



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 18 April 2013

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THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.30 am): Madam Speaker, I wish you the happiest of birthdays. The House joins with me in celebrating this wonderful day.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

PETITION

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


Wynnum Hospital and Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit, Closure

Mrs Miller, from 12,142 petitioners, requesting the House to not close the Wynnum Hospital and the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit [\[2453\]](#).

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Independent Advisory Panel, Report

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.32 am): I seek leave to table a redacted copy of the report of the Hon. Ian Callinan QC and Professor Nicholas Aroney titled *Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel* dated 28 March 2013 and associated documents and correspondence related to the report. Redactions have been undertaken on the advice of crown law.

Leave granted.

That is not seven copies for those opposite; that is in fact the report and the associated documentation.

Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version [\[2447\]](#).

Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version, appendix 2 volume 2.1 [\[2448\]](#).

Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version, appendix 2 volume 2.2 [\[2449\]](#).


Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version, appendix 2 volume 2.3 [\[2450\]](#).

Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version, appendix 2A [\[2451\]](#).

Tabled paper: Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel—redacted version, appendix 5 educative material [\[2452\]](#).

MOTION

Independent Advisory Panel, Report

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.32 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House authorises publication of the redacted copy of the report of the Honourable Ian Callinan QC and Professor Nicholas Aroney tabled today titled *Review of the Crime and Misconduct Act and related matters: report of the Independent Advisory Panel*, dated 28 March 2013, and associated documents and correspondence related to the report.

The Newman government has a fundamental commitment to the preservation and improvement of an independent and accountable Crime and Misconduct Commission. We have always accepted the view that such a body is essential in modern society to ensure that the full powers of the state are brought to bear on police misconduct, official misconduct and serious crime. The simple fact is that there are no shortcuts towards achieving these goals.

Accordingly, the agency charged with these grave responsibilities must be furnished with the tools to undertake these tasks, the qualified personnel to carry them out and, importantly, the will to overcome the challenges that they face. It has been our aim to ensure the commission is best placed to carry out these important tasks. For some time now there have been concerns expressed that the CMC has not been as effective and efficient as it should be. Queenslanders are entitled to expect the highest quality service from all public authorities, particularly those which are charged with identifying and preventing unlawful behaviour.

Against this background, the Newman government initiated a review of the Crime and Misconduct Act. We appointed an advisory panel consisting of former High Court judge the Hon. Ian Callinan AC and Professor Nicholas Aroney of the University of Queensland to undertake this review. In coming to its conclusions the panel referred to a number of matters which, upon review by crown law, has resulted in the moving of this motion and the tabling of a redacted version of the report.

This is not the first occasion on which a motion of this nature has been moved and carried by this House. On 1 May 2003 the then Premier, Peter Beattie, tabled a report titled *Report of the board of inquiry into past handling of complaints of serial abuse in the Anglican Church Diocese of Brisbane*. The printing of that report by parliament, a report commissioned by the Anglican Church, allowed it to be released into the public domain. Today's motion will allow precisely the same thing to occur. Former Premier Beattie said on that occasion—

Archbishop Aspinall said that it is clear that there is substantial and justified public interest in the content of the report and he said that it was his wish that the report be publically available so far as that may lawfully occur.

In this instance, there is also a substantial and justified public interest in this report being made available to the public.

The panel has identified shortcomings in the CMC's performance but has put forward constructive suggestions as to how this can be improved, whether it be through a change in internal structure or approach. Few of us would pass scrutiny without some suggestions for improvement and I would hope that the CMC and the wider community would view the panel's suggestions as nothing less than reforms that deserve full and fair consideration.

I propose to invite the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee to offer its comments on the panel's recommendations and will be writing seeking the committee's cooperation in this important task. The presentation of this report preceded the release of the parliamentary committee's own report, report No. 90, on an inquiry into the Crime and Misconduct Commission's release and destruction of Fitzgerald inquiry documents. Both reports form a firm foundation upon which this parliament can build a Crime and Misconduct Commission better able to fulfil its important public duties.

I believe we have a unique opportunity to make improvements to the CMC's structure and the way in which it operates. I believe we have an obligation to do this in the interests of all Queenslanders. This is an obligation this government will not shirk. I commend this motion to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Anzac Day




Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.37 am): Between 2014 and 2018 Australia will commemorate the Anzac centenary. This marks 100 years since our country's involvement in the First World War and the landing of the Anzacs at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. To mark the significance of this event, the government has established an official advisory committee chaired by retired Lieutenant General Mark Evans. This committee is working hard to develop a program of activities across the state.

Over the course of the Anzac centenary, Queenslanders will have the opportunity to honour all of those who have represented our country through a range of commemorative events, legacy projects and a community grants program. But this year, as always, Anzac Day next Thursday will be a time to acknowledge and remember Australians who have served and lost their lives in all wars, conflicts and peace operations, and those who serve in the military today. Anzac Day is an annual reminder that we should never forget the spirit that helped forge this nation—Australians stand by their mates. For Australians who served in more recent times, Anzac Day is our chance to give them deserved recognition. In some small way, it can help to soften the horrors of war which stay with many veterans until the day they die.

On Sunday we will farewell the five Queensland high school student winners of the Premier's Anzac prize as they depart on their 15-day educational tour to Gallipoli and the Western Front. During the tour the group will commemorate Anzac Day and visit other historical war sites in Turkey, Belgium and France—sure to be a very memorable experience for these young people.

As part of their tour the students will pay their respects to selected soldiers that they have chosen to research. The students will visit the respective cemeteries and memorials related to those soldiers and share their soldier's stories with their fellow students when they return to Queensland. The Executive Building will again this year feature a display commemorating Anzac Day, organised by the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland. Madam Speaker, I recognise not everyone will have the chance to see this excellent display. However, I urge all honourable members and the people of Queensland to participate in their local Anzac Day commemorative events. Lest we forget.

Small Business, Red-Tape Reduction

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.40 am): It is a prerequisite that all members of this government understand and appreciate how essential small business is to the Queensland economy. That is why we are cutting red and green tape, giving small businesses the support they need to prosper. Over 320 red-tape reduction initiatives have been identified by government. More than 150 have been fully implemented. The rest are on track to be delivered by the end of this year.


Easing the burden of red tape will stimulate the economy and create jobs for Queenslanders. Some of the small red-tape reduction initiatives already making a huge difference include saving business around \$7 million a month by removing the waste levy; changing plumbing and drainage legislation, saving the kitchen and bathroom industry approximately \$25 million per year; establishing the independent Office of Best Practice Regulation; and establishing a task force to cut environmental impact assessment time frames by half and lower the costs associated with assessments.

Recently in my electorate of Ashgrove I visited more than 10 local small business smash repairers and motor vehicle garages to tell them the good news about green-tape reduction initiatives, including that an environmental licence will no longer be required for the operation of motor vehicle workshops. The removal of this requirement, as proposed by the MTAQ, means that operators will no longer be required to fill out an application form, apply for a licence, pay an annual fee of up to \$1,545 or submit annual returns on their activities.

I also visited Carline Enoggera and spoke with owner Andrew Dredge. He said this about the removal of the green tape: 'Any saving in time and money is always welcome from small business in a tough economic climate.' The hardworking member for Capalaba also reports that the many small businesses in his electorate are very pleased with these red-tape reductions. I am told Garry and Mark Hammond from Hammond 4WD Centre Tyres & More are saving about \$30 per week on skip bin rentals through our initiative to abolish Labor's waste tax, on top of the \$600 per year they will now save on Labor's environmental licence requirements. Gavin Eales from Capalaba local business Serco is also saving a similar amount. Gavin says, 'These savings come into account when considering employing more people ... lots of little savings add up to be significant.'

This government is consulting with business and industry to get the detail of the reforms right and to make Queensland a great state with great opportunity for small businesses and the people they employ. Our efforts to date and our ongoing commitment to reduce the red and green tape illustrate just how determined this government is to make Queensland the most attractive place in Australia to invest in and run a business.

Education Reform

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.43 am): In less than two months the Newman government will deliver its second state budget, and it is shaping up to be a tough budget. As I have said many times before, governments must live within their means, otherwise deficits accumulate into debt and future taxpayers are burdened by the poor decisions made by previous governments. Unfortunately, the Gillard government continues to impose poorly defined, large spending proposals on the state governments. Make no mistake: we all want to do more, but doing more does not always mean spending more.

The request for the state governments to fund Gonski, on top of the existing funding pressures on states, is an enormous ask. The Newman government has already committed \$535 million towards the Great Teachers = Great Results action plan, which will identify and encourage high-performing teachers and give schools more autonomy. The Great Teachers = Great Results initiative is on top of the additional \$300 million—another \$300 million—to address the maintenance backlog that accumulated under the mismanagement of the former government.


Queensland is at its fiscal limit. To fund Gonski, Queensland would need to find an additional \$1.3 billion for school funding, and inevitably this will require a trade-off with other services or infrastructure projects. In this context, \$1.3 billion represents 1,300 beds in hospitals; or 16,250 teachers; or 13,000 nurses; or 26 brand-new, top-shelf primary schools; or all capital spending on housing and community safety infrastructure for the next four years; or nearly the entire budget for the disability services department in 2012-13 of \$1.37 billion.

The Independent Commission of Audit's interim report released in June last year made it very clear. Queensland cannot be a high-spending and low-taxing state. It needs to choose between two alternatives: high taxing and high spending or lower taxing and lower spending. Queensland has unashamedly chosen a highly competitive tax regime. It must therefore moderate its expenditure. For too long now past Labor governments have lived beyond their means and grown so sloppy with expenditure that productivity has plummeted. The Newman government is working hard to correct this but, Madam Speaker, you cannot turn the *Queen Mary* on a dime.

Instead of supporting the states, the Gillard government continues to give with one hand whilst taking with the other. We currently have 27 separate funding arrangements which are under serious threat. These agreements, which will expire during the next two years, are estimated to be worth a total of about \$2.5 billion to Queensland alone. Despite numerous attempts by me and other state Treasurers to secure agreement on these specific purpose payments and national partnership agreements, the federal government has continually refused to provide any certainty about the payments that we are due.

These agreements are not just numbers in our budget; they are real services for Queenslanders, services like universal access to early childhood education and care or homelessness programs. The Commonwealth starts these programs and the community rightly expects that they will continue, but then the Commonwealth only commits for a few years and when the commitment expires it leaves the states holding the baby and forced to spend the money. The Newman government stands up for Queenslanders and we will be taking a long, hard look at any proposals from the Gillard government that may injure our fragile financial state.

Reef Plan

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.46 am): The Newman government recognises the value of the environment and the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef. It is for this reason I am very concerned that the second report card into reef water quality protection sitting with the federal Labor government is still on the shelf. I wrote to the federal Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon. Tony Burke, earlier this month noting in the strongest terms that the final checking of this report had been completed late last year—late last year. In fact, it was agreed at a ministerial forum in December that the report card would be released as soon as possible. Yet here we are some four months later and still the federal Labor government has not released the report.

However, while the Commonwealth sits on its hands, the Newman government is acting. As I outlined previously to the House, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has moved quickly to work with the cattle-grazing and the sugarcane industries to put in place best management

practice, or BMPs, similar to those used by the cotton and grains industries. We are delivering for the agricultural industry and for the reef, and I thank Minister McVeigh for his department's work in assisting industry in the development and implementation of the BMP program. This is something this government can do, something the opposition can only look at with envy to see firsthand the environment and the agricultural departments working together for the good of the state.


But the success of the BMP work is not this government's only success, so I table for the House a summary listing some 16 major achievements put in place by the Newman government in the last 12 months for the benefit of the Great Barrier Reef.

Tabled paper. Document titled 'The LNP's record of achievement on the Great Barrier Reef' [[2454](#)].

Let me alert the House to some of those achievements. We have committed to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan and maintaining a \$35 million investment. We have announced the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership. We have curtailed plans for the multicargo facility at the port of Abbot Point. We have laid charges against Orica in Gladstone. We have released an expression of interest for the east coast net fishery \$9 million buyout, and we have announced those agreements, as I just said, with the cane and the grazing industries.


In summary, we are currently working towards updating the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan for adoption later this year. The absence of the report card is a major concern. It is impeding ongoing engagement on a new reef plan. I urge the federal government to release this second report card, especially since the third report card is currently being finalised. I also call on Minister Burke to commit to funding for the Great Barrier Reef—something he has not done to date. The Queensland government is committed to rectifying this situation and is insisting that the Commonwealth government commit to getting future report cards released annually by September each year. The ongoing delays in the reef plan report cards are unacceptable, and this is not how the Newman government does business. We are now in a position where we are forced to play catch-up because of yet more Commonwealth delays. We call on the Commonwealth to stop delaying, stop pontificating and release the second report card into reef water quality protection.

Caring for our Community, Grants

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (9.50 am): The Newman government is continuing to deliver on its election commitments to Queenslanders. Today I am pleased to announce that more than 300 volunteer and community groups across Queensland will share in a \$1.35 million boost through the Caring for our Community grants. This important initiative is the first deliverable out of this \$4 million program. Caring for our Community recognises the invaluable contribution that community groups and their volunteers make to Queensland and demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting their hard work.

This program will make grants of up to \$5,000 to organisations to allow them to purchase much needed equipment such as computers, whitegoods and furniture. A smaller number of organisations across the state have received larger grants of up to \$15,000 towards the purchase of more significant essential equipment or infrastructure essential equipment or infrastructure. I am confident that these grants will help them continue to deliver benefits to Queenslanders because supporting community organisations is a priority for this government. These grants provide a fantastic opportunity to improve community facilities, upgrade resources and assist community groups to continue to deliver benefits to even more Queenslanders.

Cape York Welfare Reform Trial

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.51 am): Happy birthday, Madam Speaker. The Newman government is committed to alleviating the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across so many aspects of life. We are committed to doing that in conjunction with Indigenous people and their elected representatives at all levels of government through responsible programs, services and actions. Welfare and other similar government payments are not the answer to alleviating Indigenous disadvantage. The Newman government's Indigenous agenda is focused on ensuring that state government programs and funding are directed towards improving the stability and sustainability of Indigenous communities.

For too long in Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy has been driven by intentions which have not been adequately translated into achieving better outcomes. Despite the injection of increased funding from both state and federal governments, it cannot be said that substantially improved outcomes corresponding to that level of funding have been achieved for Indigenous people in areas of housing, education, health and employment.

An example of significant funding which has gone into Indigenous communities is the Cape York welfare reform trial, which commenced in 2008. Since then, a little over \$100 million has been injected into the four communities of Aurukun, Coen, Mossman Gorge and Hope Vale. While there is no clear agreement on outcomes, there are indications that the trial has been responsible for a number of improvements in the communities. The aim of the welfare reform trial was always, as the name suggests, to trial options for increasing sustainability in communities and reducing their reliance on welfare. One positive outcome of the trial was the work of the Family Responsibilities Commission. With the support of local communities, the commission has helped increase parental responsibility and restore social norms which, in turn, has assisted to create sustainable employment opportunities.

The Newman government is looking at finding practical support mechanisms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve the lives of individuals and families. The FRC is one area that we could look at modifying, and there is the option with federal government support of adopting the model throughout the state. Now that we finally have the evaluation report—more than 12 months late from the federal government—we can begin to assess the success or otherwise of initiatives under the trial. To allow a smooth transition from the current trial to what benefits from it might flow to other communities, the government has allocated \$5.65 million to continue the trial for a further 12 months. That will allow time for a proper assessment of which elements have been successful.

I will be meeting with the trial partners, the Cape York Institute and the federal government, during coming months to decide what form the trial should take during the 12-month extension. I will also be talking to all mayors to involve them in the process of devising longer term initiatives coming out of the trial. Many Cape York councils have publicly expressed the wish for all communities to have the opportunity to share in the benefits of such initiatives. It was always the intention that what has been learnt from the trial should be applied more widely to benefit all Indigenous communities, and that remains the intention of this government. We will take the time during the next 12 months to properly assess the report and plan how the trial can benefit more Indigenous communities from 2015 onwards.

East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery




Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.55 am): On 28 March the second invitation in the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery net fishing licence buyback closed. I am pleased to advise that the buyback scheme is continuing to be a success. As honourable members will recall, I launched the buyback scheme last year as part of the Newman government's \$9 million election commitment to reduce the total net fishing effort along Queensland's east coast. This was in response to approaches by commercial and recreational fishing and tourism and environmental representatives. These stakeholders asked that we act to ensure the sustainability of the net fishery, and we are delivering on that request.

Following the first round of offers earlier this year, we accepted 22 licence packages totalling 71 symbols for purchase. I am pleased to now announce that the second round has yielded a further 13 licences with 42 symbols. This brings the total licence packages accepted for buyback to 35, with some 113 symbols removed from the fishery. I will again be asking the Net Buyback Stakeholder Working Group that I have established to consider these outcomes when it meets again next month in order to make a decision on the eligibility criteria for the next stage in the buyback process. So far we have spent \$2.2 million out of the \$9 million commitment, so I am very keen to explore further opportunities under the scheme for the fishing industry.

Our fisheries are some of the most prized resources in Queensland, both for play and commerce. We have approximately 700,000 recreational fishers in Queensland, and in the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery the commercial net sector is Queensland's third most valuable, with an estimated value of some \$19.6 million. This buyback will contribute to ensuring the economic viability of the fishery whilst also improving resource sharing for the recreational sector.

Youth Boot Camp Trial

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.57 am): The Newman government is committed to breaking the cycle of youth crime and getting positive outcomes for the youth justice system in Queensland. The government has already delivered the first step towards reforming the youth justice system, with the establishment of two youth boot camps and the announcement of a review of the Youth Justice Act. It gave me great pleasure on the one-year anniversary of the Newman government to accompany the Premier as we announced three additional boot camps in Rockhampton, the Fraser Coast and Townsville, although in Townsville Manpower was in town so the Premier and I did compete for air time. But I am pleased to say that the Townsville community accepted the boot camps with open arms. This announcement will bring the total number of boot camps in Queensland to five.

The early intervention youth boot camp run by the Kokoda Challenge on the Gold Coast commenced in February this year. I look forward to visiting Kokoda's Lake Maroon property with the Premier and Kokoda's patron, Keith Payne VC, on 8 May this year. The sentenced youth boot camp in Cairns is also up and running, with two children having been sentenced to boot camp orders by the court. A sentenced youth boot camp will be introduced in Townsville to address the increasing number of young offenders committing serious and dangerous crimes in the area. The early intervention youth boot camp program is being expanded to reach kids in Rockhampton and the Fraser Coast. While I am on Rockhampton, let me deal with the member for Rockhampton. An article in the local paper states—

A Rockhampton man whose business has suffered at the hands of countless youth offenders over the years yesterday backed the Newman Government's plan for a boot camp.

In the same article it states—

Rockhampton MP Bill Byrne was sceptical of how effective the boot camp would be.

So his community is calling out for boot camps, yet the member for Rockhampton does not want boot camps. He does not want the investment. Even the member for Dalrymple, Shane Knuth, supports boot camps in Queensland.

We are getting on with the job and delivering for youth justice right around Queensland. Young people must take responsibility for their actions. As part of this plan, I would encourage all Queenslanders to fill out the blueprint for youth justice survey, which is online. I am pleased to report to the House that, in the few short days that it was online, over 2,000 responses were received. I thank the Queensland community. I thank members on this side of the House for supporting such important reforms to youth justice in Queensland.

TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE


Report

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (9.59 am): I table report No. 21 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, subordinate legislation tabled on 12 February 2013 (SL 215-232) and forms. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 21—Subordinate legislation tabled on 12 February 2013 (SL 215-232) and forms [\[2455\]](#).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Redcliffe

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.00 am): Madam Speaker, happy birthday for today. My question is to the Premier. I refer to reports last night that the member for Redcliffe has provided false and misleading statements to the LNP and the media, and I ask: will the Premier now refer to the Crime and Misconduct Commission all information held within the state government about the expenditure of taxpayers' funds by entities associated with the member for Redcliffe?

Mr NEWMAN: I believe that I have been asked a few questions about this over the past month or so. The record would show that I have been asked on numerous occasions and a number of my cabinet colleagues have also been asked similar questions. I can only say, once again, that every

time allegations have been made they have been referred to relevant authorities within government. They have been referred to groups such as the Ethical Standards Unit in the department of health. Members have heard in recent days from the Minister for Communities how there has been—

Ms Trad: You have done nothing.

Mr NEWMAN: I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane, who just said that nothing has happened. It is typical of the spin that the member for South Brisbane is involved in. The member for South Brisbane was an official in the Australian Labor Party's campaign for the 2012 election. She perpetuated some of the biggest porkies in that campaign and continues to do so today. How many times do we have to come in here and say that there are a number of investigations underway into the alleged activities of the member for Redcliffe? Every single allegation has been referred. Every single allegation is being dealt with in an appropriate way.

I compare and contrast that with those opposite, a number of whom have a father who served in this place. They came together in here, at a special sitting of this parliament, to change the law to protect someone, to cover up for someone, to change the law to make it legal to tell porkies to a parliamentary committee. Those opposite share the DNA of those members. It is in their DNA to tell porkies. It has been fascinating to watch the member for South Brisbane stand up with a straight face in front of the media in recent days and say that this government has an agenda to privatise QR when, during the last government's term, she was down at Trades Hall doing the numbers for the state conference of the Labor Party to ensure that Anna Bligh and the Labor Party did not get rolled, as state Labor did in New South Wales. The member for South Brisbane backed asset sales and did the numbers so they did not get done over at their conference. Those are the facts. How dare she come in here today and suggest with her interjection that we are not dealing with the matters associated with allegations around the member for Redcliffe.

(Time expired)

Member for Redcliffe

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is, of course, to the Premier. I refer the Premier to allegations about the use of taxpayers' funds by the member for Redcliffe and to the Premier's statement in this House on 7 March in which he said he had full confidence in the member, and I ask: is the LNP moving to expel the member because the Premier, as parliamentary leader of this government, has failed to show leadership and to act decisively on this issue?

Mr NEWMAN: After two days of silence and not bothering to ask many questions, those opposite come in here today and want to have a last hurrah with this one. I will answer the question, but I reflect back today—and I will be going to Canberra to talk about important national issues that affect the state of Queensland. Where are the questions—and I hope we are going to get some—about education and doing a better job for kids in our schools? Where are the questions, for example, on this issue of a federal government which wants the states to cede authority to deal with gangs when it cannot even stop the boats? These are questions that I would be really interested in answering today. Perhaps they could rewrite the script and then we could get some proper questions today.

In relation to the member for Redcliffe, I have said very clearly that people deserve a fair go and there has been a measured, proportional response—

Ms Trad: Just your people.

Mr NEWMAN: The member for South Brisbane—

Mr Nicholls: Cannot help herself.

Mr NEWMAN:—cannot help herself. She has no discipline. She cannot even hold it together and sit there quietly when a question is being answered.

Mr Nicholls: Being shushed by her own colleagues.

Mr NEWMAN: She has to be shushed by her own colleagues. She sits there most of the time with a manic grin, which has us quite intrigued. What is going on in that mind over there?

There has been a measured, proportional response to the allegations surrounding the member for Redcliffe. At every stage—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is answering the question. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: There has been a measured, proportional response so that, as revelations have been made, they have been investigated. On multiple occasions I have urged people who had information to come forward, but still somehow it comes out in a drip fashion. If somebody had real concerns about the member for Redcliffe and wanted to come to me two or three months ago, there might have been a completely different answer from me in this House when I was asked questions.

Ms Palaszczuk: You failed to act.

Mr NEWMAN: I will take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition who again cannot control herself. I have acted on all occasions to investigate these matters. I have also made sure that the party executive suspended the member for South Brisbane—sorry, the member for Redcliffe.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I can dream! But I say this: he is no longer a member of this team. He is no longer a member of this government and he probably will be expelled from the LNP.

Council of Australian Governments

Mrs RICE: Madam Speaker, I wish a very happy birthday to you. My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on the important matters he will be raising for Queenslanders at the COAG meeting this week?

Mr NEWMAN: This is the sort of matter in which one would think the opposition would be interested, because today I go to Canberra. Tonight I will be dining with the Prime Minister at the Lodge and tomorrow I will be attending the COAG meeting. The Commonwealth government is short-changing Queensland. As I stress right now, I will be fighting for a better deal for this great state. The national partnership on early childhood education is a clear example of that short-changing. It expires in June and the offer from the Gillard government for the next six years will mean a 23 per cent funding cut for kindergartens in Queensland. That is effectively \$195 million less for our kindy kids over the next six years, and you do not hear much about that from Peter Garrett or the Prime Minister. This funding gets cut and it goes into the magic pudding funding model called Gonski. It means kindies cannot retain qualified staff and it will impact the business models of many valued Queensland kindergartens and day care centres. Those opposite talk amongst themselves over there. They do not care about our kindies. They do not care about our kids. They have not stood up—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The member for Mulgrave interjects, but he has not said anything about kindergarten funding being cut, and that is a fact.

There is a similar story from the federal government's treatment of universities. I have spoken to our vice-chancellors. The government will rip out \$2 billion nationwide to pay for Gonski. What has the University of Southern Queensland's vice-chancellor, Jan Thomas, said in *Country Life* today? She describes the federal cuts as a 'death sentence to regional communities'.

It is time to end the top-down, one-size-fits-all, Canberra-is-full-of-smart-people, we-know-best, bureaucratic socialist approach from Canberra. Funding of the states by the federal government for education and health must be fair and must allow for proper competition, comparison and reward for good policy and programs. Competitive federalism, where states can grow and share ideas that work, is the way to go. We want this because we want to make Queensland the best and we are willing to compete to do that.

Queenslanders are sick of the bickering between the federal and state governments. They just want the best funding and services and the best outcomes for their kids. There is a clear need to better redefine the powers and responsibilities of each level of government in Australia. That is what we should be talking about in COAG. That is what we should be doing to sort out the Federation and make this nation work better. The Commonwealth and the states now have overlapping roles in education, health, workplace relations and the environment. It is inefficient, it is confusing, it is wasting time and money and we need to sort it out.

Member for Redcliffe

Mr MULHERIN: Happy birthday, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. Will the minister advise if he has shared with the Premier any of the information he has received from the Police Service about allegations involving the suspended LNP member for Redcliffe?

Mr DEMPSEY: The simple answer to the question is that there has been no information presented to me to be presented to the Premier. This question really exemplifies the type of questions asked of the government this week. As the Premier just said, the COAG meeting this week is so important to the financial structure of this state. On the other side of the House sit three previous members of government—we talk about debt, deficit and deceit—that presided over putting this state, as the Treasurer alluded to in a number of ministerial statements this week, in an unsustainable financial position. This government inherited that position after 20 years of financial mismanagement of this state. Then they have the hypocrisy to come in here and target an individual's issues. That just shows the gutter political tactics of those opposite.

If those opposite have any other evidence that they have colluded with or conspired with other individuals over the last two or three sittings of parliament and they have not presented it, then they are guilty of not bringing it to the proper authorities in a timely manner. This government stands for accountability and transparency and will get on with governing Queensland for all Queenslanders, not just a bunch of union hacks. At the last election the people of Queensland showed that they had had enough of the ALP in Queensland. I thank the member for the question. We will get on with governing Queensland for all Queenslanders, because this is a great state with great opportunity.

Water

Mr JOHNSON: Happy birthday, Madam Speaker. I hope you will be nice to me now! My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House why the federal environment minister's new water triggers not only hinder economic development but are of little environmental benefit?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Gregory for the question. I reflect on the comments already made by the Premier and by the Minister for Police and Community Safety. This is the sort of question this parliament should be considering. These are the sorts of issues that are important to Queensland and its economy now and in the future. To have an approvals process in place that ensures our state can continue to develop the major projects that underwrite our economy and provide the economic benefits that will build the schools, the hospitals and the roads in the future should be a primary concern of this parliament. The opposition never asks questions about that so it is left to people such as the member for Gregory.

The latest move by the federal environment minister, Tony Burke, can only be seen as playing politics with that issue that is critically important for the people of Queensland. The Queensland government is determined to have the best approvals process in the world. We are determined to have the best resources industry in the world. We have done a lot of work to ensure our approvals process delivers just that. We have had anything but cooperation from the federal minister. In fact, it stands in stark contrast to the approach formerly taken by the Prime Minister. With the Premier heading off to COAG today, we have the opportunity to reflect on the COAG meeting of 12 months ago at which the Prime Minister gave an assurance—there was a huge media story—about moving towards a bilateral, single approvals process that industry and government across Australia have recognised for a long time is the most efficient way to do it. The Prime Minister embraced that at the COAG meeting about 12 months ago, but when Tony Burke wanted a political issue it was completely overturned. That move towards a bilateral approvals process—the long overdue move towards a single approvals process that could guarantee approvals for the projects that we need so badly—was reversed for base political reasons, so Tony Burke could create for himself a political issue. That is all it was.

Our government will protect the things that are special to the people of Queensland. We will protect the Great Barrier Reef. Every Queenslander will protect the Great Barrier Reef. Every Queenslander will protect the Great Artesian Basin. Every Queenslander will protect those environmental values. We are committed to doing that with an approvals process that can be made to be the best in the world. It should be an approvals process that is not a political plaything of a federal

minister who finds himself in political trouble. That is what Tony Burke has turned this into. I hope that when the Premier goes to COAG he reminds the Prime Minister of what she said at the COAG meeting 12 months ago and what has transpired since then.

(Time expired)

Electricity Industry

Mr PITT: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the statements by the Premier in March 2011 that he supported privatising the management of the electricity transmission and distribution network, and I ask: will the Premier guarantee today that the LNP will not use recommendations in the secret Costello report to privatise or outsource management of the electricity transmission or distribution network?

Mr NEWMAN: I am a little at a loss as to when those comments were made, but I will accept them. That is dangerous with the Australian Labor Party, because it is good at verballing people and extracting what they want.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: They asked the question. You would think they would be polite and courteous enough to listen to the answer. I am more than happy to answer their questions any day of the week. For two whole days this week I sat here but they did not bother to ask me a question about education, health or a whole range of important issues. They have been happy to speak about those things in the media, but they do not want to come in here because, at the end of the day, they usually ask pretty shonky, poor questions.

But here is my position: very shortly we will release the Commission of Audit report. When we release the Commission of Audit report in this place, at the same time members will receive a response from the government about the recommendations. There are many recommendations across the many hundreds of pages of the Commission of Audit report. If there is a stack of recommendations, probably only a few of them are actually about asset sales. This really is a comprehensive blueprint to provide the best state government administration in Australia. Right now when I look around the nation I see what is going on in WA. I think the WA community sees it as a state government that is performing under the leadership of Premier Colin Barnett. There is a big gap between Queensland's performance and that of the Barnett government in so many ways in terms of service delivery. Essentially, we want to get to be as good as it and then we want to do even better than it. So I want to assure honourable members opposite that it is not just about asset sales.

In relation to Ergon and Energex and the transmission corporation, I will say what I have said in the media on many occasions over the past two years: I see them as natural monopolies and I have always had grave reservations about the privatisation of natural monopolies like the electricity poles and wires business and indeed the ports. In contrast with my approach of openness and accountability and a willingness to talk about these things, the Leader of the Opposition was a member of a cabinet that was against privatisation but then went and did it—that is, sold a monopoly port, the Port of Brisbane, and that is one less policy lever that we have today. The hypocrisy is there, and I again refer to the member for South Brisbane's comments in the media. That is where I stand on the poles and wires business and that is a bit more for honourable members' information about the Commission of Audit report. It is not just about asset sales.

(Time expired)

Natural Disasters, Federal Funding

Mr RICKUSS: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, as those opposite will not ask the Treasurer a question. Can the Treasurer please inform the House if Queensland will receive the full extent of disaster relief funding owed to it by Canberra?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Lockyer for the question, because it is vital that we all remember the pain and the suffering that occurred in the Lockyer Valley three years ago. We certainly remember the heartfelt speech that the member gave in this place after those tragic events at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011. This is a serious matter. Queensland and the Queensland government of both sides of politics sign into an agreement with the federal government about funding disaster relief and recovery arrangements. The Queensland government in good faith has spent money with local authorities and given money to those people who have been affected by

floods and complied with requirements to ensure that people who have been hurt and affected by the events that occurred have the opportunity to recover. The payments that we talk about are \$725 million that Wayne Swan is now refusing to reimburse to the Queensland government. Payments were in the form of personal assistance payments to individuals and grants to local governments to rebuild damaged infrastructure. Wayne Swan is refusing to pay Queensland this money even though it is allocated in his forward estimates. The argument is that the \$725 million was spent in ways that have not been properly verified in line with audit requirements. Those requirements were not actually introduced until the end of 2011.

This government does comply with all of the new requirements and has done so and received unqualified audit opinions. But to expect councils with thousands of kilometres of roads to have a pre flood event photo of every culvert, causeway and street sign is ludicrous. Similarly, people claiming hardship payments because they have lost everything probably are not carrying around with them photos of what they lost and what their documents are. This appears to be a triumph of bureaucracy over outcome. We have been negotiating with the federal government for some three months now to come to a resolution in this matter. I have written to Mr Swan, and I table a copy of the letter, including the additional advice provided by Queensland's Auditor-General.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 February 2013, from the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, Hon. Tim Nicholls, to the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, Hon. Wayne Swan, regarding audit qualification of some expenditure, prior to the establishment of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority [\[2456\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 18 April 2013, from the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, to the Prime Minister, Hon. Julia Gillard, regarding Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements [\[2457\]](#).

We have sent our Treasury officials to negotiate with Canberra. I have raised the matter with Mr Swan at SCFFR meetings. Yesterday we were bluntly told by the federal Treasury that it will not be paying the \$725 million to Queenslanders to enable the recovery effort to continue. This is money that the federal government imposed a levy on every single Australian to raise to pay the bill. It is not its money. It is transferring it to its bottom line because it cannot manage its account. It does not care about Queensland's recovery effort. It is as a successive process over outcome. Today I call on the Leader of the Opposition to jointly sign with the Premier a letter to Mr Swan demanding he pay the \$725 million owed by Queenslanders. I have tabled the letter. That is the challenge for the opposition: sign up, get the money for Queensland!

Regional Community Association Moreton Bay

Mr JUDGE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Given the Newman government's commitment to be open and accountable, will the minister today guarantee that the taxpayer funded PricewaterhouseCoopers investigation into the Regional Community Association Moreton Bay, which was ordered by the minister's department and Queensland Health, will not be hidden away but will be released unedited publicly?

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. That is the wrong minister.

Madam SPEAKER: I would ask the member to repeat the question. The question was not clear in its entirety and then we will make a ruling as to whether it is to the appropriate minister.

Mr JUDGE: The question is obviously to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Given the Newman government's commitment to be open and accountable, will the minister today guarantee that the taxpayer funded PricewaterhouseCoopers investigation into the Regional Community Association Moreton Bay, which was ordered by the minister's department and Queensland Health, will not be hidden away and will be released unedited publicly?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I would remind members in respect of the standing orders that matters have to be pertinent to a minister's portfolio. It is not for me to judge whether the question in its entirety is. I will call the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to answer as pertaining to her portfolio.

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question. As the lead in commissioning the audit through PricewaterhouseCoopers was done through the Minister for Health and his department, I think the question should be directed to the Minister for Health.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the member for Broadwater.

Gang Related Crime

Miss BARTON: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My question without notice is to—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are interjections not only on my left but also towards the back and I warn members to give the person who has the call to ask a question the opportunity to be heard in silence. I call the member for Broadwater.

Miss BARTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Ahead of COAG tomorrow and the attempted cash grab by the federal Labor government, can the Attorney-General please update the House on what Queensland is already doing to combat gang related crime?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Broadwater for the question. I thank the member for Broadwater and other members on the Gold Coast for their particular interest in not only youth crime but other gang related crime on the Gold Coast given some of the events that have occurred in that area. The question raised the issue of a cash grab by the federal government, and let us not make any mistake about it: this is a cash grab by an incompetent and broke federal government.

Government members: Desperate!

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a desperate attempt; I take the interjections from honourable members. We will be going to COAG and talking about the future of education and the future of Queenslanders. The Premier will be going down there to fight in the corner of all Queenslanders. However, what the federal government wants to have a debate about now is another referral of some power. We have heard about unexplained wealth powers being referred. Let me advise honourable members how this occurred. The Prime Minister and the federal government did their usual stunt: they turned up at a press conference in the morning and told the world at large that they wanted the Prime Minister's premiers—in fact, I think she used the words 'my premiers', 'I'm going to be taking it to my premiers'—to sign up to a particular deal with respect to referral of powers of unexplained wealth laws and then some 24 hours later or that particular night the Premier got a letter from the Prime Minister asking him to engage in discussions and consultation about this matter.

If you are serious about engaging in consultation and discussion about these quite serious matters, then you do not do a press conference in the morning and call on 'your' Premiers to debate this issue and then send a letter. But that is exactly what the federal Labor Party does. That is in its DNA. We have seen it in education, we have seen it in health, we have seen it in law and order. So rather than the Commonwealth concentrating on the most important matters that the Commonwealth ought to be concentrating on in terms of its upcoming budget, it is now getting into the law and order sphere.

Queenslanders should not be blamed for the soft Labor Party policies of the past 20 years in this state. Other states and territories should not be blamed. We are getting tough on this stuff. We are determined to go to COAG and tell the Commonwealth that we have appropriate and sufficient laws in place, or about to come in place, that will deal with bikies across Queensland. We recognise that it is a serious issue.

But just as the Labor Party and its union mates are concentrating not on COAG, which we are concentrating on, it really concerns me to read in the paper yesterday about the Labor mates—remember the HSU scandal and the Craig Thompson matter? So when we are concentrating on COAG tomorrow, the HSU is doubling its credit card amount for expenditure. So they are having a debate to get back into the ACTU. We are debating education, we are debating health, we are debating law and order and the HSU, associated with the Labor Party, is debating its expenditure on credit cards, doubling it from \$5,000 to \$10,000. That concerns me. We will stick up for Queenslanders and that is what the Premier will do tomorrow in Canberra.

(Time expired)

Government Administrative Precinct, Redevelopment

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier please detail what plans he has made on Queenslanders' behalf to address the serious reduction in the value of state property assets as a result of the government decision to build a supertower at 1 William Street at a time when investors are unloading central city properties at heavily discounted prices?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know he is an incredibly smart man, but I have not really seen him in the past being acknowledged as an expert on the property market. Let me talk about 1 William Street and what it will do for this city and for this state. The government has quite a lot of leased and owned office space in the Brisbane CBD—several hundred thousand square metres. The buildings are old, they are inefficient, they are not good work environments for the public servants concerned. The buildings are dark and dingy. They require a lot of maintenance and upgrades to bring them to modern standards. If we took the people who currently work in the Queensland Public Service in the Brisbane CBD and we were able to magically consolidate them tomorrow into one or two modern buildings with modern floor plates, with natural light and decent amenity, in terms of the actual outgoings per annum we would save \$60 million at least as a minimum. That is an extremely conservative figure. So the government has decided to commission the building of a new building at 1 William Street. It is being funded entirely by non-government funds. The taxpayers are not outlaying any money. It is being funded by Cbus—the building industry superannuation fund.

What else will we see from this? I have painted the benefits in terms of \$60 million a year savings. That will allow us then to put the public servants into this new modern building—a great work environment. We will then be able to consolidate existing property holdings and have buildings refurbished and sublet or sold as the case may be. We will see 1,000 people directly employed on that project each year for the next three years. That will then allow us to completely revitalise the large super blocks between William and George streets and from here at the parliament at Alice Street back towards Charlotte Street. It will be the making of Brisbane and it is our answer to the redevelopment opportunity that people saw in Melbourne in the 1990s with what became the Crown development.

There are just so many positives from doing this. I reject totally the assertion in the member's question. This is a great project. It will save taxpayers money. It will enliven and revitalise this part of the Brisbane CBD. It will provide jobs for hardworking men and women in the construction industry. That is why the CFMEU construction division's Michael Ravbar and the BLF's David Hanna have supported it.

(Time expired)

Queensland Plan

Madam SPEAKER: I call the member for Mirani.

Mr MALONE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and a great day for you. My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on the status of the Queensland Plan?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Mirani for the question. I know he is very excited about the upcoming summit in Mackay—unlike the member for 'South-East Queensland' over there, who bagged the idea of it coming to his home town. That is why there is a briefing being held today for all members of parliament in the Undumbi Room.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I have hit a raw nerve. They did not want the summit to be in Mackay. They wanted it to be in South-East Queensland. 'Anywhere but Mackay,' said the member for Mackay. 'Anywhere! Hold the summit somewhere else. Don't hold it in my home town.'

Mr MULHERIN: I rise to a point of order. I find what the Premier has said that I have gone out and made statements saying the forum should not be held in Mackay or the summit should be held in South-East Queensland to be totally false and I ask the Premier to withdraw

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that is not under the standing orders. Under the standing orders you have to find a matter offensive.

Mr MULHERIN: It is offensive.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the Premier to withdraw.

Mr NEWMAN: I withdraw. I am very sorry that I have deeply offended and hurt the member for Mackay. I am very sorry. I am very sorry.

Mr Mulherin: It's a false statement.

Mr NEWMAN: The member is saying that it is a false statement. I will be happy to come in here and table some of the things he did say in the media about the summit that is coming to his home town. Anyway, we are only four weeks away from this summit. We have received responses from all 89 MPs who have been engaging with their local communities and taking local representatives. It is going to be a great process for the future of Queensland, looking forward 30 years, properly to plan the future of Queensland. In the words of one-nine-year-old Queenslanders from Glass House, 'Queensland will be a better place if we know where we are going.'

The Queensland Plan will be a plan by Queenslanders for Queensland and the Mackay summit is the start of our journey to a better future. The electorate delegates and the MPs will join with Queensland mayors, who will be an integral part of the process, and present views and perspectives from all across Queensland. Delegates from the Mackay summit will shape the process to develop the plan through interactive sessions. Firstly, what is the long-term vision? How do we prepare for the future? What challenges and opportunities will Queensland face over the next 30 years? Secondly, what questions do we need to ask at a local and state-wide level to get Queenslanders thinking about where we want to be in the future? And finally, what is the best way to engage with our communities within May and September to discuss these issues and respond to those questions?

We are also holding an industry briefing to seek input from peak representative bodies from across the state. We are going to work with schools, universities and other bodies to ensure that we get everyone's input. Queensland's future is important to all of us. Everyone has a different view and we encourage them to share it.

So far, we have had a great response: more than 3,400 visits to the Queensland Plan website and more than 500 people who have registered their interest to be involved. Conversations have started. People are talking, which is what the development of the Queensland Plan is all about. Working together, we are going to make a great difference to this state.

(Time expired)

Queensland Rail

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. This week the minister announced that the transfer of QR to a statutory authority will increase rail standards for QR's South-East Queensland passenger service. Over the past year, there has been an unacceptably high number of derailments and speed reductions on the Mount Isa-Townsville freight line costing millions to a region with a gross revenue value of \$15 billion to the economy. Will the minister guarantee that the transfer of QR to a statutory authority will not only benefit the South-East Queensland passenger service but will bring higher quality standards to the only freight rail line that services this region of national economic significance?

Mr STEVENS: There is a bill before the House on this particular matter.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Madam SPEAKER: It has been drawn to my attention that this is pre-empting the debate under the standing orders with a bill before the House. So I rule that question out of order.

Queensland Health, Funding

Mr BOOTHMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and happy birthday. My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Given that it has been over a month since a bipartisan Senate committee called on the federal Labor government to reinstate \$103 million that it had actually cut from Queensland Health's funding, I ask: can the minister update the House on the federal government's response and how that contrasts with the LNP's efforts to protect health jobs and health services?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Albert for his question. No doubt the honourable member for Albert, like the majority of members of this parliament, has been most concerned in recent times about how those members opposite have failed to stand up for the people of Queensland when it has come to the direction of this parliament for the Commonwealth government to give that money back which it so ruthlessly stripped away from our health system in November or December of last year. Not only that, we have a bipartisan report from the federal Senate that also says that the Commonwealth government should give the money back.

We have apologists opposite who are not prepared to stand up for the people of Queensland. Indeed, I think it is important for us to all reflect on what the \$103 million that the government has ruthlessly and retrospectively ripped out of Queensland Health funding would actually deliver for

patients and their families across Queensland. It would deliver 4,622 knee replacements. It would deliver 4,691 hip replacements. It would deliver 2,410 Cochlear implants, 34,170 tonsillectomies, 15,684 appendectomies and 25,613 normal births in Queensland.

It is completely wrong, unjustifiable and disrespectful for any government to rip funding out of a health system retrospectively. You are unable to plan for the future retrospectively, particularly when that money has been spent—\$40 million of that was spent in the previous financial year. More than half of the \$60 million allocated to this year had actually been spent in the lead-up to November of last year. That has meant that our Health boards in Queensland have had to make some very, very challenging decisions as Wayne Swan runs away and hides.

I sought to put this matter on the agenda for the Standing Council on Health this Friday. Guess what? As a consequence of that it has been cancelled by the federal minister and her cohort. They do not want to confront this issue. The Premier has also sought to put this matter on the agenda for COAG tomorrow. And guess what? The Prime Minister will not even engage in this issue despite the fact that her own Senate has indicated that her government should give the money back. These are issues that are vitally important to the people of Queensland and Australia. In November last year in Perth all state health ministers came to bipartisan agreement that the Commonwealth government should give the money back.

Public Transport, Privatisation

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to page 15 of the Costello report executive summary which states that privatisation through franchising of public transport should be considered and ask: will the Premier rule out using the secret Costello recommendations to privatise or franchise public rail and bus transport services further?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. Now we are actually getting questions that are relevant, sensible and appropriate about the future of this great state. I do thank the member for South Brisbane for the question because it is a refreshing change and it shows, I hate to say this, a level of leadership. But I will move on. Firstly I need to answer the question just to remind particularly the House, but also I notice a number of school students who are in the gallery today, that the people who privatised assets in Queensland without telling the electorate—who actually said they would not and then went and did it contrary to their solemn promise prior to the election in 2009—were those opposite and their colleagues who have left this House.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I urge the member for Mulgrave to stop interjecting and doing the performance because there are students watching. Is this what school students want to see today, this sort of poor performance and rudeness and misbehaviour after those opposite have asked a question they want me to answer?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: They continue to object. How rude are they? You would think they could have the manners to listen.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: They continue on. I say sorry to the students who are here today. I am sorry they are witnessing this terrible display of not only rudeness but hypocrisy, because those opposite were the ones who privatised Queensland Rail, the Port of Brisbane, Forestry Plantations—I could go on—without seeking a mandate from the people of Queensland. We have made it very, very clear that we will not sell assets owned by the people of Queensland without being upfront, talking about it and going to an election. Earlier on in the day I was asked a question about these matters and I basically, I think, gave a pretty good account of how we will deal with this. We will bring the Commission of Audit report in. I know the member for South Brisbane is keen to get going. May Day is just around the corner and the comrades will need something to maintain the rage because they have no policies. After 12 months we have had not one policy announcement. We are told we have to wait till Labour Day. Labour Day is in October. That is too long to wait for a policy—18 months. I say to those opposite just be patient, we will be revealing it all very shortly, doing it properly in this House, and you will have a full and comprehensive response from government.

Members know my position and what we have said about QR in recent days. It is going to be about passengers, not about profits, and it is a clear demonstration that we are not held down on privatisation.

Queensland Teachers Union

Mr SHORTEN: My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please inform the House of the reasons for the Queensland Teachers Union's objection to the Newman government's Great Teachers = Great Results direct action plan?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the member for Algester for the question. It was reported yesterday that the QTU expected a thousand people to this rally outside parliament. They must have misprinted an extra zero because about 100 teachers by proxy were out there last night apparently complaining about our Great Teachers = Great Results plan to improve teacher quality. The Treasurer and the Minister for Health have told me that the small but rowdy bunch were singing *Solidarity Forever*. If I was ever to doubt that the QTU is stuck in the past this proves it. *Solidarity Forever* was written in 1915. The union wants to rally troops by singing a song that is 98 years old, a song that was written the year that Australian soldiers landed in Gallipoli. No more fitting image could there be for a union that would prefer to keep Queensland schools in the Dark Ages. A union that claims to represent modern teachers in modern classrooms is using century old union tactics to get their point across.

I am still bewildered as to what their problem could be. Do they have a problem with the \$50 million going into the pockets of their members? Do they have a problem with 200 of their members receiving masters scholarships each year? Do they have a problem with 300 struggling schools receiving exceptional teachers to boost results? Everything in our policy is aimed at boosting teacher quality. It is about breaking down those antiquated union hang-ups and freeing up good teachers to excel rather than face the long march year by year receiving the same reward as under-performing colleagues.

I am sure the member for South Brisbane knows how it is to work with underperforming colleagues who have been promoted simply because of longevity. To demonstrate the level to which the QTU is out of touch with modern society, I want to read an extract from a speech by Tony Shepherd, the president of the Business Council of Australia. He told the National Press Club yesterday, 'I want to congratulate Premier Campbell Newman for having a red-hot go at lifting teacher quality.' So who would you believe: a motley crew of people pretending to be teachers singing 100-year-old songs or the peak business body in the nation?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is the difference between us and those opposite. The people who matter and the people pushing this nation forward are the ones on our side. On their side are a few unions out of touch with their members.

Commission of Audit, Health Services

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Premier. It has now been 49 days since the secret Costello report containing recommendations about health services—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the member to start again. I expect members to allow the person with the call to ask the question in silence. I call the member.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Premier. It has now been 49 days since the secret Costello report containing recommendations about health services being increasingly delivered by private providers. I ask: will the Premier rule out using the secret Costello recommendations to allow for the private management of public hospitals in Queensland, specifically, the new Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and childrens hospitals?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. Again, these are good questions. Perhaps the member for South Brisbane actually got this one on the list as well, because they are good questions. They are pertinent questions. They are ones I am thrilled to be able to answer. Because what we are trying to do, through the term of this government and hopefully into future years, is to make this the best run state government in Australia with the best state-run services and the best delivery of infrastructure for Queenslanders. We want great schools, we want fantastic free public hospitals, we want to care for the aged and the disabled and we want great roads. That is our vision. That is what it is all about.

As the Minister for Education was pointing out, sadly, those in the Labor Party and, I am afraid, in the leadership of the union movement are stuck back in 1915, singing the old songs of class warfare, which is something that was dealt with by great reforms that I acknowledge in many cases

were achieved by the unions and the Labor Party over many years. That has happened. It has been achieved. Those songs demonstrate that the Labor Party and the union leadership are stuck in the past.

The member wants an assurance about the privatisation of the delivery of services. I am sorry: I cannot give that assurance, because the Mater Hospital is a privately run hospital that is a public free hospital today in Queensland. How can I make such an assurance? What a ridiculous assurance it would be. Over the past 20 years, it was good enough for them to actually permit the contract with the Mater to continue, because it does a great job for Queenslanders.

It is a matter of public record right now that we are investigating whether the Sunshine Coast University Hospital should be run in-house or should be run in some way, or various elements run, by the private sector. I stress that there will be a free public hospital on the Sunshine Coast. I note the desperate federal member Craig Emerson is distributing misleading paraphernalia in the Logan area about the Logan Hospital. There is a little thing on the flyer that says 'up for sale'. The Logan Hospital is not up for sale. What a misleading and disgraceful effort.

As I have often demonstrated over the past 12 months, the Australian Labor Party has lost its way. It has no vision and it has no direction. Its members fight like mad dogs against one another. Most disappointingly, they have no integrity. They will say and do anything in an election year and at any other time. What we are about is creating a great plan for Queensland, because it is a great state with great opportunity. We want great hospitals that are free, that are well run and that deliver services in an efficient fashion for Queenslanders. That is what we are about.

Level Crossings, Safety

Mr CHOAT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Loving the railway as I do, I ask the minister: what is being done by the Newman government to improve safety in and around our rail level crossings?

Mr EMERSON: Madam Speaker, I join the others in wishing you a happy birthday. It has only been a few years since we were at university together, I think.

A government member interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection. You are aging much better than I am, Madam Speaker. I thank the member for Ipswich West, who quite rightly said that he is committed to Queensland Rail and he is committed to improving safety, particularly at our level crossings, as is this government. This is a very sensible question and a serious question. Last year across the state, we had 400 near misses at our level crossings, 157 of which involved pedestrians. Across the state, there were more than 5,000 illegal entrants across our level crossings, boom gates and tracks. Four hundred near misses is 400 too many and 157 pedestrians are far too many.

We are dealing with this issue and we are doing so in a number of ways. Since we have come to office, we have doubled the fines for illegal entry from \$4,400 to \$8,800, which is on top of the increase in the on-the-spot fines of \$220. As we promised in our election campaign, following many calls for the previous government to act, we are working towards the flyovers at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge, and at Robinson Road, Geebung. My colleague the Minister for Communities has fought long and hard for a flyover at Telegraph Road, as has the member for Nudgee in relation to Robinson Road, Geebung. That area is very dangerous for pedestrians in particular. In the past three years, we have had 40 near misses with pedestrians.

We have named the sites for trials for new technology at our open level crossings. We have put \$2 million towards trials of new technology, which include issues such as radio break in technology and visual warnings at level crossings. There are two sites between Townsville and Charters Towers. A site will be at Gatton, another at Dalby and another at Rosewood. That is important technology. We have about 2,000 open level crossings. We are looking at those trials to begin soon. Once the trials are completed, we will select one of those technologies and look to start rolling it out across the state.

To answer the question from the member for Ipswich West, this government is committed to improving safety at level crossings. We have done more than any government in the past on this issue. It is an important issue. Last year we had four hundred near misses, 157 of which involved pedestrians. We are committed to improving safety at level crossings.

Commission of Audit, Health Services

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to page 23 of the Costello report executive summary, which discusses increasing the private sector contestability of clinical and nonclinical health services. I ask: will the Premier rule out using the secret Costello recommendations to privatise pathology and pharmacy services in public hospitals?

Mr NEWMAN: Again I thank the honourable member for the question. I am delighted to answer questions about the Commission of Audit report, because it sets out a very clear picture of the problems that this government was left by the former Labor government, some members of which now sit opposite as a forlorn little band that wants to pretend they did not create the huge debt and they did not leave us with fiscal chaos and, perhaps more importantly, a completely dysfunctional public service structure with a lack of coordination, cooperation and teamwork across all the agencies of the state government, which we are going to fix.

As to the Costello report being secret, it is so secret that they have asked a number of questions where they quote from the executive summary. It is so secret that I have said time and time again, until the cows come home almost, that it will be in this place by the end of the month, and guess what? We are going to spend a whole parliamentary session talking about it. They can ask us even more questions then. They can ask lots more questions. They can maintain the rage on Labor Day. They can get together and sing their songs. They can hold hands. They can come down here and wave their posters. They can carry on like pork chops. At the end of the day, we are going to deliver for Queenslanders. We are not going to be held back by the fact that they are stuck in the past and they do not have the honesty to talk frankly and debate us about the issues.


In relation to the outsourcing of clinical and non-clinical services, that is in the highly non-secret health blueprint that the Minister for Health and I launched a few weeks ago. Rather than those opposite spending their time reviewing the report, they criticised it for one reason or another; they criticised that we actually had a plan for health. There will be a lot more that we will be talking about.

A great example of a service that could be delivered by the private sector right across Queensland is hospital in the home. There are many dedicated registered nurses, men and women, in big cities, regional towns and remote parts of Queensland who could provide a great service to people where they live. Rather than them coming into hospitals for a blood transfusion, which is far more costly, we have a vision and health professionals have a vision to take that service to the home. It saves money. It is a real win. It is convenient. It is less traumatic on older people. What a great way to go. Why should that be delivered in-house by Queensland Health if the private sector can do it? It is ultimately about better health services for Queenslanders. That is what we stand for.

Madam SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Plan, Further Answer to Question

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (11.00 am), by leave: Honourable members will recall a few minutes ago during question time that there was a bit of interplay between me and the member for Mackay about comments that I made suggesting that the opposition, and particularly the member for Mackay, did not support the summit being held in Mackay. I think it is very important for the standards of this place and for its representation that we are scrupulous with the truth. I am about to table some of the comments of the opposition in this regard.

I have two articles. The first one is an AAP story dated Tuesday, 26 February 2013, date stamped 4.11 pm. I will read extracts from that article. It states—

Brisbane, Feb 26 AAP

The Queensland opposition says Premier Campbell Newman is too scared to hold his “future” summit in the southeast ...
It further goes on to state—

The opposition says Mr Newman should have held the summit in the southeast, but couldn't handle the feedback over mass job cuts ...

Blah, blah, blah. The next paragraph states—

Deputy Labor leader Tim Mulherin says the Bligh government conducted six months of consultation ...

It is clear to me. Perhaps there is an alternative explanation that Tim Mulherin, the member for Mackay, was one of the spokespeople on that day who said that—

Mr Mulherin: I didn't say it.

Mr NEWMAN: I will take his interjection. He said that he did not say it. Where was the correcting press statement saying that AAP had got it wrong—that it should be held in Mackay and they supported it. I will read it again. It states—

The opposition says Mr Newman should have held the summit in the southeast ...

The only Labor member quoted in this story is the member for Mackay. I table the first document.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 26 February 2013, to Scott Whitby titled 'Qld: Mixed reactions to summit on Qld's future' [2458].

There is a second article so maybe we will give him the benefit of the doubt. There was another spokesperson around that day, but I do not know whether it improves the position. This article is from the *Daily Mercury* in Mackay dated 27 February. It states—

Campbell Newman's decision to host The Queensland Plan Initiative summit in Mackay on May 10 has been labelled a "joke" by Bundamba MP Jo-Ann Miller.

For the record, the member for Bundamba just took a bow in the chamber.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs Miller: That's right.

Mr NEWMAN: She still thinks going to Mackay is a joke. How do they trivialise such things?

Mrs Miller: A stunt.

Mr NEWMAN: I will take that interjection: going to Mackay is a stunt.

Mrs Miller: Yep!

Mr NEWMAN: And she just confirmed it by saying yes. The article continues—

Ms Miller has criticised the Premier's decision to host the summit in Mackay.

"He's holding it in Mackay because the pensioners and other people won't be able to afford to get there ...

Blah, blah, blah. We are taking the delegates there. I table this article as well.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Daily Mercury*, dated 27 February 2013, titled 'Welcome decision: the Queensland plan initiative: State summit comes to city' [2459].

For the record, the Australian Labor Party on the day that we announced that this summit would be in Mackay ridiculed the announcement, bagged it, said it should not happen, said it should be in South-East Queensland.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The member for Mackay continues to interject and says he is deeply and personally offended. I challenge him to make a personal explanation and provide a transcript of the press conference that he attended. We keep transcripts of our press conferences. Deliver your transcript to the House at some stage to demonstrate that you did support it being in Mackay. Truth should be upheld in this place. Debates should be conducted on a high level—

Mr MULHERIN: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. I have referred this to you for your consideration to be referred to the Ethics Committee. I have given you the information around all public statements I have made in relation to this, including audio.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. Has the Premier finished his ministerial statement?

Mr NEWMAN: No.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Allow me to wind up. This is the trouble with the Australian Labor Party. They play fast and loose with the truth. They did it in the state election and they do it today.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Since they are interjecting and continuing on there is another matter that involves the former racing minister of this state that I might deal with today as well.

Recently there have been articles in the media, specifically the *Courier-Mail*, about the activities of the former board of Racing Queensland. I will read into the record some of an article dated 16 April. It states—

Some former directors of Racing Queensland Ltd, including Bob Bentley and Labor heavyweight Bill Ludwig, could face criminal charges or a ban from operating on other boards in the wake of a forensic audit into the organisation's financial processes.

The Courier-Mail understands that the draft report by the accountancy firm Deloitte raises concerns about the board's handling of major building contracts following allegations \$150 million in contracts was awarded to an engineering firm without first going to tender.

Investigations by the Crime and Misconduct Commission and ASIC are continuing into the board's approval of new employment contracts for four executives which led to \$1.9 million in payouts after they quit following last year's state election.

We know those contracts were awarded just prior to the election. The point is this: this government organised a forensic audit of Queensland Racing.

Government members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: This government, to take their interjections, has arranged for a forensic audit of this—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr NEWMAN: This government has fully investigated every allegation—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr NEWMAN:—surrounding the member for Redcliffe. What investigations I ask the House were instigated by the former minister for racing who has had a lot to say today? What did he do? Perhaps we should have an investigation that is a bit broader than the current one into what he did or, more importantly, did not do as the minister for racing as serious allegations of impropriety were swirling around Queensland Racing. He cannot say.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I heard the member for Mackay clearly say it was an organisation set up under the Corporations Law. Guess what, though? It sounds a bit like the little situation at Redcliffe, doesn't it? But we had that investigated. When these allegations—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: We have, to take the interjection. When the allegations around Queensland Racing were made in 2011 and 2012—and there were lots in the media—what did the then minister do? I say that he did nothing. That is the difference.

Ms Palaszczuk: And what are you doing about Scott Driscoll—absolutely nothing!

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms Palaszczuk: This is a diversion.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition! I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I will take the Leader of the Opposition's interjection. No, this is not a diversion. This is the difference between those opposite and this team over here. When allegations are made we investigate. When things are not being done properly we deal with them. When we have an inefficient, bloated bureaucracy we take action. When there is a need to provide the best possible health service in the nation we are going to go and make it happen. We are going to have better education in our schools through having great teachers who are well prepared and well trained. We will do that, unlike those opposite who ran this state into the ground and never dealt with things like the things I have covered today. I table these articles.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 16 April 2013, titled 'Former directors of Racing Queensland Limited could face charges or bans from board positions following financial audit' [2460].

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, undated, titled 'Major racing work did not go to tender' [2461].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Clerk to read the next order of the day, I wish to acknowledge schools visiting today: Ferny Hills State School in the electorate of Ferny Grove and St Agatha's Primary School in the electorate of Clayfield.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (11.09 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 26 of the Finance and Administration Committee, titled *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2012 and Review of Lobbyists Code of Conduct*, tabled on 27 March 2013.

Firstly, my thanks go to the Finance and Administration Committee secretariat—Ms Deborah Jeffrey, Dr Maggie Lilith, Mrs Marilyn Freeman and Ms Lynette Whelan—and all members, both past and present, of the Finance and Administration Committee. The committee has oversight responsibilities with respect to the Integrity Commissioner and his office under the Integrity Act. The Integrity Commissioner is also required to consult with the committee regarding the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The purpose of report No. 26 is to inform the parliament regarding these responsibilities.

The Integrity Commissioner has made a number of changes to the Lobbyists Code of Conduct subsequent to the passage of the Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012 through the parliament. The Integrity Commissioner has included additional provisions relating to the publication of the information provided to him. The committee disagreed with some aspects of the proposal and sought his reconsideration of these issues.

The committee is also concerned that the definition of 'lobbyist' is too narrowly focused and does not include up to 80 per cent of those who lobby government. The committee considers that the definition of who is a lobbyist needs to be expanded to incorporate paid in-house lobbyists of both corporations and associations, including industry and non-profit organisations.

The committee found that there are a number of additional areas that require review in order to ensure that the act is best practice. The committee has recommended that a review of the act be completed. I thank the Integrity Commissioner and his office for their assistance. I also thank those who provided submissions to the Integrity Commissioner regarding the review.

As stated earlier, the committee recommends that the Integrity Commissioner reconsider his proposal to publish the client names and the purpose of the meetings, as part of the review of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The committee is of the view that either the client names or the purpose of the meeting be published, but not both. Sadly it appears that the Integrity Commissioner has chosen to ignore the committee's recommendations. I fear that, as a result, there will be unintended consequences. I fear that this important industry will suffer significantly as a result of the Integrity Commissioner's decision.

Section 68 of the act stipulates that the Integrity Commissioner may, after consultation with the parliamentary committee, approve a Lobbyists Code of Conduct which must be published on the Integrity Commissioner's website. Lobbyists are required to comply with the code. The purpose of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct is to provide standards of conduct for lobbyists designed to ensure that contact between lobbyists and government representatives and opposition representatives is carried out in accordance with public expectations of transparency and integrity.


In mid-December 2012, the Integrity Commissioner outlined in his letter to registered lobbyists the amendments he proposed to make at that time to the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The Integrity Commissioner proposed to seek a great deal of information from lobbyists—indeed the proposal was quite over the top. As a result of feedback, the Integrity Commissioner now requires the information that is to be provided for each lobbying contact as follows: the name of the registered lobbyist; whether in arranging the contact the lobbyist complied with requirements of 3.2 of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct and, if relevant, 3.3; the date of the lobbying contact; the client of the lobbyist; the title and/or name of the government or opposition representative present; and the purpose of the contact.

As committee chair, I am disappointed in this decision by the Integrity Commissioner and hope that between now and 1 May he chooses to follow the committee's recommendation—that is, to either publish the client's name or the purpose of the contact, but not both.

A further two recommendations made by the committee are as follows: firstly, the committee recommends that the Integrity Act be amended to include paid in-house lobbyists of both corporations and associations. This may go some way to offset the draconian decision made by the Integrity Commissioner. The committee also recommends that a review of the Integrity Act 2009 be completed and include examination of a number of other topics as outlined in the report.

We have a long way to go before what I regard as a level playing field is in place when it comes to the lobbying industry, an important industry that essentially has a role to assist business to inform government of the views of the marketplace. To single out third party lobbyists or lobbying firms who represent around 20 per cent of the market is both unjust and a detriment in that it is likely to cause some to go underground with regard to the way they conduct their activities. It will open things up to trawling and most certainly disadvantage business enterprises that cannot afford in-house lobbyists. I commend the report to the House.

(Time expired)

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.15 am): I rise to speak on report No. 26 of the Finance and Administration Committee which covers the work of the Integrity Commissioner, the Lobbyists Code of Conduct and the government's recent changes to the Integrity Act. On behalf of the opposition, I would like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Coomera, and all the other members of the committee for their genuine bipartisan approach that they adopted when considering these integrity issues.

As we are all aware, issues involving integrity and lobbying have been prominent in the first 12 months of the Newman government. Even a cursory glance of ministerial diaries reveals that lobbyists such as LNP powerbroker Santo Santoro have been quite active among government ranks since the election in March 2012. I genuinely believe that the committee has risen above the politics of these issues to make three recommendations to the government in relation to lobbying and integrity.

The first recommendation relates to the government's new system whereby lobbyists will record interactions with government and opposition representatives through the Integrity Commissioner. This recommendation is, I believe, a practical compromise between the need for openness and transparency when it comes to lobbying activities and existing legislation relating to privacy and information. Certainly, given that ministers are responsible for public moneys, there is a need for a high level of scrutiny regarding who is influencing their decision making.


My view, which is not foreign to some people in this chamber, is that there should be no real need for lobbyists. A government should be open and accessible to the people it is elected to serve. However, the reality is that a market exists for people and companies with expertise in lobbying activities, and we must have a framework to ensure the public interest is protected, along with an organisation's interests.

This leads me to the second recommendation to include in-house lobbyists in Queensland's regulatory regime. I must say that, if the government ever did adopt this recommendation, it must ensure that the Integrity Commissioner is appropriately resourced. The extra demands placed on the Office of the Integrity Commissioner by including in-house lobbyists would require a significant injection of funding and staffing. There is no point adopting this measure if the Newman government is not prepared to properly resource the Integrity Commissioner for both monitoring and compliance.

The issue of monitoring and compliance is also an element of the third recommendation of the committee, which involves a broader review of the Integrity Act. Through this review process, the committee has identified a number of areas where the regulatory regime regarding lobbying could possibly be improved or strengthened. This includes such things as sanctions for certain types of breaches of the legislation, the investigative powers of the Integrity Commissioner, the definitions of a 'lobbyist' and 'lobbying activity', and post-separation employment restrictions. Obviously, possible changes to the elements in this recommendation would depend on the government's view on the two other recommendations. But I would particularly like to see the government move to clarify the definition of a 'lobbying activity'. The committee has expressed its willingness to assist the executive with this review, and I urge the government to adopt this recommendation.

I would also like to add that, in my view, the Integrity Commissioner should continue to attend estimates committee hearings each year. While it may, at times, seem like a waste of time for senior government officials to attend these hearings each year, particularly if they are not asked any questions, I can reassure them that it is not. The people of Queensland are happy for senior officials to give up a little bit of their time each year to ensure expenditure and performance of government agencies can be scrutinised. Our estimates committee process may not be perfect, but exempting senior officials from scrutiny would be a backward step.

To conclude, as deputy chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, I want to again thank members of the committee, as well as the committee secretariat, for their efforts in compiling this report. I also want to thank the Integrity Commissioner, Dr David Solomon, for meeting with the committee and providing his candid views on the integrity regime in Queensland. I commend the report to the House.

 **Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP)** (11.18 am): I, too, would like to speak to this motion that the House take note of this particular report. I would like to say at the outset that this is a very constructive committee from both sides of parliament that would perhaps belie some of the stereotypes out in the community about how politicians from different parties or Independents can work together. I would like to thank the staff of the committee, and I would like to thank the Integrity Commissioner and his very small staff, because we did impose a big work burden on them. This report draws attention to the role of the Integrity Commissioner and canvasses some issues that would see a substantial increase and/or variation in his role, and of course it deals principally with the review of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct.


It extends the requirements for lobby registers to the opposition, and it deals with the meaning of a third-party client. This is pretty critical to getting a workable system for transparency around lobbying. It deals, in particular, with what must be reported to the Integrity Commissioner and how that is published, and it no doubt puts a great deal more onus onto lobbyists. The chairman of the committee, the member for Coomera, dealt with those matters which are dealt with on page 11 of the report.

If we continue with a system where this only applies to third-party clients—organisations like trade unions, environment groups and industry groups are not required to be lobbyists, nor are large corporations that have their lobbying component in-house, as none of them are required to report currently—and we put more of a public onus on the 20 per cent that are registered lobbyists, we will have a system that is not workable. This is an inconsistent approach if we go ahead with it, and that is the reason the committee has made some of the statements that it has.

Last year we saw public debate centred on something as basic as what is lobbying. This is dealt with in 2.11 of the committee's report, but it is apparent that the media is certainly still not clear about what is lobbying. If you look at some of the comments in the report, this has even flowed through to some lobbyists who clearly do not understand the definition of what is lobbying. What we saw last year could even be described as a circus, where every casual encounter on the street, every administrative or minor e-mail or phone call, every function that a minister attended suddenly became lobbying without recognition of the critical ingredient that makes it lobbying—and that is that it is a contact in an effort to influence government policy, contracts et cetera.

I notice that Santo Santoro was mentioned by the Manager of Opposition Business. If I bump into Terry Mackenroth on the street, it is not a lobbying contact unless he is seeking to influence government policy, and any intelligent debate needs to be framed around this. Most of the matters discussed in the report were about what matters are to be disclosed. If we continue with a system where 80 per cent of lobbying is exempt from disclosure but lobbying firms—the remaining 20 per cent of lobbying—must disclose the details of their clients et cetera, we will actually go backwards because the firms seeking to influence government policy will go to industry groups, environment groups, set up community action groups or use a union. We would be foolish to think that construction or building firms did not have contacts or influence in parts of the union movement. They would set up somebody who would voluntarily lobby for them because that is not captured under the present provisions, and we will end up with a system that is even more opaque than the one we have at the present time or they will simply seek private influence in other ways.

It is not fashionable to say that the lobbying industry serves a valuable service, but it does. It is difficult, particularly for small and medium enterprises, to get their view across to government and to work out how government works. This is an important industry and it is important that we get this right. I commend this report to the House.


 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.23 am): On 27 March 2013 the Finance and Administration Committee tabled its report No. 26, *Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2012 and review of Lobbyists Code of Conduct*. Although honourable members have talked about the bipartisan approach this committee took, I note that the Manager of Opposition Business used the opportunity in this debate to have a crack at the LNP government and some people involved in politics in Queensland. Let me respond to that. I was not going to politicise the report but having been given the opportunity and a slap in the face by the member for Mulgrave I will respond accordingly.

I would really like to know how many times Bill Ludwig, for instance, met with the Labor Party ministry during their term in office. But guess what? They cannot find their lobbyists register. They were put into archive boxes and no-one is any the wiser. No-one can find their lobbyists register. The honourable member opposite who criticises the LNP was a minister of the Crown who now cannot find his lobbyists register. Was it an administrative oversight of his office? Where is the lobbyists register of the member for Mulgrave, a former minister of the Crown? I would dearly like to know how many times and on which occasions the militant thugs in the unions in Queensland met with Labor Party ministers, but they cannot find the register. This is coming from an opposition which when in government set up this whole integrity process. It set up this process—this muddled, inconceivable, confusing process of a lobbyist register in Queensland. The Labor Party set it up and it cannot even abide by its own laws.

The government will respond accordingly to the recommendations of this report in the future. It is no secret—and I mentioned this in this House, particularly when I moved some amendments last year—that these lobbyist rules in Queensland are confusing to everybody concerned. They are so confusing, as I said, that the former government which introduced it cannot find any of its lobbyist registers and will not put them forward into the public domain. This government in the short space of 12 months has introduced for the first time in an Australian jurisdiction the tabling of ministerial diaries. The Premier has introduced the tabling of ministerial diaries so people can see third parties we are meeting with on a daily basis as we table them each month. I have amended the RTI Act to say that when an RTI application is given to the requisite applicant it is released to the world at large. Not only do we give the applicant who paid for the RTI application all the documents associated with it; we release it at exactly the same time to the world at large so every Queenslanders has an opportunity to have a look at it.

We also have the open data website—another first in this country. Queensland is leading the way, but I hasten to add that with respect to lobbying activities and the code of conduct I made it abundantly clear when I introduced legislation to amend the act last year that the government's intention was for ministers not to keep a lobbyist register. If a lobbyist conducts a meeting with a minister, then the lobbyist will keep the register. What we see now is a more bureaucratic document with guidelines about to be issued, if the Integrity Commissioner has his way, which state that not only will the lobbyist tell us who they are meeting but we will publish the details every month. That was never the intention. The intention was that the register is there so that if the Integrity Commissioner has concerns he or she can have a look at the register. But the Integrity Commissioner's intention is to release all this information again to the world at large despite the fact that registers will be required to be kept, ministers are releasing their diaries, people have open and accessible information to government data and the RTI Act has been amended so people can see every application that has been administered.

I do have concerns with respect to the code of conduct that has been issued by the Integrity Commissioner. I think the confusing aspect of it is that it is not engrained in legislation. Any Integrity Commissioner at any period of time can just amend the code of conduct and we have a different applicable law. Ken Smith, the former DG, could not work it out when he issued a directive in the former government. They said that you have to keep the registers but you do not have to keep the contact registers. By the way, an e-mail is probably not a contact. It is a confusing nightmare that we will eventually sort out. I do thank the committee for looking at this issue.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (11.28 am): I rise today to inform the House of a report prepared by the Finance and Administration Committee. The committee oversees the office of the Integrity Commissioner and consults with the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the Integrity Act 2009 and the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The Lobbyists Code of Conduct contributes to the regulation of contact between lobbyists and state government representatives in accordance with the public's expectations of transparency and integrity.

The Integrity Commissioner performs an integral role by being responsible, among other things, for giving written advice to designated persons on ethics and integrity issues and for maintaining the lobbyists register and registering new lobbyists. However, since the passing of the Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012, the Integrity Commissioner has made a series of changes to the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The committee is opposed to some of these changes and is seeking a review of the issues, particularly those pertaining to the definition of 'lobbyist' and to the publication of information provided by the Integrity Commissioner from registered lobbyists.


The Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Bill 2012 was introduced to improve transparency and integrity in the Queensland government as demanded by our communities. It has been stated that you can drive a truck through the existing code, and I believe that the review does not come close to closing this gap, meeting the community expectations or creating a fair and just playing field for all.

The committee has reservations about the definition of a lobbyist and believes that up to 80 per cent of those who currently lobby the government are not included in the definition. The current definition notably excludes paid in-house lobbyists of both corporations and associations whether these are from industry or the not-for-profit sector. The committee is of the opinion that it is not sufficient to limit regulation to relatively few lobbyists who are third party professional lobbyists. Lobbyists, whether external or in-house, should be required to operate in the same transparent environment governed by the same set of regulations.

The committee has also asked the Integrity Commissioner to reconsider his proposal to publish the client names of registered lobbyists and the purpose of the meeting as part of the review of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The committee is of the view that either the client names or the purpose of the meeting be published but not both. Under the Information Privacy Act 2009 there was provision to protect commercially confidential information from being subject to right to information requests. However, during consultation with registered lobbyists in January this year many submissions expressed concern that the proposed operation of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct—and especially the requirement that information received from a registered lobbyist be made public by the Integrity Commissioner—would erode existing third party rights. In addition, right to information provisions dictate that a number of pieces of information in question, such as the name of the client of the lobbyist, the purpose and outcome of the meeting, should not be released or should be subject to a series of tests before the release. Given that 80 per cent of lobbying is undertaken by non-registered lobbyists, in the interests of fairness to the registered lobbyists the committee does not consider that client information should be published. Additionally, the committee recommends a review of the sanctions imposed on parties who act as third party lobbyists but are not registered.

On behalf of the Finance and Administration Committee, I would like to thank those who made submissions to the Integrity Commissioner during his review of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The committee is appreciative of their willingness to allow the committee to consider their comments as part of this report. I would also like to thank the secretariat for the work that they have completed in producing this report.

The committee has also found a number of areas that need to be reviewed in order to ensure the Integrity Act 2009 is best practice. To that end, the committee has recommended a review of the act be undertaken. I would like to encourage all members, particularly ministers, to take the time to review this report. Ask yourself: does this meet the community expectations of open and transparent government? I would also like to personally commend the ministers for releasing their diaries. This is definitely a step forward in open and accountable government.

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (11.33 am): Firstly, I would like to thank the chair and the committee for a very interesting debate on this proposal. I found it quite fascinating. I especially give great thanks to the secretariat. It never ceases to amaze me how hard they work.

In analysing the proposed changes, the committee sought to attain a balance between transparency and fairness. The committee was also aware of the fact that registered lobbyists encompass only a small proportion of those who lobby government, which is approximately 20 per cent. The committee considered that transparency could be achieved by revealing that the contact took place rather than the intimate details of that contact. The committee, therefore, recommended that section 4 be amended to state that only certain prescribed details will be published on the Integrity Commissioner's website.

Unfortunately in our opinion, the Integrity Commissioner's response was against what we had recommended. He advised that there were a number of difficulties with the recommendation to remove item No. 4(e), which requires the name of the client of the lobbyist. Our committee respectfully disagreed with that. The committee considered that the publication of client information will impact on registered lobbyists and their clients and may lead to clients seeking to influence government in other ways. Therefore, our recommendation, as has previously been stated, is that the Integrity Commissioner reconsider his proposal to publish the client names and the purpose of the meetings as part of the review of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct. The committee is of the view that either the client names or the purpose of the meeting be published but not both.

The definition of a lobbyist was given a great deal of consideration. We were told that the definition of a lobbyist in the Integrity Act is as follows—

A **lobbyist** is an entity that carries out a lobbying activity for a third party client or whose employees or contractors carry out a lobbying activity for a third party client.

When considering the proposed revision of the Lobbyists Code of Conduct, the committee found that all submissions, except one, also expressed serious concerns about the existing definition of a lobbyist, which currently precludes in-house lobbyists. The Integrity Commissioner also expressed concerns about the current scope of the Integrity Act 2009 stating—

In relation to the definition of a lobbyist, I think there are a lot of things wrong with it. The present definition, as I have complained, really catches only about 20 per cent of the people who actually lobby and I do not think that that provides the accountability that the Act seeks to give.

One other submitter stated—

There is no difference between an external government relations consultant or other professional adviser and those who are engaged 'in house' by companies and other organisations (such as industry peak bodies and not-for-profit groups), yet the Code currently applies to only a small proportion of government's engagement with government relations professionals.

Submissions agreed that all professional lobbyists, whether external or in-house, should be required to operate in the same transparent environment governed by the same set of regulations. Dr Solomon identified that the main complaint of registered lobbyists is that the proposed changes will only affect third party lobbyists. He advised that, based on what happens in Canada, the third party lobbyists represent about a fifth of all lobbying that actually goes on. The Canadian Lobbying Act defines this by three different kinds, that is, the consultant lobbyist, an in-house lobbyist for corporations and an in-house lobbyist for organisations. So our second recommendation is that the Integrity Act 2009 be amended to include paid in-house lobbyists of both corporations and associations. Thirdly, we talked about the definition of a lobbying activity, which I will have to leave for one of my other colleagues to describe because I am now out of time.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (11.38 am): I move—

That the House takes note of report No. 90 of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee tabled on 5 April 2013.

The history of these events is well documented: from the advice on 5 March 2013 by the CMC that two pressing matters had emerged—the destruction of original Fitzgerald inquiry documents and the release of other sensitive inquiry documents—the committee's immediate response to that information; and the resolution of this parliament passed on Friday, 8 March, which further defined the committee's investigation. This resolution required the committee to report by 5 April 2013. By any measure, the committee's task was large and particularly so within the time frame available to it.

The format for this inquiry was unprecedented in Queensland and, if not unique, rare in Westminster democracies. We appreciated the opportunity given by the Legislative Assembly to utilise this new format of inquiry and found that it worked well. The committee held 14 public hearings at which evidence from 31 witnesses was received and spent many more days in private deliberation considering evidence, compiling the report and formulating recommendations. As detailed in the committee's report, some witnesses clearly wished to assist the committee in the inquiry. Some did not, and the committee found those people to be neither reliable nor credible witnesses.

The committee made 22 findings and 24 recommendations relating to the circumstances relevant to the release of the documents, the prevention of any further release of sensitive documents held by the CMC and other matters which the committee determined it would report on under the terms of reference. In relation to the release and destruction of the Fitzgerald inquiry documents, the committee has made recommendations that will go some way to protect those persons who bravely provided information to the Fitzgerald inquiry. I acknowledge that on Tuesday this week the House passed an amendment to section 346A of the Crime and Misconduct Act which will extend the protective legislation while the government considers the committee's report.

The committee has also recommended that schemes be considered which will allow appropriate and controlled access to the non-sensitive Fitzgerald inquiry documents through an amendment to the Right to Information Act 2009 or by the CMC adopting an appropriate scheme modelled on the RTI Act principles, exemptions and considerations.

The release of the Fitzgerald inquiry documents was known by senior officers and the chair of the CMC in May 2012. I am confident that, had the committee been informed at that time, it could have ensured the matter was appropriately corrected and the damage limited. This failure to report to the committee highlights the problems with section 329, which currently requires the CMC chair to only report to the committee where they suspect improper conduct. The committee has recommended changes to section 329 of the Crime and Misconduct Act to impose an obligation on the CMC chair to report more broadly to the committee, along with matters they consider constitute improper conduct.


The committee also made recommendations that, if adopted, would result in the restructure of the CMC to better serve the organisation as it operates today. The committee considered that this inquiry highlighted the need for a CEO to ensure effective management while retaining the current legislative profile of the chairperson. It is envisaged that the CEO would act as a director-general, reporting to the commission as a whole.

The committee acknowledges and embraces change that flowed from this inquiry in relation to its oversight of the CMC. The committee looks forward to holding public hearings with the CMC, the first of which since the report will be held on 3 May, and will report to the House on its determinations in relation to complaints it has considered without compromising the necessary protection of individuals.

The committee has, because of time constraints, made recommendations for further investigation of certain important matters. One such investigation is to determine whether disciplinary or legislative breaches have occurred as a result of the matters considered during the inquiry.

As stated in my chair's foreword, the committee's inquiry would have been a painful process for the CMC. I reiterate that the process was necessary. There is very great support for the CMC to continue its vital role in Queensland. The challenge for the CMC and its individual officers is to learn from the inquiry reform and move forward as a better institution. I believe that the committee's recommendations will assist in that growth.

I acknowledge the assistance given to the committee by Mr Peter Davis SC, acting parliamentary commissioner, and Dr Kerri Mellifont, counsel assisting. The research into and collation of a significant quantity of documents and information could not have been done without the tireless work of an expanded committee secretariat—Neil Laurie, Stephen Finnimore, Mitchell Kunde, Amanda Honeyman, Peter Rogers, Gail Easton, Melissa Cook and Lyn Whelan—and staff across Hansard, the attendants, Property Services, IT and others. Thank you. I commend the committee for their commitment and commend the committee's report to the House.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.43 am): I am pleased to speak to this report, which over the past six weeks has consumed quite a lot of my time and the time of a number of other members in this House. I start by commenting on the unprecedented nature of the inquiry conducted by the PCMC. I acknowledge the work of the chair and all those who participated as elected representatives in this process. I particularly acknowledge and thank the parliamentary staff, as already listed by the member for Gladstone, for all their work. I particularly thank the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, and Ms Amanda Honeyman, Mr Stephen Finnimore, Mr Peter Rogers, Ms Sharon Hunter, Ms Gail Easton and Ms Melissa Cook.

I also acknowledge and thank the acting parliamentary commissioner, Peter Davis SC, and counsel assisting, Dr Kerri Mellifont SC, for their expert assistance. Their efforts over the month of the inquiry can be described as nothing less than herculean. We had significant amounts of documents to


analyse. We had testimony given at over 42 hours of hearings. It was quite significant and I want to commend them for all of their effort and particularly for having worked, I think, 24/7 for over four weeks.

As one of its signatories, I do want to draw the attention of the House to the statement of reservation and particularly some of the concerns contained therein. It is not to detract from the whole of the report, but we do raise significant issues in relation to the process. There was a significant amount of work, testimony and documents to get through, and I felt that we had run out of time. Requests to extend the inquiry—as the Callinan and Aroney inquiry had been extended—were not received with, I think, a due level of consideration. In terms of due diligence and appropriate investigation of much of the evidence and the documentation, I put on the record that it was given a disservice because of the lack of time.

Some of the assertions contained in the report are of significant concern to those members who did sign the statement of reservation. There are many assertions in the report that cannot be based in an exercise of cross-examination of the documents, nor evidence given by the witnesses. Suggestions that this incident—in relation to the release and destruction of some Fitzgerald commission of inquiry documents—is emblematic of the culture of governance within the CMC just cannot be substantiated in fact, and the committee could not do that across the whole of the agency. I draw the attention of the chamber to that.

The biggest issue is obviously the politicisation of this investigation and, in fact, the politicisation of the role of the CMC in Queensland democracy currently. Before the facts had even been established—before the investigation had even commenced—we had members opposite out there calling for blood. Before any of the evidence could be tested we had those opposite calling for heads to roll. This is in stark contrast to the way they treat their own. I acknowledge that mistakes were made at the CMC, but did those mistakes at any point outweigh all of the good work the CMC has done or will continue to do in this state? Not at all.

Also, some of the intemperate and immature comments that came from those opposite in the chamber in relation to Mr Ross Martin, the former chair of the CMC, were completely and utterly disrespectful. Someone who has given so many decades of service to this state in terms of the provision of justice, in terms of prosecuting criminals, deserved a better hearing and better due process than he got from those opposite. But we all know that those opposite are merely out to restrict the powers of the CMC. Those opposite say one thing and do another. Quite frankly, Queenslanders will judge them on that and they will judge them harshly.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.49 am): I can understand why the member for South Brisbane said what she said, because she has such a link to the CMC. I need not remind members that during the 2012 state election campaign the member for South Brisbane used the CMC as a political football, so I can understand why the member for South Brisbane—

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. I find that lie offensive and I ask it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I ask the Attorney if he would withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: Prior to withdrawal, I make the point to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the member for South Brisbane—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think it would help—

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. The member for South Brisbane was the deputy state secretary of the Australian Labor Party Queensland division. The Queensland division of the Labor Party made complaints to the CMC during the election campaign. I suggest that the member for South Brisbane knew all about it.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. That is untrue and that is offensive and I ask it to be withdrawn.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, was the member not the deputy state secretary of the Labor Party?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am struggling to understand what part of it the member for South Brisbane finds offensive.

Ms TRAD: The Attorney-General has asserted that the ALP made complaints during the last state election to the CMC, and it did not.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not believe that that is a personal imputation.

Ms TRAD: No, no.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Attorney-General has—

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry; is there a further point of order?

Ms TRAD: It is a personal imputation and I ask it to be withdrawn. It is offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have ruled that I do not believe that was a personal imputation, from what I heard, in terms of yourself personally.

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, what he has said—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Attorney to take his seat.

Ms TRAD: His statement is because I was an office holder and because the organisation made complaints—which it did not—I have been using the CMC. That is untrue and I ask for it to be withdrawn because it is offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, I did not hear in terms of the personal imputations and I have made a ruling on that. If there are further statements that are made that you find offensive, then I will take your points of order. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I submit to you that the member for South Brisbane has made certain personal reflections on your good standing today in this House.

I hit a nerve with the member for South Brisbane. I hit a nerve, because when we talk about the CMC the member for South Brisbane knows all too well about the CMC. She comes into this place and defends the indefensible on the CMC former chair's own admission. The member for South Brisbane comes in here and defends the indefensible. You cannot keep doing what the member for South Brisbane does. I would have thought that, if anything, the Callinan and Aroney report that I tabled today and the PCMC report that we are debating would have shed some light for the Labor Party on the inner workings of the CMC. But it has not—because the Labor Party thinks the CMC should be a body not accountable to anyone, not accountable to the people of Queensland, only accountable to Labor Party political tactics. We on this side of the House do not believe that. We believe in an independent, strong watchdog. These reforms that we are noting from the PCMC and that the Hon. Ian Callinan has suggested will ensure that Queensland has the best and the most independent and accountable crime-fighting watchdog in this state. In due course the government will officially respond to the recommendations in this report. We will also respond to the Callinan report.

I want to quote what the opposition leader said at the time I moved the motion in this House for the PCMC to look at this issue. The member for South Brisbane is taking very much personal offence today at the suggestion that the CMC should not be above reproach—personal objection. But her own leader said in this House—

I now address the current situation involving the unauthorised release of sensitive documents. It is clear that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. It is clear we need to consider swift action if people's wellbeing or personal safety is at risk. It is clear we need a detailed explanation from the CMC ... about the circumstances that led us to be engaged in this debate tonight.


Her leader further said—

We deserve to know what went wrong and how it can be stopped from ever happening again in our state. The people of Queensland deserve a clear explanation if we are to maintain confidence in the process of our corruption watchdog.

I would like to say that it was me who said that—it was very similar to what I said—but it was not. It was the Leader of the Opposition! The member for South Brisbane's boss said those comments. But the member for South Brisbane in her contribution today has basically rejected the submission from her own Leader of the Labor Party, and we know why. We know why the member for South Brisbane is doing that: she has ambitions, she has ambitions to fulfil that role.

I have made some pretty clear statements both in here and in the public domain: one, the LNP wants an independent, strong watchdog; two, we will work very well and closely with the PCMC. If I did not have confidence in the PCMC, I would not have moved a motion in this House giving it all the power to conduct a public inquiry—the first, as I understand it, that has been done in this House, in this instance by the PCMC. I thank the Independent chair, Liz Cunningham, for the work that she did and the tireless hours she and other committee members put in to that report. If anything, we have shown, as I have said all along, that opening up the PCMC to this sort of public debate was great and a great part of democracy has been displayed in the last six weeks. I look forward now to working with the PCMC as we look at reforming this organisation to ensure that it is a modern, crime-fighting organisation in Queensland but that is accountable once and for all to the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (11.55 am): Today I rise in commending report No. 90 of the PCMC, *Inquiry into the Crime and Misconduct Commission's release and destruction of Fitzgerald inquiry documents*. I begin by thanking the Attorney-General, Jarrod Bleijie, for moving the motion which triggered a chain of events—most of which were historic, as has been outlined, and many that set a precedent. The workload undertaken by the committee was absolutely tremendous, and I commend all committee members and everyone associated with that. One of the historic things was actually having both chambers sitting simultaneously. That is the first time since 1922. I also recognise the role that the chair played in the meetings.

Mr Rickuss: You were almost the upper house.

Mr DOWLING: We were almost the upper house; I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. I also recognise the staff and the outstanding job that they did in presenting the report and going through the volumes of information that we had to process. I place on record the roles of Mr Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament; Mr Stephen Finnimore, Committee Office Manager; Ms Amanda Honeyman, Acting Research Director; Mr Peter Rogers, Principal Research Officer; Ms Sharon Hunter, Principal Research Officer; Mrs Gail Easton, Executive Assistant; Ms Melissa Cook, Executive Assistant; plus the small army of people who toiled on this between 12 and 18 hours almost every day. Easter came and went for many of us, but not for the group working on that committee. I extend my personal thanks to them for their efforts.

Turning to the report, there were days and days of public hearings and we found that the evidence could best be described as vague and incomplete by many who presented to us. Total recall would not be the way that we could describe the evidence given. We found poor governance and 'I don't recall' actually being quite possibly the most common response to any matter raised in any question. We found an organisation that had meetings in doorways, in kitchens, standing in offices—all mostly unminuted. That may be acceptable at lower levels in many organisations—that informal flow of information—but that came from the very top of this organisation, the very organisation that holds accountability to every other organisation that it is responsible for.


Mr Rickuss: Did they take the committee seriously?

Mr DOWLING: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. I do not believe that many of them actually took the investigation of the committee—our work—seriously, not for one minute. The report details some 22 findings and makes 24 recommendations. While those opposite may protest, the one thing that we all can agree on is that we found many poor processes. We found a lack of accountability and responsibility, we found continuous incomplete record keeping, and we found an overabundance of poor recollection—so much so that the chair commented that this was quite possibly one of the most significant cases of corporate amnesia in the history of corporations, and I added the last bit for effect.

This is an organisation which, as I have stated, holds a blowtorch to everyone else on accountability, process and integrity of systems. This is an organisation whose motto could well be changed to, 'Do as I say, but not as I do,' because we found that this organisation lacked process in some critical areas, in some critical silos. We often refer to things as being secret squirrel. This was quite clearly a case of secret squirrel.

During my consideration of the evidence I drew some parallels with a number of real-life scenarios. If was not real life that we were dealing with, if it was not so important, it would be akin to an episode of *Get Smart*: the cone of silence, the secret little nods, the little codes that people hid in

all manner of items around the country. It was bizarre. It was like the Sergeant Schultz defence: they did not see anything, they did not know anything, and they denied ever any responsibility for any of their actions. In saying that, I look forward to the positive change that we can bring and I commend the report to the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.00 pm): I rise to speak to report No. 90 of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, of which I am the deputy chair. This report relates to the committee's inquiry into the Crime and Misconduct Commission's release and destruction of Fitzgerald inquiry documents. The report was released almost two weeks ago and hundreds of column centimetres or inches of newspaper print have been devoted to its findings. But given that the report was released late on a Friday afternoon when most rational people had their minds on a weekend or perhaps a refreshing drink rather than the machinations of state parliament, this report probably has not received the analysis that it should. So I will use my time to help members and the public to better understand the circumstances surrounding this report into the CMC and its implications for the anticorruption framework in this state because, make no mistake, the circumstances are very worrying and the implications are profound.

Firstly, I want to expand on the matter raised in the statement of reservation lodged by me, the member for South Brisbane and the Independent member for Nicklin. I refer to the Premier's attempts to derail the committee's deliberations by interrupting the committee by contacting the committee chair directly. Being a member of this committee, it is almost like having ghost members of the PCMC where phone calls come to and fro. This has been the case since the government appointed the MP for Gladstone as the chair. It also seems to be a case where the Attorney-General seems to think that it is okay to be able to contact members of the PCMC. This was a clear attempt by the Premier in his statements to intimidate the committee and to try to ensure that we came up with the recommendations that he, in fact, wanted.

It is clear that the Premier wants Queensland to do a big U-turn. He wants to head back to the old days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The Premier is sending a clear message to all the spivs, the crooks and the con men that the boys are back in town. It is okay for the Minister for Education to come in here and criticise the QTU for singing union songs but the song that is relevant for this government is *The boys are back in town*. I have news for the Premier. I lived through the Joh Bjelke-Petersen days and that is a period that I and the rest of Queensland never want to go back to. The Premier and his government—

Mr RICKUSS: I rise to a point of order. The member for Bundamba has gone off on a ranting tirade and is saying nothing that is relevant to this—no relevance at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I am listening to the member and the member needs to stay to the motion.

Mrs MILLER: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. I am talking about the motion of the PCMC. I was saying that I lived through a period where corruption was rife in this state, which directly relates to the PCMC and the CMC. If they want to go down that road, then the public realises that they are dismantling the anticorruption watchdog.


The Callinan recommendations are also part of it. We have the Callinan and Aroney recommendations. Everyone knows that, from the outset, this was a review that was motivated as a get-square with the CMC. What we had was a secret report until the Attorney-General lobbed up here this morning and suddenly released most of the report. But for the people who were tuning in to the internet or whatever, I ask them to have a look at this. There is still some of the committee report, there is still some of the Callinan/Aroney review that is not in there. But, of course, we always have to remember that the 'Kmart' Attorney-General set it up wrongly. Of course, the former High Court judge knows that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will refer to members by their proper title and withdraw that.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw. So I would like to give a recommendation now to the Premier that he reshuffles his front bench and he puts in the member for Mansfield a few seats along so that at least we have an Attorney-General who knows what he is doing and also an Attorney-General who may have the respect of the legal fraternity.

I just want to say that, whilst the Premier said that the PCMC was a lap-dog—what a joke—if you kick a dog too often the dog might just bite back. If you kick the people of Queensland on the CMC, they will kick this government back. They will certainly kick it back. There is no excuse for what happened in relation to these documents, but let me tell members that the rest of the CMC is worthy of preserving in its full form.

(Time expired)

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (12.06 pm): I rise in this House as a member of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee to make a short contribution to the debated on the tabled report titled *Inquiry into the CMC's release and destruction of Fitzgerald inquiry documents*. Firstly, I would like to place on the record my sincere appreciation for all the secretariat staff, which was expanded for this inquiry, and the Clerk of the Parliament for their tireless work on the inquiry. There were also many others involved, including the Hansard staff, parliamentary attendants, Property Services, IT Services and numerous other parliamentary staff. I would also like to pay tribute to Peter Davis SC and Kerri Mellifont SC for their tireless work.

I thank the Attorney-General for the legislation and the motion moved in the House that enabled this inquiry to occur. This inquiry addressed the very serious issues involving the release and destruction of Fitzgerald inquiry material. The committee had a strict time frame in which to report and the amount of work that was performed during this period was extraordinary: 14 hearings totalling approximately 42 hours of oral evidence, possibly 10 lineal metres of documentary evidence produced and a total of 22 findings made, resulting in 24 recommendations. I believe this inquiry was unprecedented and I envisage other parliaments in Australia and perhaps even in New Zealand would have been watching closely.


It vitally important that all organisations be reviewed from time to time. It is vitally important that matters such as these are investigated fully and transparently. That ensures best practice and also assists in maintaining public confidence in such organisations. I commend the report to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Resumed from 27 November 2012 (see p. 2761).

Second Reading

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.08 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its consideration of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on 12 March 2013. The committee's report makes only one recommendation to the House and that is that the bill be passed.

This bill is a step forward in Queensland's participation in a national electronic conveyancing system and is a commitment included in the Newman government's six-month action plan for January to June 2013. National e-conveyancing involves a web based system for undertaking land conveyancing transactions across Australia. This system will provide a more streamlined electronic process for these transactions and provide significant efficiencies for the finance and legal sectors as well as for members of the public who are parties to conveyancing transactions.

All states and the Northern Territory have been working together for several years to lay the groundwork for national e-conveyancing and have now reached the stage where a legislative framework is to be put in place to implement this important reform across Australia. The states and the Northern Territory have agreed to introduce consistent legislation for national e-conveyancing. This will provide a basic framework for e-conveyancing to operate nationally. However, I want to make it absolutely clear that property law and land titling matters will continue to be governed by relevant legislation in each of these jurisdictions. The state government is not surrendering any legislative power by adopting this nationally consistent legislation.

It was agreed that nationally consistent e-conveyancing laws would be achieved by legislation being first enacted by New South Wales as the host jurisdiction before being adopted by other states and the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth government is not a participant in e-conveyancing. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law was enacted in New South Wales in late 2012 and

commenced on 1 January 2013. The national law has subsequently been adopted in Victoria. Queensland will be the third Australian jurisdiction to enact legislation to adopt the national law and other jurisdictions will follow suit. Each state and the Northern Territory will continue to administer its own land registers and land titling legislation. However, the national law provides for the key matters required in each jurisdiction for national e-conveyancing. The national law allows the registrar of titles or equivalent officer in each jurisdiction to authorise lodgement of land titling instruments through an electronic lodgement network and ensures that these instruments after lodgement have the same status and will be dealt with in the same manner as instruments prepared in paper.

Due to the importance of security and certainty in the land titling system, the national law also empowers the registrar of titles to set operating requirements and participation rules for the operation and use of electronic lodgement networks and to conduct examinations to monitor and ensure compliance with these requirements and rules. For example, the operating requirements will specify the need for independent certification at certain intervals and that the operator satisfies various technical and security requirements in accordance with recognised national standards. The national law acknowledges that an e-conveyancing system or electronic lodgement network can only be used by persons who become subscribers to the network. It also requires those subscribers to adhere to participation rules.

The participation rules will, amongst other things, have stringent eligibility and insurance requirements for subscribers which will mean that only financial institutions and legal practitioners will be able to become subscribers in Queensland. Legal practitioners will be representative subscribers—that is, they will be able to transact on behalf of clients through the electronic lodgement network. Under the national law a client authorisation in a prescribed form must be given by a client to allow a solicitor to transact for them in this way and to digitally sign e-conveyancing transactions on their behalf. The digital signing of e-conveyancing transactions is a key component of e-conveyancing. The national law does not detail how e-conveyancing instruments will be digitally signed but rather leaves this type of technical detail to be included in the participation rules.

In its submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee during its consideration of the bill, the Queensland Law Society expressed concern about how the national law deals with the repudiation of a subscriber's digital signature in e-conveyancing. A subscriber to the e-conveyancing system, such as a lawyer, will only be able to repudiate their digital signature in limited circumstances where they can establish certain matters. This is to ensure that parties to e-conveyancing transactions can have confidence in digitally signed transactions. The subscriber will not have to establish how an unauthorised digital signing actually occurred, which, in the electronic world, could be very difficult. However, they will need to establish that any unauthorised signing was not because of negligence on their part or because of any breach of the participation rules that they agreed to when signing up to use the e-conveyancing system.

The registrars from the participating jurisdictions have agreed on a common set of operating requirements and participation rules. All jurisdictions have a similar interest in maintaining security and certainty for titling transactions. This is because all jurisdictions maintain a register of freehold land under the Torrens title system where registered interests in land are backed by a state guarantee.

In addition to adopting the national law, the bill also amends the Land Title Act 1994 to ensure that land titling instruments can be prepared and lodged in digital form. The Land Title Act provides for a register of freehold land to be kept by the registrar of titles and for the creation and transfer of interests in land by recording dealings in the freehold land register. The Land Title Act currently provides for instruments, for example, transfers and mortgages, to be prepared in paper form, signed personally by the parties to a transaction or a duly authorised attorney in the presence of a qualified witness, and then lodged for registration.

Amendments to the Land Title Act modify the requirements for instruments to the extent necessary to accommodate e-conveyancing documents which have been prepared and lodged in accordance with the national law and the participation rules. Similar amendments are made to those provisions of the Land Act 1994 which relate to the registers of non-freehold land such as state leasehold tenures. Although national e-conveyancing will initially only cater for transactions with freehold land these amendments are made to allow for other tenures to be transacted electronically in the future.


National e-conveyancing is to be implemented in stages. It is planned to commence in Victoria in June this year with a limited range of transactions, being releases of mortgages and new mortgages, and with only financial institutions as subscribers. This bill will allow stage 1 to commence

in Queensland which is planned to occur before the end of 2013. In stage 2 a greater range of transactions, including transfers, will become available and legal practitioners will be able to become transcribers and represent clients in these transactions. Stage 2 is planned to be rolled out in Queensland in the second half of 2014.

The bill will facilitate national e-conveyancing in Queensland as an alternative means of conducting land titling transactions. However, I stress that this will not replace the current paper based system for these transactions. The paper based system will continue to be available to legal practitioners and financiers who do not become subscribers to an electronic lodgement and for those members of the public who undertake their own conveyancing transactions. The paper based system will also continue to be available for those types of transactions which are out of the scope in the early stages of e-conveyancing including transactions with state leasehold tenures. No-one will be disadvantaged as a result of the introduction of e-conveyancing.

The bill does not affect contractual matters as it relates only to the conveyancing process. Conveyancing usually follows the making of a contract for the sale of land or an agreement to provide a loan on the security of a mortgage. There may be some review of standard contractual terms by the legal and financial sectors to take account of the new processes for completing contractual obligations to transfer title or register a mortgage. However, this legislation does not deal with these contractual matters, instead contractual matters can be considered once the practicalities and time lines for settlement arrangements through the online system become clearer over the coming months.

Financial settlement of contracts will become possible in stage 2 of e-conveyancing planned to be implemented in Queensland in late 2014. Where transactions are undertaken through e-conveyancing there will be benefits to the Queensland finance sector and to legal practitioners and their clients by removing the need to prepare, execute and exchange paper documents and physically attend settlements. As a result of the data exchanges and the checks and communications that will occur through the system, there will be greater accuracy in lodged instruments and more certainty that settlements will occur at the planned time. This will save time, avoid the disappointment and sometimes expense that comes as a result of settlements failing, and allow faster processing of instruments after the lodgement to achieve registration. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.19 pm): I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the Labor opposition to the debate on the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. I can indicate that the opposition will be supporting the legislation. I would like to add my voice to some of the more sensible elements of this debate. Like other Australian jurisdictions, Queensland operates under the Torrens system of land title registration. It is a system that is well established and widely recognised as world's best practice. In short, interest on land is registered with a central government registry, whereby all legal interests on land are registered and those registered interests are supported by state guarantee of title.

As already outlined, in Queensland the freehold land register has been kept in electronic form since 1994. That is, paper hard copies of legal and financial documents have been converted to electronic files to enable more effective handling, such as allowing better processing and filing and to support easier searches. The move to e-conveyancing, as envisaged in this legislation, would enable the documents to be prepared in electronic form and lodged directly with the electronic register.

This legislation is the action required by the Queensland Parliament to implement national e-conveyancing reforms. These national reforms stem from the 2008 COAG agreement with states, territories and the Commonwealth, committing them to the promotion of a seamless national economy. In relation to these specific reforms, agreement was reached in 2011 on the Intergovernmental Agreement for an Electronic Conveyancing National Law, an agreement that Queensland signed up to and it remains a signatory. New South Wales was nominated as the host jurisdiction, with other jurisdictions to subsequently implement the national laws.

The legislation introduces changes to how interests can be lodged, not the substantial law, that is, this reform enables electronic filing of documents, within the existing framework of the Torrens system of land title. The paper process will still be available should individuals or legal operators prefer that option. The electronic option will be voluntary and individuals completing their own settlement will continue to use the paper based process.

The enabling of electronic forms and automatic electronic filing will make the practicalities of property transfers far more efficient and cost effective. For example, the reforms will remove the requirement for paper documents to be signed and the need for a physical attendance at settlement. There are also reforms to allow electronic transfer of duties and conveyancing payments, which can

replace the need for lawyers and financial institutions to physically meet and hand over cheques. These reforms are progressing outside this as Queensland does not regulate financial institutions, but is consistent with the national reform agenda and this Queensland legislation.

The former Labor government signed up to national reforms promoting a seamless economy, including the 2011 Intergovernmental Agreement for an Electronic Conveyancing National Law. The Queensland Labor opposition supports this legislation as the implementation of that national reform. As the committee report makes clear, Queensland will be the third jurisdiction to introduce the reforms and much work has already been undertaken to ensure the system can be implemented. At page 3 the report outlines—


The initial e-conveyancing platform to be called 'Property Exchange Australia (PEXA)' is being developed by National e-Conveyancing Development Ltd (NECDL), a company limited by shares and majority-owned by the governments of Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. Australia's largest financial institutions also hold a minority shareholding.

The Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council (ARNECC) which comprises state and territory registrars of titles is managing the implementation and ongoing management of the regulatory framework. According to ARNECC, participation in e-conveyancing will be optional, and there is no present intention to make participation mandatory, or to remove paper-based conveyancing.

Submissions were made to the Parliamentary Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee by the Queensland Law Society, in support of the national reforms and this bill. Importantly, the Queensland Law Society also notes that state and federal legal representative bodies were heavily involved in the national negotiations to develop the national legislation. In implementing this national reform, it may serve as a reminder to the Queensland government of the benefits that can be gained from genuine and wholesome consultation in policy development and legislative reform. Submissions were also received from the Australian Bankers Association, which strongly supports a consistent national approach and this legislation in particular.

In conclusion, this is a sensible implementation of national reform that has been developed over several years, in cooperation with the Commonwealth and interstate governments. These reforms will have practical benefits for legal practitioners, financial institutions and consumers. I also remark on these bipartisan reforms and appeal to members to engage in this debate in the appropriate manner. I wonder whether we will see a mature debate in the chamber—I hope we do—or whether the government will send in a long line of new representatives who may not recognise the history of the issue.

In addition, I certainly note the specific and practical benefits that will flow from the changes. These reforms demonstrate what can be achieved through positive engagement in the national reform process. It reminds us that, rather than picking a political fight with Canberra on every occasion, every now and then a mature approach to negotiations with Commonwealth and interstate counterparts can actually produce real results. It actually does happen in reality. In commending this bill to the House, I hope today's debate will recommit the government to proactive participation in national reform. I am a very big believer in cooperative federalism. Certainly in this context the government can put the interests of Queenslanders before political posturing. I hope that is what we do see.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise to make some comments on the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. I note what the member of the opposition has just said. As can be seen from my grey hair, I have some maturity about me and I am sure I can deliver on that issue. I thank the staff of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. We had some interesting committee hearings and discussions on the electronic conveyancing law. We examined the issues raised by groups such as the Law Society, the Bankers Association, solicitors groups and so on. This is really about moving into the 21st century. Fortunately, no longer do we have to ring up operators to make phone calls; we use mobile phones and so on. That is what this process is about. In the early 1990s the Queensland Land Title Act went electronic.

Mr Berry: 1994.

Mr RICKUSS: I thank the member for that interjection. In the early 1990s, the Queensland Land Act went electronic so most of the data was stored electronically. This is the next progression. This progression has already happened in New South Wales and it will happen in Queensland in the very near future. In Queensland stage 1 will happen in late 2013 and stage 2 in late 2014.

I did some research to see if there was any criticism of these laws and their implementation. Early in the piece there was some criticism from some of the conveyancing people in New South Wales and Victoria. I have looked for any recent data since the law was enacted in New South Wales, but I have not been able to find anything. This is just about bringing us into the 21st century. This is good common-sense legislation that is supported on both sides.

The legislation is one of the few things that will actually save the community some money. I hope some of those savings do go back into the community, because I realise that most of the savings will be with the bankers and solicitors. I hope that some money translates back into the public's pocket as well. As a government, that is where we want the savings to go. If we are talking about savings in the vicinity of \$500 million around Australia, let us ensure that some of that money does go back to the public. I am sure that some of my learned legal colleagues will be sharpening their pencils and working out how they can discount conveyancing bills.

Mr Berry: That is not going to happen.

Mr RICKUSS: I take the interjection from one of my legal colleagues who said that it is not going to happen, because I do not know why not. There are savings for all sections of the community.


Mrs Frecklington: It will definitely save people in Nanango.

Mr RICKUSS: I take that interjection from another legal colleague of mine that it will definitely save money for people in Nanango. I am sure that any law firm that the honourable member for Nanango has been involved with is sharpening its pencils right now to ensure that some of those savings will go through to the public when this law is passed.

There were some concerns about the impact on practitioners with regard to liability raised by the Queensland Law Society, but I think the minister has covered that. Most of this is fairly common now. Unfortunately, there are people who work in legal firms and the odd solicitor who unfortunately make errors of judgement and end up in trouble with the law. I am sure we will be able to look at this as it progresses to see whether errors increased when the electronic transmission of information was implemented. I feel they will not increase and, if anything, should decrease.

The Queensland Law Society did say in its submission to the committee that the QLS is supportive in principle of e-conveyancing but are critical of the lack of consultation. This has been around since 2008. I think people say there has been a lack of consultation because they do not want to get off their behinds and read the legislation until the last minute. It is a bit like uni students who have an assignment set saying in the last week before it is due, 'I have no time to do this.' That seems to be what we are hearing with a lot of bills coming before the House that have been out there for four or five years.

I feel this is a good bill. I support the bill. It is common-sense legislation. I support the legal fraternity and the conveyancing firms reducing their costs for the public of Queensland.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.30 pm): I rise to support the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill that has been presented to this House by the honourable Minister Cripps. I thank the minister for his hard work and his department's dedication towards this way forward for all Queenslanders. This is another wonderful example of a reduction in red tape not only for big businesses like financiers and local solicitors but, most importantly, for the mums and dads of Queensland. This legislation will save time and money for all of those individuals.

I thank my colleague the member for Lockyer, the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, and his committee for their inquiry into this bill. I note that the committee recommended that this bill be passed.

As a former solicitor working predominantly in regional Queensland I understand how much running around is involved with a property settlement.

Mr Rickuss: That's right.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Absolutely. People buying or selling a property will no longer need to organise bank cheques, couriers and settlement agents. That will save an everyday mum and dad property buyer or seller up to \$150 in fees on those settlement cheques. For a firm like the one I was involved in if a settlement was to happen in Brisbane or Toowoomba or outside the region we had to employ a settlement agent. That cost is passed on to the mum or dad or whoever is the buyer or seller. When I left the law firm I think it was \$100 for a settlement agent. Those savings are immense for people, especially those buying their first home.

The passage of this legislation will mean that documents can be lodged online through the national electronic e-conveyancing system. This will ensure more certainty that settlement will take place when it is scheduled. It also avoids delays in settlements due to errors in documentation, which is a massive inconvenience. More importantly, it will also avoid the additional costs incurred due to errors in documentation. A person may get to settlement and find that the bank has written the cheque out wrongly. A settlement agent may get to settlement and find that the bank has written the cheque out wrongly.

This is an opt-in system. Not all solicitors have to use this system. I think it is important to reiterate that. It will take time for the legal fraternity to embrace this new process. However, I think we will find a major uptake in e-conveyancing by regional solicitors. The entire transaction can be completed within their office. Less time will be spent completing the documents. That is another saving for the customer.

Mr Rickuss: Most legal firms would have email now, wouldn't they?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. I imagine all law firms would have email. I also understand that the Queensland Law Society is very supportive of national e-conveyancing and is actively informing its members, in particular its country members, about the progress of this reform and the expected changes in practice for members who do choose to opt in and become a subscriber.


I think it is also important to note that for financiers this is a great change. There will be no need for bank cheques or the physical attendance at settlement, as I have mentioned. Financiers will be able to build upon their current electronic processes and build this into their loan applications and other documentation. It will have flow-on effects. This is a wonderful reform contained in this bill.

I think it is important that I touch on how this new legislation will help the Newman government's plan to make doing business and buying property in Queensland more affordable. It will absolutely make conveyancing more affordable for all Queenslanders. As this is a national system, it recognises that many financiers and businesses operate nationwide and across borders—across states. Land transactions are often done across states. Therefore the cost of employing a solicitor in another state or territory will be reduced as well. The new e-conveyancing system will involve an online hub which can be used throughout Australia to create land titling documents, including mortgage documents. These will then be digitally lodged into the appropriate land registry in any state, including the Northern Territory.

I think it is important to note that the honourable Treasurer put out a press release today about the confidence that is building within Queensland's property industry. This bill will assist with this confidence. I am absolutely delighted to announce to the House that the latest Property Council of Australia-ANZ property industry confidence quarterly survey, released today, shows a 17 point rise in sentiment among property professionals in Queensland. The results this quarter come after an eight point rise in the last quarter. This means that Queensland is heading in the right direction. Queensland saw positive trends in sentiment in just about every measure used in the Property Council of Australia-ANZ property survey. The Property Council notes that the upswing in confidence comes as the Newman government continues to deliver on its planning reform agenda.

In relation to this upturn, it is also important that I reiterate that we have reintroduced the principal place of residence concession. This saves families up to \$7,000 when purchasing a home. As part of the 2012-13 budget we implemented the \$15,000 Great Start Grant which was all about stimulating Queensland's construction industry.

This survey released today is good news for Queensland. It is showing our mums and dads and everyone in Queensland that we are a great state with great opportunity. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (12.38 pm): I wish to take this opportunity to express my support for the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. My thanks go to my fellow members of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee and also to those stakeholders who took part in the consultation phase in relation to the bill. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill will bring our state into line with other states and territories by adopting the national e-conveyancing law. The bill will also make some minor amendments to the existing Queensland land titling legislation to provide appropriate links between the national law and state legislation.

E-conveyancing will not actually change the way the contract between the buyer and the seller occurs and it will not change the fundamentals of Queensland property law or titling law. This is a national initiative that all states and the Northern Territory are working together to implement. It will ensure those documents that are electronically lodged will have the same legal effect as those lodged through the paper system. The Queensland land register is already kept in electronic form, and has been since 1994. While not phasing out the paper system, the proposed bill allows for conveyancing to occur by building on existing electronic environments that financial institutions and industry practitioners already have in place.

The implementation of the national e-conveyancing system means that documents can be created, signed and lodged in the land registries digitally and that financial settlement can be effected by electronic funds transfer. National e-conveyancing is expected to provide efficiencies for participating financiers and legal professionals by removing the need for physical attendance at settlement and for preparation and exchange of paper documents and bank cheques. Currently many transactions fail to settle at the appointed time because of inaccuracies in documents or cheque details. Consumers—that is, parties to conveyancing transactions—are expected to benefit from the greater accuracy in documents and the lower chance of settlements ‘failing’, avoiding inconvenience, additional costs and sometimes the loss of the actual contract, which for a buyer can mean forfeiture of their deposit.

There are also expected to be efficiencies for government by allowing digital lodgement of documents directly into the land registers and facilitating future automatic registration of some of these documents. Traditional contractual land sales involve the presence of buyers and sellers, lawyers and financial institutions, the signing of paper documents and the exchange of cheques. This necessarily involves much complicated timetabling to have all interested parties in the same room at the same time. As many as 30 per cent of these transactions fail because of the absence of an interested party at the appointed time or irregularities with the paperwork. This bill seeks to address these inefficiencies. The next step is for a solicitor to lodge the transfer documents for examination by the Titles Registry so ownership of the property can be transferred to the buyer. Approximately 2,500 such documents are lodged daily—half in paper format handed over the counter and the rest as scanned documents sent electronically.

Of key importance is the concept of the digital signature. That is our means of authenticating that a particular person has authorised a digitally created transaction. To use national e-conveyancing, a subscriber to the electronic conveyancing network—for example, a solicitor—will be required to obtain a digital certificate from an accredited provider under the Commonwealth government’s secure gatekeeper regime. That is where the Commonwealth government certifies suppliers of digital signatures for a wide range of purposes, certainly not just for electronic conveyancing, and they have different suppliers of those digital signatures.

With regard to the implementation of this bill, once the bill is passed, national e-conveyancing will be implemented gradually. It is planned that the PEXA system currently being developed will be introduced in two phases. The first phase will facilitate transactions which involve only a release of mortgage or a new mortgage. For these transactions, the only subscribers will be financial institutions. This phase is currently planned to commence in Queensland in October 2013. The second phase will facilitate a greater range of transactions and will include legal practitioners as subscribers. New South Wales and Victoria are currently leading the way in implementing the national e-conveyancing framework, so we will also have the benefits of seeing the system in place elsewhere before it rolls out in Queensland.

With regard to the consultation process that was undertaken with this particular bill, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and its predecessor departments have undertaken consultation on the national e-conveyancing proposals over a number of years, including participation in presentations on national e-conveyancing at several Queensland Law Society seminars and conferences. Consultation has also been undertaken with financial sector representative bodies, namely the Australian Finance Conference and Abacus—Australian Mutuals, through circulating information documents, conducting a stakeholder briefing and notifying these bodies of release of the consultation RIS. Individual financial institutions, including Suncorp Bank and the Bank of Queensland, have also attended briefings.

I would like to relate part of the opening statement from Ms Dann, Executive Director, Titles Registry, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, during the committee's public hearing. She stated—

You would be aware that under the Torrens system of land title legislation, which applies in all of the jurisdictions, once the document, be it paper or electronic, has been registered, it effectively creates or transfers an interest in the land and that registered interest is then banked by the government guarantee.

She then went on to say—

Confidence in that system of landownership and title registration is critical to all of us, as well as to our investment market and property market and development and the like.

While my background is not that of a legal one, I have been involved in several property transactions and I believe—

Mr Rickuss: Do you do your own conveyancing?

Mr COX: No, I do not do my own conveyancing, member for Lockyer.

Mr Rickuss: Sounds like you have a good grasp of it.

Mr COX: Well it was a very good committee review, I must say, chaired by you. This bill simply by its introduction will not only bring Queensland into line with other states but also give another option in conveyancing that in the future will become the norm. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs MADDERN (Maryborough—LNP) (12.44 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Rickuss: Here's someone who does her own conveyancing, I am sure.

Mrs MADDERN: I am sorry to disagree with you, member for Lockyer. I do not do my own conveyancing in Queensland. I rise to speak to the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. The bill has been developed as a consequence of a Council of Australian Governments, COAG, initiative for a national electronic conveyancing system which recognises that property dealings by owners, buyers, sellers and financial institutions regularly cross state boundaries.

At this point I wish to acknowledge and thank the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, the member for Lockyer, my fellow committee members, parliamentary and departmental staff, and those parties who provided submissions and took part in the public hearing in relation to this bill. I, and I am sure many other Queenslanders, will thank the minister very much also.

Property transactions in Queensland operate under the Torrens title system, which is a register of property dealings backed by the state. This system of register is underpinned by the Land Title Act 1994 for freehold land title and the Land Act 1994 for non-freehold tenures. These acts set out the processes which are required for dealings in real processes in Queensland.

In the past, this has been a full paper system, but in recent times the register itself has become an electronic document supported by paper documentation. Currently the system requires the preparation of paper documents and the physical exchange of these documents at the point of settlement. Having been involved in the property industry for many years, I can attest to the frustration of parties who turn up for a settlement only to find that someone else fails to be at the appointed place at the appointed time or that documents are not correctly prepared. This particular process then needs to be rescheduled.

In simple terms, the setting up of an electronic conveyancing system involves an IT company whose shareholders include state governments and financial institutions to act as an electronic collection and distribution point for all the documents required by Queensland law to make a transaction on a property in Queensland. Documents will be crosschecked electronically, and at the appointed settlement time these electronic documents will be 'exchanged' within the electronic system. This will mean that funds are transferred electronically through this hub to relevant parties and government departments, and the registration of the transaction on the Queensland land title register will take place at the same time.

The electronic 'exchange' of documents does not effectively change any of the processes which are required under the existing Queensland law to set in train a change of ownership of a property, the registering of a mortgage, the registering of a lease or other land dealing on property in Queensland. There will, however, be some minor changes to the style of presentation of the documents at the point of the electronic settlement—that is, these documents have to be converted to an electronic format which meets the requirements which will ensure that the transaction is legitimate and will be backed by the state government once lodged in the land register.

The setting up of this type of system will obviously reduce some of the problems associated with the need to physically hand over documents at settlement as well as some of the issues with mistakes made in the preparation of documents. It will remove the need to have local agents appointed to do the settlement if parties to the transaction come from locations some distance away or interstate.

In order to set up this national electronic system for exchanging documents in land dealings, the participating jurisdictions have agreed on the terms of the national law required for this process which has been termed 'e-conveyancing'. They have agreed that the national law will first be enacted in New South Wales as the host jurisdiction. This bill adopts the national law as its core, supported by amendments required to align it with the Queensland land titling legislation and will bring Queensland into the national e-conveyancing system.

As with all new systems, but particularly a new system which involves the transfer of ownership of some of the largest financial transactions individuals and companies ever make, there are questions about the safety and security of the system. I think it is pertinent at this point to note that, once in place, this new e-conveyancing system is optional. The existing system of conveyancing will remain in place but there will be a choice of either using the existing system or opting into the new e-conveyancing system with its added advantage of speed and convenience. And, as with most new systems, use of the system will grow as confidence is established in the safety and efficacy of the system.

One of the factors which has raised some debate is that of the mechanism to digitally sign documents for lodgement with the e-conveyancing hub. Points of discussion have included the style of the digital signature, its security in terms of fraud, who may carry responsibility if there has been fraud, and the likely implications which impact on professional indemnity insurance for legal practitioners using this system.


Advice provided by departmental staff indicates that significant work has been done by the registrars of the participating states in setting up participation rules for subscribers who wish to use the system. These participation rules have been designed to ensure that users of the system can have confidence that the digital signature represents the legitimacy of the documents being submitted. Subscribers will of course be required to exercise reasonable care in the application for a digital signature and who can be authorised to use that digital signature.

The advice is that it is anticipated at this stage that only legal firms, government entities and financial institutions in Queensland will be able to become subscribers. Legal firms would then use the digital signature on behalf of their clients supported by the appropriate documentation. As with all signatures, electronic pins or passwords, there is always the risk of fraud. If the risk in these circumstances is perceived to be too high by either the potential subscribers or their insurers, then the existing system is still able to be utilised.

Questions were also raised as to the actual point of settlement under the electronic system if circumstances arose where there was a legal capacity and a need to repudiate a contract and stop the settlement process. While this circumstance is quite clear in a physical settlement process, it is not so clear in the electronic process. One solution offered, if the e-conveyancing system is to be used, is to specify the exact point of settlement in the original contract which is the basis of the transaction. Departmental advice indicated that the actual electronic process has not yet been completed and when that is done that may be the time to put into legislation the point of settlement.

Of some concern is the fact that if the legislation in New South Wales is amended as part of the national system the amendments become effective in the Queensland legislation without having been debated or scrutinised by the Queensland legislature. Safeguards to be adopted require that if all participating jurisdictions do not agree with the proposed amendments there must be 75 per cent agreement between jurisdictions for any amendments. Further, any proposed amendments will be brought to the attention of the minister through the Registrar of Titles. Finally, if the bill becomes an act, the Queensland parliament can at any time repeal that act.

This bill will allow a process to move conveyancing into a future streamlined electronic format while retaining all the safeguards and processes which have stood the test of time and made our Torrens title system internationally recognised as a highly efficient and reliable system. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (12.52 pm): I rise in support of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill. I acknowledge my fellow members on AREC, parliamentary staff and the community that participated in all the consultations. The reason behind the introduction of e-conveyancing is to develop an electronic system of conveyancing that makes selling and buying of property far simpler and more streamlined and efficient for all concerned in the conveyancing process.

The introduction of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill is timely for those involved in property transactions in the Cairns region. In recent months solicitors and conveyancing clerks have attempted to establish a central settlement point in the Cairns city. The aim was to cut down time for conveyancing clerks walking around the city to attend settlements at various venues throughout the afternoon. Unfortunately, this has not come about for a variety of reasons. As a consequence, conveyancing clerks still walk the walk every afternoon—a daily chore not only entailing valuable time away from the office but also in the heat, humidity and deluges of the Cairns summer, not a favoured way to spend the afternoon doing business if there was an alternative.

Gone are the days of reams of paper cluttering the desk or being mailed all over Australia and beyond. There was a time when the conveyancing process involved snail mail letters between solicitors, agents and clients and paper forms to be completed in order to request searches. So many pieces of paper to go missing and so many potential delays. Transfer documents were mailed to out of state and even overseas contract parties for signature and return. Sometimes this process took weeks if one of the signatories to a document was away from home base. Then there were documents that had to be returned because they were incorrectly completed or a signature was missing.

For the past 19 years Queensland's freehold land register has been in electronic form which has resulted in much quicker processing and ease of searching the register. The fact that national e-conveyancing will allow electronic preparation and lodgement of documents and the ability to update relevant information online is a huge step forward in conveyancing efficiency and saving time. As mentioned, a normal afternoon in Cairns, and indeed any regional town or city, sees conveyancing clerks out of the office and off to various venues to undertake settlement. Prior to settlement there are bank cheques to collect.

I spoke to some of the largest conveyancing businesses in Cairns last week to discover their reaction to the introduction of this legislation. The conveyancing manager of one law firm sighed audibly as she explained that one of her clerks had just returned to the bank for the third time in an attempt to collect a settlement cheque. The previous two visits had met with the message that the bank cheques were not ready. Another conveyancing manager told me that requests for cheques have to be sent to Brisbane's financial institutions by 10 am on the morning of settlement. If there is a mistake on a cheque that is the fault of a solicitor rather than the financial institution, it has to be reordered from Brisbane and consequently would not be available until the following day. This conveyancer was about to drive to Port Douglas, approximately 50 minutes north of her employer's law practice, to effect a settlement. She recounted the process that had got her that far, ending in the fact that she had to get everything sent up to Port Douglas the previous Friday to be in time for settlement the following Tuesday. An Express Post bag sent on Monday evening would not reach Port Douglas, 50 minutes away by car, in time for the settlement. Closing time for Express Post at the local post office for next day delivery, just 52 kilometres away, is 2 pm. She explained that the law firm effected settlements all over Queensland using conveyancing agencies charging between \$150 to \$200 to attend a settlement on its behalf. Surprisingly, she added that cash transactions were the worst as the cash has to be paid into the agent's trust account in time for settlement.

Needless to say, the law firms were eagerly anticipating the introduction of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill. Conveyancing clerks from my electorate may have to drive into Cairns, up to 22 kilometres away from the northern beach suburb of Clifton Beach, to effect a settlement. That is a long time out of the office and a fuel bill for one settlement that might not proceed due to a discrepancy in paperwork or an error on the cheque. Apparently clerks sometimes have to wait up to 45 minutes for bank cheques to be provided by the bank. That is not only frustrating and time wasting but frequently results in delays to settlements. In the case of the latter, given that clerks may have scheduled settlements back to back throughout the afternoon, lack of documents—for instance, mortgage releases or cheques—can cause a settlement to be postponed to another day altogether. That is costly, embarrassing and expensive. The worst possible scenario sees a vendor, for example, bent on making the purchaser liable for costs to the delay or forfeiting their deposit.

In Cairns there are now only two banks that bring their own cheques to settlement. All the other banks use solicitors in the city as agents for settlement. The existing electronic lodgement system has been a boon to all those involved in the conveyancing process. Although many conveyancers still utilise manual systems, as with the introduction of all new technological processes—even internet shopping and banking—reluctance to change is soon overcome when efficiencies of cost and time are verified by current users.


I believe sole practitioners in regional Far North Queensland electorates will welcome the ability to complete conveyancing transactions instead of having to be professionally represented at settlements currently involving lengthy travel into regional centres. I applaud this government on the introduction of this initiative, and I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Trout, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member for Redcliffe

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 pm): This weekend everyone who calls the Redcliffe peninsula home will finally see some light at the end of what has been a very long and very dark tunnel. They will finally receive something of a reprieve from the sorry saga that has seen them miss out on proper representation in this place and has left them justifiably feeling that this government just does not care about them.


When the LNP finally expels the member for Redcliffe from its ranks on Saturday they will be carrying out the job that the Premier has failed to do over the last several months. The Premier, like the member for Redcliffe, has failed the people who called the peninsula home. He has refused to act, despite the daily dose of revelations relating to this member. He has failed at the most fundamental level to show any leadership on this matter. Instead, he has been content to sit back and allow this member to continue on a path that on a daily basis makes the plot of *The Bold and the Beautiful* look credible. The soap opera they have been subjected to has left the people of Redcliffe feeling deceived, desolate and abandoned—and rightfully so. The Premier, like the member for Redcliffe, has ignored those people, preferring to play politics rather than allowing them the representation they are entitled to. He has betrayed them. Instead of showing some backbone and getting rid of this member at the very first sign there was something very, very wrong—and that is by the admission of the LNP itself even before the 2012 state election—he has allowed the rot to set in.

The sorry footnote to this sorry saga is that, even though the member for Redcliffe will be expelled from his party this weekend as the Premier himself admitted to the House this morning, will the Premier and the LNP now sit back and be happy to accept the vote of the member for Redcliffe from the crossbenches? Rather than act decisively over the past several months as the evidence against this member grew to mountainous proportions, the Premier and this government elected to run a protection racket around the member for Redcliffe. They ignored the allegations that he continued to operate the retail traders association from his electorate office. They ignored the very concerning claims that he had taken control of the Regional Community Association Moreton Bay, installing his mates in key positions, establishing a board heavy with LNP members to the point where this group was found unfortunately to be insolvent.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The reaction of members opposite in this chamber says it all. They know that on Saturday the member for Redcliffe will be expelled from the LNP and they will continue to accept his vote from the crossbenches.

Burdekin Electorate, Events

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.33 pm): Last Wednesday was a very exciting day for the Burdekin electorate. Firstly, the Premier, Campbell Newman, and Minister Andrew Cripps attended and opened Evolution Mining's Mount Carlton gold, silver and copper mine south-west of Home Hill. This \$200 million mine will provide an economic boost to the area with 135 new jobs during production. This project will greatly benefit businesses and the communities within the Burdekin

electorate, and Evolution's commitment to spend another \$28 million to continue exploration in the state shows this company really does have confidence in Queensland. I look forward to watching the progress of this mine over the next few years.

A little further south in the electorate on that same day, the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, came to Abbot Point with two exciting announcements. Two companies, Anglo American and NorthHub, a joint venture with Aurizon and Lend Lease, have been short-listed for the potential staged further expansion of coal-handling infrastructure at Abbot Point. The export coal sector is a critical part of the state's economy and further development and expansion of the port of Abbot Point is being managed very carefully by the Newman government. Coal is the state's leading export earner and makes a huge contribution to employment across Queensland and certainly in my electorate.


The Queensland coal industry operates at world best practice standards. However, as the Deputy Premier did say yesterday, there are still those who set out to attack this industry. As a direct result of the coal industry, the Deputy Premier made another great announcement last week for the Burdekin electorate. The Whitsunday Regional Council's application for Royalties for the Regions was successful and the Deputy Premier announced \$10 million to go towards upgrading a 7.1 kilometre section of the Bowen-Collinsville Development Road. The Bowen-Collinsville Development Road is a vital transport link. It is within the region's expanding mining communities where development is being strongly supported by the LNP government. It is a connecting road for the existing Xstrata and QCoal mines in Collinsville and there are also new mines currently under development. It is also the connector for employees travelling from the north to those mines and to Glendon, Nebo and Newlands.

This road is utilised by many heavy vehicles and parts of it are just plain dangerous. I really welcome this commitment from the Royalties for the Regions program. I am so proud to be part of a government that acknowledges the importance of the regions and is committed to returning investment back to the regions where this is being produced. Royalties for the Regions is all about returning these mining profits back to the bush and creating more jobs and better infrastructure within our regional community heartland.

I am looking forward to this weekend welcoming the Premier, the cabinet ministers and staff to the Burdekin. I am looking forward to showcasing the wonderful communities of Ayr and Home Hill and I appreciate what a privilege it is that the community cabinet will be held there.

(Time expired)

Moody, Mr P

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (2.36 pm): Yesterday evening in the House at the start of the coal seam gas debate I made mention of the retirement of Black Caviar. Today I want to make reference to a young man who created history with Black Caviar—none other than Peter Garth Moody. Peter Moody was born at Charleville in Western Queensland. His father and mother were pastoral people. At a young age he moved to Charleville with his mother in her later years. He was educated there as a humble young man, as he is still today. I am fortunate to have known Peter Moody ever since he was a young lad. In later years a very close friend of his mother's, the late Tony Facey, and another gentleman of the racing era in the south-west, the late Frank Kavanagh, took Peter Moody under their wing and showed him the ways and means of training and understanding racehorses.


One day in the late eighties Peter Moody came to me and said, 'Vaughan, I have this horse. I want to train it. Would you buy it for me?' We bought that horse and that was the first horse that Peter Moody ever trained. It was a Lorenzaccio colt called Lorentilla. We had a lot of fun with it. He came to me one day in the latter part of the eighties, just after I was elected to parliament. He said, 'Vaughan, I have been offered a job in Sydney with the TJ Smith stable.' He went down there under Ernie Smith as stable foreman. After that he left TJ Smith and went with Billy Mitchell—FJ Mitchell—in Sydney. Then he came back across to the late Colin Hayes at Angaston in South Australia where he spent five or six months and then came back to Billy Mitchell again in Sydney. Ultimately, he came back to Queensland where he came with Billy Mitchell's horse.

In 1998 Peter Moody decided that racing in Queensland was all over. He came to me one day—and I remember it well—and he said, 'Vaughan, I am leaving Queensland. I am going to Melbourne. I have been offered the stable at Angus Armanasco and eight boxes at Caulfield,' and away he went. He won the 2001 VRC Derby with Amalfi in 2001. He started Moody Racing in 1998 and, as we know, the rest is history.

There are many opportunities out there for young people right across this state. There is no greater story in modern-day international and domestic racing than that of Peter Moody. It is an absolute pleasure to know this man. Any member who has had the occasion to meet him will know that he is a gentleman. He is a humble person, as are his mother and his sisters. They are a beautiful family—wonderful people. It gives me great inspiration to know that he won the TJ Smith Stakes with Black Caviar last Saturday—the mare's 25th win in a row. Well done, Peter Moody. Well done to Australian racing.

(Time expired)

Sue-Fong, Mr D; Bundaberg Flood, Recovery Assistance


 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (2.39 pm): Today I bring focus to a mate of mine, Daniel Sue-Fong. Daniel is a regular guy, 35 years old, who lives in Woodford. There is one small difference: this guy is a phenomenal singer/songwriter and is part of a band called Sue-Fong. Members should remember that name, because this guy is a true uncovered gem who will be discovered at some time here in Australia to become a superstar.

Sue-Fong has regularly been involved and performed at fundraisers and community events in my local area. My wife and I went to watch them recently and can attest that their music relates to people of all ages and cultures. Sue-Fong is well known to our local radio stations, and any producer wanting to promote a truly unique and extremely talented Australian should come and talk to me so I can introduce them to Daniel and Sue-Fong. If people want to see Sue-Fong, they will be playing at the Palace Hotel at Redcliffe on 3 and 4 May. If you enjoy live music you will love Sue-Fong.

That brings me to my next point—that is, an event that I know Sue-Fong will be playing at that deserves to be promoted in its own right. On 11 May at the Avondale Homestead Tavern in Bundaberg musicians from all over South-East Queensland will gather for a concert to raise money for victims of the recent flood. The organiser is Dan Nebe. I want to rain a little praise on this guy and his team of volunteers because a couple of weeks ago they held a similar event in Redcliffe and raised around \$10,000 for the people of Bundaberg through the Salvation Army. I know how good that event was because my wife and I attended it. I know that my friend the member for Burnett has been working with the organisers. I applaud his efforts for his community.

I understand that some of the bands that will be performing at the 11 May event in Bundaberg include Le-Murd, Team Utopia, Sue-Fong and Pretty Fingers, and there will be appearances by comedian George Smilovici and a couple of Bundaberg bands including Barricade 5 and Purple Hills. I urge people all over South-East Queensland who love live music and a great festival to take a drive on 11 May to Bundaberg. The bands will start playing at about 11 am and finish at about 2 am. I guarantee you will have a great time, and your support will help the people of Bundaberg and show them we have not forgotten them.

Carindale PCYC

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.42 pm): I rise today to pay tribute to one of Chatsworth's wonderful community organisations, the Carindale PCYC. The Carindale PCYC has served as a community hub for the suburbs of Carindale and Carina and the broader Chatsworth community since its opening in 1998. Originally a modest hall with few facilities, concerted fundraising activities by the Carindale PCYC committee and immense community support have enabled the PCYC to undertake extensive capital works. Today the Carindale PCYC complex boasts a number of quality facilities including a competition grade trampolining facility, a purpose-built youth room, a community garden and an outdoor play area. These wonderful facilities enable the Carindale PCYC to provide over 30 structured activities which cater to everyone from young children through to senior citizens. Many of the activities are designed to promote a healthy and active lifestyle and provide participants with the opportunity to learn a new sport such as gymnastics, trampolining or martial arts. The Carindale PCYC's core philosophy is to encourage family unity through the development of caring, respectful relationships. The PCYC enacts this philosophy by asking that parents and carers participate in sporting activities with their children or assist the qualified instructors.


In addition to the Carindale PCYC's outstanding efforts to provide sporting and recreational opportunities for our community, they have developed a range of personal development and crime prevention programs for all ages. Warranting special mention are the Girls With a Purpose and the Rite Way programs, designed to equip our young people with self-confidence, life skills and resilience

to become strong and successful young adults. Another wonderful initiative of the Carindale PCYC is the Seniors Online Security Project, which teaches the older members of our community how to use emails, social networking and internet banking safely.

I would also like to draw to the attention of the House the Carindale PCYC's incredibly successful blue-light discos. Every month the PCYC hosts discos for students in years 3 to 7 and years 8 to 10 and also for students with special needs. Last month it was my pleasure to feature as a guest DJ at the year 8-10 disco, coming out of hibernation from 20 years ago when I used to DJ at nightclubs. While I am pleased to report that my choice of music was well received, the most heartening aspect of the evening was witnessing the joy on the faces of the young people as they danced with their friends, played games and enjoyed the amusement rides. I would like to sincerely thank the Carindale PCYC staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication—month in, month out—to make the blue-light discos a success and to provide our young people with a safe environment in which to have fun, make friends and socialise.

It is a privilege to have a facility such as the Carindale PCYC in the Chatsworth electorate. I am very proud to commend the work of Carindale PCYC staff, volunteers and the branch manager. And a special note of thanks must go to Sergeant Dave Beard, who does an outstanding job. I commend the PCYC at Carindale to the House.

Logan

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (2.45 pm): Today I rise to speak about the so-called gangland wars that are happening in Logan. I think it is an absolute travesty when sensationalist media runs away with issues like that. I watched that story, I saw the people involved in it and I could not help but feel both pity and anger.


That area is constantly encumbered by this negative sort of press. I take it as a great slap in the face, not just to me but also to the residents of Woodridge, Waterford and indeed the whole of Logan, because wonderful things happen down there every day of every week. It is a community that works hard. The vast majority of people go about living their lives, working hard and doing the right thing, yet they are encumbered by this sort of rubbish. As I said, it is a real slap in the face to the ordinary, everyday man.

Beyond that, what about the people who throw themselves into their community and get involved—people like Uncle Marty, Aunty Betty and Aunty Robyn who do things with their community? What about Mary from Te Korowai Aroha, which arranges great events that are specifically designed to bridge the cultural divide. We are a city that has a great deal of ethnic diversity. We are very proud of that. I am not saying that we are perfect. Indeed, nowhere is perfect.

We are a diverse area; we have diverse issues. In acknowledgement of that, I am pleased to say that the Newman government, under the direction of the Premier and a number of cabinet ministers, came down to Logan for the City of Choice summit to address the issues that were basically highlighted in the catalyst incident in Woodridge. That incident was blown out of proportion, much the same way as the story on Monday night was blown well out of proportion.

On this occasion I say to my community—I know, because I live there: keep your heads up. Keep going. We value what you do as a community. This sort of rubbish should not weigh you down. I will be working with you progressively, as this government will be working with you progressively, to meet the needs of our community.

Nursing Homes

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.48 pm): Today I have lodged a petition which should, but undoubtedly will not, make every government member hang their heads in shame. That is because, as they blithely go along with each decision this government makes, they are ruining lives, perhaps none more so than the lives of the residents of nursing homes and their families. As they continue on their merry path, closing down these nursing home facilities and then, no doubt, gearing up to sell off the properties to the highest bidder, that path is littered with lives irreparably shattered—lives thrown into chaos, elderly Queenslanders left displaced and their loved ones left to try their best to pick up the pieces.

These people opposite who were chosen to represent their electorates either simply do not care or they are content to turn their heads away and ignore the terrible turmoil that they have created. More likely, they hope that this issue will just go away. They do not care about the lives that


they have ruined. The petition that I have tabled today tells another story. More than 12,000 people signed this petition. That is how many have taken the time and the care to put their names to this petition to save the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit. They have come out in their thousands to support people like Michelle Rafter, whose mother is a resident of this facility and who is now desperately concerned for her mum's future. She is rightfully and frantically worried that this closure will cost her mother's life. The health minister may be able to brush this aside and continue to—

Mr SYMES: I rise to a point of order. How can the member for Bundamba state that that would actually cost a life?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs MILLER: The health minister may be able to brush this aside and continue to sleep at night, but I would ask him and all the other LNP members around here to consider the true desperation of these families. I ask each member: what if it were your mother and father? What if it were? What if it were your mum and dad who had been callously wrenched from their home with little option for finding another home? Would you be angry? Would you be anxious? No, you would not! You are not! You do not care! You do not give a rat's! That is what you are about. I would have thought that maybe a couple of you might have had some semblance of decency, but obviously not, because you have the LNP DNA in your blood because you are capital 't' Tories—the whole lot of you! I want to sincerely thank the 12,000 people who signed this petition. The Labor Party is on your side.

Everton Electorate, Defence Force


 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.51 pm): Today I rise to speak about the defence personnel who live in my electorate. With Anzac Day looming, it is very appropriate that we recognise the fantastic contribution that the military makes to the wellbeing and the safety of our nation. My electorate of Everton has a very large percentage of families who are connected with the military because Enoggera Army barracks is nearby and the Gaythorne RSL is on the border of my electorate and the Premier's electorate. Therefore, the Everton electorate has quite a high concentration of defence personnel families. On the weekend it was great to be at the Gallipoli Barracks open day at Enoggera where, for the first time since September 11, the barracks were open to thousands and thousands of people. People could come to see Army vehicles and services and parachuters. It was a great open day. It was great to be there with the Premier to see thousands of people enjoy this free day where families could come along, and the kids enjoyed themselves. There were simulation exercises and it was a great advertisement for the military of our country.

Across the road from the Gaythorne RSL is the Wests Mitchelton Rugby League Football Club, which is a very famous club. It also recognises the contribution that defence personnel make to our country in that this weekend it is holding a defence appreciation weekend. There will be footy games played all day on Sunday and there will be an expo by the Army, which will bring some of its vehicles to show the kids. That should be a great day. On Friday night it is holding a defence appreciation dinner and the guest speakers at that event will be General Peter Cosgrove, who is of course very well known and the hero of East Timor. I look forward to hearing him speak. As well, a West Mitchie old boy great, John Ribot, will be a guest speaker. John Ribot played for West Mitchie, Wests, Manly as well as Western Sydney.

Mr Rickuss: Didn't he play for France, too?

Mr MANDER: No. He had a French name, but he did not play for France. He had great judgement in that he selected me to be a superleague referee many years ago. This is going to be a great night. It is a charity night. The funds will be going to the Kids of Kokoda and Wounded Heroes Australia. I congratulate David Weale on that initiative.

Ambulance Service

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise to talk about a wonderful experience that I had in my electorate last week. I was very honoured to join some Queensland Ambulance Service officers from the Narangba station on the beat in my electorate. I thank Nick and Beth, whose shift I was assigned to from 11 am to 11 pm on Friday. They gave me a good insight and were very welcoming of me into their ambulance station and showed me how the day starts, how the communications work, what they do when they get to people's homes who have called for an ambulance and then the other end of the experience of what happens when we get to the hospital. These guys have a high level of professionalism. My hat goes off to them. It takes a very special


breed of person to be an ambulance officer. It is not one of those jobs where you get some training and you go out on to the front line. It takes training, it takes skills and, as I saw throughout the shift, it takes a good personality. It takes a lot of professionalism and a good personality to keep a situation calm. The two officers that I spent the day with definitely demonstrated those abilities in a number of scenarios.

Throughout the shift I got to experience a number of things, and one of those was the new load-sharing arrangements that the government has brought in. We visited Caboolture Hospital, Redcliffe Hospital, the Prince Charles Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital throughout my time. I was able to go to those different hospitals and talk to more ambulance officers at those locations to hear how they function and what they thought of what the Newman government was doing and to hear how things were operating on the front line under the new structure of the health boards with regard to ramping. To touch very briefly on that, the situation in terms of ramping is very good. We have heard the health minister say in this place before that the ramping situation in Queensland has gone. I can confirm that throughout my shift on a Friday, which would be one of the busiest, it has gone. We did not ramp once. It was straight into the hospital. The communication with the triage nurses was fantastic. The ambulance officers were able to communicate on the way to the hospital by hooking up the computers and get going. It was fantastic to see the changeover at the local hospital when we got there. There was clear access in terms of getting patients through and getting good results. It was fantastic to see that some of the initiatives we are implementing as a government are working for ambulance officers and health practitioners.

Mrs Frecklington: That's because we care.

Mr GRIMWADE: I take the interjection because we care, and we do. It was great to see that it actually is working and people are being seen in our local hospitals after arriving by ambulance. To those ambulance officers who may read this speech or hear what we are saying in this place: thank you for everything you do. Queensland ambulance officers are an inspiration to me. You will always be admired by me and you will always have my support in my local community.

Road Safety

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (2.57 pm): Road safety is an issue that touches all Queenslanders and it is an issue that every individual Queenslanders has a responsibility to take seriously. So far this year, the number of people who have lost their lives on Queensland roads is well up compared to the number the same time last year. It seems that the message around road safety and the Fatal Five is just not getting through. It is with this in mind that the member for Kallangur and I have been working closely with officers from the Pine Rivers police district to plan a week of road safety initiatives in the last week of May, culminating on Fatality Free Friday on Friday, 31 May. During that week we are organising a number of key events to drive home the road safety message to the residents of Pine Rivers and Kallangur. One of the marquee events of the week will be the launch of the Pine Rivers and Kallangur hoon watch programs. This program, modelled on the highly successful program that was first run a number of years ago by the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games, will be launched by the Minister for Police and Community Safety separately in both our electorates in events that will involve local Neighbourhood Watch groups, schools, police, business owners and residents. The aim of this program is twofold: firstly, to provide a means for community members to do in a hoon, providing valuable information that our police can use to target hooning behaviour and catch those who are responsible for hooning acts; and, secondly, this is an important initiative to educate the community on what actually constitutes hooning behaviour.


We will be distributing information to our entire electorates and this program will be backed up with enforcement by our local police commands in the weeks following the launch. Also that week, the Pine Rivers police district is coordinating a Fatality Free Friday business lunch, where guests will hear from three speakers who each have had involvement in fatal traffic accidents. I am sure that will be a powerful event.

As I alluded in my speech on the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Motor Vehicle Impoundment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill earlier this week, we will also be convening a roundtable discussion between local car enthusiasts and police representatives to help facilitate a stronger working relationship and clear lines of communication between car enthusiasts and police. Following our highly effective Christmas road safety launch last year, where the median strip along Gympie Road at Lawnton was covered with 258 white crosses representing every person who had

died on Queensland roads to that day in 2012, we will again be looking to shock locals into action through a visual display on Fatality Free Friday. There will also be other road safety messages delivered throughout the week via local media to local schools, local railway stations and local shopping centres.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and I urge all Pine Rivers residents to take the issue of road safety seriously and to always avoid the Fatal Five on our roads: speeding, drink and drug driving, failing to wear a seatbelt, driving while fatigued, and distraction and inattention. During the last week of May, the member for Kallangur and I will be doing our bit to spread the road safety message to our electorates.

Child Protection

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.00 pm): Last Friday, I was pleased to attend the annual Bravehearts ThankShoe lunch—a wonderful chance for the staff at Bravehearts to say thanks to their many dedicated supporters and reflect on their achievements over the past year. I particularly want to acknowledge Hetty Johnston and Carol Ronken and the team at Bravehearts for all their hard work. As members know, on 1 July last year the LNP government announced a commission of inquiry into child protection in Queensland. Since then, the federal government has followed suit and announced a royal commission into child protection and institutional care. Although I am no longer the assistant minister for child safety, my passion for child protection is extremely strong and I will continue to work with Bravehearts and the government to make Queensland the safest place in Australia to raise a child.

The federal commission has been asked to review institutional responses to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse and related matters. 'Institution' has been defined as—


... any public or private body, agency, association, club, institution, organisation or other entity or group of entities ... does not include the family.

Although I am pleased that this inquiry is taking place to address some serious systemic failings in Australian institutions, there is so much more that needs to be done to address the issue of abuse both inside and outside institutions. The Australian Institute of Criminology found that 11 per cent of abused children under the age of 15 were abused by a stranger. This is the smallest group of children offended against by perpetrators. Thirty per cent of children were sexually abused by a male relative other than the victim's father or stepfather, 16 per cent of children were abused by a family friend, 15 per cent of children were abused by an acquaintance or a neighbour, 15 per cent of children were abused by another person and 13 per cent of children were abused by the father or a stepfather. It is absolutely crucial that this inquiry extend beyond the investigation of children in institutional care.

Last Friday, I was pleased to stand with the minister, Tracy Davis, and we were both honoured to accept, on behalf of the Queensland government, a platinum ThankShoe award from Bravehearts for the state government's work in supporting a number of significant initiatives, such as the new two-strikes policy that was introduced last year—some of the toughest legislation for child sex offenders in Australia—and then just this week we passed further legislation in respect of child grooming, exploitation and dangerous drugs.

I also want to pay tribute to some other award recipients: to the von Bibra family from Southport—Warren, Sally and their son, Wade—who, through their motor dealership, are raising money to support Bravehearts and I could not let the moment pass without acknowledging Claude Harvey, the mower man, who has raised over \$500,000 pushing a lawnmower for this incredible charity.

Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.03 pm): The Newman government has a lot of questions to answer ahead of this weekend's community cabinet in Ayr about its mass sackings and savage cuts to front-line services in the Burdekin. The Burdekin has been hit hard by the slash-and-burn policies of the Brisbane-centric Newman government, which has done little in its first year except cut jobs and services while looking after itself.

This weekend when the whole of the Newman cabinet is in Ayr will be a perfect opportunity for them to provide an explanation to the locals there about why they prefer to sack people rather than create jobs. Most recently in the Burdekin region, the Deputy Premier and member for Callide created


uncertainty about the expansion of the Abbot Point coal handling facilities. By excluding a multicargo facility at Abbot Point, the Liberal National Party government is limiting the industrialisation of North Queensland. By not allowing for a multicargo facility, this could sterilise the ability of North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation to develop a multicargo facility, which could assist in developing new industries in the 10,000-hectare industrial estate adjacent to Abbot Point. There are limitations to how much industrial development can occur at Gladstone and Bowen has been identified as a future industrial port. The Deputy Premier and this government is threatening jobs by creating further uncertainty in the mining and processing industries, the North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation and the construction industry by flip-flopping on this strategic port project in the Burdekin electorate. This port is so important not only to the economy of the Burdekin electorate, which takes in the towns of Ayr, Home Hill, Bowen, Collinsville, but also to the towns of Mackay and Townsville to the north.

There is also a long list of Newman government cuts to jobs and front-line services in the wider North Queensland region: 130 health jobs, including 45 nurses, 23 health practitioners and 10 health workers; \$21 million slashed from the Townsville Hospital and Health Service; the axing of 28 rail jobs in North and North-West Queensland; the slashing of funding for the Bowen neighbourhood centre; the closure of the Townsville WorkCover office, axing five jobs; local job losses at Ergon and RoadTek; four North Queensland QBuild jobs axed; the closure of the Townsville and Bowen Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service; the slashing of the North Queensland TAFE campuses from 26 to 15; and the closure of the Oonoonba biosecurity laboratory and the former Labor government's proposed new biosecurity laboratory at James Cook University.

This is only the tip of the iceberg and the member for the Burdekin is nowhere to be seen to explain these cuts. The Newman government's program of mass sackings and cuts to services is also aggravating the unemployment—

(Time expired)

Juvenile Crime

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (3.06 pm): Today, I rise to speak about the important and troubling issue of juvenile crime. Sadly, at times this issue seems to be an overwhelming problem. But before I go on, I want to stress that I am proud of the vast majority of the young people in the electorate of Ipswich West. Indeed, there are some great young people in my community. One of those young people is Miss Brianna Corbyn. Brianna is the 2013 YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament representative for Ipswich West. I met Brianna and her proud family and I was very pleased to attend the opening of the youth parliament in the Legislative Council chamber earlier this month. Brianna is certainly a bright young lady from Walloon who cares about making a difference. She attends St Mary's College at Ipswich, which is a fantastic school, although it is in the electorate of my colleague the member for Ipswich.


In contrast, there are examples of wayward youth running amok in my community creating havoc and causing distress for residents with their antisocial behaviour and sometimes wilful destruction of public and private property. More distressing are the examples of violence on our streets. Members will recall only last week that there was a violent attack in Rosewood involving a young person who has been at the centre of trouble for an extended period. I want to state here today that this has to end. I am horrified at what happened in Rosewood and if nothing is done I am worried that there will be a loss of life.

I am pleased that the LNP government has acted since its election with its boot camps, Australia's toughest anti-hooping laws, soon new antigraffiti laws and I am looking forward to the review of the Youth Justice Act. Just like the people of the electorate of Ipswich West who I speak to every day, I am not going to be a spectator. I am going to take action. I am forming a juvenile crime panel made up of people in my community who have the skills, knowledge and experience to help with strategies to address this scourge. I am looking closely at the performance of organisations that deal with youth and juvenile protection in my electorate and I am putting them on notice: look after those in your care, but be very mindful about how your operations affect others in our community.

I will not accept quiet neighbourhoods being trashed by the clients of these organisations. I will do whatever is required to protect my community. Just in the past week I have had quite a number of residents talk to me about a particular property. I have already had contact with the office of the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and her staff have been very good in

providing me with information. I will be speaking to senior members of the department and I am going to make sure that that organisation pulls its socks up and does the right thing. I am going to give back to my residents in Karalee the beautiful, lovely quiet street where their children used to happily play.


Toowoomba Range Crossing, Roadworks

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.09 pm): I rise today to represent the people of Toowoomba. The people of Toowoomba live in a beautiful part of the world. It is the gateway to Western Queensland. It is 700 metres above sea level and this has left everybody who lives in Toowoomba with a logistical problem and that is the Toowoomba range crossing. The Toowoomba range crossing was severely damaged in the flood of 2011 and it is now considered that it needs a safety upgrade. These upgrade works are being undertaken. The contract has gone out and the state government has contributed substantial funds to ensuring that we have a safe and reliable road. Unfortunately, deadlines of 30-minute delays will be applied to the range while these repairs are going on. This week some people and businesses in my area were very, very disappointed when the time delays went past the 30 minutes. I would like to thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the director-general for assisting me. My community was crying out because the delays went over an hour and 10 minutes. I spoke to the minister and the director-general and we have already made some changes. The director-general is visiting Toowoomba in the early part of next week to make sure that we get the delays while these very necessary are being undertaken down to 30 minutes.

I want to reassure the people of Toowoomba—not just the families, but also the businesses, the bus drivers and the other people who rely on the Warrego Highway—that I will represent them and work hard in this place not only to make sure that the road is safe and reliable but also—whilst these repairs are going on—to keep the delays to the bare minimum while ensuring that the work can be done and the workers are safe.

I should just add that the Warrego Highway as it drives through Toowoomba is James Street. It divides my counterpart on the south side of my electorate. People should be aware that 50 per cent of the Port of Brisbane's exports come down that road. The entire rest of the road network in the south-east corner between them carry the other 50 per cent. When people tell me their roads are busy, they have to understand that the heart of Toowoomba is cut by over 6,000 B-double trucks on a daily basis getting up and down that road. We cannot wait any longer for the range crossing to be built. I am pleased with the Deputy Premier's efforts in ensuring that we have a good workable business plan and I would encourage the minister and the Deputy Premier to make this an absolute priority, not just for me but for everybody who uses the Warrego Highway and for the financial benefit of everybody in Queensland.

Red Shield Appeal

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.13 pm): I rise to talk about the annual Red Shield Appeal that will take place on the weekend of 25 and 26 May 2013. We need around about 100,000 volunteer collectors throughout Australia to help make the doorknock a success. It is very simple to get involved. I am proud that I have been involved with the Salvos for a number of years. As the chairman of the local Red Shield Appeal it is very easy. When I gave up being the mayor the local captain of the Salvos, Russell Morgan, thought I had nothing to do so he asked me to be the chairman. I have been involved ever since and I have enjoyed that experience very much.

Mr Crandon: It is giving you something to do as well.


Mr SORENSEN: Yeah, mate. I appeal to all members of the House to participate or encourage others to do so by registering as a doorknock volunteer. You will be doing your part to help the Salvos to continue to provide support for Australians everywhere. I am sure that no member in this House is beyond grabbing a donation bucket and going around to clubs and pubs in their electorate and asking people for a donation. In my experience, once you put that red apron on most people walk up to you and give you money. I always think that it is kind of strange because I am a politician. I have never seen anything else like that where they come up and give politicians money.

It is a great cause and really appreciated by a lot of people out there. I know from experience that people in my electorate, when you are able to catch up with them, always dig deep for the Salvation Army and the Aussies who they support. My electorate of Hervey Bay has raised many thousands of dollars. This year we have had 55 volunteers sign up already, but we really need around about 250 volunteers to make it a successful day.

The Red Shield Appeal is especially important this year with the floods and disasters that have happened throughout South-East Queensland. The Salvos are always first out there. They are front and centre lending a hand. The Salvos are always giving hope in tragedy. One only has to look at Bundaberg and Maryborough recently, especially Bundaberg, where the Salvos were right out front.

I would like to thank my committee, Major Lyn Cook of Hervey Bay, George and Lyn Duck and their daughter Gail; my wife Jenny especially; Janelle Ivers, Peter Carey, Gerard O'Connell and Leanne Harrison who is the regional public relations coordinator. I would also like to thank the Premier for throwing in \$60,000 to kick-start the Red Shield Appeal this year. It will go to a very, very good cause.

Police Service, Presentation of Certificates


 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algerster—LNP) (3.16 pm): It was with great pleasure that I accepted an invitation to attend the presentation tomorrow morning in Beenleigh of the Assistant Commissioner's Certificate to a couple of my local police officers. The officers in question are Senior Constable Jason Giggins and Constable Rebecca Hall of Browns Plains Police Station. I would like to read into *Hansard* their citation, if I could—

... In recognition of Senior Constable Jason Giggins and Constable Rebecca Hall for outstanding operational response to an incident at Boronia Heights IGA Shopping Centre on 29 August 2012. Senior Constable Jason Giggins and Constable Rebecca Hall of Browns Plains Station were performing general duties when they responded to a call for service in relation to an intoxicated male person creating a disturbance at the shopping centre. On arrival the officers were confronted by a male person armed with a six-inch hunting knife demanding to be shot by police. Members of the public, including children, who were in the vicinity at the time were requested to move away by police. Both officers responded producing their firearms, giving loud verbal commands to the male person to drop the knife. The male person continued to respond to police stating that he wished to die and wanted police to shoot him. Both officers continued to negotiate with the male person and their efforts eventually resulted in the male person dropping the knife to the ground. One officer secured their firearm then draw their taser while the other officer secured the knife and handcuffed the male person. Senior Constable Giggins and Constable Hall are awarded the Assistant Commissioner's Certificate (Operational) for providing an excellent response to a high-stress incident ensuring it was brought to a successful resolution without injury to members of the public, the offender or themselves.

We have a number of ex-police officers in the House who serve as members of parliament. I put on record my deep and abiding respect for all the men and women in blue. They do a hard job. They get up every morning, they go out to their job, they do not know what they are going to front. As outlined in this report that particular incident could have turned very nasty. The police in my area work very hard, as I know they do in all the electorates across this state. I am proud to be a member of a government that has pledged to put 1,100 extra police on the beat. I am proud that we have introduced laws to make it a serious offence to assault police.

In my conversations with local police and police in general, they are very supportive of this government's actions. They are very supportive knowing that they needed a change at the last state election to tighten up the laws so that they could put offenders behind bars. Even though they are disappointed a little bit with the court system, I know that we will get there at some point in time as well.

Problem Gambling


 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (3.19 pm): Gambling in moderation and responsibly is not a problem, but gambling in excess and irresponsibly can destroy lives and communities. It is a major tragedy that in these more difficult times gambling has not increased, but the forms of that gambling have merely changed to suit the times. I say this because online sports betting is rising at very rapid rates as horse and harness racing and even poker machine revenue has flatlined in growth in some states and even declined. Poker machine revenue gives close to \$1 billion of income to the state and is supplied in large part from our two grocery monopoly providers, Coles and Woolworths.

For some time problem gambling received a lot of media attention by virtue of a failed attempt to introduce effective gaps to curtail possible losses by addicted gamblers, although this failed for a variety of reasons and the problem remains. The biggest concern is the potential change as the OLGRs in Queensland are considering increasing trading hours and betting limits. Jupiters Casino has confirmed that it will have a \$50 million upgrade of its machines, taking out coin operated machines. Monash University's Dr Charles Livingstone has stated that evidence shows that it is easy to get people to gamble by using playing cards rather than using slot machines or coin operated machines.

Recently, the Southern Cross University did a co-morbid study of problem gamblers, funded by the AHA. I congratulate it for that. The university conducted a three-year research study identifying information that inferred in quantum that the rates of alcohol dependence, smoking and drug use is significantly higher in problem gamblers from the general population. Of the problem gamblers who experienced depression, men were five to six times more likely to experience depression, with or without anxiety, after the onset of problem gambling. Women were more likely to experience those disorders before problem gambling. There is a tendency for the disorders to present together.

Therefore, if we are to address this issue and the wider health issues resulting from problem gambling, we need to identify the individuals earlier. We need to restrict the availability of opportunities. We need to identify better strategies to deal with those affected. In doing so, we will get a dual benefit. As I have said, male problem gamblers will present with the co-morbid problem at a later stage and women initially, but the two go together. In view of those findings, I suggest that we approach smoking male gamblers and ask if we can help them at the time when they may present. Members should remember there are great opportunities to address the issue of smoking, because it is seen as a no-no in the community. At the same time, we may well address the issue of problem gambling, and not just address the smoking problems.

Windsor and Districts Historical Society; New Farm and Districts Historical Society

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak about two very important and hardworking groups in my electorate, the Windsor and Districts Historical Society and the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. Those two great organisations help preserve the historical significance of the inner city of Brisbane by compiling and recording the significance of places, buildings and people who are important to the area from years gone by, through monthly meetings and publications and the subsequent sharing of those with the local community.

The Windsor Historical Society's strong membership is open to all individuals with an interest in the history of Windsor and the surrounding districts associated with the old Windsor Town Council and areas of Albion, Alderley, Bowen Bridge, Eagle Junction, Eildon, Kalinga, Kedron, Lutwyche, Maida Hill, Newmarket and Herston. Based at the historic and heritage listed stone Windsor Town Council Chambers, built in 1897, the team share the stories of the early residents and houses of Windsor. They offer relevant publications and displays, and volunteers ensure there is open access to the public of the historic chambers every Sunday and Monday.


The society maintains large photographic displays of the history of the area, which include photographs of early settlers, historic homes and schools. A large collection of family and other local resources has been established including selected Post Office directories, electoral rolls and over 80 real estate maps from the 1870s to the 1920s. Complete listings of council members have also been compiled and the mayor's chair still sits in the main chambers. It was the chair used by the final Mayor of Windsor, William Jolly, who went on to become Greater Brisbane's first Lord Mayor when 19 municipalities were amalgamated to form Brisbane in 1925. Last week at the reopening of Brisbane's City Hall, William Jolly's grandson spoke alongside the Premier, Governor and Lord Mayor.

The society's premises are adjoined by the Windsor War Memorial and Windsor Town Quarry Parks. Notably, the society coordinates the district's annual Anzac Day service, which I and hundreds of others will be attending next week. That is commendable of them. I congratulate the hardworking committee: President Derek Churchill and committee members Judy Willis, Rosalie Raciti, Beres McCallum, Gem Cowlshaw and Denise Bender, and the chamber's curator, Jack Mann. I note that the Premier himself is a proud member of the society.

Closer again to the inner city is the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. Its team of volunteers record and celebrate the fascinating history of New Farm, Newstead and surrounding districts. The society has been very successful at forming gatherings exceeding 200 people drawn from both locals and the broader community. They attend monthly meetings, often with guest speakers, afternoon tea and lots of discussion transferring history from one generation to the next. The society also plays an integral part in the hugely popular Teneriffe Festival, which draws over 30,000 people each year. Any number of discussions and displays could be advanced at those meetings, discussing items such as New Farm during the war years, the history of the Brisbane Powerhouse, which was built on top of Brisbane's first racecourse, the way convicts once grew crops in the area, the intense history of the wool industry and buildings of Teneriffe, and the amazing urban

renewal that continues to this day. I congratulate Ross Garnett, Clare McEniery, Lynn Thompson and all the team for their hard work and dedication. On behalf of a grateful community, I commend their efforts.

Cup From Above Cafe


 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (3.24 pm): Today it gives me great pleasure to rise to commend the work of a terrific small business in my electorate. Located in the heart of Aspley on Gympie Road, at the 340 bus stop, is the Cup From Above Cafe. Cup From Above is where art, music and good coffee are found, but Cup From Above is much more than that. It is where the cafe employees, locals and volunteers come together to support the less advantaged and each other.

In the past week, Cup From Above has made national headlines, including articles in the *Australian* and the *Courier-Mail*, in regards to its most recent initiative, suspended coffees. The practice of suspended coffees originated in Italy more than decade ago. It encourages strangers to buy coffee for the homeless and disadvantaged. Suspended coffees provide support to those who need a sanctuary to relax and somewhere to be welcomed with open arms and a warm beverage. Adam is trialling suspended coffees this month, exchanging heart shaped tokens for coffees paid forward, which are then displayed on a rack in the cafe. So far, the suspended coffees have been distributed to disadvantaged residents in the Aspley Acres Caravan Park.

Since its opening in June last year, Cup From Above has built a great reputation for its passion for community. Adam, who also works as a disability support worker on the Sunshine Coast, is passionate about his work in the disability community and his passion is clearly reflected in his cafe. Artworks donated by local artists line the wall. Proceeds from the sale of art go towards purchasing instruments for the students at Aspley Special School. Cup From Above also runs live-music sessions where all of the musicians play for charity and, of course, there is always a donations jar. Cup From Above may be small but, as the adage goes, good things come in small packages.

I was thrilled when Adam accepted my invitation to be one of the three Aspley electorate representatives to travel to Mackay to discuss and contribute ideas in the development of the Queensland Plan. It is wonderful to see this level of community spirit and support thriving in my electorate, where a community can bond together to promote equality and improve the lifestyles of those less fortunate or in need of support.

Bulimba Electorate, School Leaders

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.27 pm): This afternoon in the House, I rise to talk about leadership across the excellent schools within the Bulimba electorate. Over the course of the first term of this school year, like many members in the House I attended numerous leadership induction ceremonies at the primary and secondary levels across state, Catholic and independent schools. I am continually amazed by the outstanding level of dedication, commitment and ability shown by the young leaders at my schools. Their level of confidence and ability to engage with the school community holds us in good stead now and as they become future leaders in business, sports, politics and life in general.

To recognise this outstanding talent pool, at the start of this year I undertook two key initiatives to support the continued growth of the leadership skills of those student representatives. The first initiative was to conduct a leadership forum for three secondary schools: Balmoral State High School, Lourdes Hill College and Cannon Hill Anglican College. With the support of all the school principals, particularly Ms Allison, the principal of Balmoral State High School which hosted the forum, over 70 elected school leaders assembled on the day to undertake some extracurricular activities and hear from guest speakers. The guest speakers included the former Lord Mayor of Brisbane Sally-Anne Atkinson AO; Australian beach volleyball player and Olympic gold medallist Natalie Cook OAM; the President of the Rotary Club of Balmoral, Mr Joe Beath; published author on public speaking Mr Adrian Pauley; and two past house captains of Gregory Terrace, Nic and Lucas.

The students were engaged from the start with both inspirational and great tips on how to be a leader. Those tips included self high fiving; setting high goals, writing them down and reviewing them; telling the world your dreams; surrounding yourself with images of your goals; that following and

failure are just as important as leading; being a jet ski in life and not a roller-coaster; and most importantly, surrounding yourself with people who support you. Those were all simple but effective tips for our young leaders.

After the students learnt about the Rotary programs available to them, the afternoon turned to group interactions with time management and simple public speaking activities that gave again practical tips to the students, including using an ideas paper, the PRES formula and having two signature stories. The feedback from the students, teachers and guest speakers indicated that the event was an overwhelming success.

The second event I held was to invite four student leaders and their chaperone from each of the 10 primary schools to Parliament House for a barbecue and opportunity to interact with like-minded and like-tasked students from within the electorate. The relationship building by students so young was all too evident as they mixed before and during the lunch break. After the barbecue, the students then had the opportunity to witness the start of parliament and question time. Again, the feedback from both the chaperones and the students was that the opportunity to attend the primary leadership barbecue was a very worthwhile exercise.

I thank all of my guest speakers, my staff, the schools and, most importantly, the students for the open minds they brought to each of my events. I look forward to undertaking these activities again in 2014 to support the leaders of the future. Members of the House can be assured that our future is in good hands.

Sunshine Coast University Hospital; Queensland Health



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.30 pm): Since the election of the Newman government I have continued my part in the community-wide campaign to build and commence the construction of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and improve all health services on the Sunshine Coast. Hospital construction has accelerated on this project, after being delayed by the previous Labor government. It was likely that it would never have been built.

The LNP government is delivering a free public hospital at Kawana for the people of the Sunshine Coast and the wider community. There has been lots of debate on the Sunshine Coast recently by those advocating that we are privatising the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. That is not true. The Sunshine Coast University Hospital will be a free public hospital—the best in Queensland, if not Australia. This is a complete fabrication of what is actually occurring.

The hospital will be a free hospital and will provide a world-class training facility for students and first-class health care. I have received a number of questions about the hospital from members of the community and I am only too happy to answer those questions. I am pleased to report that the Sunshine Coast University Hospital will have a 24-hour accident and emergency department. It will create massive new surgical capacity for the Sunshine Coast region, as envisioned by the community, the government and the hospital's advocates. The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Board will administer the operation of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Teaching obligations will be discharged at the same high level that they are at at other tertiary facilities in Queensland. I appreciate the many years of hard work that so many Sunshine Coast residents have contributed to make the Sunshine Coast University Hospital a reality. Under the local direction of our Hospital and Health Service Board, Sunshine Coast University Hospital will break new ground.


Across the state, reforms will improve health services for all Queenslanders. We were elected to sort out the mess that was in Queensland Health. In the short time since this government was elected, ambulance ramping has reduced by about 90 per cent. The member for Morayfield said he was at a hospital lately and there was no ramping. To provide some perspective, I think it is important to take one step back and look at what we are trying to fix—a health system that was described by the former government as sick; a system which allowed bureaucracy to get out of control. We have seen a 43 per cent increase in Health funding over the past six years, but only a 17 per cent increase in services.

If we continue to do the same thing over and over, we will continue to have the same result—a system that saw more than 200,000 Queenslanders placed on a secret waiting list just to get onto the official waiting list, a system with fake Tahitian princes in it and more than 100,000 on the dental

waiting list. Few would deny that change is necessary. The Newman government is delivering that change—a change that is maximising healthcare services and bringing Queensland Health back within budget for the first time in a decade.

I thank members of the Sunshine Coast community for continuing to fight for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. To dispel any rumours, despite the fact that the government is looking at better ways to efficiently deliver health services the hospital, when it is built the hospital it will be a tertiary hospital, it will be free to the public, it will have an accident and emergency department and it will be the best hospital in Queensland.

Education Reform

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (3.33 pm): I rise to speak on the importance of engaging in legitimate and productive consultation on education reform. Next week I will be engaging in an education forum with principals from my electorate. It is a fact that the Queensland Teachers Union asserts that the Newman government has failed to consult with teachers and principals about the recently announced Great Teachers = Great Results plan.

More and more people seem to be forming the view that this is typical of the Newman government and there is an inherent failure to recognise the importance of consultation, research and evidence based policy. In my view, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the Newman government prefers quick fixes and populist politics which classically attracts only short-term gains and ultimately causes long-term pain.


On education reform there are clearly competing political interests, but the Gonski business plan is undoubtedly the preferred model of leading educators. Last night I attended the QTU rally outside parliament to listen to some of our state's professional educators and they collectively and convincingly confirmed this position. At the rally I was also provided with well over 100 submissions highlighting issues with the Newman government's Great Teachers = Great Results plan, by and large backing the benefits of the Gonski business plan and comparatively talking about Finland which produces some of the highest education results in the world. I table the submissions on behalf of the teachers and principals for consideration by the Newman government.

Tabled paper: Bundle of submissions regarding Great Teachers = Great Results [\[2462\]](#).

As relevant to the Gonski debate, the transformation of Finland's education system was developed over the long term as a propellant for the country's economic plan—it was not a quick-fix approach. In the year 2000, results from the Program for International Student Assessment—PISA—revealed Finnish youth to be the best young readers in the world. Three years later they led in math. By 2006 Finland was the first out of 57 countries and a few cities in science. In the 2009 PISA scores, the nation came in second in science, third in reading and sixth in math among nearly half a million students worldwide.

In my view, this illustrates that we all need to 'give a Gonski' and that the Newman government needs to do more homework—that is, consultation and research—about education reform to ensure the strongest evidence based position for the future competitiveness, prosperity and security of our children, state and country.

Redland Hospital, Palliative Care Unit

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.35 pm): I am pleased to announce today that a palliative care service has been launched at Redland Hospital. After four years of advocacy work, Cleveland and the Redlands community has finally got the palliative care services it has needed for so long. This is another major step that the LNP government has taken towards building a better bayside.


Metro South health is expanding its palliative care services in order to provide quality, comfortable care for Redland city residents who are approaching the end of their lives. Metro South health has opened 10 new publicly funded palliative care beds in Redland city. Five of the beds are located in an in-patient ward at Redland Hospital while five are equivalent services in the community or virtual beds. Having both the hospital service and home service increases the choice and treatment options for palliative care patients in Cleveland, Redland city and south-east bayside Brisbane.

The service is made up of a multidisciplinary team which includes a palliative care medical specialist, doctors, nurses, a councillor, a social worker and an occupational therapist. This team works alongside local GPs and other providers to provide quality and appropriate care to clients. The aim is to improve the quality of life for people with a life-limiting illness and their families and carers. The service provides pain and symptom management, end-of-life care, education regarding medication, access to grief and bereavement support and emotional support for clients, family and friends. All 10 beds are now open and fully staffed and being utilised. Already 30 people have needed the service. Some 14 patients were admitted for their whole episode to the Redland Hospital palliative care ward beds. A further 16 patients have needed the in-home care service.

The credit for this achievement must go to motivated local Cleveland and Redlands residents like Gordon Somes, John Neilson, Graham Maynard; Queensland Health and hospital staff such as Professor Liz Reymond and Brett Bricknell; the Metro South board and the health minister; and supportive local media. My part in this wonderful outcome for the Redlands community has been small. It has involved speeches to the parliament, a media campaign involving mainly newspapers—the *Bayside Bulletin*, the *Redland Times* and the *Courier-Mail*—newsletters to the electorate, a petition signed by over 3,000 people, meetings with Queensland Health experts and several representations from my office in Cleveland to successive health ministers.

The \$5.9 million funding has been provided as an LNP commitment and personal commitment that I made to address the lack of subacute beds available in the Redlands area. The LNP Newman government is delivering on its commitment to expand health services in Cleveland and the Redlands.

Papua New Guinea, Trade Mission

 **Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (3.38 pm): I rise to give a quick update on a recent trade mission that my esteemed colleague from Barron River and I took part in over the last few days. The trade mission was led by the Cairns Chamber of Commerce. It visited Lae. I joined the trip for the Port Moresby leg. It is the biggest trade mission of its type undertaken out of Cairns to PNG. It featured all levels of government and various business and lobby groups who are keen to develop trade links with PNG.


It is just over an hour and 20 minute flight from Cairns to Port Moresby. In fact, it is the closest capital city to Cairns, closer even than Brisbane. Papua New Guinea is, of course, a fascinating and incredible country. There is extreme wealth but also extreme poverty. I commend the local businesses involved in the trade mission, including Northern Refuelling Maintenance, the Rack'n Stack Warehouse, Miller Harris Lawyers, The Energy Hub, Bright Black AV, Aspen Medical and Accor Hotels.

During the trade mission we met with PNG businesses and NGOs to discuss opportunities for trade and support between PNG and Far North Queensland. We met with PNG politicians to discuss a huge range of governance issues that they face. We also had a tour of PNG's quite magnificent Parliament House. During the trade mission we also met with Australia's High Commissioner in PNG, Deborah Stokes, and I just want to touch on an issue that I raised with her in this meeting that is of vital importance to the people of Cairns and our local hospital.

As medical service delivery in PNG has been unable to keep pace with the fairly disturbing rise in diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy and malaria, the pressure on Cairns Base Hospital has increased. They just cannot cope with the level of disease they are experiencing. We are getting an increasing number of patients from PNG coming to Cairns for very costly treatment. It is costing Cairns Base Hospital and Queensland Health millions and millions of dollars every single year.

There are vast opportunities for business and trade between Cairns and PNG. While there are these vast opportunities, there are of course immense challenges particularly relevant to Cairns and Far North Queensland. I urge all sides of politics at the federal level to take this issue incredibly seriously as it is so close to our state and our border. It is costing millions and millions of dollars for what really is a federal responsibility. I urge both sides of politics at a federal level to take it seriously.

Country Jam for Coen

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (3.41 pm): On Sunday, 7 April, joined by my colleagues the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Tim Mander, the member for Everton, and Mr Seath Holswich, the member for Pine Rivers, I was honoured to attend the Country Jam for Coen held at the Eatons Hill Hotel. This outstanding charity event was organised to help young Coen Osbaldiston with his battle with biliary atresia.

Biliary atresia is a congenital or acquired disease of the liver and one of the principal forms of chronic rejection of a transplanted liver allograft. As a birth defect in newborn infants, it has an occurrence of one in 20,000 cases in live births in Australia. In the congenital form, the common bile duct between the liver and the small intestine is blocked or absent. The acquired type most often occurs in the setting of an autoimmune disease. If unrecognised, the condition leads to liver failure. The cause of the condition is unknown. The only effective treatments are certain surgeries such as the Kasai procedure or a liver transplant.


Coen is supported by a wonderful and loving family. His parents, Melinda and Brad, and siblings, Ebony and Darion, are a rock for young Coen. As the community banded together to raise funds to help the research department at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane find out what causes this condition in young children and infants, an enjoyable afternoon of country music and festivities was had by all who attended.

With outstanding performances from Logan local Jake Gilroy, Jay Seeney, Aaron Jobst and Stephen Redman, who formed the local country music band Forever Road—which has been nominated for three Australian County Music Awards—this great fundraiser showed what the community can achieve when we work together. I must also take a moment to congratulate Jake on being endorsed by Ibanez Guitars. This world-renowned brand is one of the oldest and most respected, which has endorsed music greats such as Joe Satriani and Steve Val. This is a great achievement for a local boy.

Events like the Country Jam for Coen highlight the many causes that Queenslanders are battling. Not everyone is always able to give financial support, but what we can do is continue to raise awareness. We can continue to keep the fights like those that afflict young Coen front and centre in the minds of Queenslanders. I would like to thank the Minister for Housing and Public Works for opening the event and the member for Pine Rivers for his support. Their attendance was greatly appreciated by the Osbaldiston family. The event would not have been such a success if not for the tireless efforts of the event organisers, Sammie Lee and Jake Gilroy. Their hard work in pulling the event together ensured it went smoothly and was a resounding success.

I know that the efforts put in and the awareness raised on the day will help the Osbaldiston family and those like them who face tough challenges ahead. As a community, we can make a difference: together we can make it happen.

Racing Industry

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.44 pm): Recently, the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was passed to set the framework to restore the damage that had been done to country racing under the previous government. Country racing has suffered terribly over the past decade, and this has had a massive impact on the social and economic benefits to many country towns. I have been approached by representatives of the National Sprint Racing Association for my support of a proposal which I believe will inject new life into country racing and reinvigorate bush race meetings. Sprint racing has been part of our national heritage since settlement. It is interwoven in the history of thoroughbred racing and enjoyed a heyday in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.

During the 1980s and 1990s, sprint racing was one of the fastest growing and most popular forms of racing on the Queensland racing circuit, but a lack of legislative backing, combined with an increasingly hostile thoroughbred industry hierarchy, resulted in Queensland sprint racing officially ending in 1993 under the Goss government. A major contributing factor to this was rule changes by the Australian Racing Board that demanded that any form of racing not sanctioned by the ARB, including races under 800 metres, must be under the management of the state principal racing authority. Since its demise, sprint racing has continued in a limited form mostly through memorandums of understanding with individual thoroughbred clubs as a novelty. However, there is a growing tide of support and interest in this alternative racing form both domestically and overseas.


I have been advised that there is a lot of money waiting to be injected into Queensland racing clubs that add sprint racing to their programs. However, to achieve the potential growth in Queensland racing that sprint racing could bring, legislative changes need to be made that will afford the industry the legislative framework needed to develop a professional model of administrative control.

Changes in legislation and attitude have allowed major changes to occur in the Queensland racing industry, and I know that many rural members in the LNP have already voiced their support of sprint racing and acknowledged the benefit it will bring to country race meetings. Under the now

abolished Racing Queensland, country racing was gutted by decisions that favoured city race meets, and this has had a huge impact on the economy of towns struggling to survive. Meetings were cancelled for no good reason apart from being close to a city meeting, and many clubs were forced to shut down as costs of security and workplace health and safety requirements have become exorbitant and unrealistic.

Country race meetings are often the single biggest social and economic event in rural and regional towns. Last year 3,000 people turned up for the amateur races in Charters Towers, 6,000 people at Mount Garnet and 2,000 at Moranbah. Country racing is the lifeblood of rural communities. Sprint racing has the potential to create an alternative revenue stream for struggling clubs, and I encourage the minister to take advantage of the growing national and international support and provide the legislative framework to introduce sprint racing to Queensland country racing programs.

Get in the Game

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (3.47 pm): I rise today to speak about the Get in the Game program and the wonderful effect it is having in my electorate of Capalaba. This is a very positive policy that the government is involved in, restoring opportunities for families across the state and particularly in my electorate of Capalaba.

Few understand better than I do the role that sport can play in providing a sense of community and unity of purpose for otherwise unconnected individuals. Many of the life lessons that I have learnt have been on the sporting field, and I am happy again to be participating in competitive sport after a few years, and many a kilo, on the sideline. I would like to congratulate my team, the mighty Capalaba Warriors Masters Rugby League side, which I now play for—

Mr Gibson: No!

Mr DAVIES: Yes, I do. They had their first game on the weekend. Unfortunately I had a previous event and I could not go.

Mr Gibson: Oh, not even one game!

Mr DAVIES: But I play my first game this Saturday at 4.30.

Mr Gibson: So you don't actually play for them; you're about to.


Mr DAVIES: Yes, I am playing. I have been to training and I must admit I was not as good as I thought I once was. But I look forward to getting to know the boys a lot better at the Capalaba Warriors and having a very successful year.

I am also very proud to be part of a government that recognises the important role that sport plays in our community and that has taken an active role in supporting and fostering the next generation of champions and competitors through its Get in the Game program. The lessons that young people learn and the opportunities that are given to them are the same lessons that I have learnt over a lifetime of sport. They will learn to never give up and to play until the last minute. They will learn the value of friendship, mateship, personal discipline and the support of team mates. They will learn to win gracefully and lose well—all lessons that translate well into life's many walks.

More than that, though, these young people will learn the value of commitment, the way to overcome obstacles and to develop disciplines in their lives to achieve success. These are the lessons that I have learnt. I commend the Premier and Minister Dickson on tripling the funding to the program. It means a lot to the many sports clubs and parents of young people in Capalaba. Many have already accessed the program under previous funding and many will access it in the future. Clubs like the Redlands Rugby League Club, which has received over \$5,000 for new training equipment, and the Redlands BMX Club, which has received close to \$9,000 for lap scoring and timing equipment, have felt the benefit of the Get in the Game program. This funding will assist these clubs to develop and remain competitive and ensure their long-term future. I am thrilled to be able to put up my hand and say I was part of giving families and clubs the opportunity to get involved in grassroots sports. I commend the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for his continued support of one of Queensland's favourite pastimes.

(Time expired)

Boys Brigade, 1st Brisbane Co.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.51 pm): As the member for Mount Coot-tha, it always gives me great pleasure to rise in this House to talk about the wonderful milestones and achievements of the array of outstanding community service organisations across my electorate. On

this occasion I had the great pleasure of attending the significant milestone of the 100th anniversary dinner of the Boys Brigade, 1st Brisbane Co. on Saturday, 16 March. In this day and age there are not many things that can lay claim to being around for 100 years, so this is a significant achievement.

In 1913, 1st Brisbane Co. formed, led by Mr George Orr, a former lieutenant of the 1st Glasgow Co. under the captaincy of Sir William Smith. 1st Brisbane Co. is the only Australian Boys Brigade company that lasted past World War I and it continues to win drill competitions and maintains a successful marching band. In Australia the Boys Brigade is a unique, non-denominational Christian uniformed organisation for boys and young men. Their motto 'sure and steadfast' is very fitting, particularly in the context of a 100-year anniversary.

The Boys Brigade 1st Brisbane Co. gives boys the opportunity to participate in an environment where they are supported in their growth, balanced personal development and leadership. Providing young people with a mix of fun, adventure and challenge, Boys Brigade mentors and empowers each member to reach for their potential, building their resilience and enabling them to find their place in leading and impacting their world today and into the future.

I was delighted to attend the 100th anniversary celebration of Australia's oldest Boys Brigade company in my electorate of Mount Coot-tha. The dinner was attended by 100 of the company's old boys, supporters and present members. It was great to meet a number of the boys and their families as well as John Neil OBE, Honorary President of the Boys Brigade UK and Ireland. John spoke about the Boys Brigade as a global movement. Dave Allen, the President of Boys Brigade Queensland, and Keith Young, Boys Brigade historian, also provided insights about Boys Brigade history and its significance in our community today.

The company's original building on Enoggera Terrace in Red Hill was fitted out with a variety of memorabilia spanning the 100 years of active existence in the Red Hill community. Interestingly, one of the guests, James Kenyon, joined 1st Brisbane Co. on his doctor's orders in 1936 when he was 11. He suffered from frequent nose bleeds and doctors thought Boys Brigade activities would boost his health. Mr Kenyon, now 87, said that not only did his health improve but his experiences in 1st Brisbane Co. also meant he was prepared when World War II broke out in 1939. I understand from Mr Kenyon that the Navy wanted volunteers from the Boys Brigade on the basis that if you have someone who is fairly well trained then you are halfway there. It is clear that an attitude of camaraderie still thrives in 1st Brisbane Co. today. On that point, I would like to congratulate Eric Pitt, who is a fantastic team leader and mentor to the young men and boys. I also thank him for his dedication and commitment to serving Brisbane Boys Brigade. He certainly upholds their motto 'sure and steadfast'.

Lockyer Electorate, Roadworks



Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to make a brief comment about some transport issues that are affecting not only the electorate of Lockyer but all of South-East Queensland. I note that the member for Toowoomba North spoke about the Toowoomba range crossing and how it has created some angst. There are a lot of new roadworks happening on the Warrego Highway. Some of it is the result of flood damage; some of it is simply upgrading of works. People have to be patient.

We get complaints about roads that are not up to standard, and then we get complaints about roadworks. People need to understand that we have to do roadworks and they have to be patient. Life is not that important that you cannot spend 15 minutes going a bit steady through roadworks and making sure that the appropriate safety is in place. Let us ensure that the roadworks are done properly and soundly so that we all have safer travel in the future. It is really important. I understand the issues that people have, but they should give themselves 10 minutes extra so they are not late for every appointment. They should give themselves a little extra time.

I also want to comment on the high-speed rail study and key findings and executive summary released and promoted by the federal Labor government today. It is one of those feel-good studies. Would you like high-speed rail through the Coomera electorate so you can get to Sydney in 20 minutes?


Mr Crandon: It sounds good.

Mr RICKUSS: Everyone would like it. I would like high-speed rail. I am sure the Deputy Speaker would like high-speed rail to Gladstone so she could walk up to Central Station this afternoon and be home in Gladstone in half an hour, but let us be realistic. This is \$114 billion. We should be calling this pie-in-the-sky rail, because it is just delusional. It just so happens that the federal government has come out with this report only six months before the federal election. That is strange!

Mr Hathaway: Like high-speed broadband.

Mr RICKUSS: I take that interjection from the member. That is really crazy stuff. They are now talking about taking action to preserve rail options in the future. Unfortunately, I already have people who are under the pump with delusional rail options and corridors that have been put aside by the previous Labor government. This just creates angst for people. Here we are talking about high-speed rail. The way technology is changing, people like the member for Rockhampton will be on a big screen in here one day because he will not have to turn up. This is 2060 we are talking about. How delusional are they? They are delusional.

Adermann, Mrs J

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (3.57 pm): I rise to reflect on and celebrate the life of my friend Joan Nell Adermann. Joan was born on Anzac Day in 1931 and she passed away on 29 March this year. The great thing is that she is now with her Lord and my Lord and saviour. My wife and I have known Joan since we first moved to the Sunshine Coast because we worshipped together at the same church. There are so many wonderful stories to share about Joan, but I want to focus on two today.

Many members would know that Joan not only shares my faith but also my politics. She was the wife of Evan Adermann and the daughter-in-law of Charles Adermann, who between them represented the people of north Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the South Burnett as the federal members for Fisher and Fairfax from 1949 through to 1990—41 years of representation. During that whole time, Joan was a part of it. Joan's daughter Jenny worked with me for the first two years upon my election in 2009 and her brother John, who is in the gallery today, works for my good mate Neil Symes, the member for Lytton.

I will never forget walking into one of the first National Party meetings for Nicklin in Nambour and being confronted by two very formidable women. One was Joan Adermann, and the other was Peg Cyphers. I will share a quote from John's eulogy that he provided at the funeral recently. John said, 'A couple of weeks ago the Prime Minister referred to herself as a strong and feisty woman. I think my mother fits that description as well, but the difference is she didn't have to tell you she was; she just was.' That is the kind of woman Joan was. My sympathies go to her good friend Peg, who has lost not only a friend but also a neighbour and certainly a confidant. I pass on my best wishes to her.

The other story I want to share is that Joan was a fantastic support for my wife at a time when we went into politics. It was a struggle—the idea of basically being a single mum at home with now five kids. Joan did that, too, yet she did it in a much tougher way, back in a time when her husband would have been on the road for many, many weeks at a time travelling down to Canberra. And, yes, she, too, had five kids. So, Joan, we thank you for all the support that you have given to Taryn and me. I extend my sympathies to Joan's children—to Joanne and Jenny and to David, Peter and John—and to their many grandchildren as well. Joan, we miss you but we know you are in a far better place.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Customer Water and Wastewater Code

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.00 pm): On behalf of the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, I table the notice of amending of Customer Water and Wastewater Code made in accordance with section 93 of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009.


Tabled paper: South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009: Notice of amending of Customer Water and Wastewater Code [\[2463\]](#).


ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1159, on motion of Mr Cripps—

That the bill be now read a second time.


 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.00 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. The purpose of the bill is to enable land conveyancing transactions to be done electronically. The aim is to achieve greater efficiency in the process, removing the need to have paper documents signed and attendance at physical settlements. Consistent legislation is to be introduced in all participating jurisdictions and the first of those is New South Wales. I am guessing that there will be a reduction in costs associated with conveyancing transactions, which means in my mind—and certainly in the minister's speech on this he confirmed this—a reduction in red tape. That, of course, will benefit the constituents of the state seat of Coomera and, indeed, all Queenslanders.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (4.01 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak to the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. Everyone will benefit from the changes proposed in this bill: the purchaser, the vendor, the solicitor, the real estate agents and the furniture removalists as well as our government offices. Not only will this bill allow the sale of a property to be settled on time, it will save both the purchaser and the vendor hard earned cash. There will also be no more signing reams of paper, no more chasing justices of the peace or witnesses, no more obtaining bank cheques and no more travelling to conduct settlements. This bill will mean it can now be done electronically.

Buying a home is normally the largest purchase that people make in their lives and it should be a pleasant and exciting one. However, we all know that purchasing a property can be a dreadful experience if documents go missing or there are typographical errors on the documents. This bill will provide peace of mind to Queenslanders and make property purchasing less stressful and allow certainty for people to know the day and the time that they are going to move into their new home.

In my former life I ran my family's real estate agency Richardson & Wrench on Bribie Island. My mum is a licensed principal as is my dad, my husband and I prior to the election. I understand the difficulties and frustrations experienced by vendors and purchasers, solicitors and financiers. I understand all too well the process of buying and selling a home and the pressure surrounding the settlement at the time agreed. This legislation will allow solicitors to finalise a sale or purchase more efficiently and without incurring unnecessary costs and stress.

I would like to thank the following real estate companies for their input, particularly in my own area of Pumicestone: the principal licensee of First National, Lyn Petrohilos, and her daughter Melissa Petrohilos; and also the past principal licensee of Harcourts on Bribie Island, Ann Groat; and Chad Freshwater at Richardson & Wrench, Bribie Island. It has been fantastic to have something that we campaigned on come through in legislation. I am very proud to rise tonight to support the bill.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.04 pm): The objective of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 is to provide a legislative framework for the implementation and operation of a national electronic conveyancing system. E-conveyancing is a national electronic conveyancing system which will allow land conveyancing transactions to be completed electronically and forms to be lodged directly with the state and territory land registers. The object of national e-conveyancing is to achieve greater efficiencies and remove the need to have paper documents signed or for parties to attend a physical settlement.


The bill follows similar legislative changes in New South Wales and Victoria and is part of Queensland's commitment to the Intergovernmental Agreement for an Electronic Conveyancing National Law. These changes should benefit many in the bush who will now be able to log on and complete conveyancing transactions without the burden of travelling long distances to complete these transactions in person. However, I would like to stress the importance of getting this system right. Statistics show that 30 per cent of paper based settlements fail to proceed as planned due to errors in the cheques or paperwork. It would be an incredible waste of money and a major inconvenience for those choosing to opt into this system if all of the bugs are not addressed prior to the platform's release.

The platform for e-conveyancing is being developed by National e-Conveyancing Development, a government corporation owned jointly by the governments of Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales. It is vital that the highest standards are applied to the development of the system and reporting requirements are placed on the corporation to ensure accountability and transparency. The implementation of this system will be managed by the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council, which will also provide the ongoing management of the regulatory framework. A critical aspect to the success and efficiency of the e-conveyancing platform will be that users of the system are confident that their information is safe.

A major issue identified by the Queensland Law Society that could affect the security of the e-conveyancing platform and also influence stakeholders to not opt in to the system is a concern about the digital signature. The Law Society challenged the bill's definition of digital signature with the type of digital signature currently used in Public Key Infrastructure. Public Key Infrastructure is a set of hardware, software, people, policies and procedures needed to create, manage, distribute, use, store and revoke digital certificates. In its submission, the Law Society pointed out that the legislation does not appear to give the same standard of encryption as that provided by a Public Key Infrastructure system. In the public hearing the Queensland Law Society raised this issue again and pointed out that many solicitors are only one- or two-man operations. Considering the onus of repudiation of a digital signature rests heavily on the subscriber as prescribed by section 12(4), I believe the Public Key Infrastructure System presents a higher standard encryption method that will give subscribers greater confidence in the platform.

As pointed out by the Australian Bankers Association, one of the factors that will determine the success of a national e-conveyancing system is the uptake by the finance and conveyancing industries. In the explanatory notes it is stated that the government expects that the cost of implementing the system will be exceeded by savings made through the reduction of paper used in transactions. If subscribers are not confident in the security of their signatures, then this will affect the number of people who choose to opt in and logically affect the savings that will be made. The last thing the government needs is to wear the cost of a national system that fails because industry is not confident in the protection of their digital signature.

The final issue I would like to mention is comments made by the Queensland Law Society in relation to a lack of consultation over amendments to the Land Act 1994 and the Land Title Act 1994. Although the changes are minor and largely uncontested, it is imperative for good governance, especially considering Queensland has only one House, that the government takes every opportunity to provide transparency and accountability to the legislative process. There is a growing perception in the community that this government is rushing legislative changes, which has led to some commentators observing that the government is avoiding accountability and scrutiny and passing legislation faster than cars travel across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. I believe that perception can be a very damaging thing to a government. I urge the minister and his colleagues to take note of the consistency with which this comment about a lack of consultation appears in the committee submissions.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.09 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012. First, I commend the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Andrew Cripps, for bringing this important bill to the House. This will bring property conveyancing in Queensland into the modern era. As a valuer and member of the Australian Property Institute, I have no doubt that this bill is something that anyone who sells or buys property has been waiting for with bated breath for many years.

The introduction of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 will ensure that the process for completing property settlements will be much smoother. Electronic conveyancing will be revolutionised when it comes to buying and selling property in this great state of Queensland. The Newman government is continually looking for ways to streamline processes and ease the burden of red tape, and this bill ensures that it keeps happening. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 will ensure that the process of transferring title to real property will be easier to complete and that it will be harder to make mistakes.

It is pleasing to represent the people of Chatsworth in a government that is encouraging efficient and effective processes to complete important legal documents. The Newman government is committed to taking advantage of increasingly cutting-edge technology to cut down the burden on individuals who are engaging in a property transaction. Maybe this approach could be considered by the seven fiscal deficit deniers in the ALP opposite me today, who in their 20 years of government introduced reams and reams of bureaucratic red tape.

What will this bill mean for my electorate of Chatsworth and other electorates throughout Queensland? It will mean that constituents and businesses will be able to purchase or sell their slice of heaven much quicker. There will be no need to sign mountains of paperwork or sign multiple copies of the same documents such as transfers and mortgage documents. Electronic conveyancing will also ensure there is no need for a bank cheque to be acquired.

Completing a property transaction electronically cuts down on the risk of important legal documents being lost. Additionally, there will be no more need to move legal documents physically within an office or to another location when things can be done electronically. This will obviously save both time and money. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 will cut down document control issues significantly.

After 20 years of an incompetent ALP government hammering people wanting to do business in Queensland with more paperwork, red tape and control nonsense, this bill will bring the benefit of certainty when completing property transactions in this great state. Unlike those opposite, we understand business. Members should look at the curriculum vitae of ALP members to see how insular their working lives have been. They are indeed victims of the ALP's shallow-gene-pool preselection processes. It is almost as though you need to have a conceded pass in remedial economics to even stand for preselection.

As recently as yesterday in the House the Minister for Housing and Public Works was highlighting to members the sheer IT incompetence of the former Labor government. What is in the water cooler at the Peel Street politburo? Do the terms 'open architecture' or 'cross-platform compatibility' resonate? When in government, the Labor Party brains trust could not pay many of their health workers accurately or even arrange an integrated travel booking system let alone undertake electronic conveyancing reform. They can rant as much as they want, but the people in businesses that I represent in Chatsworth want genuine reform with government processes and transactions. I am privileged to be the member for Chatsworth in a government that wants to actively encourage property transactions in Queensland.

The Newman government is clearly demonstrating a commitment to encouraging individuals and the business community to once again get on and do business in Queensland. By offering the option of web based electronic conveyancing we will ensure greater validation and accuracy of important property transaction documents. Mistakes and delays with important paperwork can often lead to a delayed settlement, costing the vendor and the purchaser of a property. As we all know, when people sign a contract to purchase a property it becomes a very important, legally binding document, and any hiccups in the paperwork can be deleterious financially.

Without the option of electronic conveyancing people will have no choice but to ensure property settlements are still finalised, to continue to physically attend to the essential paperwork at a particular time. It is indeed time to bring Queensland into the 21st century and give Queenslanders the choice to conduct their property settlements electronically. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 will ensure the integrity of the data when completing a property transaction.

Using electronic methods is nothing new in Queensland. The Registrar of Titles has kept electronic information since 1994. It is just disappointing that the former ALP government in 20 years could not get this legislation going to make the overall process more fluid, yet the Newman government will do it in under 20 months. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill will provide benefits not only for the individuals who engage in property transactions or the solicitors. Electronic conveyancing will also have a positive flow-on effect to financial institutions and staff in the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. Again, maybe this is a lesson for the seven ALP members across the chamber to learn about IT being used productively, as opposed to their bungled Health payroll system. Indeed, this bill will ensure solicitors can also represent clients from any location in the state of Queensland or across Australia.

Again, on behalf of the Chatsworth electorate I wish to thank the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Andrew Cripps, for bringing to the House an easier way of doing property transactions in this great state. As a property professional with a valuation degree and a masters degree in property economics, I thoroughly commend this revolutionary bill to the House.




Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (4.14 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 and acknowledge that it could potentially deliver great benefits to the isolated and remote areas in the north-west of Queensland, in the electorate of Mount Isa. The tyranny of distance between these centres and major regional cities on the

Queensland coast has long been a hindrance for out-of-town investors looking for high-return rental properties, people transferred to Mount Isa or Cloncurry wishing to sell their properties elsewhere, and graziers and commercial business owners and managers who work with banks and real estate agents on multimillion dollar contracts.

The convenience and execution of e-conveyancing offers a quick-fire solution to vastly reducing the time limits between the signing of a contract and the final legal and financial approval of a property sale. I worked in a valuation business for 15 years all over the state—two years in Brisbane, Townsville and Mount Isa—and for seven years I owned my own business. So I was pretty close to the action when it came to property transactions. Continually we had issues. With declining staff numbers in even Townsville, Mount Isa and Cloncurry it became increasingly difficult to get good advice and to process paperwork. Issues also arise in terms of titles when we start to talk about title searches for freeholding lessees selling properties under that leasehold tenure that require ministerial consent. There are often lengthy time delays. I get a lot of people in my office complaining about those things. Anything that takes us in the right direction will lead to improvement for people in remote areas.

I also acknowledge that this bill will bring us into line with New South Wales and Victoria. Interstate nuances can often be frustrating and costly. I also commend the minister on retaining the current, old style paper conveyancing procedures until such time as e-conveyancing is unilaterally accepted, because some people have a lot of problems with it being phased out. Most of the other issues have already been addressed by previous speakers. I guess the major point is that this is a positive move forward. I commend the minister on the bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Before calling the minister, I remind honourable members that it is incredibly discourteous to walk in front of speakers who are on their feet. I encourage members to remember that, particularly given that they would not like that to happen to them.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.17 pm), in reply: I thank members for their participation in this debate. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law (Queensland) Bill 2012 provides a legislative framework for the implementation of a national electronic conveyancing system in Queensland—a reform that will enable more efficient and streamlined processes for land conveyancing transactions while maintaining the effectiveness and security of Queensland's land titling system.

The passage of the bill will achieve the necessary legislative framework through two key components. First, the electronic conveyancing national law, which was recently enacted in New South Wales and has been adopted in Victoria, will be applied to Queensland. Secondly, the bill will amend the Land Title Act 1994 and the Land Act 1994 to provide the necessary links between the national law and existing legislation providing for land titling transactions in Queensland.

The adoption of the electronic conveyancing national law in no way erodes Queensland's current land laws. The state's land laws and the fundamental principles of Queensland's secure land titling system will be unaffected by the application of the national law. This is clearly expressed in the objects of the national law itself.

I also reiterate that the bill will not introduce e-conveyancing as a compulsory method of transacting in land. Any person who is party to a transaction with land, whether buying, selling or mortgaging, will be able to complete the conveyancing aspect of the transaction in the same way as they would do at present—that is, by signing the appropriate documents and then lodging the documents for registration. This paper based system will continue to be available to members of the public and to the lawyers who represent them in conveyancing transactions.

Queensland has worked cooperatively with other jurisdictions for a number of years to bring about a seamless electronic means of transacting with land as desired by industry. National e-conveyancing will benefit Queenslanders in a number of ways. Legal practitioners who become subscribers to use e-conveyancing will benefit from the replacement of manual processes with electronic processes which can be conducted entirely from their office. For example, they will not need to prepare paper documents for execution by clients and arrange attendance at a physical settlement to exchange bank cheques and documents. This should mean more expeditious finalisation of transactions and therefore—God willing—smaller costs to their clients. Clients of legal practitioners and financial institutions that are subscribers will benefit from the greater accuracy and certainty in settlement arrangements that will result from the automated processes in e-conveyancing. There will be particular benefits in rural and regional areas as legal practitioners will not have to be

involved in settlements at a great distance from their place of business. Those legal firms and financiers operating across state borders as well as Queenslanders transacting with parties in another state will also benefit from the national availability of this system and its links to each jurisdiction's land title registry. E-conveyancing should significantly reduce the cost of doing business for subscribers and therefore reduce the cost of accessing these services for individuals and businesses.

I thank all members for their contributions to the second reading debate and thank all members for their support of the legislation. I might just respond to a couple of points made by members during the course of the debate. The member for Mulgrave said in reflecting on the widespread support of both sides of the House for this bill that it was a good example of cooperative federalism and how cooperative federalism can work and called for a mature debate, and I suppose the member for Mulgrave made those comments in light of a number of other public debates on public policy issues that are currently underway in Australia. Nothing that I said in my second reading speech could have been construed as politically provocative in recognition that this legislation is uncontroversial, so if there was any politically motivated comment during the course of the debate then I suppose the member for Mulgrave can take credit for it. I might point out that the Commonwealth government is not involved in the implementation of this legislation, and that is possibly something that we can be grateful for given its abysmal track record of successfully negotiating and implementing national partnership agreements over recent history. I say again: the federal government is not involved in this initiative and that is something that I believe will give comfort to all Queenslanders.

The member for Dalrymple in his second reading contribution to the debate made it absolutely clear once again that he does not listen to the second reading contributions of ministers when they stand up to respond to committee reports and submissions that are made to committees when they consider bills before the parliament. He certainly did not listen or at least understand the response that I made to the parliament during my contribution to the second reading debate because I addressed the concerns that had been raised by the Queensland Law Society in its presentation and submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee during its consideration of the bill. The member for Dalrymple has now established a pattern of behaviour whereby he comes in here and he repeats the submission of an interest group made during the committee process. I suppose this is an opportunity for me to explain to the member for Dalrymple that ministers are now obliged to respond to committee reports and submissions to the relevant committee during their second reading contributions to the debate. So if the member for Dalrymple is capable of listening to ministers when they stand up and respond to committee reports and submissions made to committees in the second reading debate, he may better understand the new process that the parliament has adopted for the consideration of bills before it. That would be useful for the time of the parliament, all members participating in the second reading debate and certainly the Hansard staff.

Once again, I acknowledge the work of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in reviewing this bill, and in particular its chairman, the member for Lockyer. I want to acknowledge the efforts of my staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines who have worked cooperatively with other jurisdictions over several years on the national e-conveyancing reform process, including formulating the national law which will be adopted by this bill. I also acknowledge the contribution of the Australian Registrars National Electronic Conveyancing Council, the Queensland Law Society, the Australian Bankers Association and other stakeholders that have provided valuable input into this initiative. 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 50, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.25 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. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.26 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.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 November 2012 (see p. 2491).

Second Reading

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (4.26 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I firstly thank the Health and Community Services Committee for its prompt consideration of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and note that the committee tabled its report on the bill on 7 February 2013. I table a copy of the government's response.

Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 15—Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [\[2464\]](#).

I note that the committee's first recommendation is that the bill be passed. The government accepts the committee's recommendation and I thank members of the committee for their consideration of the bill. In addition, the committee has drawn three additional recommendations to my attention and I want to respond to those matters now. The first matter relates to a range of issues raised in evidence about ecotourism facilities that are to be addressed in a future policy framework. Consistent with the committee's recommendation, I want to provide the House with further details on the development of the implementation framework. As I stated in the House on 13 November 2012 when I introduced the bill, a comprehensive framework and associated procedures will be developed to support the implementation of the provisions relating to ecotourism facilities on national parks. This implementation framework will include, among other things, a robust and transparent process for assessing ecotourism proposals; a model for determining rental arrangements; criteria and lease conditions against which a lessee's performance will be evaluated; and clear procedures on how leases will be administered. This will ensure that investing in ecotourism ventures in Queensland is attractive to investors while at the same time ensuring high-quality products and the continued protection of our national parks. The implementation framework will be developed by June this year to support the subsequent finalisation and release of the expression of interest for sustainable ecotourism investment initiatives. The release of the expression of interest is one of the government's six-month action plan items for January to June 2013, and I am pleased to inform the House of the scope of the consultation regarding the development of the implementation framework for ecotourism leases.

My department is currently working with other key departments, such as the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to develop the draft framework. I will then release the draft framework for a consultation period to provide the tourism industry and other sectors of the community with the opportunity to review the framework and provide feedback to the department. This approach will provide an opportunity to ensure that the implementation framework meets the needs of the industry and the broader community in addressing the issues outlined in the committee's report relating to assessment criteria, public notification periods, approval processes and leasing conditions. This is in contrast to the former Labor government, which went out to the market with an expression of interest without having contemplated the legislative change required to make the proposal attractive to investors. That expression of interest failed to attract any investment. This government is righting the wrongs of the past. We have listened and we will continue to listen to the needs of the tourism industry at forums such as DestinationQ. In this bill we have laid the foundations for successful investment opportunities in ecotourism.

The committee also asked whether public comment will be sought on applications for each lease or authority for an ecotourism facility and the arrangements that will apply to trigger public comment on proposals. Public comment will be sought on applications for ecotourism facilities in the vast majority of cases. However, from a practical point of view public comment may not be needed for some minor proposals, such as a proposal to build a small lock-up canoe shed in an already developed site. Invitations for public comment will be triggered by existing processes that will apply to ecotourism facility proposals. For example, in most cases it is likely that public comment will occur under the regulatory impact statement process in regard to the regulation required to be made to allow for the ecotourism facility use. However, for a large scale proposal, public comment may also be triggered as part of an environmental impact statement process. Public comment may also be invited as part of the process of seeking local government development approval for the facility, if required, depending on the nature of the specific proposal and the applicable local government planning scheme.

In response to the committee's inquiry regarding what arrangements will be put in place to specify who is responsible for the rehabilitation of the site of an ecotourism facility when an operator leaves the facility and what rehabilitation is required, I can confirm that the implementation framework will address these matters. Arrangements will be put in place to specify who is responsible for the rehabilitation of the site when an operator leaves and what rehabilitation is required. These processes can be given effect by means such as lease conditions, performance criteria and rehabilitation bonds. The individual arrangements will depend on the nature and scale of the particular facility. Generally, if an ecotourism facility ceases to operate, all traces of the development will need to be removed and the site restored to its previous condition. However, that may not be necessary if another party takes over the facility and assumes full responsibility for that site. The supporting implementation framework will also set out a monitoring and compliance strategy to ensure that lease conditions are met. This strategy will be developed in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in recognition of its role in enforcement and compliance under the Nature Conservation Act.

In regard to assessment processes for proposed ecotourism facilities, the amendments provide clear criteria on the type of ecotourism infrastructure that will be allowed without constraining innovation. Proposals will be assessed by the chief executive officer of the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing against the requirements of the act, including the definition of an ecotourism facility. The implementation framework will include guidelines that further specify design and management standards that are consistent with the presentation, appreciation and conservation of the land's natural condition and cultural resources and values.

Under the provisions of the Nature Conservation Act, the chief executive may also require an environmental impact statement to be prepared for these facilities. This provision could be triggered. However, this would be on a case-by-case basis. The implementation framework will also provide appropriate criteria for assessing the public interest of any ecotourism facility proposal. Public interest considerations will include assessment of the need that is to be served by the facility, its impact on the amenity of the area, its effect on general community access and on other recreational and commercial opportunities in the park and adjacent areas, its impact on other landholders and businesses, long-term viability and the level of commercial return to the state. I would also add that any ecotourism facility in a national park will need to comply with the requirements under all relevant local, state and Commonwealth legislation. This includes the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 as well as the requirements of the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 and the state's Native Title Work Procedures.

In addition to the rights afforded to Indigenous people under the legislation I just mentioned, this bill provides further opportunities to empower traditional owners. I would like to thank the member for Woodridge for her question during the committee's public hearing and I refer to page 5 of the transcript about—

... the possibility of this legislation opening up opportunities for Indigenous people... We are looking at ways our Aboriginal and Islander people can actually be self-sustaining, have income ...

This potential was also highlighted by the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation in its submission to the committee as follows—

Traditional Owner groups are increasing their operational interest in National Park management in some areas and many have aspirations to develop tourism businesses within National Parks. The amendments appear to remove some real and/or perceived impediments.

This bill certainly enables traditional owner groups to develop ecotourism facilities in national parks that not only deliver an income and economic benefit to Indigenous people but also allow them to promote their culture to Australian and international visitors alike. By allowing the opportunity for such investment, this government is empowering Indigenous people to invest in their own ecotourism economic opportunities and aspirations for their land rather than having them dictated by the government. An example of how this might be achieved has been developed in Western Australia at the Karijini Eco Retreat in the Karijini National Park, which operates in collaboration with the traditional owners and the Western Australian government. Visitors to the retreat are also made aware that their tariffs contribute to the conservation and management of the park.

In addition to being able to propose and invest in ecotourism facilities themselves, this bill gives traditional owner groups the ability to jointly authorise proposals from other proponents in conjunction with the chief executive officer where the proposal concerns Aboriginal land, including Indigenous joint management areas. These amendments recognise Indigenous people as the landholders and provide the ability for the government to work in partnership with them regarding the establishment of ecotourism facilities on their land.

The committee also requested that I inform the House of the type of assessment criteria that will be used to ensure that the area and time frame provided under an occupation permit in a state forest is appropriate. Given that the removal of the seven-year time frame and the 10-hectare limitation on occupation permits is the only change—the only change—to the nature of these permits under the Forestry Act, the assessment criteria that are currently used will continue to apply and I can outline the key criteria for the information of the members today. Uses must be consistent with the cardinal principle to be observed in the management of state forests, which is—

... the permanent reservation of such areas for the purpose of producing timber and associated products in perpetuity and of protecting a watershed therein.

Uses must be consistent with any existing permit, lease, agreement or contract granted or made by the state in respect of the same land. My department will ensure that state forests continue to be managed to achieve a balance between the use of the forest resource and the carrying out of other activities. Uses under occupation permits must be a legitimate use of forestry land where the activities carried out do not compromise existing management strategies, rights or potential higher-priority purposes for the area.

In relation to determining the appropriate area and time frame for a permit, the following additional principles will apply. Permits are to be generally granted for periods of up to 20 years for the most permanent infrastructure and for shorter periods reflecting the expected life of the infrastructure in relation to semipermanent or temporary uses. Cases that may warrant a period of longer than 20 years due to an expected life beyond that term will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

As is currently the case, administrative plans will define the permit area which corresponds to the footprint of the infrastructure being approved under the permit. Procedures will allow for uses on a state forest which involve a rolling development program, for example coal seam gas infrastructure, to be permitted under a single permit which is amended as infrastructure is commissioned and decommissioned. This approach has been developed to meet the operational characteristics of this type of infrastructure. The amendments to the Forestry Act further rectify the tangled web of red tape strangling industry under the former Labor government. The occupation permit impediments it placed on public and private infrastructure meant that not only would proponents have to lodge multiple permit applications for the same piece of infrastructure multiple times over the life of the infrastructure, but that taxpayer dollars would be spent assessing each and every one even though it produced exactly the same outcome. These amendments will remove these impediments. Scaremongers, including those opposite, will say that this will open up the gates for coal seam gas into our state forests. This is simply not true. Coal seam gas infrastructure is already permitted in state forests and was under the former Labor government as well. There are more than 350 well sites in Queensland state forests without these amendments in effect. As I have already outlined, under the proposed changes proponents will still be required to undergo the same rigorous application process but the amendments will avoid the unnecessary and burdensome duplication of the impediments imposed by the former Labor government.

I now turn to the final matter raised by the committee relating to concerns as to whether it is possible for an occupation permit in a state forest to provide exclusive rights to occupy all or part of a state forest. I am pleased to inform the House about the operation of occupation permits on state

forests and whether it is possible for an occupation permit to grant exclusive possession. As noted in the committee report, the primary purpose of state forests is to be for timber production and watershed protection, allowing for a number of secondary purposes including grazing, conservation, recreation, apiary sites, infrastructure and mining. Occupation permits are used to manage the often competing uses on state forest lands. Occupation permits are issued over areas as mapped on administrative plans. These permit areas show the actual footprint of the infrastructure being approved under the permit and there is no proposal to allow larger areas of state forests to be occupied as a result of the proposed amendments, only a streamlined process.

Standard conditions of occupation permits also provide that the state, and any other person otherwise authorised by the state, retain the right of access to the permit area, except in cases where safety or other factors would make this undesirable. For example, at times telecommunication towers are contained behind fences to prevent people climbing on the towers or being exposed to other risks. In these cases physical exclusion of other users from the infrastructure is a sensible precaution. However, the occupation permit is not limited to the exclusive use of the grantee, it also provides for co-location within this area. If, for example, another telecommunications provider sought to install infrastructure in the same location arrangements provide for this use to be co-located on the existing tower rather than another tower being erected. In circumstances where an occupation permit is issued for a pipeline or electricity corridor, the land would continue to provide for other uses to occur on the surface of the land, for example grazing or recreational activities, provided they are compatible with the operation of the infrastructure for which the occupation permit is granted.

As I have stated previously, this bill and the proposed legislative amendments it contains are essential in delivering a range of key government commitments and priorities, as well as providing positive outcomes for the community, business and government. The reality is that these amendments will see the Newman government succeed where Labor previously tried and failed. Those opposite are being deliberately obstructionist to this government getting Queensland back on track. This government is not so small-minded. We are open to a world of possibilities. We are creating the conditions to allow private enterprise to be creative and innovative and to allow our state to achieve its great potential. We are opening up great opportunities for our great state. We will not be so presumptuous as to tell industry or consumers what to think or where to go, like something out of a George Orwell novel. The former Labor government did exactly that. In 2009 it investigated seven sites to be released to an expression of interest process. They selected the sites, the terms and the type of investment it would consider. Ownership of the assets was to be retained by the state government, another aspect of their groupthink policies. No site progressed beyond the expression of interest stage. Proponents cited the restrictive nature of the proposed development, state ownership of the assets and overly prescriptive terms as factors which constrained their ability to obtain finance. Without finance, there is no investment. The lack of security of tenure was also cited as a disincentive to investment.

This bill proposes amendments to the Nature Conservation Act that will cut the red tape which has been strangling the struggling Queensland tourism industry. This government is willing to listen to industry, as it already has done at the first DestinationQ forum in the first 100 days of this government and will continue to do so with another forum announced for later this year on the Gold Coast. This government is looking for innovative ideas which will enhance the experience of our national parks and attract more investment in our parks so that we can get on with the important task of park management. We know that those members opposite are no friends to park management. We know that under the former Labor government, just 17 per cent of Queensland's protected areas had management plans. We know that the former Labor government rapidly purchased all the land it could grasp with no transparent assessment of its quality, no resources and no plan for its future all in the name of an arbitrary percentage target for a glossy brochure.

Amending the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to provide for the authorisation of ecotourism facilities on national parks will contribute towards meeting this government's commitment to provide increased access to national parks as well the DestinationQ commitment to improve opportunities for ecotourism in national parks. This amendment will provide an attractive investment environment for potential investors, allowing for privately owned permanent ecotourism facilities with a secure tenure, whilst retaining a focus on the continued protection of the natural and cultural assets of our national parks estate. In turn, this will create opportunities to deliver additional world-class ecotourism experiences in Queensland, with associated flow-on economic and social benefits to communities across the state. Those opposite will repeat the arguments of their friends from the Greens. They say there is no demand for this kind of investment. These amendments were developed in response to

industry who are in the best position to determine whether or not there is a demand. They say that such proposals cannot work in Australia. But there are already several successful examples in Australia, such as the Cradle Mountain Huts in Tasmania which have been operating for 25 years. They say it will unfairly compete with existing off-park businesses.


I would like to comment on two submissions to the committee, in particular that submitted by the Noosa Parks Association and that submitted by the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society, which Dr Aila Keto also presented on behalf of as a witness at the committee's public hearing. Both of these organisations, it should be known, operate ecotourism businesses or services on or adjacent to protected areas which are leased from the state government and either pay a peppercorn rent or pay no rent or fees at all. Dr Keto stated at the public hearing, and I refer to page 13 of the transcript of proceedings, 'our businesses are successful and we understand why many other businesses in the surrounding area are not. I think those issues need to be addressed rather than changing the rules to make it easier.' Dr Keto is entirely correct. It is easy to see why ARCS accommodation businesses at Springbrook are successful with a peppercorn rent and a coveted spot on the steering committee that recommended to the former Labor government that it purchase the properties at the height of the market. It is understandable that the Noosa Parks Association and the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society would oppose legislative amendments that would enable private enterprise to compete with their privileged arrangements devised under the former Labor government.

The bill also provides for amendments that deliver on the government's commitment to reduce red tape and regulatory burden by streamlining the processes for authorising pre-existing service facility infrastructure on national parks. Providing this simplified process will result in a reduction of the current administrative complexity associated with authorising this service infrastructure. A reduction in processing time for applications will result in benefits to both industry and government, while still maintaining the necessary assessment processes to ensure our lands continue to be managed into the future for the benefit of all Queenslanders. In addition, removing time and area restrictions for occupation permits on state forests will provide significant benefits to both government and industry by simplifying the way permits are administered and managed. This process will allow one permit to be issued over a larger area and for the life of a project, reducing the administrative burden and complexity that has previously existed, without compromising the integrity of the rigorous assessment processes that are currently in place.

The final amendment, repealing the Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977, will result in the removal of unnecessary legislation in line with the government's program of streamlining and reducing regulation. This amendment will not impact on current access arrangements for the public into Brisbane Forest Park areas, the majority of which is now included in the expanded D'Aguilar National Park. In fact, it will lead to more flexible and positive coordination between land managers to deliver a better outcome for Queenslanders.

This bill is about cutting red tape and listening to industry instead of dictating to it. This bill is about providing opportunities for Indigenous people to take control of their own economic livelihoods. This bill is about enabling innovative investment by reducing red tape to grow our four-pillar economy and get Queensland back on track. I commend the bill to the House.

A government member interjected.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.52 pm): That is very unlikely. The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 potentially represents the largest change in the management of Queensland's national park estate since the declaration of our first national park at Mount Tamborine in 1908. Of itself, the bill lays the foundation for the transformation of public parks into private retreats and risks the environmental value and heritage of the parks themselves.

For the record, the Australian Labor Party is not opposed to low-impact ecotourism opportunities. I will say that again: the Australian Labor Party is not opposed to low-impact ecotourism opportunities. However, those opportunities must be underwritten by best practice environmental protection, good business models and thorough stakeholder engagement across the entire spectrum of interested parties. These amendments are high-risk changes from a government that has minimal environmental credentials. This government is determined to pursue profits at the expense of the considered stewardship of Queensland's protected areas. This government simply cannot be trusted to look after our national parks.

Members of this chamber should be in no doubt that the Australian Labor Party unequivocally opposes the core of this bill and all the inferred intentions justifying it. This bill gives effect to four main changes. It amends the Nature Conservation Act in order to open up our national parks to rampant development under the guise of ecotourism. Secondly, it alters the Forestry Act 1959 to remove the

seven-year maximum term and 10-hectare maximum area limits on grant of permit to occupied land in state forests. This makes it easier for CSG miners in particular. Thirdly, it makes relatively minor amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to simplify the process to address service infrastructure within national parks. Finally, it repeals the Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977.

Before I move on to describe the opposition's objections to the core of this bill, I point out that I am perhaps uniquely placed in terms of experience to discuss the practical issues associated with the management of major conservation areas such as national parks. From 1995 up until relatively recent times, I was responsible for the management of the largest and most significant environmental site on the east coast south of Cooktown, namely the Shoalwater Bay military area, which covers 454,000 hectares and includes complex terrestrial, marine and major offshore island systems. It is enough for me to say that there is not a single policy or practice issue that might be relevant to national parks that I have not been accountable for or dealt with in my previous working life. Therefore, I know what I am talking about when it comes to making decisions and justifying them in highly sensitive locations. I know what it is to conceive a project, plan it and deliver it in a high-value area that triggers all of the automatic components of the EPBC Act less the nuclear action trigger. It is from that experience that I am able to draw direct comparisons to the management of state forests and national parks.

Returning to the bill, I will deal quickly with the two elements of the bill to which the opposition does not object. On the service infrastructure component, the opposition accepts that these are fairly minor and logical amendments to the Nature Conservation Act that are designed to correct an unforeseen problem with the original wording. It makes sense that the existing service infrastructure should be assessed in a different manner than the construction of new infrastructure. I echo the submission of the National Parks Association of Queensland on this matter, which stated that these amendments are straightforward assuming that the authorisation is subject to an assessment and not automatic, and the interest in the land is clearly constrained to the facility in question. I note that appendix 2 of the committee report addresses those concerns, stating—

The authorities granted under the amended process will continue to be time-bound, subject to assessments of impact, and confined strictly to the facility and its immediate access.

I would like to thank the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for providing such detailed responses to the submissions, particularly on this specific issue. In short, the changes to the treatment of the existing service infrastructure in national parks are one aspect of the bill for which the opposition has no concerns.

The opposition is also broadly supportive of repealing the Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977. There is no point in unused legislation remaining on the statute books and, therefore, it is entirely logical to legislate for the repeal of that act. Unfortunately, ecotourism facilities are the crux of the bill. The opposition is opposed to the opening up of public parks to grand, unrealistic and potentially damaging projects. The opposition believes that ecotourism can be a welcome activity in national parks, but this proposal goes well beyond anything that we believe is appropriate. Already there are a small number of private ecotourism facilities within Queensland's national parks. Perhaps the best known is the Cairns Skyrail. The Skyrail has been a tremendous tourism drawcard for the Cairns area and demonstrates that it is possible to find the right balance between environmental sustainability and ecotourism development.

The opposition would be willing to support across Queensland similar proposals that are capable of openly demonstrating the same balance. In fact, as has been pointed out earlier, in 2009 the previous Labor government began a trial program for further ecotourism facilities in and near national parks. Seven demonstration sites were identified and expressions of interest were opened for several of them, with detailed sustainability requirements included. This was a careful, cautious and considered approach to managing tourism within our national park estate. It was an approach that ensured the protection and conservation of our natural heritage was still the main reason behind the management of our national parks, which comprise less than five per cent of Queensland's land area. That contrasts greatly with the current government and the current minister. The legislation we are now considering goes much further than assisting new projects to meet the same high standards of sustainability that have been achieved with the Cairns Skyrail.

The Newman government's changes essentially open up all the national parks to the prospect of large scale developments. I could not oppose these changes more vehemently. They represent a gross threat to the conservation of Queensland's national park estate and they reduce the ability of

members of the public to enjoy our natural heritage. This government's determination to allow developers into national parks ignores two important principles which are absolutely essential to the preservation of environmental value.

During estimates last year I tried to discover whether the minister could describe in his own words the cardinal principle. I did not receive a convincing answer. The cardinal principle states that the purpose of national parks is to provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values. It is pretty clear that the cardinal principle does not figure strongly in the minister's decision-making processes. His answer during estimates involved falling back on standard hyperbole and bluster. I can only surmise that he was unable to explain this relatively simple concept. That may have been enough to bluff through 2012, but the minister has now been in the job for more than a year.

This legislation also seems to pointedly ignore the precautionary principle—the idea that when considering a course of action that has a suspected risk of harm to the environment the proponent should be required to prove beyond doubt that it is not harmful. Once again, when I asked the minister about this during the estimates process last year he gave a vague answer. In fact, while blustering he said, 'We are opening up our national parks and we make no apology for doing so.' He further said, 'We are open for business.'

Everything is a sound bite to this government. That five-word phrase more than perhaps anything else shows the stark contrast between Labor and the LNP. This government's application of these principles appears to be like the notion of being half pregnant. In fact, these principles are either applied or they are not applied—there are no half measures. In order to apply them one firstly has to understand them. It would give me great comfort if the minister could stand in here later on and confirm that he will apply the precautionary principle to every decision that he makes in relation to national parks derived from this legislation.

Unlike the minister, I do not think national parks are primarily about businesses. Unlike the LNP, we in the Labor Party think national parks exist to preserve and protect our natural heritage and not provide profits to wealthy LNP associates and holidays for people whose idea of getting back to nature is leaving the hair dryer at home.

Just to make sure that there is no doubt, the Labor opposition insists that the primary purpose of national parks is the protection of biodiversity for future generations. We believe in the ongoing expansion of the national parks and protected areas in this state so as to ensure the long-term survival of an endangered species and broader biodiversity in this state.

A government member: This is a policy, Bill?

Mr BYRNE: You can take it as what you like. The opposition believes that national parks must provide comprehensive and representative, intact samples of all Queensland vegetation types and habitat for all native fauna. As a matter of policy, the Labor opposition rejects any proposal for development in or adjacent to a national park that is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the national park's value. The Labor opposition pays particular attention to the retention and protection of high wilderness value areas and, in doing so, supports the comprehensive statutory protection of such wilderness areas being in place and being retained within the provisions of this act. The Labor Party is implacably opposed to the prospect of national parks being degraded by a free-for-all of development. Under the provisions of this bill, Queenslanders will be left in the invidious position that they will have almost no idea of what developments could be approved in national parks.

I have had this speech ready for quite a while—this debate has been a while coming—and I had been planning to point out that the government had not released the policy framework which will underpin this legislation. So when I saw that the Minister for National Parks and the Minister for Tourism were out on the Speaker's Green putting on their robes, lying down having a bit of a nap, I thought I might need to make some changes as a result of what was contained in the documents released yesterday.

After reading the draft ecotourism document that was released I was relieved that I did not really need to make any changes to this speech because it is not a policy framework for national park management, it does not set out what developments would be allowed in national parks, it does not even pay lip-service to conservation. The truth is that that draft policy is not a conservation document at all, it is a tourism plan. It does not contain any safeguards for national parks. It does not contain any guidelines for ecotourism developments. It does not contain any assurances that national parks will not be privatised.

It is pretty clear from this document that the minister's media stunt was not the only time that he has been lying down on the job. He clearly has not been focussing on nature conservation if that is the policy he has developed to allow private companies to build in national parks. So I am still waiting to see this comprehensive policy framework that the minister has promised will come to underpin this legislation because what has been released so far is entirely unsatisfactory and a joke.

These legislative amendments are deliberately broad. This means that they potentially open the way for all manner of developments. The explanatory notes explain that at least some developments will not be allowed—golf courses, amusement parks or casinos. That certainly leaves a lot of options still on the table, including large resorts with significant sewerage, transport and power requirements, tourism developments that could result in significant clearing of protected area and habitat or the like. Moreover, there are absolutely no requirements under this legislation that would require ecotourism operators to return that land to its original state once the lease has expired. I note the minister's comments earlier on, but the legislation does not necessarily reflect that.

I wonder whether the minister really expected people to read the explanatory notes and say, 'There are going to be no golf courses, no amusement parks and no casinos. That will fine then.' The minister is asking the people of Queensland to trust the Newman government. But Queenslanders have realised that this government cannot be trusted—just ask the 14,000 workers who were sacked without warning or the community organisations whose funding was unceremoniously slashed.

If the government is determined to press ahead with this terrible idea of allowing permanent private tourism facilities in national parks, at the very least it should have waited to introduce this legislation until they had completed the policy framework to implement it. At least then Queenslanders would have had a real idea of what potential developments could happen in iconic national parks.

Is this a good way to promote ecotourism? It is another piece of particular good fortune that Queensland happens to be the home of the world's leading ecotourism expert Professor Ralf Buckley from Griffith University. In fact, according to several criteria, including a number of publications, the impact factor of journals, citations and honorary appointments, Professor Buckley is the world's top ecotourism researcher. So Professor Buckley is better qualified than anyone in this chamber to comment on whether this bill will increase tourism and have any effect on the national park itself. Let me quote from his submission to the committee—

Private tourism development in public parks would not achieve the stated intention to boost Queensland tourism and State revenue—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr BYRNE: You can always speak.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Rockhampton, can you please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr BYRNE: Certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker. I continue—

... because most parks are too remote from high-volume gateways and have no internationally unique high-volume attractions.

Some Queensland parks do indeed have both good access, and international recognition as World Heritage Areas, but the World Heritage Convention generally does not permit new development with ecological or cultural impacts.

To boost park-based tourism, the best approach is public investment in maintaining trails, lookouts, toilets and signage in national parks, and private investment in accommodation on adjacent private land.

Approaches used to promote and manage tourism in parks are not fully transferable between countries, but international examples do not support the Bill's approach.

So here we have the world's foremost expert on this topic telling us that, firstly, the idea has not worked overseas; secondly, it will not boost tourism; and, thirdly, public investment in national parks would be a better way to increase visits. I should not be at all surprised that the Newman government is seeking to replace public investment with private profiteering. The still secret Costello report says, after all, that everything is up for sale. The minister even admits that international tourism to national parks has been falling across the world in recent years, not just in Australia but in the United States, Japan and everywhere else. I have some news for the minister—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, the conversations are getting particularly loud. If you wish to have a private conversation, can you take it outside, particularly those who might be close to my right.

Mr BYRNE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I encourage them to stand up and get on the list. I am happy to have any number of contributions to this debate. So we know that this sort of investment in national parks around the world is not delivering anything like what has been stated as the intention of this bill, and there is no evidence that it will.

In essence, this legislation is an admission by the minister that he is incapable of actually delivering the public investment—that is getting the money through the budget—for the public infrastructure that our national parks require. Instead he wants to outsource this to the private sector—a private sector that will be more concerned about profits than protecting our precious natural environment.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, of which Australia is a signatory to and all of us are therefore bound to, sets specific targets on the amount of land which is protected from development in the interests of securing biodiversity. It is an ambitious target—that 17 per cent of land across the world will be conserved as protected areas by 2020. It sets us a goal to work towards in Queensland, even if we still have a long way to go. It appears though that the Minister for National Parks and the Minister for Environment have given up any hope of expanding Queensland's national park estate.

It took a Labor government to understand the importance of Queensland's natural environment and set about cordoning off areas of the state for permanent protection. In 1991, only 2.1 per cent of Queensland was in our national park estate. This was just two years after Wayne Goss won government and ended 32 years of conservative mismanagement of our environmental heritage.

Queensland's first national park was declared in 1908. That means that in the 83 years to 1991 just 0.025 per cent of Queensland was added to the national park estate each year. When Labor left office last year, over 4.7 per cent of Queensland was national park and 6.8 per cent was protected in some way. This means that Labor expanded our national park estate approximately five times faster in the 21 years between 1991 and 2012 than the previous conservative governments did in 83 years. But there is still a long way to go, and the people of Queensland have absolutely no faith in the Newman government to expand our national parks. Instead they want to sell off the ones we already have to the highest bidder.

They are also opening up our state forests to logging and clear-felling. These areas of Queensland set aside for protection that may eventually end up in our national park estate are being endangered by this government's callous approach to biodiversity. This government is so confused on the issue of conservation that it does not even have a single minister dedicated to the task. Instead they have three ministers with divided and fragmented responsibilities. The Minister for National Parks is responsible for existing national parks—and he wants to flog them off to developers. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has a responsibility over our state forests—and he is opening them up to logging. The Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection is responsible for the acquisition of new land for our national parks. This minister cares so little about the national park expansion that he has removed the performance measure for the area added to the national park estate.

This is a trio of ministers who simply have no respect for Queensland's environment, yet they are charged with protecting it. In fact the Queensland environment minister does not even believe in climate change, so forgive me if I am a little sceptical when ministers talk about putting science first. A man who will not accept the overwhelming scientific consensus on the most important environmental and economic issue of our time has absolutely no credibility when it comes to science based environmental decision making.

Let me refer to the CSIRO. It is imperative that we properly manage our existing national park estate in light of climate change. In October last year the CSIRO released an updated version of its report, *The implications of climate change for Australia's biodiversity conservation and protected areas*.

Mr DICKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would like to know what the relevance is to this bill.

Mr BYRNE: This has got to do with the sustainable—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Rockhampton, I am making a determination on the point of order. It is not necessary for you to interject across the chamber at the minister. I would ask that you stay relevant to the long title of the bill.


Mr BYRNE: I will endeavour to do that. The CSIRO made certain observations in terms of obligations for the management of national parks. This is directly related to the philosophy and implications of what this bill is about. This report stressed that climate change would have massive

impacts on Australia's environment and biodiversity. It called for a rethink on the management of our national parks and protected areas, recognising that they would all be affected by climate change in ways difficult for us to predict. Therefore, it is extremely important that we manage our protected areas to deal with these changes. We can no longer expect national parks to remain frozen in time. Instead we must recognise that there will be changes which are beyond our ability to stop.

It is more important than ever that we increase our national park estate. This would allow us to potentially transplant species that may no longer be able to survive in their original habitats. It reduces the risks of wide-scale species loss by ensuring that there are large areas of the state that are only minimally affected by human development. The proposals that we are looking at today from this government are heading in completely the opposite direction. They propose to expand the urban footprint right into national parks.

Opening up our national parks to private development in this manner is a bad idea, and it is especially problematic now. Whether we like it or not, humans have an effect on our natural environment and we can unknowingly and unwittingly endanger species survival. Over 100 years ago the Queensland government preserved the first small piece of Queensland against future development. Bit by bit our national park estate has increased over that period, especially in the last 20 years. It is frankly moronic to completely up-end the abiding principles that have underpinned the management of our national parks for 105 years, especially when Queensland is facing an environmental threat of a considerable scale in the form of climate change.

Let's not beat around the bush. In essence, the primary purpose of this bill is to amend the act to allow privately funded ecotourism facilities on certain classes of protected areas. These amendments are not the product of consultations with experts on conservation or the management of world-class national parks. It is simply a policy position derived from engaging a single stakeholder with no broad base of community support underwriting that arrangement. It is of concern to me that the good old-fashioned country party of the 1950s seems to be coming to the fore again. Let's grease up the bulldozers and remember if it moves shoot it and if it doesn't chop it down. Queensland cannot allow further risk to the environment by ill-considered commercialisation of our national parks. This bill should not be passed.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (5.19 pm): I enjoy a robust debate but, by crikey, it is hard to argue with rubbish. Prior to the 24 March 2012 election the LNP presented detailed policies to the people of Queensland to consider. These policies provide the outcome for which we as a government strive and against which we are delivering. One of those policies was a commitment to invest in the environment. That policy document states—

We will make **National Park management** a priority, concentrating on maintaining biodiversity, weed and pest management—we will deliver improved conservation and improved access for tourists and all Queenslanders.

This was not a secret. This policy statement was not only made very available but it was also promoted by the LNP team widely as part of a broader focus on the environment. Queenslanders voted with their feet and they made a very clear decision to support our well-considered and balanced policies that we presented to them to consider. Public consultation—how much more open, transparent and consultative can you get than to take a policy to the people?

A further commitment by the LNP team going into the last election, and now actively being introduced by the LNP government, was to reduce red tape. Again, this was a well published and distributed commitment. We are now delivering against this commitment and unwinding the cumbersome, tangled web of legislation and regulation that has tied up ingenuity and entrepreneurship in Queensland for a long time.

Tourism is a major income earner for Queensland and draws cold, hard currency from outside our economy. It is important to develop such an important source of income and to do whatever we can to not only support and secure this income, but to make every effort to grow it. A major growth area for tourism worldwide is ecotourism. Queensland has opportunities to expand our ecotourism footprint, to develop new jobs and to grow our economy. One of the first things this government did was to hold a conference in Cairns that focused specifically on tourism called DestinationQ Forum. One of the opportunities identified during this forum for tourism operators was to allow access to national parks for ecotourism opportunities. This is yet more proof of this government's commitment to seek feedback and act on it where we can do so in an environmentally and economically sensible way.

This bill delivers on our pre-election commitments to the people of Queensland—no secrets and no hiding; open, upfront and transparent. The Auditor-General's Report to parliament No. 9 for 2010: *Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas*—and I ask members to please listen to this—showed that only 17 per cent of Queensland's protected areas had management plans under the former Labor government. It seems Labor developed its green credentials using smoke and mirrors. An area about the size of Tasmania was used by Labor to buy green votes under the guise of real outcomes that turned out to be nothing more than broken promises and an idea. That sounds like what the Prime Minister is doing right now with Gonski. If the Greens studied the substance of Labor's efforts, they would see that it is this government that is delivering real, considered and balanced outcomes for them, not Labor. To back up my claims regarding Labor's actions in playing the Greens for a fool and talking the talk but not walking the walk, let me present an independent authority's opinion. This year the Auditor-General tabled a report entitled Report No. 2 of 2012-13: *Follow up of 2010 audit recommendations*. It states—

The 2010 audit made seven recommendations. The department accepted all but one recommendation. The department partially accepted recommendation number 4, indicating it will consider options when reviewing the Master Plan.

The former Public Accounts and Public Works Committee has reviewed the audit report No. 9 for 2010—*Sustainable management of national parks and protected areas* since it was tabled in October 2010. In its *Report No. 8—Review of Auditor-General's Reports—January 2010 to December 2010*, the committee said that: '... it remained concerned that so few of the management plans have been completed. However, in view of the fact that the department had committed to implementing the audit recommendations the committee would await the results of the follow-up audit before assessing whether further action is required.'

The report goes on to say—

More than 18 months after report No. 9 for 2010 was tabled, the department has implemented only one of the seven recommendations made in the original audit report. Overall progress is not satisfactory given the department's acceptance of the 2010 recommendations and its commitment to act by October 2011.

Further, the Labor minister at the time of the 2009 Auditor-General's report remarked that it would take 30 years and \$60 million to complete management plans for them all. As this evidence shows, it seems the former government locked up land with no plan for its future and did not allocate resources for the management of feral animals and weeds, which have a great detrimental effect on Queensland's national parks and the threatened plant and animal species that the opposition is claiming to be trying to protect in opposing this bill. Need I say more? The former Labor government paid lip-service at best to national parks. Labor has no credibility. Let me repeat that: Labor has no credibility when it comes to the management of national parks. In contrast, I know that the Newman government, under the leadership of Minister Dickson, has already started work on a draft master plan for our protected areas. This bill is evidence that when we say we will do something, we will do it. We deliver on our promises and we do not need smoke and mirrors and hollow platitudes to fool people into believing us. Without question, in 12 short months we, the LNP, have built up more credibility in relation to common-sense management of the environment than Labor did in 20 years in government.


This government is setting the stage for success in the ecotourism industry by allowing them to be creative and innovative. We are not dictating to them how to build and run their business, unlike the former government, which prescribed in great depth many useless pieces of red tape that businesses were required to follow for no apparent practical purpose. I would also like to draw the attention of members to the comments of Daniel Gschwind, CEO of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, at the committee's public hearing. Mr Gschwind said—

... tourism and the natural environment have a symbiotic relationship. The idea that somehow tourism is a white-shoe brigade type enterprise that tramples all over the environment is simply not contemporary any more.

Mr Gschwind continued in his comments to highlight that it is simply not in the tourism industry's interest to cause damage to the environment because that is the asset around which they are structuring their businesses to showcase. It would be counterintuitive to destroy something they are marketing as their major asset or point of difference. Given the level of economic illiteracy that Labor often displays, I am fairly confident that this concept is lost on them as a legitimate economic model.

I thank the minister and his staff and the staff of the department for their hard work and efforts to bring this bill before the House. It is a well-considered and balanced bill and has sufficient checks and balances to ensure quality outcomes for Queensland and the global community.

Finally, I want to again thank the committee secretariat. We often thank them for their efforts and help, but I want to make special mention of the staff because when this report was being written, the committee's workload was quite large. So I thank them for their extra efforts and attention to this report. I definitely support this bill.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, introduced by my colleague Minister Dickson. What a breath of fresh air this legislation is for the silent majority whom I represent in the tiny embattled village of Springbrook, which is located in the Gold Coast hinterland in my electorate. It may be a small village—and getting smaller all of the time and threatened with extinction—but its 650 residents have big hearts and they are fighting back. Their beloved village has been disappearing before their eyes, all because of a 2006 secret grubby deal when Peter Beattie sold out the local residents for a preference deal with the Greens, under the spectral shadow of Aila Keto and ARCS.

To seal the deal with the Greens, around \$40 million of taxpayers' money was spent supposedly on rainforest restoration. But it has not been used to buy rainforest land but to buy out land used for homes, farms and businesses. To illustrate this madness, houses bought by the state, including historical homesteads, have since been demolished or left to slowly rot, waiting to be reclaimed by the rainforest.

According to a report in 2008, there has been an unknown number of plant extinctions in the past 100 years in Springbrook which may have irreversibly changed the environment, making restoration impossible. The report goes further, saying that the natural pollinators and dispersers may have disappeared and that the overall genetic diversity could have fallen below critical levels. Indeed, even Aila Keto herself, from the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society, was quoted in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* as saying, 'It is impossible to know if complete restoration is possible.'

So why has all of this taxpayer money been spent when there is little chance of restoration? Why has this tiny community been singled out and sold out when it is not going to make much difference to the environment? This is yet another example of Labor and the Greens doing secret, grubby deals to the detriment of taxpayers.

Under an LNP government, national parks will be better managed with easier access for visitors and they will deliver real conservation benefits. This will benefit Gold Coast hinterland towns such as Springbrook, which relies on nature based tourism while other businesses in the township have been rightly concerned about the declining number of visitors to the area as a result of the Beattie-Bligh government's \$40 million land grab, which was done under a cloud of secrecy and started as far back as 2005.

The Labor Party has already given \$40 million of our hard-earned taxpayers' money to a group, ARCS, that cannot finalise a plan and took from 2008 until 2011 to produce even one report and thus far has shown no evidence of environmental outcomes, despite signing a restoration agreement in August 2008.

Labor dropped the ball in managing our parks, as was mentioned by my colleague, with the Auditor-General finding back in 2010 that just 17 per cent of protected areas have management plans. This report highlighted what we already knew: there was no plan for Springbrook and ARCS had no accountability to the government or to the people of Queensland, despite the provisions dictated in the restoration agreement. Unlike Labor, the LNP is committed to delivering green outcomes, not chasing Greens preferences.

Springbrook is a small but very passionate community. Residents vented their anger over the demolition of 13 homes in the hinterland community that should have been heritage listed, but they were left with no resolution in sight. However, they were shocked to discover that all that was left of the traditional farmhouse built by the Hardy family in the early 1900s was debris. The destruction of Kanimbla brought some long-term residents to tears.

The Health and Community Services Committee, of which I am now a part, received a submission from the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society. It would be remiss of me not to comment on the contribution from ARCS. I table the submission.

Tabled paper: Submission from the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society to the Health and Community Services Committee regarding the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [[2465](#)].

First can I say that as the member for Mudgeeraba I have never had the opportunity to meet with Ms Keto. In fact, at one stage I actually had to send Channel 9 Gold Coast News and Tom Vergotis down her driveway because she would not come and speak to anybody. I have been asking questions about ARCS since 2005, so we are now eight years down the track and the elusive Aila Keto is yet to meet with me. I wonder if she would have turned up to speak to her submission before the committee if she knew I was going to be there. We will never know now. I do, however, note her comments on the social impacts of ecotourism in Springbrook. She states—

Whatever such a framework might be, the fact remains that there will be a private enclave within a national park that is the exclusive domain of paying guests of the facility and from which the general public who own the park are excluded.

Guess what? Thanks to her spending frenzy in Springbrook, just about every property on Repeater Station Road was bought up and, indeed, Aila Keto is the one who has the private enclave as it is one of only a few houses left on Repeater Station Road which has pristine, multimillion-dollar views of the heritage listed national park.

I move on to the economic impacts raised in her submission. I really had to try not to splutter over my Corn Flakes on this one! It states—

A tourism facility within a national park will have a commercial advantage over nearby accommodation facilities, outside the national park, with which they will directly compete. This could cause closure of such accommodation businesses and produce an overall reduction in tourism locally with a flow-on impact on other businesses dependent on tourism.

I can tell you categorically that the cause of the economic impacts on Springbrook tourism and businesses is a direct result of ARCS, Aila Keto and her mismanagement and their reckless disregard for others. This is nothing more than the pot calling the kettle black. ARCS already has a commercial advantage in Springbrook, as the minister mentioned, over businesses such as the Mouses House because it does not have any overheads and it pays peppercorn rents.


This legislation will open up Springbrook for everyone. It will enable people to get up to Springbrook, and no gates will be locked under this government. This is a great piece of legislation. I also look forward to working with the Health and Community Services Committee so we can redress the hysteria of the Greens and Labor over Springbrook. The hysteria continues, with Aila Keto and the Greens making preposterous claims about logging in Springbrook. I table a recent article from the *Courier-Mail* titled 'Conservationists say Springbrook in the firing line as the State Government prepares to open national parks to logging'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 16 April 2013, titled 'Conservationists say Springbrook in the firing line as the State Government prepares to open national parks to logging' [[2466](#)].

I am sure the hysteria will commence yet again about a cableway in Springbrook. As the local member I have always said that we would not revisit the former plan of 2001 but we will look at all options for sustainable ecotourism and we will make sure proper processes and environmental impact studies stack up. I welcome suggestions to the draft plan released this week by the minister. I table for the benefit of the House comments made this morning in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* by Minister Stuckey in an article titled 'Ecotourism plan may allow a cableway' so that the gangrenes up in Springbrook cannot run off and put words in the LNP's mouth and create their usual mischief and misrepresentation.

Tabled paper: Online article, dated 18 April 2013, from goldcoast.com.au website, titled 'Ecotourism plan may allow a cableway' [[2467](#)].

I wholeheartedly support this legislation and the draft ecotourism plan, and I encourage everyone who wants to reopen Springbrook to contribute to a plan for environmentally sustainable ecotourism in what is one of Queensland's great wonders, Springbrook. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (5.34 pm): I rise to make an enthusiastic contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is an expression of the Newman government's commitment to increasing recreation and ecotourism access to national parks so they are available to be enjoyed by Queenslanders and the wider world.

The diversity and uniqueness of Queensland's national parks are without peer. From the serene lushness of the Springbrook and Bunya national parks to the breathtaking vistas of Whitehaven Beach and the 74 islands of the Whitsundays National Park to the primeval beauty and remoteness of Carnarvon, Queensland is blessed with some of the world's most captivating national wonders.

As a member of the Health and Community Services Committee I believe that the opening up of our national parks will be a part of a real and sustainable future for our national parks. It will contribute to the state's ability to maintain and improve our wonderful natural assets while contributing essential funding for the management of the asset.

In contrast to the Newman government's approach, the 2010 Auditor-General's audit concluded that the former department of environment and resource management had systems in place to conserve the state's natural and cultural heritage and to manage protected areas; however, these systems were sadly not applied consistently across the regions. The audit identified that only 98 of the 576 protected areas had park management plans and that the department was not monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the extent to which its actions were protecting the park's values.

Instead of prudent management of our valuable natural resources, Labor just continued to lock up land, including that with very little conservation value, to meet a percentage target of their failed Q2 strategy with no plans for the land's management. True conservation of our important environs is not about locking up vast tracts of land, throwing away the key and planting a big 'keep out' sign at the front gate. In fact, this is the sort of world view advocated by Labor and their friends with benefits, the extreme Greens. An ideology that is so ruinous and damaging to our natural environment, this lock-out mentality sees humans as the enemy, considers any human interaction with nature as inherently evil and simply allows feral animals and feral weeds to run riot, vital fire trails to become dangerously overgrown and useless, and land care to be physically untenable.

To truly love and want to protect the environment, people need to be able to experience its grandeur. They need to see it, to touch it and to experience the majesty of the environment. Without this, people simply become postcard tourists—chardonnay adventurers without any real connection to or real passion for the land.

Having had the privilege of travelling on holidays to both the USA and New Zealand and spending a lot of time visiting their amazing national parks, I was able to see firsthand the benefits for the tourist as well as the environment that the opening up of national parks to private tourism enterprises has wrought. The first of these nations I would like to examine is one of our closest neighbours and our Commonwealth cousin: New Zealand. This is a nation that prides itself on its natural environs. In fact, its marketing catchcry is '100% Pure New Zealand'. Obviously a nation that places such a high priority on the purity of its environment would be totally opposed to any commercial activity on or in its national parks! Nothing could be further from the truth.

New Zealand has a thriving commercial activity partnership model called concessions. In New Zealand, a concession is an official authorisation to operate a commercial activity in an area managed by the Department of Conservation. It is primarily an environmental protection mechanism authorising operators, subject to conditions and charges, to conduct private and commercial activity on conservation lands. These activities include accommodation facilities, transport services, guiding, bungee, rafting, ski fields, attractions and services. Concession holders pay concession fees to the DOC that are used to provide funding for ongoing work and the management of their national parks.

A recent study commissioned by New Zealand's DOC looked at the financial, employment and social benefits of concession tourism in three sensitive environmental regions—namely, the Taupo-Ruapehu district on the north island, the Nelson-Tasman district and the stunning Southland-Fiordland district. The study showed that these three areas and their concessions contributed over \$110 million to the New Zealand economy, employed over 1,020 full-time equivalent positions and added over \$53 million worth of value to local communities, including over \$30 million of household income. The study also showed that employment of locals was seen to be beneficial, as permanent local residents already had accommodation, were more settled workers than short-term employees, lived nearby, had inherent local knowledge and appreciated the area.

The second nation I want to highlight is the USA. The US has successfully had a concessional commercial activities program in its parks for well over 110 years despite what those opposite would say. This has been a very successful program. In fact, the reason there is a strong outdoor wilderness culture within the US can be directly attributed to its strong use and endorsement of environmentally sound commercial activities within its national parks. The use of this type of public-private partnership includes the world's first national park, the legendary Yellowstone National Park which has, in the last year alone, had over 3.3 million individual visits. What activities are provided to these visitors by these private-public partnerships in Yellowstone? There are nine hotels and lodges offering over 2,000 hotel rooms or cabins, five concession operated camping grounds providing some 1,700 camping sites, nine visitor centres and museums, and a marina providing private moorings as well as boat and kayak


hire. These activities and the subsequent visitors to the park provide 4,000 jobs in Yellowstone, including 780 National Park Service personnel and over 3,200 employees who work directly for the concessions.

In 2007 my family and I had the incredible experience of visiting the Grand Canyon National Park and were able to see firsthand the associated concessional activities provided at that park. These included hotels, canyon chopper rides, the skywalk, rafting and the legendary canyon mule rides. The mules, I am sure members will be glad to know, were spared on my family's visit as we took the chopper tour rather than traumatise the poor beasts of burden with lugging me up and down the canyon. The Commercial Services Program of the National Park Service administers more than 500 concession contracts across the nation, including the monitoring of their performance as well as ensuring their environmental accountability. With gross receipts totalling over \$1 billion annually, these national park concessioners directly employ over 25,000 people in the hospitality industry during peak season and indirectly provide tens of thousands of jobs in surrounding communities and in support services across the nation.

By welcoming the private sector as a partner in park operations, the National Park Service broadens the economic base of the region in general and the communities surrounding the parks in particular. One other benefit of these concessions is the financial imperative or the vested interest of the concessions to maintain, if not, enhance their local environmental offering. The popularity of environmental tourism that these activities encourage also increases patronage and increases the funding available for maintenance and management of the parks themselves. Given the economic benefits demonstrated both in the US and New Zealand to local communities, as well as the obvious environmental outcomes that a strong environmentally sensitive partnership can foster, I commend Minister Dickson for thinking outside the narrow extreme green paradigm and green preference model the Bligh government was wedded to for developing a common-sense policy that ticks all the environmental boxes while creating Queensland jobs and generating much needed income.

Tourism is one of the government's four economic pillars, making an estimated \$18 billion contribution to the Queensland economy while providing much needed support to our regional and remote communities. Our national parks play a vital role in supporting this industry's growth, particularly with regard to the ecotourism opportunities they provide. The tragedy has been that as an ecotourism destination Queensland has been left behind—far behind—despite our natural competitive advantages. All the while we in Queensland have procrastinated, other states across Australia and our South-East Asian neighbours have been successfully offering new and exciting ecotourism experiences for visitors and providing more attractive and secure investment models for industry.

The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will provide a new and flexible legislative framework to allow the Queensland tourism industry to compete with other jurisdictions in this market. It will provide jobs—and, more importantly, local jobs—and ultimately will benefit the environment by providing recurring income streams that allow for better management, infrastructure and maintenance of our wonderful natural environment. Our national parks are a key asset for the future growth and development of ecotourism in Queensland and the ecotourism amendments in this bill will pave the way for new opportunities to attract both domestic and international visitors to Queensland to experience the natural beauty of our state. I commend the minister and his team for their hard work in developing this innovative legislation and wholeheartedly commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (5.45 pm): Today I rise as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak on the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Aside from my membership of the Health and Community Services Committee, what other qualifications do I have to speak on this bill? My qualifications come from direct personal and practical application tempered with sound risk management processes that are based on fact, not based on preference buying or emotions. I have had over 30 years experience with the Australian Army. During that time I exercised and operated in many high-value, environmentally unique, sensitive and, in some cases, pristine areas across our nation and abroad but largely centred on those in Queensland including, but not limited to, Shoalwater Bay training area, Cowley Beach training area, Tully-Millstream and Koombaloo Dam, to name a few. I have been involved in a full range of activities in these areas that include light infantry operations, entry from air and sea, airborne—parachute and air land—air mobile, amphibious, motorised and mechanised utilising equipment from the shanks pony in the mark I GP boots through to the M1 Abrams tank, light and medium lift helicopters, field and medium artillery and even fighter ground attack aircraft!

Defence has for many decades been custodians of these unique environments, as we heard tonight from the member for Rockhampton, and has well-developed management plans that have enabled it to use these areas in a sensitive and sustainable manner to ensure they remain in tiptop shape, environmentally protected and—what is more important—available for use by subsequent generations of soldiers. So members might understand my feelings of incredulity when I heard the member for Rockhampton and shadow minister for national parks—and I add a former comrade in arms of mine and a serving officer of similar rank and similar duration—speak against this bill for the simple reason of maintaining Greens support for their few remaining ALP seats. My point is this: here we have a member opposite—and the shadow minister for national parks no less—who has had 30 years experience and been a practitioner in the use of military force, combat power, tactical manoeuvre and while doing so, as outlined in his contribution tonight, been responsible for the environmental and sustainable management of military training areas including one that is significant in size, uniqueness and sensitivity of its varied habitats. Yet he speaks in this debate about the inability of this government and this legislation to manage the sensitive and sustainable development of ecotourism in Queensland's national parks.

We can easily see the member for Rockhampton's intent here. It has zero to do with the protection of the environment and everything to do with maintaining ALP relationships with the Greens. When the member for Rockhampton got up this morning, perhaps he should have put underwear on when he donned the emperor's cloak. Not for a moment do I suggest that any future proponent who utilises the opportunities of this legislation to develop ecotourism adjacent to or within our national parks is going to be driving there in an M1 tank and constructing the Siegfried line but merely to demonstrate that, with smart planning, targeted legislation and presenting financial opportunity, sensitive and harmonious use of such areas is possible while protecting its uniqueness and sustainability for generations to come. This bill aims to provide greater ecotourism in, for and to Queensland's national parks. The tourism industry has clearly identified the current inability to allow for these types of facilities on national park tenures and it has historically been a key impediment to attracting investment in ecotourism. These are opportunities that Queensland is missing out on. As such, these opportunities are now marketed elsewhere in Australia and overseas. Our own tourism industry has clearly identified a demand for purpose-built, low-impact ecotourism projects on and adjacent to national parks.

This bill also follows the mandate of three election promises of the Newman government, but largely it is about cutting red and green tape—or, for the benefit of those opposite, I will describe the colour as watermelon. The bill will enable innovative and environmentally sensitive investment to grow our four-pillar economy, of which one is tourism. Low-impact infrastructure ecotourism will provide new opportunities to attract domestic and international visitors to Queensland. As we have heard earlier, tourism makes an estimated \$18 billion contribution to our state's economy and our national parks play a critical role in supporting the industry's growth. Tourism proponents and reviews of other jurisdictions have identified three crucial elements in the development of ecotourism: the ability to acquire an interest in land against which finance can be attained, for the interest to be granted for a period of time that was reflective of the level of investment and modelled returns, and the ability to develop permanent ecotourism infrastructure in national parks.

The department also advised the committee that ecotourism is an emerging trend in national park management elsewhere in Australia and overseas. The Queensland Tourism Industry Council stated that it was supportive of the bill and the opportunities that it will provide to Queensland and our tourism industry. Its CEO, Daniel Gschwind, stated that the data shows the following—

More than 50 per cent of all international visitors to Australia list national parks as one of their experiences...

He stated further that tourists want to experience the action from within the park, not from the outside.

However, this amended legislation is about more than international tourists; it is about the domestic and local markets that are equally important. Research conducted by Tourism Australia last year showed that international visitors ranked rainforests, forests and national parks in the top 5 most appealing attractions in Australia. There are no prizes for guessing which state has the lion's share of these attractions across a multitude of environments, including the littoral, Wet Tropics, dry tropics, subtropical and savanna. Mr Gschwind also stated that there is a symbiotic relationship between tourism and the environment. He argued that the industry and visitors have driven protection and conservation of national parks and he disagreed with suggestions that privately owned ecotourism would have a negative impact on national parks.

Further, already this government has rationalised and simplified the type and process of permits for entry and activities. This legislation is part of our campaign commitment, which the people of Queensland voted for, to improve access for Queenslanders to our national parks. Therefore, it is understandable that it is in the best interests of everyone, whether that is the tourism operator or the tourists themselves, to protect the environment for generations to come. We can learn from the experience of other conservation parks. It has been proved in the past that if people can experience firsthand the wonders of our environment they come away with an emotional connection, an understanding and respect for our environment. That experience engenders stewardship and sustainability, not exploitation. Not all submissions argued that authorising ecotourism facilities would be effective in attracting significant tourism numbers or revenue. One, as we have already heard tonight, was from Professor Ralf Buckley. However, he also indicated that the most effective way to boost tourism is to increase investment in national parks and to maintain facilities such as trails, lookouts, toilets and camping areas.

The bill provides a broad framework to enable the chief executive of the department, and also the Indigenous landholders where parks include Indigenous land, to authorise ecotourism facilities in national parks. The chief executive can give such authorisation only if he or she is satisfied that the use will be in the public interest, is ecologically sustainable and will provide to the greatest extent possible for the preservation of the land's natural condition and the protection of the land's cultural resources and values.

The department has advised that the Nature Conservation Act includes provisions for environmental impact statements, public consultation and third-party appeal rights. However, let me look at the previous Labor government's record. I can point out that Labor obviously does not hold the same views as the Newman government in cutting red tape and enabling investment to grow the tourism industry. As we will hear tonight and already have, members of the opposition have attacked this bill, claiming that allowing ecotourism in national parks will have a negative impact on our national parks. I find that quite hypocritical, considering that during their last term in government they failed to adequately protect Queensland's national parks.

I refer to the Auditor-General's report, about which we have heard earlier, of the then Department of Environment and Resource Management, which found that, whilst systems were in place, they were not applied consistently and had weaknesses. The key findings were that park management plans were in place for only 98—that is 98—of the 576 protected areas for which they are required under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. The master plan had not been updated since it was issued in 2001, despite a requirement for a review and process evaluation of that master plan every five years. The monitoring data across regions varied in quality, quantity and timeliness and there was a lack of evidence that the data was validated. That 2010 audit made seven recommendations. DERM accepted all but one of those. However, more than 18 months after the report was tabled the department had implemented only one.

I must also mention the duplicity, because although the members of the opposition slam us for even considering providing opportunities to boost ecotourism, when they were in government they also looked at ways to boost ecotourism in national parks but failed because their policy, as with many of their other policies, was not well thought out. A pilot project in 2009 called for expressions of interest for a number of potential sites to establish nature based ecotourism accommodation on or adjacent to national parks. However, the accommodation was required to be low-impact and semipermanent and removable. They are well-intentioned principles. However, the idea was that the accommodation was to be built by the investors but their ownership retained by the state. This was done under a 15-year commercial activity agreement with a possible extension of 15 years. Needless to say, owing to those restrictions there was some interest, but no proponents were willing to submit a full proposal owing to concerns about commercial viability and the length of tenure. Analysts of the pilot and the outcomes of approaches in other jurisdictions found that commercial viability would be significantly improved by allowing sustainable ecotourism infrastructure authorised under lease with a term matching the level of investment risk and potential return on investment.

In summary, unlike Labor, the Newman government is aware that there has to be commercial viability in order for proponents to invest in ecotourism in national parks. That is why this bill is about cutting the watermelon coloured tape and allowing innovative investment in our national parks. Protecting ecotourism will significantly increase growth in our tourism industry and the local communities that surround these national parks. It will promote access, provide unique tourism attractions and opportunities for visitors, both national and international, to experience our national parks. It will generate stewardship, a sense of pride and, because of its value, encourage

sustainability. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my committee colleagues, the secretariat, all submitters to the inquiry and the minister for putting forward this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Before I call the next speaker I advise the House that we are sitting all the way through and there will not be a dinner break.

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.57 pm): I rise to oppose the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill has nothing to do with conservation. It has everything to do with the Newman government's relentless obsession with inappropriate development at any cost. If we were being accurate this bill would not be titled as it is; it would be titled the 'Nature Conservation Travesty Bill 2012'.

The Labor opposition opposes this bill. We will be opposing it on the grounds that it is a gigantic environmental leap backwards based on flawed economic logic, as my colleague the member for Rockhampton has outlined already. I will confine my comments to two main issues with this bill. Firstly, the amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 open up our national parks to development under the attempted disguise of ecotourism. Secondly, the amendments to the Forestry Act effectively make it easier to mine in state forests, particularly with regard to CSG.

This bill will be another addition to the Newman government's shocking and devastating environmental record—not at all green, let alone the greenest, as the minister contends. In fact, those opposite have embarked on the systematic dismantling of environmental reforms that were enshrined in law over decades by successive Labor governments. For the benefit of the House, let me detail the Newman government's environmental record: overturning a 23-year-old ban on uranium mining despite the Premier's commitment to the people of Queensland, watering down historic protections for Queensland's precious wild rivers, allowing open shooting season on threatened flying fox species, axing the waste levy, cutting funding for the Environmental Defenders Office, slashing coastal protection law, abandoning Labor's moratorium on oil shale mining, axing every single renewable energy project in Queensland and, in the LNP's own words, taking the axe to tree-clearing laws.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order. Again, relevance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for South Brisbane, I would ask that you confine your comments to the long title of the bill. It would appear to me that those comments were not entirely within the long title of the bill and I would ask that in your remaining time your comments are solely related to the bill.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I shall. This is the Newman government's record on protecting Queensland's environment so I guess it would not be surprising that we now find this 'Nature Conservation Travesty Bill' before the House, a bill that abandons the cardinal principle of national park conservation which, according to the minister's own departmental website, states that the purpose of national park is to provide to the greatest possible extent for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values. Nowhere in this bill is there consideration or thought for the permanent preservation of national parks. Indeed, it is clear that the LNP's only priority is to permanently preserve the support and financial backing of its developer mates.

I would like to be able to say that this bill takes us back to the Bjelke-Petersen days, but that would be unfair to the Bjelke-Petersen era. When it comes to environmental destruction Mr Newman has outdone his own political hero. In fact, between 1977 and 1979 under Premier Bjelke-Petersen's reign the amount of land declared as national park in Queensland doubled. I issue a challenge to those opposite to meet the record of their former political heroes. In 1975 Bjelke-Petersen established the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service incorporating the management and protection of national parks into the Department of Primary Industries. Previously all national parks had been administered through the forestry division.

Indeed, the protection and conservation of our most important environmental assets, including national parks, historically received bipartisan support. It was Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser who intervened to prevent sand mining on Fraser Island and who proclaimed Kakadu a national park. But the urban Liberal Party of Queensland are gone. They are themselves an endangered species replaced by the likes of Newman, O'Farrell and Baillieu, who have all led their newly elected conservative governments to view national parks as just another opportunity to make a profit, which is exactly what this bill seeks to do.

There is no hiding from the fact that climate change is also a factor that should be considered when working to protect and manage our national parks. The CSIRO last year released a revised version of its report, *The implications of climate change for Australia's biodiversity conservation and protected areas*, which stressed the need for governments to not only maintain current protected areas but expand protections to ensure that we can respond to the unpredictable effects of climate change. But we all know from the introduction of this bill, with its expansion of development and mining in national parks and the proposed changes to the way in which remnant and regrowth vegetation in Queensland is managed, that this government is not only walking away from any action on climate change; it is running a million miles an hour. The Newman government has completely rejected any responsibility to contribute to action on climate change. We know that the LNP is not convinced by the science. The 74 sceptics who sit on that side of the House somehow magically outweigh—they know better than—80,000 climate scientists around the globe who will attest to the real and serious threat of climate change. Even as sea temperatures in the Great Barrier Reef continue to rise—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for South Brisbane, I have already asked you to keep your comments within the long title of the bill and I am not sure how the Great Barrier Reef is relevant. I would ask that you be relevant as I have already directed you to do so.

Ms TRAD: National parks are also at the heart of protecting and supporting Queensland's threatened species. The loss of a species can have enormous and long-lasting effects on the biodiversity of an entire region. I note that those opposite are laughing at the extinction of Queensland species and I want it recorded in the parliamentary record that they are finding this a cavalier issue. However, protecting threatened species is not simply an ecological issue; I believe it is also a moral obligation. Professor Tim Flannery recently wrote a quarterly essay titled *After the future: Australia's new extinction crisis* which articulated the moral and ethical imperatives to protect threatened and endangered species. In reference to the extinction of a species of bat formerly found on Christmas Island Professor Flannery stated—

The demise of a bat may not weigh greatly in the balance of human wellbeing, but it speaks volumes about the human soul. Do we wish to be the despoilers and executioners of the natural world? Or do we want our children to have the opportunity to enjoy a world as bountiful and diverse as the one our parents bequeathed to us?

What a significant and relevant quote when one considers this government's decision to allow shooting of Queensland's bat species. Professor Flannery later went on to state—

Money—big money—that's the only thing that matters now, and everyone and everything holding back the flow of cash needs to get out of the way. Whether it's fertile farmland, marine sanctuaries, important nature reserves or even national parks—in Australia all are increasingly negotiable, so long as the money's right.

I think that quote perfectly describes the thought process behind the development of this bill—the blind pursuit of profits to the detriment of everything else. As the person tasked with being the champion of Queensland's environment it is interesting to note the environment minister's weak position on the importance of national parks and protecting threatened species. Remember this is the minister who thought it was wise to announce the issuing of damage mitigation permits to shoot threatened flying fox species on National Species Day. This is the environment minister who put out a release celebrating the fact that the population of critically endangered northern hairy-nosed wombats at Epping Forest National Park had doubled in the last 10 years. He celebrated the fact without acknowledging that this had happened under the previous Labor government. It is Labor's decision that is largely credited with increasing the population of hairy-nosed wombats at Epping Forest National Park. Had this government and this weak environment minister been in charge in 2009 or earlier, this bill shows they not only would have failed to protect the hairy-nosed wombat but also would have most likely looked to build a massive resort on their precious habitat. Clearly Minister Powell is happy to trumpet the success of national parks but is unwilling to lift a finger to actually protect these critical ecological areas.

It appears that Mr Powell is the hairy-nosed wombat of environment ministers across Australia. You will not see him standing up for Queensland's environment and is often asleep at the wheel.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order. Again relevance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Bear with me for a moment, Minister. I would contend that those comments are unparliamentary and I would ask you to withdraw. The minister has also raised a point of order about relevance. This will be the third time I have asked you to stay relevant to the long title

of the bill. I will warn you if, in your remaining time, you do not stay relevant to the long title of the bill. As I have said, your comments about the minister were unparliamentary and I have asked you to withdraw.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. In my summation, it was interesting to note that previous members throughout this debate had referred to Professor Ralf Buckley, who is a professor at the International Centre for Ecotourism Research. I think that some selective quoting from Professor Buckley was used to back up some arguments, but if you look at his submission to the inquiry he went to great lengths to outline the policy, the economics and a whole range of other issues and concluded that granting rights to private entrepreneurs to build facilities inside public parks will not achieve the goal of this bill and would generate a wide range of negative social, ecological and political consequences. Quite frankly, this is just the start. I suspect it is only the beginning given that this minister is reviewing all of the national parks that have been gazetted since 2002. Once there was a time in Queensland when the Liberals would stand up to the Nationals when it came to the environment. No longer is that the case. The Liberals in Queensland are gone and because of that the environment does not have the champions inside the LNP that it should.



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I belong to Katter's Australian Party, the KAP. We consider ourselves a freedom party. We certainly endorse more open use of national parks by all Queenslanders. Core value No. 11 of our party is—

Vacant land such as State Forest and some unallocated lands and seas now designated as 'off-limits' are to be owned and accessible by the people. They are not the exclusive domain of the 'Crown'.

It is our hope that this legislation will open up national parks to more people, not just an elite few. Access to parks is a very relevant issue in my electorate, where we are not talking about 5,000 or 20,000 acres of pristine rainforests. Our national parks can often cover half a million acres and can be a headache for their neighbours. Quite often, the private adjoining owners try to quell the problems that are cultivated on the national park estate, which can be a nursery for weeds and feral animals. Very often they are in poorer condition, in terms of biodiversity, than the land of the responsible private landholder next door. Therefore, we are not comparing apples with apples. In many cases, the parks are a burden.

Parks can diminish the rates base for councils. As I said, the parks can be a nursery for weeds and feral animals. They are a large cost burden to the government and evidently the asset base is becoming large and unwieldy with proper management becoming more and more difficult. I have friends who are very strong sympathisers of the environmental cause. Often they argue with me in defence of the use of parks, but they will admit that many of the parks in my area are now in worse condition than when they were privately owned and under average standard management.

I do get confused when we refer to some of the parks and the window of time in which they are to be preserved, because many are to be taken back to their natural state. It was with great interest that I learned that in one park in my electorate they have turned the artificial waters back on. Initially, they were turned off to turn the park back to its natural state. I can only conclude that the decision was made that the biodiversity was enhanced by having the artificial waters in place, that is, it was better when the artificial waters were turned on. That is saying that man's disturbance of this land enhanced the environment. In acknowledging that, my attitude towards some of the parks, particularly in the western areas, is very cynical.

Getting back to the bill, we agree with the Ergon submission that these amendments will make it easier for it to administer its services in national parks, freeing up red tape and causing fewer time delays. We agree with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council that changes to the Nature Conservation Act enabling authorisation of privately operated ecotourism facilities in national parks, including Indigenous joint management areas, will only benefit tourism in Queensland. We are supportive of that. I have enjoyed the accommodation at Spicers resorts and other such resorts. Such resorts could potentially open up in those areas and that would be a benefit to the state. However, it is concerning that having such uses in parks could increase the threat of weeds. That issue will require close monitoring as the impact of the bill rolls out.

It is our hope that under this amended legislation the Indigenous management of ecotourism facilities in parks, such as Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land, will go a long way towards self-determination for our first Australians. Whilst also I am critical of some aspect of the CSG industry, I

acknowledge that part of the bill serves a purpose in enabling easier traversing of parks and access to their infrastructure. I support the right of industry to have the opportunity that is offered by this bill. On that basis, I will support the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Before I call the next speaker, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of councillors from the Scenic Rim Regional Council, who are guests of the member for Beaudesert.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.12 pm): In speaking to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I congratulate the minister. I believe that this is good legislation and I support its objectives in general, although I notice that a number of elements are missing from it. During the last election, the LNP promised to provide to areas of North Queensland information through educational pamphlets to clarify the rules around allowing recreational activities such as off-road vehicle access and special hunting activities in the state and national park forestry areas. However, we notice an absence of that promise in the writing of the bill. The LNP may have forgotten its pledge to honour those commitments, but we will give them the benefit of the doubt.

The bill claims nature conservation as a main objective. However, it does not extend to the problem areas of wild pigs, wild dogs, feral cats, wild horses and the total lack of any weed management programs. Over the years, we have seen a massive increase in the extension of national parks. Under the previous government, I believe the national park estate increased by about 750,000 acres over five years. I believe that those extensions were a little bit too frivolous and maybe were a vote-buying grab by the conservation movement at that time. Through that massive extension of national parks, we have seen an increase in the number of feral animals, noxious weeds and other problems, all of which affect surrounding landowners. I believe deep down that we cannot expand our national park estate if we cannot manage the parks that we already have. You only need look at the feral cat problem to recognise that. The feral cat is one of the greatest environmental vandals that you could possibly think of. Every day feral cats kill native wildlife and they are breeding like no tomorrow in our national parks. It is the same with feral pigs. Overnight one feral pig, working like a rotary hoe, can rip up a quarter of an acre of land, destroying the sides of creeks and river veins. Those issues should have been addressed before national parks were extended.


I acknowledge the dialogue that the minister is having with Robbie Katter and me about the issues that we had with fires in the southern Tablelands area. The minister worked with the graziers and I commend him for that. In some places there is nowhere to graze cattle because they have been burnt out. There are issues of drought. I also commend the minister for the announcement he made yesterday about Blackbraes. That is good stuff. I do not believe that that would have been allowed previously, and it is definitely to be commended.

A lot of issues were raised after horse riders were kicked out of state forests. When looking at rural and regional Queensland, it is true that this country was developed and opened up from the back of a horse. We need to uphold that culture and that way of life. We need to give people the opportunity to ride horses in the national parks and state forests. I believe that we can work out a system to allow horse riders, trail bike riders and off-road vehicles into our parks and forests. We should allow the different groups to work out a plan as to how they can best utilise parks and state forests. We need to have a dialogue with them, so that there is a resolution that can allow them to ride here and to drive there, and to utilise those areas.

There is another issue that needs to be addressed. I hope that the minister will look at this as well, because national parks make up a massive area in Queensland. In the United States of America, small-time fossickers are given the opportunity to fossick in conservation areas and national parks. They can go in and look for gold, amethysts, sapphires, emeralds and so on. I believe that needs to be investigated, because we want people to be out there doing something. We do not want to push people into the cities where they stay in their homes. We want to encourage them to be outdoors, doing something they enjoy.

In terms of hunting, we need some form of controlled permit for some national parks. Over the years, a lot of money has been spent on shooting feral pigs out of helicopters. Recreational hunters will do that in their own time and at their own expense. They can help sort out the problem without any cost to the taxpayers and the government of Queensland. As I believe I have mentioned before, the Staaten River National Park covers over 4,000 square kilometres. It is a massive area. I have been up there. It is an absolutely mind-boggling park. It is a wonderful area. However, it has been taken over by infestations of rubber vine, lantana, noxious weeds and feral animals including feral

dogs. Setting aside land in that park to allow recreational hunters to play their part in resolving that problem would be beneficial to all of us. I say 'well done' to the minister and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. National parks are wonderful places. They should be protected. They should be looked after. They should be set aside. We have seen a significant amount of land set aside for national parks, as the previous speaker intimated, but they have not been resourced to be properly managed.

In my electorate I have seen an increase in the national park at Kroombit. One of the greatest problems that landowners who live adjacent to that national park face are wildfires. Because there is no backburning and no controlled burning the fuel load gets so high that when a fire comes through Kroombit it comes straight down the mountain and into adjoining farms. They find that all of their feed is burnt out and they have to handfeed for as long as it takes for their pastures to be re-established.


National parks are important places. They need protecting and they need to be dealt with sensitively. But setting aside millions of hectares without the appropriate management and the appropriate number of rangers to properly manage those areas is pointless. I am seeking some clarification from the minister in relation to the amount of development that will be allowed in national parks. Will there be some kind of constraint in terms of the quantum of development that will be allowed or will it be open slather?

I took my children to national parks in Queensland when they little. It really instils in young people the diversity of our environment and the beauty of it, but they have to be able to access it and they have to be able to access it safely. The tourism development in Lamington National Park that has been there for donkey's years is very sensitively done. It has been there for a lot of years. When you go in there it feels like it is part of the environment. If that is the intended purpose of the changes in this legislation then that is an example of how it can be done sensitively and done well. In developing an area it can add to the safety of the region in terms of the long-term protection of environmental diversity.

I voted against the removal of horses from mainly forestry areas. The horse-riding fraternity were the eyes and ears for the department both in national parks and forestry areas. They used to go in there and if they saw problems they would report them. If there was an emerging issue—whether it was the presence of illegal horticultural activity or whether it was a potential fire risk or even signs of human habitation that should not be there—horse riders would alert the appropriate people to that issue.

There has to be a balance between locking up the national parks so that nobody gets to benefit from them—and, as the member for Dalrymple said, they get overrun by noxious weeds and feral pests—and the other extreme where national parks are vandalised because too much use is made of them. There is a place for the wise human use of what is a beautiful and glorious area that is recognised and set aside.

I would seek the minister's comments in relation to any limits on development and whether there will be areas, because of their fragility and importance, that will not be allowed to have any development on them. I look forward to the minister's response. I believe that we as a community and the beauty that surrounds us can work together well, harmoniously and responsibly.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (6.23 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. On 10 July 1996 the then environment minister, the Hon. Brian Littleproud, made a ministerial statement to the House. He said—

State Cabinet in June endorsed a plan to prepare a proposal for development of nature-based tourism involving national parks and other public lands. When Cabinet endorsed this plan, I said that any proposed development and consequent increase in visitor use would need to be able to be managed consistently within the principles of management set out in the Nature Conservation Act.

He went on to say—

Members opposite may care to take up the invitation, bearing in mind that the proposal is partly driven by their failure in Government to provide adequate infrastructure and ongoing upgrading in national parks.

Not much has changed in the 17 years since that statement. Our national parks are suffering enormously through a lack of maintenance and effective management. Just 17 per cent of parks had management plans at the time we took over government. That is why, 17 years down the track from then Minister Littleproud's address to this House, we see that parks in my electorate of Ferry Grove

show signs of disrepair and negligence. That is why volunteer groups such as the Mount Nebo & Mount Glorious Environment Protection Association—MEPA—have become the front-line combatants of weed management in our parks and are fighting a losing battle.

This bill is about cutting red tape and enabling innovative investment to grow our four-pillar economy and get Queensland back on track. The point that I feel the naysayers conveniently overlook is that the investment in infrastructure and facilities in ecotourism will be substantial. When someone undertakes that level of investment they want to ensure that their investment is secure. That is why I remain confident that any investment will be undertaken with a view to ensuring that the guidelines are strongly adhered to.

Those expectations are clearly outlined within the statement of principles on ecotourism from the International Ecotourism Society, namely, to minimise impact; to build environmental and cultural awareness and respect; to provide positive experiences for both the visitor and the host; to direct financial benefit for conservation, financial benefit and empowerment for the local people; and to raise the sensitivity to the host country's political, environmental and social climate.

Another example of sound ecotourism benefits for conservation and local people is found in an article authored by Dr Anna Spenceley in 2006. This was printed in the African wildlife journal. The article outlines the growth of the tourism market in Africa and broadly overviews that the program of South African National Parks—SANParks—began with the commercialisation of accommodation, shops and restaurants which were previously all state owned. In the article, Dr Spenceley states—

Large ecotourism groups such as Wilderness Safaris and Conservation Corporation Africa ... CCA) have demonstrated their dedication to conservation and poverty alleviation through joint ventures with local communities, their involvement in endangered species conservation and by transforming degraded farmland into world-class wildlife destinations.

In May 2008, under Morris Iemma's leadership, New South Wales Labor established a task force on tourism and national parks in New South Wales. It was engaged to provide practical advice to expedite the realisation of the New South Wales state plan and report on opportunities for enhanced levels of sustainable nature tourism on public lands, particularly national parks, marine parks and reserves.

Some of the key findings were as follows—

Sustainable nature tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Australian tourism market. All public lands can contribute to sustainable tourism but well managed, protected reserves are best positioned to provide internationally competitive and sustainable nature based tourism experiences.

...

To improve the quality of the nature based experience and to adapt to changing visitor needs it will be important to consider enhancing and developing new nature based experiences either adjacent to or, where appropriate, in national parks and reserves.

...

Investment in sustainable nature tourism experiences and/or visitor facilities can involve a partnership approach between government and the private sector.

Even New South Wales Labor identified the benefits of introducing legislation to enable collaborative ventures within their state's national parks. So it does come as a surprise that those opposite continue to present a dissenting viewpoint, especially given that they themselves embarked upon a number of programs that are not too dissimilar to that being proposed within this bill. The most significant difference is that we are being open and transparent.

I have randomly viewed a couple of the 419 management plans or statements that were in place in October 2012, focusing upon the parks within my electorate of Ferny Grove.

Debate, on motion of Mr Shuttleworth, adjourned.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.29 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this day's sitting, the House will not break for dinner at 6.30 pm but will continue to sit to conduct government business, followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1205 on motion of Mr Dickson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (6.29 pm), continuing: The management plan for the D'Aguilar National Park is now 15 years old. It was produced in 1998 and is a very brief two pages, making statements of a more generic nature in relation to the management of fire risks and cultural and environmental outcomes. I spent a lot more time looking instead at the 30-page management plan, produced in 2011, for the Cape Hillsborough, Pioneer Peaks, Mount Ossa, Mount Martin and Reliance Creek national parks and adjoining state waters. I recall fondly many a weekend adventure within the Cape Hillsborough National Park and I recall how many years ago there were tourist facilities within the park area. I am sure, too, that the member for Whitsunday would join me in recalling the magnificence that is evident most mornings as a troop of local kangaroos grace the foreshores, with excited locals and tourists watching on. The plan states—

Each year, more than 180 000 visitors are attracted to the broad sandy beaches, rugged landscapes and diversity of plants and animals.

The plan goes on to outline within section 4.5 'Tourism and visitor opportunities' in relation to Cape Hillsborough National Park—

The day-use area has established car parks, toilets, reticulated water, grassed areas, picnic tables, gas barbecues, orientation and interpretive signs ...

It goes on to say—

A visitor management strategy will be developed that will provide a framework for future opportunities, growth and management. Localised impacts in the day-use areas can be eliminated or minimised through careful site selection and appropriately designing and placing facilities..

...

Overnight accommodation is available at the QPWS-managed campground at Smalley's Beach, or at a privately owned tourist park at Cape Hillsborough. Commercial overnight accommodation is also provided at Halliday Bay and Seaforth.

The plan also goes on to say—

There is a growing network of private accommodation and commercial opportunities in the area ... QPWS, in association with Tourism Queensland, supports commercial activities in the management area where appropriate.

On page 9 the plan states—


Commercial operators provide opportunities that complement the management area.

And it specifically states how that will be done in paragraph A37, which reads—

Foster commercial tourism that allows visitors to experience the unique biodiversity of this area.

So we are not too dissimilar in what we are aiming to achieve. However, our openness and transparent approach means that our government has highlighted our objectives publically.

Our national parks are a key asset of our state and represent an integral component of our future growth and development of ecotourism in Queensland. To this point, our state has not capitalised as others have on the windfall that can come from appropriate and responsible development of ecotourism capability. As outlined at the DestinationQ Forum, our government is committed to develop a responsible and sustainable ecotourism industry to help grow our four-pillar economy. The Queensland government is getting on with the job of getting Queensland back on track. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (6.33 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is about cutting red tape and enabling innovative investment to grow our four-pillar economy and get Queensland back on track. I commend this government on the proposed legislative amendments to the Nature Conservation Act to simplify the process for authorising pre-existing service facility infrastructure on national park land. Indeed, I support any initiative that reduces red tape to allow economic growth and development within and outside the tourism industry.

Queensland's national parks were created to preserve nature, culture and history and with the purpose of protecting pristine environments in an age when exploitation is rampant. Our national parks attract more visitors to our remote areas and that benefits tourism, farming and fishing interests


and generates new commercial opportunities. Existing strict regulatory practices provide for ongoing environmental responsibility and to protect the ecosystems of our national parks for future generations.

National Parks provide an opportunity for Queenslanders, and indeed visitors to the state, to connect or reconnect with environment and cultural heritage. National park visitation has health, relaxation and educational benefits as well as numerous others not so readily revealed. Queenslanders love the outdoors and national parks present many opportunities for healthy pastimes. National parks present opportunities for huge return, not only in memorable visitor experiences and economic opportunity for local communities and tourism generally but also with particular reference to the potential for substantial economic growth through ecotourism.

Queenslanders have the right to enjoy the state in which they live. Some Queenslanders choose to holiday overseas. Others choose to holiday on the Great Barrier Reef or in the Wet Tropics. Still others prefer the city lights, shopping and attractions of the eastern seaboard towns and cities. But for those with a yearning to connect with nature and enjoy the solitude and peace of wide open spaces, the national parks provide the perfect destination for recreation and relaxation. And those living in the communities adjacent to our national parks deserve the opportunity to benefit from visitors lured to the parks for recreation, sport, education, research or just the adventure or the peace and quiet of camping.

International studies demonstrate long-term economic and social benefits of national parks. The opening of parks has proven to serve as a catalyst that not only improved economic conditions but also gave the local communities amenities and infrastructure that set them up for future growth. The discussion of ecotourism at last year's DestinationQ Forum in Cairns was of tremendous significance to the Far North—Cairns being the gateway not only to the Great Barrier Reef but to the stunning beauty of the Cape York Peninsula.

I applaud this government's acknowledgement of the current obstacles experienced by ecotourism businesses wishing to provide sustainable and responsible, low-impact activities in national parks, and I wholeheartedly welcome the release of an expression of interest for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas. This government has therefore introduced this bill to address the tourism industry's demand for privately funded, low-impact ecotourism investment in national parks and to provide a mechanism for the grant of commercially viable leases to support investment in projects which have not been possible before. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (6.36 pm): This bill is another step towards cutting red tape and enabling innovative investment to grow our four-pillar economy and get Queensland back on track. Red tape is not just some imaginary slogan we at the LNP state level have thought up to help explain what has been holding back industry across-the-board. Rather it is a policy Labor governments across the country employed to help their union mates take control of private enterprise and prevent industry and government departments delivering services, jobs, revenue, and productivity in the most efficient and fiscally responsible way. This terminology has long left the vocabulary of those opposite and the Labor Party in Australia.


The Newman government is committed to increasing recreation and ecotourism access to our national parks so that they are available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders. What this means is that we are opening up the outback parks and rainforest areas once again for all Queenslanders to enjoy and explore. This way of thinking is very much unlike the Labor Party's model of 'lock it up and throw away the key' to appease their Greens mates who think these areas should remain exclusive. With a growing population concentrating in our urban areas, it is now more important than ever that children today and tomorrow have access to this state's unique and wonderful natural environments.

Those opposite hate the thought that some individual or company should be able to make money or run a business from operating in one of our national parks. This has me wondering why they cannot at least see that there is a cost associated with maintaining these parks, including the operations and services to the public, and that has to be accounted for. Labor has never been able to show any sort of fiscal responsibility, let alone understand returns on investments which these parks are in the form of protecting and retaining the natural environment and sharing them with world. This is where these parks should and will under the LNP play an important role in the state's ecotourism industry and to a lesser extent the resources and construction sectors.

Queensland's national parks are a key asset for tourism, outdoor recreation and educational and scientific pursuits, in addition to activities undertaken for the simple enjoyment of nature. Allowing for public appreciation of these natural assets is important in ensuring that they are valued and conserved into the future for generations of Queenslanders and visitors to enjoy.

The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will provide new and unique opportunities for visitors and the community to experience our national parks that have been locked up for too long under Labor. The bill will serve to further enhance the existing access and enjoyment of national parks in Queensland by creating an environment receptive to new ecotourism opportunities in national parks. The word 'new' is important here in that it will help get this state back its AAA rating and get out of the red. We will need to find new ways to create revenue, and tourism is one of the four pillars under the LNP that has been identified to help us achieve that goal. Promoting ecotourism investment in national parks means the community has more access again, which will generate growth for the tourism industry and the local communities surrounding these parks.


The bill will go a long way towards restoring some connection between the bush, the regions and the urban areas for the kids and families of today. Sadly, the days are gone when everyone had a cousin or a connection with someone on the land. This bill will restore that in part while offering the opportunity to create much needed revenue for the state of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (6.39 pm): It gives me great delight to rise tonight in support of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I want to pick up on some of the comments made by the member for South Brisbane, the aspiring Leader of the Opposition. She made some references to members opposite having some sort of mortgage on our national parks and those on her side being doyens of doing it properly. I raise the Epping Forest National Park north-west of Clermont. It is country with which the member for Gregory would be very familiar. The former member for Belyando Vince Lester would be very familiar with it, too. That national park was established in 1974 in the days of the Bjelke-Petersen government. The Eungella National Park, part of which is in my electorate, is a place that I am very familiar with. It is a place that the member for Ferny Grove would also know very well. Guess who set that up? I will tell honourable members. It was the then mayor of the city of Mackay and a man who became a great advocate for the people of North Queensland, the former Liberal senator for Queensland, the 'cycling senator', Ian Wood. That is who. So when it comes to establishing and managing our national parks we have great form on delivering a good job and a good outcome for the people of Queensland.

As has already been noted in the debate in this House tonight, when we came to office just 17 per cent of our national parks had management plans. That is an absolute disgrace. I can remember the minister some time ago coming up to the Conway National Park and looking at opportunities up there, and a lot of people love bike riding through national parks. We need to open up our national parks rather than locking them up like Fort Knox which then becomes a haven for noxious weeds, feral animals with pigs running amok—and we are not talking about the West Sydney Razorbacks; we are talking about pigs running out of our national parks.

In my electorate we have some magnificent national parks such as Eungella and Cape Hillsborough National Park, which the member for Ferny Grove has spoken about. Ecotourism there goes back a long way, back to the Risleys family in the 1940s who used to bring people from Mackay. If honourable members go to other islands throughout the Whitsundays they will find the same. There was the Busuttin family on Brampton Island, the Nicholsons on Lindeman Island, the Bauers on South Molle Island—the list goes on and on. We have a great heritage in our national parks. However, they have been locked up like Fort Knox and it is a disgrace. We need to be tapping into this potential to grow a four-pillar economy. And guess what? Tourism is one of those key planks to take us forward so we can build better prosperity for the next generation of Queenslanders and turn this economy around—the economy that Labor smashed and trashed after being in charge in Queensland for 20 of the last 22 years.

It is not just my electorate that is home to great national parks; there are plenty: Cape Upstart, Lawn Hill, Wallaman Falls, in the cape, Lakefield, Carnarvon—it goes on and on. We are going to provide those opportunities because tourism is going to be such a key driver in getting our economy going. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (6.43 pm), in reply: Firstly, I would like to thank all honourable members for their participation in the debate on the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I welcome the opposition's commitment that they are not opposed to low-impact ecotourism facilities and that it does not oppose other amendments contained in the bill.

The member for Rockhampton stated that this government cannot be trusted to look after national parks and went on to put on record his own environmental credentials dating back to 1995. The member for Rockhampton is a member of the Labor Party whose government had only made management plans for 17 per cent of Queensland's protected areas. The member for Rockhampton says that the primary purpose of national parks for the Labor Party is the protection of biodiversity. I ask: where were the management plans to protect the biodiversity of Queensland's protected areas while they were being overrun by feral animals and weeds? They simply were not there. The member for Rockhampton said that it took the Labor Party government to acquire land for Queensland national parks. We know that they did: they bought anything no matter the price and no matter the biodiversity values. They bought ovals, wineries, cattle stations and viable ecotourism accommodation businesses at overinflated prices with taxpayers' money, as the member for Mudgeraba outlined in her speech.

I would like to thank the staff in my department, in particular Todd Kelly and Bob Hoey, for their work in developing this bill. Queensland is a great state with great opportunities. The government is standing up for all Queensland families. By working together, we are delivering better services such as better management and better access to our national parks so that they are available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders. This is about enabling innovation and investment by reducing red tape, growing our four-pillar economy and getting Queensland back on track. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 62—Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, France, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Johnson, Katter, Kempton, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Wellington, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

NOES, 6—Byrne, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. SL DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (6.59 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. SL DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (6.59 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.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (7.00 pm), by leave: I lay upon the table of the House Ethics Committee report No. 132, titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 29 November 2012 relating to an alleged contempt of removal of documents from members' desks in the chamber*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 132—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 29 November 2012 relating to an alleged contempt of removal of documents from members' desks in the chamber [\[2468\]](#).

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (7.00 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 30 April 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (7.00 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Blain, Mr C; Poole, Mr G



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (7.00 pm): While for many people the Easter weekend is a time of celebration, it is also a difficult time for many families, some dealing with the aftermath of tragedies, often on our roads. In Far North Queensland it was a dark time for the families of two local police officers who lost their lives. In the time allotted to me today I wish to pay tribute to Constable Casey Blain and Constable Gene Poole, both role models in their communities.

Earlier this week the Minister for Police spoke of Mareeba based Casey Blain, who was killed on Friday, 29 March on his first day of relief duty near Georgetown. Casey was married to my cousin Lena, and upon hearing the tragic news my thoughts and those of my entire family turned to Lena and her four-year-old son, Mark.

Casey was liked by almost anyone who met him and was admired and respected for the way he conducted himself in all aspects of his life. I want to particularly express my sincerest condolences to Casey's parents, Ray and Lynette, who have lost their only son. In a recent newspaper article, Ray, a senior transport inspector with the department of transport, talked of only weeks ago sharing a quiet drink with his son after Casey had attended a fatal crash. He said—


We talked about the days that are good and the days that are not so good. And he talked about the new job he was getting and I told him how proud I was of him. Twenty-five years of my life has been on the other side looking at parents who've lost children and loved ones ... There's no gap like the one that you feel when it's your own.

The message that I heard over and over again was that Ray and Lynette should be so proud of the man they raised—a loving husband, a dedicated father and a pillar of the community. Serving with honour in both the Queensland Police Service and the Army Reserve, Casey was about to start his dream role as a school based police officer, something he would have excelled at. Casey will be remembered by all who knew him, but perhaps one of the biggest tragedies of all is that there are so many people who will now never get to know him, in particular those young people whose lives he would no doubt have changed for the better.

I also want to express my condolences to the family of Constable Gene Poole from Gordonvale station who suffered a medical condition and died in his home on Easter Saturday aged 41. Not one to seek promotion or the limelight, Gene was content to be the best local police officer he could be, and the Gordonvale community was the better for it. Gene graduated from the academy in 2001 and received a medal for 10 years distinguished service, eight years of which were spent at Gordonvale. Prior to this time he was stationed at Tully and also served on Palm Island and was awarded a bravery medal for service during the 2004 riots. My deepest sympathies go to Gene's partner, Kerry

Sues—someone I have known almost my entire life—and their three young children, Harry, Lawson and Kamryn. The loss of Casey and Gene hit me hard—not because I was a close personal friend of either, but as a father of three children under four myself it broke my heart to think that their children may not truly know how well liked and respected their fathers were. It is our job—all of us—to ensure that they know and to remind them as often as possible. I know that both Casey's and Gene's fellow officers are hurting too. Being a police officer is a tough job at the best of times but no doubt even harder when you lose a friend and colleague. I wish to thank the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union and Police Legacy for their work in not only farewelling two very much loved local officers but also for their care and support of their respective families.

Redlands Electorate


 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (7.03 pm): On Tuesday morning I welcomed home a most courageous Redlander, Reid Anderton. He was also welcomed home by a couple of hundred people and Spencer Howson from the 612 ABC breakfast show. Why were we all there to welcome him home? What did he do? He rode 14,178 kilometres over 37 days, one hour and 18 minutes which meant he rode a bicycle around Australia averaging a distance of 382 kilometres per day. He had a support team behind him, and I want to acknowledge them. The people who did the whole trip were Graham Hedges, Daniel Brown, Daun Slauson and Lynda Phillips. For part of the trip they were joined by Natalie Campbell, Lyndell Pascoe, Graham Folling, Tiffany Sharp, Natasha Johnson, Andrew Pope and David Eade. Why did he do it? He is trying to build a science block at Monkey Fountain in Ndola in Zambia. It is part of an education program. He is associated with Eagles Wings, an association that is raising money. It needs to raise \$100,000 and so far he has achieved over \$50,000, with more still coming in. I congratulate him on his monumental effort. I also commend local business Bike Nirvana at Victoria Point, which coincidentally was the start point and the finish point of the ride, both of which I was present for. They were big supporters in providing the bicycle.

I also bring to the attention of the House some students of whom I am so incredibly proud. They are band members at Faith Lutheran College at Victoria Point. They are touring the Western Front. They are touring battlefields. They have been in France now for a little over a week and they have been touring at such places as Fromelles. They have been to a number of cathedrals and battlefields—the names of which escape me at the moment, so I do apologise for that. The culmination is the Dawn Service on Anzac Day at Villers-Bretonneux. I am so incredibly proud of them. As I said, they have performed at such places as the Arc de Triomphe. They have performed at a number of battlefields. A number of parents are chaperoning the students, and one of the chaperones is my beautiful wife, Helen. I hope she is enjoying the trip. That is certainly the feedback I am getting, as are the students. It is an incredible opportunity—

Government members interjected.

Mr DOWLING: She is burning up a fortune! I take the interjections from all members, particularly the female ones. It is a tremendous educational opportunity for which the school is most grateful. I also place on record my thanks to the Premier, who was kind enough to write a letter to each of the students attending expressing his congratulations to them for performing across France.

Gaven Electorate

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (7.06 pm): I support recommendations by Judge Clive Wall of Southport District Court that we need to change our approach to juveniles appearing in the courts. Clearly, the public perception is that juvenile crime on the Gold Coast is a serious and increasing problem, and unless we tackle this head-on nothing will change. There have certainly been some great initiatives which include everything from—

Mr Stevens: Boot camps.

Dr DOUGLAS: Yes, boot camps, which we have had a lot of experience with over the last 20 years on the Gold Coast. For a very small group, they apply very well. I commend Judge Wall on his paper 'Is the Children's Court working?' presented to the Gold Coast District Law Association, and I table that document.

His paper reveals the extent of juvenile crime on the Gold Coast, including a bus attacked by up to 20 teenagers armed with bats and iron bars in an unprovoked attack where windows and doors were broken. I agree with Judge Wall that there is little respect shown these days. He cites how a solicitor was, without cause, abused by the mother of a child waiting to be dealt with by the Children's Court and then unlawfully assaulted by the child's aunt. If parents have no respect for others, it is


unlikely that their children will. Unfortunately, this is repetitive and recidivist behaviour. When someone as respected as Judge Wall says that intervention programs are needed and that reprimands are not working, it is time we listened. He recommends removing a reprimand and a good behaviour order as a sentencing option for certain juvenile offences and allowing a juvenile who offends during the good behaviour order to be re-sentenced for the original offence.

Strong opposition to the sale of land for a proposed cruise ship terminal on the Spit continues, with the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland's Gold Coast and Hinterland branch coming out against this development. I agree with the branch when it says that the loss of public open space for private gain can never be replaced. One of the few natural areas where people can walk, picnic, walk the dog and generally enjoy what is left of nature in this fast developing corner of Queensland exists on the Spit. 'Hands off our open space' was the message from the branch. I endorse this along with thousands of other Gold Coasters who are outraged by this proposal. I support them when they say, 'Hands off the Spit and Wavebreak Island.' We, the people, need them.

My thanks to those who paid my bail of \$500 last Friday to be released from jail for the PCYC, which the member for Mermaid Beach knows very well from his days on the council—all in the name of a fundraiser for the Nerang PCYC. Along with nine community members, I was put in jail at Bunnings in Nerang for half an hour until my bail was paid and I thank all those who donated to get me out.

I congratulate the organisers of an interesting symposium that I attended at the weekend, the Sold Coast Project, at the Rabbit and Cocoon creative precinct at Miami. Interestingly, the symposium looked at the question, 'What will the Gold Coast look like in 50 years' time?' It was a creative talkfest, bringing together academics, policymakers and the community.

Townsville Community Legal Service, Seniors Legal and Support Service

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (7.09 pm): I take this opportunity to highlight the wonderful work being done by the Townsville Community Legal Service. Part of that service is the Seniors Legal and Support Service, which began as a pilot project funded by the department of communities in 2007. It was established to provide legal assistance and support to people over the age of 60 at risk of or experiencing elder abuse or financial exploitation. Research shows that about three per cent to seven per cent of seniors will experience abuse each year. These people can experience financial, physical, psychological, social, sexual abuse and neglect.

In 2010 the Townsville Seniors Legal and Support Service held a forum with local seniors to gather information about their needs and how they could better address the risk factors for elder abuse. Those findings were released in 2011 in the Townsville seniors speak out report and reshaped the service's approach to elder abuse. Also out of the forum came the establishment of primary legal intervention aimed at not only empowering seniors but also raising awareness of a range of issues, such as ageism, social isolation and lack of resources. The intervention became known as Seniors Creating Change and was designed to capture the attention of the community, politicians and the media.


What sets this group apart from the rest is that this group of volunteers carry out what is known as flash mobbing, which is performing unexpectedly in public in order to raise awareness of the issues affecting seniors. They first debuted in Townsville in June 2011 when the group of about 30 seniors aged up to 85 years young flash mobbed in a shopping centre eatery. Shoppers were extremely surprised when the group stood up, peeled off their shirts to reveal their red group T-shirt and then sang their civil rights movement song. This instantly gained the media attention that they were looking for to raise awareness, with over 6,800 hits on YouTube, media coverage and an article on the Australian Human Rights Commission's Age Positive website.

This group has grown to a membership of over 50 members and they receive calls to perform from across North Queensland. I first saw them perform as part of Townsville Seniors Week in March last year. However, last Saturday week I was privileged to be a guest at their rehearsal. The news of my singing ability preceded my arrival, because a tambourine was thrust into my hand. If they had had information about my inherent lack of coordination and rhythm they might not have been so eager to assign me to percussion.

I enjoyed the morning with them. They have a broad repertoire, including many of the traditional protest songs of the sixties and seventies and many old chart busters with their message for change superimposed over the lyrics. I was presented with badges and booklets—and I proudly

wear that badge tonight—for myself and the Premier, which I have passed on. I thank Sonia, Annie, Ari, Mary, Jen and many more for their hospitality. I wish them well in their endeavours. What they lack in youth they more than compensate for in vitality, versatility, commitment and drive.

North Queensland, Construction Industry


 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (7.12 pm): I commend Minister Tim Mander for recognising the need for northern contractors to be considered for tendered work in their region. Large contracts have been broken down to enable local building contractors to tender on projects, in turn having a favourable flow-on to local labour, local tradies and local raw material suppliers. Architects and builders in the northern region know the region and the climate. They know the tropics, they design for the tropics and they build for the tropics. They design and build for Indigenous communities. Many of them have a lifetime of experience in the region. Yet under the previous government Project Services frequently opted for southern operators, removing vital income from my region and doing nothing to help local employment, local business, or morale.

The Far North is suffering a building downturn. We desperately need the work to be carried out in the Far North by Far Northerners. There is plenty of work in the south of the state for southern contractors and there is enough competition in the Far North to achieve economies when selecting tenderers. Architects in the Far North united to address the inequitable awarding of contracts. For them to remain in business there are huge outlays merely to continue in the profession year to year. Owing to huge outlays on insurances and other outlays, combined with a lack of consideration for government work, small firms in the Far North were at risk of going under and large businesses were being awarded the monopoly of government work. The government paid a premium for the services provided as large firms have more overhead costs, such as wages and employment related expenses.

Local knowledge is tantamount in the tropics. Design and building must be geared towards the heat and humidity, be proven to be of appropriate resilience to reduce maintenance, airy to combat damp and mould and able to withstand cyclonic conditions. The specialists are right on site here in Far North Queensland. Buying local and utilising local services makes sound economic sense.

We have made a commitment to support small business in recognition of the fact that they make up 95 per cent of all Queensland businesses. We have made a commitment to cut red tape and regulation by 20 per cent and change and actively reduce red tape. Where many local builders and architects have survived on a mix of private and government work in the past, they are now having to decide whether to cease operating as there is not enough work to justify paying the insurance premiums and now the additional cost of QA audit for certification. I commend the minister for small business on her buy locally initiative and look forward to seeing Far Northern trades and professions receive a lion's share of local project work.

Galloway Plains Pastoral Co.


 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.15 pm): Just over 100 years ago Hugh Neill came from Scotland and settled at what is now known as Galloway Plains. He came over as a young man and for the first little while lived fairly rough and then decided that he needed to go back to Scotland to find himself a wife. He went back to Scotland, got married and brought back Margaret McKissick. At the Galloway Plains Pastoral Co.'s 150 years celebrations, I wondered how Margaret felt all of those years ago, coming from lush, green and moist Scotland to what would have been the middle of nowhere by horse and sulky to join her husband who had brought her out to what we now know as God's own country, but for her it would not have been. They established the Galloway Plains Pastoral Co. They had one daughter. Rather than risking his wonderful farm going to some gold-digging man, Mr Neill left the farm to his daughter's children. That was the commencement of the Galloway Plains Pastoral Co.

The families who are involved now include the Latimers and the Neill-Ballantines. Jim and Chris Neill-Ballantine were the hosts for the celebration weekend, but a number of the children were involved. Leo Neill-Ballantine is also a councillor on the Gladstone Regional Council. Leo spoke at the unveiling of a memorial to Hugh Neill and he talked about the challenges of the cattle industry—farming in general, but the cattle industry. That brought out the very stark reality of a farm staying in the one family for that many years so much more of a huge achievement.

The Galloway Plains Pastoral Co. was large enough where, for a number of years, it had its own polocrosse team and it is still a theme in that family. They had a couple of polocrosse games in the afternoon to celebrate this incredible milestone. The event was catered for by the QCWA, which is again a wonderful connection to country Queensland and urban Queensland as well, and a memorial bust to Hugh Neill was unveiled. I had the privilege with Ken O'Dowd, the federal member for Flynn, to unveil this bust.

Hugh Neill is buried on that farm. In fact, he was buried on the site where he first camped. This family has this huge connection with the property. In terms of its size, it is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, pastoral holdings in Central Queensland. The family has a great involvement in the community—in horse riding, with the Calliope Jockey Club and, as I said, with the polo club. I congratulate each and every member of the family—not only the current family members but former family members—for establishing not only a strong pastoral company but also a very strong pastoral family and I wish them every success into the future.

Nudgee Electorate

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (7.18 pm): I want to start with noting the passing earlier this year of Mr Paul O'Brien OAM. Paul was a life member of Queensland Athletics and former manager/president for some 30 years of the Aspley Little Athletics Club, which finds its home at the end of my street and at a park aptly named the Paul O'Brien Park. Paul lost his battle with cancer at the age of 77 and he leaves behind a legacy of remarkable achievement in both the legal and sporting arenas of the city.

Paul was City Solicitor for the City of Brisbane and served as the lead legal adviser to the Brisbane City Council under six Lord Mayors from both sides of the political spectrum. Paul was a committee member of my local Kedron-Wavell Services Club and rose to be senior vice-president and president. Paul also went on to represent and lead the licensed clubs industry in Queensland as president of Clubs Queensland. He worked with premiers, mayors, business leaders and sports administrators at state and national levels, but was always ready with a broom or shovel to get his hands dirty. He was an inspiration to many and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

In other news from around the electorate, it was great to attend the Toombul Cricket Club end of year awards at Virginia State School. Again club statistician and Virginia State School principal Mr Tim O'Farrel was MC for the afternoon. A job well done, Tim, to you and all the committee members, and congratulations to all the trophy winners.


At Geebung RSL last Saturday I attended the remembering of the Siege of Tobruk. I congratulate Jock Hunter for putting on a wonderful service. But, Jock, I look forward to the day that I can understand the words you say with that accent of yours. It is strong.

I cannot help put a little bit of health and fitness in. Earlier in the month I joined the runners from the Queensland Running Club at 7th Brigade Park. I will not say it was an enjoyable three kilometre run because it was very wet and muddy. Turning up in my nice clean white runners was not the smartest of choices. But they did look good for the first 100 metres. I look forward to taking part in future Queensland Running Club events—a dry track would be a bonus.

Keeping with my health and fitness theme, I wish to congratulate my good friend Ron Ziemiecki who, after just 10 weeks of turning around his diet and eating real food, has not only lost over 12 kilos but is about to come off one of his prescription tablets he has been taking for 20 years. His cardiologist says, 'Keep going and I'll take you off another drug in the next few months.' Just think, decades of damage, decades of prescription drugs and all starting to be undone within months of eating real food. Now there is food for thought!

I say to Tablelands, North Burnett, South Burnett, Doomadgee, Cairns, Burdekin, Bundaberg, Cloncurry, Charters Towers, Northern Peninsula and Whitsunday Regional Councils, for no particular reason whatsoever, congratulations and thank you.

Police-Citizens Youth Clubs

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (7.21 pm): I rise in the House to pay tribute to those hardworking people who contribute to the success of our PCYCs, in particular the Whitsunday PCYC in Jubilee Pocket and neighbouring PCYCs in Mackay, literally across the road from my electorate in Mount Pleasant, and nearby Bowen. It is timely because this year marks the 65th anniversary since the formation of the Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association. Since 1948 PCYCs have


been and continue to do great work in our local communities. This work, I might add, would not be possible without the support of good local people who serve their local community with tremendous pride and distinction, all because they want to help young people.

At the Whitsunday PCYC, where I am proud and humbled to serve as patron, we are blessed to have some terrific people. They include Bob Bogie, Peter Chengody and Mario and Gloria Demartini—all of whom were awarded life membership over the past couple of years for their outstanding local contribution. In fact, at this year's open day, I saw ex-mayor Mario once again quietly going about his work. He had the drill out doing what he does best looking to fix a few problems around the place while the Zumba ladies were spruiking their stuff with their chosen sport alongside other sports in our community.

I would also like to acknowledge Rowan Bond, Devin Flor and Toni McNeil, all of whom were awarded life membership of Mackay PCYC over the past couple of years. Superintendent Bond, of course, is the police officer who led the recovery efforts in Bundaberg earlier this year. Like many honourable members, I participated in the PCYC's Time 4 Kids program, which in my case came to life at Centro in Cannonvale last Saturday when I joined with other people in my community—the likes of prominent local businessmen John Crossley and Michael Muller, shopping centre boss George Wade and newspaper editor Leanne Abernethy—in being locked up behind bars in our endeavours to raise a few bucks for our local PCYC. Thanks to Sergeant John Dickinson for ensuring we got a feed, as well as a police escort—flashing lights and all. It was great fun for a great cause indeed.

Finally, I would also like to mention the Bowen PCYC in the neighbouring electorate of Burdekin, a \$5 million facility if memory serves me right, that is less than 18 months old and made possible thanks to combined funding efforts from both the public and private sector, including significant support from mining giant Xstrata to the tune of around three quarters of a million dollars. I would also like to recognise a donation by the Airlie Beach Rotary Club in my own electorate of \$20,000 showing that our region is working together to help the youth of the Whitsundays.

Forsyth Water Supply


 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (7.24 pm): I rise in the House to talk about the water supply in Forsyth in the Etheridge shire. Forsyth has a population of 137 people with only about 64 to 70 service connections. This year it has had no monsoonal rains—or nothing significant—and the water supply in the dam is half its capacity. Last year in March rainfall was 412 millimetres compared to March this year, where there was 21 millimetres. They are struggling at the moment. This time last year the dam was at full capacity. It holds about 5.8 metres. It is at three metres now. You cannot use all the water because once it gets to a certain level the siphon does not work. They are at a critical point in their water supply.

This morning I asked the water minister about that and it seems as though there will be no help forthcoming for that town, which is a problem because they are going to have to start trucking water in and that will cost them \$400,000 per annum. There is precedence for helping small towns. A similar situation occurred in Cloncurry in 2008-09 and they received assistance with the cost of freighting water by rail and Cloncurry paid pumping costs. The bigger issue is that they will need a permanent water supply there. This is not a council that has frittered money around the place on bells and whistles in their shire. They have been prudent over the years. It is not a case of them spending money where they should not. They have just not had the money to improve that water supply. They want to put a dam on the Delaney River. I think in the future that is something that needs to be looked at. In consideration of the large-scale irrigation projects that are planned for that area, there is a huge opportunity there for Queensland to develop agriculture and irrigation. The proposed project is really getting wheels. It will mean an expansion of the town. Already the neighbouring town of Georgetown is suffering from water supply issues. This is something critical. It is a perfect example of where government support for the development of infrastructure in these areas can promote more industry which will keep giving to the state of Queensland for many years to come.

I encourage the minister to think about the response he gave us this morning. We are not so much talking about just helping out those ratepayers who might be slugged with an extra \$2,000 to \$4,000 on their bill this year to try to cover the cost of water if it was passed on directly, otherwise it will be on the back of the council; what we are talking about here is long-term—

(Time expired)

Toowoomba Royal Show; Weetwood Handicap

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (7.27 pm): Tonight I would like to share with the House my experience over the last week at two wonderful events in my beautiful hometown of Toowoomba. Last Thursday, 11 April, my wife, Anita, and I had the honour of attending, as we do most years, the opening and committee dinner of the Toowoomba Royal Show. The show, held at the iconic Toowoomba Showgrounds, managed by the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland, was this year in its 149th year. We indeed look forward to the 150th show in Toowoomba next year. It is important that the House I think recognise that our RASQ in Toowoomba is some 15 years older than the royal show here in Brisbane. So we have a tremendous history. This year the show attracted some 55,000 participants and attendees. It was described to me by Damon Phillips, the chief executive of the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland, as the biggest attendance in his 13 years in the job. I do need to acknowledge the tremendous leadership of John 'Cracker' McDonald AM, of QRL, NRL and Toowoomba rugby league fame, who is chair of the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland. He led his committee to another wonderful show this year.

As one of my colleagues just mentioned, it has been normal over the years for the public holiday held in Toowoomba on the day of the royal show to also include the Weetwood Handicap. The Weetwood Handicap was for the first time this year not held on that day but held just last Saturday, two days later than the public holiday for the show on 13 April. Some 6,900 attendees went to the Weetwood this year, up 2,000 on last year proving that a shift to a Saturday was the right thing to do. Aaron Clancy, the CEO of the Toowoomba Turf Club, and Mr Bob Frappel, the chair, did a tremendous job. I need to note that the Weetwood was won this year, for the second successive time, by Miss Imagica with the jockey Skye Bogenhuber, the first female jockey to win the Weetwood in its 118-year history. The Toowoomba Turf Club looks very much forward to the grass track which will be installed over the next six months. I acknowledge the efforts of the minister, Steve Dickson, in providing them with the assistance to do just that.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young