by this bill will apply to adults who unlawfully: carry on the business of trafficking in weapons without a reasonable excuse, where at least one of the weapons is a firearm; supply weapons without a reasonable excuse, where at least one of the weapons is a short firearm; possess a firearm where the firearm is used in the commission of an indictable offence; and possess a firearm where the possession of the firearm is for the purpose of committing or facilitating an indictable offence. We have not seen any other legislation of this type brought in, particularly from the previous government. This legislation will be welcomed. This government does not tolerate crime. This is what the community is asking for.


I listened with great interest to the member for Ipswich's contribution to the debate. He gave us a very learned dissertation on the pros and cons of mandating. I did hear that the member for Rockhampton was totally against the idea of mandatory sentencing. The community has been crying out for this for years. That is what this bill is delivering.

Under this new legislation, there will be no excuses. It is time for Queenslanders to feel safe again. It is time to get tough on crime. Any member of the community who does not hold a firearms licence will be able to surrender their firearms during a planned amnesty period without penalty. I know that will be welcomed.

This bill aims at cracking down on illegal gun holders, many of whom hold these weapons for, could we say, questionable activities. The bill will impose prison sentences of up to five years for crimes, including the unlawful possession of guns and the supplying or trafficking of weapons.

The Newman government is taking aim via this bill—taking aim to protect innocent Queenslanders and to reduce crime. We are also getting rid of the red tape that is totally surrounding gun owners. Gun owners in Queensland have felt vilified and unloved, to use a very easy term. We have many legitimate gun owners across Queensland. They are using the guns for sporting activities or for agricultural, rural and farming activities.

There has been growing concern about the criminal activity involving the use of firearms that is occurring across Queensland. Those firearms are not registered firearms, they are illegal firearms. At long last we are seeing some legislation that will actually crack down on those illegal firearms. Queenslanders have had enough of crime and they are entitled to feel safe. I commend this bill to the House. I congratulate the minister for at long last bringing some sensible legislation into this parliament on the use of firearms.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (8.07 pm): It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak to the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. From the outset, I congratulate the Newman cabinet and especially the Minister for Police and Community Safety on bringing this legislation to the parliament. There are a lot of responsible issues in this piece of legislation.

I was in this parliament in May 1996 following the horrific aftermath of Port Arthur. What the then Prime Minister, John Howard, sought from Australian governments right across the Commonwealth was tough gun laws. This is not about toughening up gun laws. This is about saying to the crooks out there who want to break the law, 'This is about you.' This legislation will go after those people and put them where they should be. Mandatory sentencing is a very important and integral plank in this legislation.

What we are looking at here is letting the police be the observers in many areas when it comes to licensing. We are putting in place a structure. They know who the good people are. They know who the responsible and genuine people are. This bill is about the element out there who have no respect

whatsoever for themselves let alone the wider community. We have seen the horrific events on the Gold Coast in the last couple of years. We have seen a young police officer murdered. This is about making our community safer. The Newman government came to power on 24 March with a policy of getting tough on crime.

One of the worst things people can have in their possession is illegal weapons that are going to create violence in the community. We can talk about outlaw motorcycle gangs all day, but they are the scourge of the community. They want to just snub their nose at the law, snub their nose at communities and snub their nose in general at all things good. If it is about surrounding illegal firearms, drug issues and other evil habits, well so be it: this law is going after those people in question.

Mandatory sentencing is part of this legislation. Mandatory minimum sentencing will not apply to any person under the age of 18 years. A lot of people misinterpret what this legislation is all about. This legislation is going to create a situation in which lawful gun owners in Queensland can go about their business of owning weapons knowing that they are not going to be subject to a criminal investigation because they are going about it in the right way.

The bill amends section 20 of the act doubling the current term of a firearms licence for a category A and a category B licence from five years to up to 10 years. This is a very responsible amendment to the current legislation, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I will tell you why. In relation to the five-year period, a lot of people, particularly younger people in Queensland—and I know myself that one of my licences lapsed recently and I have to reapply for it. By extending the time frame from six months to 12 months in which a licensee with an expired licence is required to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the weapon, those people can get their licence renewed without having to do further safety training.


For people who live in rural and regional Queensland, this is going to be a very good piece of legislation, because the local police know who these people are. If a person unknown to the police comes in to apply for a new licence, then they have to go through the proper channels and the proper process, which is only fair. You might think that there are people out there who have a rifle and they can do this and they can do that, but no they cannot. They still have to have the same confinement conditions—the same stable, steel safes and all of that sort of thing that governs the housing of firearms. They have to be locked away. The police conduct inspections of those weapons. The important point is that this legislation is not about freeing things up but those people who are reliable, who are honest, are not going to be under the same scrutiny as the crooks that we have been talking about—the bikie gangs and all those sorts of people.

There are 551,535 category A and B weapons registered in Queensland. This legislation is extending the term of the category A and B licences from five years to a period of up to 10 years, as I said. I believe that especially with the amnesty and especially with this new licensing regime we are going to see people being more honest about what they do have. I say to the minister that the amnesty is a very important plank of this legislation, because there is no doubt that there are tonnes of people out there who have illegal weapons and are probably fearful of handing them in because they think they are going to go to jail or get into trouble for having those weapons in their possession. So this amnesty will give those people the ability to dispose of those weapons in a proper and legal way, and that is precisely what we are about here.

The good part in this bill, as I said a while ago, is the extension of the time frame from six months to 12 months, which is consistent with the time frame for new licence applications. In real terms, the good people out there are not under surveillance by the police. Most times the surveillance is to do with unlicensed weapons, it is to do with black market weapons, it is to do with the weapons that come into this country. There was a time when about 100 containers would come in and only three or four would be checked. We had a situation then where unlicensed weapons were getting through. This is another important issue for the police and the Federal Police to make certain that surveillance is upgraded and that it continues to be more prominent in those areas of investigation. These crooks are out there all the time trying to play the police off a break. But this is not about taking weapons off ordinary law-abiding Queenslanders; this is about making certain we remove the weapons from the community, from the crooks, and to try to make Queensland safer by imposing tougher penalties on that element of the community who have no respect for themselves, as I said, and no respect for the wider community.

There has been a lot of fear out there—across electorates, across the state—that the LNP government was going to introduce tougher gun legislation. It is not about having tougher gun legislation; it is about taking the red tape out of the system. It is about making absolutely certain that the honest law-abiding citizens are treated with respect, unlike the crew on the other side who all the time want to think, 'Yes, we are going to make it tough—make it tough.' The only thing they ever made tough was weapons licensing for honest law-abiding citizens while the crooks were running rampant around the streets of the Gold Coast and other towns here in Queensland. Mr Deputy Speaker, I say to you here tonight that it is this Newman LNP government that is going to reverse the tide for this element in our communities. There is one thing for certain—and that is that this government is not going to rest easy with those louts and crooks and evil people who are ruining the communities of this great state.

These amendments to the weapons licensing laws are not about making the laws weaker or making it easier for people to get guns. They are about tightening up the process to make it hellishly tough for those crooks out there to survive in this community, because this government is not going to allow them to prosper.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (8.16 pm): I have the great privilege to be the new incoming chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I have had the great benefit of advice from the exiting chair, the member for Condamine, and the research director, Mr Brook Hastie, of the committee secretariat. This is a very hardworking and extremely busy committee and their secretariat have managed to produce a very comprehensive report, which I am sure all members have subsequently seen, in what is a very complex and difficult area. This is not to denigrate the time frame that the police and the Department of Community Safety have set for themselves either, but the time frame set for the committee was very tight. They rapidly approached what has been a serious series of problems with a set of weapons solutions that used correctly should address very significant components of a very real problem in the community.

Correctly stated, this problem is occurring in communities and those communities do not like it. They want change, they want safety and they want those offending to be prevented from doing so and severely restricted from doing so. This bill may well achieve that. Clearly the shooting incident in South-East Queensland earlier this year—most likely by bikies and OMCG related—has been the genesis of this legislative step as a preventative policing step with some elements attached to it. It is part of that tougher approach to crime with harsher penalties and in this case minimum mandatory sentences.

The summary of the 30 April 2012 statement by the Hon. Campbell Newman is well detailed in the library research. But basically, as has been detailed, it includes a five-year mandatory minimum custodial sentence for trafficking in illegal firearms; a three-year mandatory minimum custodial sentence for supplying illegal firearms; an 18-month mandatory minimum custodial sentence for possession of an illegal firearm used in the commission of an indictable offence; a 12-month mandatory minimum custodial sentence for unlawful possession of an illegal firearm for the purpose of committing or facilitating in the commission of an indictable offence; and a 12-month mandatory minimum custodial sentence for possession of an illegal firearm in a public place.

Significantly, it was also announced that the legislation will provide for a voluntary hand back, which has been well detailed by most of the speakers; a registration amnesty, which the member for Gregory highlighted; and there would be no moves to erode the rights of law-abiding firearm owners who really have all the standard sets of controls. I think that the committee have gone through a lot of these things in detail, and I congratulate them for what they have done.

Honourable members, we are not alone here. All states are in the process of beefing up their own laws, but as stated Queensland will have the strongest and toughest of all the legislative steps. Honourable members may be interested in the information that has been provided by a Library research paper written by Nicolee Dixon in an August 2012 brief. It is most interesting as she has compared all the different states and stated what should be used as comparisons across borders. The comparisons across the states could be used if they needed to inform people.

There has been a shorter period of review, but that ministerial advisory committee, which was established by the minister—and I congratulate him for doing so—has had considerable time to consider what is needed in this area, and this is what has come from it. The Law Society has been consulted. Yes, it did occur a little later in the piece, but they have certainly had some time to respond. They have supported parts of the bill but they certainly have argued against the mandatory sentencing elements, as they usually do; it is consistent with their policy.

To at least address some of the obvious concerns of the public in proposing such legislation, particularly harsh legislation, the minister highlighted some key points in his introductory speech. They are the dovetailing of this legislation with existing legislation and the penalties schemes—and that is well detailed—the careful defining of what this bill is addressing, the mandatory minimum sentencing applications and safeguards around all these things. Critically, he said—

The new sentencing regime is not intended to capture licensed firearms owners who fail to renew their licence or find themselves unlicensed due to administrative processes beyond their control.

The minister has certainly gone to enormous lengths to try to ensure that those things are fulfilled.


With regard to the minimum mandatory sentencing—and there certainly are normal concerns about those—it has been raised that these are special circumstances. We do need strong deterrents and the reasons for that have been stated and appear to be well justified. As stated, the end result is that we will have the toughest gun laws in Australia. We probably need them by the look of what is going on. Remember that this is softened by the ability to raise a reasonable excuse for those who need to do so. Clearly the types of reasonable excuses are well detailed in the committee's report.

Secondly, shooters who have done everything correctly will not be captured by this legislation. Therefore, they will not be drawn into it. That certainly takes into account all sorts of issues regarding licensing. This is specifically targeted at criminals. Thirdly, the firearms amnesty will coincide with the introduction of the sentencing regime. People need not be fearful if they hand in their weapons because they will not be captured under this legislation, and there are significant safeguards to justify those statements. In terms of the penalties, this is not a complete waiver of judges' discretion. It has been stated tonight that in some respects judges will have no discretion in this area. In fact, that is not correct. I would say that it does allow the judges more discretion than people have previously stated.

I turn to the issue of red-tape reduction, which is a critical part of the bill and has been supported in a bipartisan way. I congratulate the committee and both sides of parliament for reaching this consensus. Those provisions in the bill will result in the bill being far more effective. The minister and the department are to be congratulated for achieving these sorts of changes. Interestingly enough, there were no submissions on the red-tape reductions. Either the provisions were so good that most people could not actually come up with a better idea or, alternatively, people could not come up with something better within the time frame. These are well detailed in the report. I will not go through all of them. Those who are seeking a little bit more information will find that it is well covered on pages 15 to 17. I would highlight that they are simple things such as the licence term being extended to up to 10 years—they are listed under specific headings—removing the obligation for pistol clubs to provide annual reports, extending the reporting time for licensed dealers to provide an annual return, extending the terms of permits to up to six months et cetera. It goes on and on. In fact, they are really quite sensible suggestions.

In summary, I would like to congratulate the minister on, firstly, starting with the reduction of red tape. Those sorts of things are terrific initiatives, but they require quite a lot of time and detail to work through the things that will actually save people time. We are now seeing the results of these changes. Secondly, this bill when it comes into effect should provide a very powerful deterrent to a significant group that causes the community grief. They are largely OMCGs but they do include other people as well. There are always concerns when mandatory minimum sentencing is proposed. As a counter to it, this bill will provide a stronger deterrent and that may be the appropriate step at this stage. It will address community concerns. It does not remove or vilify sensible gun ownership.

As I said, the red-tape reduction steps are supported in a bipartisan way and are sensible. These preventive and punitive components are part of a complete suite of weapons legislation that has come into parliament since the new government took over from the former Labor government. The amnesty gives us hope that there will be a greater hand in controlling the legal dispensing of drugs. I think the member for Gregory thought that that would happen. Sometimes people's greatest fear is that we propose these steps and these things do not happen. The amnesty looks to be a very good amnesty and it may well lead to that. A net positive effect of this legislation is that it removes a lot of uncertainty in some ways and when you look at it in a combined way, the negatives are grossly outweighed by the positives. It is reasonable to support it and I would ask all members to do so. Guns do not kill, but guns and weapons in the hands of criminals certainly have a great potential not just to do harm but to do widespread damage to communities, and that is what communities are seeking protection from in this type of legislation.

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (8.26 pm), in reply: I start by thanking all members for their contribution to the debate on the bill tonight. I also thank my staff for organising the bill and the paperwork beforehand. I would now like to address some specific issues raised by members in the context of the debate. The member for Rockhampton raises the issue of judicial discretion in the context of the minimum penalties imposed by the bill. The member for Rockhampton seems to argue the case that minimum sentences completely remove the discretion of the judiciary in the sentencing process. The first point I make is that these penalties are narrowly targeted. They address extremely serious conduct with weapons. The member for Rockhampton acknowledges that the criminal misuse of firearms causes fear in the community, yet he will not support a bill designed to address the offences that cause that fear.

It is also important to make the point that mandatory minimum sentences are not a one-size-fits-all approach. The mandatory minimum sentences dovetail into the existing tiered penalty regime of the Weapons Act with a term of mandatory imprisonment proportionately linked to the type of offences committed and the number and the type of weapons involved. Additionally, the judiciary will maintain the discretion to sentence within the range between the minimum and the maximum penalties. Please remember that the judiciary and the magistrate still have the discretion. Further, the bill has been designed to avoid unwanted capture. The bill provides the courts with the discretion to ensure that a person does not face the mandatory penalties where the person is able to raise a reasonable excuse in appropriate circumstances. The definition of 'reasonable excuse' obviously can be long in length, but at the end of the day it is up to the discretion of the magistrate.

The member for Rockhampton stated that he supported the work of the firearms investigation team. The government also believes that the Queensland Police Service is doing excellent work enforcing the provisions relating to criminal misuse of firearms. However, those efforts need to be

supported by penalties that are reflective of the serious nature of the offences which are the subject of this bill. The government believes that it is important that the work of our police is supported by sentences that reflect the serious nature of firearms offences that are the subject of this bill and acknowledge the fear and danger they impose on the community.

The member for Rockhampton gave the example of a person dealing in drugs using a firearm to protect themselves in their business of supplying drugs. This government is of the view that people who use firearms in connection with or in support of the supply of drugs are committing serious offences that warrant substantial penalties. The connection between the supply of illegal drugs and the use of firearms is particularly serious, usually because it often involves offences of violence. This government is also introducing a firearms amnesty, as mentioned by a number of members. People will have an opportunity to hand in firearms that they are in possession of unlawfully.

The member for Rockhampton posed a question with respect to clause 9 of the bill which amends section 10A(4) of the act. Prior to a minor amendment made in 2011, the Weapons Act recognised interstate and international firearms licences that were substantially similar. The amendment simply restores the position of the act prior to the 2011 amendments to ensure interstate licence holders do not have to do a safety training course when in many circumstances they have held an equivalent licence for many years. It is important to emphasise that an application for a licence is still considered, as it always was, on a case-by-case basis by an authorised officer. Part of that assessment would include consideration of the origin of the licence in question.

The member for Rockhampton also suggested that a person should be convicted of an indictable offence before the minimum penalty could apply. The bill requires the element of the commission of an indictable offence to be proven. I refer the member to the manner in which the committee addressed this issue in its examination of the bill. The report states—

... the offence requires the elements of the commission of the indictable offence to be proved, but it does not require a guilty finding or conviction to take place ... It would appear to the Committee that multiple charges would simply be brought before the court and tested at the same time, it should not be the case that the indictable offence be tried first, and then only on a conviction of that offence that the charge under section 50 is put to the Court.

I thank the member for Gladstone for her commitment to the bill. I will respond to her comments about the amendments proposed by the member for Rockhampton. The bill already recognises that there may be some circumstances in which mandatory penalties should not apply. That is why the bill allows a reasonable excuse defence to be raised; for example, a person who is unlicensed because his or her licence has lapsed within the previous six months. I also note that the member for Gladstone stated that there is no excuse for the possession of firearms where that possession occurs in connection with the commission of an offence. That is why the reasonable excuse defence within this bill does not apply with respect to the possession of firearms in connection with offences. I agree with the member for Gladstone that this bill would have the support of the vast majority of Queenslanders.

This bill ensures that sentencing for the illegal use of firearms is in step with community expectations and ensures that adequate penalties are in place to deter people from committing offences that cause significant concern to members of the community. It also implements a broad range of red-tape reduction measures to lessen the burden on law-abiding firearms owners. In doing so, the bill strikes an appropriate balance between the rights of legitimate firearms owners and the safety of the community. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—



Mr BYRNE (8.34 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 15 (Amendment of s 50 (Possession of weapons))

Page 8, line 22, before 'for an offence'—

insert—

'subject to subsection (1C).'

2 Clause 15 (Amendment of s 50 (Possession of weapons))

Page 9, line 12, before 'for an offence'—

insert—

'subject to subsection (1C).'

3 Clause 15 (Amendment of s 50 (Possession of weapons))

Page 10, after line 6—

insert—

(1C) If a court, in sentencing a person found guilty of an offence against subsection (1) to which a minimum penalty would have applied apart from this subsection (the *minimum penalty*), is satisfied that because of exceptional circumstances it is in the interests of justice to impose a penalty that is less than the minimum penalty—

- (a) the minimum penalty does not apply; and
- (b) the court may impose the lesser penalty.’.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Mr Bill Byrne’s amendments [1725].

These amendments seek to amend clause 15 of the bill, which provides for a mandatory minimum sentence in certain circumstances in relation to an offence against section 50 of the Weapons Act 1990 relating to possession of weapons. Amendments 1 and 2 provide that the relevant subsections 50(1)(d) and (e) will be subject to a new subsection (1C). Amendment No. 3 inserts new subsection (1C) to provide that a court will retain a discretion to impose a penalty less than the minimum penalty where it is satisfied that, because of exceptional circumstances, it is in the interests of justice to do so.

During my contribution to the second-reading debate I said all that I intended to say regarding mandatory sentencing. Those comments apply in all respects to these amendments.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: In relation to amendment No. 3, I acknowledge the minister’s comment that reasonable excuse is allowed for in the bill. The example given was that the licence had expired. I welcome that. In the busyness of our lives, these sorts of issues can get past our attention. But I am concerned—probably most in relation to the possession of weapons rather than the unlawful supply of weapons or, certainly, the unlawful trafficking of weapons—that there could be genuine reasons for possession which, under this legislation, will result in a mandatory period of incarceration, albeit 18 months.

I am interested in the minister’s comments—other than the ones I have acknowledged—in that he said, yes, it is covered. There is no mandatory sentencing if the reasonable excuse is something like an expired licence. I am not going to raise examples, because I do not have any, except to say that, as I have already put on the record, I have concerns about mandatory sentencing. As I said earlier, the issues particularly of unlawful trafficking and unlawful supply, to a lesser degree, are less concerning, but just the possession of a weapon without excuse does concern me when there is a mandatory incarceration period attached to it and where there appears to be little or no discretion, other than the example the minister has given, for the court to exercise in those exceptional circumstances.

Mr DEMPSEY: In order to provide clarification for the member for Gladstone, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report states—

The purpose of a reasonable excuse offence is to allow the court to objectively determine what constitutes reasonable based on the facts and circumstances of each individual case.

A non-exhaustive list has the capacity to unintentionally narrow the scope of what the courts may consider to be a reasonable excuse.

Bear in mind, the legislation has already identified administrative practice or a licence being in force within the previous 12 months. But at the end of the day, a person still has to be found guilty by their peers in a court before the mandatory sentencing comes into play. So it is still up to the magistrate or judge to determine what is reasonable. If we as legislators had to compile a list it would become too restrictive. We obviously have faith in our judicial system.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! The question is that the member for Rockhampton’s amendments be agreed to. Those of that opinion say aye, those against no.

Government members: No!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the noes have it.

Mr Byrne: Divide!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: As there was no ‘aye’ called, there cannot be a division.

Non-government amendments (Mr Byrne) negatived.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—



Mr BYRNE (8.41 pm): I move the following amendments—

4 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 50B (Unlawful supply of weapons))

Page 10, line 16, before ‘for an offence’—

insert—

‘subject to subsection (1B),’.

5 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 50B (Unlawful supply of weapons))

Page 10, line 22, before 'for an offence'—

insert—

'subject to subsection (1B).'

6 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 50B (Unlawful supply of weapons))

Page 11, after line 9—

insert—

'(1B) If a court, in sentencing a person found guilty of an offence against subsection (1) to which a minimum penalty would have applied apart from this subsection (the *minimum penalty*), is satisfied that because of exceptional circumstances it is in the interests of justice to impose a penalty that is less than the minimum penalty—

(a) the minimum penalty does not apply; and

(b) the court may impose the lesser penalty.'

These amendments seek to amend clause 16 of the bill, which provides for a mandatory minimum sentence in certain circumstances in relation to an offence against section 50B of the Weapons Act 1990 relating to unlawful supply of weapons. Amendment Nos 4 and 5 provide that the relevant subsection—that is, 50B(1)(d) and (e)—will be subject to a new subsection (1B). Amendment No. 6 inserts new subsection (1B) to provide that a court will retain a discretion to impose a penalty less than the minimum penalty where it is satisfied that, because of exceptional circumstances, it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his comments in relation to the consideration of these amendments. However, my comments in this regard have been covered in my reply speech and previously in the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report. We will not be supporting the amendments moved by the opposition.

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

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

NOES, 75—Barton, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Smith, Sorensen

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendments (Mr Byrne) negated.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—



Mr BYRNE (8.51 pm): I move the following amendments—

7 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 65 (Unlawful trafficking in weapons))

Page 11, line 14, before 'for an offence'—

insert—

'subject to subsection (3).'

8 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 65 (Unlawful trafficking in weapons))

Page 11, line 20, before 'for an offence'—

insert—

'subject to subsection (3).'

9 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 65 (Unlawful trafficking in weapons))

Page 12, after line 8—

insert—

'(3) If a court, in sentencing a person found guilty of an offence against subsection (1) to which a minimum penalty would have applied apart from this subsection (the *minimum penalty*), is satisfied that because of exceptional circumstances it is in the interests of justice to impose a penalty that is less than the minimum penalty—

(a) the minimum penalty does not apply; and

(b) the court may impose the lesser penalty.'

These amendments seek to amend clause 17 of the bill which provides for a mandatory minimum sentence in certain circumstances in relation to an offence against section 65 of the Weapons Act 1990 relating to unlawful trafficking in weapons. Amendment Nos 7 and 8 provide that the relevant subsections—that is, 65(1)(c) and (d)—will be subject to a new subsection (3). Amendment No. 9 inserts a new subsection (3) to provide that a court will retain the discretion to impose a penalty less than the minimum penalty where it is satisfied that, because of exceptional circumstances, it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Mr DEMPSEY: As I stated previously, a person will have an opportunity to raise a reasonable excuse for an offence of unlawful trafficking. What constitutes a reasonable excuse will be for the court to decide. However, clause 17 states specifically that a person will have a reasonable excuse where a licence is in force in the 12 months before the offence, the act of trafficking would have been authorised under the licence, and the licence was not surrendered, suspended or revoked. So I hope that clears it up for the member for Rockhampton.

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

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

NOES, 75—Barton, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Smith, Sorensen

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendments (Mr Byrne) negatived.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 18 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (9.01 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. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (9.02 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.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND INTEGRITY (OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Integrity Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012 [[1726](#)].

Tabled paper: Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1727](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012. This government is embarking on an open data revolution—seeking to release as much government information as possible to the community. Consistent with this, the bill inserts into the Right to Information Act 2009 new requirements about disclosure logs in respect of right to information applications made to departments and ministers. Disclosure logs are part of an agency's website. They contain lists of documents which have been released under the Right to Information Act and in some cases the documents themselves. The current disclosure log requirements do not oblige agencies to place the actual documents that have been accessed on the disclosure log. The amendments will require applicants to state whether they are seeking access to a document for their own use or benefit or for the use or benefit of another entity. The amendments will place obligations on departments and ministers to publish on the disclosure log as soon as possible after access is granted the applicant's name and a copy of the actual documents that are accessed. This is to ensure that all Queenslanders can have access to the documents.

The bill allows for appropriate deletions to be made from the material to be published, including where it is prevented by law, may be defamatory or would unreasonably invade an individual's privacy. This allows an individual's name to be deleted if appropriate. In addition, departments and ministers will be required to publish on the disclosure log, as soon as possible after a valid application is received, details of the information being sought under the application. These new disclosure log requirements will mean that the wider community will be able to see what type of information is being sought under Right to Information. The amendments will also allow the wider community to see the actual information being released.

This bill also amends the Integrity Act 2009 to make sure that the same standards of conduct regarding contact with lobbyists apply to the opposition as to government representatives. As was foreshadowed during the last parliamentary sittings, the government is committed to making sure that Queensland has an open and accountable opposition. We in government are doing our part to deliver the most open and accountable government that Queenslanders have ever seen, but it is important that the opposition also comply with the same high standards.

The bill will apply the current regulations about contact with lobbyists to opposition representatives, being the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and staff members in the office of the Leader of the Opposition. This will mean that these opposition representatives will not be able to have contact with lobbyists unless they are properly registered under the act. This will apply to any attempts by lobbyists to influence the opposition's decisions about making or amending legislation or opposition policies, as well as the opposition's position on government actions. Due to the extension of the act to lobbying of the opposition, the bill will also make amendments which prohibit opposition representatives from conducting lobbying activities on matters they have had official dealings with for two years after leaving public office.

An integrity system can only be effective if the legislation that sets the rules is absolutely clear about what people are required to do. For this reason, the bill will make two other amendments to clarify the operation of the lobbying regulations in Queensland. The first of these is an amendment to make it absolutely clear that a third-party client is someone who has engaged a lobbyist to deliver a professional service for a fee or other reward that is agreed before the service is provided. The current version of the act has created a lot of confusion about when a lobbyist might be deemed to be conducting lobbying because, while it obviously contemplates a professional relationship between the lobbyist and the third-party client, it also says that lobbying can occur whether or not fees are payable.

The second of these amendments will clarify that the Lobbyists Code of Conduct can include requirements for lobbyists to give information about their lobbying activities to the Integrity Commissioner. This is an additional requirement to the current Lobbyists Code of Conduct which sets out the standards of conduct that lobbyists must comply with. The amendments to the current code will be developed and approved by the Integrity Commissioner following consultation with the parliamentary committee. It is only fair and reasonable that lobbyists should be recording their contact with government or opposition representatives as part of their day-to-day business activities.

To be clear, there is currently no legislative requirement for ministers or others to keep a lobbyists register. To ensure the most effective system of supervision, registered lobbyists, not ministers or opposition members, should be required to maintain records of their contacts with government and opposition. It is proposed to make recommendations to the Integrity Commissioner that such a system be implemented as soon as possible. The government's intention is to now put the full onus on registered lobbyists to record their contact with government and opposition representatives and to move away from the current internal ad hoc systems that were put in place by the former government. The provision of this information will be an extra source of information for the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that lobbying activity is being carried out with transparency and integrity in Queensland.

The government will work with the Integrity Commissioner to implement the necessary administrative systems to ensure that the Integrity Commissioner is able to monitor compliance by lobbyists with these new requirements and to ensure that the registers are maintained by lobbyists at a consistent standard. The announcement by the Premier that he and his ministers will be releasing their own diaries falls well with openness and transparency.

This bill gives effect to the government's commitment to making sure that Queensland has an open and accountable government and an open and accountable opposition; and the government's ongoing commitment to release as much information as possible to the wider community. I commend the bill to the House. I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this week's sitting.

I move this motion because it is fundamentally important. This is the last sitting of 2012 and we will not be back in this place for at least 2½ months. It is absolutely the government's intention that, in order to broaden new horizons in Queensland with respect to openness, integrity and transparency, this bill proceeds as soon as possible. It is no secret that the lobbying activity registers that we have in Queensland and the system that was put in place by the former Labor government have been ad hoc

and confusing to everyone. What is the point of all those registers when the Labor Party cannot even find its former registers? I find that incredibly difficult to understand as the Labor Party had been in power for the past 20 years and, for a portion of that time, had the Integrity Act 2009 as well as the requirements for lobbyists registers under guidelines issued by Ken Smith, who led the DPC at that time. Where have the registers gone under the system that they espoused? In the past seven months they have learned new words: integrity, openness, accountability, transparency. When we ask the opposition to be transparent, it cannot provide the lobbyists registers that it has been keeping for four to five years. I will watch with interest to see how this debate unfolds. We will be watching to see what the Labor Party says in relation to this urgency motion to pass the bill through the House this week.

Let us look at the history of the introduction of the Integrity Act. Of course, it revolved around former Labor Party ministers who went off and became lobbyists, charging great success fees. On this side of the House, we do not begrudge anyone who wishes to engage in lobbying activity in Queensland. However, we have to have a system that is transparent, that is not confusing and that is the best system possible. I think from next year we will have in place the best system, when ministerial diaries are released and new obligations for lobbyists are issued, and when we will work with the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that new guidelines are developed.

In speaking to this urgency motion, again I stress that we need to look at the historical context of the Integrity Act and the fact that the Labor Party cannot find its lobbyists registers. What hope do we have that the current system works? This is about making sure that we fix the system. For the benefit of all honourable members, I will table a letter dated 27 August 2010 from a Mr Ken Smith. The opposition leader will know who Mr Ken Smith is. He was a former director-general of the Bligh Labor government.

Mr Stevens: Where is he now?

Mr BLEIJIE: I understand that he is the Agent-General in London, although it has been a while since I have heard what he is doing over there. The letter is dated 27 August 2010 and I will table it for the information of all honourable members. It is addressed to Dr David Solomon, the Integrity Commissioner—

Mr Stevens: A good fellow.

Mr BLEIJIE: He is a good fellow. The letter was written about a year after the Integrity Act had been introduced by the Labor Party in 2009. In this letter to David Solomon, Ken Smith talks about contact with lobbyists and the department. He raises an issue about the privacy of third parties. In the last paragraph, he states—

Accordingly, the attached extract from the department's register has been amended to provide a quantifiable indication of contacts between lobbyists and departmental representatives, without disclosing information which may directly identify, or lead to the identification of, an individual, other than the registered lobbyist concerned.

That letter was written only a year after the former Labor government introduced its great accountability and integrity laws and it has not worked from the outset. It has not worked and the Labor Party knows it has not worked because, all of a sudden, since 2009, it has lost any contact registers with lobbyists. I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 27 August 2010, from the Director-General, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Mr Smith, to the Integrity Commissioner, Dr Solomon, relating to Register of Contact with Lobbyists for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet [1728].

Over the past few weeks we have heard a lot about lobbyists and contact with lobbyists. Some people have paid a high sacrifice for the system that was developed by the former Labor government. We now have an opportunity to get this right. We now have an opportunity to sort out this mess. We have the fortitude to make sure that we can fix these issues that the Labor Party never could fix. I see the opposition leader laughing and smiling.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I saw her laughing and I saw her smiling. She was laughing at a joke from the leader of opposition business. Maybe they were joking about where their registers are. Maybe they were saying, 'Maybe you've got it in your office?'.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. I will have plenty of other things happen, but I will not have the Attorney-General put words in my mouth. I find his comments offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. The question for the Labor Party is this: where are the lobbyists registers?

Ms Palaszczuk: Who introduced the Integrity Act? Who introduced it?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. The ones who introduced the Integrity Act and the Integrity Commissioner now cannot provide the lobbyists registers for the past five years. We have an Integrity Commissioner introduced by the Labor Party and an Integrity Act introduced by the Labor Party, yet the Labor Party does not have the integrity to tell us where the lobbyists registers are. We talk about hypocrisy—and we all know how to spell hypocrisy: A-L-P. The Labor Party cannot lecture anyone on

integrity, accountability, openness and transparency. From next year, Queenslanders will have the most open, accountable and transparent government ever seen across this nation. Queensland will lead the way with a premier who believes in openness and accountability and his assistant minister for e-government. The open data website has been launched and it will be further progressed next year. On the website now there is information that has never before been available to Queenslanders. We have to make a stand now to fix this issue. It would be a very brave Labor Party that voted against transparency and accountability in Queensland, but I would not put it past them.

The government is willing to open its diaries. We fundamentally believe that when a registered lobbyist sees a minister, the onus and obligation should be on the lobbyist to keep the register and liaise with the Integrity Commissioner. I am pleased that we will now move forward following the passage of this legislation. If the motion of urgency is passed tonight, I am pleased that we will be able to move forward and work with the Integrity Commissioner to get a system in place in Queensland that is understood by everybody, including the opposition. We are doing them a favour, not only by opening them up to new-found openness and transparency, but also by implementing a system that even they can understand.

We will have it in plain English. We are happy to get the crayons out and the chalkboard out. It is to be a system that the Labor Party should be able to understand, although the bill does contain the words 'openness and transparency'. They are words the Labor Party do not understand, do not know how to spell and do not know how to say. I live in hope that the Labor Party will support these new initiatives to once and for all sort this issue out in Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we move to the question of urgency, can I ask that the Attorney-General move that the bill be read a first time.

First Reading



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.20 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.20 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 137 the Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill to enable the bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this week's sitting.

I trust my contribution earlier tonight is sufficient to satisfy the requirements for delivering the urgency motion tonight.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.21 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by the Attorney-General. We will not be opposing the motion.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

YOUTH JUSTICE (BOOT CAMP ORDERS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 November (see p. 2383).

Second Reading



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.22 pm): 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 Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on 22 November 2012. I am pleased now to table a copy of the government's response to that report.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [1729].

The committee made 14 recommendations. These recommendations concern the amendments in the bill that introduce the boot camp order, removal of court referred youth justice conferencing and the amendments that provide for a new exemption in the Anti-Discrimination Act. I will now address each of the committee's recommendations.

The committee's first recommendation, that the use of omnibus bills be limited, is noted. The second recommendation that the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 be passed, is welcomed. Similarly, recommendations 12 and 13, which support the passing of those components of the bill which amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012, are also welcomed.

Recommendation 3 is that assurances are given that clear public policies are developed and appropriate guidance is provided to boot camp centre providers in relation to recognising the cultural needs of each child participating in the program. It is acknowledged that this is an important facet in the development and management of the boot camp program. As such, the bill contains a number of protections including that the boot camp program itself must have regard to the cultural needs of the child in accordance with the new section 226E. Further, the tender process undertaken for the selection of the boot camp providers explicitly required submissions to articulate their approach to and experience in meeting cultural needs in the delivery of programs. The successful boot camp centre provider has a demonstrated capability in this critical area. As part of the monitoring and evaluation, specific attention will be focused upon whether the program adequately meets the cultural needs of each participating child.

Recommendation 4 requests that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice outline the process to be followed upon a child's request for access to a lawyer and how complaints about a response to the provision of access to a lawyer can be made by a young person. While the bill does contain a requirement under new section 282H that the boot camp centre provider helps a young person to access a lawyer, this is only where it is reasonable in the circumstances. That is, where the young person is on a wilderness adventure program for three days where there is limited access to telecommunications, the boot camp centre provider will help the child access a lawyer upon return to the centre.

The processes that the department will be employing are modelled on those currently used for children in youth detention centres. Finally, as well as procedures which will be established to ensure that the child may make complaints to the chief executive, the Community Visitor Program which is managed by the Commission for Children and Young People and the Child Guardian will be operational for the boot camp centres. This will enable children to make complaints directly to the community visitors who will have access to the boot camp centres.

Recommendation 5 requests that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice set out details of the philosophy to support the proposal of a boot camp order as an option before detention. Research has shown that a share of young offenders sentenced to detention will reoffend after being released to the community suggesting that serving a detention order does not act as a deterrent to future offending for some young offenders. The boot camp order provides a consequence for young people's offending as well as providing access to the boot camp program. This program aims to address the factors associated with young people's involvement in crime and was developed with reference to existing literature and in consultation with key stakeholders and criminal justice experts.

Evaluations of traditional or military style boot camps have shown mixed outcomes on the impact of offending behaviour. Evaluations of wilderness or reform style boot camps, however, demonstrate reduced subsequent offending among participants. These types of boot camps emphasise setting challenging tasks to promote experiential learning and the need to specifically address the causes of crime. The boot camp program in which a child will be required to participate as part of the boot camp order is modelled on the reform style boot camp.

Recommendation 6 is that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice outline further details relating to the evaluation of the boot camp program. The post-trial evaluation, conducted by criminal justice research within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, with the support of Youth Justice Services within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, will be funded by existing resources.

While the evaluation methodology is being currently finalised it will conform with the criminal justice evaluation framework—guidelines for evaluating criminal justice programs initiatives. The methodology will comprise a process and outcome evaluation. A more detailed framework that includes the details of the target outcomes, and data measures to be used to assess them, will be developed prior to the commencement of the trial after consultation with the selected providers and other stakeholders. The interim results of the evaluation will be reported back to cabinet in early 2014 followed by the final report in early 2015.

Recommendation 7 is that the bill include a sunset clause to ensure that no further boot camp orders can be made after the expiration of the trial period, until after appropriate evaluation is conducted and results considered by the Legislative Assembly. An interim evaluation report will be provided to

cabinet in early 2014. If this evaluation report indicates that the boot camp order is not or is not likely to achieve government objectives, the inclusion of a sunset clause will be given further consideration. The government will therefore not be adopting this recommendation.

Recommendation 8 is that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice provide the details of any cost-benefit analysis carried out on both the direct and indirect savings that will result from removing court referred youth justice conferencing. The removal of court referred youth justice conferencing is expected to save more than \$11.2 million over the next two full financial years. The cost savings will be monitored by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to ensure that the decision is an effective fiscal measure.

Recommendation 9 is that court referred youth justice conferencing be retained and the provisions in the bill seeking to remove this option for courts be removed. The Queensland government does not support this recommendation. The removal of court referred youth justice conferencing will provide considerable savings to the government. In addition, given that the option will remain for the Queensland Police Service to refer a child to a youth justice conference, the program will remain a successful early diversion and intervention option to support children at the earliest point in the offending trajectory.

Recommendation 10 is that I clarify the intended operation of proposed section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 to address concerns raised in some submissions about possible unintended consequences. Section 106C makes it clear that, if an accommodation provider has a reasonable belief that a person is using, or intends to use, accommodation for sex work, the provider can discriminate against that other person in various ways without being in breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act. Concerns were raised that the amendment may create a shortage of accommodation available for use for sex work which may, in turn, lead to an increase in illegal sex work.

The accommodation industry is a diverse industry and the government expects there will continue to be accommodation providers willing to meet the demand for every market. The exemption simply ensures accommodation providers are able to choose whether to rent a room to a sex worker to be used for sex work. Concerns were also raised that the exemption may cause sex workers to be subjected to exploitation and coercion by accommodation providers who demand sexual favours or excessive charges. Mr Deputy Speaker, if there are any children in the public gallery, I would advise them to leave for this discussion.

Section 106C will not override the criminal law or consumer laws—for example, prostitution related offences under the Criminal Code still apply, and consumer laws that protect consumers from exploitative and unfair treatment still apply. Other issues raised include: accommodation providers may start policing all their patrons' behaviour and rush to judgement as to who is a sex worker; and sex workers may be refused accommodation when they are not working.

The accommodation industry, like all service industries, relies on reputation and word-of-mouth recommendation. I consider it highly unlikely the new exemption would cause accommodation providers to act against their own commercial interests by causing unnecessary offence to paying guests.

The new section 106C does not allow discrimination against a person merely because that person is a sex worker but only if the accommodation provider has a reasonable belief that the person intends to use the accommodation in connection with sex work. A concern was also raised that section 106C would allow refusal of accommodation to individuals who may want to engage a sex worker or that they may be evicted if they did. The exemption is drafted broadly to ensure that the intent of the exemption cannot be subverted by allowing people, other than the sex worker themselves, to obtain accommodation for prostitution purposes.

Recommendation 11 is that the Queensland Police Service and the Prostitution Licensing Authority actively monitor any increase in unlawful sexual activity in the sex industry and the number of nuisance complaints relating to unlawful sex work in public places. I will be writing to the Minister for Police and Community Safety and the chairperson of the Prostitution Licensing Authority requesting that they consider this recommendation.

I note that the committee's inquiry involved a detailed consideration of the application of fundamental legislative principles to the bill. In accordance with recommendation 14, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice is requested to address consistency with fundamental legislative principles as they relate to the amendments to the Youth Justice Act 1992.


The committee notes that the removal of the option for court referred youth justice conferencing, and section 163(4) of the Youth Justice Act 1992 in particular, is likely to have a significant adverse impact on a child's future as this removes an option for a court not to record a conviction. The removal of section 163(4) does not remove the option for a court not to record a conviction against a finding of guilt as proposed by the committee as this discretion is provided for more generally under section 183 of the Youth Justice Act 1992.

It is also proposed by the committee that the combination of a reading of the new section 246A(7) and 246A(8) will expose a child to the possibility of serving longer than the six-month maximum period for a boot camp order. It is noted that these sections replicate those contained in section 246 which relate to conditional release orders and are interpreted in such a way that the child is not required to comply with an order after the program period has expired. The order is then only enlivened for the purposes of the breach proceedings in court and at no time will a child serve more than six months on a boot camp order. This interpretation and current practice based on this interpretation of these sections should allay concerns of the committee that the rights and liberties of a child have not been given sufficient regard.

The committee also questioned the appropriateness of the delegation of administrative power as provided by amendment to schedule 2. This amendment allows the chief executive to make regulations for standards, management, control and supervision of boot camp centres. The committee's view is based on the suggestion that boot camp centres are akin to detention centres and that this power should not therefore be delegated. I bring to the attention of the committee that this power does exist for detention centres and is therefore not an inappropriate delegation of power.

Finally, although it is acknowledged that orders which apply retrospectively must be strongly justified, the government stresses that the boot camp order does not apply or impact upon a child retrospectively as the order cannot be made until after commencement of the relevant provisions of the bill. A boot camp order made by a court after commencement will only require a child to comply with the requirements of the order from that time onwards. The government does not consider then that there is an inconsistency with a fundamental legislative principle in this instance.

I would like to acknowledge those who have made submissions on the bill to the committee. I note that the submissions on the amendments to the Youth Justice Act 1992 have been largely reflected in the thorough recommendations of the committee. As I mentioned at the time I introduced the bill into the Legislative Assembly, the bill delivers on the government's pre-election commitment to introduce youth boot camps to stop the cycle of youth crime and give young offenders a real chance at rehabilitation and the opportunity to make positive life decisions. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to advise that the opposition will not be supporting this piece of legislation. This bill exemplifies all that has gone wrong with the Newman government in just eight short months. To demonstrate that fact we need look no further than the report from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, for whom do we find signing off on the committee report on this legislation? None other than the member for Condamine. This report was tabled just last week on Thursday, 22 November 2012. It was signed off by the then chair of the committee, the member for Condamine. I think we would all agree that a week in politics is indeed a long time.

Little did we know that, at the same time as the member for Condamine was finalising this committee's report on behalf of his LNP members, he was reportedly also changing his phone number and getting ready to jump ship to Katter's Australian Party. Why? Because, as this committee report again shows, the Newman government is ignoring the wishes of its backbenchers and the majority of Queenslanders. The member for Condamine knows that the LNP government and the Premier in particular have stopped listening, and once again it is written largely in the committee report of this bill.

On numerous occasions this year the government has been warned by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and other committees about the lack of meaningful consultation on significant legal changes. The standing orders of this House state that, when bills are referred to portfolio committees for scrutiny, a time period of six calendar months should be available for the committee to lodge a report. But what have we seen time and time again from the Newman government? The LNP, in its arrogance, has introduced bills and then nominated almost impossible turnaround times for committees to report back.

In the case of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill the proof is evident. This bill was introduced into this House on 1 November 2012, less than a month ago. Submissions on the bill closed on 8 November 2012, just seven days after the 42-page bill was introduced. On 22 November 2012, just three weeks after the bill was introduced, the committee was required to lodge its report on the complex issues contained in the legislation. These ridiculous deadlines have not gone unnoticed by stakeholders. Even the report by the committee, which is dominated by LNP backbenchers, has noted the growing disquiet about the Newman government's cavalier approach to legislation.

On page 2 of the committee report it is stated—

A number of submitters were displeased with the amount of time to consult with the Committee. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) stated that 'due to time constraints (relating to the very minimal amount of time afforded within which to provide feedback), that it is entirely possible that important considerations might have gone unidentified (or insufficiently fleshed-out).'

The Crime and Justice Research Centre also commented on the short opportunity to review the bill. The report goes on to state—

Given that the Committee has only been provided with three weeks to examine this Bill in addition to other bills over a similarly short period, the Committee considers that it is vitally important for the Government to engage stakeholders early in the process.

If earlier engagement with relevant stakeholders took place, the Committee considers that many of the concerns raised in submissions may well have been identified prior to introduction of the Bill and many of the queries raised in submissions may have been addressed. This would have given stakeholders more certainty in the proposed operation of the Bill and enabled them to focus on the effect of the Bill itself when engaging in the committee process.

Further, given the lack of broad consultation and the short time-frames in which the Committee has to report (which would have been known to the Government), the Committee considers that it would have been helpful for some information to be included in the Explanatory Notes on the results of consultation, rather than simply listing the bodies with whom the Department is stated to have consulted.

These words echo sentiments expressed by committees numerous times already since the Newman government came to power. There is a distinct lack of commitment from the government to genuine consultation. There is also a distinct inability of the Newman government to learn from its mistakes.

This bill is what is known as an omnibus bill, a single piece of legislation that amends numerous pieces of legislation with many of the amendments completely isolated and distinct from the others. Yet here we are again debating this bill that makes a raft of changes to Queensland's legislative framework with many of the changes completely unrelated. As I said last sitting during the debate on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 in relation to the nature of these bills—

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 would also like to quote a section from page 5 of the committee report. It states—

The Committee has previously expressed concerns in relation to the use of omnibus bills to amend multiple items of legislation, most recently in its report on the Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

This Bill amends three separate and unrelated Acts of Parliament with very different policy objectives i.e. youth justice, anti-discrimination issues and other unrelated matters. It also makes a number of 'minor and consequential amendments'.

The Committee acknowledges that the Bill's short title contains the phrase 'and Other Legislation Amendment Bill' which will alert the Legislative Assembly (and others) to the fact that the Bill contains amendments unrelated to the subject area stated in the title of the Bill (in this case "Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders)").

The Committee's concerns with omnibus bills relate primarily to Members' feeling their ability to vote for or against such a bill in its entirety, as limiting their actions. These issues arise when bills such as this are presented containing a number of unrelated matters ...

Now I would like to address some of the problems with the bill that go to the substantive issues concerned. The bill introduces the boot camp order, an alternative to detention of a juvenile offender that will entail a one-month residential requirement in a facility with a follow-up period of between two and five months of intensive supervision in the community. The government has long been on the boot camp bandwagon. Even in opposition, members opposite raised the spectre of boot camps on a regular basis. The one thing they always fail to mention is that they do not work. In particular, the military style of boot camp originally favoured by the Attorney-General simply does not work as a rehabilitation tool. I, therefore, welcome recommendation No. 5 of the committee's report which asks the Attorney-General the following—

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, in his response to the Committee's report, set out for the benefit of the Legislative Assembly, details on the philosophy and empirical evidence to support the policy proposal to provide a boot camp order as an option before detention.

So why is the government following this path? Why have they scrapped court ordered youth justice conferencing in this year's budget? The boot camp trial is costing \$2 million over two years. There is no evidence to suggest that it will even have an effect on the juvenile reoffending rates. On the other hand, court ordered youth justice conferencing, which is being abolished by this bill, has enjoyed considerable success in Queensland. Only last week the Children's Court annual report said this about the program—

In the financial year, the Youth Justice Conferencing program received 2,937 referrals, an increase of 2.8% from the previous year. There were 1,691 referrals by the courts and 1,246 referrals by police. In total 2,282 conferences were held. 95% of conferences resulted in an agreement being reached. There was a very high level of satisfaction from participants (98% indicated that the conference was fair and with being satisfied with the agreement).

The Youth Justice Conferencing program provides a valuable mechanism to the police and the courts for the adoption of restorative justice principles. It allows the victim of a crime to confront the offender with the consequences of that crime. In the vast majority of cases it results in an agreement between the parties to address the issues that led to the offending, and to recompense the victim for the impacts of the crime. It is an important mechanism in diversion from the court system, recompense to the victim and rehabilitation of the offender.

That is high praise indeed from those who actually use the program.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is also highly supportive of the present system of court referred youth justice conferencing. As it said in its report on the bill—

The Committee considers that the current benefits associated with court referred youth justice conferencing outweighs any short term savings and, based on the evidence it has received, recommends that court referred youth justice conferencing be retained by the courts.

In budget paper No. 4 the government has indicated that they will achieve savings of \$5 million in 2012-13 and \$10.2 million per annum from 2013-14 from the changes made to court diversion programs and referrals. It is unclear from the budget papers how much of this saving could be attributed to the abolition of court ordered youth justice conferencing. I would ask the Attorney-General to please outline what the savings will be specific to the abolition of this initiative.

The committee pointed out—

The Committee considers that the cost of diversionary programs are not simply limited by the costs involved in the delivery of the programs but must be considered against the long term benefits and savings by keeping the subjects of the programs out of the custodial system. Concerns have also been raised in submissions that the removal of court referred conferencing will reflect savings in the short term, but will have adverse effects for sentencing outcomes in the long term.

The committee has therefore asked the Attorney-General to provide details of any cost-benefit analysis carried out by his department on both the direct and indirect savings that will result from removing court referred youth justice conferencing. It is my guess that there will have been no analysis of whether the scrapping of youth justice conferencing will result in cost savings in the long term. It is another case of policy on the run being policy underdone.

It is disappointing to see that a program that has been so successful and has done so much good all over Queensland is being abolished to make way for another program that has not been proven to work and will only be trialled at two sites in Queensland—in Far North Queensland and the Gold Coast—for the benefit of a comparatively small number of participants: 1,691 last year compared with an estimated 80 through boot camps.

A number of people who made submissions to the committee raised concerns about the cultural needs of Indigenous juveniles participating in the boot camp program. The committee was sufficiently concerned to make a recommendation that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice ensure that clear public policies are developed and appropriate guidance is provided to boot camp centre providers in relation to recognising the cultural needs of each child participating in a boot camp program.

Another concern raised was the access to be provided to lawyers. The bill provides that if a child participating in the residential phase of a boot camp program asks for help in gaining access to a lawyer then the child is given the help that is reasonable in the circumstances. The Queensland Law Society submitted that the bill be amended to provide that the child must be assisted to access a lawyer and that the child's parents and/or the community visitor must be informed of their request and the attempts made to provide access. They also considered that the boot camp provider should have to take mandatory actions to provide access to a lawyer for a child.

The committee feels that the bill is adequate in its current form but has asked the Attorney-General to outline the process to be followed by a provider upon a request for access to a lawyer and how complaints about a response to the provision of access can be made by a young person. I would also ask the Attorney to advise what records will be kept of the attempts made by the provider to comply with the request and whether access to any such records will be provided to the community visitor.

I am also of one mind with the committee in being concerned about the funding source of the evaluation of the trial upon completion. It is unclear, as the committee points out, whether the cost of evaluation will come from the \$2 million in funding provided for the program or whether there will be any additional source of funding. The committee would like to see that an appropriate evaluation methodology is adopted to ensure an effective evaluation is carried out. The committee notes that an evaluation should be designed at the time of project planning and form part of the ongoing refining of program activities. It is therefore recommended that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in his response to the committee's report confirm (a) how the post-trial evaluation will be funded, (b) the evaluation method to be used and whether it conforms with the Criminal Justice Evaluation Framework guidelines for evaluating criminal justice initiatives and (c) whether the results of the evaluation will be provided to the Legislative Assembly.

The bill also contains amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. These amendments are twofold, and I will allow the member for Woodridge to address the issues of concern in relation to these amendments. The opposition will not be supporting this bill.



Hon. JA STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.52 pm): I rise to join the debate on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, introduced by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the honourable member for Kawana, on 1 November this year. This bill was referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, which reported back to parliament on 22 November.

Importantly, the passage of this bill will fulfil yet another pre-election commitment of the Newman government, with its primary objective being to stop the cycle of youth violence by providing young offenders a real chance at rehabilitation. It also proposes a common-sense approach for accommodation providers in regard to sex workers booking rooms and working in their establishments. My contribution today focuses on the amendments made to the Youth Justice Act 1992; that is, the removal of the court referred youth justice conferencing to commence on 1 January 2013.

This bill also provides the legislative amendments necessary for the introduction of the boot camp order as an option instead of detention for young offenders by proclamation on 31 January 2013. The government will be trialling two youth boot camp programs: one on the Gold Coast, my home town, and one in Cairns. The boot camps are part of the Safer Streets Crime Action Plan and promote a whole-of-government approach to curbing youth crime. These boot camps are a pilot model to begin in 2013 and run over the next two years involving 80 young people.

On the Gold Coast there will be an early intervention youth boot camp. The key aim of it will be to identify certain young people who are considered to be at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Intervention via a boot camp is designed to prevent these young people making wrong decisions that could lead them down a less-than-desirable path—one that could jeopardise their options and opportunities for their future. Participation in the Gold Coast program will be entirely voluntary, and young people will not be required to admit guilt to an offence to be eligible. Young people assessed as having protective factors in place—that is, appropriate parental support—will not be eligible. The program will be tailored and will run for a maximum of three months, dependent on the needs of the individual and their respective families. Each of the young people accepted into this program will be assigned a mentor, and family members will be encouraged to participate in camp activities. The dominant focus is identifying practical solutions to issues known to steer someone towards undesirable behaviour. For many years I have been an avid supporter of a boot camp model for youth who display antisocial behaviours, and I am really pleased to be here supporting the Attorney's bill tonight.

In Cairns, the model to be implemented will be a boot camp order targeted at young people who face detention as a result of committing an illegal act. For a child to participate in the Cairns program they must be at least 13 years of age, have consented to the order and in most circumstances reside in the area. So for this trial the area has been determined to include Cairns, Yarrabah, Mareeba, Atherton and Innisfail.

There will be three phases to a boot camp order: a one-month period which will be a residential boot camp phase; a community supervision phase, which will run for a maximum of five months; and a mentoring phase for the duration of the program and on a voluntary basis after the completion of a boot camp order. As with the Gold Coast model, these programs will be tailored to suit the individual's circumstances and needs. I understand that successful tenders have been announced for the two boot camps. On the Gold Coast the program will be run by the Kokoda Challenge Association, and in Cairns Safe Pathways will operate the boot camp.

The LNP went to the state election with a raft of promises, policies and pledges to the people of Queensland. Since April of this year we have passed numerous pieces of legislation and implemented a clutch of initiatives that deliver on these commitments. The introduction of this bill to parliament is yet another strong example of this. Under Labor, we had a government that was soft on juvenile crime—soft on crime in general. In fact, I think 'limp-wristed' was the term I frequently used in the last parliament. Labor was soft on supporting our officers, soft on initiatives such as school based policing, soft on graffiti, soft on hoons, soft on truancy. Labor did not care if our youth fell into a downward spiral of crime due to a lack of early-intervention programs or recourse for their actions. In stark contrast, the Newman government has proven that we will not shy away from these challenges. We are totally committed to helping our young people by instigating creative solutions that provide practical support and teach life skills for the youth of our state. Already we have seen legislation passed through this House that indicates we are serious about tackling crime at all levels.


This legislation truly is a step in the right direction, with its focus on providing our young people with another option—an option that does not involve a life in crime, rather an option that offers them a path to a meaningful life.

This legislation does not seek to replace good parenting, and nor should it. With the rise in social media and the ever-evolving society we live in, good parenting is paramount, as are already established early-intervention programs. These play a critical role in a young person's life. Nor does this legislation claim to replace the importance of community support groups and a good, solid education. Rather, these measures go hand in hand with all of these character-forming essentials.

In some information that the library kindly provided to me I noted some interesting statistics. In 2007-08 a total of 1,255 young offenders had committed a crime, and in 2010-11 that number had jumped to 1,463. The number of those young offenders who committed fewer than four offences had also jumped, from 766 to 840. These findings are totally unacceptable, and that is exactly why these boot camps are so important, as they provide the opportunity for change through a different approach—a genuine, concerted effort to reverse the systemic problem of children repeat offending, to ultimately provide them with an alternative.

In the Currumbin electorate we have two large high schools and a significant number of teenagers. Throughout my time as the local member I have been actively involved in and have championed a number of initiatives to guide our youth towards a fulfilling adult life and career options.

In 2011 I worked very closely with the charity Wesley Mission and instigated an antibullying program known as Walk in My Shoes—a program that involved the local community, businesses, police, parents, teachers and students. I might add, honourable members, that this was required because the Labor government had paid no attention at that stage to antibullying programs in schools. The interest from teachers wishing to train to be able to facilitate this program was high and the results they reported indicated that the program was really cutting through and having a quick and positive effect. Sadly though, it highlighted just how rampant and damaging bullying had become, not only the physical bullying but also cyber threats. The local police officers in Currumbin have also been instrumental in curbing youth disturbances and local police such as Senior Constable Kurt Foessel, Senior Sergeant Chris Ahearn and Inspector Damien Crosby are all great champions in supporting our young people, engaging with our local school communities on a regular basis and informing our students on a range of issues, including the dangers associated with alcohol and illegal substances. I have spoken to local officers in my area and they are really keen to see this initiative get started and they look forward to being actively involved in the process. I commend the Attorney-General for wasting no time in bringing this important bill before the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (10.00 pm): This evening it gives me great pleasure to rise in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill has a couple of objectives. Obviously the first is to introduce boot camps, as the name would suggest. Boot camp orders will be an option for juvenile offenders instead of detention. Other objectives of the bill are to remove the option of court referred youth justice conferencing, to allow operators of hotels to ask sex workers to leave the premises if it is being used for work related purposes and to impose eligibility requirements that are based on citizenship or visa status for those who are benefiting from government services, assistance and support. This is the Newman government again honouring another commitment and honouring another pledge it made to the people of Queensland. I say it time and time again, but this government is committed to law and order in Queensland. It is committed to listening to the community and it is committed to listening to the community's concerns. It is committed to taking action and it honours its pledges. This is the third bill that I have spoken to today that honours the Newman government's commitment to the people of Queensland. I am so proud to be part of a government that is actually honouring its commitments, that is going forward with its pledges and that is respectfully using its mandate.

It is important to realise that boot camp orders are a trial. We need to think about how we deal with juvenile offenders in this state. It is clearly something that people in the community are concerned about. We are seeing the number of youth offenders rise and we need to start thinking about how we might be able to stop those juvenile offenders becoming adult offenders and how we might be able to stop rates of recidivism in this state. We need to sit down with these youth offenders to try to work with them to make them change their lives for the better so that they can be active contributors to society. One important aspect that will come out of this bill is that actions and values will change because through boot camps we will be able to impose certain values that the community just simply take for granted such as respect for people's elders and respect for other members of the community. That certainly will be a positive benefit from this trial. I am particularly excited as a member of parliament from the Gold Coast region that we will be seeing a boot camp in the Gold Coast region. I appreciate that the member for Ipswich West is perhaps a little bit disappointed that there will not be one in the Ipswich region, but it is important that we are committed to this trial and that we look at how this might be able to help juvenile offenders not only on the Gold Coast but also in Cairns in Northern Queensland.

As a parliament and as a society we need to work with juvenile offenders to make sure that they do not become adult offenders. We have an amazing opportunity to help these kids turn their lives around, and anything we can do would be a good thing. The fact that this government is committed to ensuring that these children can make their lives better and will not only appreciate the error of their ways but in the long run become upstanding members of our community and our society is a good thing. I commend the Attorney-General for having the courage to take this step to look at alternative ways of helping troubled youth in our community.

Recommendation 9 of the committee was that we should retain youth justice conferencing. I am proud to say that as a member of that committee I actually opposed that recommendation. I am a very proud member of the Newman government and I very proudly voted for the Newman government's 2012-13 budget, and there were many measures in that budget that were difficult decisions but decisions that had to be made. One of those decisions was that we would terminate youth justice conferencing and I very proudly, alongside my government colleagues, voted for that. We made a decision that we would look at alternative ways of helping juvenile offenders and I believe that if we are going to go down the path of boot camps we need to go the full hog. We cannot just keep a finger in each pie, so to speak. If we are going to make a decision about looking at alternative ways of helping juvenile offenders and helping young criminals, then we need to give it our full support and we need to


put our entire weight behind one alternative. I do not think it is appropriate that we start mixing up different ways of doing it, particularly during the trial period for boot camp orders, so that we can really test the efficacy of these orders. It is necessary that we follow the commitments that we made not only in the budget but also to the people of Queensland to look at how we might be able to help juvenile offenders.

There are some amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act contained in this amendment bill. I preface the comments that I am about to make by saying that I love freedom. I believe in the freedom of individuals to make decisions for themselves, but I also believe in the freedom of business owners to make decisions about the people that they allow into their facilities and into their businesses. That is why I think it is really important that we give hotel and motel owners around Queensland the right to refuse access to certain members of the community on the basis of the work that they may undertake or that they reasonably believe they may undertake. As a government we should be able to say to those people, 'You have the freedom to do that.' I do not believe that we as a government should impose anything on motel and hotel owners that force them to accept any kind of business whatsoever. It should be the right of a business owner to choose who they do and do not do business with. I certainly support that particular aspect of this amendment bill.

Another aspect of this bill in terms of the Anti-Discrimination Act is changes with regard to citizenship and visa status requirements in terms of people who might be accessing and taking advantage of government services and government support. I am a really strong believer that as a government we should be giving people a hand up and not a handout, and we do a fantastic job of helping the disadvantaged in our society and those in our community who need some support. When we as a government say that access to these support mechanisms and access to these particular services is predicated on someone being an Australian citizen or having a certain status with regard to a visa, we should be able to follow through and impose those eligibility requirements. This amendment bill makes sure that we as a government are able to enforce these eligibility requirements that we set in terms of access to government services and government support mechanisms.

It is important to remember that this bill is about how we as a government can work with the community to help troubled youth—to help juvenile offenders who need a little bit of a guiding hand so that they might be able to turn their lives around and become credible members of society who are able to fully contribute to society and be very meaningful members of our community. We have an obligation to ensure that young people are given full opportunity to realise the error of their ways and correct the poor decisions that they may have made. Unfortunately, many young offenders in society have not always had the family support that they need and one great thing about these boot camps is that young offenders will actually have someone that they can talk to, someone that they can look up to and someone who will support them.

I think it is incredibly important that we provide mechanisms for troubled youth in our society so that they can have someone who might mentor them, someone who will help them as they follow a path into adulthood and, hopefully, become upstanding citizens and upstanding members of our community who believe in discipline, respect and in upholding the law. I think that this is going to be a fantastic trial and I look forward to seeing how it goes over the next period of time. I look forward to reading the reports and seeing the results. I also hopefully look forward to seeing the rates of recidivism for juvenile offenders significantly reduced, because I have full confidence in this measure just as I have full confidence in this government. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.10 pm): The Leader of the Opposition has set out the Labor Party's concerns about this bill. Those concerns will be reinforced by other opposition members in their contributions. I will focus on specific matters related to new section 282A of the bill, which deals directly with the engagement of service providers, and new section 282B, which sets out the management of boot camp centres.

In late October I was approached by concerned members of the Cairns youth services sector, including Mr Todd Hartley, the CEO of Choice Australia Management Ltd, regarding the Far North Queensland boot camp tender process. Since that time, the tender for FNQ has been awarded to Safe Pathways and I wish them well in delivering on this contract. Several local and interstate organisations made submissions, including Choice Australia—an organisation with 15 years experience in working with young people in the region. In previous contributions to this place, I have placed on the record my admiration of Choice Australia and I have declared that CEO Todd Hartley, the 2009 Cairns Citizen of the Year, supported me during the last election because we share a belief in investing in people for our future. For the record, the submission from Choice Australia outlined partnerships with a large number of organisations including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Welfare Company, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Advance Cairns, Tourism Queensland, the Northern Pride, Wuchopperen Health Services, Thiess Construction and Abigroup. It included hard funding of \$695,000, with in-kind support of land valued at approximately \$2 million. Choice Australia's proposed activities included the rebuilding of a multipurpose mountain bike track at Smithfield, which would provide significant sports

tourism marketing opportunities, yet a local organisation known as Team Wild was short-listed while others such as Choice Australia and the Southern Cross Junior Leaders Camp were not, despite clearly having real and demonstrated experience when compared with Team Wild.

This prompted Mr Hartley to write an email to the Attorney-General on 19 October, which I table, outlining his concerns about the boot camp tender process and the transparency of decision making.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 19 October 2012, from Todd Hartley, Chief Executive Officer, Choice Australia Management Ltd, to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, regarding Sentencing Youth Boot Camp, conflict of interest [1730].

The email alleges inappropriate involvement in this process by the member for Cairns on behalf of Team Wild and suggests that the concerns of some members of the selection panel were not heeded in terms of the experience and capacity of Team Wild to meet the criteria set out in the tender document. There have been claims by Team Wild that they are working with disengaged youth, depression, abuse, criminality and marginalisation. It is asserted that Team Wild staff have no professional qualifications, are not registered health professionals and, despite their claims, appear to have no demonstrated experience in working in these specialised areas.

It has also been suggested that the business development manager for Team Wild, David Grant Jackson, told a credible stakeholder two weeks before the submission deadline that he was the government's preferred supplier, allegedly based on verbal advice from the member for Cairns. I have been provided with information that I believe to be credible that David Jackson, who was put forward as a potential service provider for a boot camps tender, has a more than suspect background. Team Wild is listed as a charity, but it seemed odd that photos or background information about Mr Jackson were almost nonexistent. He had made claims to youth sector workers about his military background, including time in the Special Air Service Regiment out of Perth during 1996. After being questioned by a youth sector worker, who had actually served in the SAS, subsequent searches of military records indicated that Mr Jackson may never have been in the SAS. This prompted further investigation into the character of the potential boot camp provider. David Jackson's personal Facebook posts are littered with anti-Labor and pro-LNP rhetoric and his likes include 'I Hate Julia Gillard' and LNP politicians such as Jarrod Bleijie. On 19 November he posted—

The very essence of success is reliant on the provider—

being able—

to gain the trust of the youths and their families, I can speak from experience on this and can say this will be a very difficult task.

Gaining people's trust is of more interest to David Jackson than most, because in July 2005 he pleaded guilty in the Cairns District Court to stealing and fraud committed in 2003. He used company funds for personal purchases and air travel as well as stealing a post office key, computer hard drive and other items, which were found when police searched his residence. He was given a 12-month suspended prison sentence and was ordered to pay \$2,881 in restitution.

But the real test of David Jackson's character came earlier. An article from the *Woman's Day* magazine of October 2003, which I table, features a photo of a 17-year-old Jackson, then known as David MacLeod.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Woman's Day* titled 'My grandson stole my home' [1731].

The article titled 'My grandson stole my home' tells of a 29-year-old Mr MacLeod defrauding his own grandmother, fleeing her of her home and being found guilty through subsequent civil action in the Maroochydore District Court.

Team Wild claims to have been delivering services to young offenders since 1999, yet this assertion appears to be false. The first many people in my region had heard of Team Wild was earlier this year through self-promotion by David Jackson. David Jackson has been supported and encouraged by the member for Cairns after the delivery of a school holiday program over June-July this year, appearing in various photographs to promote Team Wild as a can-do group that can get the job done. The nature of Mr Jackson's criminal offences raises the question of whether he is a suitable individual to deliver youth programs designed to instil qualities of integrity, honesty and accountability. There is also a concern about his capacity to manage public funds.

For those in the House who think my contribution to this debate is nothing but a kick in the head for the member for Cairns and the LNP, I acknowledge that funding for Team Wild's Right of Passage Entitlements—or ROPE—under the Get Set for Work program was approved by the previous government and was used by Team Wild to work with offenders during the dress rehearsal for the boot camp job. This is a matter of public interest and I do not intend to omit the facts and I do not raise these matters lightly. Yesterday, Mr Jackson posted the following on a Facebook forum discussing boot camps—

... Team Wild are delivering another School Holiday program with some funding from the State Government for two months starting December 1.

I am concerned that, unless Mr Jackson and the organisation are looked into more closely, they may be funded for additional future grants, which could otherwise go to more qualified organisations with more appropriate individuals at the helm.

I am informed that at the Cairns community cabinet on 16 September the Attorney-General said that he would personally oversee the boot camp selection process, claiming that he would personally review each tender application. The successful tenderer needed to state clearly that they were capable of delivering the services and they needed to identify the service delivery site, which included providing 24/7 accommodation for five young people and two adults. It has been suggested that the FNQ tender would have been awarded to Team Wild had it not been for the constant murmurs in the youth services sector about the process getting louder and perhaps Mr Hartley's email being taken a bit more seriously by the Attorney-General's office. That may explain why there is doubt arising in the youth services sector as to whether the site for the Cairns boot camp is yet confirmed. Is this because Safe Pathways was a last-minute choice and has been unfairly put in a position where it may not be able to deliver on time? What was the advice from the member for Cairns following the 28 August 2012 meeting at his office where Choice Australia made a presentation to the Attorney-General? Was it that Todd Hartley is a Labor man and that he should not get a look in? The bottom line is that Choice Australia has done business with state and federal governments from both sides of politics over the past 15 years and it would indeed be outrageous if the organisation—or any other for that matter—had been discriminated against and not short-listed on any basis other than merit. It is very difficult to explain how an organisation with a limited financial history and, it seems, no track record of delivery could be short-listed.

I trust that the Attorney-General will ensure Safe Pathways is aware of Mr Jackson's background, particularly given his offer of assistance via a Facebook post yesterday—


... Team Wild will engage with the boot camp provider and have them engage with youths who are candidates for boot camp orders ... I have offered our assistance—a smart operator will take that offer!

I ask the Attorney-General to look into the tender process to ensure that the submission from Choice Australia was not pushed to one side. I also ask him to explain how applicants were short-listed and why and investigate whether preferential treatment was given to Team Wild and David Jackson, a non-declared fraud and very vocal and public supporter of the LNP.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I call the member for Ipswich West.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If you gentlemen would like to have a conversation, please take it outside.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (10.19 pm): I rise to also make a contribution to the debate on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and as a concerned member of my community, I am pleased to speak in support of this bill, which I am sure will have a positive impact on our communities.

This bill most certainly recommends the implementation of key LNP election promises. It is pleasing to see yet another example of the Newman LNP government getting on with the business of governing the state in line with the expectations of Queenslanders and providing protection for the wider community against the disturbing trend of juvenile crime. The objective of the bill is to amend the Youth Justice Act 1992 on an issue which is unfortunately becoming an all-too familiar problem reported in local media across Queensland and also in my local area.

I am deeply concerned about the rising incidence of juvenile crimes reported in communities that make up the electorate of Ipswich West. The objectives of the bill are to introduce a boot camp order as an option for juvenile offenders instead of detention and to remove the option of court referred youth justice conferencing. I want to point out that like my colleague the member for Broadwater as a member of the committee I did not support the committee's recommendation No. 9 for the same reasons that the member put earlier.

The bill also deals with amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 to allow operators of hotels to ask sex workers to leave the premises if being used for work and impose eligibility requirements that are based on citizenship or visa status for those who are benefiting from government services, assistance and support. I want to focus on the areas concerning youth justice. My views on dealing with youth crime are well known in my community. People have had enough of the revolving doors of our courts and the go-soft options taken by many in those courts—the slap-on-the-wrist mentality, as they say. I am a parent and in my household children are taught that they have certain responsibilities for certain behaviour and that there are consequences for their actions if they step out of line. I also know well and appreciate the attitudes and ideas of young people. The vast majority of our youth are decent people who will grow to contribute to and build our society in very positive ways.

Some years ago I was young, too, and a colourful character at that—although as long as those colours were black. Though my appearance in the 1980s and into the 1990s was a shock to some people, my attitude was always a pleasant surprise. Young people are often different in their appearance and that should be celebrated in most cases. Young people should, as I did, take responsibility for their actions. Indeed, I was taught from a young age that consequence was the best form of prevention of bad behaviour. Sadly, for an increasing number that no longer applies. Just last

week I attended the Rosewood and Walloon Consultative Committee which is made up of concerned members of the community about issues relating to their local area. We talked about the lack of positive role models for a great many young people in our community. The consensus of the meeting was that this is one of the largest root causes of the problems we are seeing with our youth in the community.

I want to reject statements made by the Leader of the Opposition earlier this evening. In my community people are overwhelmingly pleased to see the implementation of these trials of boot camps in 2013. The people who seem to be rejecting these ideas are the same ilk, they are hanky wringers, they are the people who will tell you that you cannot smack your kids. Well, you can, and in some cases you certainly should. My kids know that if they do the wrong thing a consequence could be a good smack on the backside.

Something that really must be done is to look at opportunities for giving young people a second chance. Sadly, up to 30 per cent of young people who are detained in prisons have been there five times before. That is really concerning. Obviously those strategies are not working. This initiative of the LNP government is a great opportunity and something that people want to see happen. Boot camps have never been tried before in this way by a government like this that has the resolve to address the issues. We have people saying boot camps do not work, but they have not been conducted in the way that the LNP government will trial them next year. I am very confident that we will have some positive results out of this great initiative.

There are small communities that make up my electorate. Regularly on a Friday and Saturday night throughout school holidays some residents feel as though they are prisoners in their own homes. They are disturbed to hear at night rubbish bins being kicked over, cars being vandalised and to wake up the next morning to find rubbish up the street. They have had enough. Some of the kids are as young as 14. They unfortunately do not have positive role models at home. They are not taught boundaries. When they go to school they show no restraint. There is no discipline. Unfortunately our teaching professionals have to deal with this. I am convinced that the implementation of these trials in 2013 will dawn a new era in how we address this growing problem—this scary, sad problem—and that we are going to provide an alternative means of dealing with some of the very vulnerable people that at the moment are running amok in our community.

I am confident that at the end of these trials there will be opportunity for communities like Ipswich West to also host boot camps. We have the facilities. The Attorney knows that I am keen to see this happen. In fact, I have broached this with a number of community leaders and they believe it would be a great idea. I am sure that the average person wants to see juvenile crime addressed and they are prepared to try things like boot camps. If we can turn one young life around, the \$2 million is well worth it. I am confident that there will be any number of the 80 in each instance who will get that second opportunity, who will turn themselves around. They will have, for the first time in their lives, an opportunity to be mentored. I am hoping to gain new skills. Members will know that for 23 years prior to entering this place I was involved with vocational education and training. Truly that is the levelling of the playing field. Over the years I have seen many young people who have been given an opportunity for VET in the TAFE system, and also when I worked in the railway, gain self-confidence and pride, all of the things that the people who are running amok in our society at the moment of a night—as I have said, as young as 14 or, dare I say, younger—have not had an opportunity for. I believe this will take them to the next step where they can contribute to society, they can lead fulfilled lives and really make something of themselves.

I look forward to seeing the benefits this bill will provide to the community for its safety and the reassurance it will give the law-abiding people of towns like Rosewood, Lowood and Fernvale and suburbs like Brassall and North Ipswich. I really think that it will provide a much needed strategy of intervention and rehabilitation for young offenders, providing an opportunity for these people in this great state. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (10.27 pm): I rise to speak on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. It has certainly been a long time in coming. I wish to confine the majority of my comments regarding this bill to the issue of boot camps. As the committee observes, this is effectively an omnibus bill and a controversial one at that. The LNP's fixation with boot camps was flagged by its Rockhampton candidate more than 12 months ago. But allow me to start by reflecting on the contributions made by various LNP members leading up to the last state election. What is important is the impression these comments provided. I particularly recall the comments of the member for Mirani. His comments 13 months ago created a very particular impression in the minds of Central Queenslanders about what the LNP was going to do if it was elected to government. At the time the member for Mirani said—

Labor has had years to tackle this and has done nothing but focus on the rights of criminals.

He said that these young offenders needed to be rounded up, taken off the streets and kept off them. He stated—

We need to look at stronger, direct action to take these young criminals off the streets and send them to boot camps where they will learn respect for other people's property and other people's rights.

The Rockhampton LNP candidate at the time said publicly that the LNP had developed a policy that was all about boot camps. Well, here we are, eight months since this government was elected, and this bill has finally been brought to this House. What is the bill all about? I can tell you one thing it is not about: it is not about implementing a developed policy and it is not about taking comprehensive action to address the issues of youth offending in this state. At best these trial camps are nothing more than experiments. These experiments will do nothing to address the core issues of youth offending in this state. Boot camps are the only shot in the locker that this government has to address juvenile offenders. It has taken eight months since the election to bring the bill to the House and what a shocker it is.

I fondly recall the Premier's launch of this policy in Cairns shortly before the election. My recollection is that the Premier was unable to provide a single example of where these sorts of programs have been successfully implemented anywhere. The LNP deliberately ran this boot camp policy to create a certain impression in the minds of Queenslanders about what they were going to do. There was no substantive detail provided and the vast majority of Queenslanders assumed that this would be a quasi-military set of arrangements. I submit that the LNP had no idea before the election and clearly has no idea today. When their Premier announced the boot camp policy he said, 'This program will be devised if we become the government.' All the Premier knew was that it was going to cost \$2 million over two years and murderers would not be entitled to attend a boot camp. There was no cost-benefit analysis and no measurable outcomes for reducing recidivism; just populist policy on the run. That is why it has taken eight months to try to construct something around this 10-second sound bite policy called boot camps. And what do Queenslanders get? Queenslanders get an experiment that is only going to touch a tiny percentage of offenders if they are willing to participate. That is hardly what was being touted by the LNP prior to the election. This problem is escalating in our communities and none of this legislation is going to change the on-ground situation in Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Maryborough or any other regional centre suffering from this affliction.

It is not as though this is a new idea. In previous decades the idea of youth boot camps has been toyed with in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, as well as overseas. Guess what? It did not work there and it will not work here. Is there actually any prospect of success in the first term of this LNP government? I would submit the answer is absolutely not. Of course, the source for this boot camp idea, like so many others from the LNP, is the good old republican United States. Various arms of the United States government have expended millions and millions of dollars in an effort to prove that these concepts work. Most of those camps were set up to deal with out-of-control youth and most featured residential components constructed around military-style environments, focusing on respect for authority, isolation from social norms and intense physical activity supported by a degree of intimidation.

Part of the government's program suggests that it is going to instill discipline and respect. The Attorney-General said, in a media release of 21 August, that the boot camp will provide discipline, structure and physical training and a community focus component of family education and social issues. The 4 July issue of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* had the Attorney-General photographed visiting a boot camp where young men were dressed in camouflage, talking about the government's commitment to boot camps. He was at a boot camp talking about tough-love approaches and how it transforms lives. Of course, members would note that the date of the article was 4 July, good old US Independence Day. Who is running the strategy for the LNP headquarters? Are they blindly following US republican party mantra? Has the Attorney-General followed the script a little too closely by being photographed with young men in military uniform or has he been caught out promoting a boot camp as a military style activity? On 19 September, the Attorney-General said—


We have made it very clear from the out-set ours will not be military-style boot camps.

Of course, that was in response to criticisms by Dr Troy Allard that appeared in the media informing the Attorney-General that military style boot camps do not work.

The big question is: when the LNP was researching and developing this policy, why did it not realise that this trial will not work? The Attorney-General and the Premier either have no plan or they are making policy on the run. I suspect the latter. I am concerned that it was only on 15 November that the successful tenderers were announced and that they have to set up boot camps from scratch, including the provision of staff, training, housing, use-of-force methods, security, alert systems for escapees, counselling, mentoring, cultural programs, education requirements and the list goes on. I am wondering how the money will be spent and what is going to be achieved with only \$2 million.

While we are speaking about what works and what does not, and it is worth speaking briefly about this because it forms part of the bill, the cuts to the court referral conferencing, which everybody acknowledges had a 98 per cent satisfaction rate, make no sense whatsoever. The committee recommended that the court ordered youth justice conferencing be reinstated because it was good policy, but, no, that was not accepted. Around the world, in places such as the UK and here in Queensland, we have seen a move towards restorative justice, not just for juvenile offenders but also for adults. It is only in the good old USA where they have a three-strikes policy in many states. I am waiting for an LNP three-strikes media release, ready for the next election. When we look at the Newman government policies we must look at what drives them and it is the dollar sign.

It is my contention that this government has further politicised the issue of juvenile crime, dumbing it down with the one-shot-in-the-locker solution of boot camps and sold it mercilessly to an ill-informed and frustrated community as evidence of its stated tough stance on crime. The only problem with all of this is that it will not work. All of the research across the developed world absolutely demonstrates that there will be no benefit to boot camps in any of their various guises whatsoever. There is not a single set of performance metrics that lend weight to the prospects of this program. Rates of recidivism are not affected by the use of boot camps in any form. All the research identifies that, states it and everyone who understands it knows it.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (10.36 pm): That is about the worst bit of rubbish I have heard since first coming into this parliament. To hear the Hard Yakka program criticised as it was tonight was shocking. I can tell the House that Hard Yakka has pulled some kids out of the gutter and put them back on the straight and narrow, and to hear it criticised tonight was shocking.

A government member: He has no idea.

Mr SORENSEN: He has no idea what this legislation is all about. It was shocking to have to sit here and listen to that garbage. It was the worst speech I have ever had to listen to. I have seen kids go through that Hard Yakka program. One mother came to me and said, 'For the first time, my son brought me a cup of tea in bed'. I have seen other kids go through the program, return to school and then enter the Army. It was too much about the adults and not enough about the kids who we are trying to save.

In Hervey Bay, we have the Glendyne Farm for kids who do not fit into the school system. If they do not fit in there, we send them to Hard Yakka. We try to keep those kids out of prison. That is what we try to do. We should be trying to do that for the kids, not because the member opposite wants to play politics with this issue. That is what we are trying to do. I came into this place tonight and I listened to the member bag a guy who does so much good. The member bagged him, but I cannot sit here and listen to somebody be denigrated like that without speaking out. We are here to help the kids. We are trying to keep them out of the prison system. At the end of the day, that is what it is all about. How much does it cost to keep a kid in prison?

Mr Bleijie: Two hundred thousand a year.


Mr SORENSEN: Yes. If we can keep those kids out of prisons, that is what we have to do.

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: The member would put more in. He has no idea. I have been in public life longer than he has and I have seen some of the things that are working. To have the member tell me that it is not working is absolute rubbish. I cannot sit here and listen to that crap all night.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I ask the member to withdraw the comment, please. It is unparliamentary.

Mr SORENSEN: I withdraw.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.39 pm): Firstly, I acknowledge the impassioned speech of the member for Hervey Bay. It was a very heartfelt speech. Tonight I am pleased to also stand in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I too rise to commend the great work of the Attorney-General in bringing this legislation before the House.

This bill fulfils our pre-election pledge to introduce youth boot camps to put a stop to the cycle of youth crime and give young offenders a chance at real and meaningful rehabilitation. I was very honoured when the Premier and the Attorney-General asked me to play a role—albeit a small role—in looking at the boot camp model. I participated in a number of round table events with people who can only be described as Queensland's best and brightest in the youth welfare, crime and rehabilitation space.

As a result of this input, the government is trialling two models for youth boot camps. The first is an early intervention youth boot camp program which will be trialled on the Gold Coast. This program will target at-risk young people—that is, those whose current behaviour and life choices mean that there is a high likelihood that they may soon be entering the criminal justice system. I believe this model is vital as an ounce of prevention is much better than a pound of cure. I commend the Attorney-General for having the foresight to run with this pilot.

The second of our youth boot camp models will introduce a supervised youth justice order as an option before detention. This bill will provide courts with this new sentencing option. This boot camp order is targeted at those young people who are facing detention. It will provide young offenders the opportunity to break the cycle that is crime and detention and begin to make positive life choices and get their life on the right track. Both of these programs are part of the Safer Streets Crime Action Plan and will take a whole-of-government approach to working with 80 young people over two years.

One of the real highlights of these trials is the involvement of a young person's family. This holistic, whole-of-life approach will identify and seek to work through difficulties within and with the family which may be contributing to a young person's behaviour and seek to work with the young person and their family to provide the best possible chance of the young person having the opportunities each and every one of us would wish for our children.

As someone who as a youth would have been a prime candidate for the boot camps being legislated here today, I feel I bring with me a wealth of knowledge as someone who not only has experienced severe dysfunction in their formative years but also has worked for the past quarter of a century with young Queenslanders, many who would be considered at risk. Many people here know my story—a story that led me from the brink of complete social isolation to one of community engagement. Along the way I watched many of my friends make seriously negative decisions that saw them enter into a system that meant their choices had serious and life-changing consequences.

For anyone who has visited a correction facility, especially a maximum security facility, the sense of hopelessness and lost opportunity is palpable. The 40-year-old man pacing the exercise yard was once a young child with hopes and dreams which he no longer has. Although I personally believe that the punitive element of our correctional system should not be lightly discounted, we as a government are doing everything we can to stop young people from throwing their lives away. There is no doubt in my mind that the at-risk 15-year-old kid in high school in Kingaroy—that was me—would have benefited from the boot camp model being trialled on the Gold Coast. This model would have made a real difference in my life. I believe it would have helped me make the right choices.

Regardless of the manner in which it comes, I can attest to the value of a second chance and the value of a government that is concerned enough about our young people to find an alternative arrangement to detention to address the challenges facing our young people. Boot camps are not only good for the individual, they are good for society. If through these programs and programs like them we can provide positive pathways for at-risk and young offenders, the financial and social benefit to the state and society in general will be immense. The LNP government has fulfilled an election promise that is in line with community expectations to match community concern with escalating youth offences. But far more tangible for those who will find themselves experiencing this trial, they will be given a second chance.

Boot camps are designed to highlight to those going through the camp that their current choices are destructive. This is achieved through physical activity and then a highly specific program of offence based counselling aimed at turning around the offenders' attitudes that have led them to a point of needing intervention. This trial incorporates the essentials needed for a serious wake-up call for offenders who have their entire lives ahead of them. The residential phase and the mentoring phase have the right ingredients of support from family and reparation programs that will get these kids back on the path to being engaged with their community and kick-start their learning or training to get them back on the path to schooling or employment.

The best part of this program is the personalised nature of its construction to fit the needs of the offender. Rather than a cookie cut mould for a variety of different circumstances, an approach that may have contributed to them being there in the first place, this trial will establish programs on a needs basis of those using it to enable the best possible outcomes and results. By instilling respect, discipline and values the community shares in those taking part in the trial, we expect those who complete the trial to come out of it empowered to make constructive choices for their lives that will give them a future and hope. I commend the Attorney-General for standing up for young people and for giving them a second chance. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.45 pm): I rise to speak to the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Can I say at the outset, if I was inclined to speak against this bill, the contribution from the member for Hervey Bay would have given me cause to reconsider. He was speaking from a position of involvement and certainly a position of compassionate concern.

It is my experience that 90 to 95 per cent of kids are wonderful. They are positive contributors to our communities. Each of us goes to school functions and we see grade 7s or grade 11s and 12s and younger in our high schools leading assemblies and hosting programs. They are positive, they are well adjusted and they are good contributors. It is the five to 10 per cent that we are here discussing tonight.

These young people do not have good prospects. It is one of our responsibilities to ensure that we do as much as we can to change their direction from one of spiralling downwards to, as much as possible, hope and a future. I would be very interested in knowing the results of youth conferencing. Certainly the feedback I have received, and this is just anecdotally, has been mixed at best. There was a lot of interjection about youth conferencing, which was the previous approach. I have certainly had mixed reactions to that prospect.

It is proposed that 80 young people take part in these boot camps over two years. If these boot camps can change one of those young people from being a young man or woman with a life in prison ahead of them it will have been successful. Any greater number is a bonus. I certainly have no qualms about supporting them.

There are two different types of boot camps proposed. The Safer Streets Crime Action Plan involves more intervention. It identifies youth who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Much of that can be done from their school days. Teachers are very well informed. They will be able to identify—not 100 per cent—children with destructive behaviours, and behaviours that are likely, in the medium to long term, to put them into the criminal justice system. That is a resource that could easily be tapped. I am sure there are good resources being marshalled to identify these young ones at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Even that level of intervention is well informed and well able to be identified.

The second type of boot camp is the supervised youth justice order as an option before detention. Others have spoken about that. The early intervention trial will be on the Gold Coast. The second youth justice option will be based in Cairns, Yarrabah, Innisfail, Mareeba and Atherton. As another speaker has said, I certainly hope that based on the success of these two trials they will be able to be extended throughout the state.

There are some disqualifying offences and if these are involved in the charges these boot camp options will not be available. I think it is important to put on the record the offences, because I think a reasonable person listening to this list of offences would agree that these types of offences need to be treated and heard by a court. The disqualifying offences include unlawful sodomy; indecent treatment of children under 16; being the owner et cetera permitting abuse of children on premises; carnal knowledge with or of children under 16; abuse of persons with an impairment of the mind; taking a child for immoral purposes; incest; punishment of murder; attempt to murder; punishment of manslaughter; acts intended to cause grievous bodily harm and other malicious acts; rape; assault with intent to commit rape; and sexual assaults. They are serious crimes and this sort of intervention—early intervention and youth justice orders to avoid detention—is not intended and should not address those types of criminal activity.

So I just wanted to put on the record that I do support the boot camp process. 'Boot camps' is a fairly hackneyed term. I have seen some programs—certainly not on this level of boot camp—where young men and women who are at risk of offending have been taken to an isolated area and put through a series of experiences, challenges, personality building and they have come out the other end. Not 100 per cent but 80 per cent of those young ones in the program that I followed through had improved in their respect for others, their respect for authority figures and, more importantly, their respect for themselves. If this program engenders that sort of respect and builds that capacity in a young person, then it is certainly welcome.

A previous speaker talked about disciplining children. We have a generation—at least one generation—who are at risk of not learning what self-respect is, let alone respect for others. We do have to engender that. It is a responsibility as a parent. If that fails, then that child is at risk of failing to respect the other parameters that surround us in life as we grow and in adulthood. So I support this proposal. I do wish the Attorney-General success in it. But, more importantly, I wish those who are involved in these program stamina, because it will be a very wearing program to be involved in, and to the participants I wish them success and a future filled with hope.

The other part of the bill that I wanted to speak about was the Anti-Discrimination Act changes to address the findings of a recent court case where a motel owner was found to have contravened the Anti-Discrimination Act by refusing to provide accommodation to be used for prostitution purposes. The bill inserts a new exemption in the act to protect businesses from this type of complaint and to give the owners or managers of those businesses control over the use of that premises, and I will be supporting this part of the bill as well. I wish to put on the record though that I received one email, as did others in this chamber, from a lady—and I will just identify her as Jodine. I am not going to quote the entire email but I will put this on the record. She says—

Please consider my human rights and civil liberties when sitting in parliament deciding whether or not to pass the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and vote NO to the Anti-Discrimination Act Amendment, sec 106C.

The writer went on to talk about the Legislative Standards Act and the meaning of fundamental legislative principles. She says—

The points above are addressed in Section 3, Fundamental legislative principles ...

And that is—

- (2) The principles include requiring that legislation has sufficient regard to—
 - (a) rights and liberties of individuals; and
 - (b) the institution of Parliament.

- (3) Whether legislation has sufficient regard to rights and liberties of individuals depends on whether, for example, the legislation—

(g) does not adversely affect rights and liberties, or impose obligations, retrospectively;

The writer goes on to say—

Clearly all sex workers human rights and liberties will be adversely affected if the amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act is passed. This would be a gross violation of my human rights.

I have not replied to this lady but I will. I will put this question to her and to others who would think similarly: what of the rights of the proprietors or managers of these accommodation complexes? What of their rights to administer that premises according to the principles and the ethos and indeed the environment that they wish to create? What about the rights of others who are residing in the premises and perhaps in proximity to the rooms that are being so used?

I am going to err on the side of those other persons, the rights of the proprietors and the managers of the accommodation complex to use that premises in the way that they choose and the rights of others who hire a room in those premises to be able to enjoy that room in quietness and in peace. So I will be supporting the legislation in relation to that.

Again, I support the legislation. I commend the Attorney-General for this move to improve the future for young offenders—potentially 80, and I hope more in the future. I certainly hope that our young people have a lot to look forward to in their futures filled with hope.



Mr PUCCI (Logan—LNP) (10.55 pm): I rise today to participate in the debate and support the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This legislation is one more accomplishment that our LNP team has achieved since being elected in March. This amendment bill covers three key areas addressing subject matter in the Youth Justice Act 1992, the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012.

The main focus of this bill is crime prevention and rehabilitation. Criminal activity amongst juveniles has always been a growing concern within our community. This bill takes a proactive step to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders whilst offering them an alternative to institutionalisation within our correctional system or being referred to youth justice counselling. For some offenders, depending on the severity and repetition of their offence, detention is not the answer. Today some young people are seen as adults—a reflection on our society that has placed certain expectations on how adolescents must be held accountable for their actions.

The objective of this bill is to provide a structured and disciplined rehabilitation program focusing on changing the behaviour of offenders and returning them to be functional members of society. The introduction of the boot camp programs will serve as an alternative to detention for offenders of criminal offences that would currently be referred to youth justice counselling. The program will entail a period of one month in residential boot camp centres followed by a period of no less than two and no greater than five months of intensive supervision in the community.

Approved by the chief executive, these programs will be tailored to meet the needs of each offender. This will seek to eliminate the current crises of juvenile repeat offenders. Sadly, offences are committed by adolescents of all ages. This program is targeted to offenders over the age of 13 who have willingly consented to undertake the program. This program does come with restrictions. Offenders who have committed a disqualifying offence or are facing pending charges of a disqualifying nature will be prevented from participating in the boot camp programs. Factors that may also prohibit an offender from participating come about if, with sound reason, the offender poses an unacceptable threat to the boot camp centre, employees or other offenders undertaking the rehabilitation program. A boot camp order being granted by the court will also factor in the physical and mental health of the individual.

The program provided is an individualised and intensive program focusing on strenuous physical activity during the residential phase and focused programs aimed at rehabilitating offenders who are afflicted by substance abuse and/or require intensive counselling. Furthermore, enlistment in these programs is only done so with the express consent of the offenders' parents.

In short summary, the conclusion to this element of this amendment bill, as stipulated in the LNP budget, removes the option for courts to refer offenders to youth justice conferencing, thus removing the redundant role of the youth justice conferencing coordinator and replaces those responsibilities with the chief executive. These mechanisms are designed to help offenders rehabilitate and resume a functional role within society.

Criminal activity cannot be tolerated; yet we must provide pathways—constructive pathways—for those who are making a concerted effort to make amends for their actions. I have spoken many times about the importance of education and, from my military background, discipline. If you act enthusiastically, you will be enthusiastic. Through these camps, young offenders will review the enthusiastic motivation and education to better their lives and avoid making the same mistakes that landed them before the magistrates. These qualities form the backbone for many as to how they live their lives. The boot camp programs will give young offenders this opportunity, an opportunity that, depending on the crime, would not be achieved if incarceration was the only form of sentencing.

Passing this bill will be another accomplishment by our government in tackling the soft laws left behind by the former Labor government. The rise in youth crime has flourished because the former government lacked the fortitude to take a tough stance on crime, a tough stance that was lacking in not only youth crime but also across the board. The proof is in the writing. Our government has taken the fight to the criminals, those who display antisocial behaviour or pose a threat to public safety. From the Criminal Law Amendment Bill to anti-hooring legislation, this amendment bill is another step that our government has taken in combating criminal activity in our state. During the years of inactivity of the former government, one-third of youth offenders had reoffended no less than five times. This is proof that the former government's approach to tackling youth crime failed.

In 2010 the number of youth offenders facing the Children's Court in Queensland spiralled to 7.2 per cent despite youth justice conferencing and Labor's weak official cautions. In the last two years of the ALP government, up to 1,450 youth offenders were incarcerated in the corrective system. That is not an answer. Locking them up time and time again is not the answer to changing the culture of young offenders. These programs that our government is implementing will do that. It will bring about change in how we tackle the growing problem of youth crime.

The opposition sit there and object to this legislation. Now all of a sudden, after 20 years they have an opinion on juvenile crime. They had 20 years to fix the problem, but their soft stance on crime—and not only at the juvenile level—allowed it to flourish. It has taken this proactive government to implement legislation to clamp down on offenders and also, as represented in this bill and through boot camp programs, to offer pragmatic and structured rehabilitation schemes for offenders.

The second component of this amendment bill is the legislative changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. The amendment contained within this legislative amendment bill will enable owners and operators of accommodation facilities to refuse accommodation to persons who they reasonably believe will use their facilities for the purposes of providing prostitution services. As highlighted by the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, this element to the legislation serves to protect the integrity and safety of both parties—protection in terms of the integrity of the establishment and protection of sex workers who may be subjected to improper and unlawful advances from property owners.

This government is listening to the people. I cannot tell honourable members how many Neighbourhood Watch meetings, Crime Stoppers meetings, community organisation meetings, RSL meetings and P&C meetings I have been to, and youth crime is mentioned everywhere. Something has to be done. We can sit here and say, 'It's not going to work,' and keep doing the same thing. It is insanity to just keep repeating the same thing with the same effect. Or we can try something that is going to help, and that is what we are doing. It gives me great pleasure to support this bill and support the great opportunities that our state has to offer. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (11.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I will be restricting my comments to the proposed amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 in relation to government eligibility policies. In his explanatory speech, the Attorney-General had this to say in relation to this aspect of the bill—

There are also amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act to exempt requirements of citizenship or visa status in government eligibility policies. The exemption will only apply to government policies for the provision of financial or other assistance, services or support and will only extend to citizenship or visa status criteria. It is not a blanket exemption for government policies in relation to other grounds covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act. Public resources are finite. Limits must often be placed on who is eligible for government funded assistance. The exemption will ensure that government entities can adopt and implement assistance policies based on citizenship or residency without being exposed to litigation which would further deplete scarce public resources.

It appears that these amendments are in response to a decision of QCAT in relation to a settlement paid by the Queensland government to Hannah Campbell, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a baby and requires full-time care. In my electorate of Woodridge there are many Pacific Islanders who are long-term residents of Queensland and who hold New Zealand citizenship. They have expressed concern to me about these proposed amendments. Many of these people have been working in Queensland, paying taxes and government charges the same as any other Queenslanders. They are concerned that, should they ever need to call on the services of the government, they will be denied because of their immigration status.

These people have a unique status in Australia. They are able to reside here permanently on a non-protective special category visa and many find it very difficult to become Australian citizens. Indeed, many of the older generation will never attain Australian citizenship and it blocks their children from getting HECS for university and access to many other services and payments. The hardship that will be created by these amendments for these residents of our fair state will lead to some unintended consequences that were pointed out by people who had made submissions to the committee on this aspect of the bill. The Attorney-General has said that public resources are finite, and this is true. He has


also said that limits must be placed on who is eligible for government funded assistance, and this is also true. But it is also important to be fiscally responsible and to not make cuts to services in the hope of achieving short-term savings but instead creating social problems that will require the expenditure of more funds further down the track.

I read with some concern the submission made by the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland. It states—

The Commission appreciates that economic requirements may in some instances justify the restriction on the provision of expensive government services to Australian citizens or to persons with particular visa status. However, if the amendments are made as proposed, the Commission is concerned that any widespread denial of certain government services to long term residents of Queensland may create a permanent second class of people. The ADCQ considers this to be detrimental to Queensland's long term social cohesion and localised community harmony.

I was even more concerned to read the submission of the family Skiffington who told the committee about their experience in trying to get support services for their disabled daughter Rachel. Their submission says that they were advised that 'the only way Rachel would be supported was that if either we abandoned her at a location or I was not available to take care of her'. That was called 'relinquishment'.

I think it is important that all aspects of this legislation are looked at in context and the full cost to the community is weighed up before cost-saving measures are implemented that may appear at face value to be capable of providing savings but, in fact, have long-term consequences that end up costing the community more not only in dollar terms but also in human terms.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.09 pm): I rise in the House to speak in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I say at the outset that there are communities right across Queensland where youth crime is out of control including our major provincial cities of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton—places I am most familiar with, thanks to my previous life working across regional Queensland.

In my own electorate of Whitsunday, just a couple of weeks ago the community was outraged by one particular crime allegedly committed by juveniles. What was that crime? It was arson. I cannot speak too much about the incident, of course, because it is before the courts, but the alleged crime has many people in my home town on the warpath, venting their spleens in local newspapers and on talkback radio. The fire I speak of gutted several retail outlets on Mackay's north side, in the suburb of Mount Pleasant.

Mrs Menkens: A terrible fire.

Mr COSTIGAN: It was a terrible fire. I am sure most honourable members would recall seeing the media reports in relation to this terrible situation. It was a fire that left a damage bill well in excess of \$1 million—a fire that I happened to see with my very own eyes as I headed up the Bruce Highway to Calen to officially open a new synthetic green at the local bowls club. The same fire has left many hardworking people without a job, without an income in the lead-up to Christmas and without Christmas presents, given that one shop was in fact a toy store. Sadly, it and others are now in ruins.

Elsewhere, youth crime is sending people around the twist. Again I will speak with local knowledge in the case of publican Will Cordwell, a respected hotelier in Rockhampton.

Mr Young: Hear, hear!

Mr COSTIGAN: I am sure the member for Keppel is well aware of the situation there. It goes without saying that Mr Cordwell is sick and tired of having to deal with juveniles running amok, ripping him off, wrecking his pub and sucking his time. In years gone by, some of these kids who play up like second-hand lawnmowers would have got a good, old-fashioned kick up the backside. In Rockhampton, legendary police officer the late Jack Kelly, who served his community alongside the father of the member for Keppel, would have endorsed that approach and in those days he was not alone.


In Mackay we had our own version of Mr Kelly, the one and only 'Lofty' Wesener, whose big foot can still be remembered by people who had to take their medicine for doing the wrong thing but who, all these years later, are now extremely grateful for Lofty's old-school style of policing. Of course, those days of a kick up the bum are gone—a shame in the eyes of many in the community—but, nevertheless, this government is pushing ahead to curb youth crime.

The advent of these boot camps is something that I welcome as I genuinely believe that it will bring about good outcomes. I am not alone. Tonight I had the opportunity to converse with the inaugural president of the Mackay-Whitsunday retired police officers association, my old mate 'Kojak' Campbell. Kojak, without batting an eyelid, I would have thought, was most adamant that we are well and truly on the right path here. He advises me that the majority of his members are very supportive of this government's move towards boot camps, and he commends the Attorney-General on his leadership in relation to these matters. If anything, Kojak says, 'Don't pussyfoot around.'

This bill is another example of the Newman LNP government delivering on its pre-election commitments—our pledge to introduce boot camps to stop the cycle of crime among our youth and give young offenders a real chance at rehabilitation and the opportunity to make positive life decisions.

Speaking of decisions, I am delighted to say that this bill also makes amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. The people of Queensland, in particular those in the Mackay-Whitsunday region, would remember that recent case involving a motelier in our hinterland, in the mining town of Moranbah. The motelier was found to have contravened the aforementioned act by refusing accommodation to be used for the purposes of prostitution. It was enough to fire up people in my own electorate of Whitsunday who wrote to me outraged by the situation.

This bill inserts a new exemption in the act to protect businesses from that sort of complaint and to give them control over who exactly comes to their business and for what particular purpose. The exemption allows someone to lawfully discriminate against another person in relation to accommodation if they reasonably believe that that other person is using or intends to use it in connection with that person's work or another person's work as a sex worker. Put simply, ladies of the night should think again if they think they can rely on the local motelier, who previously had no choice but to cop it sweet. It goes without saying that I warmly welcome the new exemption. I am not alone. It is in line with community expectations—something this government is well aware of. In closing, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (11.15 pm): As the new chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee I rise to speak on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Extensive consultation on this bill was conducted with a variety of submitters—primarily individuals but also legal services people, the Crime and Justice Research Centre, Halo Divine, Youth Affairs Network, Scarlett Alliance, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, the Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council, Caxton Legal Centre, Pacific Indigenous Nations Network and the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. For those who may not know, Elizabeth Fraser is going to stand down from the position of commissioner. She may have already written to members to inform them. Certainly the bill did raise some issues. A lot of recommendations came out of the inquiry.

I had a lot to do with people in youth justice programs over a very long period of time in a different life, prior to coming into parliament. I actually do support programs like this. Previously there was an extensive one that was run in the Gold Coast and Brisbane areas whereby people were referred to the Youth Enterprise Trust. Unfortunately, it died a death in some ways, primarily because there was a funding problem. It actually accepted somewhere between 40 and 60 young people a year. It really did have a very high success rate.

When you are running systems looking after young people going into programs, you need a diversity of program types available to you. When you are providing for people going into a semicustodial, punitive or penalty environment, no one system is absolutely perfect. In other words, you will always have a lot of people who have specific problems with any one system. I think the name 'boot camp' sometimes tends to put people off. They should probably see these things as specific types of programs which have different flavours, depending on both the types of people who would be entering into them and where they came from.

I think the intention primarily—it was an election commitment made by the government—was to try to address a specific problem which was occurring with specific groups of people in what is a very regionalised community in Queensland. It is appropriate to fund these systems, because they are inherently expensive. I would always caution people not to underestimate the usefulness of preventative strategies, which this could be considered to be. For a female going into prison, the first week or two costs somewhere between \$10,000 and \$12,000, and for a male it costs somewhere between \$8,000 and \$10,000 if they have to undergo drug rehabilitation.

The majority of people going into prison need to undergo detoxed, and that is the average cost. The cost carrying out a custodial sentence for a male is somewhere between \$50,000 to \$60,000 and \$100,000 to \$110,000 a year. The reality is that we do not want people progressing to those sorts of facilities. Everyone has to take a big swallow and sit back and say to themselves, 'I might have some problems with specific programs with regard to youth justice, but we have to have systems which are available to the courts and also mediation type situations whereby we can refer people who may well be advantaged by them.' The flow diagram at the rear of the youth justice boot camp report gives a fairly good idea of how we could manage these people.

I have listened to members giving a lot of specific examples and raising particular sets of circumstances. One would say that most of the people who tend to go into these programs are not types of people, if we are to grade people into certain groups, and are generally not the ones they have been talking about. Everyone knows certain types of offenders, but there is great diversity in the types of offenders. It is not a homogenous group, and one should never assume that we can use a one-size-fits-all policy or have an inherently fixed belief about people's circumstances, whether they be the 'disadvantaged group' or they come from a particular cultural group. What is interesting about young people is that there is an enormous amount of similarity amongst them but there are also cases of individuality. That has really come through in this bill and certainly the recommendations that relate to it.

The committee developed a lot of checks and balances, and people ought to give this bill a chance to work. The recommendations are quite specific. Whilst the committee has said that there are some specific things, particularly in recommendations 6, 7 and 8—I will not go through what they are; people can look for themselves—the committee considered these things very closely. I would endorse the bill going forward. It is one of those things where we need to 'suck it and see'. I would recommend that in terms of limited numbers it is an appropriate way of looking at it.

'Boot camp' is a terrible name and we should look at these things in terms of youth justice programs which may well have a flavour of that type of thing. They do work in very select circumstances. The committee reviewed this. It was an election commitment of the government and it has suggested two limited programs—one in Cairns which has a heavy emphasis on looking after Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and the other on the Gold Coast looking after a specific group of troubled youth. I do know some of those people in those types of programs and I think the results are reasonably good, from what we have seen so far. I have spoken on the topic in parliament before. Members should consider this reasonably. The committee has gone through it and the minister is to be congratulated for pushing on in what were difficult times.



Mr BOOTHMAN (Albert—LNP) (11.23 pm): I rise in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—legislation that is long overdue and a piece of legislation that has been demanded by residents throughout Queensland. We are witness to the escalation in crime committed by individuals under the age of 18 years. These individuals have a complete disregard for society's expectations and find themselves in a perpetual cycle of crime from which they see no escape. We as representatives can no longer sit idly by whilst this situation continues to spiral out of control. Governments have a moral obligation to best serve all Queenslanders and create a proactive environment to give those who have strayed from a law-abiding path a far more productive and rewarding path. It has become an expectation that offenders are held accountable for their actions, with the goal of breaking the cycle of crime. Detention has proven itself ineffective in reducing future offending and incarceration has a limited effect on a small number of repeat offenders.

The residents of South-East Queensland are at their wit's end with youth offenders. We are subjected to these individuals' handiwork on a weekly basis through our newspapers and in person. Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout the electorate demanded action because they felt that the policies of the previous government failed. The Newman LNP team gave a firm commitment that change was upon us. I wish to thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for his resolve in taking a proactive approach to delivering this legislation.

The bill will amend the Youth Justice Act 1992 to introduce a boot camp order which will provide the courts an option before detention. This gives the courts a clear alternative to help these youth find their way out of a life of crime. The boot camp program will entail one month of residential boot camp followed by at least two months or up to five months of intensive supervision in the community. This will give offenders guidance in how they should conduct themselves within the greater community and, where possible, this will include the involvement of the young person's family. It is crucial to involve the young person's family to ensure that difficulties within the family which may be partly responsible for the individual's actions can be addressed so they can refrain from further infringements upon completion of the boot camp program.

Young offenders will participate in a physical, health training, educational and offence focused program to address the causes of offending. The residential phase is designed to instil discipline and assist youths in turning their lives around. To be eligible for the program, an individual must be at least 13 years of age at the time of sentencing and reside in the area prescribed by regulation. I should note that young offenders who participate in sexual assault or serious violence will be ineligible to enter the boot camp program. Furthermore, if an offender is seen to be an unacceptable risk to boot camp employees or other children participating in the program, the individual will be ineligible to participate. If a young person breaches the boot camp order, there will be a number of options available to a court. This may include serving a sentence in a detention centre or receiving a new boot camp order or a conditional release from the program.

This legislation is what the community has been crying out for. We need to break the cycle of crime in our communities. As I go around my Neighbourhood Watches, I hear that they are extremely pleased with this legislation—from Cedar Creek to Oxenford to Willow Vale. Well done to the Attorney-General on this fantastic piece of legislation. Well done! I commend the legislation to the House.



Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (11.28 pm): This bill is yet another rushed LNP bill which raises more questions than it answers. Not only are people involved in the youth justice sector questioning this change in legislation; the parliamentary committee is questioning it as well. The committee found numerous outstanding questions and problems with the bill. We all seek to make the youth justice system work better to avoid young people continually undertaking antisocial behaviour, causing social

incohesion and getting a criminal record that will hold back their progress in society for many years. But this government rushes in its ideologically driven approach without consideration of what does and does not work.

Without proper consultation and analysis, the Attorney-General again is making mistakes that will do more harm than good to the young people involved, and the community will suffer from young people not progressing but, in fact, regressing through outdated and proven underperforming projects like boot camps.

This bill also seeks to remove the court referred youth justice conferencing, which had a 98 per cent satisfaction rate for not only the offenders but, more importantly, the victims of crime. The committee in its recommendation No. 9 rightly suggests that this highly successful program be retained. It makes no sense to replace this program, which is delivering real results in our community. It makes no sense to ignore the people who work in this field. They are the experts in youth justice.

Despite having only a few days in which to prepare submissions to the committee, members of the public and those concerned with youth justice ended up making 53 submissions, and very few were supportive of this bill. Most, as is reflected in the committee's report, have concerns and valid questions about the effectiveness of boot camps and the scrapping of a successful program in youth justice conferencing. From judges to social workers, people are concerned that this bill will take youth justice backwards, not forwards, and that the ideology of the LNP clouds the successful, practical and proven programs that are available.

The committee raised these concerns when it asked in recommendation No. 5 that the Attorney-General detail the philosophy behind and empirical evidence to support the boot camp policy. The committee also raised the issue of cost to undertake this program. Many youth groups working in this sector—and I know quite a number of them—provide highly successful programs, working with young offenders and their families in an holistic approach that delivers measurable and substantial improvements to young people's lives. They deliver these programs for a fraction of the cost of boot camps. Boot camps by nature are expensive to undertake. They require 24-hour care and supervision. Insurance costs are astronomical in these situations, as having young people together is regarded as very high risk for insurance purposes.

There have been various studies and research undertaken into boot camps across Australia and the world. Most highlight that undertaking boot camps alone effectively has little or no effect on recidivist behaviour and can work in the opposite direction by introducing different cohorts of young offenders to work with and learn from each other and put peer pressure on each other to show antisocial and criminal behaviour. Further, even those young people who show some improvement, without the continual assistance both before and after camp, slip back into their behaviour when the support is not available and the environment they are returned to is the same that contributed to the problematic issues in the first place. A vast majority of youth justice workers will relay to members that continual support, family intervention and improved educational and vocational access will bring real and demonstrable results. It makes no sense that this government moves towards programs that have been discredited since the 1990s.

Young people need to be prepared for change in their own lives to achieve results in youth justice. Forcing them away with others who are not prepared to and who are not wanting to participate then affects those who may be ready to embrace change. Studies by groups such as the Australian Institute of Criminology show that what is far more effective is working with a young person and their family through properly resourced programs that increase their educational and vocational skills, teach problem solving, anger management and self-esteem, safeguard or improve—

Mr Crandon interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Member for Coomera!

Mrs MILLER: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for your protection—safeguard or improve their physical mental health and wellbeing and provide the appropriate level of support in the community. Those studies also find that things like US style shock incarceration—

... do not reduce recidivism, do not reduce prison populations and do not reduce costs.

New Zealand is regarded as one of the world's best in dealing with young offenders. That recognition comes from their successful youth justice conferencing, and that is just what this Attorney-General wants to get rid of in this state. Our young people will not get the support they need because, despite all the evidence and all the advice, even from the parliamentary committee, this current Attorney-General wants to go down a proven path of failure. This is ideological LNP madness enshrined in legislation before the House. The Attorney-General is this parliament's own recidivist youth offender.

He needs constant counselling and constant assistance to see that his antisocial behaviour in this legislation is not addressing the needs of young people. This current Attorney-General arrogantly does not listen, does not learn and is an embarrassment to this parliament and an embarrassment to the justice system in this state.


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.36 pm): As the member representing the electorate in which the Gold Coast region boot camp trial will be held, I want to make a brief contribution to this debate. I thank all members for their great interest in the youth justice program. As the Attorney-General has said, a \$2 million investment over two years in youth diversion programs is a sound investment when we consider that it costs \$200,000 a year per youth offender to keep them in detention. If we keep 10 youths out of detention, that is a sound investment.

Some weeks ago the Attorney-General visited my electorate and met the people who were going to be running this diversion program. I thank him very much for coming down and seeing it firsthand and also for visiting other operators of similar programs who have been doing things like youth diversion programs—or boot camps, for want of a better name—for many years and with great degrees of success. I commend that part of the bill and look forward to the expansion of the program after the trial is completed. I am sure it will yield good results, and hopefully there can be further investment in that youth diversion program in the Beaudesert region as well.

The other part of this bill deals with introducing new exemptions into the Anti-Discrimination Act, particularly where it deals with accommodation used in connection with work as a sex worker. This exemption is in response to a decision that was made by the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. Motels are just one type of business or enterprise where proprietors should have the right to determine who they transact business with. The state should not be in the business of telling people who they can or cannot deal with, whether that be forcing people or banning people from joining unions or forcing people or banning people from shopping at a particular place or not dealing with a particular person. This provision certainly corrects the situation that came as a result of that decision of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. It reinstates that right to private businesses.

The other amendment in the bill introduces an exemption on the basis of citizenship or visa status in government policies. I presume that this amendment will allow the government to direct assistance of a financial nature primarily to Australian citizens or permanent residents of Australia. It is the government's responsibility to look after those people in the first place. Of course, citizens of other countries or newly arrived people need a pathway to citizenship, but our government programs in the ordinary course of business should be able to be targeted at Australian citizens or permanent residents so that we look after our society first and foremost.

I reflect on the billions of dollars that have been spent by the federal government in Canberra over the last few years due to its weak border control policies. Money spent building detention centres and housing people who have arrived on our shores illegally could have been better spent looking after those who cannot meet their weekly expenses. Those billions of dollars could have gone towards assisting those people whose pension increase or superannuation is being eaten up by carbon tax increases or other tax grabs by the federal government. Instead it has had to be directed to fixing up Labor's mess because of its weakness in dismantling John Howard's policy in relation to border protection. The point I am making is that the exemptions to the Anti-Discrimination Act introduced in this bill are sensible provisions and the bill itself is a good bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.40 pm), in reply: Can I start by acknowledging all honourable members for their contributions to the House this evening, particularly the Liberal National Party members in government. In ordinary circumstances I would refer to the opposition leader's contribution tonight, but I wanted to depart from my usual practice and talk about the honourable member for Hervey Bay, Mr Ted Sorensen, who I think made the best contribution to this debate tonight.

Mr Crandon: It was passionate.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Coomera. The member for Hervey Bay displayed passion when he was sticking up for his local constituency, and particularly Bob Davis, who runs the Hard Yakka program. I agree with the member for Hervey Bay that the member for Rockhampton, who has only been in here a short while and gets up in this place with a speech prepared by one of the 22 drones outside—the most overresourced opposition in Australia's history—has no idea what he is talking about but denigrates a man, Bob Davis, and a program that are getting results in the electorate of Hervey Bay. Do not look surprised and as if you do not know what we are talking about. It was in your speech, but, as I said, you did not write it so you probably have no idea. You probably cannot remember what you said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The Attorney-General will speak through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: Indeed and absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Rockhampton looks surprised—I can't remember saying that. He probably cannot remember because he did not write the speech. That is the problem with the Labor Party. Its members do not write their own speeches. They have no passion.

Mrs Scott: Rubbish!

Mr BLEIJIE: It is not rubbish.

Mrs Miller: It is! It is!

Mr BLEIJIE: I will take the interjection from the member for Bundamba. I will take the interjection from the member for Woodridge. It is not rubbish. You do not believe in what you say in this place because the drones outside are drafting all your documents.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I serve on a committee of a youth agency in my electorate and I find his comments offensive in regard to his saying that I have no knowledge in relation to this area and that my speeches are written by someone else. I am asking for him to withdraw the comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I did not hear anything personally offensive in what he said.

Mrs MILLER: I found it personally offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear anything personally offensive, however I will be listening very carefully to the Attorney-General and should he make any comments that you find personally offensive then that is a different matter. I call the Attorney-General.

Mr BLEIJIE: No doubt the member for Bundamba will, because I have another 28 minutes to talk about the member for Bundamba and her contribution to this debate tonight. But let me start with the member for Rockhampton, who came into this place tonight and denigrated Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program. The member for Rockhampton has no idea about the Hard Yakka program that caused such passion from the member for Hervey Bay. That is the integrity of Liberal National Party members in this place. They can get up on their feet and defend a program that is operating in their electorate when it is so diminished by a person who has no idea about the Hard Yakka program. I ask the member for Rockhampton: have you seen the Hard Yakka program? Did you visit the Hard Yakka program?

Mr Byrne: No.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did. Did you? No.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. Attorney-General, I have already warned you about speaking through the chair. I again ask that you speak through the chair and hopefully the debate can continue in a reasonably civil manner.

Mr BLEIJIE: I went and visited the Hard Yakka program at the invitation of the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Maryborough. I did it because we were not rushing into a policy decision; we wanted to see what was on offer and what was operating right across Queensland. The member for Rockhampton said there was a bunch of little kids in army uniforms. Those little kids were Indigenous Queenslanders from Cherbourg who are trying to get a second chance in their life. I think it is disgraceful that the member for Rockhampton would come in here and say they were little kids running around in army uniforms. They were little kids from Cherbourg who want to get a second chance in life. If Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program can offer them a second chance, I say good on them.

The Labor Party not only runs the dirtiest campaign in Queensland's history; now it runs dirty campaigns about youth service operators trying to do the best for young Indigenous Queenslanders. I congratulate the member for Hervey Bay for getting to his feet tonight with passion and determination to fight against the champagne socialist opposite who know nothing of what he talks about. I would suggest that if the member for Rockhampton wants to denigrate young Indigenous Queenslanders, Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program then he ought to go there and have a look at the program himself. Then he might have a better understanding of the situation.

Ms Palaszczuk: I won't miss you in the valedictory.

Mr BLEIJIE: Your valedictory? Whose valedictory? I think the opposition leader is talking about her valedictory. The member for South Brisbane is sitting very quietly. She did not contribute to the debate tonight. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that the other six members will not miss her at her valedictory. They will force an early valedictory on her, guaranteed. When the member for Hervey Bay talked about the Hard Yakka program I could not help but notice the member for South Brisbane laughing, because there is a group out there in the community trying to change young people's lives. I heard tonight from those seven opposite about boot camps being terrible and that they do not work. Members will be interested to know that the group that got the tender at the Gold Coast, the Kokoda Challenge, were offered the same opportunity by Anna Bligh during the election campaign. I refer to a *Brisbane Times* newspaper article, 'Bligh pledges \$1 million for Kokoda Challenge', that states—

A Queensland Labor government would give \$1 million to help troubled teens take part in the Kokoda Challenge, but the Premier has denied it is her party's response to the LNP's boot camp for youth criminals policy.

We announced our boot camp policy, which was ridiculed by those opposite in the election campaign, and a week later they announced their own boot camp policy. The article goes on and it gets better. Anna Bligh states—

These programs give them the chance over a long term planned program to really turn their lives around.

So it's not about punishment, it's about opportunity.

When we have talked about boot camps in Queensland, we have talked about giving young people an opportunity. I know why the member for South Brisbane was so silent in this boot camp debate tonight. It is because it was her best mate, Anna Bligh, who announced it. Her best mate, Anna Bligh, took the photo. During the election campaign, Anna Bligh was happy to stand up with some young people and talk about the Kokoda Challenge. At that time the opposition leader was a member of cabinet. Did it go through cabinet? Did she support it at the time? Did the opposition leader support their proposal for boot camps? Did the opposition leader support her leader at the time having a photo taken with young people and talking about all the things that the Liberal National Party government has talked about in terms of boot camps?

I note that in their great contributions tonight they did not mention their alternative youth policy. That is because it was the same as ours. They were going to introduce youth boot camps and wilderness camps across Queensland and they were going to start with Kokoda Challenge. Incidentally, Kokoda Challenge won the tender for the Gold Coast boot camp. Again tonight we hear that the Labor Party, which is always negative, will be voting against giving young people opportunities, yet only a short six to seven months ago the Labor Party, according to its own media release, was going to give troubled teens the same opportunities that we are giving them. Usually, the Labor Party would say that we are copying their policy. We announced our policy about a week or two weeks earlier than this rushed policy was announced. They believed in it so much that they staked their election campaign on it, yet within six months it is gone. They do not believe in it anymore. They say it is not going to work and they ask why we are doing it. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: why was the government of the time going to invest \$1 million?

Ms Palaszczuk: No, we ask the questions of you. Why did you abolish youth justice conferencing?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. I spend five minutes talking about boot camps and I receive an interjection asking why I have abolished youth conferencing. The Leader of the Opposition does not get it. I am trying to point out to her that the boot camp policies were the Labor Party policies. The Leader of the Opposition was a member of cabinet and as such she should have known the Labor Party policy with respect to youth justice.

I will ramp it up a notch, if I may. Although I accept that the Labor Party's position was essentially the same as that of the Liberal National Party going into the election campaign, one thing I will not forgive the Labor Party for is the state of youth justice in Queensland. We have no-one to blame for that but the Labor Party. They cannot blame anyone else. They were in government for 14 years. Who else can they blame? There has to come a time when the Labor Party stops blaming Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon for the two years they were in government. In Queensland the Labor Party was in power for 14 years, yet it was someone else's fault; the juvenile crime issue that we have right across Queensland is someone else's fault.

The opposition leader talks about omnibus bills and how terrible it is that we have an omnibus bill. I lost count of the number of omnibus bills that the Labor Party introduced. Why is this different? Is it different because the Liberal National Party have introduced an omnibus bill? The Labor Party could do it and get away with it, but we cannot? What is the story here? What is right for the Labor Party in government is not right for the Liberal National Party? An omnibus bill is when you have succinct big policies of government. Boot camps is the policy in this bill. It contains small references to abolishing youth justice conferencing and there is a small amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act, but you would not have a separate bill for those. The former Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, in his last bill introduced—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE: The last bill that the former Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, introduced into this parliament, which incidentally was not debated, amended some 30 pieces of legislation. This is called an omnibus bill and it amends about four pieces of legislation. His bill amended about 30 pieces of legislation, yet there is no problem with the Labor Party doing that.

I will address some of the other comments from honourable members. All Gold Coast members are particularly excited that the early intervention boot camp will be located in and around their areas. I think that is good for the Gold Coast, which has a particular problem that we are trying to address. The honourable Minister for Tourism, Jann Stuckey, talked about the Labor Party's culture of being soft on crime. If there is one thing that we have shown Queenslanders in the past six or seven years it is that this government is not soft on crime. We will not hesitate to introduce the laws necessary to keep our Queensland communities safe. We will not give in to the namby-pamby civil libertarians who are running

around the world saying that there is a better way to do these things, because they had the ear of the Labor Party for 14 years and nothing changed. For 14 years those namby-pamby civil libertarians had the ear of the Labor Party and nothing changed.

The member for Bundamba can put her hand on her hip and whinge about what I am saying, but she was a member of the Labor Party government for 14 years and failed our young people in Queensland. She absolutely failed our young people in Queensland in terms of youth justice.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I find the words of the Attorney-General offensive to me, considering that I have been on committees and still am on a committee of a youth justice organisation—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs MILLER:—and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has—

Mrs MILLER: I find it personally offensive—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has no point of order.

Mrs MILLER:—and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has been warned. Under standing order 253A the member has been warned previously. There was no point of order. I ruled there was no point of order, but the member continued. Under standing order 253A, the member will now take an hour out of the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Bundamba withdrew from the chamber at 11.57 pm.

Government members: Night, Jo.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: Now we may be able to participate in an orderly debate in this chamber. The member for Broadwater, whom I note was on the committee, talked in particular about the amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act with respect to sex workers in Queensland. Her comments were pertinent in terms of believing the individual and businesses. Small business makes up the backbone of the Queensland economy. I table a copy of a submission to the committee from the Queensland Hotel Association, the QHA, dated 13 November 2012. It is a letter to me. It states—

Dear Minister

I am writing on behalf of Queensland's licensed accommodation providers to thank you for your recent intervention in relation to the question of the use of commercial accommodation in Queensland by sex workers.

The final paragraph states—

Thank you for your speedy and very helpful intervention in this issue, which is very much appreciated by Queensland's accommodation businesses and operators.

I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 November 2012, from the President of the Queensland Hotels Association, Mr TH McGuire, to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, regarding use of commercial accommodation in Queensland by sex workers [1732].

We believe in tourism as a key pillar of the Queensland economy. We will stick up for small business operators across Queensland, no matter where they are, and that includes motel and hotel operators right around Queensland.

I turn to the address by the member for Mulgrave. I take personal objection to the contribution that the member for Mulgrave made tonight. The member for Mulgrave made a lot of accusations about the procurement process for the tender. I want to be very clear about the tender process. I had nothing to do with the tender process. A tender committee was set up and chaired by Steve Armitage, from my department, and included David Goodinson, the regional director of youth justice; Tom O'Donnell, the manager of the Atherton education unit in Far North Queensland; and Norm Ferguson, the regional director of DATSIMA. The process was overseen by a DJAG procurement officer as observer to the panel. They had a panel meeting in Cairns. They reviewed all the submissions and then they compiled a shortlist.

The recommendations that my department gave me for the Cairns youth boot camp, the centre's youth boot camp and the Gold Coast early intervention boot camp I accepted. There was no secret involvement with anyone. The member for Mulgrave was going on about Team Wild and how terrible it was, thinking Team Wild were LNP mates, they got short-listed. They did not get the tender. They did not win the tender.

But the member for Mulgrave talks very positively about Choice. He asked how it was that Team Wild were on the short list but Choice was not on the short list. But then he admits that the fellow from Choice—Todd—is a Labor mate. I do not know what the opposite is to cronyism. I do not know what the opposite is to nepotism. He whinges that the LNP mate did not get it, but he also whinges that the Labor mate did not get it. But if the LNP mate got it, there would be some sort of nepotism complaint. So for the member for Mulgrave, let me make it abundantly clear.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: You asked the question. I am answering it.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Member for Mulgrave.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Mulgrave asked the questions. This is the opportunity for me to answer the questions. I am answering the questions.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Mulgrave will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Mulgrave made serious accusations tonight about the procurement process. I am answering him by saying that the procurement process was fair dinkum. It was in line with DJAG procurement processes. The best people who tendered got the gig—not a Labor mate, not an LNP mate, the best people for job got the gig.

The member for Mulgrave then talked about the guy from Team Wild being up on fraud charges. I remind members that they did not get the tender. Who funded Team Wild—the one that the member for Mulgrave—

Mr Rickuss: He's just so used to giving it to Labor mates he can't understand why you didn't give it to an LNP mate.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. The person that he is saying tonight was the LNP mate was funded by the Labor Party. The former government funded Team Wild. The member for Mulgrave stood in here tonight and said, 'This guy committed a fraud 10 years ago. I can't believe Team Wild made it to the short list.' He accused the member for Cairns of involving himself in the procurement process. We did not give them the tender. The Labor Party funded that organisation. Maybe the real question—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE: Maybe we should look at the former Labor Party's procurement processes to see how an organisation with such accusations against them got money.

I make it absolutely clear that the procurement process was ridgy-didge. The best people, both in Cairns and on the Gold Coast, got it. I would have thought that the member for Mulgrave, representing that area, would talk positively about the people who got the tender and would want to work with them.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I hear the interjection. He had his chance in his contribution. I know it was a limited contribution at best for his competence. Everyone rises to their level of incompetence. I know he did his best. I am trying to give the answers to the questions he raised as best I can. He made serious allegations. I am denying the allegations. I am saying that the procurement process was fair dinkum, ridgy-didge, overseen by a procurement officer in DJAG and the best people for the job won the tender.

Honourable members, would you not think that if you go through a tender process, there is a scoring mechanism, the department recommends to the minister a particular group because of X, Y, Z, the minister agrees with the recommendation the department gives them, that that is a full and frank disclosure regime and process? I think it is a pretty fair system. The best people got the job in Cairns, and I wish them all the best.

I am sorry that they have a member for Mulgrave who has denigrated the whole process tonight. By denigrating this process the member for Mulgrave has effectively denigrated the organisation that got the job. He is questioning whether they should have got it or not because he wanted his Labor mate to get the job.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not know this Todd fellow was a Labor mate. That was an admission from the honourable member for Mulgrave. When this government looks at procurement processes, it does not look at the politics and where people come from. We do it on the basis of the application the individual organisations make. That is why the two best organisations got the job. I look forward to working with them.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for South Brisbane has found her voice at just past midnight. I think if the member for Mulgrave wants to make those accusations he should go outside this chamber and make those accusations in front of a TV camera and then see how tough and brave he is in this new world.

The member for Rockhampton always gives an interesting contribution considering he does not understand what he is reading. He did give an interesting contribution. He in fact whinged that it has taken us so long to get here—seven months. He was frustrated it took so long to get here. He is obviously forgetting the fact that the Labor Party had 14 years to do something like this and they did not. If the member for Rockhampton gets frustrated because it took the Liberal National Party government seven months to deliver something he wishes be delivered, God help him where he would have been with the former Labor Party government for 14 years! He would have been frustrated to disbelief waiting for them to get around to delivering for Queenslanders and getting on with these issues.

The contradiction the member for Rockhampton made was this: it has taken so long to get to this point to introduce this bill, but we are doing everything on the run. I do not quite get it. How can we be doing everything on the run, but then be taking such a long time to get here. I think taking six months in a three-year term is a pretty good innings.

In the first six months the government has introduced legislation to start boot camps in Queensland. It is a serious issue. That is why we have not rushed it. We have not wanted to rush it because we did not want to get it wrong. It is a serious issue. I know those opposite play on the words 'boot camp'. I have, at every opportunity, said that this camp is not only about discipline and respect in the individual; it is about families, it is about education, it is about health, it is about getting these kids off drugs, it is about getting these kids off alcohol and, more importantly, it involves their families to make sure that we can get these kids a second chance in life.

That leads me to the member for Capalaba's contribution. Thank you for that contribution. It was a personal contribution about the experiences he had as a younger fellow. What was particularly pertinent in the member for Capalaba's contribution was giving kids a second chance. What really resonated with me was when he said if only he had had the opportunity to participate in something like this or other programs. I think the member for Capalaba has grown up to be a fine, outstanding citizen. He represents his electorate to the highest degree of integrity I have seen. Thank you for the contribution tonight. I thank the member for the support he gave me personally with the round tables and in developing this youth boot camp policy to get young kids' lives back on track.

I thank the member for Gladstone for her support. I do sincerely thank the member for Gladstone because she wishes the participants all the success for this program. This is what it is about. We want these 80 young kids in two years to succeed with flying colours. We do not want this trial to be a failure. I have had many members, particularly my honourable colleagues from Townsville, Thuringowa and Mundingburra, all wanting a boot camp around that area. I am hoping that this is such a success that we can start rolling these out right across Queensland. The letters that I have received from people wanting these boot camps—I know the member for Ipswich West talked about this tonight—

Ms Palaszczuk: How many letters have you received?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the opposition leader about how many members. I suggest that the opposition leader talk to the 77 members here, and when they are in the elevator with the opposition leader they can tell her and her colleagues how their constituents support these boot camps. I would encourage them all to give feedback to the opposition leader and ask the opposition leader at the same time why her sudden change of heart—why six months ago they supported boot camps, getting \$1 million, and now they are not supporting them. Do you know why they are not supporting them? Because they have not got the guts to come in here and support the Liberal National government's initiative, because it was not their policy. It was not their initiative originally.

I thank the member for Gaven for his contribution. I congratulate the member for Gaven on his appointment to the high office of chairman of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I think he is going to make an outstanding committee chairman—certainly better than the former chairman, the member for Condamine. I look forward to the contribution that the member for Gaven will make to that committee. I certainly do keep that committee particularly busy.

I thank the member for Logan, who gave a great contribution in relation to the pathways and education. This is what it is about. This government is about changing the lives of young people. We realise—the Labor Party never did—that, to change a young person's life around, sticking them in a detention centre for a period of time and using it as a revolving door is not the answer. That was the answer for the Labor Party. Thirty-two per cent of young people in youth detention centres across Queensland have been in there five times or more—a statistic the Labor Party were happy to have when they were in government. I am not happy with that statistic. We do not want detention centres to be a revolving door. We want to get young kids contributing positively to society. We want them to get a job. We want them to get an education.

If the Labor Party were so interested in young people, why wouldn't they give it a go? Why wouldn't they support giving something else a go? Why denigrate people for having a different view on things or a different approach to things? This is why we are doing it, because what the Labor Party did for 14 years did not work. If the policies of the Labor Party worked, we would not have the member for Rockhampton recently saying in the *Rocky Morning Bulletin* that juvenile justice is out of control in Queensland. It did not become out of control in the last six months in Rockhampton; it became out of

control over the period of Labor government administrations in Queensland. So the member for Rockhampton cannot blame us for that; he can blame the Labor Party. Look to the right, member for Rockhampton, and blame the people sitting to your right. They are ones who created the problems of youth justice issues in Queensland.

This is the only government that is going to try something different. We will try something different to give every young person a second chance and to give them an opportunity in life that they never had under the Labor Party. We will give them that opportunity.

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

AYES, 69—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young.
Tellers: Menkens, Smith

NOES, 5—Byrne, Palaszczuk, Pitt. Tellers: Scott, Trad


Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 55, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.22 am): 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) (12.22 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.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (12.22 am), by leave: I advise the House that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has, in accordance with standing order 136(2), agreed that committee reports in respect of the Gasfields Commission Bill referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee is to be tabled by 27 March 2013; the Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill referred to the Health and Community Services Committee is to be tabled by 27 February 2013; the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill referred to the Health and Community Services Committee is to be tabled by 12 March 2013; the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee is to be tabled by 12 March 2013; and the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Motor Vehicle Impoundment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is to be tabled by 12 March 2013.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (12.23 am): by leave, without notice: I move—

That in accordance with standing order 136(1) the report date for the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee be extended to 21 February 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (12.24 am): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

South Brisbane Electorate, Christmas Donations



Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (12.25 am): As we celebrate the last sitting of parliament for this year and as the school year comes to a close, it is important to remember that, although this is a great time of festivity and relaxation for many, it can be a very difficult time for some in our community. For those doing it tough, for those who are unemployed or for people who are on their own, Christmas can be a lonely time. That is why in tonight's adjournment debate I would like to promote the good work being done by many locals of the South Brisbane electorate who are getting into the Christmas spirit and helping those less fortunate.

Micah Projects is a remarkable community based organisation in West End. It has been front and centre of some of the biggest social justice issues confronting Queenslanders and Australians in recent years—from the abuse of children in church and government-run institutions, to establishing innovative and new homelessness services and also we saw them here today in regard to the apology to those who had been forcibly taken from their mothers. This year, as Micah Projects has done for many years previously, it is holding its annual Christmas hamper appeal for people in need.

Last year, thanks to the efforts of the local community, Micah was able to provide over 250 hampers and gift packs to individuals and families. This year, it hopes to provide over 420 hampers and gift packs. But it needs assistance from the community and anyone wishing to donate to this worthy cause can visit Micah's website on www.micah.org.au.

Local businesses in West End will also kick-start a 'shop local' Christmas campaign this Saturday, 1 December. Dandelyon Gifts will be collecting donations for a Spirit of West End Christmas Dinner, which will provide a Christmas meal for local homeless people. Local book store Avid Reader will be asking for a gold coin donation for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation's Christmas appeal. I want to place on record my thanks to all the hardworking locals who see this time of year as a way of giving back.

I also want to recognise the Kids in Care Christmas Appeal, being organised by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and supported by ABC local radio, which is giving the appeal much needed publicity and attention. I also acknowledge department in this respect and the many years that it has been conducting this appeal.

I think all members in this House can agree on the importance of this appeal, which brings Christmas gifts and joy to over 8,000 Queensland kids who are currently in state care. Gifts for children, aged from infancy through to 17, are being sought up until Friday, 14 December and can be dropped at any child safety service centre, Harvey Norman store in Queensland and, of course, at the ABC studios, which are located in South Brisbane in my electorate.

In conclusion, I wish all Queenslanders, and particularly the residents of the South Brisbane electorate, a happy break and a prosperous new year. I look forward to working with them and representing them and their families next year and for years to come.

Bremer State High School



Mr BERRY (Ipswich—LNP) (12.28 am): This year, I had the privilege to attend the Bremer State High School graduation ceremony. The class of 2012 has now graduated from Bremer State High School and they are now adjusting to life, having been in the secondary school education system for five years. Although their memories will be forever enriched by their experiences of Bremer State High School, I expect their graduation ceremony will be one of those more prominent highlights in their lives. For posterity, I wish to record that day.


On Friday, 16 November 2012, the then graduating students of Bremer State High School, with their parents, friends, siblings and teaching staff, slowly filled the school gymnasium. Helium balloons filled the space within the auditorium and slowly the auditorium filled with people. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the principal, Mr Bruce Saxby, for the opportunity and certainly the privilege of officially witnessing and participating in this most memorable event. This long awaited graduation day is a recognition of the completion of these students' secondary schooling and the leaving behind of their trials and tribulations.

Movement and murmur settled as Principal Saxby gave a timely message about aspirations. School Captain Rhys and Deputy School Captain Peta gave their speeches, recounting their accomplishments and those of their fellow students and giving thanks to those who have given them wise counsel and assistance, including parents, teachers and close schoolfriends. If there was any melancholy at this graduation ceremony, it was quickly dissipated by the annual address by Mr Graham

Goodyer, who addressed the more colourful moments in the school year. Mr Goodyer conveyed the sense of collegial harmony and humour that permeated the school year. Students then made their way to their teachers to collect their certificates and bid farewell.

I must say that it was a pleasing experience to be among young people who enjoyed their educational experience and who will, hopefully, complete their lifelong journey in education in years to come. I am sure they will reflect on their year and give due appreciation to their teachers and thanks to their parents in helping them on their journey. I enjoyed the experience and, once again, congratulate the teachers of Bremer State High School. In particular, I congratulate Principal Bruce Saxby. It was a great experience and Bremer State High School is a great school. I wish the school and its students in past and coming years the very best. Hopefully, we will produce more young people of a similar calibre.

Maryborough History

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (12.31 am): She moved up the river, a tall masted ship with white sails flapping, her crew in old-fashioned costume, with musicians playing, and docked at a wharf crowded with people, the most important of whom was the Governor, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley. The ship's name is *South Passage* but for the day she was re-enacting the arrival 150 years ago of the first immigrant ship, the *Ariadne*, to the new settlement of Maryborough on the Mary River. This special event was organised by the volunteers of the Maryborough Family Research Heritage Institute, who spent countless hours researching and then locating the direct descendants of the region's first immigrants in order to have them take part in a celebration of our past history.

The welcome speech given by the Governor demonstrated her depth of research and love of history and also her sense of humour when she referred to comments in the *Chronicle* of that time stating—

Politicians are no use—they never get anything done.


This comment provided much amusement for the crowd and those of us present who have political careers. This event, as part of a three-day celebration, led me to step back and look at the history encapsulated in the buildings and the knowledge base of Maryborough. A few weeks ago, Maryborough held a very successful open-house event in which buildings of significance, both commercial and residential, were opened to the public for free for the day. This was a wonderful way of sharing our built history with both the local community and visitors. There is much of this preserved built history—places such as the National Trust's Brennan and Geraghty's store, the Town Hall, the Bond Store and the School of Arts building.

Located in this School of Arts building is the Maryborough historical society. I was very privileged to be invited to spend a morning with members of the society. The amount of history stored in that building in the form of old newspapers, documents and books, maps and photographs and memorabilia is awe inspiring—a treasure to show future generations where we started and what happened along the way until the present.

More than 20,000 immigrants came into Queensland through Maryborough and my community is especially privileged to have the Maryborough Family Heritage Research Institute, which holds passenger lists for all of those immigrants. They also hold one of the largest collections of genealogy records in Queensland.

The early history of Queensland is there for all to see in the buildings and in the records. As the Queensland Government Architect, Malcolm Middleton, told me, Maryborough is unique in the quality, location and preservation of its historical buildings and the historical records that give their history.

Fishing Industry


 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.34 am): Some within this parliament are aware that I have been a keen recreational fisher for most of my life. I have been fishing estuarine and inshore waters since I was a small child and I have developed very strong personal views on the state of Queensland fisheries. I have various concerns about the misinformation that is being put to the public. It is in that vein that I wish to draw the attention of House to a particular matter associated with Queensland Fisheries management. The Newman government promised that if it was elected it would increase recreational fishing opportunities and invest in and enhance fisheries monitoring on a regional basis, but almost immediately after being elected the LNP set about withdrawing funding from key programs and initiatives that provide great benefit to recreational fishing and monitoring. One of the most unfathomable cuts was to the universally acclaimed Suntag fish-tagging program that has operated in Queensland as a collaboration between the Australian National Sportfishing Association Queensland and Fisheries for the past 25 years. This program is the largest recreationally managed tagging program in the world.

Data from the tagging program is highly sought after by Fisheries managers and researchers alike because it extends over such a long period and the quality and reliability of the data is high. This data is not available from any other source. Successive Labor governments have recognised the

importance of supporting the Suntag program to ensure its ongoing success and provided annual grants. This assistance does not entirely fund the program but provide sufficient assistance to ensure the administration management costs were given some certainty. The recent level of funding support was around \$50,000 a year. This is a very small amount in the context of the value that the Suntag program provides. The program was founded on the passion and voluntary time willingly given by thousands of the state's most dedicated recreational fishermen. If government or research bodies had to fund the full cost of such an extensive program, the annual bill would be in the millions of dollars. The small government investment required to deliver such an important state-wide fisheries monitoring program should never be the subject of government razor gangs. I call on this government to recognise and be proud of Queensland's own best practice Suntag program and guarantee ongoing funding. It is insulting to require such a proven monitoring program to annually justify itself and plead for the relatively tiny amount of government funding needed to support the program.

This government promised the people of Queensland that it would invest in fisheries monitoring on a regional basis. There is no better investment than a pledge for ongoing support to the Suntag monitoring program, which is already established and which has a 25-year database with records of over 600,000 tagged fish. I draw the minister's attention to this matter and ask that he look at reinstituting or reinstating that funding program.

Rasmussen State School

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (12.37 am): I have had reason in the past few weeks to reflect on the recent history and to look at the future of our great state of Queensland. I would like to take this opportunity to share those experiences with members of the House this evening. On Friday, 16 November I joined honoured guests, staff and students of Rasmussen State School for the sinking of their time capsule. Years 6 and 7 teacher Thomas Harrington built the capsule and encouraged students to contribute a range of different items which will be unearthed in 20 years time. The member for Townsville, John Hathaway, and I put our business cards in there among other items.


In 2032 the former students of Rasmussen State School will gather to unearth their time capsule and be able to judge how the world has changed in the preceding years. What job prospects will be available to them and their children? What will be the state of education, health and the environment? Had they sunk that capsule 20 years earlier, in 1992, they would be despairing at the state of things now after the ravages of the Bligh government. Systems stretched to breaking point under the financial mismanagement and cronyism of Queensland Labor policies. But in the hands of the Newman government that future is solid.

The government is committed to righting the wrongs of the past. We are fixing the health services pay debacle and we are building infrastructure. Not only do we have a plan; we are building a model that will ensure the next 20 years will be about growth, opportunity, wealth and security. As those students at Rasmussen complete their education and then move on to training and employment, which this LNP government will make available for all Queenslanders, they will be part of the next generation that sees this state get back on track.

The LNP government will provide more opportunities with our four-pillar economy model and our goal of four per cent unemployment. It is now time to roll up our sleeves and get to work fixing the mess, and, yes, it is a mess created by those opposite not the GFC. Those members who now number three in the western arm of the Labor Party should also roll up their sleeves and represent their constituents. Bob Katter may have once represented the conservative voters but his representation has been lost and replaced with a litany of motherhood statements and populist ideas, none of which have been backed up by rational explanations or, more importantly, costings.

The Katter's Australian Party members have never represented, and never will truly represent, the people if they do not produce real policy. Those members who in their minds are wanting to form a new opposition need to decide whether to focus on building their party brand and their MP numbers or representing their electorates. We in the LNP government know where our priorities lie. We are reshaping the future of this state and, if I may say, it is looking good. I take this opportunity to wish a merry Christmas and season's greetings to the students and staff of Rasmussen State School.

Youth Employment

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (12.40 am): It is a great privilege to attend many school award presentations at this time of year, where we gain assurance that the vast majority of our young people are engaged in their studies, involved in many school activities and are assured of a bright future. In the senior years many of our students are already involved in the workforce and are gaining valuable practical experience in many areas of workplace procedures and learning the value of hard work and budgeting their money. However, to address the issues of youth crime in our communities we need to engage the marginalised and engage the at-risk young people—those who may have grown up in homes with intergenerational unemployment, parents with drug and alcohol problems, criminal behaviour and other dysfunctional activities. Yes, the government may increase police numbers in our

communities but as a recent comment from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Paul de Jersey, outlined, the No. 1 cause, unemployment, leads to young people having time on their hands—time to look to other means of gaining an income. Perhaps it will be through dealing in drugs, street crime, armed hold-ups, ram raids, car theft and the like.


This leads us on this side of the House to ask the vexed question of the Minister for Education, ‘Why ever would you cancel the most effective skilling and employment programs in the entire nation which every year train hundreds and hundreds, indeed thousands, of young people?’ These programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Get Set for Work, Participate in Prosperity, Green Army and similar programs have been responsible for thousands of real jobs not only for young people but members re-entering the workforce and newly arrived refugees from countries where they have been the victims of torture and deprivation sometimes over many years.

Our Minister for Education has recently presided over the awards for school based apprenticeships which I had the pleasure of attending. Again, Queensland is the national leader in school based apprenticeship training. Our Logan schools were well represented, with major awards going to students from three of my own schools—Mabel Park High, Woodridge High and Kingston College. The major award for the top school went to Mabel Park High. I have no doubt the minister will be interested to attend the school to have a look at their programs.

This leads me to ask why, when you are seeking to reduce youth crime, would you cut these vital programs which not only were the most effective means of ensuring hundreds of young people entered the workforce with meaningful skills and training but also ensured our youth crime rate would be reduced? I implore the minister to do the right and effective thing and reinstate all funding throughout the state directed towards these programs.

(Time expired)

Energy Reform

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (12.43 am): I rise to offer my special thanks to our Minister for Energy and Water Supply, Mark McArdle, for hosting a very informative and lively discussion on energy reform at the Sandgate Town Hall on 20 November. I also thank many participants from all around my electorate who enthusiastically provided input and raised concerns about the complex issues surrounding energy reform. I was proud to see that, while the forum included representatives from different political and ideological persuasions, decorum, courtesy and genuine engagement set the mood for the evening. This can be a novel idea for some of us, but let me assure you that it certainly paved the way for a meaningful debate between the minister and stakeholders on the energy reform process. May I make note that this goes hand in hand with the fact that I have always said I live in the most polite electorate.


There has been a fair bit of media traffic and parliamentary comment on the government's freezing of the regulated component of tariff 11 for the 12 months leading up to mid-2013 to reduce cost-of-living pressures on households. I commend our political decision makers for this measure. However, I was particularly interested in Minister McArdle's elaboration on some of the longer term issues we confront as a government in approaching comprehensive energy reform.

Let us start with the fact that energy prices for consumers have increased over the last decade by an estimated whopping 80 per cent, and that has little to do with actual production costs. Over 50 per cent of our power bills relate to network charges, not production. And it gets better—or should I say that tongue in cheek—green schemes are pushing costs up even higher, whether or not you want to participate. Subsidisation of the solar energy scheme adds around \$70 per annum to our power bills. Add to that another hundred plus from the carbon tax and other green schemes and that is almost \$200 a year, and rising, on our annual electricity bills.

I suggest members ask their voters how many understood the deal they thought they were getting in stark dollar terms. I am not saying that I do not agree with being environmentally responsible and I am not suggesting that our current government should renege on honouring the contract already set in place by our predecessors to subsidise users of solar energy, because that is not going to happen, but I think consumers do need to know what these schemes cost all of us. Putting the word ‘green’ in front of some energy initiatives should come with the fine print—‘Warning: please note that whatever efficiencies we may be able to find will lead to increased upfront costs for all, including regular energy users.’

As for the future, I am no expert on the details of energy distribution and retail networks, but I am an emerging expert on interpreting public opinion. It is clear to me that rising living and utility costs are hurting many Queenslanders. You and I may be able to weather it, but let us not forget those we represent or the fact that as community leaders we can chart a path that is balanced or radical towards preserving prosperity or eroding our way of life.

Curriculum into the Classroom

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (12.46 am): I rise to draw the attention of the House to the current crisis in the education of our rural and remote children which is currently hampering their futures, stressing families and costing them thousands of dollars each year. I speak of the debacle that is C2C—Curriculum into the Classroom—which was hurriedly introduced into the School of Distance Education in 2012. Despite having so many flaws, the education department suggested it not be delayed. What has occurred since that curriculum was introduced is something the education minister should be very worried about. He and his department should be spending sleepless nights and working overtime to resolve this issue before the start of the 2013 school year.

On Tuesday, 20 November 2012 I was party to a lengthy and emotional telephone conference with scores of parents who are members of the Isolated Children's Parents Association, ICPA. They cited a litany of complaints about the C2C system they had been handed, with most of them saying this had been their most difficult year with distance education. Some of these parents had been part of the School of Distance Education for between 10 and 20 years.

Their complaints included: they were not getting materials on time or not receiving them at all; much of the material they did receive is substandard, and they claimed there are too many political agendas brought forward that are offensive to people living in rural areas; they had significant difficulties with downloading materials—lots of families have had to extend their internet plans to cope; evidently no consideration was given to the varying and often inadequate connectivity in the bush; they found the material in the C2C framework difficult to modify to different levels of learning ability; the digital support on MiStick failed time and again; and the C2C programs on literacy were deemed by almost every parent to be insufficient.


I am certain that if these difficulties were encountered at Brisbane State High School the outcry would be long and loud and the response would be swift. Because these children are on properties, sometimes hundreds of kilometres from the nearest town or city, they are forgotten. It is out of sight, out of mind. The mantra of social parity, one which is enshrined in the policies of Katter's Australian Party, is that every child should be entitled to a quality education.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment website makes promises of 'ensuring Queenslanders have the education and skills they need to contribute to the economic and social development of Queensland'. Surely a child's education is one critical stage which should not be ignored because of an inadequate curriculum and poorly delivered technology and curtailed tutorial support. Being away from a larger town or city should not exclude these children from the education their school based peers enjoy.

During that phone conference I asked the parents in ICPA what would help resolve the situation, with the ultimate goal being ensuring their children receive the high-quality education they deserve. Not surprisingly No. 1 on their wish list was proper consultation—the basics of any communicative and representative government. Had the education department done this, it could have avoided such clangers as this one in the year 3 material which aims to teach the children about the numbering of letterboxes—'odds on one side of the road, evens on the other'. Unfortunately, most of these rural kids do not have numbered letterboxes so this means nothing to them.

(Time expired)

AJ Wyllie Bridge, Reopening; 100% Local Christmas Challenge


 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (12.49 am): I wish to speak on two issues concerning my electorate. Firstly, in conjunction with my very good friend Mr Seath Holswich, the member for Pine Rivers, I wish to extend an invitation to all members and their communities to come to the AJ Wyllie Bridge opening celebration on Saturday, 8 December from 2 pm until 6 pm at Wylie Park. My friend the member for Pine Rivers and I worked very hard for nearly two years for our communities to ensure this bridge was finally rebuilt following Labor's series of poor decisions that delayed the rebuild.

On Saturday, 8 December over 40 stall holders will set up stalls selling steak and hamburgers. There will be stall from various businesses around the district to service clubs and churches in the area. We will also have the community radio station 101.5 broadcasting live. There will be zumba displays—and I believe the member for Pine Rivers will be joining in that activity—kids bands and island dancers. The main stage will be alive. It will be a great day on the 8th, so come on out and join our celebration. All funds raised will go to the Petrie SES and Rural Fire Brigade.

The second issue I wish to speak about is the 100% Local Christmas Challenge. This is also being run in conjunction with my friend the member for Pine Rivers and the Pine Rivers Chamber of Commerce and the Kallangur and Districts Business Association. This challenges every member of our communities to buy everything they need for Christmas locally so as to benefit our community by supporting jobs and business.

So, on 8 December we will celebrate and leading up to Christmas we will shop local and support jobs, businesses and our community. I love living in the great electorate of Kallangur, and I challenge every member to come on out and celebrate with us, and while you are there stay overnight in one of our B&Bs up Dayboro way, have a round of golf, enjoy a day at the Lakeside race track, have a barbecue at one of the beautiful areas on the side of one of our lakes and maybe even go for a ride in your canoe or wet a line in the North Pine River. Maybe you might like to take a ride at the pony club. If you like markets come out to Old Petrie Town or spend Saturday morning at the Pine Rivers showgrounds or visit Alma Park Zoo with the kids or your girlfriend. There is something for everyone—a place you will love to come back to and on 8 December we would love to see you. I wish everyone a very safe, happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Indigenous Wellbeing Centre; Bundaberg Healthy Lifestyle Program

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.51 am): I would like to share with the House the work of the Indigenous Wellbeing Centre and the Bundaberg healthy lifestyle program. I recently visited the centre in Bundaberg where I meet staff and was presented with the outcome focused programs delivered for the people of the Bundaberg-Burnett area. The Bundaberg healthy lifestyle coordinator has been employed by the Indigenous Wellbeing Centre since July 2007 and covers the local region of Childers, Agnes Water, Gin Gin, Mount Perry, Bundaberg, Isis, Kolan.

The position is a mainstream position and addresses an identified need due to the rising rates of chronic disease caused by overweight/obesity within the community and the need to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviour change by running group based programs—Lighten Up and Living Strong—in conjunction with other healthy lifestyle initiatives. The coordinator also builds capacity and sustainability in the community by training and encouraging other health, community and employment professionals to become facilitators and run the program with their own clients. The group component of the program runs for seven to 10 weeks and covers the following areas: pre and post health screening; nutrition, label reading and healthy cooking; physical activity; behaviour change; self-esteem; and stress and relaxation.

Since starting the program at the Indigenous Wellbeing Centre there have been 44 client programs run with 491 participants completing the program. During this time frame, the post health changes have been remarkable with overall 391 kilograms and 821 centimetres being lost by people. Whilst these weight changes are impressive, the benefit of the program has also extended beyond weight loss, with many participants reporting positive changes in behaviours, such as increased physical activity, reduced sugar and fat intake and eating more vegetables. The mental health benefits of the program are also worth noting as community members report reduced social isolation caused by illness, disability or carer duties from the opportunity to interact with others and that participation in the program has inspired them to keep going.

A significant proportion of referrals to the program come from employment agencies. Additionally, a number of other community based promotions, presentations and interactive workshops and displays have been conducted over the program's time frame. The healthy lifestyle program has also developed and implemented various healthy lifestyle based tools and resources in conjunction with schools and other organisations to assist in the education and training of community members. The emphasis the Indigenous Wellbeing Centre places on the program has been the importance of the community and ensuring the grassroots holistic needs of the community are met. I regularly engage, meet and talk with community members and the public and can attest to the passion of staff and the positive outcomes.

I take this opportunity to pass on my best wishes for the festive season. Merry Christmas to you and yours.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.54 am (Wednesday).

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Madder, 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