

~~I wish to stress that this is not the end of the process. I intend to maintain a watching brief over the legislation and expect to make further changes in the future. Also, the current local government regulations are extremely detailed and overly prescriptive. Over the course of the next few months, I intend for complementary changes to be made to the regulations to remove unnecessary red tape and prescription. This will further ease the burden on local governments and, consequently, on ratepayers. As I mentioned at the outset, this bill is a demonstration of the new start between the state and local governments in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.~~

~~First Reading~~

~~Hon. DF CRISAFULLI (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (2.47 pm): I move—~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

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

~~Motion agreed to.~~

~~Bill read a first time.~~

~~Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee~~

~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.~~

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL


APPROPRIATION BILL

FISCAL REPAIR AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 1944, on motion of Mr Nicholls—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.47 pm): I will resume my speech which was interrupted by the lunch break. I am speaking in relation to the Queensland budget, the Appropriation Bill, particularly in relation to my portfolio.

I want to paint a picture of the state of public housing that the Labor government left us to clean up. When I came to this portfolio and got the first day briefing that ministers get, I was presented with an old, inappropriate portfolio of over 50,000 government owned houses, a portfolio that because of mismanagement was operating at a loss, a portfolio that was selling houses when they became vacant to help fund those losses, and 30,000 Queensland families—equating to 70,000 people—on the waiting list, of which around one-third were homeless. Every month I get an update of the figures as to how the housing system is going. Over the 12 months to the end of July, the number of homeless families on the waiting list for Queensland public housing rose from 8,500 to almost 10,500. That was in one year. That is a 22 per cent increase in the number of homeless families.

What happened to government owned and operated houses during that time as this government mismanaged and incompetently performed its duties in housing? How many more government owned and operated houses did we get over that same year? There were 200 fewer government owned houses over the same year during which nearly 2,000 extra Queensland families registered for housing assistance and were in the homeless category. That is nothing but shameful. In all the time that we sat on the other side of this chamber never once did I hear those lazy incompetent members who managed housing ever tell the truth. I never saw the truth until I was able to access the information in the department. It is a shame.

It is this sort of background that has meant we have had to make some hard decisions that might not have been necessary had it not been for the negligence and incompetence of those who governed before us. We have had to make decisions like cancelling funding for the TAAS program. We are taking steps to ensure that tenants in the private sector do not suffer because of that decision, but it was a decision about which we had no choice; make no mistakes about that. The RTA is doing a fabulous job reorientating its service and ensuring that those extra services will be available to private sector tenants

who get into trouble. We have not forgotten them. The ones who forgot them were those who ran this state into the ground before us.

Yes, we are selling some commercial caravan parks that, because of unbelievable administrative arrangements, have been draining our ability in the public housing area. Unfortunately, we are reducing the number of people, particularly in Project Services and QBuild. All of those things are things we would rather not have done. We do not get up in the morning and say, 'We want to take away jobs,' or, 'We want to sell things or close things down.' Let me make it clear: when you talk to a mother living with children in the back seat of a car, that does not matter much. These are decisions that have to be made.

One of the other things that that lazy government that preceded us did was to operate a single housing fund. When they sold a property, the money just went into the fund out of which administration and maintenance were paid. One of my first decisions as a minister was to draw a line down the middle of that account and say, 'When we sell a public house, that money will go into a capital account and will be spent on new capital housing; it will not be allowed to be frittered away.' That is a decision that I think will end up housing an awful lot more Queenslanders.

We had nearly 9,000 houses with two or more bedrooms than the number of clients. So I wrote to those people and explained that no-one would be put out on the street and that we would take care of their individual needs including their medical needs, but that we would try to fix the housing portfolio and stem some of the losses. I gave them a moratorium. That was my second decision as minister in this portfolio. I said, 'If you tell us who you are housing rent free, who pay no rent to live in our public houses, I won't penalise you; you will only have to pay the rent going forward.' That is an amnesty. Do honourable members know how many people put up their hands? There were 2,300 undisclosed tenants! That is millions of dollars a year worth of rent. I take my hat off to the people in public housing because that was the right thing to do—to put up their hand. Perhaps they should have done it earlier, but nevertheless they did the right thing. The ones whom I condemn are the fools on the other side who did not even ask them to nominate their undisclosed tenants; they just let public housing slip into loss.

For the first time I have introduced a system of rental agreements. New clients going into public housing will now be on a rental agreement at the end of which their need for continued public housing and the suitability of their public housing can be reassessed. All of us make those sorts of judgements about the housing in which we live. This is just a start because we intend to fix housing for those in greatest need in this state. We will never preside over the sort of nonsense that occurred before we came in.

One of the things that I am most proud of can be seen if we look, for instance, at the state of housing in the city of Logan. There are 4,870 dwellings and Woodridge has 13.2 per cent public housing. Nowhere in the world is it accepted to have concentrations of public housing at this level. Kingston has 11.6 per cent. Have a look at what sort of housing we expect these people to live in. Of those nearly 5,000 houses, 2.5 per cent were built in the last 10 years and 87 per cent of those houses are more than 20 years old. Of the three-bedroom houses, which is two-thirds of the houses, 95 per cent are more than 20 years old. We have set up a task force very capably headed by my colleague the member for Springwood to put in a redevelopment program for this most heavily concentrated public housing area of the state. We are not riding roughshod over local considerations. The Logan Renewal Board, chaired by the member for Springwood, has two representatives of the local council and a representative of the department of disabilities because, increasingly, that is whom we house in our tenancies. We will partner with a major community housing organisation and we will see the lives of people individually and that corporate life of the city of Logan change dramatically for the better because we have sat down to do the work that is necessary to give people decent housing and to make sure we get great communities out of that as well. I congratulate the member for Springwood on his passion as well as the members of the Logan City Council, who are giving up a lot of time. I can tell honourable members that, as chairman, the member for Springwood makes these guys work hard to make this a better place.

That model that we developed will be a model that we will roll out across other communities in Queensland. I have already met with the mayor of the Gold Coast. We are looking at issues such as those that my friend and colleague the member for Townsville raises with me continually. He has found that with high concentrations in parts of Townsville discipline breaks down and neighbours are severely impacted. We will have a look at things like the three strikes policy from Western Australia and see if that is something that we can adapt. We are going to make a big difference in the lives of people in terms of housing.


I went up to Cape York to have a look. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on Indigenous housing. I walked into houses that I would not live in myself. They are houses that cost \$400,000 or \$500,000 to build, but are utterly inappropriate for the tropics, utterly inappropriate for the way that people on Cape York live. The previous government should be condemned for what it has done with Indigenous housing on the cape.

Mr Hathaway: There is only one in the House.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection. They do not really want to hear it perhaps.

We have set up a team in Cairns that will assist Indigenous Queenslanders to end up with their own home. I have written to the federal minister Brendan O'Connor to say that we need to look at this federally funded program to make sure that Indigenous people have a bit of choice and are not just lumbered with housing that we tell them they have to have. I put a design team together that consulted with Indigenous communities on the cape and looked at proper ways of designing housing for Indigenous Queenslanders.

As well as that, we have done a whole array of other things in the short time we have been in government. People no longer need a building approval to make their swimming pool fence safe, as they did under the previous government. They used to have to spend \$500 or even \$1,000 to put up a couple of perspex panels because there was a climbing hazard for a child. What sort of nonsense was that? We have changed that regulation. We have made the vast majority of plumbing for existing housing notifiable instead of requiring council approval. It saves thousands of dollars. We intend to take this state forward and make a difference in the lives of Queenslanders, and that is exactly what we are doing.

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.58 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012, the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012, introduced into this House on Tuesday, 11 September by our state Treasurer and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Tim Nicholls MP. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier and my cabinet colleagues for this budget—a budget that will chart Queensland's future and get our great state back on track. Without doubt, this is the most important budget in a generation of Queenslanders and one that will set Queensland's finances on the road to recovery after years of wasteful Labor spending with little but debt to show for it.

It is widely noted by financial commentators that the most significant risks to the Queensland economy in 2012-13 are external—namely, Europe and the US. For the past 13 or so years, though, the big risk was Labor. For eight long years after my election I witnessed firsthand a government that did not care about Currumbin or indeed any community in Queensland. For eight years I saw budget after budget handed down that showcased Labor's addiction to debt and deficit. Year after year, the good folk of Queensland were hoodwinked with smoke-and-mirror tricks to cover Labor's gross incompetence and shameful mismanagement that saw not only our assets sold off at bargain basement prices but also our AAA credit rating stripped away and thousands of decent, hardworking small businesses go to the wall. And we were still spiralling downwards into interminable debt of some \$85 billion after all that.

Upon victory at the 2012 state election the LNP accepted responsibility for fixing the problems created by Labor. We understood that corrective action was required to get Queensland back on track and get interest expenses substantially lower, because if they remained unchecked we were truly approaching what could be described as a point of no return. Our aim is to be a 21st century government—a reformist government, a government that will work with the private sector and not against it, a government that will engage with the broader community and private sector to make our dollars go further, and a government that will get out of the pockets and off the backs of our small businesses.

In my department and right across government, we have already laid solid foundations for Queensland's future and prosperity. This budget adds the detail required to get Queensland back on track and return us to a fiscal balance for 2014-15. Yes, we had to make some tough decisions; however, they were decisions that had to be made to save our great state from a millstone of debt that would curse generations to come. We also had to make some decisions in support of our 400,000-plus small businesses who were suffocating at a frightening rate under 92,000 pages of Labor's red tape and regulations.

Tourism is an area of our economy that deserves recognition for being a key job and wealth creator. The Newman government recognises tourism as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy—one that contributes \$17.5 billion to the Queensland economy, both directly and indirectly. This state was known for consistently punching above its weight with tourism, attracting over a third of Australia's international visitors and a quarter of its domestic visitors and employing almost 10 per cent of the state's workers—more than the mining and agricultural sectors combined. Yet Labor treated this goose that laid golden eggs with such contempt that she was laying bricks. And no-one noticed and no-one cared.

But the Newman government immediately established the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Under Labor, tourism was merely a management unit within DEEDI. Key goals of my department are to reposition Queensland as the premier Australian destination of choice, to reduce red tape by 20 per cent and unemployment to four per cent within six years, and to double annual overnight visitor expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020. We are talking about an industry that employs more than 120,000 Queenslanders and directly contributes \$8.4 billion to the state economy. As an export earner it is second only to coal, generating \$3.8 billion for the local economy. My department is actively working with the tourism industry to achieve our 2020 goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure. To do this we will leverage a whole-of-government commitment to growing tourism.

We will attract new investment into tourism products, expand aviation capacity and routes to our state, and increase visitation through effective marketing and major events.

The Premier said that we would look after tourism as one of the four pillars of our economy. As minister I said that we would look after tourism, and that is exactly what this budget does. The Newman government has provided an extra \$20 million to Tourism Queensland to develop and implement a tourism investment strategy focusing on inward destination marketing. This puts an end to speculation of the naysayers, who only recently were predicting major cuts to the TQ budget.

Already we have witnessed a renewed enthusiasm and sense of confidence within the industry since the LNP came to power. The highly successful DestinationQ forum in Cairns was a great example. Along with my tourism cabinet committee colleagues, we will continue to see that confidence grow through initiatives such as the drive tourism strategy from Minister Emerson and ecotourism from Minister Dickson. Skills and training shortages are being addressed through Minister Langbroek, and, importantly, the Deputy Premier is working to enhance investment opportunities for tourism projects by streamlining processes. So while we may have added a figure of \$20 million to the Tourism Queensland budget, our whole-of-government approach to tourism will reap much more by leveraging through related departments. There is a welcome boost to regional tourism organisations, with \$7 million allocated—a more than doubling of funding, from \$3.11 million. The extra \$3.89 million will take the form of a contestable incentivised fund.

Another key plank of our election commitment was the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund—\$8 million over the next four years. This fund has already been used to secure new aviation businesses and routes into Queensland from identified priority markets as well as to enhance existing partnerships. We recently kicked a goal through the fund, with China Eastern Airlines commencing a new route three times a week into Cairns from Shanghai as of October this year. The announcement of this new route, made while I was in China with the honourable the Treasurer on the first trade mission of this new government, prompted another airline into action, with China Southern announcing it will bring flights out through Cairns three times a week as part of its Guangzhou-Brisbane route.

Red tape is suffocating our small businesses due to the Labor Party. In response, the Newman government established the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority to provide real relief to our small businesses from the duplicative and cumulative impact of red tape and regulation over the past decade. This budget will make it simpler for Queensland's 412,000 small businesses to do business with government by providing \$9.6 million for business-to-government services. These will influence national, state and local regulatory agencies to reduce the regulatory burden, consolidate the business online service into the business and industry website, business.qld.gov.au, to ensure a one-stop shop for all government advice and transactions required to run a business. It will facilitate adoption of knowledge and information by small business through the planned delivery of webinars, and it will strengthen the voice of small business within government through the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council.

Improvements to my department's online portal include easier usability and the inclusion of tourism pathways to help tourism operators find specialised business support programs. With just a few clicks and a couple of questions, users can access more than 100 business support programs. Business.qld.gov.au is a major contributor to regulatory efficiency, as evidenced by Queensland business reporting benefits. Some \$155 million was attributed to the use of business.qld.gov.au. The latest figures show an increase of over 110 per cent, which equates to some 42,000 regular users, and nearly 90 per cent of business users saying that they are likely to revisit the site.

This year's budget also sees a significant increase in funding for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, although, as they say in the classics, you ain't seen nothin' yet. The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation was established on 1 January 2012. We have allocated \$20.9 million in the 2012-13 year to continue the planning for this prestigious event. Next week I will officially open the new corporate offices at Bundall to accommodate the growing numbers of staff.

While this year will see the completion of the business plan for the village and other venues, from 2013-14 onwards the real action will begin. That is why the coming months are so important. We must make sure we get the planning right so that we create a long-term legacy, not only for the Gold Coast but for all of Queensland. We have the team in place within my department, on the board and in the Commonwealth Games office to ensure that these will be a games to remember. I commend Nigel Chamier and his board, CEO Mark Peters and his staff and Nick Elliott from my department for their sterling efforts to date. Major events have a proven track record of delivering a significant economic benefit and return on taxpayer investment. Events Queensland has played a critical role in establishing our state as a major events tourism destination. This year the Newman government has committed \$49 million to ensure this promising element of our tourism strategy continues to perform and attract visitation with a diverse mix of new and exclusive events.

I turn now to my electorate—my home—of Currumbin. What really makes Currumbin tick is the community, which is one of the most engaged and connected communities in Queensland, if not Australia. It deserves a government that governs with its best interests in mind, a government

committed to lowering the cost of living for Queenslanders. Households in South-East Queensland will receive an \$80 rebate per domestic water connection—a welcome relief from year-on-year increases which were a result of an incompetent Labor government. One would be hard pressed to find residents who suffered more as a result of the ill-fated water grid than those in Currumbin—home to the infamous Tugun desalination plant. But finally we have a minister, the honourable member for Caloundra, committed to reviewing the operation of this sorry saga.

A commitment of \$63 million has been made to freeze the standard electricity tariff. These two initiatives are estimated to save families in South-East Queensland an average of \$200 this year—a saving that Labor never could have delivered. The Newman government will freeze car registration fees for family vehicles and halve public transport fare increases due in 2013-14 in South-East Queensland. These are tangible initiatives that will provide long overdue relief to cost-of-living issues that were crippling our residents due to the former government's gross mismanagement. In some really exciting news for schools in the Currumbin electorate, the budget announced plans for the Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund. This sets aside \$200 million over two years and the eight public schools in Currumbin will be eligible for up to \$160,000 each in funding to fix existing priority maintenance issues. This will go a long way to alleviate the backlog of maintenance problems that the former government refused to act upon.


Currumbin residents will also benefit from the First Home Owner Construction Grant, which will see first home buyers purchasing a newly constructed home or property off the plan receive \$15,000, up from \$7,000 under the first home owner grant. Currumbin will receive \$5.552 million in disability service grants as the government demonstrates a commitment to improving disabilities support in Queensland. This government's first budget delivers a record investment for specialist disability services and will ensure that people have greater choice and control over the services they receive. Some \$15 million over three years has been allocated for a new trial program aimed at providing greater security to older parent carers. Funding of \$522,000 has been allocated for the Gold Coast South Home Assist Secure service for support and advice for those aged 60 years and over.

This government's proactive approach to law and order under the Minister for Police and Community Safety is already resulting in a reduction in crime in my electorate. Officers are to be congratulated for their unwavering dedication to tackling law and order issues, and I acknowledge Assistant Commissioner Graham Rynders, Superintendent Paul Ziebarth and Inspector Damien Crosby for their commitment to the Gold Coast region. All Gold Coast MPs are working hard with the LNP on law and order and we are determined to clean up our streets. Our commitment to recruit 1,100 new police officers over four years will reduce crime further. The Gold Coast police helicopter has been secured and funding of \$1.1 million committed to establish a major and organised crime squad on the Gold Coast.

Soccer and football resources in Tugun will receive funding for equipment and provide accreditation for coaches and referees. Funding has also been allocated to important roadworks, including \$1 million towards the Coolangatta Road and Boyd Street intersection and \$6.5 million towards works on the Pacific Highway at the airport. The budget provides \$8.5 million to protect Queensland's koala population. As I mentioned in my address-in-reply in May, I will continue to earnestly support the iconic Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to gain its share of any available funding so it may continue its lifesaving work.

The Currumbin electorate is the southern gateway into Queensland and a famous tourist destination. It is home to the Gold Coast Airport which, under the guidance of Managing Director Dennis Chant and Chief Operating Officer Paul Donovan, is to be congratulated for the excellent results it has achieved recently—a 10 per cent increase on passengers from last July with a total of 484,421 in one month. Special events such as the Coolangatta Gold, Quiksilver Pro, Bleach, Swell, Cooly Rocks On and the Tour de Valley all showcase the beautiful southern Gold Coast. With the budget committing \$49.6 million towards the events calendar, I am sure we will see these great events go from strength to strength in coming years.

I want to thank my departmental staff and director-general and my ministerial and electorate staff for their assistance with this year's budget. Thanks also to Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland. Honourable members have heard from myself and others in this House just how good this budget is for our great state, but importantly industry chiefs think so too—people like Daniel Gschwind from QTIC, John Lee from TTF and Richard Munro from the Accommodation Association of Australia. While it is indeed nice to hear such praise, it is certainly not the motivation behind this government's first budget. The people of Queensland were dealt a cruel hand by the previous government. Confidence had taken a blow in both the tourism and small business sectors, and we needed to rebuild this. As I said earlier, the LNP went to the electorate with a strong commitment to get this state back on track and put Queensland's future first. This is what the Treasurer has done through his first state budget, and I have great pleasure in commending these bills to the House.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (3.16 pm): I am truly humbled to stand in this House today and know that, just like the men and women who serve in the

73 councils around the state, the Department of Local Government is doing its bit to help Queensland reclaim prosperity. I am also profoundly grateful to be part of a government which had the courage to assess the threat that was posed to each and every Queenslander by enormous debt and deficit, the resolve to do something about it and the brains to lead us towards a future so much brighter and more hopeful than the past we are about to leave behind. This budget marks the real beginning of our great state shaking off the contaminated dust of Labor's disgraceful waste and unaffordable spending and walking into an era of confidence and optimism. My hope is that Queensland's local governments will be at the forefront of that journey. While assessing how to deliver more effective and less regimented support to councils, the local government department has looked hard at the bottom line and plotted a path to get more bang for less buck.

I am proud to be the leader of a department that has turned to the task of achieving a leaner, more efficient service to councils with the gusto and courage one would hope for in people fortunate enough to assist a level of government closest to the people. It is another source of pride for me this year that regional Queensland will be the biggest recipient of the local government department's funding. In a nutshell, money is being directed towards communities to provide the services and infrastructure projects that will help them improve the lives of their residents. We will set aside funds to prepare councils for changes to the Local Government Act and City of Brisbane Act that will cut the red tape and onerous reporting requirements that have held councils back and stopped them being as responsive and proactive as they know they can be. This is what councils need. Their ratepayers judge them on the quality of their roads and water coming out of the tap, not by some sort of document that has to get checked off by Brisbane each and every year; to be able to deliver for themselves, not to be burdened by a 'one size fits all' model. The budget also includes training for Indigenous councils to enhance financial and asset management and land use planning. I am determined to set Indigenous councils on a path towards sustainability. We owe this to our first people.

As the members of this House have just heard, the Department of Local Government looked hard to make sure that it would put its funding to the best possible use. There will be real challenges as well as triumphs ahead, but there can be no doubt that the emphasis for 2012-13 is on delivering to councils in regional Queensland the most responsible budget for the times that we find ourselves in or stepping up the support that will foster the recovery, growth and improvement in the state's communities. Better times are ahead and we are heading towards them with this budget.

I stand in this place today not only as the minister but first and foremost as the proud member for Mundingburra. As one of the five LNP members to serve Townsville, the interests of that great northern city are part of who we are and what we hope to achieve in this chamber. I am honoured to have the member for Townsville join me today. I want the people of this great city to realise that a government can live within its means whilst still delivering crucial infrastructure. The people of Townsville have waited a long time to secure weatherproof access to an essential road in the city, which floods far too often. This budget will therefore start work on flood proofing the notorious Blakey's Crossing. The LNP promised to finally end the blame game and that is precisely what we are doing. Yes, this is a council road, but it is not fair to ask local government to upgrade an arterial that is vital because it is a key part of the entire network. That was my attitude when I was with the council and it will remain my attitude despite my new role. There will be no gun-to-the-head funding deal that was seen under the previous hokey-pokey-doing minister. Instead, this government will commit \$24 million to be provided to councils when they are ready to use it.

In Health, the Newman government will inject \$14.7 million over three years to establish paediatric intensive care services at Townsville Hospital. Although I am proud of the small role that I played in getting this issue on the agenda, the credit must go to Dr Eric Guazzo, who led a grassroots campaign against the Brisbane based bureaucracy that just did not get it. Nothing gave me more pleasure than to see the start of the local hospital and health board, which puts an end to the Brisbane-comes-first mentality. A new, six-bed child and youth unit and a day care centre at Kirwan Health Campus will receive \$10 million.

Despite the state's serious financial challenges, the LNP's vision was never to cower away from the storm. We are dedicated to providing for the community and investing in key infrastructure to help the state regain momentum and, indeed, end the approach that we have seen of constantly playing catch-up with our infrastructure. Let us change the way we do business. Let us deliver ahead of the game. This is an honest and responsible budget that will deliver lasting benefits to regional Queensland. Let us not overlook the savings that will be shared by all Queenslanders that this budget will deliver. For the first time in a long time Queenslanders wake up this week without any new taxes on families. Sixty-three million dollars will be spent to freeze the standard electricity tariff, saving families an average of \$120 on their bills. Two and a half million family vehicles will now have their registration frozen for the whole term of government—yet another promise delivered. Homebuyers can save up to \$7,000 because we have reinstated the principal place of residence concession for stamp duty. Under this government the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, which assists patients accessing specialist medical services not available in their immediate local area, will also be doubled. And has that not been a long time coming!

But perhaps one of the most pleasing changes has been the changing of the maintenance regime in schools. I want to highlight some of the issues facing the electorate of Mundingburra, which I represent. At Annandale State School, the taps are so bad that water gushes out every time the kids turn them on in the toilets. At Cranbrook State School, we have roofs that leak each and every wet season. In Vincent, we have painting that needs to be done, tired guttering and yet more leaking roofs. I have to tell the story of what I saw before the election of practical, visionary, forward-thinking parents. They sat down with us—the now members for Townsville and Thuringowa and I, as well as the members for Burdekin and Hinchinbrook—and told us of their frustration at having dedicated parents on P&Cs who are capable of doing a job for their kids; not looking to line their pockets but looking to help their children. They told us stories of jobs that they thought parents in the school could do for around \$20,000, but they had received a quote of \$60,000 to do that same job. This change represents a fundamental shift in the way in which this state does business. We do not have to have this mentality that the government must do everything for us. There are capable people in the private sector—good people who own businesses, who employ people and who are not the money-sucking hungry people who they have been made out to be in the past 48 hours—who want the best for their kids and who can deliver more efficiently than any government department could ever dream.

Most people in this place will know that when Labor lost the state's AAA credit rating I was serving my community in the Townsville City Council. I knew how much that credit dive was going to cost just my council alone to service the interest on our loans and I knew the misery that would be shared around the state. Instead of the state being famous for its growth and opportunities, Queensland became infamous for having the worst credit rating of all the states. I want to point out a couple of comments from mayors in regional Queensland—mayors who understand that this government, sadly, will not have rivers of gold to be able to throw at them, who will not be able to fly over the top of their cities and shires in helicopters pouring money out of the window because of the legacy we have been left. I refer first to the Mayor of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Mr Bill Shannon, who said—

I'm very supportive of what the government is doing and it's absolutely necessary to get that AAA credit rating back.

Rick Britton, Mayor of the Boulia Shire Council, stated—

If you take over a business or property and it's in massive debt, you have to make some hard decisions for the long term. It takes a lot longer to come out of debt than to go into debt. I am very disappointed after 10 years of a mining boom this state is where it is, because it should be on top of the world. We understood this would be a tough budget but if we can make the hard decisions now, there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

When I visited Boulia, the council there was not after money; all it wanted was a government to free them from restrictive legislation. All it wanted was for the then department of environmental resource management to approve something for it. When you hear stories of councils in regional Queensland who are just sitting back for years waiting for what should be the most simple approvals—approvals for a little bit of land in unallocated state land of thousands of hectares, just a slice of that, to bury their people—


Mr Hathaway: How wide was it?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Just one square metre of land to put in an electricity pole to create an industrial estate. These councils are not after a free handout; they just want the state to get out of their way and let them do business. The situation is no different from the businesses that many of those in this chamber ran before they came here. You have to live within your means. You cannot keep borrowing each and every day for everyday expenses. It does not work. Any business that was run the way that this state government was run would be in a world of hurt.

A government member interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It would be. I take that interjection. You cannot have that attitude in a business and survive. This will be a government that turns around the state's finances. It will make some tough decisions and it will have to upset some people. That is the sad reality of the legacy that we have been left.

In conclusion, I believe the tide has started to turn. I believe we have a government that has a vision: a vision for a stronger Queensland; a vision for a place where local communities matter; where they can control their own destiny; where the people who run for public office are able to have a say on what happens in their cities and shires. Instead of wasting money on an ever-increasing interest bill, with the measures this budget introduces we will have more money to spend on delivering the services Queensland needs—the schools, roads, hospitals, police, teachers and nurses—and we will also better support councils to do the job they were elected for: to help their communities achieve progress and prosper. I commend the bill.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.30 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bills before the House today. In understanding the physics of electricity, there are two types of electricity charges: positive and negative. The same is true for the politics of electricity. In recent years Queenslanders have been subjected to negative electricity politics with runaway cost-of-living impacts due to mismanagement by the former government of government owned electricity utilities. However, the positive side of electricity politics received a huge kick-start on Tuesday

with the state budget that puts reducing the cost of living to households and families first. In Queensland and Australia today it is the cost of living that must be at the forefront of the government's agenda. It is for the Newman government, and will continue to be so, which it delivered cost of relief measures in spades in Tuesday's budget.

Under Labor the concept of cost of living was given lip-service, for that is the only way to explain the lack of any real action to arrest the ever-increasing cost spiral. In water and energy the most visible budget measures were the freeze on the main domestic electricity tariff, tariff 11, at \$63 million; an \$80 rebate for residents of South-East Queensland to mitigate the five years of significant price increases for water at \$92 million; and \$620 million for people outside the state's south-east to pay for the uniform tariff policy that ensures they pay the same electricity prices as people in the south-east corner. The freeze of tariff 11 and the rebate were election commitments, commitments that this government kept. Other positive visible measures were the end of funding of policy tokenism by the former government through a range of programs that put political imperatives ahead of cost-of-living stress for Queensland households and families. The less visible positive measures in the budget were the long-range planning initiatives now underway in my department that will lay the groundwork of solid planning principles to guide water and electricity policy for the next 30 years.

It is often said that failing to plan is planning to fail. At the same time, it is true that long-term planning is absolutely essential to provide real solutions. For too long the horizon was set at next year's budget. In this era of rapid advances in technology that view is unsustainable. The need for long-term planning is said to be obvious, yet we are often caught with what has been termed 'the problems that are coming today, next year and the year after' and by doing so there is a tendency to concentrate available resources on the problems we face now and perhaps ignore what the potentialities and capabilities will be of our people 10 or 15 years from now. That will not happen in this government nor in my department. The horizon must be one that tests the imagination and pushes the boundaries. Thirty years is also the investment horizon for obtaining a return on assets such as dams or power stations. These types of investments need to have forward-looking policy certainty which was delivered in the budget on Tuesday.

In 2012-13 my department has commenced a long road to deliver an affordable, safe, secure and reliable energy and water supply. This is not an easy task, but it is one I am keen to undertake and it must be undertaken if we are to achieve long-term outcomes. I am proud to say that my department has embarked on developing 30-year plans for Queensland's energy and water supply sectors; identifying and implementing strategies to address cost pressures on energy and water prices; reforming the South-East Queensland water sector, including the merging of the region's bulk water entities; taking further steps to reduce red and green tape and streamlining regulatory requirements; implementing of all relevant Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry recommendations; positively engaging and influencing Queensland residents, businesses and industry sectors to ensure shared understanding of expectations, roles and responsibilities.

Since taking office in March my department has pursued a wide-ranging reform agenda that includes the establishment of an interdepartmental committee and independent review panel on electricity sector reform to meet the government's commitment to address cost-of-living pressures; commenced closure of various clean energy initiatives to address the government's commitment to cutting waste and inefficiencies—these have included many federal Labor initiatives which had high hidden costs to Queenslanders; significantly progressed the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry recommendations; established a project team and an interdepartmental committee on water supply reform to meet the government's commitment to address cost-of-living pressures; commenced the merging of the South-East Queensland bulk water entities; completed planning to transfer Queensland Water Commission staff into the department's interim structure and put arrangements in place to ensure the commission can continue to deliver its obligations; and commenced a review of options for the Gold Coast desalination plant and western corridor recycled water scheme. Combined, these and other initiatives will place my department at the head of a number of important outcomes. These are tasks that I am committed to, not just because of the immediate end result but for the new opportunities they will offer to further enhance the quality of life for Queenslanders.

The Prime Minister recently attacked the states, stating that they were responsible for high electricity prices. Colleagues, the Prime Minister is a hypocrite when one considers that neither as Deputy Prime Minister, nor as Prime Minister, to my knowledge did she level this accusation at former Premier Anna Bligh. The issues she raises can best be described as a work in progress with significant movement to occur in the next three to four months. The Prime Minister has tried to hijack the high moral ground on the issue of electricity prices. Could I make the point that it was the Premier of this state in 2011 who pointed the finger at the cost of living across this state and highlighted the high cost of electricity. Premier Campbell Newman put the price of power on the agenda in this state and he himself put the price of power on the COAG agenda, an agenda item the Prime Minister hypocritically is now trying to hijack. I simply advise 'watch this space'.

I referred to other initiatives earlier and there is one I would preliminarily raise—that is, the role of the consumer. They are the largest group in the economy but with regard to electricity and water they

have been the least heard. In 1962 the American consumer was prescribed four rights: the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose and the right to be heard. The challenge will be to place those rights in a framework that allows contribution to a process that advances consumers' interests. As has been said, the business of government is the business of people. The consumer will be one of my focuses going into the future in relation to the supply of energy and water.


If I can turn to the electorate of Caloundra, I welcome this budget which delivers around \$28 million to maintain and upgrade local services, including \$2 million of funding towards meeting flood capacity compliance requirements at Ewen Maddock Dam; \$3.5 million of funding to ensure the quality and safety of Nicklin Way through asphalt resurfacing; the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service will receive a total budget of \$634.9 million, including \$31.7 million to continue construction of the \$1.872 billion Sunshine Coast University Hospital. There will be 30 more beds at the Caloundra Hospital and 60 more at Nambour Hospital at a cost of \$20.88 million.

Throughout the Sunshine Coast, schools will benefit from the Newman government's \$200 million Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund, which will allow state school parent and citizen organisations to apply for up to \$160,000 to fix existing priority maintenance issues. There will be \$5 million available across the Sunshine Coast, Somerset and Moreton Bay regions for the upgrading of social housing and \$245,000 to upgrade existing pools to current standards.

This is a once-in-a-generation budget that delivers the settings for a progressive and forward looking Queensland. For too long, Sunshine Coast residents were punished by state Labor governments and starved of state government investment in favour of major investments in more marginal Labor electorates. The delay to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital was put down to the global financial crisis, but work on the Queensland Children's Hospital, the Gold Coast University Hospital and many other hospitals in Labor seats did not cease.

The first Newman government budget is about getting Queensland back on track. It is about getting on with the job. The hard decisions have been taken. It is time to get on with the hard work to get Queensland moving. This is a fiscal repair budget, but it delivers on the essential big ticket policy certainty settings that are needed by business to invest. It is the first state budget in over a decade that truly delivers at a grassroots level for my constituents in Caloundra. The Treasurer concluded his budget speech by referring to the word 'confidence', and with his comments I agree. May I add, the future is in our hands and we require a confident vision of the possibilities of the future.

On Tuesday of this week when I sat in this House and saw the Treasurer rise to his feet to deliver the budget, I realised that this was the last of the firsts to flow from our election campaign victory on 24 March 2012. It is not simply the first budget delivered by a non-Labor government in years; it is the first budget delivered by a new party in this state. It was part of history. It is part of history. The gravitas associated with that should not be lost upon any member of this chamber. When members are addressing the budget, the critical nature of what we are putting in place here should not be overlooked. These firsts will never come again. I can recall very clearly when the Treasurer first came into this parliament in September 2006. I have seen him grow since then to now, craft his skill and learn his art. In my opinion, he delivered a breath-taking budget that is not afraid to take on the hard issues and deal with the issues that had to be dealt on a daily basis. He delivered a platform for the future. The platform is there and it is up to us as a government to build the structure upon it. I commend the budget to the House.

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (3.42 pm): I too am pleased to make a rely with respect to the first Queensland LNP budget, indeed, the first LPP budget full stop. This is the first conservative budget in the 21st century. It is a budget for Queensland's future. Indeed, it is the most important budget in a generation. As I have said before, this budget is a turning point. It sets a course to navigate the state away from the treacherous path of debt, deficit and decline and back to prosperity. Let me contrast a before and now.

Let me compare the fiscally reckless approach to financial management that prospered under previous environment ministers and the previous administration of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, commonly referred to as DERM, with the new fiscally responsible approach of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Before I do that, I make the following observation: under the new EHP, staff have come on board to deliver this government's policy agenda. They have come on board under the leadership of my director-general, Andrew Chesterman, and his executive management team. I thank them for that. I am pleased to say that EHP staff are committed to being fiscally responsible and are focused on making a streamlined EHP the best environmental regulator in Australia. It is the rank and file—those who deliver our services, who consider our environmental approvals, who monitor the health of the environment, who protect our built heritage, who develop policy and legislation or offer corporate support—who will make a difference for the people of Queensland. They will do that not with more, not with a bigger budget, not by throwing money at a problem, but by being fiscally responsible, innovative and creative.

Before I look forward to the future again, it is timely to dwell on the past. It is prudent to note the financial mismanagement under the previous regime, particularly in DERM. In 12 months of the 2010-11

financial year, DERM racked up almost \$13 million in travel alone. That is more than \$1 million every month, just in travel alone, with \$9 million spent on airfares. If that was not enough, Labor put even more taxpayer dollars aside for jet setting, with no less than \$16 million allocated in 2011-12. They were well on their way to achieving that figure, spending nearly \$12 million on travel in the first 10 months of the previous financial year, until we intervened in April. Similarly, under the previous leadership DERM spent over \$3 million per year on consultancy fees and a whopping \$75 million in contractors' fees in 2010-11. When the budget forecasts were looking grim for Labor, rather than curb spending this financial year they splurged out even more, laying out \$73 million on contractors and another \$3 million on consultancy fees in just 10 months from July 2011 to April this year.

By creating the stand-alone Environment and Heritage Protection portfolio and by breaking up the former DERM, this government can get on with the job of refocusing the department's core purpose to better protect local environments and to be a strong regulator, while facilitating appropriate and sustainable development. To this end, and I acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues, particularly the Deputy Premier, I am pleased to be a part of the Cabinet Resources Committee, to be led by the Deputy Premier. This committee will aggressively examine the impacts of government regulation, particularly on the mining industry. This will build on the work we have already done in EHP through the green tape reduction bill and the ongoing work of our green tape reduction project team.

As I have said before and will continue to say, where companies are doing the right thing my Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will not be a roadblock to economic recovery and growth. Instead, we will be a facilitator that ensures that growth happens in a measured and sustainable way that is respectful of landholders and the environment. For years Labor added regulation upon regulation, layer upon layer. I acknowledge the Minister for Tourism, who is sitting beside me. As the shadow minister for small business, in the dying days of the election campaign one of her projects was to identify red tape that was strangling businesses in particular and organisations across the state. Many of the examples raised with the then shadow minister were around environmentally relevant activities and environmental regulation. They did not produce environmental outcomes. They strangled business and gave no benefit necessarily to the environment. That vine of green tape snaked its way into every nook and cranny of industry, suffocating commerce and strangling the life out of this state. Labor's approach was to put political green preferences above positive and practical environmental outcomes, as if adding thousands and thousands of environmental conditions actually changed the environmental outcome. By working together with the resource sector, the Cabinet Resources Committee will come up with new ways to reduce approval times, cut green tape and reduce the regulatory burden to facilitate the economic growth this state needs, whilst continuing to maintain the highest environmental standards.

This budget shows that we can be fiscally prudent, pro-environment and pro-business, and that those elements are not mutually exclusive. There is no doubt that we must grow our economy and it is essential that a healthy environment supports a robust economy. The cost savings achieved by my department will protect key regulatory, compliance and response services. By streamlining cumbersome processes, as undertaken recently through the green tape reduction program, we will free up departmental resources that can then be redirected to front-line compliance and enforcement activities focused primarily on those industries and those businesses that present the highest risk to our environment to ensure the ongoing protection of Queensland's environment.

These changes to the department will help industry to get on with doing what it does best—contributing to a thriving economy and generating jobs whilst ensuring that appropriate environmental management to protect the state's unique land and waterways. We will be investing a further \$2.8 million into coal seam gas regulation in addition to the almost \$5 million already allocated in 2012-13. We have also started work on a Healthy Harbour Partnership for Gladstone Harbour and have committed \$12 million over the next three years to fund projects run by grassroots community groups through our Everyone's Environment grants. These will be the first in what I hope will become a longer term trend to drive innovation and deliver better value for money for Queensland taxpayers.

As announced last week, we have committed half a million dollars this financial year as part of a \$1.5 million commitment to better manage crocodiles in North Queensland in partnership—in partnership—with local councils. As proof of our ability to listen and act, I can advise the House that Environment and Heritage Protection rangers trapped and removed a potentially dangerous crocodile from Cairns just days ago—a crocodile located in a built-up area that was over three metres in length.

Mr Cripps: Innisfail a couple of days before that.

Mr POWELL: That is correct. I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook, the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Several days before that another crocodile was removed in the Innisfail area from the Johnstone River.

Mr Cripps: The plan is working, Minister.

Mr POWELL: The plan is working and I commend the work of my EHP rangers in actioning that plan, and I look forward to working with councils over the coming 30 days as we prepare local management plans in each of the councils of Townsville, Hinchinbrook, Cassowary Coast and Cairns.

We have also committed \$8 million in 2012-13 to purchase koala habitat as part of a wider three-year commitment, and we are currently receiving expressions of interest from South-East Queensland landholders. We are committed to protecting and managing our wildlife, but we cannot invest the necessary resources if we do not make tough decisions to balance our budget.

Moving to the electorate of Glass House, I am particularly excited about what this budget delivers for the electorate of Glass House, for the people of Glass House—what it means for local roads, for schools, for disabilities services, for health services that are the main winners from this historic LNP budget.

Firstly, I commend the Treasurer for his commitment to health—\$1.3 billion is committed to be spent on construction, expansion and redevelopment of hospitals across Queensland. As the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the member for Caloundra and my neighbour, recently mentioned in his speech, we on the Sunshine Coast commend the government, commend our colleagues, commend the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, for getting the Sunshine Coast University Hospital off and running. It is also great to see the allocation in this year's budget of \$2.7 million to the Caboolture Hospital, which services my electorate, for an education and skills centre and the commitment of \$8.5 million to continue the \$9.7 million expansion of the Caboolture Hospital's emergency department.

Another announcement that I am particularly proud of due to the financial relief it will offer the people of Glass House is the increase in the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Our government has increased the accommodation subsidy from \$30 to \$60 per person per night, with this being the first time it has increased since 1987. It is great to see that the travel subsidy has also been increased from 15c to 30c per kilometre which will go a long way to help cover costs associated with having to travel to seek medical care.

For three long years, I, along with the good people of Glass House, have also been pleading with Labor to get started on overdue work on the Maleny-Kenilworth Road. For three long years there was no action, no support and no money from the previous government. Well I am pleased to see that in this first LNP budget nearly \$11.5 million will be spent on the Maleny-Kenilworth Road over the next two years, with the replacement of Grigor Bridge at Conondale, the rehabilitation of bridges and culverts along the road and flood repair work still not completed since the floods in 2011. This is a major win for the people of my electorate. But there is more good news.

The D'Aguilar Highway will also receive just under \$1 million to be spent on improving intersections at Bye Road and J Lindsay Road between Wamuran and Woodford and on road resurfacing. Additionally, \$11.9 million will go towards finishing the repair work—


Mr Nicholls: I think it is a very prudent allocation of funds.

Mr POWELL: I think it is a very prudent allocation of funds and I look forward to working with you over the coming budgets to build on that for the D'Aguilar Highway. I note the investment that is going on in the highway in my good friend the member for Nanango's electorate, and I look forward to working with her as we continue to advocate for it. As I was saying, \$11.9 million will go towards finishing the repair work to Palmwoods-Montville Road and \$2.85 million over two years to continue the upgrade of the Pumicestone Road and Bruce Highway interchange. There is \$884,000 earmarked for repairs on the Maleny-Stanley River Road—again, long overdue repairs from the floods last year—and extra dollars for the intersections on the Landsborough-Maleny Road, and I thank the Minister for Transport for that investment.

Mr Nicholls: It's my money.

Mr POWELL: I thank the Treasurer for his allocation of the money to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads so that he could spend it in the good electorate of Glass House.

The Glass House community will also receive \$2.87 million in grants for disability services this year. I know we need better roads, I know families with disabilities need support, I know people need access to quality health services, but I also know that we cannot deliver any of these things without making the hard decisions outlined in this budget. Instead of wasting money on an ever-increasing interest bill, we will have more money to spend on delivering the services people need in the future. So I commend the budget Appropriation Bill, I commend the Treasurer for his vision and strength in articulating our responsible fiscal plan to get this state back on track, and I commend all of the LNP's leadership team in making difficult but necessary decisions to get this state back on track—out of the red and back in the black.

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (3.56 pm): I would like to thank the Treasurer for the budget and the way in which it was presented to the House. I have spoken to a number of people since, particularly in my own electorate, and the words 'faith, hope and trust' have reverberated a number of times, because the people of Queensland finally have faith, hope and trust in a government to properly manage the finances of this state—to get the best value for dollar for all Queenslanders. They have faith, hope and trust in the government to make sure that every cent is spent going towards the essential services that all Queenslanders have missed out on over approximately the last 20 years.

This budget has put Queensland back on the right track after almost 20 years of neglect and mismanagement. Historians will look back on it as the moment when Queensland changed its destiny and pulled back from the financial abyss. The opposition know very well why it is absolutely vital that we find savings and reduce our horrendous debt. Yet they act as though it has nothing to do with them.

Labor have left us with no choice but to make some tough decisions, because they allowed bureaucracy to grow at the expense of front-line operations. We have sought to restore the balance. Yes, we have had to make some tough calls but we have also laid down a firm foundation for the future—a brighter future for all Queenslanders.

Of course the Department of Community Safety and the Queensland Police Service have a vital part to play in this very important transformation. This is a portfolio that touches every Queenslanders. Our front-line forces are often the first people at the scene when catastrophe strikes or when help is needed. It is therefore vital that we get it right, that Queenslanders are confident that we are putting our resources where they are needed and not allowing a bloated bureaucracy to flourish at the expense of the front line.

This budget sees total spending for the Department of Community Safety and the Queensland Police Service at nearly \$4 billion. With regard to the Queensland Police Service, the Newman government has made it crystal clear since even before the election that one of our main goals would be getting more police on the streets. This budget has followed through with our promises. We have allocated \$34.7 million this financial year for 300 police recruits. This is the first instalment of our pledge to put 1,100 extra police on our streets over the next four years.

We are developing plans to move 50 police officers from behind desks to the front line, and this is the first instalment in our target of 200 over the next four years. That is why this government is quite different. We will be out there making sure that police officers are not driving their desks and their hard drives but are out there driving down crime on our streets. \$3 million has been set aside to deliver police helicopter services—the first instalment of our \$18 million plan to have two permanent helicopters for the Gold Coast and South-East Queensland. We are spending \$2.5 million as part of \$12.7 million over three years to replace three water police catamarans based in Cairns, Townsville and the Whitsunday.

Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers will receive \$1 million to revitalise their work towards helping keep our streets safe. This will be the first instalment in \$4 million pledged over the next four years. This is very important because police are only as good as the information they receive, and these vital volunteers need to be supported.

We have allocated \$38 million for new and replacement police vehicles. A total of \$37.8 million has been allocated for police capital works across the state including \$27.1 million to complete internal infrastructure at the new Queensland Police Academy site at Wacol which will underpin further construction, \$6.6 million to refurbish and upgrade existing police facilities, \$2 million for closed-circuit cameras in watch-houses as part of our ongoing program and \$800,000 to upgrade the Broadbeach Police Station.

We have also set aside \$1.5 million to extend the trial of Drink Safe Precincts in Townsville, Surfers Paradise and Fortitude Valley. However, to achieve these important measures the QPS will undergo a number of structural changes. These savings and efficiencies will enable us to produce a skilled, highly visible and responsive Police Service which meets the needs of all Queenslanders. It will be backed by a government that believes in four words in particular—four words that have been used by the many countries that participated in the recent Olympic Games and Paralympic Games—rise up, unite, believe and commit. That is what this government does. It rises up to the challenges ahead. It is united in what it does. It believes in what it does. And it makes a commitment to the people of Queensland by taking actions and not words.

With regard to the Department of Community Safety, one of the main aims of this budget is to concentrate on resources where it matters—on the front line rather than the back of house. Under the former Labor government, bureaucracy was allowed to run rampant at the expense of people on the ground. We aim to create regional empowerment by removing layers of bureaucracy. We have done this by listening to local communities and acting on what they have told us. Efficiency measures will allow the Department of Community Safety to invest \$174.5 million in capital purchases and \$4.8 million in capital grants to support essential front-line services. These new spending initiatives include \$28.3 million to continue the \$442.8 million expansion and redevelopment of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre; \$16.8 million to continue the \$33 million cell upgrade program to modify cells in Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre; \$1.3 million in 2011-12 to establish a new SES headquarters in Cairns; and \$11 million over four years for an academy for disaster management to enhance disaster management training. \$51.4 million is allocated for ambulance facilities and vehicles across the state which includes \$18.4 million to commission 130 new and replacement ambulance vehicles; to complete new ambulance stations at Coomera, North Lakes and Pinjarra Hills; to complete the replacement ambulance station at Calliope; to continue the construction of replacement ambulance stations at Cleveland and Kingaroy; to commence the construction of the replacement ambulance station at Emerald and the replacement ambulance station and relief quarters at Tara; to continue the

refurbishment of the ambulance station at Gladstone; and to complete staff housing in the Surat and Bowen basins.

There will be \$45.6 million allocated for fire and rescue facilities and urban and rural fire appliances. This includes \$11.4 million for 21 urban fire appliances and \$4.6 million for 24 rural fire appliances; for the completion of the replacement fire and rescue station at Ripley, which I had the pleasure of attend just recently; for the completion of the replacement auxiliary fire and rescue stations at Clifton, Millaa Millaa and Mount Tamborine; for the completion of the replacement permanent auxiliary fire and rescue station at Emerald; for the completion of the redevelopment of the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Walkerston; and for continuing the construction of the new fire and rescue stations at Brassall and the replacement auxiliary and rescue station at Mareeba. This is a budget which is about less bureaucracy and more about front-line facilities which provide the resources that are desperately needed.

I would now like to speak in relation to my own electorate. I would like to mention my neighbouring parliamentary colleague the member for Burnett, Steve Bennett. We will be working together to ensure that we meet the needs of the community. It is always better in any type of activity to work together as a team so we can get better results. I thank the member for Burnett for his continuing support and the way that he goes about representing the people of Burnett with a great deal of pride and passion.

In the 2012-13 budget, as the Treasurer alluded to, more than 75 per cent of the government's capital expenditure will take place outside of Brisbane. The budget will deliver for the Bundaberg and Burnett regions in relation to education, roads and disability services. Operation Queensland funding will see \$47.4 million go to local government to fund the reconnection, rebuilding and improvement of regional roads. \$10 million will be allocated to fix the Bundaberg, Childers and Goodwood Road sections of the local highways. \$10.2 million is allocated for the upgrade of the substation at Avoca, which will also assist with increased development as Bundaberg grows to be ahead of the game in relation to those development issues.

To reduce the burden on small and medium business and assist with local jobs, we are particularly thankful that payroll tax will be reduced. This will give struggling businesses a boost to have, as I said in the beginning of my speech, faith, hope and trust for their future and faith, hope and trust in the government of Queensland to get the best value for the dollar and the best value for the Queensland taxes that come through this government.

The electorate will also receive \$14.7 for disability services grants, and another \$3.6 million will go towards a range of community housing projects. We are very thankful for this disability services funding. Bundaberg has one of the highest percentages of disabilities per person in Queensland. Our cost of living and cost of housing is very low. We also have an enviable lifestyle and we have a community which embraces the great values of giving more than taking, which is why I chose to live in a beautiful place like Bundaberg and to raise my family. We have some very beautiful friends whom I am very thankful for. Housing funding includes \$462,000 towards two Electra Street dwellings for people with spinal cord injuries. This is a very important group within the Bundaberg area, and I thank them for continuing to speaking up for people with not just spinal injuries but also other disabilities. They do a terrific job.

There is \$300,000 for the construction of 16 dwellings in Takalvan Street and more than \$3 million towards upgrades of social housing in the Bundaberg and Burnett areas. That is very pleasing, because how we look after our most disadvantaged people within our community is a reflection on the whole of the community. We are very thankful for the state government funding in this respect.

There is an exciting development for every local school, with the provision of up to \$160,000 to deliver backlogged maintenance through the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund. This is a wonderful project. It is very visionary in that it allows the mums and dads of the school to work with the P&C to get the best value for their dollar so they can get their maintenance projects up and running. This is about embracing everybody as a community, valuing the school community and understanding that the school, besides being a community in itself, is part of the wider community and that we can only get the best results by working together.

In relation to looking after the whole community, the Home Assist Secure program in the region will benefit from the \$560,000 in funding. I would like to thank that group. They are mainly managed by the Rockhampton Catholic diocese which does a terrific job through many other organisations in the Bundaberg area.

Another budget commitment to benefit the local community is the doubling of the patient travel subsidy. This is very important for Bundaberg after the failures of the previous government in relation to the health services of the Bundaberg community. People in Bundaberg have to travel long distances to come to Brisbane, mainly on the tilt train, and this move will help no end to meet the needs of the community. When people come from a rural area to the big smoke of Brisbane, as we may call it, this scheme will assist them to find better quality accommodation. It will assist them after they get to the train station, because that is only one part of their journey; they then have to get to the medical facilities and

they have to return. Often times they are with a carer or a loved one so this will assist them to have a few comforts that many members of the community take for granted.

Other cost savings for families come in the form of the freezing of car registration costs and the \$15,000 boost for first home buyers purchasing new homes. The Wide Bay area alone has approximately 14,000 vacant blocks that have passed development and are sitting there waiting to grow, waiting to meet the needs of the rest of the community and waiting to meet the needs of the Queensland government's four pillars, particularly in relation to mining, construction, agriculture and tourism. Bundaberg is a very liveable city. It is a place where you are safe, where you have a health network of the highest standard and where you have a government that will support you.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Treasurer. I reiterate those words 'faith, hope and trust' in the management of this government in the future. I also remember those four Olympic terms that are spoken in many languages and across many countries. This budget shows the commitment of this LNP government because we are rising up to the challenges ahead, we are united in the challenges ahead, we are representing the people of Queensland and we are working hard for the people of Queensland. We are showing the commitment to the people of Queensland by getting out there and getting the best value for their hard earned tax dollar.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (4.13 pm): This first state budget from the Newman government delivers on our priorities in agricultural research and development in Queensland. It invests some \$442.4 million into the now stand-alone Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Queensland's bid to double food production by 2040 is an ambitious one but it is one that we have an obligation to meet. The world's population is growing and we have the land and the skills to produce more food and fibre to feed and clothe it. To this end, my department, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, received a major boost with a strategic \$4.8 million investment for research into tropical pulses—legumes, chick peas, lentils and beans. This is about putting our money where our mouth is and putting Queensland farmers on the front foot. The funds will underpin a partnership with the Queensland University of Technology to help position Queensland as a leading exporter of pulses to India and Asia. The tiger economies of Asia are hungry for protein and, with this research investment, Queensland will now be even better placed to meet the demand. This makes sense given the state's proximity to these Asian markets.

The budget also announces \$7.6 million over some four years towards agricultural research and development aimed at increasing the productivity of Queensland's key export sectors. This is in stark contrast to Senator Ludwig and his federal department's plans, which show a willingness to jeopardise the disease free status of many of our local industries by allowing fruit and vegetable imports which would simply introduce diseases into our industries and risk decimating them.

Mr Newman: The most cowardly ag minister we've ever had in this country.

Mr McVEIGH: I accept the interjection from the Premier. The Newman government believes that Queensland produces some of the best produce in the world, and we are working with industry to get it out on to the world stage and on to tables across the globe. Sugar is one of Queensland's best known industries, but with other countries such as Brazil and Thailand emerging as strong competitors we know we have to invest locally to ensure our industry is competitive on the global marketplace. I am delighted therefore to say we have committed some \$4.6 million for sugar research development and extension to increase the productivity of Queensland's \$1.2 billion sugarcane industry.

Mr Cripps: Thank you, Minister.

Mr McVEIGH: We have listened to producers, and I listened to my colleague, the Minister for Natural Resources and member for Hinchinbrook, who knows the initiative required to develop the capacity to produce more by opening up the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments to irrigated agronomy in North Queensland. We have committed some \$3 million to rebuild research and development, including support for barley breeding, a new agronomist for the central highlands and work on managing tree size in horticultural tree crops for productivity and harvesting efficiencies. Just last week, I announced together with the Premier at Ag Show in Toowoomba that we have worked to ensure that our barley breeding research program and capacity will not be lost to Western Australia, as was the plan under the former Labor government.

We want research that will benefit Queensland growers. We want research to be undertaken here in Queensland so that it produces the best outcome for our local producers. We know that after two decades of Labor there is not much money left in the kitty so we have to use what we have wisely. Labor left many agriculture facilities, like the campuses of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, to simply go to rack and ruin because it did not care and it did not maintain them.

I believe in looking after what we have got. We will look after these things far better and ensure upgrades of our Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry facilities. We will spend \$3 million upgrading the Spyglass Beef Research property outside Charters Towers and we will also spend \$500,000 to upgrade facilities at Brian Pastures outside Gayndah. This is in addition to the \$4.5 million for upgrades at research stations and laboratories and for the purchase of new scientific equipment

across the state. We will also be working at maintaining fisheries capacity, with \$1.1 million to replace boats and equipment for the fisheries research and regulatory functions and \$1 million for new heavy plant and equipment.


Agricultural industry stakeholders—the Queensland Farmers Federation, Growcom and AgForce—have recognised our efforts and have welcomed these announcements. They acknowledge the need to get our finances back in the black and to get Queensland back on track. The QFF CEO, Mr Dan Galligan, said the budget provided positive commitments for the primary production sectors, including sugarcane industry R&D and research into increasing Queensland's capacity as a food bowl for Asia. AgForce president, Mr Brent Finlay, said making Queensland part of the food bowl for Asia would help agriculture in this state and of course help our economy.

Growcom chief advocate David Putland said that the budget included a number of positives for agriculture, reflecting the LNP's election commitment to the industry as one of the four pillars of our economy. This budget secures agriculture's future as one of those four pillars of the economy, and research and development will play a critical role in ensuring just that. We are directing funds into research and development to drive increases in production and to help Queensland along the path of doubling that production by 2040.

I will not deny that the past few months have seen some difficult financial and structural changes, but we have laid the foundation for a strong, more efficient department that is focussed on the needs of the agriculture, fishing and forestry industries alike. We have examined programs, activities and staffing levels to ensure that this budget directs funds to areas that will drive increases in production for producers right across the state just where they want them. We have done this to ensure that agriculture is once more a key priority for the state and that our farmers get the front-line services that they need and deserve.

In terms of my own electorate, Toowoomba South, I am very pleased and enthused to go out and work with the education department in following up on the education facility maintenance program. That will mean a great deal to schools in my electorate, including Rangeville, Harristown, Glenvale, Middle Ridge, Gabbinbar and South Toowoomba. I look forward to working with sporting groups across my electorate, particularly those that look after children in the various sporting programs that mean so much and promise so much. I also look forward to seeing delivered the various initiatives that will assist those caring for the elderly and the disabled. I look forward to working with my neighbouring state members, Mr Trevor Watts in Toowoomba North, Mr Ray Hopper in Condamine and Mr Ian Rickuss in the Lockyer Valley to ensure that the regional initiatives, including those of transport and other infrastructure, are proceeded with under the commitments made in our budget announcements. I also look forward very much to playing a key role in managing the rollout of the various agricultural issues that I mentioned that mean so much to the regional city of Toowoomba and the surrounding Darling Downs.

I commend the Treasurer for the budget and emphasise that it has been a pleasure to work with him and other colleagues in assisting him.

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (4.22 pm): As the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, my responsibilities to the people of Queensland are hugely varied, ranging from estate management protection of national parks, custody and management of state forests, marine parks management, fish habitat areas through to racing, recreation and sport. I am working to benefit Queenslanders by providing services including, but not limited to, improving access to and management of Queensland's national parks and state forests; working to increase Queenslanders' participation in sport and recreational activities; and providing a proactive and supported regulatory environment for the racing industry, which directly employs approximately 30,000 people in this great state.

In delivering these services, I am also determined to contribute to the Newman government's objectives for the community and commitments in the following ways: contributing towards the growth of a four-pillar economy based on agriculture, tourism, resources and construction through to reducing red tape and regulation for sustainable tourism in protected areas and providing increased opportunities for enjoyment of all of Queensland's national parks and forests; lowering the cost of living for families by cutting waste through working with local clubs to reduce costs and encourage greater participation in sport and recreation; delivering better infrastructure and better planning by supporting new racing infrastructure upgrades, and the development and upgrading of local sporting facilities through targeted grants programs; revitalising front-line services for families by streamlining the processes for camping and vehicle access to national parks, and enhancing sport and recreation service delivery through new programs to increase participation; and restoring accountability in government through implementing arrangements for governance and planning across all codes of Queensland racing and ensuring systems are in place to efficiently, effectively and ethically manage public resources.

National parks are the cornerstone of Queensland's protected area estate and are an important part of our natural environment and cultural heritage. Through proper management, our government aims to ensure that parks are accessible to all Queenslanders. Indeed, the Newman government considers the future of Queensland's national parks so important that we have established a separate

portfolio for their specific care. Our national parks and forests play an important part in building stronger Queensland communities by providing recreational opportunities and helping to build local economies through sustainable ecotourism ventures. Additionally, by managing important marine protected areas, such as declared fish habitats, I will ensure sustainable recreational and commercial fishing operations in our state.

Our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service delivers recreation, tourism and conservation services for the parks and forest estate and includes our vital front-line ranger staff. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service management responsibilities include a public estate of approximately 12.5 million hectares of land, including national park and state forest tenures, as well as reserves, trusteeships and freehold land. They are directly responsible for managing state marine parks with a total area of approximately 72,000 square kilometres and have primary responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, which covers 345,000 square kilometres. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff ensure the high quality of visitor facilities such as day use and camping areas, lookouts, walking tracks, mountain bike trails and access roads that are clean, safe and meet visitor needs as a priority to ensure national parks are well managed and available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders.

In 2012-13, I will deliver key commitments and initiatives including fire management, which is an important priority for national parks. Accordingly, \$5.4 million over four years will be provided to improve fire management programs including targeted aerial ignition programs and specialised fire training for rangers. Funding of half a million dollars in 2012-13 and \$1.5 million over three years is being reallocated to provide better coordination of volunteering in Queensland's national parks. The Newman government is committed to improving access for tourism and ecotourism operators in national parks. Therefore, I will develop and launch an online portal to streamline the registration process for camping and vehicle access permits in national parks and will reduce permit classes by 50 per cent.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff maintain visitor infrastructure and assets worth approximately \$1 billion including more than 2,000 kilometres of walking tracks, 447 camping areas, 195 parks providing day-use facilities, over 30,000 kilometres of roads and fire lines, around 300 administrative buildings including houses and around 160 workshop areas. In 2012-13, \$13.9 million will be provided for capital works to replace and build visitor and management infrastructure on Queensland's protected area estate and forests. The QPWS capital works program provides infrastructure critical for the management, enjoyment and protection of our special places. Queensland's parks and forests host around 16 million visits annually and suitable facilities are essential to ensure visitor enjoyment and safety.

As far as sport is concerned, I will encourage all Queenslanders to lead an active and healthy lifestyle by participating in sport and recreation. This will be achieved through a suite of initiatives including grassroots funding programs, community programs and workshops, and physical activity resources for parents and teachers aimed at getting young Queenslanders physically active. The Newman government has an unwavering commitment to support sport and recreation at the grassroots level across Queensland. I am very pleased to announce that I am increasing the funding for our Get in the Game program by \$2 million over what was initially promised in the lead-up to the last state election. This takes funding to \$18 million over three years and means that each of the affiliated programs—GetPlaying, GetStarted and GetGoing—will provide even greater assistance to Queensland families by reducing the costs of club registrations and funding better equipment and infrastructure. Through better planning processes and financial management, we are ensuring that all Queensland children have the opportunity to participate in sport by providing direct spending for community clubs.

This initiative is another way the Newman government is determined to ease the cost-of-living burden for Queensland families. GetPlaying will provide grants of up to \$100,000 in funding to sport and recreation organisations for facility development while GetGoing will provide grants of up to \$10,000 for items and activities to assist clubs in attracting and retaining club members. Funding of \$6 million for GetStarted will enable at least 40,000 voucher payments of \$150 to young Queenslanders over three years to get involved in sport.

I turn now to racing. My department is responsible for regulating Queensland's racing industry to ensure it is commercially responsive, it is operated in a responsible and accountable manner, and racing animals are cared for to the highest standard. The Office of Racing Regulation administers the Racing Act 2002, which provides a framework for the regulation of the Queensland racing industry to ensure integrity and public confidence in the industry. The Racing Act 2002 places significant emphasis on the role of government in relation to matters impacting on the probity and integrity of racing, and the need to protect the public interest.

Importantly, the Racing Science Centre is an accredited facility under the Racing Act 2002 providing a comprehensive range of racing integrity services including drug testing, research and other scientific services. This service area also monitors, advises and makes recommendations to the chief executive about matters related to the welfare of licensed animals and drug control in the Queensland racing industry.


In order to rejuvenate the Queensland racing industry, the Newman government has committed to re-establishing separate control bodies for each code of racing—namely, thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing—along with a Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board. This board will be responsible for cross-industry issues such as funding infrastructure needs, while each control body will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of their respective codes.

In addition, amendments to the Racing Act 2002 will transfer appropriate integrity functions to government and remove restrictions on bookmakers to make them more competitive with bookmakers in other states. Additional funding of \$1 million in 2012-13, which means \$4 million over four years, will be provided to rejuvenate country racing in Queensland. This will enable 20 additional country race meetings throughout the year and the introduction of a new clubs cooperation scheme.

Additionally, we will be amending the Racing Act 2002 to establish a new racing industry structure. Additional funding of \$2.5 million in 2012-13 and a further \$2.5 million in 2013-14 is being provided for the Queensland Thoroughbred Investment Scheme to further support the Queensland thoroughbred industry and, in turn, create better prize money.

Although I am very proud to announce these wonderful initiatives today and outline how the Newman government is delivering on its promises to the Queensland people, I have also had to make some very difficult decisions during the process of creating this new department, ensuring we have a more streamlined service delivery and customer focused outcome. These were incredibly difficult but necessary decisions to make. However, we have ensured that our vital front-line ranger services will be protected into the future. Similarly, where possible we are protecting spending on sport, honouring the current funding agreements with state sporting organisations and local jobs plan participants.

The Newman government is acting now to address the problems caused by the former Labor government's financial mismanagement to get Queensland back on track. This is the most important budget in a generation. I am proud to stand here today and say that this budget will deliver a stronger and brighter Queensland future. I must thank the Treasurer, the member for Clayfield, Mr Tim Nicholls. I think he has done an outstanding job under difficult circumstances, considering the condition in which we found the state's finances. The Treasurer, Premier and Deputy Premier worked together as a team. I thank each one of my cabinet colleagues for the hard work they have put in over the past few months. No-one will ever realise how difficult it was and how much hard work they put in, particularly with the departments. I say to each member of this House: you are going to find it difficult—there are a lot of things that we have to get out there and sell—but this is for the benefit of the people of Queensland. We are in this thing together for a brighter future, so that Queensland will be prosperous. I know that, with the Treasurer we have, we will be the best state government this country has ever seen.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.32 pm): As my friend the Treasurer stated on Tuesday, the first budget of the Newman LNP government is a once-in-a-generation budget that provides a clear path out of the economic mire in which we were left by the former Labor administration. The LNP has taken the tough decisions early and necessary to rebuild Queensland's public sector finances, which were recklessly destroyed by the former Bligh Labor government. This budget delivers on commitments to lower the cost of living for families, revitalises front-line services for local communities, grows a four-pillar economy and sets Queensland on a clear path to regaining the state's AAA credit rating.

We have left no stone unturned to identify collective savings worth \$7.8 billion across all government departments. In doing so, we have protected Queensland families from unnecessary increases in taxes, fees and charges. This is the hard work that Labor could never be bothered to do.

This budget acts on the interim recommendations of the independent Commission of Audit. The urgency and seriousness of the need to act can be underlined by repeating a few of the key statistics presented by the Treasurer as some of the more appalling fiscal failures of the former Labor government. For example, interest on government debt has been the fastest growing expense of the Queensland government for the last decade. In the financial year 2010-11, 96 per cent of capital investment by the Queensland government was funded by borrowing. The state government's debt-to-revenue ratio under Labor increased from below 20 per cent in 2005-06 to more than 100 per cent in 2011-12—in just six short years.

Following the fiscal repair exercise by the Newman LNP government, I am proud of a number of the new economic indicators that we can point to from the Treasurer's speech on Tuesday, including: by the end of the LNP's first term the Queensland government will be able to pay its own way, with a fiscal surplus of \$652 million predicted by the financial year 2014-15; in this budget the LNP has managed to reduce the growth in government expenses to 2.5 per cent this year after it had blown out to 8½ per cent last year under Labor; and the interest repayments saved by the LNP, by its fiscal repair savings and restructuring program, will total approximately \$1.3 billion by the financial year 2014-15. That is of great benefit to Queensland taxpayers, who will not have to foot the bill for those interest payments.

In my own Department of Natural Resources and Mines, two key commitments have been central to the process of identifying our share of the cost savings. Firstly, we have minimised the impact of our departmental restructure on rural and regional areas of Queensland to ensure that communities in the

bush are not disproportionately affected by a loss of public sector positions. Secondly, there has been absolutely no loss of front-line mine safety and health positions to ensure Queenslanders working in the resources sector remain protected by one of the world's best mine safety systems.

The process of restructuring the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has also been guided by the LNP's commitment to regulatory reform. We have carefully considered programs and positions that would no longer be required as a result of our reforms, and the positions that we have announced will be discontinued because of our commitment to reducing red tape on our stakeholders and industry. Three-quarters of the positions will come from South-East Queensland, again demonstrating our efforts to minimise the impact on regional and rural Queensland. We have identified savings in areas of the department that, under Labor, had become fixated on overregulating clients and stakeholders in the agriculture, resources and property industries, with red tape tying them up in complex processes rather than supporting sustainable economic growth. Land, water and vegetation management and resource project approval and assessment processes are all areas where there can be significant streamlining, simplification and regulatory reform.

Support for the resources sector will remain a key focus of the Newman government's efforts to rebuild the Queensland economy. During the 2012-13 financial year my department will implement the independent review of the land access framework to provide greater certainty to landholders and industry on land access and compensation arrangements. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines will also help provide investment and regulatory certainty to the resources sector by supporting the development of statutory regional plans in Central Queensland, on the Darling Downs and for Cape York Peninsula. We will also be strongly supporting regional development on Cape York Peninsula through the amendment of unnecessarily restrictive legislation that could delay the South of Embley bauxite project and will work with mining companies to finalise plans for a multicargo load-out facility to be delivered in Cloncurry. My department will also be working collaboratively with the resources sector to manage the difficult question of overlapping resource tenures, taking on board the very useful recommendations contained in the Queensland Resources Council's overlapping tenures white paper.

The geological survey of Queensland will publicly release the results of the recent Galilee and Thomson airborne magnetic and radiometric surveys that will also complete regional assessments of potential geothermal areas near the existing electricity transmission line network under the Coastal Geothermal Energy Initiative. This financial year will also see the completion of rounds 5 and 6 of the highly successful Collaborative Drilling Initiative which provides grants to encourage innovative exploration across the state.

As part of the Newman government's drive to improve front-line services, my department will be implementing dedicated resource assessment expertise hubs in our regional departmental offices. The department will also place a priority on assessing key CSG permit applications to support the development of the LNG industry, which is quickly becoming a big part of the resources sector in this state. The LNG industry is driving investment in infrastructure—infrastructure in not only the industrial sector but also communities across the state—and is set to become a major export earner for Queensland. The small mining sector will be supported through the finalisation of draft Indigenous land use agreements with the North Queensland Land Council, the North Queensland Miners Association and the state to provide for the grant of small scale mining and petroleum tenures in North Queensland. These initiatives from the Newman LNP government will ensure that the resources sector will continue to be one of the load-bearing pillars of the Queensland economy.

In the area of land, vegetation and water management, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will progress a number of policy reforms made possible through savings achieved through this budget process. The management of vegetation across Queensland's land mass has a major bearing on agricultural and resource sector productivity. This government will recognise that linkage through less interventionist vegetation management policies to support sustainable economic growth. More of the department's budget will now be spent on supporting practical, common-sense vegetation management practices rather than on enforcing complex and impractical rules and regulations. With a view to delivering a reduction in red tape and returning appropriate land management controls to landholders, the LNP government will develop a balanced vegetation management approach that will deliver cost savings for both landholders and the department.

The management of land titles and valuations by my department will be boosted by a \$6 million investment by the LNP government. These funds will improve the reliability and integrity of the department's ageing land and cadastral information technology systems that support land titles, valuations and boundaries in Queensland. The investment will be funded by the introduction of a modest land registry lodgement fee and a new land registry search fee. These modest fees will be invested directly into improving services to clients using these systems. This year for the first time landowners will be able to lodge their valuation objections online. This will streamline the process for landowners and enable them to track the progress of their objection in real time while reducing the time that departmental officers have to spend manually entering data. While there will be an initial cost of approximately \$200,000 to implement the online valuation objection process, it will produce ongoing savings while improving the service to Queenslanders.

Red-tape reduction has also been a feature of the savings achieved in the water management process administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. Reforms that my department and I are working on in relation to water metering, water monitoring, planning and licensing programs will reduce costs to licence holders, to industry and to the government. The department will invest \$141 million in water programs this year to ensure the sustainable management of our valuable water resources. This year will see the introduction of an alternative water metering framework whereby licensees are able to purchase their own water meter which meets their individual needs while meeting minimum standards set down by the department.

The Newman government continues to support rural industry by the provision of \$2.75 million in funding to two programs, the Rural Water Use Efficiency program and the South-East Queensland Irrigation Futures program, to help irrigators reduce costs through more efficient and sustainable irrigation systems and practices. The department will invest an estimated \$5 million to implement a key recommendation of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry involving a three-year study of the Brisbane River. The Newman government will continue to cooperate with the Commonwealth government and other Great Artesian Basin jurisdictions in the implementation of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative to reduce losses from uncapped bores and open drains. Finally and importantly, I will continue to engage in the development of the Murray-Darling Basin plan to ensure the Commonwealth government works closely with the local communities, funds the state's costs to implement the basin plan and to ensure the Commonwealth's water recovery efforts minimise adverse impacts on Queensland's regional communities in the Murray-Darling Basin.

I turn now to the detail of the benefits the Newman LNP government's first budget will deliver to my electorate of Hinchinbrook. This budget includes a number of wins for my constituents with regard to the availability of health services in North Queensland. I welcome the commitments in the budget to upgrade facilities at the Townsville and Cairns hospitals, particularly investments to improve paediatric and neonatal care. Some \$99 million has been allocated this year to the \$446.3 million Cairns Base Hospital redevelopment project due for completion in 2015. A further \$58 million has been allocated this year to the \$334 million Townsville Hospital expansion project due for completion in 2014.

Cairns and Townsville hospitals are the two major regional hospitals servicing patients from my electorate where complicated procedures and treatments are delivered. This fact highlights another problem faced by many regional and rural Queensland—the distance from home to the nearest suitable medical facility to access these health services. For many years I lobbied the former Labor government to increase funding for the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme—a scheme that many Queenslanders rely upon to help cover expenses they incur while seeking specialist medical treatment. The Newman LNP government has committed an additional \$106 million over four years to ensure rural patients have more affordable access to the health care that they need. The rates of subsidy granted to eligible patients will double in respect of both the kilometres travelled and the overnight accommodation, and I am very proud of this announcement by the LNP because many of my constituents will benefit from it.

Another area in desperate need of funding in my electorate is roads. More than \$49 million has been allocated for the construction, repair and general maintenance of roads in and servicing the Hinchinbrook electorate. Since my election in 2006, I have lobbied the previous Labor government for funding to be allocated so maintenance and upgrades could be completed on the Bruce Highway and other state controlled roads in my electorate. In particular, I have been lobbying for overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway. It has been a tough fight, but over 5½ years in opposition I have been able to secure a number of overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway in my electorate south of Mourilyan, south of Moresby, both north and south of the Kurrimine Beach turnoff on the Silkwood straight, south of Cardwell, south of Ingham at Helens Hill, south of Rollingstone and north of the Toomulla Beach turnoff. I am pleased to say that the Newman government has continued to deliver these important improvements on the Bruce Highway.

What is particularly pleasing is that \$12½ million will be spent on constructing various overtaking lanes along the Bruce Highway in my electorate, including \$5.3 million to construct overtaking lanes south of Dundonald Creek between Kennedy and Euramo, \$4.2 million to construct overtaking lanes from Broderick Road to Feluga Road between Tully and El Arish, and \$3 million to construct overtaking lanes from Whitfield Creek to Yellow Waterholes, which is north of Cardwell. Some \$14.25 million has also been allocated for pavement rehabilitation on the Bruce Highway between Ingham and Innisfail, a section of road badly impacted upon by Cyclone Yasi last year. A further \$22.7 million has been allocated to commence the construction of a bypass between Shaw Road and Mount Low on Townsville's Northern Beaches, a rapidly growing area of my electorate of Hinchinbrook. This allocation of money highlights the Newman government's commitment to improving the quality, safety and reliability of the Bruce Highway.

Natural resource management, environmental programs and national park facilities in my electorate are also set to benefit as a result of this budget. My own department has announced that two NRM groups covering the Hinchinbrook electorate will receive more than \$1 million in funding. Terrain NRM and NQ Dry Tropics will each receive \$530,000 which will enable them to deliver practical on-ground projects in their regions to control pest weeds and feral animals, improve water quality and

enhance sustainable agricultural practices. Facilities in our national parks will benefit, with funds allocated to replace bridges on walking tracks in Djiru National Park at Mission Beach. Money has been allocated to continue the construction of the new parks and wildlife ranger station and facilities at Cardwell and two Girringun Indigenous land and sea rangers based at Cardwell have also received funding to continue their work.

One of the most desperately needed services in regional Queensland—disability support—has received welcome attention in this budget. The Hinchinbrook electorate will receive \$4.4 million in funding to continue the provision of disability services, and I also welcome the \$15 million allocation of funding for an elderly parent carer innovation trial which aims to alleviate unmet need for elderly parents who can no longer care for their adult disabled child.


The lifeblood of my electorate of Hinchinbrook is agriculture and I am pleased to see the commitment shown to agriculture in this budget. Most importantly for my electorate, the sugar research body BSES will receive special additional funding of \$4.6 million over four years to increase the productivity of the Queensland sugar industry. The sugar industry is worth a billion dollars a year to the Queensland economy. Given that the four sugar mills in the Hinchinbrook electorate crush between six and eight million tonnes of sugar a year and given that the industry directly supports and employs thousands of people in my electorate, a funding allocation to the BSES is vitally important.

I also welcome a further \$4.8 million towards research into tropical legumes to develop Queensland as the food bowl for Asia. The Queensland government will establish a partnership with the Queensland University of Technology to position Queensland's primary industries to take advantage of the growing economies of Asia and India—an important cause and one that Hinchinbrook is well placed to take advantage of as a result of that investment.

State schools in the Hinchinbrook electorate will have a long overdue opportunity to address a backlog of maintenance following the announcement of a major initiative to fund state school parents and citizens' associations. An amount of \$200 million has been allocated over two years to state school P&Cs through grants of up to \$160,000 per school. There have also been a number of other positive funding announcements for schools in the Hinchinbrook electorate, including an allocation of \$200,000 for the construction of a sports shade court structure at Kennedy State School. I am delighted to see that \$20,000 has been allocated towards planning for the enhancement of the Paluma Environmental Education Centre in my electorate. There has also been \$5.3 million allocated this financial year to continue the replacement of facilities at Tully State High School that were damaged last year by Cyclone Yasi.

I welcome the \$109 million funding allocation for energy and sewerage upgrades in my electorate. I am pleased that the budget has maintained the allocations available for the Cardwell Sewerage Scheme that were originally made available in the 2007-08 budget. The \$91 million upgrade of the high-voltage powerline between Ingham and Tully is the last section of a larger project to improve the reliability of electricity supply between Townsville and Cairns, which has been ongoing for several years. As always, I welcome the ongoing investment by Stanwell Corporation into upgrades to the Kareeya hydro-electric power station, north-west of Tully, which is an important power-generating asset in Far North Queensland. This year, the investment is \$4.5 million. These projects are vital to provide for future population growth and economic growth in the Hinchinbrook electorate and to improve essential service reliability.

In conclusion, as both a minister and as the member for Hinchinbrook, I am proud of what has been achieved for Queenslanders in this first LNP budget and achieved under such difficult fiscal circumstances—the legacy of a Labor government that had no discipline or principles. The Newman government has upheld the commitments it made to the people of Queensland: to lower the cost of living, revitalise front-line services, grow a four-pillar economy and set Queensland on the path to regaining the state's AAA credit rating. The LNP is getting Queensland back on track. I offer my compliments to the Treasurer on his hard work and dedication to developing this budget.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill. There are three things that contribute to the context of this budget that I believe are vitally important in understanding how devastating it is to the faith of Queenslanders in the political process, the integrity of parliament and the hope for the future prosperity of Queensland. The first is the promises and commitment by this government as it stormed into power—promises that services in the bush would be valued by the LNP government; rural fires would receive greater support for equipment, training and resources; and communities would receive a greater return from mining royalties. Public servants were promised that an LNP government would look after them and that they would have nothing to fear. Queenslanders were promised that front-line services would be protected and strengthened. But as soon as the LNP gained power, the rules changed and the new government shamelessly redefined what front-line services mean.

This government promised that it would lead with dignity and grace, but all we have seen is a government that has hidden behind a politically motivated Commission of Audit, which was drafted by

the former federal Liberal Treasurer, to justify sacking 14,000 people without the decency to front those people and explain why their jobs have been sacrificed to further a political cause. The reality is that the Commission of Audit was received by the LNP with religious fervour and applause and has been quoted time and again, with projections of debt and bloated Public Service figures against the background soundtrack of asset sales, to prepare the Queensland people for the LNP's 2015 election campaign. This government has remained so fixated on the past mismanagement of the former government that it has failed to recognise that this budget provides no plan to generate wealth or build industry. The LNP has committed Queensland to the path of poverty, which will inevitably culminate in the sale of our ports and energy sectors.

The LNP would have us believe that there is no money in the kitty for vital infrastructure projects like the upgrade of the Mareeba Airport, at a measly cost of \$13.3 million, because of the financial incompetence of the former Labor government. But the truth is that there is no money, because this government has put aside \$550 million for the Premier's palace on the north bank, which they call the Taj Mahal. This is the type of decision that defines this budget: wasteful expenditure on projects that will bring no return while withdrawing funding from projects that would revitalise industry, create jobs and generate wealth for decades to come. On top of that is the \$800 million that will be paid out to public servants, who have committed no crime. That totals \$1.5 billion that could have been used to pay off debt. Instead, we have a \$1.5 billion debt as a result of this Taj Mahal and the \$800,000 that is needed to pay out public servants.

Rather than fund the east-west energy corridor and open up the north-west minerals province, the Premier and the Treasurer, in their infinite wisdom, have decided to gouge the mining industry with higher royalties, right when the resources sector is shedding jobs and withdrawing investment. The CopperString energy project and the rail corridor would have opened up the north-west minerals province, creating thousands of jobs and drawing billions of dollars in royalties and revenue without having to increase mining taxes or cast uncertainty over Queensland's mining future.

It is not only projects that have been given the axe in regional Queensland but also services that are vital to the economic survival of many small communities that have been axed. The Healthy Lifestyle Program in Charters Towers is an example of a program that has been dropped. This has happened after two members of the LNP came to Charters Towers and said what a wonderful service it was. They told the *Northern Miner* and the residents of Charters Towers, 'Stick with us and we will look after you.' The Community Literacy Program, which provided adult literacy services, has been axed. Over 70 per cent of its clientele were gainfully employed after completing the courses that that program provided. The farm financial assistance program, which was very valuable to the farmers in Mareeba, has been slashed.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this budget is the focus on slashing services that assist the most vulnerable in our society. I have mentioned the Community Literacy Program, which has been operating in Far North Queensland for 20 years. In that time it has helped thousands of adults become employed or further their careers, which has opened job opportunities in the region. Many students have become trainers themselves and have found great direction, drive and satisfaction in educating and assisting others to better themselves and contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Far North Queensland. This program has been slashed. The program had just gained access to the Indigenous community in Mossman. However, the axing of this program now means that those who are struggling because of literacy or learning difficulties will now have to travel to access adult education in Cairns. This means that many will no longer pursue adult education and will most likely slip through the cracks that will be created by this government's lack of consistency and compassion.

The Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service, a service that was largely funded through the interest from tenants' bond payments, has been closed. It will no longer be there to prevent thousands of people from becoming homeless every year. The inconsistency of this decision beggars belief. This service operates with little effect on the budget bottom line. It provides an essential and unique service to tenants with high and complex needs, including those with disabilities, mental health issues and the elderly. The loss of this service will severely affect the rental market and the justice system as thousands of cases will now go to QCAT or the Residential Tenancies Authority for mediation. I table a non-conforming petition of 70 signatories who use this service, asking for the government to acknowledge the social and economic consequences of closing this service and to keep the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service going.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition regarding the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Queensland.

It is these types of programs, that are the front line in combatting homelessness, welfare dependence and that encourage industry growth through better management practices, that this government has had the audacity to label non-essential. They may not be essential in urban areas where people have access to public transport and multiple facilities, but in the bush these services ensure those disadvantaged by the tyranny of distance have access to services that will improve their lot and provide a path to a better quality of life. The rationale of closing these services down appears both heartless and ignorant of the real issues facing rural and regional Queensland.

There is nothing for the bush to be confident about in this budget. It was good to see a former National Party member take a stand on the cutbacks in the Rural Fire Service. This member understands the devastation and destruction of wildfires that are caused by 44 degree heat and the need for rural fires at the front line. Rural fires provide a staggering 93 per cent of Queensland with essential volunteer fire fighting services to back up regular emergency services personnel. Prior to the election and as late as July this year, rural fires had received assurances from the minister that an LNP government would provide greater support. The reduction of 57 per cent in rural operations uniformed positions will cut the heart out of the Rural Fire Service that is so vital for rural and regional Queensland. What this translates into is the gutting of rural fire services so that volunteers will be left to fight fires without adequate equipment, training or support. This is not just bad economically, as fires threaten billions of dollars of rural land production and infrastructure, but it is an act of gross negligence to put volunteers at extreme risk of what is predicted to be the worst bushfire season in 50 years. There is absolutely nothing to be gained from cutting such an essential front-line service and I hope that the member for Gregory's comments on the ABC today get through to the Treasurer and the Premier because this has to be one of the most disastrous decisions I have ever seen in my parliamentary career.

The Goss government cutbacks were devastating for rural and regional Queensland. We saw thriving communities such as Nelia, Nonda, Maxwellton and Torrens Creek, which had a football team, all become ghost towns after the cutting of the rail service and the closing of the courthouses which impacted on other services. That was devastating, but that was small compared to what these cutbacks are equivalent to with the sacking of 14,000 public servants who have committed no crime. I have had nurses who I have met and have rung me who have bawled their eyes out. I have met people who have lost their job as a result of these cutbacks who have said they voted for the LNP. They put their faith and trust in the LNP. I have spent my entire political life trying to convince people why they should not vote for the Labor Party and the LNP gets into the government and 14,000 people who have committed no crime lose their jobs.

Mr Cox interjected.

Mr KNUTH: You will not be around for the next election so there is no use you talking. Your job will be gone as well.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The member for Dalrymple will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: Under the budget there are funding measures in relation to national parks and streamlining permit systems to get rid of feral pests and, likewise, flying foxes. Over the years the Charters Towers City Council has spent nearly half a million dollars chasing bats. That was a complete waste of money. The minister and the Premier came to Charters Towers and said people will come first before bats. Yesterday the minister said to me that it is my responsibility, my fault, and I should be communicating with the council. But it was the minister and the Premier who said in the paper at least three times that they will get rid of the bats at all costs. I cannot get through his thick head that Charters Towers—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order!

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw that. We cannot get the bats out of the area through booms and bangs and noise and smoke. A simple solution is to cull the flying foxes. That is simple. The problem is resolved once and for all. The minister has been dodging, weaving and hiding. I know the minister is sympathetic to the flying fox cause. For eight and a half years I have brought up flying foxes. I do not want to come into this parliament and bring up flying foxes. All that the minister has to do is go to Charters Towers, talk to the council and say they will get rid of the bats like they promised.

Government members interjected.

Mr KNUTH: Do you want to see five different paper clippings?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The member for Dalrymple will come to order. I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair. Please do so.

Mr KNUTH: All the minister has to do is work with me and the council in bringing about the appropriate permits that will resolve the problem once and for all, rather than arguing, dodging, weaving, blaming and hiding. It is that simple. Come to Charters Towers. They pounded the streets day in day out and promised every visit that they would get rid of the bats at all costs and by whatever means possible. Go there again after the election because it is a promise and get rid of the bats. It is as simple as that.

There is one beacon of light in what is an otherwise bleak budget and that is the long-overdue increase of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. That will greatly benefit those in the bush and I commend the government for fulfilling that election promise. I acknowledge those who have lobbied over the years. When I was first elected in 2004 I tabled a petition of over 700 signatures in relation to increasing that Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Most of our rural medical services have been removed

and patients now have to travel further and further, especially the elderly, and when apply for funding it is only a pittance. I believe the increase in funding is a great decision.

I welcome the continuation of the funding to complete the work on the Kennedy Highway. Likewise I welcome the funding for the Atherton and Charters Towers hospitals and the funding for the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Millaa Millaa. I am hoping that the funding allocated to Flinders Highway will be directed to areas where it is most needed such as Shovel and Gardener Creek crossing. This is something that I have lobbied for, along with the chamber of commerce, rural representatives and the livestock industry. All it takes is a drop of water in that low-lying area 70 kilometres west of Charters Towers and the whole western mineral province transport operation is shut down. If funding could be directed to upgrade this area the problem would be resolved once and for all.

I believe that rural Queenslanders were looking forward to a government that would protect their interests and return the bush to its rightful place as a generator of much of this state's wealth. I believe there were those who voted for the LNP because they believed the LNP government would restore the balance.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KNUTH: 75 per cent of the state is not receiving funding, member for Lockyer. People who hoped for a change are feeling disappointed and disillusioned. I believe rural Queensland is feeling betrayed and deceived. Queensland needs a government that is willing to commit to investment that will create new jobs and underpin strong economic growth into the future. The truth is that unless there is immediate investment in these types of projects the future of Queensland is bleak. We heard the Premier deride the Labor Party for its lack of vision or plan for Queensland's future, but the reality is that the two major parties have both demonstrated they lack the intestinal fortitude to invest in wealth generation and create future revenue opportunities. The government's once-in-a-generation budget will stifle growth and increase unemployment. Rather than securing a better future, this budget demonstrates that the LNP's only plan for getting Queensland back in the black is to sell Queensland off, ruining the lives of tens of thousands of families who have committed no crime.

Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.10 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the first Newman government budget, the once-in-a-generation budget as we heard from the Treasurer a couple of days ago. Like a gunman criticising a surgeon for operating on his victims, what we have seen from those opposite today and since the election has been the outstanding audacity of the Labor Party which dares to criticise the Newman government for cleaning up the wreckage that it created. When Andrew Fraser handed down his budget in 2012, those opposite criticised me for my reply to the budget. I was criticised for being too miserly and for daring to suggest that the government should reign in its spending. Indeed, the then Treasurer said that my reply was impotent. I know that Andrew Fraser Googles his name and searches for it in *Hansard*, so I tell Andrew Fraser that this time around my speech on the budget is certainly a lot more potent than his.

The need to reign in spending has been unequivocally highlighted in the past six months. The Treasurer has often told us of the first words that he was advised of in his incoming government brief, that the state's financial position was unsustainable and something had to be done. Listening to the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech today reminded me of the lyrics of a song that is very popular at the moment, *Some Nights* by Fun. I listened to it as I drove to parliament the other day. I asked my staff to find the lyrics to the song. As I listened to the Leader of the Opposition today, I thought I would quote the words of that song. It says—

But I still wake up, I still see your ghost—

That must be Andrew Fraser and Anna Bligh—

Oh Lord, I'm still not sure what I stand for oh

What do I stand for? What do I stand for?

Most nights, I don't know anymore...

That is what we heard today from the Leader of the Opposition. Words of a popular song remind us that the opposition has nothing to offer and it had nothing to offer today.

In a service portfolio like Education, one would think that such profligate spending over all would have led to a gold plated education system, but instead their priorities were all wrong. While they were spending money on white elephant projects such as the water grid and political whims like ski jumps and remotely located eggs, they were letting schools down. One of the most damning legacies of the former Treasurer was the \$292 million maintenance black hole. Andrew Fraser was responsible for a \$292 million maintenance black hole. Schools with peeling paint, broken stairs, broken glass, holes in walls, ripped carpets, dirt carparks—

Mr Rickuss: Where was the Teacher's Union in all of this?

Mr LANGBROEK:—and all sorts of other minor problems were pushed aside while minister after minister put schools last, allowing their colleagues to spend money on political whims to get good headlines.

In yesterday's budget we went a long way towards filling Andrew Fraser's black hole with an injection of \$200 million for schools' maintenance budgets. More than that, the local school community will be the ones that determine what works are prioritised and how they will be sourced. No longer do schools have to use only QBuild. They can use private providers and they can use any savings to reinvest in the school. We know from a previous trial that I mentioned this morning in question time that we can achieve savings of between 20 per cent and 25 per cent by using private providers in addition to Qbuild. That means, by giving schools the choice of putting maintenance work out to private providers or using QBuild, we can get five projects for the price of four. The previous government, beholden to the unions, did not care about this. We have acted swiftly not only to put more dollars into school maintenance but also to make those dollars stretch further.

Outside of my capacity as minister and in my capacity as the member for Surfers Paradise, I am excited about the initiative, as every local member should be. By way of example, in Surfers Paradise alone I have five state schools. Bellevue Park State School has a backlog of \$173,100 worth of works and it will receive \$160,000. Surfers Paradise State school, just up the road from my electorate office, has a backlog of \$180,390 worth of works. That is something that I have been aware of since I became the member in 2004. Under Labor, that school only ever received a meagre maintenance allowance, but now it will receive \$160,000. Under the previous government, Ashmore State School had a backlog of \$364,740 worth of works. It will receive \$160,000. Benowa State High School has over 1,600 students and is expected to have over 3,000 students when Year 7 comes into high school. It has a backlog of \$480,620 worth of works. It will receive \$160,000. Benowa State School has a backlog of \$540,040—over half a million dollars—worth of works. It will receive \$160,000.

Like many other members in this chamber, the reaction I have received from this news has been resoundingly positive. As I said in question time yesterday and as has been rightly mentioned just now by the honourable member for Lockyer, as well as a number of ministers, including the Attorney-General and the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Kevin Bates of the Queensland Teachers' Union said—

In local communities, the people who make up the P and Cs will be the local business people who may very well stand to benefit on maintenance in schools ...

That's a reality, that's not an accusation.

It sounds very much like an accusation to me. As I said yesterday, it is reprehensible for the QTU to imply that P&Cs would seek to use funds for purposes other than their schools. I will not stand for a union smearing P&Cs with the scent of fraud or impropriety.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: We have tested the Labor members as to whether they are going to stand up for their local school communities. I know who I would trust to make decisions about local schools. I would trust the P&Cs. I would trust the parents and the school community over a union leadership that has spent the last five months traipsing around the state, spreading unfounded rumours and speculation that have been deliberately misleading to bolster the union's relevance. I would trust those who know the individual school over the leadership of an out-of-touch union that is more interested in its own prosperity than in improving state schools.

Underscoring the government's commitment to education, the budget is an investment of \$9.158 billion for the Department of Education, Training and Employment. This represents 22 per cent of the state's total budget. Once we include the funding for school maintenance, it represents an increase of over four per cent. Yesterday the federal Treasurer was out there trying to land blows on the budget like a drunk third man up in a bar fight, speaking—

Mr Nicholls: I wonder how his surplus is going.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, exactly. Good luck with the surplus, Mr Swan. Speaking whatever popped into his mind, Mr Swan said that he was shocked by the cuts to education. Once again, despite it being a great ability of Labor Treasurers, I am shocked that the federal Treasurer cannot read a budget statement.

Mr Nicholls: Has he ever delivered a surplus?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. Let me tell the Treasurer who has never delivered a surplus about our education budget. Spending in education has increased by over four per cent and this has happened in a very difficult economic climate. This underscores the LNP's commitment to education. As a state, we continue to grow and, consequently, the department is responding to student enrolment growth. In 2013, two new state high schools will open at Mackay's Northern Beaches and at Pimpama. Additional stages will also be commissioned this year at Augusta State School, Coomera Rivers State School and Woodlinks State School under the South-East Queensland schools public-private partnership.

However, some difficult decisions have had to be made. As was reported in the paper yesterday, on budget day I made a series of phone calls to affected groups. I raise this today not because I want to dwell on the cuts and not even to underscore the fact that difficult decisions had to be made as a result of the financial situation the LNP was left with. I raise it to contrast the style of this side of the House with those opposite. If there is bad news in my portfolio, I give my stakeholders the dignity and courtesy of telling them. My director-general and deputy directors-general know this as well. I would prefer a bad headline than to shirk my responsibility as a minister. This is, of course, in stark contrast to those opposite. The fair-weather friends of the Labor Party would clamber all over each other to deliver good news, but when they had to look Queenslanders in the eye and tell them something difficult but necessary, this place was like a ghost town. The flat-track bullies opposite shirked the task when times were tough and the result is what we see today: an almighty mess that we have to clean up, which those opposite have the audacity to criticise us for.

So in a stark change to the style and intestinal fortitude, or lack thereof, from those opposite, where I as minister have had to make hard decisions, I as minister take responsibility for those decisions. A number of programs to which the department has provided grants and staff have been impacted by the difficult decisions that we have had to make. Not only have I told them; but in our commitment to accountability and transparency a list of these programs is available on the DETE budget website.

Importantly, this budget delivers on our election commitments in education, and I commend the former shadow minister for education before the election, Dr Bruce Flegg—now the Minister for Housing and Public Works—for his hard work in developing these policies. These commitments include: \$4 million over four years for the Step Up into Education program to better prepare children for school, particularly in areas of disadvantage—and this is particularly vital since the introduction of the prep year and is in line with all of the research pointing to school readiness as having a strong link to achievement; a \$5.5 million investment in our efforts to boost the number of Queensland children participating in kindergarten programs by establishing new kindergarten services on school sites in areas of need; increasing teacher aide time for 150 prep classes from the start of the 2013 school year as part of the \$53.6 million four-year initiative. We have identified these schools and I launched this with the Premier at Tullawong State School within our first 100 days.

There is a commitment of \$62.1 million to continue the introduction of year 7 as the first year of secondary school from 2015 and \$3 million in 2012-13 as part of a \$21 million four-year initiative for 120 schools to participate in the independent public schools initiative. This is a key plank in the LNP's election policy and again underscores the difference between this government and the union. While they have been out there scaring principals about this program, we have been committed to giving schools greater autonomy to make the right decisions for their schools.


Other commitments include: \$1.4 million as part of a \$10.9 million four-year initiative to expand support for students with disabilities in state and non-state schools through the engagement of additional speech-language pathologists; providing state special school and special education program students with access to tablets through the investment of \$3.5 million; and providing additional funding of \$1 million over four years to support Queensland schools with access to chaplaincy services which I launched last week at Glenala State High School.

In Surfers Paradise, the Newman government's first budget has delivered on a raft of promises, aimed at keeping the community safe and secure. More than \$500,000 will be spent on a trial of a safe drinking precinct in the city centre. The aim of this is to stamp out the soul-destroying violence that increasingly results from too much alcohol too quickly. The Broadbeach Police Station will get an \$800,000 upgrade to ensure that our front-line police have the resources they need. We are also targeting the criminals who think they can get away with major crime on the Gold Coast. We will spend \$1.1 million to create a major and organised crime squad incorporating an illegal firearms team.

The Newman government is committed to giving our senior citizens the support they need to stay in their own homes where health and happiness outcomes are strongest. We are providing more than \$640,000 to keep the Gold Coast Central Home Assist Secure service going to help elderly and disabled residents to make sure their homes are safe and secure.

We are also looking ahead, providing a better future for residents and tourists alike. The Newman government has delivered \$279 million to ensure the Gold Coast Rapid Transit goes ahead, on time and on track. With the money we have saved from removing red tape and duplication and refocusing the Public Service, we have been able to channel \$5.7 million into major and minor roadworks on the Gold Coast. That means better roads for our residents and trips for our tourists.

We have made some hard decisions but that has allowed us to focus our spending on the things that Queenslanders want—better roads, more police, schools where students want to learn and hospitals that work quickly and efficiently. We have set the groundwork for a new era of prosperity and growth for the greatest state in Australia.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012, the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012. I would

like to congratulate sincerely the great work that the Treasurer has done on handing down one of the most difficult budgets in Queensland's history. He has done a great job in setting the position of the state's finances on the right trajectory for a prosperous and rewarding future for all Queenslanders. The LNP government has hit the ground running since 24 March this year, and I would like to congratulate the Premier in setting the blistering pace of reform that was desperately needed for the future of Queensland.

The Treasurer has now consolidated Queensland Treasury finances to get the inherited former Labor government debt under control for the future of Queensland. The hard decisions have been made and the Treasurer has guided Queensland in the right direction for the future prosperity of Queensland. This is the most important, nearly \$48 billion, budget in a generation and for our future generations. Queensland's finances are now on the road to recovery and our debt and its ever-increasing interest bill—that is the former Labor government's legacy—will be brought under control because of the Treasurer's astute fiscal management. We will have more money to spend on delivering the services Queensland needs such as schools, roads, hospitals, police, teachers and nurses.

As Leader of the House and Manager of Government Business, I believe we have had an extremely productive time in parliament for the first few months of our term and we are in an exciting position due to the excellent budget that the Treasurer has handed down. We are now on the right road to improve our state's finances. We have acted on our promise of cutting the waste, and important legislation has been passed through the parliament including changes to the committee system, along with reform in the areas of criminal law with respect to tougher penalties, electricity with respect to the ability to change suppliers, environment green tape reduction, health and local area networks and boards, water reform with respect to local authorities taking back control and Treasury cost-of-living initiatives—just to name a few. These reforms will all help in getting Queensland back on track.

In the budget we are right on track for our promise and commitment to our four-pillar economy—tourism, agriculture, resources and construction for Queensland's future. These are the roots in which the tree of growth will flourish for these sectors in Queensland, and this budget will provide the nourishment needed for this once-in-a-generation budget. We are stimulating the economy by introducing a new first home owner's construction grant of \$15,000 for new homes, and this will be important for a construction stimulus that will be great for the Queensland economy and particularly for my area of the Gold Coast. It was Menzies who made owning your own home a priority for all, and we are continuing this important societal focus for the future of our families.

After the mining boom it will be agriculture, but until then we need to make sure that Queensland benefits from the mining boom. We know that the mining boom will not last forever, so, as the Treasurer said, we are increasing mining royalties for all Queenslanders. This will help us achieve a healthy surplus in three years time. This is the only way forward to help bring down the debt. The interest is \$10 million a day on our \$65 billion debt which reaches 90 kilometres into the sky, and paying back the debt is a major priority for the LNP government.

The Labor Party lost our AAA credit rating and are continuing their three-monkey act of see no evil, do no evil and say a lot of evil as debt and deficit deniers. They have proved this time and time again. They kept spending like drunken sailors. We have been given a record mandate in this parliament, as we look around the House, to fix the mess that they created.

In Health, the LNP government is to provide an additional \$816 million to Queensland Health—\$816 million will be invested in Queensland Health this year and will go straight to the newly created hospital and health services which have been established to give greater local control and input into health services. The LNP's first budget for Queensland Health is \$11.862 billion in 2012-13—more than the Labor government ever put into Health. The Labor government wasted billions of dollars in Health, but because of this Treasurer's good budget management we have spent more on the most important service to the community, that of health—almost a quarter of our budget. As the health minister has indicated, the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme will double for Queenslanders living in rural and remote areas. This is fantastic for folk in regional areas and it proves that the LNP government is acting in the best interests of all Queenslanders.

The world economy is experiencing a global shift which has never been seen before. According to Standard & Poor's new chief global economist, Paul Sheard, it is in a 'precarious' position. With world markets and global business intertwining more than ever, there are negatives and positives that are the by-products of this global shift. The International Monetary Fund explains that the interaction with the global community with trade, capital, information and technology has advantages and disadvantages. The IMF says that finance and trade integration have underpinned strong growth and narrowed the gap between rich and poor countries. However, the dissemination of information globally has enhanced people's lives in the areas of education, health and communication.

On the downside, the protracted global financial crisis has, as we have seen, 'grave risks of contagion'. The ripple effect shows that no country is immune. This is another reason why the Premier and the Treasurer have made the hard decisions but the right decisions for the future of the Queensland economy as we travel down an uncertain world economic road.


The Reserve Bank of Australia's decision to keep interest rates on hold last week confirms cautionary behaviour by the RBA, and this is due to the softening of the global growth. The Costello audit report on the state's finances and Moody's report confirmed the state of Queensland's finances and that a change in direction was critical for the future of the Queensland economy, and that is exactly what we have done and what the Treasurer has done so successfully with this budget for 2012-13.

Education is in good hands and the Minister for Education has expressed some great initiatives for education in Queensland. In Mermaid Beach, the minister has confirmed that there will be no sell-off of Broadbeach State School, as the former Labor government were considering doing to stump up the funds they needed and which they were going to achieve by selling off more important state assets. This decision has given my constituents whose children attend this school security of tenure for the future. The minister has also announced that our LNP government will support school chaplains to the tune of \$1 million. This is great news for schools in my electorate and across the state of Queensland. There will also be \$160,000 for each and every state primary P&C committee in my electorate which will allow many projects to be addressed by the people who know best—that is, the parents.

We have tighter control over bikie gangs in my area in Mermaid Beach—which has unfortunately drawn some attention in recent times—through government legislation. The Gold Coast should be much safer because of the LNP government's commitment in this budget of \$34.7 million for 300 police officers, leading to 1,100 police officers in total over four years.

The Gold Coast has been recognised as the tourism festival city because of its many functions—such as the Blues on Broadbeach Music Festival, the Jazz Festival, the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, Magic Millions, Rugby 7s, Quiksilver Pro surfing, the Surfers Paradise Festival, the Gold Coast Marathon and many more fantastic festivals that are now part of our Gold Coast culture. These will all lead towards the Commonwealth Games in 2018. The Commonwealth Games village business case is on track, with \$21 million allocated in this budget. This will be one of the priorities for our government over the next few months.

In conclusion, this is a new era of hope for the future because we are implementing the right policies and doing all the ground work for the future prosperity of Queensland. This can only be achieved if we get Queensland back on track, and this is what has been presented in this once in a lifetime budget. It has been tough on the 14,000 public servants—we understand that—but they were put on by the Labor government and the taxpayers of Queensland could not afford to keep them so they will therefore lose their employment with this government. Many of these people, however, will find employment in the private sector following the much needed Newman government stimulus to provide enterprise in the four pillars of the Queensland economy. I congratulate every minister, every department and my LNP leadership team for their hard work, determination, political resilience and economic foresight in bringing hope to every Queenslanders through a better future with the LNP government's first Queensland budget.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.34 pm): I rise to support the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012, the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill which were introduced by the Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, this week on 11 September. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the honourable the Treasurer for his hard work and dedication to the task of bringing this state back into fiscal repair. I would also like to thank all of the cabinet ministers for the work that they and their departments have carried out. As a member of the Treasurer's cabinet budget review subcommittee, I had the opportunity to see firsthand the effort that the cabinet ministers and their departments put in on behalf of all Queenslanders. As the Treasurer has stated, the first line of the incoming government briefs said—

Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government.

On coming to government we knew that the state's financial position was compromised, but for this to be the first line in Queensland's Treasury brief immediately crystallised the enormous job before the Treasurer and the Newman government. The view from Queensland Treasury was reinforced when the government received the interim report of the independent Commission of Audit. The Treasurer established the commission as one of the priority items in our first 100 day plan. As we have stated, it was chaired by the former Treasurer, Peter Costello, and also included former Under-Treasurer, Doug McTaggart, and James Cook University vice-chancellor, Professor Sandra Harding. The report stated—

... in recent years, the Government of Queensland embarked on an unsustainable level of spending which has jeopardised the financial position of the State.

The main message I took from the independent commission's report was that the previous government let expenditure simply get away from it. Expenditure became a measure of success rather than the outcomes it achieved. This was most relevant in health where recurrent funding increased by 83 per cent from 2006 to 2010 but hospital activity, measured by weighted activity units, only increased by 21 per cent.

The Newman government is focused on outcomes achieved rather than merely increasing the volume of money spent. The state of Queensland, or any state for that matter, does not have unlimited resources to spend without any regard to the outcomes that can be achieved. In the Newman

government's response to the interim report, it outlined its fiscal principles which focused on stabilising and then reducing the debt, achieving a fiscal balance by 2014-15, ensuring a competitive tax environment and fully funding long-term liabilities such as employee superannuation. It is pleasing to note that the Treasurer has delivered on all of these principles and his budget has put Queensland on a course to stabilise debt. This will reduce interest costs by \$1.3 billion and free up more government funding for the essential front-line services.

For me, the thing that illustrates the need for this fiscal repair is the fact that, in the past decade, interest repayments on debt have been the fastest growing expense of the government. It is more than has been spent on health, more than has been spent on disabilities and more than has been spent on education. That is simply unsustainable and this budget moves to end that trend. The budget charts a course back to a fiscal surplus in 2014-15, ensuring that the state debt does not reach the \$85 billion predicted by Labor's own budget papers. This budget also forecasts a small operating surplus next year. The turnaround is remarkable but it is no accident. It is the function of a considered and detailed process.

Very briefly, I would like to touch on the Newman government's plan to reduce red tape and regulation and, as Assistant Minister for Regulatory Reform, I am very interested in this. This budget has committed funding to the Office of Best Practice Regulation, which has been set up under the Queensland Competition Authority. The OBPR's initial review will focus on regulation that is unnecessarily burdensome and has significant reach while achieving potentially large benefits from reform.

With an estimated regulatory burden of around one per cent of our gross state product—some \$2.5 billion—this should not be too difficult. Each department has also been assigned a regulatory reduction target. This target will form part of the departmental chief executive's performance indicators which will be reported against annually by the OBPR.

Very importantly, the families and communities of the Nanango electorate will reap the rewards of this government's fiscal repair outlined in this once-in-a-generation budget. We have made some tough decisions, but I believe we have to reset the state's finances on a sustainable path. This budget delivers cost-of-living relief for families. We are investing in local schools, hospitals and roads—all while keeping our debt and deficit under control.

The families in my electorate will benefit from freezes to the car registration and electricity tariffs. We have reinstated the principal place of residence concession for people buying their family home and we are now offering first homebuyers \$15,000 to purchase a newly built home or one off the plan, an initiative which will also boost construction activity. Our small local tradies and our builders will benefit from this great reform. Small and medium businesses are also benefitting by paying less payroll tax.

One of the major announcements which will significantly benefit the constituents of my electorate is the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, with over \$100 million being spent over four years to double the subsidy to 30 cents per kilometre and the accommodation subsidy to \$60 per night. This had not changed since the eighties. The Kingaroy Hospital is also receiving the much needed funding for a specialist surgeon starting in January next year, meaning more procedures will be able to be performed locally, saving people the time and stress of travel out of the electorate.

I am also very pleased about the \$4.9 million we are providing to employ full-time prep teacher aides in classrooms, and my electorate of Nanango has benefitted significantly from this. The children at the much needed schools of Yarraman, Benarkin, Wooroolin, Mount Tarampa and Coominya will benefit when the program rolls out in 2013. As an aside, I am looking forward to attending the Coominya State School on Saturday for their centenary celebrations.

Mr Rickuss: It will be a good day.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It will be a good day. I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. I am also very proud to be representing the minister there on that day.

Disability services in my electorate will also receive a wonderful boost through the grant programs, and social rental housing throughout my electorate has been flagged as being upgraded. What is most exciting to me about this budget is that it is a regional budget concentrating on the regions. More than 75 per cent of the government's capital expenditure will take place outside of Brisbane. We have also introduced the Royalties for the Regions, a program which sees \$490 million spent in the regions.

The 30 public schools throughout the Nanango electorate will benefit from the Newman government's \$200 million Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund which, as has been spoken about in this House today, will allow state school P&Cs—the mums and dads of each of the local state communities—up to \$160,000 to fix the massive backlog of maintenance issues in our state schools. The Principal of Taabinga State School—a great local school in Kingaroy—Susan Beatty, said that she was happy when she heard about the new Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund. Previously, her small budget of about \$26,000 per year would never cover the major maintenance needed at that school. For many years she has had to put off the major jobs of laying new carpet and painting the

school buildings, but now she is very excited that these maintenance jobs can be done and also that they may be able to be done by local tradies and builders.

The Goombungee State School was delighted as they may well get the much needed door handles for the inside of their classrooms. Currently, if they have a lockdown, which apparently has happened, they cannot lock the doors from inside. However, to have them installed they were originally quoted \$500 per handle. So they have been putting off that decision. That is one job that that school will be able to cross off their list and the school will be safer in times of crisis.

High school students in the southern part of my electorate, including Crows Nest, Goombungee and Haden, can now look forward to a new high school to be built at Highfields. I thank the Treasurer for this as well as the member for Toowoomba North, Trevor Watts. He and I have been lobbying hard for this new high school. We are looking for it to be up and running by the start of the 2015 school year. Planning for the \$35 million stage 1, including community consultation, should be completed by November this year. We also have the year 7 pilot happening at the Crows Nest State High School next year. On top of this, high school students keen to undertake training in agriculture can be safe in the knowledge that the courses offered at the Emerald Agricultural College and Longreach Pastoral College are ready and available for the 2013 intake of students. Thanks must go to Minister McVeigh, local advisory boards and agricultural stakeholders who have committed to fixing the mess left by the previous administration. I know that we are dedicated to turning the colleges around to ensure they deliver what the industry needs. In the Nanango electorate we are also providing for a sport and recreation officer within the Somerset region.

This budget also invests heavily in the roads network of the Nanango electorate, with more than \$100 million in joint federal and state government funding allocated to road projects on the New England Highway. This section of the highway was once named by the RACQ as the second worst highway in Queensland. We are also continuing the spend of money on the D'Aguilar Highway through the Blackbutt Range, which was severely damaged by the 2011 floods. There is also \$10 million to start work on a new bridge at Bum Bum Creek on the New England Highway, which is in between Crows Nest and—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I write my own speeches. The long-awaited new Kingaroy Ambulance Station will also be built. I am very pleased that the minister was able to deliver this in the budget as it was promised in the last budget that it was going to be built. However, the last budget had only money for its planning. The Kingaroy Ambulance Station will be built, and construction is set to start in the new year. An amount of \$2 million will be invested in the Kingaroy Hospital to prepare a master plan for a new main block and update essential fire safety issues. This hospital in my electorate will benefit from vital medical equipment upgrades and improvements.

It is also important to note that we are making substantial investments to sustain operations at Tarong and Tarong North Power Station, including overhauls of Tarong Power Station units 1 and 2. At Meandu Mine there will be investment in a dragline overhaul, replacement of mine fleet equipment, mine exploration and development projects, and an upgrade of the coal-handling processing plant. This capital expenditure will help maintain infrastructure which forms an essential part of our community as it provides so much employment.

For our local governments there will be nearly \$60 million for Operation Queenslander in the Somerset Regional Council area and \$82 million for the South Burnett Regional Council. This ensures my local councils can continue the important work of reconnecting, rebuilding and improving our communities following the 2011 floods.

We are encouraging Agriculture and food production. I am excited about the \$4.8 million partnership with QUT for research into pulses. We need to embrace the opportunities that are the growing economies of Asia and India. We in the South Burnett are also lucky to install a new crop protection officer at the Bjelke-Petersen Research Station.

In relation to regional planning, there is \$1 million for the preparation of the Darling Downs Regional Plan, an important instrument that will help resolve conflict between the agriculture and resource sectors and ensure the region grows in a managed and sustainable way. It will allow us to deal with urban expansion, the timing and sequencing of infrastructure and enhance tourism opportunities. It will also assist with the management of environmental impacts.

The Nanango electorate has been left alone for so very long. So I am very pleased to be able to announce other key projects such as \$2.2 million for flood remediation works at Wivenhoe Dam, \$1.8 million for works at Somerset Dam, continued construction of the much needed Kilcoy Water Treatment Plant and \$12.7 million for improvements to the Wivenhoe Power Station. Also, local tourism receives a boost with \$21,000 to help restore the Taromeo Cemetery. I am also pleased that the tourism minister has announced \$3 million for regional Queensland events. I am very pleased to have Mr Shannon Scott of Kingaroy on the tourism minister's advisory board so I can ensure that my region is well looked after.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! There is too much audible conversation from across the chamber.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is also pleasing that disability services have been provided for within the South Burnett, Somerset and Toowoomba regions.

This is a budget that delivers a brighter future for Queensland and encourages confidence. It will encourage long-term job and economic growth across the four pillars of our economy and ensure the cost of living remains low for our communities. I am proud to have worked with the Treasurer in some parts of delivering this budget. I am also proud to be part of a reforming government. In his speech the honourable the Treasurer stated—

Reform can be unpopular in some parts of our community. It challenges the elites, the unions, the industrial relations clubs and the commentariat.

It challenges those for whom the old ways were the most lucrative, the most comfortable, and that entrenched their own feelings of self-importance.

But in the 21st century reform of government is a 'must do' task. And we are the 'CAN-DO' government, determined to achieve it.

I am also proud to be part of a government that is prepared to make the tough decisions in the best interests of all Queenslanders. Again, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on bringing down this once-in-a-generation budget, and I commend the bills to the House.

Dr DAVIS (Stafford—LNP) (5.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012. We do well to remember the old proverb that he who pays the piper calls the tune. Because of the debt and deficit we have inherited from over a decade of Labor mismanagement, we are now obliged to dance to a financial tune not of our choosing.

As a longstanding public servant who worked in that most complex of human activities—modern academic hospital care—I fully understand the difficulties associated with rapid restructuring and downsizing of staff employed in our public hospital system. It creates enormous challenges, and for many employees it will be extraordinarily stressful and distressing. I also know from my hospital work experience that when things go wrong and do not work out as expected, people correctly want answers. As someone who would not have wished this situation for our public hospital system or its dedicated and hardworking employees, I have also sought explanations.

The Minister for Health has this morning yet again outlined the background and the facts of Labor's mismanagement of Queensland Health. From my perspective, the overarching failure of the previous administration was their inability to introduce good governance systems. Quite simply, they failed to implement sound business practices.

As we heard earlier, Queensland Health is a system that takes some \$11 billion of taxpayer funds but has a very limited handle on the health return from all that money. To my knowledge, no business with such woeful governance would survive in a competitive market. Evidence for the lack of measures of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability can be found in cases such as that of the fake Tahitian prince, charged with embezzling millions of dollars from Queensland Health. While there has been a focus on the financial loopholes that apparently allowed this, far more important is the fact that nobody noticed that some \$16 million of the money he allegedly diverted from a ghost program into his own pocket did not lead to an absence of deliverables. Who else other than Queensland Health would hand out \$16 million and not observe that they received nothing in return?

Quite simply, the systems to clearly track the relationship between scarce health resources and benefit to the community did not and still do not exist. That is, indeed, why so many employees were and still are underemployed. It was failure of proper management, and the fault lies with the incompetence and irresponsible conduct of their political masters rather than with the majority of employees.

Whilst the failed payroll system was still in its gestation, people like me asked that it incorporate an ability to track valuable and expensive employee time and how it translated into value for patients and the community. A system like that would also ensure that only time actually worked was paid for. As we know, the failure to incorporate that has tragically meant that the system even continued to pay deceased employees for shifts and it took distressed relatives to report the inappropriate payment. Contrast this with systems used in private health practices and legal practices, amongst others, where there are clear linkages between services delivered and billing and pay arrangements.

Now that the latitude to borrow endlessly has necessarily come to an end, the failure of the previous administration to put in place sound financial governance practices means that we do not have at our disposal the systems to re-engineer our public hospital activities with the finesse and evidence base that we would like. And equally regrettably, we do not have the financial resources to cushion the transition or to delay the required changes.

As a child I was taught the wisdom of putting some money aside for a rainy day. Clearly, that wisdom never made it into the lexicon of 'Bligh the borrower'. 'Bligh the borrower' was Treasurer in August 2006, when she signed off on the decision to close Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital and

rebuild it in her electorate. That decision continues to be in the news for all the wrong reasons. An article by Mike O'Connor in the *Courier-Mail* of Monday, 10 September 2012 states—

Critics say Bligh insisted the hospital be built there, against advice to the contrary, to lift her political stocks in her electorate.

It continues—

And controversy has raged over whether it will lead to an increase ... in the quality and quantity of health care available to our children.

How outrageous that well over \$1 billion is being spent on something that lacks a convincing value proposition. The decision is even more shameful because Anna Bligh already had the practically new Mater Children's Hospital in her electorate. She already had a major tertiary referral centre providing an intensive-care unit, theatres, inpatient and outpatient services and a 24-hour emergency department. So the decision to move the Royal Children's Hospital to her electorate was completely unnecessary and grossly wasteful and, of course, will deny the children and parents of the north side of Brisbane access to their current world-class tertiary children's hospital, with all its vital links to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the University of Queensland medical school and research facilities.


If indeed, as suggested in Monday's newspaper article, the purpose of moving the Royal Children's Hospital was to improve Anna Bligh's political stocks then it is hardly surprising that it represents such dismal value for money, as pointed out in the recent Costello audit. Perhaps the \$150,000 per annum she gets from the Queensland taxpayer could be used to contribute to her new hospital and this offset could be used to help keep the Royal Children's Hospital open. That would be a wonderful landmark in terms of political accountability for gross waste and mismanagement. Indeed, why should public servants be the only people to suffer the consequence of political recklessness and incompetence?

Of course, it was also on Anna Bligh's watch that the disastrous payroll system evolved. This, too, has been a black hole exceeding \$1 billion, incurring ongoing unfunded operating costs in this financial year alone of some \$150 million. There is a particular irony that 'Bligh the borrower' is now playing the part of Snow White by fleeing to the forests of Sydney, leaving the 'seven dwarfs' to fend for themselves. Almost as if on cue, there has been a 2012 remake of the story *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* called *Mirror Mirror*. So when the Labor opposition members quite correctly express concern for public servants we can no longer afford and ask the mirror who is to blame for this, they will be told, 'The answer is reflected in the mirror.' The mirror will tell them that years of mismanagement and waste are their legacy, and that is why the people of Queensland voted for change with such conviction.

If the Leader of the Opposition has genuine compassion for those losing their jobs, she should immediately release the legal opinion on the failed payroll system that might allow the recovery of over \$1 billion of hard-earned taxpayer money that this government could then reinject back into our public hospital system. Whilst she is going through the Labor Party's chamber of horrors, she might in a moment of remorse also want to find and release the deceit and deception strategy document used to close the Royal Children's Hospital.

Whilst acknowledging the pain caused for some public servants as a result of Labor's legacy of waste, mismanagement and deceit, this budget will deliver for Stafford. In a survey of north side residents prior to this budget, a key issue was cost of living. Clearly there was no room and no appetite for extra taxes and costs. By regaining Queensland's credit rating and so putting downward pressure on interest rates, this budget will help investment in small business and encourage consumer confidence. Reduced government waste on debt servicing will in time free up more money for reinvestment in crucial health, education, transport, law and order, and other key state government responsibilities. That will directly benefit current and future generations of Stafford residents. Of course, Stafford will also benefit from all of the other initiatives in this landmark budget such as money for P&C committees to address the neglect of maintenance in our state schools and also provide support for our wonderful sporting clubs.

In concluding, I am indeed sad for everyone who is suffering as a result of the sins of the former government. I am reminded that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. But such was the incompetence of the former government that the opportunity for prevention was lost. The good news is that the process of cure has now begun, albeit with discomfort from the required surgery. I commend the Newman government and in particular the Treasurer for a budget that provides a path to recovery and, in due course, prosperity for the people of Queensland.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (6.01 pm): I am pleased to rise to support the bills. I first want to acknowledge the historic nature of this budget—the first by the Liberal National Party. It will be a feather in the Treasurer's cap which no-one else can take away in that he has delivered such an historic announcement to this place, and I congratulate him personally for it. He described it as a once-in-a-generation budget. I think it is more a blue and grey budget: blue skies ahead leaving Labor's grey past behind. The Treasurer will understand the code. It is a budget which is rigorous in its response to both the unfortunate state of Queensland's finances and the clear commitments which we in the LNP made in our election policies. It starts the process of restoring the state's fiscal balance and returning the budget

to a fiscal surplus by 2014 and, in particular, it saves \$1.3 billion in dead interest payments over the period from 2011-12 to 2015-16.


In doing all of that, it still supports in every way the four-pillars policy of this government. As the go-to property person, I want to concentrate on the construction pillar and the benefits that have been given to that pillar, and they need to be thought through carefully and looked at carefully. There is \$1 billion of course over 10 years to upgrade the Bruce Highway, focusing on improving safety and flood immunity subject to the cost-sharing agreement which the government seeks from the federal government. There is \$278 million of Queensland and Australian government, local government and external developer funding towards the \$1.3 billion Gold Coast Rapid Transit light rail project from Southport to Broadbeach. The increase in the first home owner grant on new homes from \$7,000 to \$15,000 will support housing construction, and of course that is on top of the benefit already given with no duty payable on a new house purchase. The benefits that these measures will deliver to the construction industry cannot be understated, and they are terribly important because the industry needs support. It is an industry that, with support given to it, can quickly turn around its own fortunes and in turn the state's fortunes. In fact, it is the most responsive of all of the industries that we can support in turning itself and its contribution to the state—already a very high contribution—around.

It is no coincidence that today we had the announcement of the planning legislation reform as well. It is important to note that this government has done a lot in the budget to help Queensland's finances, but a lot more can be done in other areas that do not involve dipping into Queensland taxpayers' pockets or having to look at the books, because simply streamlining and simplifying processes means that we can get Queensland back on track in so many ways. I am glad to see that the announcement today has been welcomed already by the Property Council, by the UDIA and by the Local Government Association of Queensland. We are moving towards so many reforms in that area, but it is not just in the planning area. The Deputy Premier has already been doing the same thing with major state projects in terms of moving them through quickly, getting them approved and getting things happening. The Minister for Housing and Public Works similarly has been simplifying and streamlining building requirements, and I know that the Attorney-General is looking at a range of property laws so that we can modernise and bring Queensland into a simpler and more streamlined future in that area. The budget together with all of the other things that we have been doing are good for the property and construction industry, and that is important to me in my role as the go-to property person.

But of course as the member for Mansfield the most important thing for me is that my constituents are delivered some good news from the budget, and they certainly have been. In general terms, I believe that the Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund, which is applicable right throughout the state but will be particularly helpful to the many primary schools and the couple of secondary state schools in Mansfield, will be an extremely beneficial program. In writing to my parents and citizens groups, I have not only emphasised the benefit, the flexibility and the ability to move forward that this program gives; I have also emphasised to them the need, if they can, to consider spending the money locally as well, because it will only amplify the benefit of the scheme if we can support local struggling businesses, properly done of course with all of the necessary quotes and rigorous approach. If our local community can be assisted by being granted these contracts, that simply makes the good news travel further.

There is great news for our local Home Assist Secure program in that the program funding will be continued, and that is a valuable program provided by Lynn Rose and her team at the Mount Gravatt Community Centre. There is \$30,000 for drainage works on the Mount Gravatt showgrounds, and that will be music to the ears of CEO Winston Fraser, who is already sizing up the extent of the job that needs to be done there to keep that oval well drained and dust free for the many events that are held on it throughout the year. There is \$1.5 million to refurbish the kindergarten at the Mount Gravatt East State School, and that will be welcomed. Bruce Wilson and his team who are building an indoor sports complex for the Mount Gravatt Youth and Recreation Club at Weedon Street have their three-quarters of a million dollars funding confirmed in this budget. Again, they will be grateful for that because it will add to the hard work that they have been doing to make that dream a reality.

One of the most important funding arrangements that has been confirmed in this budget is \$3.3 million worth of funding associated with the colocation of the Mount Gravatt Special School to the Mount Petrie State School site. That is going to create an interesting and exciting combination of the special school and the state school operating in tandem from the one site. I know that Terry Foster from the special school and Shirley Rimon from the state school will be pleased to know that that funding is secure as they complete the tremendous job that they have done in creating an exciting and innovative campus, which we hope will be opened in early December. That just highlights for me some of the good news for the constituents of Mansfield. There is much more, but all I need to say tonight is that I am pleased and optimistic given the budget the Treasurer has delivered. It has delivered for the property and construction constituency and it has delivered for the Mansfield constituency, and it leaves me pleased and proud to support the government which delivered this budget.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (6.09 pm): Over 12 years in this chamber I have seen a number of budgets delivered. I must say that I am very pleased to be part of a Queensland government that delivers a budget that is delivering concrete outcomes for my region. I will set out some of the

allocations that my electorate of Condamine received that will certainly help the people of my electorate over the next 12 months, but firstly, I would like to start with what the Treasurer has delivered for the whole of Queensland.

I want to talk about our P&C organisations. For years, many schools within my electorate battled with QBuild. I am being honest about that. I can remember, as president of the P&C of Cooranga North State School for many years, trying to build a covered walkway from the toilets to the school. We went through absolute hell on earth. We had the people in the school who were capable of building it and building it at a very cheap rate for the school. The Treasurer and this government has opened up our schools so that they can use private contractors and save millions. Not only have they done that, but our government is enabling our schools to receive \$160,000 for construction. What a wonderful gift for our kids. That \$160,000 would equate to half a million under Labor's old scheme. It is unbelievable what our schools will now be able to do for our kids. This morning the Minister for Education gave us a brief outline of what the savings will be for a few schools. It is just wonderful to be part of such a decision—to put forward \$200 million for schools. I am very proud to stand in this chamber and speak to the first budget delivered by a government of which I am a part. There will be 150 teacher aides for prep classes. We have been crying out for them for years.

Mike Horan has been the only health minister who has ever put Queensland Health on the map. What he did in the two years that he was health minister was simply unforgettable. Mike's reputation is seriously on the line as we now have the member for Southern Downs, Lawrence Springborg, as health minister. It is simply commendable that he is turning around the health department with the staff that he has. It was a great choice to select Mike Horan as chair of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board. We are already seeing the fruits of the setting up of these health and hospital boards in our communities. It is just a wonderful thing.

This is an exciting budget. An amount of \$1.3 billion will be put into our hospitals. We welcome that. There will be \$44 million for better access to emergency and specialist care and \$14 million to assist the elderly parent carers of disabled children. As members, how many times have we had parents of elderly disabled children come in and ask us what we can do—'Can you help?' You would try to get an appointment with the health minister, but the minister would not see you. Now, we have money put into the budget to protect these people. Queenslanders have been calling out for this for years. It is exciting.

There will be 300 new police, part of a rollout of 1,100 officers that we are going to put into the Police Service to protect places such as the Gold Coast. That will be 300 going straight in immediately. That is just really good news. There is \$28.9 million for home visits and community clinics for mothers and bubs. They are going to be looked after. They have been neglected for years.

We all know what small business has gone through. We have lifted the payroll tax threshold and we are going to reduce the red tape so that people can get on with running their businesses and making money. That is what government is about. This government is not about spin and borrowing money; this government is about getting things done.

There is \$20 million for attracting new tourism opportunities. There is also a first home owners grant. We have heard the members opposite abuse us for the \$7,000 that is going, but there is \$15,000 up for grabs if people buy a new home or build one off the plan. What a great start for young people who are trying to get a start in life: \$15,000 given to them!

This morning, we heard the Deputy Premier explain to the House how much the increase in mining royalties will cost mining companies. It will cost them very little. That increase is locked in for 10 years. Miners can now plan without the threat of a government decision hanging over their heads. It will be wonderful. That increase in royalties is locked in and it is a great plan.

There is \$7.6 million for key agricultural export sectors. The electorate of Condamine, which I represent, is just an amazing electorate. With the flood plain, if we had to grow small crops in a food shortage, we could feed half the world. If we had to turn to six-week crops, the food that we could get out of my electorate would be unbelievable. We will protect electorates such as the Condamine electorate. At this very moment they are under threat of coal seam gas extraction from Arrow Energy. Minister Cripps met with Arrow Energy and told them to back off and move out. I have met with them myself and told them that that country is to be locked up. With the technology that we have, at this stage that country is unsuitable for drilling.

We are going to freeze car registration. There will be a saving of up to \$120 annually on electricity bills. These are positive things. We are going to double the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Quite often in my electorate sick people cannot afford to get to Brisbane to receive treatment. After 20 years of Labor the health facilities in regional areas were run down. Now, people will be able to receive assistance to be able to get their loved ones into a city to be cared for. What a wonderful gift from a Queensland government. This is exciting stuff.

For the electorate of Condamine, there is \$5.2 million for electricity redevelopment in the Toowoomba area. There is \$1.4 million for a new fire station at Clifton. Clifton is a town that has been

forgotten. We hardly ever hear Clifton mentioned. It got hit by the floods. The highway was wrecked and the railway was wrecked. It is a wonderful agricultural area. Now, the people of Clifton will receive a new fire station to look after the boys who will look after them. There is \$3.1 million across the Darling Downs for upgrading social housing. There is \$125,000 for disaster event funding. During the floods last year Dalby was flooded three times. It was absolutely horrific. We are going to put in place some funding for disaster management.

There is also \$4.5 million for the upgrade of the Dalby saleyards. I have sold many hundreds of cattle at those saleyards and that upgrade has been badly needed. We are about halfway through building them and this funding will certainly see that project completed, which makes a lot of people happy. There is \$375,000 for the Myall Creek master plan, where a skate park, a toilet block, a gym, a children's playground, barbecues and picnic areas will be built. Dalby was settled when the squatters moved across the flood plain. That was the first water they found. The squatters camped on the Myall Creek. That area was not meant to be the site for the town. Dalby should have been located about 10 kilometres up at Colkerri in the hills. But that is how it was. Now, we are going to put some good things on the creek for the kids. There will also be \$1.3 million for an indoor heated pool at Dalby. There is also \$82,000 for changes to the Dalby Rugby Union Club. There is \$50,000 for health services in Queensland Indigenous communities. There is \$54,000 for sport and recreation, \$53,000 for the sport and recreation jobs program and \$2,000 for Dalby football club equipment. There is \$5,000 for a 'come and try' event at Oakey.

My electorate has certainly done very well. May I say that I have made probably 11 speeches at this time of the year. In preparation for those speeches I tried to find something that my electorate got out of Labor. It is just wonderful to be able to stand here and know that, as part of the LNP government, my electorate is certainly being looked after. There is also \$5,000 for the Pittsworth Basketball support.

There is also \$1.7 million for the Gatton-Clifton Road to replace the bridge. During the floods that road was cut. The owners of the zoo at Pilton suffered, because as the road was cut no-one could come to the zoo. The owners have certainly put a wonderful zoo in place for people to take their kids to. They have a white lion. They do a wonderful job, but they have certainly suffered because, owing to the road being cut, no-one could possibly get to their zoo. It is just wonderful to see funding to rebuild that road.


There is also \$2.6 million to widen the Dalby-Kogan Road. That is much needed funding. There is \$60 million to upgrade the Warrego Highway between Toowoomba and Dalby. About two months ago I took a truckload of horses to Dalby to the campdraft and had to get a wheel alignment in my truck after driving along the Warrego Highway. Not so long ago I had someone come to me who had sent an apprentice to Dalby, driving a ute with eight solar panels on the back. There were only two left when he got there. That is the state of the Warrego Highway. I met with the police in Toowoomba and they said that impatience was killing people, because the truckies cannot go over 80 kilometres an hour along that highway.

This is a much-needed upgrade. We need the feds to step in and put four lanes to Dalby. We are talking about 40,000 coal seam gas wells in the next 10 years. For each gas well there are 2,000 vehicle movements. That equates to eight million vehicles just to drill the wells. That is without putting the infrastructure and pipes in place. We have the corridors going through Gladstone. We have the rail link. That is all going to come up the Toowoomba Range and down the Warrego Highway. In the Bowen Basin we have the electric train system getting our coal to the ports. Sir Joh built that. Sir Joh saw what we needed in 50 years time. We have suffered for 20 years under a government that survived from day-to-day by borrowing money. I used to stand on top of the annexe when Peter Beattie was Premier and challenge the Labor members to get up there and show me one piece of infrastructure that was built in Brisbane. It was a footbridge and a football stadium. That is what I saw in my first nine years as a politician in this chamber. That is what Beattie delivered to the people of Queensland. He built absolutely nothing. Bligh came in on a boom and sent Queensland broke. Now look at what we are doing for the future of Queensland. We already have plans in place. We need to build a Queensland for 30, 40 and 50 years time so that our grandkids can live off the fruits of our labour, just as we are now living off the fruits of the labour of the once great Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Coming back to funding in the budget for the electorate of Condamine, there is \$1 million for the draft Darling Downs Regional Plan which is very much needed. There is \$66,000 to the Clifton High School; \$10,000 to the Dalby State School school amenities block; \$42,000 for coal seam gas inspection and compliance; and \$1.1 million for land, weed and pest management on the Western Downs. That is very much needed. We have African love grass spread right throughout Queensland. It is a declared pest. It cannot be controlled. It gets into paddocks and cattle cannot eat it, it cuts their tongues, and takes over every other grass. Now we have funding to put management plans in place to look after those areas. It is very, very well accepted. There is \$1.52 million for disability services on the Western Downs. Our western region has suffered, especially if you have a loved one with a disability. This budget is delivering good strong policy and incentives for our people in such a terrible marketplace where we are faced with debt that could possibly grow to \$100 billion. That is just horrific. There is \$48,000 for an equestrian centre pavilion at the Toowoomba Showgrounds in my electorate. That is very close to my heart. I have competed in that pavilion many times and it is wonderful to see funding go to

that area. I have often met with the show society. Nearly every weekend the pavilion is booked up and most of it is horse sports. Toowoomba is becoming the horse centre of Queensland and this government recognises that. There is an allocation of \$60,000 for cricket and rugby league in Drayton just on the edge of Toowoomba.

It is an honour to stand here as part of a government and see such a strong budget delivered for the seat of Condamine, a seat that I have worked very hard to protect. I am finally in a position where I can lobby ministers and get something done. It is quite a honour to be able to do that. Thank you.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (6.23 pm): I am very pleased to contribute to the debate on this government's first budget. Like many of my colleagues before me, and I have no doubt those who will follow me, I recognise that this is a budget for Queensland's future. It is the most important budget in a generation. It makes the hard decisions now to get the state's finances under control, but it is also a budget that is focused on growing our economy for the benefit of all. As the members for Condamine and Mansfield said, I too am proud to be part of a government that is genuinely concerned about the future of Queensland. I am proud to be part of a government that has a plan for the future. I know many of the decisions in this budget were not made lightly. I recognise that there are residents in my electorate of Mount Coot-tha who have been affected by some of the decisions. So it is very important to understand why this government has had to make the hard decisions. Under Labor we were set for ruin. They were addicted to debt and deficit, but I know from talking to thousands of residents in my electorate that the previous government was sadly not addicted to ensuring that Queenslanders' cost of living remained sustainable or that front-line services were equipped with the tools and flexibility they need to deliver the best service for all Queenslanders.

Labor's litany of failures is a very long list and while this budget seeks to address many of those failures, pertinent to the decisions that have been made in this budget is the advice the Treasurer received from the Queensland Treasury's incoming government brief which stated that Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government. As outlined in the Commission of Audit report, general government sector gross debt has increased more than tenfold in the last five years and interest has been the fastest growing expense of the Queensland government over the last decade. Since 2005-06 the state has been living well beyond its means. Expenses have grown at an average of 10.5 per cent while revenue has grown at an average rate of 6.9 per cent per annum. You do not even need to be in business to know that these figures are not sustainable. Every household knows that the expenses of their family budget cannot increase at a rate much higher than the money coming in.


This budget will free Queensland from a future of debt and decline. It will set Queensland's finances on the road to recovery. This budget is about putting Queenslanders first. We have delivered on key commitments to lower the cost of living, revitalise front-line services and grow a four-pillar economy. This budget will help regain the state's AAA credit rating. At the financial level, this budget delivers a fiscal surplus in 2014-15 and a return to an operating surplus in 2013-14. It will stabilise debt at \$81.76 billion instead of \$86.3 billion in 2014-15 and in 2015-16 debt will be \$6.6 billion lower than the Commission of Audit predicted. It will save interest payments over the forward estimates of \$1.3 billion. So instead of wasting money on an ever-increasing interest bill we will have more money to spend on delivering the services Queensland needs.

I have listened to thousands and thousands of residents across the Mount Coot-tha electorate over the last 18 months and their message to me was that they wanted to see better planning for roads and schools, better and cheaper public transport, greater support for small business and a lower cost of living. I have represented the priorities of my electorate to all key stakeholders across this government and I know my electorate will be very pleased to see that their concerns have been heard. They are reflected in this budget through the following measures: this government has recognised the great need in all our schools and allocated \$200 million to a schools maintenance fund to fix the maintenance backlog of public schools. P&Cs have welcomed the opportunity to apply for up to \$160,000 to ensure our children have access to the best school facilities and a safer environment in which to learn. This government will also deliver \$86.3 million over the next four years to provide better infrastructure and planning for Queensland non-state schools and additional funding of \$6.5 million per annum to enable principals to select literacy and numeracy programs that will improve educational standards at their school. Implementing one of our key election commitments, this government will also deliver \$3.5 million to provide every Queensland state special school with 20 tablets and every school offering a special education program with 10 tablets for use by students with special needs through the e-learning for special needs students program. This initiative is certainly welcomed by Petrie Terrace State School and Red Hill Special School in my electorate. This budget also delivers road safety at our state schools, providing for flashing school zone lights. I am certainly looking forward to delivering these lights at Toowong, Bardon and Milton state schools in line with our election commitment. I am also pleased to confirm that within the Department of Education's capital program, Rainworth State School will receive much-needed funding to meet the needs of its growing number of students with the provision of more classrooms.

On the public transport front, I commend the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for his commitment to delivering more frequent, reliable and affordable services by investing \$1.6 billion into public transport. To address the spiralling cost of public transport under the previous government, this government is investing \$39 million over four years to deliver free travel after nine weekly journeys for go card users. This budget has also allocated \$158.2 million over four years to halve the public transport fare hikes planned under Labor for 2013 and 2014. This minister will continue to review bus services and end duplication, simplify the network, improve under-utilised bus services and deliver more services where they are needed.

Because the LNP is the party of small business and we value the significant contribution of small business to the Queensland economy, I am delighted—and I know businesses and residents in my electorate are delighted—that this government will deliver on our election commitment of \$300,000 for the reinvigoration project for Rosalie Village and Park Road at Milton. This commitment is about supporting our local communities and our local economies. It recognises that they have been doing it tough and it will assist to reinvigorate these iconic areas and bring business back to their doors. Also delivering on our election commitments, this government has already increased the payroll tax threshold and will continue to do so. We have removed the job-destroying waste levy and we are reducing red tape to enable business to get on and do what they do best. To give some relief from the spiralling cost of living, this government has frozen car registration fees for more than 2.5 million family vehicles.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

 **Mrs RICE:** As I was saying, to give some relief from the spiralling cost of living, this government has frozen car registration fees for more than 2.5 million family vehicles; reinstated the principal place of residence concessional rate of stamp duty, saving Queenslanders up to \$7,175 when buying a family home; frozen the electricity tariff 11 for one year, saving families an average of \$120 on their annual electricity bill; and this budget delivers rebates of \$80 per domestic water connection to households in South-East Queensland. This is in addition to the savings for public transport users I mentioned earlier.

I know residents in Mount Coot-tha will also be excited by new initiatives, including \$15 million allocated for a three-year trial to assist elderly parent carers of people with a disability in transition to new care arrangements. At-risk Queenslanders in need of social housing will also benefit from a \$456.5 million Capital Works Program. This is an important measure that will address the issue faced by the 30,000 families currently on the waiting list and allow for the construction of 72 new rental units and the completion of at least 534 rental units. This will be welcome news to those people in my electorate who have already presented to me their desperate need for housing. Our local environment will benefit from an additional \$3 million in 2012-13 for Everyone's Environment grants, which will greatly benefit local organisations, including the Vera Street Community Garden, the Toowong Creek Rehabilitation Group and Save Our Waterways Now Ithaca Intact project, with each receiving a \$10,000 grant to assist them to continue their great work. There is also \$10,000 for the Bardonia Lions for much-needed equipment.

In my role as Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education, I am proud that this government is supporting women in male dominated fields experiencing skills shortages through a \$10 million commitment over four years to provide 500 scholarships of up to \$20,000. I also welcome the Treasurer's announcement to build on our skilled workforce in Queensland through a review of the criteria for both state sponsored skilled migration visas and business migration visas. In order to revamp Queensland's VET sector and ensure that we have an industry engaged, responsive VET system that provides flexible pathways to skill Queenslanders to meet future employment and skills needs, I am looking forward to working with the Minister for Education, Training and Employment to consider the recommendations of the Skills and Training Taskforce when its final report is handed down at the end of this year. Following on from the task force report, the government has allocated \$86 million from 2014 to 2018 to support 10,000 additional apprentices.

Today I encourage all Queenslanders to look carefully at this budget; look carefully and see that this budget is focused on delivering critical services and cost-of-living savings; look carefully and see that the Newman government is focused on getting Queensland back on track and, instead of wasting money on an ever-increasing interest bill, will have more money to spend on delivering the services Queensland needs: the schools, the roads, the hospitals, the police teachers and nurses. Over the past 48 hours, residents and business owners have provided their feedback on this budget and overwhelmingly their message is that they support and understand the decisions that the government has had to make to fix the problems of the previous government. They have made comments such as, 'If this government doesn't take the hard decisions, who will?' Many recognise that this is not an easy budget and, as I have already mentioned, some have certainly been personally touched by it. However, the overwhelmingly feedback has been that residents want better economic management in Queensland, more efficient services and a lower cost of living. I commend the Treasurer on his first budget. Certainly it is a far more fiscally responsible budget than that of the former Treasurer. I commend the bills to the House.

Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.34 pm): I rise in support of these appropriation bills. It gives me great pleasure to speak on this bill, especially as my wife's American aunt, Joan Fister, is in the public gallery tonight. Even in Ohio they are interested in the most important Queensland budget in a generation. This is a budget focused squarely on getting the state's finances back in the black. It has come after years of reckless spending by the previous Labor government. The result is a state dragged down with debt. Many have asked me, 'How is it possible that Labor sent Queensland broke in the middle of a mining boom?' Labor certainly was not spending vast quantities of money on infrastructure or front-line services. If it was, we would now have a multi-lane Bruce Highway stretching all the way from Cairns to Brisbane and we would have high-frequency bus services across the TransLink network. But alas, that is not the case.

I am afraid to say that the focus of the Labor Party was not on building infrastructure, but on building bureaucracy. It was more interested in pushing the unions' line than delivering services on the front line. The hallmark of Labor in Queensland was waste and mismanagement. This budget is a budget for Queensland's future. The Newman government is getting on with that job. The hard decisions have now been taken. It was not an easy task. Sadly, it means that we have to reduce spending for a lot of good projects. We will also lose a lot of good people from the public sector, but unfortunately those decisions were necessary to restore the budget to fiscal surplus. It is important to remember that the people of Queensland spoke with a very clear voice on 24 March. They voted for a government that would get this state back on track. They voted for a government that would make the tough decisions to build a stronger Queensland.

The people have spoken and, through this budget, the Newman government will deliver. My portfolio of Transport and Main Roads is an example of how we are delivering for Queenslanders. When we were elected, we said we would revitalise front-line services. Public transport is an example of a front-line service that was left to decay under Labor. I am pleased to advise the chamber that this budget contains a record \$1.6 billion in funding for public transport for South-East Queensland. On the back of Labor's massive fare increases and record low reliability, we saw patronage flatline. That happened under the reign of the now Leader of the Opposition when she was minister for transport. The budget documents show that in 2011-12 the then Labor government predicted that patronage would be 186 million trips. The reality is that they only achieved 178 million, which is almost eight million fewer trips than they predicted. We are predicting that in 2012-13 patronage will rise to 181 million. That is a conservative number, I admit, but a number that is achievable. It is achievable because we are focusing on reliability, frequency and affordability.

The Newman government is focused on lowering the cost of living for families. This budget will deliver \$39 million over four years for the free travel after nine journeys initiative. Each week, around 80,000 public transport users are benefiting, with almost 200,000 free journeys taken. This budget has also funded our election commitment to half Labor's planned 15 per cent fare hikes in 2013 and 2014. This will cost \$158 million over four years. That will mean that public transport fares will always be cheaper under the LNP than they would have been under a Labor government.

These two LNP initiatives will put almost \$200 million back into people's pockets that they would have lost under Labor. These are real cost-of-living savings for Queenslanders. When they vote on this bill Labor will have a choice. It is a choice between their former failed policy to raise fares and slug families or they can choose to support nearly \$200 million in cost-of-living relief for families.

This government is also working to improve frequency of public transport services. The opening of the Northern Busway saw an investment of \$10 million. That investment provided an additional 2,000 weekly services across northern Brisbane. Route 330 from Bracken Ridge and route 340 from Carseldine have both been upgraded to high-frequency services. Passengers on these services will now have a bus at least every 15 minutes off peak. With \$18 million funding in this budget, the Ferny Grove rail line will soon be running daytime, off-peak, 15-minute services Monday to Friday. This is great news for residents along the line.

This government will also be tackling public transport reliability, particularly on the rail network. We saw two significant maintenance failures earlier this year. Thousands of passengers were left stranded with 297 services impacted, including 124 cancellations. This significantly eroded public confidence in Queensland Rail. This government intends to win back the confidence of the travelling public.

One of the first things I did on becoming Minister for Transport and Main Roads was to order an independent audit into the reliability of Queensland Rail's network. This audit found that the money was wasted with a piecemeal approach to planning significant capital investment, including asset replacement and enhancement programs'. The audit made 26 recommendations, which this government will implement.

However, the reliability issue facing Queensland Rail was just a symptom of a bigger problem. Under Labor, Queensland Rail lost its focus on front-line rail services. While numbers in their corporate head office swelled, reliability was falling. Between July 2010 and June 2012 the number of FTEs in communication, stakeholder and marketing increased by 68 per cent, the number in finance rose by

122 per cent and the number in strategy and corporate services rose by 66 per cent. This budget gives Queensland Rail clear direction that they have to identify savings and focus on front-line services.

In response, Queensland Rail will be slashing the organisation's executive and general manager positions from 77 to 32. Consultation has also begun on a proposal to reduce the corporate and support areas by around 500 personnel. This will be achieved through voluntary redundancy payments and winding back contractors. This government is also determined to revitalise front-line bus services.

It may shock members to know that there are some parts of our bus network that have not been reviewed since the 1990s. In a lot of places we have also had services added over time and the result is a network that is complex and inefficient. We need to improve the reliability of the network, particularly where there are buses that are so full they need to leave passengers behind. Other areas have buses carrying fewer than three passengers a trip.

Most importantly, patronage has declined on 13 of South-East Queensland's 16 bus providers following Labor's fare hikes. We all know what Labor's response would have been to the reduction in fare revenue. They would have jacked up fares yet again. Well, that is not how the Newman government operates. We are going to tackle the problem and make our bus network better.

I have ordered a full review of the bus network. Over the coming months TransLink will be working with our operators and passengers to build a better bus network. In particular, the review will focus on eliminating service duplication and managing the infrastructure constraints we have inherited. We will simplify the network and get better connectivity between services and modes. Finally, we will redirect resources to routes where there is overcrowding.

This year's budget will be the last one to include TransLink as a separate statutory authority. On Tuesday I introduced legislation that will see TransLink come back within the Department of Transport and Main Roads. So I will just say that this government is determined to deliver services in the most efficient way and without duplication. I look forward to the legislation coming forward so I will have a chance to speak more on that issue.

I should also note that Budget Paper No. 3 also contains \$66 million for a very important piece of infrastructure—that is, the start of consultation on the Moreton Bay Rail Link. This railway has been on the books since about 1895, so I can understand that there may be some people out there who think this project will never happen. Other governments may have promised; the Newman government will deliver. But, importantly, we want to deliver this project in the best way possible.

We saw under the previous government various gold plated projects that really could have been delivered with better efficiency and less waste. I am pleased to report that more than 300 business representatives recently attended the project's first industry briefing. This shows that there is a high level of interest in the private sector for this project. My challenge to those companies is to put on their thinking caps and find innovative ways to deliver this rail link. That is because, unlike those opposite, we know that when we are spending taxpayers and ratepayers' money we have a responsibility to ensure that we do not spend one cent more than is necessary. I say that because it is important to point out that, under the deal done by the previous Labor government, the federal government's contribution is capped. So any overrun will have to be paid by the taxpayers of Queensland. We are going to need the sort of prudent management of this project that we never saw under the previous government.

While I am talking about infrastructure, let me turn to roads. Can I say that when talking about road investment under a Newman government there is a lot to talk about. At the front and centre of this budget is our commitment to the Bruce Highway. It will receive a \$415 million boost as part of our \$6.4 billion commitment to better infrastructure and planning. This is more than just a road: the Bruce Highway is a lifeline for Queensland. Its safe operation is essential to support the four-pillar economy centred on agriculture, tourism, resources and construction. It is worthwhile to remind members that this road, which is so important for the prosperity of the state, has been cut by floodwaters 530 times over the last two years. This has caused significant disruption to tourism and industry. But, more importantly, investing in the Bruce Highway will save lives.

According to the RACQ, if nothing is done we are likely to see 300 to 400 lives lost on this stretch of road over the next 10 years. I am sorry to say that the Bruce Highway counts for one in six deaths on national highways in Australia. That is why during the election campaign we gave a commitment. We said we would invest an additional \$1 billion over 10 years on the Bruce Highway if the federal government brings forward their share of funding. The Newman government's first instalment—an additional \$200 million—has been funded in this budget. Now I call on the federal government to come to the table and show us their money.

The importance of this road and the need to save lives is unquestionable. So you would think that the members opposite would be at the government's side, lobbying their federal Labor colleagues to get the money that we need to fix that road. Regrettably that is not the case. You see the member for Mulgrave has revealed that the Labor Party thinks that our investment in the Bruce Highway is 'mispending' money. Here is a quote from the *Cairns Post* from April 2012—

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

"Their plan is one of crisis," Mr Pitt said.

This really does sum up why the Labor Party is in opposition. When faced with a crisis the Labor Party do one of two things: they either shove their head in the sand and hope the problem will go away or they point their finger and blame someone else. Well that is not the way the LNP and this government operates. We want to do something about this problem and we would prefer to work with the Labor government in Canberra to get the Bruce Highway fixed. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia supports us when it comes to fixing up the Bruce Highway. The RACQ thinks funding is urgently needed. It seems the only people who do not want to act are those opposite, and I would urge them to rethink their position. It is not too late to say you were wrong and start supporting this vital investment.

As I have previously indicated, this government has made a \$6.4 billion commitment to better infrastructure and planning. We are investing in infrastructure across the state. There are far too many projects for me to mention in this speech, but I would urge members to grab a copy of the QTRIP document, if they have not already done so, to get a better understanding of the breadth and depth of the program. I would like to mention just a few highlights: \$93 million for the ongoing upgrades of the Gateway Motorway, north and south; \$55 million for intersection improvement works on the Brisbane Valley Highway at Blacksoil, and I know the member for Ipswich West is very interested in that project; \$219 million for the Warrego Highway; \$30 million for the Capricorn Highway; and \$22 million for the Townsville Ring Road. The list goes on but I will stop there otherwise I will be here for hours.

Instead I would like to say a few words about measures in this budget that are designed to reduce the cost of living. It is worthwhile reflecting on what we saw under the previous government. Remember the car registration bill that went up and up and up, and the constant 15 per cent public transport fare increases? Why were those increases necessary? It was because the Labor Party had lost control of the state's finances. They were desperate for cash. Queenslanders were not treated as people; the previous government thought they were mobile ATMs that they could extract cash from whenever they had a cost blow-out.

Contrast that with the initiatives in this budget. I have already mentioned the free public transport after nine trips policy and I have mentioned the halving of Labor's planned fare increases. There is also good news when it comes to the family car. Registration for these vehicles will be frozen for three years and this will save a family with a 6-cylinder vehicle \$67 over three years.

The Newman government's first budget has delivered for local communities and, in particular, the community in my electorate of Indooroopilly. State schools around my electorate will benefit from the \$200 million Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund. This will enable them to apply for funding to help clear Labor's maintenance backlog. The budget will also see my electorate receive funding to upgrade facilities at schools, such as Graceville State School which will receive \$900,000. There is also \$450,000 for Indooroopilly State High School to continue improvement works. We will be delivering on our election commitment to allocate \$10 million for the installation of flashing school zone lights at over 300 schools. This initiative will improve safety around many schools in the western suburbs.

In this Newman government budget, we will see record investment in areas such as disabilities. This will mean for my electorate that the many disability service providers which rely on government grants will continue to offer support for those who need it. The fact is that we have seen a three per cent growth in disability funding. This budget shows that the Newman government is taking steps in the right direction.


I am extremely pleased that we have fulfilled our election promise to ensure more community groups and sports groups receive more support from the state government. The Chelmer Recreation Reserve has received over half a million dollars to improve facilities, including the amenities buildings and the installation of lighting. I warmly welcome this commitment to small community sports groups in the south of my electorate.

I am proud of the commitment we have made to ensure we have safe and reliable roads in my electorate. We have made a significant investment in the western arterial road. Along with the members for Moggill, Mount Ommaney and Mount Coot-tha, I believe the \$5.8 million we are spending on safety improvements, including variable speed limit signs, is the right choice for Brisbane's western suburbs.

Earlier in my budget speech, I mentioned the fact that we had delivered on our election commitment to halve Labor's endless 15 per cent fare increases. The response to this move has been greeted warmly by all I speak to in Indooroopilly. Indeed, even my wife—who is here tonight—and I are beneficiaries from this policy to address the cost of living for those in Indooroopilly, as we regularly catch the bus on our daily commute together.

I would like to wrap up by thanking the officers in the Department of Transport and Main Roads and those in Queensland Rail and RoadTek. They have worked so hard on this budget. I have set some very tough targets and I have been very impressed by the officers' professionalism and dedication. This is the most important budget in a generation. It is a budget for Queensland's future. The Newman

government is getting on with the job. The hard decisions have now been taken. It is time to get on with the hard work to get Queensland moving. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.54 pm): It is my absolute pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012, the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012 and the first budget of the Newman government. As the Treasurer has rightly stated, this budget is the most important one to be delivered in a generation. The reason for its importance was clearly demonstrated on page 1 of the incoming government brief for the Treasury portfolio that the Newman government received back in March 2012. It stated, and we all know the lines—

Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government.

This budget provides for \$7.8 billion in fiscal repair measures and, as the Treasurer correctly stated, resets the clock as we break from the addiction to debt and deficit that characterised Queensland's finances under those economic illiterates opposite. The state of Queensland currently pays around \$650,000 per hour in interest payments as a result of Labor's economic incompetence, or just under \$11,000 per minute. I will give periodic updates throughout my speech on how much interest we continue to rack up over the next 10 minutes or so. Already, since I began this speech, the interest debt clock has ticked over another \$11,000 for the people of Queensland.

It is important to put the historical financial context in place before describing the 2012-13 budget initiatives in detail. How did it really get to this? Who could forget the \$1.1 billion white elephant that is the rusting Tugun desalination plant, or the \$600 million wasted on the failed Traveston Crossing Dam which ripped apart the people of the Mary Valley, or the former government making it more expensive for Queensland motorists after breaking their election promise to not introduce the 9.2c a litre fuel tax, or the \$350 million spent on the Wyaralong Dam which Labor then decided not to connect to the South-East Queensland water grid, or the absolute debacle of the Queensland Health payroll fiasco which is going to end up costing taxpayers potentially more than \$1.25 billion? In fact it was only last Saturday's edition of the *Courier-Mail's* colour magazine supplement, *Qweekend*, which stated, inter alia, that the Queensland Health payroll catastrophe was perhaps the greatest stuff-up in Australian Public Service history. I have taken the liberty of tidying up the language slightly with this quote as I respect the dignity of this hallowed chamber.

I recognise the mandate that the LNP was entrusted with on 24 March of this year and the responsibility that obviously came with this result. We will not pander to vociferous minority groups or vested interests, but rather we will work for the forgotten men and women across the state who strive to work hard, educate their kids, be rewarded for the fruits of their labour and be able to make their own individual choices in life. Interest clock update since I began this speech: \$22,000.

The LNP made a promise to all Queenslanders that we would work for them—not in spite of them—to deliver better services, reduce the cost of living, legislate responsibly with common sense and get the state moving again. I made a promise to the people of Chatsworth that, if honoured by being elected, I would work as part of the LNP team to cut the burgeoning costs of living. Wherever I campaigned throughout the electorate, it always came back to this single fact—memo to those democratic socialists across the chamber in opposition: 'It was always about the economy, stupid.'

I am delighted to speak in support of the first conservative budget delivered in 15 years. It is a tough budget but it is a budget that will enable the Newman government to deliver on its commitments to the people of Queensland, reduce the fiscal waste the former Labor government burdened our great state with and get our economy moving again. It will enable the Newman government to build a strong four-pillar economy, lower the cost of living, deliver better infrastructure and planning, revitalise front-line services and importantly restore accountability in government. Interest clock now at \$33,000. This once in a generation budget is not in itself the solution to the mess of Labor ineptitude that we as a government inherited, but it is the medicine the state needs in order to truly build a brighter future for the electorate of Chatsworth, which I serve, and Queensland as a whole.

Undertaking a fiscal repair exercise of this magnitude was never going to be easy. It never is when conservative governments have to continually come into office and clean up the financial mess of Labor governments that spend with reckless abandon. Niccolo Machiavelli wrote in the famous treatise on Renaissance statecraft *The Prince*—

And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents ... and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them.

The interest debt clock has now been added to by approximately \$44,000. The constituents of Chatsworth and Queenslanders overall will benefit considerably from the measures allowed for in this budget. Already, the Newman government has delivered on its key election commitments to lower the cost of living by freezing car registration for more than 2½ million vehicles; freezing electricity tariff 11, thereby saving families on average \$125 annually on their electricity bills; providing an \$80 water rebate

for households; halving public transport fare increases; and rewarding regular commuters with free travel on the TransLink network after nine journeys. There is a \$15,000 first homeowner grant—

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mr MINNIKIN: Thank you. We have also reinstated the stamp duty concession for a principal place of residence, saving Queenslanders up to \$7,175 when buying the family home.

Mr Ruthenberg: Helping working families!

Mr MINNIKIN: I will take that interjection. The interest debt clock has now racked up approximately \$55,000 since I began this speech. Additionally, we have committed \$1.3 billion to construct, expand and develop hospitals across the state. There is an amount of \$456.5 million to expand and improve social housing services across the state, \$146.9 million over four years to deliver an additional 1,100 new police officers by 2016, \$200 million over two years to state school P&Cs to chip away at the maintenance backlog in state schools and \$53.6 million over four years to roll out the equivalent of a full-time teacher aide to an additional 150 prep classes each year in areas of greatest need.

All politics is local and there are some great budget initiatives for the people in my electorate of Chatsworth. Indeed, the ability for Chatsworth P&C committees such as Mayfield State School to address their woeful toilet block facility should they choose or to assist the Gumdale State School with master planning facilities is a wonderful feature of this budget. This budget initiative will allow local school communities to become empowered to look after their own needs and wants. The interest debt clock has now racked up approximately another \$66,000 since I began this speech.

Mr Crisafulli: Stop speaking!

Mr MINNIKIN: I am going to keep going to highlight the economic illiterates opposite.

I am also pleased that we were able to roll out early the new Carindale park-and-ride facility at the corner of Old Cleveland Road and Creek Road. I note with keen interest that the Newman government was able to deliver this facility at less than \$2,000 per car park bay as opposed to the previous Labor government administration that constructed two park-and-ride facilities towards the end of their reign at around \$37,000 per car park bay. Vacuous and clueless!

It was also pleasing to see that funds have been allocated to employ a local coordinator for multisports at the Clem Jones Centre to support eight clubs. Despite the negativity being drummed up by the Labor Party that the Newman government does not have the interests of parents, carers and people with disabilities in mind, we are absolutely committed to delivering a record investment in funding for disability services in the current financial year. I have met several Chatsworth families over the last couple of months who care for disabled children and young adults. My admiration for them is immeasurable. In the blink of an eye, through car crash or accident, any one of us or a member of our family could require disability support. The interest clock has now hit approximately \$77,000.

I am especially pleased that the Newman government has increased funding for specialist disability services to \$959 million, clearly proving our commitment to improving disability support in Queensland. I am particularly delighted that the Chatsworth electorate will receive funds to construct purpose-built housing in Carina to assist spinal cord injury patients exiting the Princess Alexandra Hospital. The interest debt clock is at \$88,000. The Newman government is investing \$15 million over three years for the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial, which seeks to alleviate unmet need for elderly parents who can no longer care for their adult disabled child. The trial is all about flexibility. Other benefits to Chatsworth include an upgrade of social rental housing properties within the electorate, which will be a welcome boost.

Finally, whilst it is true that all politics is local, we are privileged to sit in this hallowed chamber to represent the people. We are, indeed, servants of the people. There is a human dimension to the necessary fiscal repair exercise that needed to occur from a greater good or Pareto efficiency principle. In early 2009 I was made redundant from my senior executive role in an ASX 200 listed company as a result of the GFC. It was gut wrenching and a difficult time for my family. It was character building and I did bounce back. Notwithstanding this fact, I do empathise with all public servants who have lost employment as a result of the budget we have had to hand down and, as the Premier has already stated, we are genuinely sorry. Let us never forget, though, that the Newman government did not create this economic mess. We inherited it from an economic illiterate Labor government, which included the members for Mulgrave, Mackay and Inala at the helm. They just do not get it. The alternative strategy to begin fiscal repair would have involved slugging every man, woman and child another \$1,000. Given the exorbitant cost-of-living situation we are facing right now, how could we have done this? By the way, as I begin to wrap up my speech, the interest clock has hit \$110,000 since I began. Can honourable members believe it?

The great Winston Churchill once stated, 'The inherent vice of capitalism is the equal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.' The preparation and presentation of the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012 was a massive

undertaking by the Treasurer and I congratulate him, along with the Premier and their cabinet colleagues. I commend these bills to the House.

Mrs FRANCE (Pumicestone—LNP) (8.07 pm): It is an honour to rise tonight to contribute to discussions on the 2012 state budget, the first budget of the Newman government and, incidentally, the most important budget in a generation. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Treasurer and the ministers for all of the hard work that has gone into delivering a responsible budget that promises to get Queensland back on track. I am proud to take this budget back to the people in my electorate because I know it delivers real cost-of-living relief and a focus on support services for those most in need in our communities. It is also a budget that delivers on the promises we made to the voters five months ago. This government has made a commitment to stabilising debt levels, regaining the state's AAA credit rating—lost under Labor—and returning the budget to a fiscal surplus by 2014-15. The budget announced on Tuesday by the Treasurer is wholly consistent with this promise and the first steps have been taken to secure a stable future for Queensland. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland.

This Newman government is delivering on our election promises by providing savings for a number of essential services that will lower the cost of living for Queensland families. This will be achieved by freezing electricity tariff 11, saving up to \$120 a year; freezing car registration fees; reinstating the stamp duty concession, saving an average of \$7,000 when purchasing a home; boosting the patient travel subsidy; providing for rebates of up to \$80 per domestic water connection to households; halving public transport fare increases; providing free travel on the TransLink network after nine journeys; repealing the industry waste levy to reduce the burden on business; and cutting red tape that was choking businesses and adding unnecessary costs that were ultimately passed on to consumers.

I am very pleased with the deliverables in this budget for my electorate of Pumicestone. I will now summarise how these will help my local area and get Queensland back on track. I am proud to say that in Pumicestone support services for people of any age with a disability and for people aged 60 years and over, like those offered by the Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association, will continue thanks to the \$192,000 allocated for the provision of the Home Assist Secure service. The Newman government has demonstrated a clear commitment to housing assistance, despite financial constraints, and I am thrilled that this vital service will remain active in our community. While funding is an essential part of this service, this group would not exist without the support of wonderful volunteers, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Greg Spencer and the team at Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association for their hard work and dedication to our community. It is great to see that \$398,000 is to be provided to Centacare Caboolture Services for the provision of their Home Assist Secure service for people with a disability and those over the age of 60 within the Caboolture and Kilcoy areas.

The provision of disability support services is an important issue in my electorate and to me personally, so it is fantastic to see the government's record \$959 million investment in specialist services, of which the Pumicestone electorate will benefit to the tune of \$7.957 million. This funding commitment is great news for the local community and will help fund vital services including accommodation support, community access, community participation and respite services.

Mr Johnson: I bet that hasn't happened for a long time.

Mrs FRANCE: I do not think we have seen it in a long time. Our Newman government has also committed \$15 million to assist elderly parent carers of people with a disability. This is an initiative I wholeheartedly applaud, as I know it will bring a lot of comfort to the families who face this fear of the future every day. We are also establishing the Parent Connect program to provide assistance to parents of newborns with a disability. I am proud to be part of a government that places extreme importance on the provision of support services to those people in need in Queensland living with a disability. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland.

For the people of my electorate and surrounding electorates of Morayfield and Glass House who rely on the health services provided by the Caboolture Hospital, I am pleased to see further funding commitments by our government to improve these facilities.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs FRANCE: I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. It does help her area, too. After longstanding campaigns to secure additional funding for the hospital, I was absolutely thrilled to see in Tuesday's budget the confirmation of \$8.5 million to continue the expansion of the emergency department and a further \$2.7 million for the establishment of an education and skills training centre at the hospital. This is the largest Health budget in Queensland's history, with \$1.3 billion being committed to be spent on construction, expansion and redevelopment of hospitals across Queensland.

Another announcement that I am particularly excited about due to the financial relief it will offer the people of Pumicestone is the increase in the patient travel subsidy. Our government has increased the accommodation subsidy from \$30 per person per night to \$60—the first time it has been increased since 1987. It is great to see that the travel subsidy has also been increased, from 15c a kilometre to

30c a kilometre. This will go a long way to helping cover the costs associated with having to travel to seek medical care.

These firm financial commitments to Caboolture Hospital will go a long way to addressing the needs of our community, as will the other Newman government initiatives recently undertaken, such as the injection of \$28.9 million over four years to enhance maternal and child health services, to provide additional access to home visits and community clinics for the first 12 months following birth, to establish the local hospital boards, the recent addition of a 43-bed mental health unit at Caboolture Hospital, and the increased number of medical, nursing and allied health staff on the weekends to speed up processing times. The funding and improvements proposed for Queensland Health will be a positive step forward in the journey to restoring Queenslanders' faith in their public hospital system, left devastated by Labor's appalling management.

Having already announced the reinstatement of the stamp duty concession that will save homebuyers an average of \$7,000 and also the scrapping of the sustainability declaration, I am pleased to take back to my electorate yet another win for homebuyers with the announcement of the new first home owner construction grant. This gives first home buyers of new homes a \$15,000 head start and will also provide a much needed boost for my local construction industry. Our construction industry has been hit hard by the downturn in the property market over the past few years. I look forward to this initiative bringing back truck loads of trusses to my area, and hopefully this will mean that everyone—from the Davos, the Brenos, the Boogsies, the Raymonds and the Franceys right through to the bigger builders like the Mancorps and Glendale Homes—will be able to find work again in our local area. An additional benefit to business that has been outlined in this budget is the increase to the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.6 million over six years that will help 20,000 businesses and support thousands of jobs in Queensland.

In another big win for my electorate, public schools will now be eligible for up to \$160,000 each to help clear the backlog of maintenance. This will mean local parents making decisions to use local tradies and businesses to finally get on with fixing Labor's accrued backlog of maintenance in our kids' schools. I have two high schools and six primary schools in my electorate of Pumicestone, and I know that this will have a significant impact on the schools, helping to create a safer school environment, while providing an injection of new business into our local area.

I was thrilled to recently welcome our Premier and our education minister when they came to meet the delightful prep students and teachers at Tullawong primary school. We took this opportunity to launch the provision of an additional 150 teacher aides for prep classes in areas of greatest need. This initiative was welcomed by parents and teachers alike and will deliver great benefits to our children's education and development.

Our Caboolture TAFE campus and its students will also benefit enormously from this budget, with \$1.832 million set aside to upgrade the library. This is a much needed addition to our TAFE, and I am proud to be able to deliver on this for my community.

The admirable work of the Queensland Police Service has been acknowledged in this budget with \$146.9 million committed to delivering an additional 1,100 new Queensland police officers by 2015-16. This, I know, will be welcomed in my area by the hardworking and overstretched police officers, who do a fantastic job keeping our community safe. The importance of community safety and the role that the QPS plays can never be underestimated, and I am proud to be part of this government, committed to supporting our Police Service and ensuring the safety of Queenslanders around the state. I am also proud to see in our Queensland budget the allocation of \$750,000 over three years to the Women's Legal Service to support vulnerable women in Queensland.

With regard to sport, not only is our Newman government running the Get in the Game program that will provide financial assistance to clubs to ease the burden on fundraising for big-ticket items and subsidise kids' fees to try new sport; my local area has also received \$157,000 to employ a coordinator to support AFL and cricket clubs, a coordinator to support netball clubs and a dedicated coordinator to establish a network for people with a disability that will encourage involvement in sport and active recreation. These are wonderful initiatives focused on getting our young people active and outdoors.


The Newman government is committed to addressing the social housing crisis and allows for \$456.5 million to expand and improve social housing services across the state. I am pleased to be able to say that my electorate will be receiving \$4.233 million in this budget to complete the \$26 million worth of works currently in progress. This will result in 87 units on Bribie Island, with priority given to those in the 55-year-plus age group, and 13 new units in Caboolture. This is a great addition to our area that will see many families in safe, good-quality accommodation.

Funding has also been provided for roadworks projects in our area, with \$3.42 million set aside for Bruce Highway works and a further \$277,000 for works associated with the Burpengary-Caboolture Road. Unfortunately due to the dire financial situation left to us by the former Labor government, a feasibility study for the duplication of Bribie bridge is not included in this year's budget. This is something I will continue to fight for and look forward to delivering on once the state of Queensland's finances have improved. I am proud to say that our state government is working very closely with our

local governments to address the damage and repair works that have been left after the 2011 floods. In this budget we have allocated \$20.3 million to go towards Moreton Bay Regional Council to assist in the reimbursement and reinstatement of flood damage. This is a perfect example of local and state governments working together and I thank my councillors—Gary Parsons from Division 1, Peter Flannery from Division 2, Greg Chippendale from Division 3 and Deputy Mayor, and Mayor Allan Sutherland—for their ongoing commitment to working together with Wyatt Roy, the federal member for Longman, and myself to deliver on the needs of our community.

I have recently met with environmental and community groups to outline brilliant new environmental initiatives—the Everyone's Environment grants and the Keep Australia Beautiful initiative. These initiatives support community groups working to the beautification and protection of our environment. These grants can provide funding for a number of activities, including tree planting, restoring degraded lands, community clean-ups of land and water, water quality programs and works to enhance natural beauty. Individual grants range from \$2,000 to \$100,000 and community groups such as Rotary, Lions, P&Cs and environmental groups are eligible to apply, and I look forward to fighting for my area to get its fair share of the available funds. I am pleased to see that \$150,000 has been allocated in this budget for stormwater management and wetland restoration planning in Pumicestone.

This budget is a historic and critically important budget for Queensland. The Treasurer has been faced with a monumental task—repairing a state budget so deeply damaged by a Labor government that Queensland was faced with the possibility of a \$100 billion debt. Not only has this government laid the foundations to return the budget to a fiscal surplus and stabilise debt levels; we have also managed to deliver a budget that contains real cost-of-living savings for everyday Queenslanders and a strong commitment to community safety and support services. I thank all of the small business owners, the parents, the passionate community groups and all of the police, teachers, health workers and concerned citizens who took the time to write to me, to call me and to meet with me to have their say on what they wanted to see delivered in our local area. As they can see from this budget, their input is valuable and I greatly appreciate their support as we work together to get Queensland back on track. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland, and I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (8.22 pm): I rise to make my contribution this evening on the Newman government's first budget for the people of Queensland. It is a budget that lays the groundwork for getting Queensland back on track and for rebuilding the foundation of certainty for all Queenslanders. As Assistant Minister for Child Safety, I am pleased that we are making the right decisions for Queensland families, and this has to be a key focus. Last week the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, the Hon. Tracy Davis MP, and I were out and about attending Child Protection Week events. Too many children are being exposed to harm or are at risk of abuse and neglect, and Child Protection Week provided us with the opportunity to reflect on the very reason why reform is needed in this important area of service delivery.

This budget reflects our goal of delivering front-line services to improve lives throughout Queensland, and it does not start with anything more important than improving outcomes for our kids. This government understands the importance of directing resources to front-line services as the first stage of our strengthening families and protecting children reforms. The LNP's Fostering Families initiative will receive \$4 million in this budget. Our Fostering Families trial will see increased interventions being targeted where they are needed the most to keep children out of the statutory child protection system, and we will continue to fund a range of other programs to strengthen families and protect children.

Those who are familiar with my background with Bravehearts will know just how pleased I am to see \$1 million in funding going into increased sex abuse counselling for children. This funding is being delivered for children living in and around Cairns because of the high need for this type of new specialist counselling. Children living in regional areas will now have access to telephone counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with \$500,000 being invested over four years to ensure they receive timely and appropriate services when reporting instances of harm. Sadly, we know that not all children can live safely at home, and in Queensland today there are around 8,300 children living in some type of out-of-home care. Not every kid is best suited to a family based care environment and in Queensland today there are many children with complex and extreme needs who require a range of options to cater to their out-of-home care needs. This budget is responding with almost \$3.4 million in funding new capital works for residential care facilities to keep children and young people safe.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are overrepresented in all areas of the child protection spectrum in Queensland, and we also know that all governments across Australia struggle to address this same problem. But the Newman government is not shying away from it. Some \$1 million in capital funding is being delivered for a new child safe house on Thursday Island. Our child safe house program is just a part of our \$5.7 million budget commitment to address the needs and overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. Importantly, to chart the change required, the Premier established the commission of inquiry into the Queensland child protection system, the Carmody inquiry. This inquiry demonstrates our longer term commitment to create a sustainable and targeted child protection system

in Queensland. Our ongoing reform agenda is about changing the way existing processes and services are being delivered, because in the past they have been poorly targeted. As Assistant Minister for Child Safety, I am excited about the early reforms being taken by our government to strengthen Queensland's families and to protect children.

I now wish to turn to the people of my electorate, Southport. Southport has it all—ready access to the beach, an almost perfect climate, the magnificent Broadwater, a mature central business district, some of the city's best schools and the industrial areas of Molendinar and Arundel. Southport is home to over 8,000 small businesses. It is also the Gold Coast's centre for health and knowledge with Griffith University, the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, Browns, AICOL and Inforum language schools, a campus of the Central Queensland University, and the Gold Coast Hospital, soon to become the Gold Coast University Hospital, and many world-class medical service providers, eye clinics, day surgery centres and disability service providers.

While our government has had to make some very difficult decisions, I want to say to the people of Southport and the Gold Coast that there is also plenty of great news in this budget. As the Treasurer has already stated, this is a budget for Queensland's future. Like him, I believe this budget is the most important in a generation. We cannot leave Queensland in debt and decline. In 2008 when I ran for mayor of the Gold Coast and lost I also lost my job. There were no redundancy payments or accrued leave entitlements. My last pay cheque after tax was \$268. So to those who will lose their jobs in these difficult times, I want to say not only that I am sorry but also that I understand. Melinda and I scraped through, juggling bills, paying school fees and struggling to make ends meet. It was not until January of the following year that I found work interstate and overseas, having to commute each week for the next three years to keep our family afloat. That said, I still believe in Queensland, Southport and the Gold Coast. I believe this budget, while difficult, delivers hope for a better and more prosperous future. It delivers certainty for my sons and future generations.

Under Labor we had spending and financial mismanagement that were unsustainable and in the longer term would have led to a far more painful and challenging future. As a father, I have on many occasions had to make sacrifices for the good of my family. These times can be difficult, but I know that adversity produces character. It is the tough times that bind us together; it is the challenging times that teach us to appreciate what we have.

So to the people of Southport I want to say that, although this will be a challenging season for us, it will also be the making of us. I also want to say that there is plenty of good news in this budget. In just 20 months, the new Gold Coast rapid transit system will be operational, with the new \$1.2 billion light rail, whose tracks are being laid down Queen Street today as we speak. In just nine months, the new Gold Coast University Hospital will open at Parklands, where new jobs will be created, waiting lists will be reduced and the Gold Coast will receive better health services than ever before and more students will come to study at Griffith University. In addition to the 750 beds and 25 new emergency department treatment bays, construction will start on another 250 beds at the new Gold Coast private hospital across the road, paving the way for a full redevelopment of the old Allamanda Private Hospital in Spendelove Street. Our government's decision to install regional health boards and hand back control to the community will free up \$72 million of unnecessary administrative spending for the delivery of extra direct health services and procedures at the Gold Coast and Robina hospitals.

Yes, there is plenty of great news in this budget for the people of Southport: \$20 million in planning money for the Commonwealth Games and Parklands games village; \$8 million for improvements at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE in the heart of Southport's CBD; \$17 million this year towards the relocation of the Gold Coast show; and \$21.3 for desperately needed new social housing.

Roads in Southport will also be improved, with another \$30 million towards the \$120 million realignment of the Labrador-Carrara main road from Olsen Avenue, through Crestwood Heights and Ashmore. State schools in my electorate will benefit from special grants to P&Cs for much needed maintenance. I am especially pleased that the Southport Special School—a school that I have personally supported over many years through the Gold Coast Community Fund—will receive a \$467 million upgrade. Southport State High School will also benefit with \$2.8 million towards a brand-new year 7 accommodation facility.

I believe that Southport has a bright future. My pledge to the people of Southport was to lead the charge for more permanent jobs and the revitalisation of Southport as the Gold Coast's natural CBD. I am so pleased that our government will honour its election commitment to recruit and deploy more police and probably fund a police chopper for the Gold Coast. I am also pleased to say that Senior Sergeant Ray Vine has this week taken up a permanent appointment as officer in charge of the Southport Police Station. For the past two years under Labor, the Southport Police Station, one of Queensland's busiest police stations, has had only temporary appointees in charge. I want to thank Minister Dempsey for resolving this matter.


After years of neglect, the broadwater will finally receive the attention that it deserves.

Miss Barton: Hear, hear!

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. Our government will not only hand control of this most precious asset back to the people through the appointment of a Gold Coast waterways authority but also this year commit to \$3.5 million towards desperately needed and long overdue dredging.

The thousands of Gold Coast apprentices and tradesmen who commute to locations up the M1 each day for work will also benefit from jobs created closer to home as a result of this government's \$15,000 grant for first homeowners purchasing a new house or off-the-plan dwelling and stamp duty savings of up to \$7,175 for families buying their family home.

It was only five short months ago that the Newman government set a campaign that struck a real chord with the people of Queensland and we must not forget that. It was an open, honest and principled campaign and one that was based on commitments that required no reading between the lines. This year's budget defines a state in early financial repair and with a brighter future. It is time to get Queensland back on track. That was our constant message and that is what this year's budget delivers. As Assistant Minister for Child Safety and as the member for Southport, I commend this budget to the House.

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (8.34 pm): This week the Treasurer delivered the most important budget in a generation—one that will put Queensland back on the path to prosperity. Although the opposition criticises this government's fiscal repair measures, the reality is that we can longer afford to live beyond our means. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has been restructured to become an outcome-driven organisation that is outwardly focused on supporting people with a disability, protecting Queensland's children and young people and helping some of the most vulnerable people in our communities through a wide range of services and support. The bottom line is that we need resources to be directed where they are needed the most.

The Newman government is continuing to implement innovative and exciting initiatives that will ensure opportunity for all Queenslanders. Last week, the Premier and I had the great pleasure of launching Your Life Your Choice, which will trial self-directed funding for people with disabilities. Self-directed funding is a key plank of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and by getting this trial underway early we are ensuring that Queensland is gearing itself up for the national rollout, due in 2018. We already have the other key elements of the NDIS in place.

This financial year, the state budget includes a total investment of \$1.367 billion for specialist disability and community care services across Queensland. That includes a record state investment of \$959 million in 2012-13 in specialist disability services—up from \$931 million in 2011-12. We are achieving outcomes in four ways: firstly, by streamlining and improving service access for families and carers and helping them link with services more efficiently and locally where possible; secondly, by investing in early intervention and prevention to strengthen families, promote independence and social inclusion; thirdly, by increasing choice and control for individuals and their families, with the introduction of individualised person centred support and new opportunities for self-directed funding; and, fourthly, by providing better value for money and reducing red tape by improving the efficiency and contestability of the Queensland government's disability services. As part of this, compliance burden on non-government organisations will be reduced so that they can focus on what they do best: service delivery. Disability growth funding will go to front-line service delivery through the non-government sector and growth will be targeted to services such as accommodation support, community access, therapy and respite.

This budget funds a mix of services that make support for daily living needs a priority. The state budget allocation of \$1.367 billion for disability services includes new investment to maintain the value of existing services and improved service access. It builds on our action plan coming into government, which will deliver timely early intervention services for children and young people and their families. As part of this action plan, we are delivering \$4 million to establish ParentConnect and provide assistance to parents of newborn or newly diagnosed babies and children with a disability. We have \$22 million for additional respite support for 16- to 25-year-olds as well as \$9.5 million for more speech and language pathology services in schools. Twenty 20 e-tablets will be provided to every special school in Queensland by the end of the year. Of course, the Public Advocate will soon be re-established as an independent statutory authority.

The issue of certainty of care for adult children with a disability once their parents are unable to care for them anymore is also an issue that is raised with me on a regular basis. That is why this budget sees the Newman government commit \$15 million over three years for a new trial program aimed at providing greater security to older parent carers who can no longer look after their child with a disability. The Elderly Parent Carers Innovation Fund will run as a trial over the next three years and will see the government invest in projects providing new community living spaces, mixed disability and aged-care facilities and home modifications for people with a disability.

The 2012-13 budget also includes \$10.7 million to continue upgrades and construct purpose-built accommodation for people with an intellectual disability who exhibit severely challenging behaviours

and \$7.9 million for supported accommodation to provide specialist housing for people with a disability. An amount of \$14.1 million has been allocated for the construction and modifications of centre based day care for people with a disability and also to support other community care services.

I am passionate about giving people with a disability greater choice and control and empowering them to participate in their communities to their fullest extent. This is what we are delivering and will continue to deliver as we get the budget back in the black. In directing my comments to Child Safety, I would like to highlight that in this space we have faced enormous obstacles from the word go. There was a massive black hole for unfunded fee-for-service transitional placements for children and young people and this cost had to be recovered by finding savings in other program areas. We have worked to fix the structural deficit and I am delighted to announce that this government has increased funding for Child Safety by 5.6 per cent: from \$733.1 million in 2011-12 to \$774.1 million in 2012-13. I know the assistant minister is really happy with that outcome as we work towards making Queensland the safest place to raise children in Australia.

Families are the cornerstone of our communities and we must be doing everything we can to ensure they are strong and resilient. I am very pleased to announce funding in this budget for Fostering Families. The \$4 million Fostering Families initiative will run for two years and will provide around 300 families with practical support to help keep children at home and out of state care. Through this initiative we will provide intensive in-home and out-of-hours family support to vulnerable families where a notification has been made to the department primarily because of neglect. We will be trialling this initiative in Maryborough, Toowoomba and Brisbane South, areas chosen primarily for their high number of children entering out-of-home care and the need for additional intensive family support services. These trials will get underway by the end of the year as part of the Newman government's six-month action plan.

The allocation of \$1 million in capital funding this financial year will enable us to deliver a new child safe house on Thursday Island which will provide support and protection to Indigenous children in the child protection system. Safe houses provide a residential care service for at-risk youth while their protection needs are being assessed and keep children connected with their communities and in the care of people familiar to them. This new safe house in the Torres Strait is part of a broader \$5.7 million commitment in 2012-13 to provide capital works to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are also delivering for children from regional and remote areas with \$500,000 to provide a telephone support line providing around-the-clock counselling. A further \$1 million will also help increase counselling services for victims of child abuse and sexual assault. Importantly, the Carmody commission of inquiry, which is currently underway, will help this government chart a road map for child protection in Queensland over the next decade. We are serious about strengthening families and protecting children.

Our Caring for our Community small grants program will deliver support to our hardworking community and volunteer organisations. These grants, of up to \$5,000 for small equipment like computers and up to \$15,000 for more significant equipment, will help us strengthen our outstanding community organisations through a process that does not involve onerous paperwork. We are anticipating that around 600 grants will be made over the three years of this program and I am sure this will be welcomed by members on both sides of the House.

We are also continuing to support some of the most vulnerable in our communities with vital front-line services in the social inclusion area. In 2012-13 funding of over \$12.4 million has been allocated for youth at risk and youth support programs; \$770,000 has been provided to Foodbank Queensland; we are investing \$10.2 million for new multipurpose and community centres; and another \$5.9 million in grants for additional multipurpose and community centres.

I have outlined some of the highlights in this budget that will benefit Queensland in my portfolio areas. We will continue to fund a range of services to assist those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people affected by domestic and family violence, our wonderful seniors and, of course, we will continue to support Queensland's outstanding volunteers. But I would like to turn my attention now to home soil, the Aspley electorate. In past budget speeches I often pointed out that Aspley did not get its fair share under the former Labor government so I am delighted to stand here today announcing a number of projects and initiatives that are set to benefit my local community. I am very excited that residents are finally going to see the results from the construction of a rail overpass at Telegraph Road. I know the member for Sandgate shares my enthusiasm, as does the member for Nudgee whose electorate will also see the benefits of similar infrastructure in Geebung. The Newman government is making a positive difference to lower the cost of living for families and enhance opportunities for small businesses to grow. We will be saving average families up to \$120 on their annual electricity bill, freezing family car registrations for more than 2.5 million vehicles, many of which are in the Aspley electorate, and halving the public transport fare increases in South-East Queensland in 2013 and 2014. What is more, we are investing \$92 million to provide an \$80 rebate on domestic water connections in South-East Queensland. We know the value of helping families make every dollar count.

On top of that, our \$92 million Mums and Bubs program will provide for maternal and child health service providers to support parents of newborns. Home visits following the birth of a new child will give parents adapting to life with a newborn access to health and parenting advice in the comfort of their own home. This is a great initiative that young families in my electorate will be able to take advantage of and certainly assists with the rollout of the Parent Connect initiatives within the Department of Disability Services.

Aspley has a vibrant small business community and the 2012-13 budget delivers for them. Local businesses will benefit from increasing the payroll tax threshold. The budget also delivers great news for the construction industry with first home owner \$15,000 construction grants available for people wanting to build in my local area. Furthermore, local schools in my electorate will benefit from the government's Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund as well as other capital works projects. Aspley Special School will receive \$2.28 million under the Department of Education's capital works program and will also receive iPads as part of our commitment to enhance e-learning opportunities for special needs students across the state.

The 2012-13 Queensland state budget is the most important in a generation and will free Queensland from a future of debt and decline. It is about getting our state back on track and delivering for those in need. That is precisely what it does. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (8.46 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012. I congratulate the Treasurer on delivering the budget that he has delivered in extremely challenging circumstances and environment. I believe that this budget is a budget of courage, one that is responsible and one that is necessary. Unfortunately for some, it has come at a cost. I have a great deal of empathy for those public sector workers who have been retrenched. A number of them have made representations to me in the past few weeks and I do express my sympathy to them and understand the pain that they are going through. Although I understand their hurt and their anger, I do ask them to divert their anger towards those who were responsible for this and not shoot the messenger. I am confident that we will build an economy that in the very near future will provide them with employment.

Mr Crandon: One door closes and another door opens.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. I totally agree with that. This budget delivers some great benefits to the electorate of Everton. It was very apparent during the election campaign, and was the message that we were hearing every day, that the greatest concern for people in the electorate of Everton was the rising cost of living. I am very pleased to say that this budget does not impose one extra tax burden on Queensland householders. In this current environment that is something that is worth celebrating. In fact, the budget does more than that, it is delivering savings which will help everyday families in the electorate of Everton save money and lower their cost of living.

There is the rebate of \$80 per household for water connections. Car registration fees have been frozen, as we all know. The standard electricity tariff 11 has been frozen, saving at least \$120 on annual bills. Of course, there has been the reinstatement of the principal place of residence concessional rate for stamp duty, saving Queenslanders up to \$7,175 when buying a family home. We are halving the public transport increases that were due in 2013 and 2014. They were due at 15 per cent but now will be seven and a half per cent. All those things will affect the residents in Everton and bring them some relief from the rising cost of living. We are trying to stimulate the construction side of the economy, which is one of our four pillars, by increasing the first home owner's grant for new homes from \$7,000 to \$15,000. No duty is payable on new house purchases, which is another great boon for first homebuyers.

The budget has some great initiatives for schools in the electorate of Everton. For some time the P&C at Albany Creek State High School has been very concerned about safety outside the school, as every day students have to cross a very busy road without a pedestrian crossing or lights. In this budget we will deliver flashing pedestrian lights within the next six months. I am very happy to be able to announce that and I know that the school is happy about that as well. One of the most exciting initiatives in this budget is the granting of up to \$160,000 to state school P&Cs to assist in school maintenance. That has been welcomed in my electorate. In fact, principals and P&C association presidents have told me how excited they are about this new initiative. It is a chance to cut through the red tape. It is also a chance to stimulate the economy by using local tradesmen and service providers, if that is appropriate.

Mr Crandon: How many schools do you have?

Mr MANDER: There are 15 schools, including eight very good state schools. A number of speakers have already spoken about this, but I also wish to register my disgust at the comments made by Kevin Bates, the head of the Queensland Teachers Union, criticising the hard-working volunteers of P&C associations. His comment that there may be a conflict of interest, that they may work in some way against the best interests of the school, is an absolutely disgraceful comment to make. Obviously, he has not been to a P&C meeting. Obviously, he does not realise that members of his own union attend those P&C meetings. I hope that the opposition will publicly distance themselves from the disgraceful remarks made by this man, who obviously has no idea.

Still under the category of schools, I am delighted to be able to say that \$500,000 has been allocated to the Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre. We are very fortunate to have a state forest in the middle of the electorate. I describe it as the lung of the electorate. Within that state forest is an education centre where hundreds and hundreds of school kids come every year to learn about the environment and natural fauna and flora. I thank the Treasurer for allocating \$500,000 to improve the facilities of that centre.

Chaplaincy funding is very dear to my heart, as for six years I was the CEO of SU Queensland, which is the organisation that supplies over 500 chaplains throughout schools in this state. It is great to see the LNP state government supporting chaplains in our schools. I know that chaplaincy committees in my electorate will be very happy about that funding.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Members, there is a low roar in the House that is competing with the speaker. I ask members to keep their conversations to a lower level.

Mr MANDER: Under public transport, we are very excited to be part of the trial of trains travelling every 15 minutes on the Ferny Grove line, which runs through the middle of my electorate, in off-peak times Monday to Friday. That was very well received during the campaign. There will be no need for timetables. People will be able to turn up at the station and know that they will never have to wait more than 15 minutes. That is a fantastic initiative. Of course, on the TransLink network the free travel after nine journeys in a Monday to Sunday week restores something that commuters had been used to for many years. Those great initiatives were very welcomed.

As the Assistant Minister for Sport and Racing, I am very excited about the initiatives that will be happening in each electorate very soon. Grants of \$150 per child will be given to eligible families to assist them with paying sporting club fees. Local sports clubs will be eligible for grants of up to \$10,000 for equipment and the things that may help attract children to their sporting clubs. Infrastructure grants of up to \$100,000 will help to improve the facilities of our local sporting clubs. Sporting clubs are holding their breath with anticipation; they cannot wait for the initiatives, which we will hear more about in a week or two. I am happy to announce the confirmation of \$160,000 in funding for lights at the Pine Hills Football Club. That club sits in my electorate, but borders the electorate of Ferny Grove. The member for Ferny Grove and I are very grateful for that funding.

The budget contains many great initiatives that support the electorate of Everton. This budget provides an alternative vision for Queenslanders, an alternative to what would otherwise have been provided by those opposite. Today we heard from the opposition leader a response that was full of platitudes and fanciful propositions. The opposition leader spoke about providing job security for public servants, but—wait for it—in consultation with the unions. It would not be in consultation; it would be dictated by, instructed by and controlled by unions, which represent no more than 19 per cent of the workforce.

Mr Johnson: They will never learn, will they?

Mr MANDER: They will never learn, that is exactly right. The opposition leader also spoke about the low-cost programs that they ran. The problem is that they ran hundreds of programs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, as I said before, please keep the conversations to a lower level so that you are not competing with the speaker.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am not used to people competing with me when I speak. I never tolerated that on the football field. Today the opposition leader spoke about the low-cost programs that they ran, but the problem was that they ran hundreds of them. They were not worried about the combined cost of those programs. They were not worried that they were not costed. Just because something is a good idea does not mean that it should be implemented if it cannot be costed. My family thinks it is a great idea to go on holiday to Hawaii each year, but we cannot afford it so we do not do it. This is a budget that will get Queensland back on track, this is a budget that will create an environment for future growth and this is a budget that the state of Queensland required. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr KING (Cairns—LNP) (8.57 pm): It is an honour to rise in this place to contribute to the discussion on the 2012 state budget, which is without question the most important budget in a generation. The Cairns community was braced for a tough budget because of the torrid fiscal environment our government found itself entering on 24 March this year. Despite the financial rack and ruin we inherited, our government's inaugural budget has delivered a strategic and exciting combination of grassroots initiatives, reform and projects that will stimulate our regional economy and help families across our great city. The budget introduced measures that were long-overdue and managed to make limited funds stretch to all corners of our community and to those sectors most in need.

Leading up to the release of this budget, on numerous occasions I met with unions and public servants about our public sector reforms and I acknowledge and apologise for the distress this process has caused, but we had no choice. Tough decisions and strong leadership were required to repair the damage done over almost two decades of Labor rule. Just this afternoon, global ratings agency Fitch confirmed our concerns about this debt and deficit legacy. In a statement issued today, Fitch said—

As a result of historically weak budget performance combined with large capital expenditure Queensland's debt has more than doubled in the last three years.

Queensland's debt matrix has weakened significantly and is no longer comparable with its international peers.

Negative rating action could occur should Queensland be unable to improve or stabilise its fiscal position over the next 3 or 4 years.

The newly elected state government has announced strong measures in its budget 2012/13 to restore Queensland's financial position, in particular, by achieving an operating surplus by the financial year ending 30 June 2014.

I would also like to point out that the Labor and union hype and hysteria in recent days and weeks by far exceeds the reality of the job losses on the ground in my electorate of Cairns. We must stabilise debt and we must regain our AAA credit rating. This budget shows that we have a set this state on that course. We have done the hard yards to reset the integrity of governance and the use of taxpayers' money for the benefit of all Queenslanders long into the future.

This inaugural budget of this government has brought many firsts for Cairns. For the first time, Cairns has been delivered a real commitment for our CBD, not gold plated, phantom promises that cannot be delivered but an affordable opportunity to deliver a revitalised Lake Street in our city's heart before the global spotlight shines on Cairns for the G20 meeting of finance ministers in late 2014. For the first time, real respect has been paid to our local SES heroes, with a contribution in this budget of \$1.3 million for a new SES headquarters after those volunteers have been forced to work from a building that is literally falling down around them.

For the first time in years, real focus has been paid to long-term economic growth opportunities, with \$2.5 million in this budget to start the process of opening up our port to larger ships, set to reap long-term economic benefits for our city's economy and help push our case for the expansion of HMAS *Cairns*. For the first time, a real commitment to fix the Bruce Highway was made, with \$1 billion over 10 years. The Bruce is the lifeblood of Far North Queensland and everyone in my part of the world waits with bated breath for the day the federal Labor government steps up to the mark and contributes funds to this National Highway.

Reinstatement of the stamp duty concession for homebuyers, coupled with the \$15,000 building incentive plus a low current rental vacancy rate of 2.1 per cent, means confidence in the housing market in Cairns is set to lift after years of stagnation. With apologies to my colleagues from Townsville, these measures mean that Cairns is simply the best place in Queensland to build a home right now.

For the first time in a very long time, there is renewed passion to unite and capitalise on this government's investment in aviation and its success in attracting China Southern and China Eastern flights to Cairns. With a range of partners, our government has brought these flights to us, and the Cairns community is working as one to keep them coming over the long term.

For the first time in a long time, local people in Cairns are being empowered to make local decisions. Our \$200 million school maintenance fund will be accessible—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! There is too much noise in the chamber. I would like to hear the member for Cairns.

Mr KING: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Our \$200 million school maintenance fund will be accessible to all Cairns state schools for the first time, allowing school communities to choose for themselves the projects, the local tradies, builders and suppliers. Our fantastic new hospital board is administering \$3.7 million for the recruitment of extra specialists to revitalise front-line services as part of our government's \$15 million boost to specialist services at Cairns Base Hospital. A new centre for chronic disease prevention and care will be established with a budget announcement of \$850,000.

For the first time, our budget has recognised the disadvantaged suffered by patients in the massive Cairns Base Hospital catchment by doubling the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Many people travel long distances to Cairns or to bigger centres for specialised treatment. Financial relief for those people is now finally being provided in this budget.

For the very first time, law and order issues in our city have been seriously tackled by the allocation of \$500,000 for Operation Escalate, a police blitz on unruly behaviour in our CBD and surrounds. I sincerely thank and commend the Premier and the police minister for taking such decisive action on this longstanding problem. The addition of 13 full-time police will also continue this incredible work already done by our hardworking front-line police officers.

This budget also contains around \$17 million for disability services and capital works—an important investment to meet the needs of so many people and families in my electorate. Other important initiatives for Cairns include ongoing funding for the upgrade of Ray Jones Drive and the redevelopment of Cairns Base Hospital, the establishment of an AFL junior academy in Bungalow and the construction of two football fields at the Manunda sporting precinct. For the first time, this budget tackles cost-of-living pressures for families and red tape for business through measures such as freezing tariff 11, freezing car registration and lifting the payroll tax threshold for small to medium sized businesses.


In my role as the Assistant Minister for Tourism, I pay tribute to the tourism minister for her passion and dedication to meeting our government's target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure. Despite tough financial constraints, I know how hard the minister fought for a good deal for our tourism industry, and that hard work has resulted in a boost of \$20 million for a Tourism Investment Strategy focusing on emerging markets. Tourism is a vibrant, dynamic portfolio but it comes with significant challenges to turn around what has been an industry routinely ignored and treated with contempt by the former Labor government.

On the contrary, our government takes tourism very seriously, evidenced by our commitment to elevate this industry as one of our four economic pillars. We have held the DestinationQ forum in Cairns, a remarkable forum featuring some 300 industry players gathered for the first time in some two decades. The DestinationQ forum is still talked about to this day because it was not the normal talkfest that the industry had grown so tired of. It was a frenetic, working meeting with measurable outcomes and strategies mapped out and signed off at the end of the two-day event.

In my role as the assistant minister, I also chair the Tourism Backbench Working Group, a regular forum that meets during parliamentary sittings with my parliamentary colleagues. We have many goals and tasks and we will act as the eyes and ears of tourism right across this state to identify potential projects and the roadblocks they have for so long encountered.

In parallel to our government's legislative measures and the release of our first budget, for the very first time in a long time there are green shoots of economic recovery emerging in Cairns. In recent weeks and months I have spoken to businesses of all shapes and sizes who are reporting some of their best and brightest trade for many, many years. These businesses, from Allsigns Print & Design through to Cairns Airport, tell me that confidence is once again returning to Cairns, that there is a pulse again, a buzz in the air. While times are still tough and unemployment still high, I firmly believe that Cairns is on the way up once again, that our horizon is bright.

This budget draws a line in the sand. It sets Cairns and Queensland on a new path to prosperity. I sincerely congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier and all cabinet ministers for the incredible task they set and for the incredible results they have delivered in this budget. I am incredibly honoured to represent the people of Cairns and I know this budget is just the start of helping my community reach new heights as the gateway to the Asia Pacific region and the tropical jewel of Queensland. I commend this budget and the bill to the House.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (9.09 pm): I rise to make my contribution in the budget debate. Before I progress to some of the substantive concerns that I hold regarding this budget, I thought it might be useful for the House to appreciate the circumstances that led to me becoming a member of the Australian Labor Party, particularly in light of the Premier's comments this week reflecting on his surprise that I had ended up in the party. My story is entirely relevant to this debate because of the circumstances that I found myself in some 16 years ago when a tory government replaced a long-serving, progressive federal Labor administration.

In 1996, I held the position of Army base commander in Central Queensland. It was when the Howard government was elected and, shortly thereafter, my unit, made up of military and civilian staff, made a very substantial contribution to the reinvigoration of the US training presence in Australia. Through nothing short of extraordinary effort, the people of that unit made commended efforts. Loyalty goes both ways and that is why I found it so difficult when, hardly had that success concluded in 1997, the Howard government announced that it was outsourcing the vast majority of what I would describe as base support functions within the ADF.

This defence reform program never returned one dollar in a thousand days of destruction, pain and grief. In simple terms, the various support functions delivered on military bases were gradually put to the market and in most cases put to large multinational service providers. The reality was that there were no actual savings delivered and, in fact, in the medium term, the cost drivers were grossly in excess of the model that it superseded. It was only later that I realised that this large-scale outsourcing within the military services had nothing to do with efficiency and everything to do with neo-liberal, free market fundamentalism—pure ideology. So it was this process and the gross inefficiency associated with it, particularly the waste and service failure that followed, that made me really start to question what was going on in conservative politics.

Mr Young interjected.

Mr BYRNE: No, I am talking about a Howard government. But then the tipping point for me was the manner in which long-serving public sector employees were treated—the way in which people who had worked for two to three decades in their particular skill areas delivering outstanding service were simply disregarded by their employer. Does that sound familiar to anyone here? This experience turned me into a crusader against the right wing, free market rationalism that has corrupted most of the Western Anglo democracies.

When I left the Army, I decided I would join the Australian Labor Party in order to fight against conservative politics in this country. Everything that I have seen from this LNP government has validated

that decision. With this budget, all has been predictably revealed. This budget has affirmed my decision to join a genuine progressive party and fight against what I consider to be the forces of economic darkness and ruination of the social fabric. So, for the record, I would cut my arm off before I would ever cross the floor to vote with a bunch of Tories. Lyndon Baines Johnson once said—

Did you ever think that making a speech on economics is a lot like pissing down your leg? It seems hot to you, but it never does to anyone else.

Frankly, it is about time the community started to hear some sense regarding the true state of Queensland's fiscal position and the Queensland economy. The mantra associated with this budget proves that the task is well beyond this government. Over the last six months, I have sat in this chamber and listened to what I can only describe as neo-liberal mantra. I have sat back and listened to these Chicken Little approaches to economics. This government has not once talked about how it is going to grow or stimulate the Queensland economy. All we hear is sensationalist nonsense, parallels with the Spanish economy, falling into the abyss, being in darkened canyons and the like. Queenslanders have every right to question the purpose of this total misrepresentation of the state's economy and fiscal position.

Even life members of the LNP are highly critical of this government's approach. Clive Palmer is on the record as saying—

I just think the emphasis is wrong, when we say we are going to get economic benefits from just sacking people. I don't think it's that simple. I could dismiss all my employees, I don't think I'd get more revenue or money by doing this.

He went on to say—

We also don't like the idea where we got a whole government policy which relies on cutting and putting people out of work. It will be a very sad Christmas were 4000 people who have been dismissed from the government, and another 16,000 to go.

Government members interjected.

Mr BYRNE: Of course how could I overlook Mr Palmer's insightful commentary on *Lateline*. Here are a few treasures—which I am sure you are all absorbing enormously—from an LNP life member and major donor, and they should resonate with every LNP backbencher here howling in the background. This is what he said—

This is what Campbell Newman is good at. Putting people out of work.

When referring to the Premier, he said—

He's got no experience in business.

When referring to the government mantra, he said—

How you get this state going is by having confidence, doing quick approvals ... getting investment ... You've got to have a positive go-forward, not a negative wind-down. This guy can only look at his navel.

But, yes, there is more. When talking about the actions of the Queensland government, he said—

It's a disgrace, what's happening in this state.

Mr Palmer said—

We're a decentralised state, but we brought a Victorian in to tell us how we should run our state. He wasn't elected and all he could say was that we have got more public servants per capita than Victoria.

Mr Palmer went on and said—

That's been the case since Federation. There's no great news about that ... We've got to provide those services across a great geographical area. And yet this guy wants to come in, sack people, so there's a decline in services, so people get unemployed and there's no money in the economy.

And the coup de grace—

For god's sake, get some advice from an economist, not from an ex-barrister or someone like that. But is this what it's really about, or is he playing politics with the people of Queensland?

Well, I could not have put it better myself. I am starting to see Mr Palmer in an entirely different light. When taken as a whole, the Queensland economy is in excellent shape due to Labor's management. The state's physical position is generally sound and any suggestion otherwise constitutes economic buffoonery.

There is no massive debt crisis in Queensland, with Standard & Poor's on the record as saying that Queensland has a far lower level of general government debt relative to operating revenue compared with its international peers. So this entire debt mantra from this government is nothing more than spin for the purpose of creating fear and anguish in the community. It is a crusade to justify the destruction of the public sector and the eventual sale of assets. The really amazing piece in all of this is that this government actually believes Queenslanders are stupid enough to accept their exaggerated, low-road, self-serving statements. Queenslanders are witnessing an ultraconservative government applying a rabid and absolutist economic rationale. That is what this budget represents.

Let me move to those elements of the budget that have actually attracted my attention. As Queensland headed towards the 2012 election, the LNP proclaimed that they would deliver safer communities. How many times did we hear the mantra 'tough on crime'? The proof will be in the pudding; however, just for one moment let us recognise that most police services around the world have

two essential priorities—firstly, reduce crime and, secondly, reduce the fear of crime. This government seems to spend an inordinate amount of time looking in the rear vision mirror blaming the previous government. Leading up to the last election campaign, it served the LNP's interests to whip up fear of crime in our communities, and whipping up fear is a methodology preferred by this government.

But allow me to reflect on the accepted measures of reducing crime so that the members of this House understand history and Labor's positive legacy. It is irrefutable that the former Labor government delivered over 3,800 extra police above attrition as well as actually reducing crime. A comparison for the decade between 2001 and 2011 speaks for itself: there was a 30 per cent decrease in the overall crime rate in those 10 years, there was a 25 per cent decrease in offences against the person in the same period and there was a 46 per cent decrease in offences against property in that decade. I will enjoy testing this budget's implementation in contrast to that record.

This LNP government promised the Gold Coast an illegal firearms squad and a permanent major and organised crime squad. Ten of the LNP candidates signed a contract with the Gold Coast promising both squads. What has been announced in this budget is a \$1.1 million investment to establish a major and organised crime squad on the Gold Coast incorporating an illegal firearms team. Incorporating the two and not providing adequate staff to form an illegal firearms squad means that there is one fewer squad of detectives for the people of the Gold Coast, which is a clear breach of the contract. Why would Queenslanders ever enter into a contract with the LNP again when it is so clearly willing to breach the conditions of this contract?

The government has also promised \$1.1 million for the new incorporated squad. How far will that go when you consider that, among other things, it will need a new operational base of some description, vehicles and wages and there will be operational costs of targeting organised criminals and bikies gangs? What a con job! It is tough talk delivering little to the people of the Gold Coast who might also add the loss of the Burleigh Police Beat as a result of these budget cuts. I am prepared to bet that the LNP—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Members on my right, the speaker is not taking interjections.

Mr BYRNE: There are too many. I am prepared to bet that the LNP members of the Gold Coast are not even aware of the implications of this budget and certainly are unable to stand up for their region.

Let me move to the issue of alcohol related violence in entertainment precincts. The previous Labor government understood that alcohol related violence in our entertainment precincts was a substantial problem. The Drink Safe trial was funded in 2011-12 for \$3.1 million.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, please cease interjecting.

Mr BYRNE: That money provided a number of measures and extra police and the program has been a success in protecting the community. The LNP essentially inherited a good program. What has it done with it? Government members have obviously sat around in their office meetings working out how to cut worthwhile programs by providing only \$1.5 million.

Let us move to the Department of Community Safety. The cuts in the budget are over 300 jobs. Let us be honest; we are talking about ambulance officers, firies, custodial officers and numerous other staff members who assist the operation of the department. They are genuine heroes in the eyes of our community. This government has delivered a budget cut of \$164 million. The true impact of these cuts is yet to be seen, but I believe the likely impacts will include reducing the training of our rural firefighters, and what an exhibition we have seen since the budget was handed down and the piddling incompetence of the minister has been revealed to all. Only a couple of days ago this government was talking about a reduction of 57 per cent in rural operations in uniform positions in the Rural Fire Service in Queensland. The government did not consult with local members about any of that reduction, and guess what? They were not too happy. The member for Gregory described it as one of the biggest blips he has ever seen in this life.

Mr CRANDON: I rise to a point of order. What does this have to do with the debate on the bill and the budget? What does it have to do with Rockhampton? He has not talked about Rockhampton.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you taking a point of order on relevance, member for Coomera?

Mr CRANDON: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, there is no point of order on relevance.

Mr BYRNE: The government did not consult with local members about any of that reduction, and guess what? They were not happy. The member for Gregory described it as one of the biggest blips he had ever seen in his life. In less than 24 hours we have witnessed the minister bouncing off the walls, avoiding the media and talking about conducting consultation over the next six months before he comes

up with a plan. I have one simple question: what has he been doing for the last six months? This incident reveals the ineptitude of the budget construct. The destruction of morale within the rural operations of the uniformed element of the Rural Fire Brigade could not be more severe in advance of one of the most threatening fire seasons. Well done, Minister! Excellent leadership!


Likely other impacts may also include reducing prisoner training and work experience in industry, which teaches the value of work and provides real education and training so that prisoners are actually rehabilitated; interrupted meal breaks for ambulance officers; and social workers in prisons being cut. These professionals work with prisoners so that custodial officers can work in a safer environment and, upon release, prisoners are less violent in the community. Prisoners are being locked up for longer periods of the day with fewer activities to participate in so that rosters can be changed. The closure of whole jails affecting regional communities is also part of this budget. I have even heard that social workers involved in educating children to try to prevent them from lighting fires are not even immune from these cuts.

What difference has this budget actually made? How many families will be stressed tonight about how they are going to pay their mortgages or their rent, feed their children and send them to school? What additional strains will be placed on the resources of our emergency services and the police due to the circumstances created by this government? Domestic violence and mental health statistics, although largely hidden, will be interesting measurements of the pain caused by this budget. No amount of crocodile tears or feigned compassion will change the essence of this budget.

What about new spending? This government has managed to find additional money in the budget to fund something very important to them, and guess what it is? I can inform the House that it is an additional \$30 million, and it would have been great if one of the ministers had fronted the community sector workers outside the parliament the other day to talk about that money. After all, this money could have been put to use to look after the people affected; it may have even saved some jobs. But guess what this \$30 million is to buy? More speed cameras and red-light cameras—blatant revenue raising! 'Ho, ho!', I hear around the chamber. 'This is all about increasing road safety,' they say. But, unfortunately, there is no other measure in the budget that could be attributed to increases in education or emphasis on road safety, and I can promise one thing: that \$30 million will generate a lot more revenue than \$30 million. It looks like we will have more operational police sitting in speed camera vans generating revenue for this government. What a misuse of operational police in what is only a dash for cash!

Let me turn to some of the justice issues in this budget. Before the last election the government announced a policy to introduce an offender levy. In that policy document the levy was directed towards a significant front-line police boost as well as supporting more services for victims of serious crime. The budget document indicates that the offender levy will bring in \$10 million this year and \$15 million for each of the next three years. There was also an education commitment to revitalise front-line justice services and empower victims of crime with \$1 million promised this year and \$1.5 million in the following two years. Yet the budget documents show that the money promised has not been delivered. Victims of crime support has been allocated half a million dollars each year in the forward estimates. So in spite of being promised big things before the election, despite passing legislation to collect the levy and pay the promise, and despite member after member opposite speaking during the debate on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, the victims of crime have been let down by this government's first real test of its commitment to this vulnerable group of Queenslanders.

I could talk more about QBuild which, of course, has been slaughtered by this government, but I will leave that for another day—perhaps estimates. I will say that this budget certainly lays down a once-in-a-generation foundation. This is a foundation for a one-term-or-less Premier and a one-term government. I look forward to watching this disgraceful budget unravel. Finally, it is great to see rating agencies' ringing endorsement of this budget!

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (9.29 pm): I rise to express my support for the most important Queensland state budget in a generation—a budget for Queensland's future, a budget that makes the hard decisions now, a budget which finally brings to an end the legacy of a Queensland government which was addicted to debt and deficit and a cycle of tax and spend. This budget sets Queensland's finances on the road to fiscal repair—a budget that delivers on our key election commitments: to lower the cost of living, to revitalise front-line services and to grow a four-pillar economy. And, critically, we set ourselves on the path to the restoration of the state's AAA credit rating.

This budget will deliver a reduction in interest expense payments by a staggering \$1.3 billion over the forward estimates, allowing this government in the years ahead to deliver services that Queensland actually needs—the schools, the roads, the hospitals, the police, the teachers and the nurses.

As was the case for many of my colleagues, the single most consistent message I heard from the electorate was, 'Get in there, fix the mess and assist with cost-of-living pressures.' I heard that message every day that I campaigned, from New Farm to Windsor and right across the electorate. Not surprisingly—and as has just been demonstrated by the member for Rockhampton—those who sit opposite and their former colleagues did not hear that message. They were busy taking Queensland's

finances through unsustainable levels of spending and through unprecedented levels of debt. They did not deny during the campaign that the state's debt was heading towards \$85 billion. But now in opposition, these debt and deficit deniers are attempting to hoodwink the people of Queensland, throwing their arms in the air and claiming, 'Debt? What debt?' What more can we expect from the party whose primary interest is in the retention of power and whose belief in democracy is limited to the times in which they hold government?

We inherited an unsustainable financial position from Labor which not only were we compelled to correct; we were given a mandate from the people of Queensland to do so. The Treasurer has made that necessary correction and has also provided some important initiatives for Queensland and for the people of Brisbane Central. This budget has portrayed a clear commitment to lowering the cost of living for Queenslanders and to investing in genuine front-line service delivery. There is a continued commitment to find new ways to deliver services in a more effective and efficient manner. It is a budget that honours our pledge to restore accountability in government, and Queenslanders expect nothing less. The budget outlines a program focused on our small business operators, health service providers and regional Queenslanders and, importantly, holds some key initiatives for the businesses, schools and residents of Brisbane Central.

Mr Ruthenberg: Working families indeed.

Mr CAVALLUCCI: Indeed. Some of the highlights for my electorate include: addressing the much needed and welcome redevelopment of the ambulance station and emergency services complex in Spring Hill with an allocation of \$2 million towards the project. With the tragic reality that an additional 2,000 people have joined the waiting list for public housing in recent times, an allocation of \$1.67 million for the construction of a now almost complete public housing building, to be received by the Brisbane Housing Co. for the completion of construction of 31 units in Windsor, is welcome. These are much needed public housing units and they assist Minister Flegg in achieving real outcomes in this important area, which was losing \$1 million a fortnight. In order to cover these losses, the incompetent former government actually reduced the public housing stock by selling 200 homes.

A sum of \$65,000 has been allocated to the Brisbane City Football Club after it had suffered a succession of flood events at their Newmarket playing fields and facilities. Additionally, \$50,000 of funding to the Sport and Recreation Active Inclusion Program is being provided for improved opportunities for Queenslanders with a disability. There is also an allocation for an improvement at the Perry Park sports precinct at Bowen Hills, with nearly \$300,000 going towards supporting the football facilities and changing room facilities.

Home Assist Secure Services in Brisbane Central has been allocated over \$200,000 for important assistance for those older residents or residents with disabilities who seek assistance for practical household related difficulties or necessary minor maintenance assistance while they remain to live in their own homes.

Importantly for the Fortitude Valley entertainment precinct, this budget allocates funds for the extension of the trial of the Drink Safe Precinct until March 2013, aiming at outcomes that curb alcohol related violence and other related problems.

An allocation of \$3.4 million to the North Brisbane Cycleway that includes some specific priority areas in the Windsor area is a great boost to provide safe cycling routes between central areas and the northern suburbs. This will clearly result in healthier residents in Brisbane Central and less congestion on our roads.


With further allocations exceeding \$20 million covering necessary capital funding for improvements in Energex network capacity and substation improvements, \$46 million for the completion of the Supreme and District courts building, signage for recreational areas and upgrades to some social housing properties, this budget has been a genuine plus for Brisbane Central residents.

I fought hard for and am personally pleased to confirm that my further election commitments have been met through the allocation of \$10,000 towards the Jeays Street Community Garden and the allocation of funding towards flashing variable speed limit signs in the Windsor State School zone.

A real highlight of this budget is the Treasurer's announcement of the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund. Although I had often heard of the neglect that was occurring in some of the very basic and long-overdue maintenance requests for Brisbane Central schools, it was not until I became the member and gained further access to those schools and the hardworking committee members and staff behind them that I realised the true state of neglect. As just one example, no longer will teaching staff have to stand with umbrellas at classroom entrances to protect kids every time it rains because water leaks into hallway areas. I do not resent from my genuine disgust at the lack of attention to issues such as this by the former member—and examples like this are prolific, with each and every school and across the electorate. And they have existed for years; they did not occur in the last five months. I am determined to fix these issues and am currently working with P&Cs to chart a course through this process. I am grateful to the Treasurer and the education minister for recognising these important issues.

I think this initiative is something the P&Cs of my electorate have been calling for for many years. It provides them with certainty, and it provides for the completion and execution of repairs in a fashion that suits the schools and the community alike. I would like to add that I find it absolutely abhorrent that those associated with the opposition treat parents and communities with such disdain and insinuate that communities will use this opportunity to pilfer the funds. It just goes to show what truly runs through their minds.

The Treasurer has made it clear through this budget that fixing the state's finances, addressing waste and stabilising our debt position were imperative factors to ensuring Queensland gets back on track. This budget provides confidence for Queensland families and businesses. As the Treasurer, the Premier and many of my colleagues who have spoken before me have detailed, it addresses cost-of-living issues, delivers better health services, provides for people with disabilities and, as I highlighted earlier, reinvests in our schools. It delivers on our election commitments, it provides the direction that Queenslanders were looking for and it delivers a brighter future for all Queenslanders. I commend the budget and the hard work of the Treasurer. Queensland is getting back on track and back in the black.

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.37 pm): It certainly has been a very challenging period of time, and some very tough decisions have had to be made to actually address systemic neglect by our predecessors, the former Bligh Labor government. There is no doubt that some of these decisions just had to be made. There is no way the Queensland government could continue to live in a cocoon. However, those opposite continue to believe that the whole world just wafts on around them and that fundamental change never has to occur.

I listened to the contribution of the honourable Leader of the Opposition earlier today. I was waiting to hear her vision and how she would go about addressing some of these systemic and endemic problems which underlie Queensland's fiscal situation, but I heard absolutely nothing about that. One could be forgiven for thinking that it is the same, old 'Labor-nomics' that we have always seen and grown accustomed to in Queensland—that is, there would be some sort of magic pudding, money tree or pot of gold at the end of a rainbow somewhere. We all know that those things are fictitious; they just do not exist. The Leader of the Opposition, rather than giving us a vision statement about where she would make changes, basically said, 'Labor would have kept all of the public servants, kept everything that was fantastic and great, and not put the state into any more debt.'

We saw a lot of that principally over the last seven or eight years of the previous government, and that is why Queensland is in this situation. The most galling thing was the Leader of the Opposition trying to attribute the factored in \$20 billion worth of borrowings of the previous Labor government to the Newman LNP government. That is one of the most galling things that I have ever heard. Those levels of borrowings were actually factored in based around what were projected levels of expenditure principally around capital works and debt servicing which had been laid down under the previous Labor government in Queensland. As the Treasurer indicated when he brought down what was an extremely comprehensive, energetic and well-thought-out plan for the future of Queensland—indeed, the most important budget in a generation—he clearly enunciated the steps that the LNP government needs to go through as a process of fiscal repair so that we can not only ensure we have an operational surplus but also a fiscal surplus, and that means that we need to change the way that we are spending in Queensland and the way we attribute further spending with regard to our projections.

This has been a very difficult task. This is the sort of task that conservative governments always have to take. Labor has debt in its DNA and conservative governments by their very nature are better managers and have to deal with these difficult fiscal challenges. Unfortunately, that means that there has to be some degree of consequence for those actions. More particularly, it is extremely instructive to look at what I inherited in the Health portfolio. It was an absolutely unbelievable bonanza of bungling and mismanagement when I got briefing notes on day one. I just could not believe the level of incompetence. We all knew the sorts of things that were happening under the former Labor government—things such as fake Tahitian princes. Wasn't that a doozy? When I asked for a list of consolidated grants so that I could try to get a handle on that, I was told by a departmental officer, 'But, Minister, no minister's actually asked for this for 10 years.' That is the sort of hands-free government we had under Labor in Queensland.

Let us look at the payroll bungle. When I became minister there was a superbrief sitting on my desk which was available to the previous government that said that this issue that started off in its early gestational period as a \$6 million contract was growing into a \$1.25 billion Frankenstein—somewhat unbeknownst to members of the previous Labor government but sitting there on my desk! Maybe they just could not read. Maybe they were just too scared. Maybe they were running around like ostriches with their heads in the sand. Maybe they were just realising that political death was coming to them and they did not need to do anything about grappling with those sorts of issues.

Then there is the fact that the Queensland Health budget was \$130 million in the red with three months to go, and this was another deficit budget that we were facing after 12 previous deficit budgets. This is the hallmark of Labor. As Margaret Thatcher said, socialism is an absolutely fantastic idea until you run out of everyone else's money. Tonight the honourable member for Rockhampton was rallying

his socialist verbosity against the Tories. The simple reality is that he needs to look at what we have inherited in Queensland and the difficult steps that we need to take, and there is no such thing as the socialist utopia which he marinates himself in. It just does not exist, as much as he would like to think it exists out there in the real community! Despite the fact that the hospital and health service districts throughout Queensland were given finite budgets, in the last couple of years the hospital and health service districts appointed more than 1,300 full-time equivalents over and above what their budget establishments were. How does that work in small business? How does that work in big business? How does that work in private enterprise? How does that work in general households? In the general community and private enterprise people tend to get the fact that they have to live within their means and if they do not then they go under as a consequence. That is what had been happening in Health for so many years and we have put some fiscal discipline around it.

If money equalled outcomes in health care, then we would have the best health system in all of the world. Throwing money at a problem does not fix a problem. I said numerous times in my previous iterations in this place on the other side that there are a number of things that would actually fix the health system in Queensland. One is money but the most crucial issue is management, and management had been missing for so long under our predecessors. We are determined to bring proper management to the way that health is actually delivered in the state of Queensland, and I make absolutely no excuses for it. The budget this year for Health in Queensland increases by over seven per cent. In previous years in Queensland it increased by up to 10 per cent or 11 per cent. Did we get 10 per cent or 11 per cent extra activity? Did we get 10 per cent or 11 per cent extra outcomes? No, we did not. What we saw was an increasing gap between expenditure and the amount of activity that we were seeing happening in health care in this state.

Honourable members opposite have been rallying around and we have seen Tanya Plibersek cartwheeling around. They had to drag Tanya Plibersek out the other day after I made some comments about the necessity for structural reform in Queensland Health because they could not find the Leader of the Opposition because she did not want to explain the great big black hole due to the payroll system—\$150 million! Tanya was carrying on about how dreadful it was and how there was this relative budget cut down from about 11 per cent to 7.4 per cent. In this year's federal budget papers federal Labor actually cut the budget to Health and Ageing in Australia, and where was Tanya Plibersek on Friday and where was Kevin Rudd today? Nowhere to be seen! In actual fact, what happened in this year's Department of Health and Ageing budget in Canberra was it also reduced the number of employees by two per cent. No-one heard anything about that, certainly not from the federal health minister and certainly not from Kevin Rudd.

What we have is a situation where in Queensland the LNP is having to make difficult financial decisions to pay for the privations and maladministration of previous Labor governments. In Canberra the current Labor government is having to make difficult financial decisions to pay for the privations and maladministration of itself! How bizarre is it? We have heard all sorts of things about cutting funding. The other day Wayne Swan was running around saying that we have to get rid of anywhere between 4,000 to 12,000 public servants in the out years between now and 2015-16. There was some concern expressed from honourable members opposite, but I am trying to put a level of accountability around our grant system in Queensland which has just runaway without any KPIs around a lot of it and without any real demonstrable outcomes for the services delivered. Yet the other day what was on the front page of the *Australian*? The federal government looking at cutting \$2 billion worth of grants—\$2 billion worth of grants. We did not hear anything from any of the honourable members opposite because that is all somewhere else. They say, 'Let's not look over there. Let's conveniently forget about the reality of what's being faced,' as we try to address not only the issue of health care but how we actually deliver those sorts of things in the future.

Let us look at healthcare expenditure over the forward years for Queensland. The Queensland budget will increase by around about 14 per cent. The Commonwealth is proposing around about 15.7 per cent. So whilst we have gone up significantly this year while the Commonwealth has gone down, we will flatten out and in a few years time they will catch up. Basically the level of expenditure is going to be almost on par if one goes into the out years. That really indicates the reality of what we are dealing with. If the Commonwealth wants to come and play in this space, then it also needs to be cognisant of the realities of what it is dealing with. When the people of Queensland voted on 24 March, they did not vote to keep Queensland Health the way it was. Indeed, I challenge honourable members opposite to stand up in this place and move a motion that the LNP should run Queensland Health exactly the way that the Beattie and Bligh governments did. I challenge them to stand up and do that. I challenge them to actually stand up and do that, because wouldn't that be a wonderful debate to have?

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The 'mouth of the south' stands up to justify how \$150 million is unfunded this year in the budget for the payroll. She thinks it is okay for it to disappear in the ether because it is not going to have an impact on how we run health care in Queensland! We did not hear anything from the Leader of the Opposition today about how she is going to fund that unfunded component—\$230 million this year when only \$79 million was funded this year by the previous government which

means \$150 million unfunded and \$537 million in the out years. Where is the money tree, where is the magic pudding, where is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow?

People voted for significant change, particularly in the running of Health. Even Anna Bligh said that she was going to take a wrecking ball to the public health system in Queensland. I am not quite sure how she was going to do that. One day she stood up in this place and said that she was going to tear it asunder and split it in two. We asked a question in this place as to why we would need to split Queensland Health in two. She said that one bureaucracy was not big enough anymore. That is the Labor Party and the way in which it operates. It also sent out 3,900 letters across the health department asking for expressions of interest from people to go—people it had identified. That just goes to show the hypocrisy of those members opposite.

At the last state election people voted for local management. We are carrying through and being true to national health reform. We are committed to that. We are going towards that devolution, which was started by the previous government as local hospital and health networks. But under us they will be boards. If members read what is in the national health agreement it says, in the signatures between Kevin Rudd and the previous Labor government and Julia Gillard and the previous Labor government, 'local area management with local hospital boards being in control of budgets and running the operational side of health care in Queensland.' They just do not get it.

We also have not heard a plan from those members opposite about how they are going to meet the national efficient price, which they signed up to. That shows quite demonstrably that Queensland is 11 per cent over and above the cost of the national efficient price and 30 per cent below Victoria. Before anyone says, 'But Victoria is smaller and less decentralised,' we have factored in our geographic issues in Queensland and also some of the socioeconomic issues. We have a 10 per cent loading in our favour for rural and remote areas and we have another six per cent loading for Indigenous patients.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: If the 'mouth from the south' was concerned about that, why did she sign up to that? We agree with the Commonwealth that that is the amount that we have to achieve over the next two years. There is no plan from the putative Leader of the Opposition about how she is going to do that. There is none whatsoever, as she sharpens the knife, sitting loyally behind the Leader of the Opposition.

The other issue they voted for was smaller management. The previous Labor government knew that. That is why it went down the path of the VSP program in Queensland. The corporate restructure, which I announced the other day, had its genesis in May of last year. Who was in office then? There was also the revitalisation of front-line services. This is about ensuring that our health services in Queensland are accessible, that they are affordable and that they are sustainable, because no-one wants to see that, in the year 2027, we will have half the Queensland budget consumed by the department of health alone. That is why we have to have innovation, evidence based medicine, cost-effectiveness and real clinician engagement and delivery of health services at a local level.

I am still waiting with bated breath—and I look forward to this—to hear how those honourable members opposite say how they would have funded the \$130 million black hole in Health this year as a consequence of being over budget in April of this year and also the net \$130 million for the cost of the Health payroll. We have factored that in and we are going to work hard to offset the other \$20 million of the \$150 million with regard to the recovery of overpaid wages. I look forward to hearing from the members opposite how everything can be retained without building further debt despite the Labor legacy of 12 years of overruns and budget deficits in health care in Queensland.

I turn now to some really positive things in the budget. Only recently the Premier and I announced an investment of \$106 million to ensure real social justice for front-line services for people who have to travel to access health services in Queensland through the doubling of the accommodation allowance from \$30 to \$60 and the doubling of the kilometric allowance from 15c to 30c. The accommodation allowance had not increased since 1987. This investment has been roundly applauded by the Cancer Council Queensland and the Leukaemia Foundation, where I was the other day with the honourable member for Greenslopes and the Premier out in his electorate.


There are also maternal and child health services to make sure that mums are able to present with their babies, have a home visit when their babies are at two and four weeks of age, and be able to attend at the services when their babies are at two, four, six and eight months of age and then at 12 months of age to provide mums with the opportunity to have the best care and support that they can receive at a very difficult time in their lives. It can be a very joyous time, but it can also be a very challenging time because of the extraordinary obligation that caring for an infant brings.

There is an increase in medical nursing and allied health staff on weekends to ensure that patients can be treated and discharged without unnecessary delays. Private providers will also be engaged to treat long-wait patients to reduce pressure on elective surgery. These are the sorts of things that we need to invest in more to be able to deliver those outcomes. An additional 40,000 specialist outpatient treatments will be provided to enable better access to specialist care. That is getting people off the waiting list to get on the waiting list. I understand that of only—and I say 'only' advisedly—40 per

cent of those people who go through their outpatient appointments and then need surgery, 60 per cent are able to be treated adequately through some alternative form of therapy, whether that be medication or physiotherapy. It is very important that we deal with those long waits in regard to outstanding outpatient appointments.

There are also additional funds for funding general practice liaison officers at 20 public hospitals to improve GP referral processes across Queensland, establishing a general practice advisory group to improve coordination and feedback between GPs and Queensland Health and establishing a mental health commission in Queensland based on the New South Wales model, which is similar to what is a very efficient model from New Zealand. There are a whole range of other initiatives with regard to enhanced bed management and addressing serious maintenance issues in about a dozen rural hospitals that have been neglected by the previous Labor government.

It is a challenging time, but it is a very exciting time in Queensland Health. I look forward to working with the innovation of Queensland Health clinical staff in making sure that we can deliver on these outcomes in the future.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (9.57 pm): Before I comment on the efforts of the Newman government and the Treasurer to get this state back on track with this budget and the benefits that will flow to the people of my electorate of Thuringowa, I wish to address those opposite who sit in the corners and who have chosen not to support a government that has a mandate given to them by the people of Queensland. Firstly, I refer to the two members who are fondly known as the members of the 'North West Queensland branch of the Labor Party', the member for Dalrymple and the member for Mount Isa. We did not hear from the member for Dalrymple when his leader went missing during the live cattle export ban debacle last year. That industry is a major player in North Queensland. The ban on live cattle exports meant that a huge part of the region's revenue was lost. I call on the member to support this state budget, which will not only help get Queensland back in the black but also ensure better front-line services to the regions. I refer now to the other Australian Party MP, the member for Mount Isa. His leader was also missing in action and made no representation for the northern region when it came to federal Labor's introduction of the carbon tax and the mining tax, which have a significant impact on the residents of his electorate. The mining industry brings in huge revenues that are needed to help reduce the state's deficit and debt. So I also call on the member for Mount Isa to support the budget.

I turn now to the opposition. We have a fine example of an MP, the member for Mackay, who sat in the cabinet of the previous government and agreed with the measures that led to the state being in debt. As part of his portfolio the member was responsible for the state's agricultural colleges. Thanks to his lack of economic responsibility, these colleges were run into the ground.

We then have the member for South Brisbane; let us not forget her. Here is another example of the attitudes of those in the corner when it comes to balancing state coffers which, after all, is what budgets are for, and her very silence on the Health payroll debacle, the \$6 million project that blew out to \$20 million by the time the gun went off and is still not fixed with the cost at \$1.25 billion.

Let us not forget the member for Inala, the Leader of the Opposition, for her part in this mess. The member wishes to hold back vital information that may help recoup some of the millions of dollars lost in her previous government's Health payroll debacle. Those opposite sitting in the corner should try for a change to get with the business like the rest of the state, which is getting behind a government that represents all Queensland, and support this budget.

We are all well aware of the sad truth that during the Labor government reign the state was living well beyond its means. However, the former Premier Anna Bligh and her ministers were quite oblivious to the fact that they were running this state into the ground. Let me refer back to the former Labor Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, who stated in his 2011-12 state budget speech—

This State Budget puts us right back where we belong—out in front.

It is a Budget fuelled by reconstruction, but defined by optimism and opportunity.

He then went on to say with conviction—

This State Budget continues our enduring task—to confront change with courage, to shape a better, fairer and more prosperous Queensland.

What a joke! They are simply words on paper if you do not follow through and deliver. Thanks to the former Labor Treasurer's budget we did not end up with a prosperous state but instead debt, a deficit blow-out and the loss of our AAA credit rating. The Commission of Audit interim report stated that urgent action was needed to stop Queensland's debt level reaching \$100 billion in 2018-19. The LNP government has been left to make the hard decisions to right the wrongs of the previous government. The LNP government has pledged to regain Queensland's AAA credit rating and fix the debt to secure a brighter future for our state. We are now in a position where the budget will record a surplus of \$652 million in 2014-15.

While delivering a budget that will achieve Queensland's surplus, we have also been able to deliver cost of living relief and invest in schools, hospitals and roads. Residents and families in my electorate of Thuringowa in North Queensland are set to reap the benefits of the Newman government's


first budget. They will benefit from freezes to car rego costs and electricity tariffs. First home buyers in Thuringowa will also welcome the offer for the first home buyers grant of \$15,000 if they buy a newly built home or one off the plan. This will also provide a much-needed boost to our local building industry. School communities and students can also look forward to the benefits of the new \$200 million Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund. I have already contacted my local state schools to deliver the good news that they will now have more power to decide how to fix urgent maintenance issues through this initiative. After years of neglect by Labor our schools have a number of maintenance issues that have become potential health and safety hazards. Parents and citizens organisations will be able to apply for up to \$160,000 per school to fix these maintenance issues, whether that be peeling paint, broken glass or guttering that is falling down.

The residents in North Queensland will also welcome the news of a significant investment in upgrading and expanding hospitals across the region. The Newman government has delivered on its pre-election commitment to establish paediatric intensive care services at the Townsville Hospital. We have allocated \$14.8 million over three years. The Queensland and federal governments have allocated \$58 million towards continuing works on the \$334 million Townsville Hospital expansion. The Newman government will also provide \$21 million for the new regional cancer centre at the Townsville Hospital. In my electorate, the Kirwan Health Campus has been allocated \$10 million for a six-bed child and youth unit and day centre.

North Queensland motorists will also welcome the news of a significant investment in our local roads and highways. The budget has delivered a \$415.6 million boost to improve the Bruce Highway. In 2012-13 we will upgrade the Bruce Highway between Sandy Corner and Collison's Lagoon south of Townsville. This \$50 million project will significantly improve flood immunity to this section of the Bruce Highway. We will provide \$18 million to fund the realignment of Dalrymple Road in Townsville. The project will include increased traffic lanes and replacing the current roundabout at Banfield Drive with traffic signals, which I am sure the people of Thuringowa will look forward to. We will allocate \$39.6 million for the expansion of berth 10 at the Townsville port, a very important part of North Queensland's economic future. The Newman government has also provided \$24 million towards the upgrade and fixing of Blakey's Crossing.

In regard to our commitment to improving social housing, we have allocated in the state budget \$456.5 million for capital works programs. There will be significant social housing upgrades in our northern region. Over \$6 million will be invested in upgrading social rental housing properties across the electorates of Thuringowa, Townsville, Hinchinbrook, Dalrymple and the Burdekin. Also in my electorate of Thuringowa there has been funding for local organisations to complete accommodation projects. Yumba-Meta Housing Association has been allocated \$506,000 to complete construction of 16 units in Deeragun. We have also allocated more than \$300,000 to Spinal Cord Injuries Response to go towards a purpose-built dwelling in Kirwan. And \$56,000 has been allocated to the Baptist Union of Queensland to complete construction of 12 units in Kirwan.

This is a state budget that has delivered cost-of-living relief but in doing so we have not introduced one single tax to families. We have saved taxing every man, woman and child about \$1,000; saved a family of five \$5,000. The budget brings together the plan we went to the people of Queensland at the election with. What other alternative is there? None. Labor would have continued on the path to even more debt that could reach \$100 million by 2017-18 if we do not get Queensland back in the black. The Newman government has made the tough decisions to halt the state's slide into more debt and deficit. With this state budget we can now look forward to securing a brighter future for Queensland and may be able to return our AAA credit rating by the end of our term. Saving \$100 million a year once we get back on track means we can spend more on hospital beds, teachers, police and new infrastructure. With this budget and the LNP's plan for economic recovery through the four pillars—construction, mining and resources, tourism and agriculture—we will see Thuringowa and Townsville booming again. With my four colleagues, the members for Townsville, Mundingburra, Hinchinbrook and Burdekin, and the good people of Thuringowa I look forward to keeping our region the envy of the state. I commend the budget to the House.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (10.07 pm): I am pleased to talk to the 2012 budget to bring Queensland back into the black. I welcome this state budget as it gets debt under control and will free Queenslanders' hip pockets from a future of debt and decline. It is about generational change with debt management and investment in front-line services, better infrastructure and delivery at a local level. These hard decisions will stabilise debt at \$81.7 billion instead of \$86.3 billion in 2014-15 and in 2015-16 debt will be \$6.6 billion lower than the Commission of Audit predicted. That is a significant change. This is one of the largest changes in direction in budgetary terms in Queensland's history. Achieving these cost savings means that families do not have to endure increased taxes and charges to pay off the previous government's debt and ongoing deficits.

The choice for future years was to either keep on paying \$1,000 per person a year indexed or go with the LNP plan. The reduction in interest payments of \$1.3 billion is equivalent to building 26 primary schools each year. What a turnaround, what a change and what a difference. All election commitments are fully funded, including \$495 million for the Royalties for Regions program to fund regional

community infrastructure programs; \$146.9 million over four years to deliver an additional 1,100 new police officers by 2015-16; an increase in the payroll threshold tax from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in 2012-13, with further increases of \$100,000 each year until that reaches \$1.6 million in July 2017; a freeze on car registrations for more than 2.5 million family vehicles; a reinstating of the principal place of residence concessional rate of stamp duty, saving Queenslanders up to \$7,175 when buying the family home; freezing tariff 11, saving families an average of \$120 on annual electricity bills; the provision of \$100 million over four years for the patient transport subsidy scheme to assist with access to specialist medical services, which had not been changed in 20-odd years but the LNP has done it in its very first budget.

Turning to the public service, on this side of the House we do understand and accept the difficulties of job uncertainty. However, it had to be done. We had to turn around the state. It is estimated there will be \$3.7 billion in forward savings due to the reduction of 14,000 full-time public servant positions, of which 10,600 are redundancies. It is hard and difficult, and we feel for the people impacted.

We have given a commitment to seriously attack over regulation and look to smarter, better, simpler solutions to the way that government services are provided in Queensland. Under ongoing and new commitments, \$1.3 billion will be provided to construct, expand and redevelop hospitals across Queensland. What a significant change that is. There will be a 7.4 per cent increase in the Health budget to over \$11.8 billion. An additional \$4.8 million will be provided to research and develop Queensland as the food bowl of Asia. New funding of \$200 million will help to address the maintenance back log in public schools and to address existing priority issues.

Mr Cripps: Good stuff.

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely. We are untying QBuild from this program. P&Cs can go out and get three quotes from local builders or service providers, who will be able to do the job. We believe that may even free up another 20 per cent of that funding which, in fact, may build up the \$200 million to \$270 million. Non-government schools are also being provided with help, with funding of \$76.25 million. There is help for all education across this state.

There is new funding of \$15 million for a three-year trial to assist elderly parent carers of people with a disability in transition to new care arrangements. That is a compassionate issue that is important. Of course, there is funding for the \$15 million first home owners construction grant to revitalise the construction sector, which is welcome. On top of this, we have committed \$1.4 million to expand support for students with disabilities, which will see an additional 30 speech-language pathologists working in Queensland state schools. There will be additional funding of \$1 million over four years to support Queensland schools' access to chaplaincy services and \$1 million will be provided over four years to develop a school education program to teach children how to protect themselves.

The government has approved \$11 million in funding for Queensland's 14 natural resource management bodies, which is very important. I acknowledge the Minister Natural Resources and Mines in the chamber tonight. In my area alone, the Condamine Alliance will get \$800,000, the Desert Channels of Queensland will get \$775,000, the Queensland Murray Darling Basin Committee will receive \$800,000, the South West RNM will receive \$720,000. That is certainly a significant contribution to those areas and they will do a great job. Those groups very hard and we support them 100 per cent.

We have committed \$15 million over three years for a new trial program aimed at providing greater security for older parent carers who can no longer look after their child with a disability. That is particularly important. We all are getting older and many of us, our family and friends know people who are impacted in this way. We want to help those people at that time in their lives. We will provide \$6.5 million for fire safety upgrades to residential aged care facilities. In my electorate of Warrego, we have such facilities in Miles, Mungindi, Charleville and Roma, and they will be provided assistance through that funding.

In my electorate, the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service will receive a total budget of \$540 million. The hospitals to be supported with this funding are at Chinchilla, Glenmorgan, Jandowae, Meandarra, Miles, Moonie and Tara. Certainly, that funding will be available. I know it will be tight and there will be a lot of changes in the way that government does business. However, funding is available and it is a significant amount. In the south west, the Roma Hospital will receive \$3 million and a further \$3.3 million will be provided to the Charleville Hospital as part of \$51.6 million worth of upgrades and improvements to 12 rural hospitals in the next 12 months. That funding will go towards upgrading essential fire and electrical safety issues and master planning for a new facility to follow in the next five to 10 years. In that area the major facilities that will be assisted by this funding will be the Augathella Multipurpose Health Centre, the Charleville Hospital, the Cunnamulla Hospital, and those at Dirranbandi, Injune, Mitchell, Morven, Mungindi, Roma, St George, Surat, Thargomindah and Wallumbilla. A lot of communities will certainly be helped through this budget.

Another very important area of funding is provided for our roads. We hear a lot about the national highways, but out my way the road that I hear the most about is the Warrego Highway. There is an enormous amount of traffic on that road at present. There is funding for it, although there is never enough. In the 2012-13 year, \$78.087 million will be spent on the national network. That does not

include maintenance; that is general improvements. Other work will be carried out in the Murweh area on the Landsborough Highway. Another \$64.9 million will be put into those areas. On the state network of roads, nearly \$50 million will be spent on the Carnarvon Highway, affecting Mungindi and St George and going right through to the Castlereagh Highway. The shires of Balonne, Bulloo and Maranoa have received significant funding in relation to the state network of roads. That is particularly important and we need to ensure that funding continues. There is never enough funding for roads, but this is a damn good start. For the people who drive on those roads, I know it is frustrating to come across roadworks and traffic lights, but at the end of the day the work is being done and it is important to get the work done. I ask people to remember that the work is happening and it is very important.


The Murweh Shire Council will receive \$6.6 million for flood mitigation, which is a continuation of the levy bank at Bradley's Gully. We are really pleased that that money is coming through. That is really fantastic. Funding of \$120 million will be provided to upgrade homes in Indigenous communities across the whole of Queensland. Some money is going in there, which obviously is always needed. One of the most important things to remember about this budget is that 75 per cent of the government's capital works is being spent outside Brisbane. We are a decentralised state and it is important to understand that this funding is not going just into the capital but it is going throughout the whole of Queensland.

One of the things that we need to do in the future, and do more of, is make our railways work better. In my area I have a railway line that runs out through Charleville to Quilpie to Cunnamulla, and once you go past Dalby it is hardly used—two trains a week. We have to put more freight back on rail. We have to work harder. We have to ensure that QR National go out there and chase business. We need to ensure that there is encouragement to move freight off the road. That road cannot continue to take the traffic that it currently does, so we need to do a lot more to get freight off the road.

The Rural Fire Service has been in the news for the last day or so. It is important that we preserve that wonderful service that we have. I am sure that people out there understand that we have a huge fire season ahead—I would say that we are facing probably the biggest fire season since the 1950s. It is important that we have a force out there that can manage that and have the confidence to do the job.

Minister Dempsey has come forward and said that there will be a strong program there and that he will look after the Rural Fire Service, and I think that is a wonderful thing to do. We need to do that because they are the backbone of our fire services throughout regional Queensland. We will not sit by and watch our volunteer fire brigades be burnt by some of the hierarchy in the fire services.

This budget has been a wonderful turnaround, a wonderful opportunity for Queenslanders to be able to see what an LNP government can do. I certainly look forward to next year when we will see a lot of this money being rolled out and we will see the development that is going to occur in Queensland and the changes that that will make to people's lives which I am sure will be much, much better in the long term.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (10.21 pm): There is rarely ever a budget that everyone either totally likes or will admit was what was needed at that point in time. This 2012-13 Queensland state budget was probably the budget we had to have but arguably did not deserve. I say this because, in a modern world, money is scarce, it has no borders and it usually finds a home where it is more likely to give a guarantee of a return of both interest and security of principal.

In Queensland, we are net borrowers and we are at the mercy of our lenders. That said, we did not deserve this budget because we have just gone through a commodity-led boom—the likes of which we might not see for another 100 years—followed by a CSG boom and a soft landing from the 2007 GFC primarily due to severe fiscal restraint by the former Howard-led coalition federal government, with the GST introduced early in the piece going to the states, preceding the GFC.

We had to have this budget because the Blich and Beattie Labor governments just squandered every new opportunity, looted every GOC and then finally borrowed, in far too high proportion, just to pay for recurrent expenditure with limited capital expenditure averaged over their 14 years. Labor failed the public and trust in them evaporated. Therefore, this budget was a test of LNP nerve to do what the public demanded.

Everyone has suffered but for some the suffering does continue. My electorate of Gaven is doing it very tough in comparison to many in the state as a result of this budget—18 per cent, or 47, of the Main Roads staff in my electorate will be made redundant, some at RoadTek based at Nerang and others in neighbouring offices. This, together with uncertain numbers of health workers and various numbers who were on temporary contracts in departments ranging from mining to housing to health, have lost their jobs. For some it will be hopefully a case of one door closing and another opening, but for others there will be uncertainty and real loss.

Here on the Gold Coast, in Gaven, we have already been hit hard with the property, construction and tourist downturn. These retrenchments have made just getting by a little bit harder and a greater challenge. Our hope is that the new \$15,000 grant for first home owners building new homes will be a key driver for new home construction in Gaven. Sadly, with little work for young Queenslanders,

including the 700 new Queenslanders settling on the Gold Coast each week, it is uncertain whether they will rush the offer. One would hope they will.

The Treasurer has been very generous to those who have been made redundant, with payment on average for most of 12 weeks pay or one month for every year of service beyond the three-year mark. Generally, in times of severe austerity this would not have occurred, but it does make some of the unions' severe claims seem ingenuous. No-one is being retrenched by email unless they choose that. This is never easy but many have offered to take the generous redundancy offers. Fortunately, only a minor 0.25 per cent increase in unemployment is predicted.

For those who were on temporary contracts, many of whom I recognise on the Gold Coast are essential nurses working for our local Gold Coast Hospital, I pledge that I will do everything I can to ensure that the health minister and members of our government understand that the Gold Coast is not like Brisbane or other regional towns. The capacity for our health system to deliver is built around those working on short-term contracts. If I do not succeed then I suspect morale will fall, service delivery will be compromised and patients will suffer the consequences. The health minister has offered \$800 million in additional funds to provide for greater capacity of service outcome, and \$500 million will be spread between the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital, regional hospitals urgently needing upgrades and the very welcome increase in the travel subsidy for remote and regional Queenslanders. They have missed out for a long time.

I share the concerns of the AMA and other medical groups about the decisions regarding public health preventative medicine and spending targeting specific end outcomes which look very much like the former Labor Surgery Connect program. We need to be very careful to not pour precious funds into marginal elective one-off surgical outcomes that do not enhance the overall health of our state. Integration of private and public medical systems is critical for the future of Queensland Health to make sure that we provide excellence and synergy. Queensland Health has for too long lived in a vacuum, isolated not just from private care but from primary care doctors, our very capable GPs—I am one of them. But this is not the way to approach the comprehensive care of individual Queenslanders. Similarly to spend just one per cent on preventative health—public health—is to fail to both understand how medical progress was ever made or how we really will stop 10 per cent to 15 per cent year-on-year growth of budget demand in health in Queensland.

In five years we need to be spending 10 per cent of our total Queensland Health budget on preventative strategies. If we do not then nothing that we do in 2018-19 will matter. Even a doubling of the Health budget will not prevent real rationing of service delivery—everywhere! The elderly carer program, with \$15 million to assist the elderly carers of disabled children, will certainly help that very needy group. Also, it needs to be said that in addressing the failed centralisation policies of Queensland Health, making 1,217 full-time employees in corporate head office redundant is a good start. I say that because it is a positive step in reducing the appalling clinical to medical/nursing ratios. They could never be sustained, if ever justified. There are strong messages to doctors and nurses and the patients. This change is critical for medical and nursing staff. It will reduce the paper chase.

The Treasurer and Premier have every right to blame Labor for the need to retrench staff and cut programs because their job is to restore confidence. They showed that they listened recently and reduced the cuts by 6,000 from the mooted 20,000 and funded those saved positions via real savings. The health minister is arguably right to blame the payroll fiasco on what he should have been delivering, but I do hope to convince him that nurses are what makes our hospitals tick and for many reasons they are part-time, on short-term contracts and are largely unseen. He needs to reassure them that their jobs are secure.

The transport minister has his work cut out for him, and my sincere hope is that needs win out over politics, because supporting transport and infrastructure is the engine room of Queensland's economy. The restoration of the Bruce Highway is his great challenge. Every Queenslanders is a front-line person, whether they are back, central or front of house. This budget is a sincere attempt to both buy and build every Queenslanders a future and funding for those who do not work or who are retired. I am sure that even coalminers realise that it is better to have 85 per cent of something rather than 95 per cent of nothing, for that is where our state's economy was heading if severe corrective action was not taken.

Coal royalties needed review because big mines need big infrastructure. Just as an example, Alpha Hospital—which is very close to the Galilee Basin coalmines—is 100 years old. It is Galilee Basin miners who will need those services and the replacement of that hospital is urgently needed. I worked there in the floods and I can tell members that the hospital is 100 years old and it does need upgrading. There will be no change from \$30 million and the need for a replacement hospital is urgent.


No-one ever gets it all right, nor do they ever get it all wrong. Sadly, what often comes unexpectedly as a bonus just as rapidly evaporates too soon, as we have seen in the last few years. Families can afford to live now—it is hard, and Gaven families really know how tough it is but they are scratching through. An \$80 water rebate, a \$120 saving on their electricity bill, frozen car registration and \$160,000 per state school if they need that much—that is what they will be getting. Hopefully Gaven

might even get a full complement of police at the Nerang Police Station, as the total number of new police have been announced.

There appears to be a key issue in the budget that seems to have been ignored—the capital expenditure program has been reigned in only in part but, carefully, state expenditure has been reduced to 2.5 per cent growth from Labor's unsustainable 10 per cent. This forthcoming year's \$11 billion effective stimulus will drive the local economies throughout the state, while the recovery of the private economy will renew faith as confidence grows.

Tourism and property construction should grow and resources will mature, especially coal seam gas, with demand slowly growing to 20 per cent in the next 10 years. Agriculture is allowed to cycle as it always will, and we hope there will not be another drought. Amazingly, growth is predicted to be four per cent, just one per cent lower than Labor's predictions with much higher deficits. Gross debt will peak at \$81 billion at the end of the next electoral cycle but the growth curve has been flattened and we again are living within our means.

How we grow our state revenue in an environment where we have tied federal grants and slowing GST revenue and also repay the state and government owned corporation debt, the GOC debt, will determine whether the public trust in the LNP is acquitted or not. Trust, equity, delivery and shared responsibility—these are the messages of this budget.

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (10.31 pm): This is the most important budget in a generation. The budget builds a brighter future for Queensland. Queensland once had a low and stable debt. The budget breaks the addiction to years of debt and deficit and starts Queensland on a path to regaining the AAA credit rating. The budget was delivered by our Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls MP. It is no secret that state debt has become a major issue. Before I begin to speak about the state debt and the government's response to it, I want to put aside the blame game for just a moment to speak about the people and the families who have been affected by the consequences of state debt. I am talking about the good people who have worked hard in their government jobs, many of whom live in my electorate of Yeerongpilly. State debt has escalated to unprecedented levels. It saddens me to see so many good people affected because of the uncontrolled spending by the former Labor government. Make no mistake: the Newman government has taken responsibility to get Queensland back on track, and this is no small challenge.

The budget, as delivered by the Treasurer and the Newman government, is heralded as a once in a generation budget. It is designed to chart the course for Queensland's fiscal repair. It aims to deliver on certain key commitments—to lower the cost of living, to revitalise front-line services, to grow the four-pillar economy and to also help regain the state's AAA credit rating. Importantly, it is the Newman government's objective to arrest the slide into debt so there is more money to spend on important infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals and front-line services.

Commitments to revitalise front-line services and grow a strong four-pillar economy have been allocated as follows. There is \$200 million over two years to provide funding of up to \$160,000 to state school P&Cs to assist in fixing maintenance backlogs. This will help schools in my electorate like Wellers Hill, Nyanda and Yeeronga among others. There is \$495 million over four years for the Royalties for the Regions program to ensure families and communities in our resource regions share the economic dividends of mining activities through improved community infrastructure and roads. I have families living in communities like Blackwater, and I want to know that they are safe to travel the roads connecting our rural and regional communities.

Mr Costigan: It's a good town too.

Mr JUDGE: It is a good town. There is \$1 billion over 10 years to upgrade the Bruce Highway focusing on improved safety and flood immunity, subject to cost sharing agreements with the federal government. This is essential government spending to ensure the safety of all people on our roads. The road carnage is far too high and this money is essential. There is \$20 million for a tourism investment strategy focusing on key emerging markets. There is \$146.9 million over four years to deliver an additional 1,100 new police officers, and this is fundamental to improving community safety in Yeerongpilly and all other electorates across the state. It is believed that the budget will deliver for Queensland's future, not only by setting about the fiscal repair task but also by investing in the state. Very significantly, the Newman government will provide a \$15,000 First Home Owner Construction Grant for people buying their first home either off the plan or newly constructed. It is reasonably expected that families and communities will reap the rewards of the Newman government's fiscal repair effort outlined in its first budget.

Relevant to my electorate of Yeerongpilly are the following budget initiatives. There is \$895,000 funding for the South-West Brisbane Home Assist Secure, Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, for the provision of Home Assist Secure services. Home Assist Secure aims to remove some of the practical housing related difficulties experienced by people 60 years and over and people of any age with a disability who wish to remain living in their home. The service provides free information and referral about home maintenance, repairs, modifications and home security. Subsidised assistance with minor home maintenance, repairs, modifications and security is

also available for eligible clients who are in receipt of an Australian government pension or benefit and are unable to make use of alternative assistance.


Our fiscal repair effort ensures the government is able to deliver cost-of-living relief to families and invest in local schools, hospitals and roads while still keeping our debt and deficit under control. Recognising that cost of living is the most important issue for families, the Newman government will deliver rebates of up to \$80 per domestic water connection and provide free travel after nine paid journeys in a week for commuters using Translink services. Furthermore, families will benefit from freezes to car rego costs and electricity tariffs, and we have reinstated the principal place of residence concession for people buying the family home. As mentioned, we will also offer first home buyers \$15,000 if they buy a newly built home or one off the plan in an initiative which will also boost construction activity. The construction industry is one of the main employers in my electorate of Yeerongpilly. Small businesses in my electorate employ apprentices and tradespeople, and this initiative will be well and truly welcomed in Yeerongpilly.

Schools throughout Brisbane will benefit from the Newman government's \$200 million Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund, which will allow state school parents and citizens organisations to apply for up to \$160,000 to fix existing priority maintenance issues. Again, this will benefit schools in my electorate of Yeerongpilly. Small- and medium-sized businesses will also benefit under the Newman budget by paying less payroll tax. It is believed that the 2012-13 state budget will encourage long-term job and economic growth across the four pillars of the economy and ensure the cost of living remains low for all Queensland families.

By and large, this is a budget for Queensland's future, and the Newman government is determined to deliver a more prosperous future for all the people in this great state. The notable initiatives are as follows: \$55,000 has been allocated for local sport and recreation jobs—in particular, to continue to employ local coordinators for athletics to support seven clubs in South-East Queensland; \$80,000 has been set aside to employ a local coordinator for athletics to support seven clubs in the greater Brisbane area; \$54,000 has been allocated for a Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan—in particular, to employ a local coordinator for Australian football to support five clubs in the greater Brisbane area and, notably, the home of AFL is in my electorate in Yeeronga; \$56,000 has been allocated for a Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan which will help employ a local coordinator for Australian football to support juniors at five clubs in the Brisbane region; and \$54,000 has been allocated to establish a Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan to employ a local coordinator for little athletics to support six clubs.

An amount of \$43,000 has been assigned for a local sports and recreation jobs plan to employ a local coordinator for the Australian football association, as I have already mentioned, and \$53,000 has been allocated to local sports and recreation to employ a local coordinator for canoeing to support seven clubs in Brisbane, south-east and north coast regions. An amount of \$5,197,000 is contained in Budget Paper No. 3 to construct the V1 Pacific Motorway cycleway from Birdwood Road to Lewisham Street, which is in my electorate. This is relevant to the electorates of Brisbane Central and Greenslopes as well. In addition, the Yeronga State School relocation of the Centre for Young Deaf Children will be allocated \$2,150,000. I am particularly proud that Yeerongpilly will receive funding of \$10,205,000 for disability services.

In essence, this is the most important budget in a generation. It builds a brighter future for all Queenslanders, especially those requiring disability services. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.40 pm): This is a budget that is a fraud on the people of the electorate of Bundamba in my home city of Ipswich and the people of Queensland. Following the LNP's first budget after it has been in government for six months, today Fitch Ratings has downgraded Queensland's credit rating from AA plus to AA. The LNP has failed its first test. The LNP is a joke in terms of the economic performance. It gets a D for dunce.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! We will hear the member, please.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. They get a D for dunce. They get a D for decapitating jobs and services. They get a D for being dills and they get a D for being drongos.

The assessment that was given by Fitch Ratings on 26 March this year stated—

Queensland's new government has pledged to address the challenges of budgetary recovery and debt growth. Its ability to do this successfully will be an important component of our assessment of the state's rating ...

They do not like the budget. Two days later, they have given the government the thumbs down and every member opposite is going to have to cop it.

One has to wonder how they drafted the budget. For heaven's sake, was the Treasurer watching Plucka Duck on *Hey Hey It's Saturday*? As the ducks went around he pulled down the duck that said that 14,000 public servants had to go. He pulled down another duck that said services had to go. Then

he pulled down another duck. For heaven's sake! It is just like Plucka Duck. What we have seen here today is Fitch Ratings making a fool out of the state of Queensland through this Treasurer and this LNP government.

Where once I proudly reported to the electorate in previous budget speeches year in, year out about the great work undertaken by Labor in government to supply the infrastructure and fund the community programs needed in our growing community, this government has decapitated the services and the jobs in our area and has hoodwinked the people. The only announcements that this government has made are ones previously announced by our Labor government. They are hanging their hats on things already put in place by us. There has been nothing new at all, except for the sacking of 14,000-plus permanent public servants and even more temporary public servants and contractors, including those on the front line—doctors, nurses et cetera.

In my last budget speech on 17 June 2011, I announced the construction of a new fire station at Ripley. The current minister, the hypocrite that he is, bagged the expenditure. But then he had the hide to turn up in Ripley to turn the sod for the building works. He did not mention that it was a Labor budget item. He is known more as 'Sack 'em' Jack Dempsey.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. If the member for Chatsworth wants to interject he should go back to his own seat.

Mrs MILLER: There is no new funding for Blackstone—not one single dollar. They are taking away the old, historic Blackstone school site. They are selling it off in spite of it now being used as a community centre. This will rob the Ipswich Historical Society, the geological society—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. This will rob the Ipswich Historical Society, the geological society and the Bundamba subsection of the naval association of their home. The residents are outraged at this decision. Swanbank gets nothing and there is no new funding for the Bundamba community.

In my last budget speech I thanked QBuild workers for their hard work during the flood recovery effort in helping Bundamba State School get back on its feet. Those dedicated workers are now being sacked by the LNP government. Ebbw Vale has no new funding. The LNP government obviously does not know that this suburb exists. There is no new funding for Dinmore. Just like Blackstone, the Dinmore school is being sold from under the community. This robs the Tofa Mamao a Samoa Samoan Advisory Council of its home base and the centre for community like Dinmore. Like Blackstone school, Dinmore school was available for community use. This is putting profit before people. It is typical of the LNP. There is no new funding for Riverview. Labor has spent millions improving the suburb of Riverview—improving the homes, schools and community facilities—to help residents. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent on community renewal, urban renewal, State Schools of Tomorrow, rebuilding Riverview State School—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members on my right will not pass comments across the chamber.

Mrs MILLER: Riverview State School gets nothing—zilch. There are cuts to the number of public housing homes and cuts to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which got hundreds of people back into the workforce. Sadly, it looks like the Police Beat is going to be shut down. Riverview Neighbourhood House funding will be cut as will all the employment programs.

There is no new funding for Redbank. The flood-hit suburb of Redbank is another to feel the cuts of the Newman LNP government with the only news in the budget being that the Police Beat at Redbank Plaza is likely to be shut. There is no new funding for Goodna, which is still finding its feet after the long, hard struggle after the floods. This Newman decapitating LNP government has slashed and burned the funding for programs and facilities in Goodna, with Child Safety moving to Springfield. Goodna Neighbourhood House, another community organisation delivering services, can expect massive cuts in funding to their much needed services. There is no new funding for Redbank Plains and Bellbird Park. Under Labor we extended the train line from Richlands to Springfield with the next logical step of extending it to Redbank Plains. It is something on which I campaigned during the election after hearing loud and clear from the community that it would vastly improve public transport in the region and provide much needed construction jobs and economic stimulus. The LNP refuse to even contemplate extending the railway line to Redbank Plains. There is no new funding for a new school at Redbank Plains despite the growth—something earmarked by us, by Labor. Sadly, the LNP has ignored this and the other needs of residents in Redbank Plains, another suburb that loses out under this LNP government.

There is no new funding for Collingwood Park. The much needed funding for the growth suburb of Collingwood Park has dried up, with no plans for the subsidence area and no plans to increase the school facilities except for what we in Labor committed to under the contracts for Woodlinks State

School. Labor looked to the future in suburbs like Collingwood Park to provide the certainty it needed after subsidence brought ambiguity. There is no money for the filling-in of mines and no money for rehabilitation. There is no new funding for Brookwater or Augustine Heights except for what was already committed by the previous government. As planned under Labor and through its contractual arrangements, Augustine State School will be expanded.

The Newman LNP government has no vision and no empathy for residents in these suburbs who desire a safe and happy community to back their investment in their homes. For Springfield and Springfield Lakes there is no new funding, except what was contractually committed by the previous Labor government. Again, this LNP government has cut and pasted the previous Labor government's commitments—things I fought long and hard for. But there is nothing new from the Tories, this disgraced LNP government. The budget items are a continuance of what we had in place and our contracts for Springfield Central State High School and Springfield Central State School. And they had to continue the Springfield railway line or get filthy dirty tearing out the construction work already started.

The LNP government have shown that they are incapable of planning for future growth in my area. They do not care about our young families or their future needs. Just this week residents asked me why things had not been occurring in Springfield and the lakes area at the blistering pace they had under our Labor government. Labor delivered the schools before time, the police station before time, the ambulance station before time, and community facilities like the hall at Springfield Lakes before time. We delivered on the train line and we delivered on the bus services. But under this LNP government we are going backwards. The LNP government does not even recognise Springfield as a growing community. At the same time, right across Ipswich it is rehashing announcements previously made by the Labor government.

Residents who protest-voted and wanted change by voting LNP are shocked and dismayed. These are not the changes they were told of. It is not the change they expected. This is not the change they voted for. Those who voted LNP were conned. Many of them were sacked because they were public servants and they were told untruths. They were sickened by the service cuts and worried about their future. And now they are in our community and they are depressed and disillusioned—all because of the LNP government. From the tenants advocacy service to cuts to Ipswich Hospital funding, 14,000-plus job losses if you count in the temporaries and the contractors, the slashing of community organisation funding and the stopping of successful employment and training programs, people are embarrassed that they ever voted LNP. Of course, the LNP axe still hangs over the Bremer Institute of TAFE as this government is following the lead of other LNP administrations in cutting training programs across Australia at a time of skills shortage.

This budget and the actions of this LNP government of course make no sense—no sense unless you are a private provider or a contractor making a profit out of providing public services. They claim that debt is bad, but we all know that you need debt to buy a house and to get ahead in life, just like Labor borrowed to deliver the railway lines and the road infrastructure so that our community can get ahead.

People are now seeing through that deceit. This is an ideological purge of the Public Service. What did we see on Tuesday afternoon? We saw genuine, dedicated, hardworking public servants being sacked by email and being sacked by text messages. How disgraceful is that? What we are seeing now is economic activity turn down. Of course, the Fitch Ratings agency today downgraded Queensland's credit rating to AA. And what is increasing under this LNP government? Unemployment. By their own figures, unemployment will rise. And do they care about the people without jobs? No. Tories never have. Labor is the party of service delivery in our area. The LNP is the party of misery and slash and burn. Labor delivers for the future needs of our community, like the Springfield railway line and all of our new schools and halls. You borrow now so that for generations residents will have access to public transport.

This short-sighted LNP government thinks you govern from election to election, whereas we in Labor govern for the future and for the long term. Newman will be known—here he comes; cop it sweet—as the Mr Magoo of Queensland politics, stumbling and bumbling his way through the budget, slashing and burning at random, on the way sacking many good people thus forcing them out of their homes to be sold. Kids will be pulled out of school and standards of living for many Queenslanders will be reduced. While the Premier is in the chamber, I say: Can-do, you've done it again! Queensland's credit rating has gone from AA plus to AA. He has made Queensland the laughing stock of Australia.

It is not just my electorate that is suffering. People see through everything. From my shadow portfolio activities and committee activities I know that this is right across Ipswich and right across Queensland.

The Queensland health system has borne the brunt of the Newman government's first slash and burn. Nobody, not even the Premier, seems to know how many redundancies they have forced on Queensland health workers. Like I asked yesterday, is it 4,140 full-time equivalents, as stated in Budget Paper No. 2? Or is it 2,754 full-time equivalents, as identified in the service delivery statements? If anyone bothered to read the gibberish on budget night they would have been none the wiser. The

numbers look very, very rubbery indeed. They change quicker than a bookie winding down the odds when a punter has plonked a gorilla on the dishlickers after the favourite was scratched. The minister has completed a trifecta for health: cuts in funding, cuts in staff and cuts in services. But it is odds-on that that is just the start.

We have assumed that these cuts do not include those thousands of health workers on rolling temporary and casual contracts that were already dismissed in June—thousands of people sacked, sacked, sacked. Does the minister know how many people will also lose their jobs when he cuts \$30 million in grants to community health organisations each year, every year for the next four years? If we start to talk about real individual people doing real health jobs, how many are going to lose their jobs this year? I calculate that over 7,000 people will lose their jobs in the health system alone. That is 7,000 people doing real health jobs.


This is just the beginning. This budget explicitly states that the Newman government will outsource public sector jobs in IT, HR, internal audit, radiology, pathology, catering, cleaning, security and maintenance. And they are even going to outsource the 13HEALTH telephone service. So who will people be talking to and who will be giving advice? 'Hello? Hello?' There's no-one here; they've all been sacked! Or callers might hear a voice recording: 'Sorry, they've all been sacked. Please ring Campbell Newman's office on 32244500.'

The people of Queensland need to question how the safety and quality of patient care will be maintained when the for-profit businesses tender for public health services. Corners will be cut and standards will slip. We all know that that will be the case.

In the important portfolio of housing, landlord minister Dr Flegg has slashed funding for the TAAS that was funded by interest on tenants' rental bonds. This service helped people experiencing difficulties with rents and bonds and having disputes with landlords. They protected tenants' rights and ensured they got a fair go. They helped people go through the system. It saved time and money in the courts. By assisting those people in rental difficulty, it helped people off the public housing list. This is all about ideology. In Ipswich the local service has run successfully for years, helping those in need deal with disputes with the real estate agent or the landlord. It is the same story all over the state, where dedicated, hardworking people are now out of work and unable to supply a service that they did with such great dedication and compassion. They now find themselves in the situation where they have an uncertain future in paying their own rent or mortgage. But this service was more than just a tenants service because of the crisis intervention that they undertook. Also, how do we get on in relation to the public housing tenants groups? They have got rid of them. Scrapping the garden competition saves little amounts of money but causes great big holes in the community.

These programs spent a little but got a lot back for the self-esteem of public housing tenants in terms of their social wellbeing and their ability to have their voice heard and respected. Furthermore, this government has slashed 65 per cent of Tenants Union funding, further hampering efforts to assist people in need of funding. What do we also have here? A gross lack of compassion by those members opposite. Those opposite believe that sending out surveys to elderly people in public housing who have been long-term tenants was appropriate, and many of them were sobbing in fear. Those opposite believe that it is fine to put people on fixed-term tenancies, giving them no security of having a roof over their head. Those opposite stated before the election that they wanted to revitalise front-line services, but what is front line? And they are also going to sell off public assets without a mandate. Well, what are they doing? They are selling off three caravan parks because turning a profit is the LNP game.

As shadow minister for mining, the worst time to be increasing taxes is when mining is under pressure from falling prices. It is clear that the ALP could only support royalty increases if economic studies showed it would not impact on jobs and impact on the mining communities—the mining communities of Blackwater and Dysart and Emerald and the other Central Queensland communities. Those people who voted LNP, many for the first time, are learning the very harsh reality that it comes with a price—the 14,000-plus people sacked from their permanent Public Service positions, the services being cut, the cuts in the community, no catering for the growth in our area, no more major roads being funded. People are going to suffer adverse affects—from the kids in the schools to the patients in the hospitals. They are now standing up for Queensland counting down the months. They will never vote LNP again!

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (11.01 pm): I rise in this House tonight to speak on the inaugural Newman government budget contained in the Appropriation Bill 2012. Firstly, I want to repeat the words of the Queensland Treasury in the Queensland government Treasury brief—

Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government.

This has, unfortunately, meant making tough decisions, making hard decisions, making decisions that no government takes pleasure in. To those in the Public Service who will leave the Public Service as a result of the measures that have been necessary, I say sorry. As a former long-serving police officer, I have many friends who are public servants. I am the husband of a public servant and I am the son of a former public servant who, incidentally, lost his job as a result of Kevin Rudd and Wayne Goss and the then ALP government's cuts to the Public Service. As a result, I do empathise.

As has been said, this budget is the most important budget in a generation. It has been an important opportunity to ensure that Queensland is placed in a strong economic position for years to come. It is an important step to regaining our AAA credit rating so we can pay less interest and give more back to Queenslanders. People in my electorate of Greenslopes have been suffering like all Queenslanders under rising costs of living. That is why my electorate is pleased to see the LNP Newman government deliver on our election promises. Some of these include freezing car registrations for 2.5 million family cars, halving public transport fares due in 2013-14, saving average families up to \$120 on their annual electricity bills, and an \$80 rebate on domestic water connections in South-East Queensland.

As a former police officer, I am very pleased indeed to see the Queensland Police Service budget increased by more than \$165 million. Law and order is very important to the people of Greenslopes. The commitment of 300 extra police over the next year as part of our commitment of an extra 1,100 police over the next four years is exciting, following the reduction of recruiting under the former government. This of course is in addition to the 200 police being transferred back on the street from office jobs. This will mean more police on the streets on the south side of Brisbane, including the Greenslopes electorate. The establishment of the Major and Organised Crime Squad on the Gold Coast is a truly long overdue measure and one which the LNP government is delivering—no talk, just action. In addition, we have committed to police helicopters on the Gold Coast and South-East Queensland. There are many more highlights in the budget in the area of the Queensland Police Service. I wholeheartedly support all of these budget commitments with respect to the QPS as they are all about improving front-line service delivery.

The Greenslopes electorate will also welcome the Fostering Families initiative. Greenslopes will play host to one of the trial areas of this program, which will run for two years and provide around 300 families in the trial with practical support to keep children at home and out of state care. This trial will address the need for additional intensive family support services in the areas of Mount Gravatt and Stones Corner. It will help build strong, happy families and this positive initiative will help strengthen front-line services in our area. The ultimate goal of this trial is to reduce the number of children entering the child protection system and to keep families safely together whenever possible.

The parents and citizens associations in the Greenslopes electorate are also excited about the budget announcement of grants up to \$160,000 to address school maintenance issues. Schools have been crying out for years for money to repair and improve their schools. Despite recent comment in the media, I have the utmost faith in my P&Cs to get the best bang for their buck in relation to any money spent on their schools. P&Cs are passionate about their schools. They simply want what is best for their children and their schools. Removing the shackles and allowing my schools to spend this money, whilst at the same time achieving the best value for money, is truly a wonderful common-sense initiative, and I commend the Minister for Education for it.

In terms of local electorate commitments, I am very pleased to see that I will be delivering on an improved pick-up and drop-off area at the Mount Gravatt State School to the value of \$500,000. This will improve safety and convenience, not only to parents and children but also alleviate excessive vehicles in side streets surrounding the school. I will also be delivering flashing school zone lights at Cavendish Road in Holland Park outside the Cavendish Road High School. Along with the pick-up and drop-off area at the Mount Gravatt State School, this was also an election commitment. These lights will dramatically improve safety for the many students at Cavendish Road High. They will serve as a visual reminder to drivers to slow down and protect our precious children. I am also pleased that another school in my electorate, Holland Park State High School—and I have spoken of it previously in this House in relation to its Kokoda Challenge efforts—will receive funding to upgrade its quadrangle via the capital works program. The schools in my electorate will also get more say over what programs they want to run in their schools. Instead of being dictated to, they will be able to choose the resources that best suit their students' needs. I thank the Minister for Education for trusting school communities enough to know what will serve them best.

For the benefit of the many cyclists in the electorate, there is the construction of the V1 Pacific Motorway cycleway from Lewisham Street to Birdwood Road. This will improve access and encourage more cyclists to use this infrastructure. I also want to commend the Treasurer and the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for funding the Get in the Game policy. I have had many constituents contact me about this policy. Having a large number of terrific sporting facilities in the Greenslopes electorate, I know this funding will make a big difference to junior sports enthusiasts and clubs alike.

There are many more benefits for Queenslanders in this budget that other honourable members have spoken about already and I do not intend to go over them—real money delivering real results for the people of Queensland, helping families, helping schools, helping those in social housing, helping the disabled, revitalising front-line services, giving communities choices and say over how they want things to be done. This is a budget to guide Queensland's future and to get this great state back on track. I congratulate the Treasurer and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHOAT (Ipswich West—LNP) (11.07 pm): I rise to speak to the 2012 state budget. There is no doubt that this is perhaps the most anticipated budget of all time in Queensland, as it is no doubt the most important in a generation and one that will chart the future for Queensland's economic recovery. It is interesting that the opposition has such difficulty acknowledging that Queensland is indeed in a serious situation with regard to its finances. If one listens to the opposition, the Bligh-Fraser-Beattie years have left us in a sound financial position. In a way it reminds me of the story of the emperor's new clothes. The fairytale came to an end for the Bligh government for so many reasons but none more so than its dreadful financial management and its destruction and sell-off of Queensland's assets like QR. It would be wrong to say that this budget has not hurt anybody. Unfortunately it has and that concerns me, just as I know it does every government member. I have been through a redundancy myself as a result of the previous government's decision to sell off the railways, so I know about the uncertainty and the concern firsthand. But you get through it and it can provide some very great opportunities.

Mr Shuttleworth: Did they let you know that was coming?

Mr CHOAT: They certainly did not. There were 9,000 people who were shifted from QR Ltd into QR National and thrown to the wolves. I have also been on temporary contracts with government in the past and on those occasions I always knew that at the outset there were no guarantees about longevity.

Over the years while working in the Queensland government I saw many people employed on temporary contracts and those contracts were extended year after year. They were never at ease and always dreaded the approach of the end of the term of their contract. Temporary contracts and casual employment are part of life for many Queenslanders. The vast majority of those people are at ease with that situation and work hard to demonstrate their value to employers and many enjoy the flexibility that temporary contracts and casual employment provides. I know many small businesses that sadly have had to let staff go as a result of tough economic circumstances. I know it pains those business operators to have to make those decisions. In those circumstances there is little choice, as to not act may see employers lose their entire workforce. I have listened to businesspeople who are heartbroken at having to let workers go. Similarly, Queensland is in a tough financial situation and our Public Service workforce has to be cut now to avoid compounding problems down the track. This is no different from what has happened and continues to occur in the private sector. Not even the government can be immune to having to rationalise its workforce. As I mentioned earlier, I am always concerned to hear about anybody in the public or private sector losing their jobs. It is debt and overspending that is the villain in this story, aided and abetted by the Bligh Labor government.

In life and in business, the basic rule of finance is not to live beyond your means. Put simply, you cannot spend more than you earn. For years the Queensland Labor government ignored this basic principle and used borrowings to spend well above its means. Debt is not always a bad thing. We all use it to buy things such as cars and the family home or to fund renovations. Indeed, most people have personal and car loans as well as mortgages that give us the things that we need to improve our lives. However, the most important thing is that we plan for paying back the debt and reducing the interest we pay on it. The previous government lost our AAA credit rating as a result of poor financial management, meaning that Queensland has paid a 1.6 per cent higher rate of interest than have other states. That is enough to send a shudder through the spines of most mortgage holders. Just imagine what a 1.6 per cent hike in interest on a mortgage would do to a family budget. The major focus of this once-in-a-generation budget is to reduce debt, restore the AAA credit rating and redirect savings into efficient front-line services. This was clear to Queenslanders prior to the election and it has always been expected that tough decisions would be needed to fix Labor's mess. I am pleased that, despite the difficult circumstances, there is much consideration in this budget for improving the lives of the people in my electorate.

One of the major projects funded in the budget is the infamous Blacksoil interchange. I certainly was pleased to hear the transport minister mention it tonight in his speech. Over the years this project has been talked about and promised by successive governments and I am pleased to be part of the government that turns it into reality. We will see over \$55 million spent by June 2013, getting the majority of work completed with the project set to be delivered in full by early 2014, in total costing nearly \$94 million.


Another win for the residents of the Ipswich West electorate is the approval of the new Fire and Rescue Service station at Brassall, which was also mentioned by the minister tonight. This project represents a \$3.9 million investment in the safety and wellbeing of the people in my electorate as well as the protection of their property. Schools in my area will benefit greatly, including the Fernvale State School, through over \$1.3 million invested in improving the school's administration centre. In addition, I am thrilled about the injection of \$200 million across Queensland to address the shameful backlog in school maintenance, with all of the state schools in my local area eligible for grants of up to \$160,000 for works to improve and repair school facilities. The best part about this initiative is that the money will be managed locally by our great P&C committees with their school principals. They will be able to choose how the money is spent and will be free to select their own local contractors, meaning savings and support for local businesses. That will certainly achieve great improvements for our children. While I am

talking about local businesses and contractors, they will all benefit from the increase in the first home owner grant from \$7,000 to \$15,000 for those building or buying a brand-new home. That will stimulate construction and get our tradies back to work and families into quality new homes. The stimulation across the small businesses in my electorate will be immense. The stamp duty concession on the purchase of the family home will be reinstated, providing savings of up to \$7,175. I know many real estate agents in my local area are thrilled about this, as it means strong and sustainable growth in business and jobs in the property sector.

The improvement in local roads will see the maintenance and upgrading of our state funded roads. I will continue to lobby on behalf of residents for critical projects such as the Pine and Delacy streets intersection at North Ipswich to be funded in the future. I am pleased to see that this government is investing \$20 million in promoting tourism in Queensland. I will be looking for my cut of those dollars to promote Ipswich and the beautiful Somerset region as great places to visit and say.

Health services in my region will receive a much needed boost, with \$60 million for the expansion of Ipswich Hospital, \$170,000 for the helipad for emergency transfers and \$9.5 million spent across the region for upgrading equipment and other works to improve patient care and wellbeing. Very important to my electorate is the \$4.5 million to be spent on flood remediation and hydrology works to provide security and peace of mind to residents who know firsthand the devastation of floods.

Water rebates, the reduction in public transport fares, the freezing of electricity tariffs and private car registrations will put money back in people's pockets. I look forward to increased law and order on our streets, with great new resources for our police, including more officers and facilities such as the Riverlink police beat. As the people of my electorate well know, I will be looking for even more police and facilities to protect people and their property. Queensland, and indeed the electorate of Ipswich West, is open for business. I look forward to seeing the benefits from this budget continue. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier and the cabinet for their hard work in bringing down this budget. I know some of the decisions were not easy, but I am confident that the vast majority of Queensland will benefit from and appreciate the difference the budget will make. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (11.15 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2012, the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill 2012 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012. I have listened to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. She continually criticised the government for the decisions that have had to be made in order to repair the state's finances. While criticism is easy, the member failed to make any effort to put forward an alternative budget that would work to bring the state's finances into balance. Given all the difficulties faced, the Treasurer, ministers, ministerial staff and departmental staff have worked very hard to ensure that the state budget moves the business of government towards a future balanced budget. While there has been much negativity surrounding the restructuring of the Public Service, this also has provided an opportunity to look to revitalising front-line services in a streamlined and cost-efficient manner and, in many cases, responding to new ideas and new technologies. I thank those involved in formulating the budget for their hard work.

Despite the budgetary difficulties, the residents of the Maryborough electorate have benefited from the budget allocations. Of high importance to the on average 60-plus residents a week who have to travel away for their medical treatment is the doubling of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. It has been so long since there has been any increase in the patient travel subsidy that the residents of my electorate cannot remember when it was last increased. Our commitment to increase the daily accommodation rate from \$30 per person to \$60 per person per day and to increase the mileage from 15c per kilometre to 30c per kilometre will make a huge difference to those patients and their families. It is difficult enough to have to travel away at a time when you are sick, in pain, needing surgery, or chemotherapy or radiation treatment or any of the other treatments necessary without having to worry needlessly about how necessary travel will be paid for. Although we acknowledge that there will still be a gap, this increased assistance will make travel significantly easier.

The federal member for Wide Bay and federal leader of the Nationals, the Hon Warren Truss, organised a 'Fix the Bruce' convoy in which a group of politicians, both federal and state politicians, drove in convoy along the Bruce Highway from Brisbane to Cairns to highlight how much work was needed to the highway. I took part in the convoy along the 110 kilometres of Bruce Highway that transverses the Maryborough electorate.

A government member: Good on you, member for Maryborough.

Mrs MADDERN: I thank the member. The residents of Maryborough and all those who use the Bruce Highway will be pleased to know that the budget contains an allocation of \$2.499 million to upgrade the intersection of the Bruce Highway and Walker Street on the outskirts of Maryborough. This intersection has been the scene of a number of accidents and in one case resulted in the death of my friend's mother. An amount of \$5.147 million has been allocated to construct two overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway in the northern section of the electorate in the Cherwell River area. Can I say that that is desperately needed. An amount of \$2.5 million has also been allocated for an overtaking lane near Bauple. The residents who use the Cooloola Coast Road, which is the alternative to the Bruce Highway in my electorate, will benefit from repairs to that road. Residents at Howard, Torbanlea and Glenwood

will also benefit from road upgrades. Residents who daily do battle with the intersection of Woongool and Gympie Roads at Tinana will be relieved to know that \$1.01 million has been allocated to improve the intersection.


Education is one of our most important sectors in the community. The most important component of this sector are the teachers and teacher aides who work with our children. We have ensured that these jobs remain safe and have promised additional teacher aides for prep classes. Glenwood State School will benefit from additional teacher aide time from the first round of this program. While teaching is important, the physical structures in which teaching takes place are also important. I am pleased to advise that funds of \$1.677 million have been allocated in the budget for additional teacher accommodation at St Helens School; \$255,000 for replacement of an amenities block at Granville State School; and \$200,000 for a covered sports area at the Aldridge State High School. In addition, grants of up to \$160,000 per school will be made available to P&Cs to allow them to address outstanding building maintenance on their school register. There are 25 state schools in the electorate and I will be contacting the principals and presidents of the P&Cs to offer to work with them to access the funding.

Children are the key to our future. Sadly not all children get the best start in life. Some children are born into vulnerable families where they suffer from neglect. Many of these children end up in foster care. Maryborough is to be one of three centres in Queensland to host a Fostering Families trial. This initiative will help address neglect issues by focusing on developing practical skills in the family home and improving parenting skills. It is a trial which will provide intensive, in-home and out-of-hours family support services for up to 80 vulnerable families. The focus is to keep children in their own homes with the right kind of support to ensure they are safe and cared for.

Agriculture and industry are the base of the economy in Maryborough. The amount of \$4.6 million has been allocated for the Queensland sugar industry for research and development and extension to increase productivity, support the sector's ability to address emerging challenges and to capitalise on export and emerging market opportunities. I am sure that our very proactive canegrowers and MSF Sugar will be looking to take advantage of the opportunities provided. Ongoing funding of \$173 million has been provided to continue the construction of car passenger units, upgrading of suburban cars and the construction and upgrade of three tilt trains at the EDI complex in Maryborough.

The sport and recreation sector has not been forgotten, with \$119,000 for a grass athletics track at Torbanlea; \$25,000 to rebuild the motocross track in Maryborough; and \$15,000 to construct car parks and walking tracks in the Mount Walsh National Park. Funding will be provided for Home Assist to provide assistance to the aged to allow them to stay in their own homes and funds will be available for the upgrading of social housing. The first home owners construction grant will give a boost to the building industry.

This list is not comprehensive. There are other initiatives in the budget and I will work to ensure that those who will benefit by those initiatives are given the information and opportunity to access them. Now that the difficult decisions have largely been made, I am looking forward to working with the electorate and my government colleagues to build vibrant and strong agriculture and industry to provide wealth and employment to our community and provide support to a public service that provides efficient and streamlined services. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (11.23 pm): I rise in this chamber in support of an appropriation bill that delivers on key commitments to Queenslanders and, at the same time, is economically responsible—something that has not happened in this chamber for a very long time. It has been said many times this week, but I am happy to endorse the comments from my colleagues, that this is the most important budget in a generation. This budget is being called a once-in-a-generation budget because a whole generation of Queenslanders have grown up under a Labor government where they have learnt by their leaders' example to live for today and borrow money without thought of how to repay it. Indeed, what Labor did was spend up big and leave us and our children to make the sacrifices necessary to repay the debt, a debt spiralling out-of-control with interest compounding daily, a debt that costs Queenslanders \$200 million in extra interest compared to what New South Wales pays because they shamefully lost our AAA credit rating. How much fun it must have been for the previous government to rack up the credit card. I hope they had a good time at Queenslanders' expense. I know that most of them are still living the high life on their continued annual income while the rest of us pay for it.

On 24 March the people spoke and spoke loudly. They asked us to rein in the \$65 billion debt and get the economy back on track. They begged us to fix a life-threatening and frustrating hospital system, restore law and order and lower the cost of living. So we made these things our commitment. It was never going to be easy. We knew we were going to have to pay back the credit card, we just did not know how bad it was going to be. We will pay back that credit card, but we will also keep our commitment to the Queensland people. This is an excellent budget for Queenslanders as it helps with the cost-of-living pressures that continued to rise under the previous Labor government. We have frozen car registration increases and electricity tariff 11 and will provide rebates of \$80 for water savings.

This budget addresses a problem that I hear over and over in my community and that is the agony that ageing parents of disabled adult children endure worrying who will take care of their children

when they get too old or sick to care for them. The amount of \$15 million will go towards a trial to assist them and that is a good start indeed. I would also like to focus on the two major areas of the Appropriation Bill that will have a great impact not just on my electorate but on all Queenslanders—that is, education and health. Education is a fundamental cornerstone of our society. Our teachers are building the next generation of our society and we as leaders must work to ensure that today's students have every opportunity to reach their full potential. That is why this government is investing in our local schools. We are increasing the number of full-time teacher aides for an additional 150 prep classes each year over four years. Of particular interest to me and my electorate is the \$1.3 million for administration enhancements to the Kuraby State School. Kuraby State School has been desperately seeking funding for enhancements to its administration block for years. Like so many other things, the Labor government ignored them, but we are listening and we are delivering.

As the minister spoke about this morning in question time, the previous Labor government also neglected and ignored the backlog of maintenance work needed in state schools across my electorate. I am proud to be part of a government determined to not only fund and fix the backlogs but we will empower the school communities to determine the outcome that is best for them. We will spend \$200 million over two years providing funding of up to \$160,000 to state school P&Cs to assist in fixing the maintenance backlogs left by the Labor Party. That is not where it ends. It is this government that will invest more than \$20 million into programs and initiatives to enhance Queensland students' education experience in the classroom. This includes \$6.5 million to enable principals to select literacy and numeracy programs that will improve educational standards at their school. Non-government schools will also benefit from the LNP's \$86.25 million election commitment to build better school infrastructure for our children.

Another election commitment being delivered in this budget is the provision of 20 e-tablets to every state special school for their students to use at a cost of \$3.5 million. This also includes up to 10 e-tablets to each state or non-state school offering a special education program. I know that Kuraby and Calamvale special schools are looking forward to receiving them.

Additionally, they will be just as happy to see that we have also committed \$1.4 million to expand support for students with a disability, which will see an additional 30 speech-language pathologists in Queensland state schools. There will be funding of \$1 million over four years to support Queensland schools with access to chaplaincy services and \$1 million over four years to develop a school education program to teach children how to protect themselves. High school students will get the chance to travel to Anzac Day ceremonies at Gallipoli and the Western Front with \$1 million over three years in sponsorship. We have also set aside \$3 million for 30 state schools to participate in the Independent Public Schools initiative in 2012-13 and \$2 million to establish the Queensland Schools' Planning Commission. My local P-12 college has applied to be one of the first schools to participate in that initiative. This is a solid blueprint for the future of Queensland education and will provide the resources required to improve Queensland's educational institutions and equip Queensland teachers for the challenges that lie ahead.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I ask for the level of background noise to be reduced. I can hear the conversations louder than the member speaking.

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: As the mother of a young doctor who works as a locum at many regional Queensland hospitals, I know that he has witnessed first hand just how hard or how bad the situation has been for our health care professionals in dealing with the result of years of neglect and bungling by various ministers. Finally we have a minister who will stand up and take action. Minister Springborg has undertaken the mammoth task of restoring Queenslanders's faith in a system that has been mismanaged for far too long. That is why statewide Queensland Health will receive \$11.862 billion in this budget. We will be investing \$1.9 billion in capital infrastructure, technology, pathology, research, mental health, residential aged care, staff accommodation and information and communication technologies.

My local community, which falls within the Metro South Hospital and Health Service area, will receive a total budget of \$1.638 billion. The Australian government has also provided \$22.4 million towards the \$37 million Queen Elizabeth 11 Jubilee Hospital emergency department upgrade, due for completion in 2013. The Queensland and Australian governments will also provide \$46.2 million to continue work on the \$145.2 million expansion of the Logan Hospital emergency department, which has been a long time coming. The state government has allocated \$6.7 million to continue the \$9 million development of a new 16-bed mental health community care unit at Logan, forecast for completion in early 2013. Additionally, the HHS will receive \$22.2 million worth of vital medical equipment upgrades and improvements over the next two years. The state government will deliver 11 new emergency department treatment bays at QE11 Hospital. This is great news for local residents, who can now sleep better knowing that their government is making the tough decisions so that we can cut waiting lists, open more beds and have more doctors and nurses on the front line.

This is the most important budget in a generation because it does not sweep the problems under the mat. Our cabinet has not put all our problems into the too-hard basket, as the previous government

surely did. The work has only just begun and we will continue to work for all Queenslanders to ensure this state gets back on track, financially and morally. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr RUTHENBERG (Kallangur—LNP) (11.33 pm): I say this: I will keep fighting for the upgrade of the Dakabin Railway Station, which is a vital piece of infrastructure in the fastest growing area of Queensland, and I will not give up bothering the minister for funding for the station. The station was ignored for 30 years by the former government. For our residents I will keep fighting for solutions to noise barriers on the Bruce Highway. I do welcome the funds to conduct noise volume testing, but again I will keep bothering the minister to find a solution for my community. Again, this was ignored by the Labor Party for over 10 years. I will keep fighting for funds to resurface Anzac Avenue and for solutions to the bottleneck at the Petrie roundabout, again ignored by Labor for over 30 years. I will keep working with the schools of my district to access the much-needed maintenance funds and chaplaincy funds. I will continue working on solutions for youth and family services, and various ministers will soon learn of these efforts. Again, this is an area ignored by Labor for over 30 years. These are all problems of Labor's legacy in my electorate. While I do not accept responsibility for causing them, I have accepted responsibility for trying to fix them and, ministers, I will continue.

Mr Rickuss: You are the solution, you are not the problem; is that right?

Mr RUTHENBERG: I take that interjection. Certainly I will be working hard to find solutions. I do not want to trivialise the experience of public servants losing their jobs. It is another Labor legacy. It sucks and it is not their fault. Nonetheless, they are suffering because of the decisions we as a government have made. It is not easy to make decisions that impact negatively on the lives of people. Even though the government's severance packages are generous, I acknowledge the folks who have lost their jobs are suffering because of the mess Labor left us to clean up. Queenslanders told us to clean up Labor's mess. To the folks who have lost their jobs I simply say: I am truly sorry; you are sacrificing much for our community.

What stuns me is the complete lack of ownership by the Labor Party of their legacy of debt, deficit and decaying assets. Today we heard of their plans to retrench up to 41,000 public servants. They had and have no plans, ideas or answers as to how they would repay the debt. Their responses in this place are hollow and without integrity. Not one plan has been presented by the Labor Party for how they would pay down the debt—not one plan.

As unpleasant a task as it has been, I do put on the record that I support the budget measures. As hard as some of them are, we must arrest the out-of-control spending left to us by the Labor government or every person in Queensland will be required to pay more tax. I am glad that this government did not raise, in any fashion, the cost of living for working families. In fact, we have started to provide some relief to families and businesses. Finally, we have a government that is listening to the people of Queensland, weighing up the options and transparently offering solutions, not hiding in an office or behind faceless men in suits.

The plans and measures of this budget will not only arrest the debt but also start to lay down the fundamentals of encouraging business to once again invest in Queensland, for example, the increased cap of payroll tax over the next six years to \$1.6 million, the abolition of the waste tax and the new \$15,000 first home owner grant for new construction or off the plan purchases. Can members imagine that every time a new home gets built, roof tiles get bought, paint gets bought, wood gets bought, floor tiles get bought, doors get bought, white goods get bought. All sorts of things get bought within the manufacturing industry around this great land. In turn, that starts the economy rolling again. What a great initiative. I congratulate the cabinet for bringing this forward.

The reintroduction of the stamp duty exemption is worth over \$7,000 to around 500,000 homes. That is a great start to help businesses get going again. Add to that our continuing effort to reduce red tape and the small businesses in my area are once again starting to look with hope to the future. A solicitor in my area who deals with business and their particular issues has reported to me that for the first time in years he is starting to see very small capital investment by business in my area. That means that they have some hope for the future. This budget certainly provides that.

I want to acknowledge the members for Morayfield, Murrumba and Pine Rivers. They are my mates. I work with these guys, these community champions, on many joint issues. Together we work for the good of those who elected us to represent them. I can assure the people who trusted these men that they are getting excellent value for money, for I have seen these men in action and I know that they are fighting hard with me for our communities.

In a time of deferred budget items and cut programs, I am glad to say that the hard work of representing our community has paid off. This budget signals a strong future for Kallangur. This budget is a vote of confidence in our efforts of 'bothering' ministers. This budget is a vote of confidence in that team that I talked about. This is a turning point for our community. After years of neglect, finally—finally—Kallangur is getting its share, something we promised during the election campaign. Our community will benefit from the debt reduction strategies contained in this year's budget as well as from a renewed focus on delivering front-line services. A strong financial position for Queensland means a strong Kallangur.

This budget puts Queensland on the path to regaining our AAA credit rating, which will save hundreds of millions of dollars in interest payments annually which can then be diverted to local service delivery. This budget delivers on the Newman government's commitments to reduce the cost of living for local working-class families. We are delivering on our commitments to the people of Kallangur. We are delivering savings on electricity costs, water bills, car registration fees and the costs of purchasing the family home.

But even before the budget was handed down I have been able to deliver to my community some vital infrastructure. Members, I knocked on the doors of nearly 14,000 homes during the election campaign and since then a lot more. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can tell you this: one of the things that really struck me was the level of disabled folks in our area. Over 10 per cent of the population of our schools are disabled folks. I was very, very pleased to be able to make the announcement, with the other three gentlemen who represent the electorates around me, of \$930,000 for respite care over three years. This is brand-new money and it is a real help at a vital time. It is fantastic.

I also worked with the Minister for Transport and the Assistant Minister for Public Transport on upgrading a major arterial route across the railway line at Boundary Road. I am talking about an old wooden, rickety bridge that had been left to rot by the Labor Party on a vital transport route. An inspection was done and the inspection had to downgrade that bridge to two tonnes. The department worked hard and listened to me, and I am glad to say that we will be delivering a brand-new bridge at a cost of just over \$600,000 for the folks in and around my electorate so that that vital arterial road can be opened again. So even before the budget was handed down that was able to be delivered.

I can also tell the House that even before the budget was handed down we were able to announce that 18 new police officers will be coming into our area. How fantastic is that? For the first time, the people in my electorate are finally—finally—seeing their share of the pie because that seat is a seat that is now represented by a person who actually lives in the community and cares about the community and listens to the community and delivers for the community.

I want to sum up by informing the people of my electorate of some of the benefits that they will be receiving as a consequence of this budget. I note that these benefits are shared by people right across Queensland, even those who are represented by the Labor Party. There will be an \$80 rebate on the domestic water bills of South-East Queensland. How cool is that? We have put a freeze on car registration fees for family vehicles—again, another commitment. We have reinstated the principal place of residence stamp duty exemption, saving homebuyers up to \$7,175 when buying a family home. Do members know what people do with that \$7,175? If someone buys a new home, they want to make it their own, don't they?

Mr Rickuss: Buy a new fridge.

Mr RUTHENBERG: They buy new carpets, a new fridge, a new television. And what does that do? It generates activity in the local economy. And guess what? That carpet layer gets another job and the Retravision fella gets another sale. This happens and it just goes round. Mr Deputy Speaker, I have to tell you that this is just so exciting.

We have put a freeze on the standard electricity tariff, saving families an average of \$120 a year. That is real savings. That is money in the pocket. But they will still vote against it. We are increasing the first home owners grant. At the start of this speech I said that I live in the fastest growing area in Queensland, and I share that honour with my good friend here the member for Morayfield. We see houses going up all over the place.

Mr Berry: I think I might challenge that.

Mr RUTHENBERG: I would be happy to challenge that—maybe with an arm wrestle later, member for Ipswich. In fact, this is a very, very good thing for us because what it does is it allows developers to bring in a whole new demographic into our area, and we welcome that. That is fantastic.

One of the most exciting things for us to be able to announce and confirm is that the brand-new rail link from Petrie to Kippa-Ring will open. It will go ahead. We have committed to it. It is coming. Do you know why that is so cool, Mr Deputy Speaker? Because it will provide jobs. It will stimulate the local economy for years.

Mr Dillaway: It'll take cars off the road.

Mr RUTHENBERG: It will take cars off the road in the long term. I take that interjection from the member for Bulimba. This is truly a fantastic investment for our area. I might say that it has only been promised since the late 1800s, and it is this government who is delivering it to that area!

I also note that \$3.6 million will be spent on a water treatment plant at the North Pine Dam. This is not very exciting by the sounds of it, but there would be a lot of people really excited—

Mr Rickuss: They have a couple defunct ones down the coast.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Yes, they have. There would be a lot of people really excited if they turned the tap on and brown water came out of it. While it sounds mundane and boring, it is actually very

important for my community and the community of Pine Rivers and also for the community of the Moreton Bay region, because that water goes out all over that area. It is important and, at this time when we have had to take a lot of austerity measures, it is an important recognition of the area that we live in.

Of all the benefits to Kallangur that I am going to talk about here, the most gratifying one is \$1.413 million for Dakabin State High School. I spoke about Dakabin State High School and the wonderful effort they put in from a community perspective in our area during my maiden speech. I have been working with Dakabin State High School and the Minister for Education since I was elected on a bunch of maintenance issues at that high school. When I first went to that school, the principal took me around and I walked into one of the buildings and he said, 'Have a look up there,' and I could see through the ceiling, through the roof, to the sky—Labor's legacy. We have kids who are learning in those conditions and it is absolutely disgraceful. I am just completely pleased that we will be able to substantially fix up a humungous backlog of maintenance at that school. It is this government that delivered that to our community.

Also associated with the Petrie to Kippa-Ring rail is the expansion of the third track from Lawnton to Petrie. We have to put a new bridge across the river there. There is \$7.3 million allocated for that project and that will continue to grow.

One of the other areas that I am really, really pleased about is a grant of \$368,000 to an organisation called Home Assist Secure based in Petrie, right in the middle of my electorate. Home Assist Secure is a fantastic organisation. Some members may have that organisation in their electorates. I will read from a press release I put out a couple of days ago which states—

Home Assist Secure removes some of the practical housing-related difficulties experienced by people 60 years and over and people of any age with a disability who wish to remain living in their own home.

This is a fantastic result for our community and, again in a budget where austerity measures are occurring everywhere, this is a great recognition for my community and for the hard work we have put in to ensure that we secure that funding going forward.

The \$160,000 for state schools for the backlog in maintenance will also be warmly welcomed by the other state schools in my area. I look forward to working with them so we can actually get that funding and get that stuff going. What is really exciting about this measure is that it actually puts the control back in the hands of the P&C and they can go out and stimulate the local economy. Yet again this budget is looking at stimulating the local economy. No wonder the businesses in my area are just starting to tip their toes into the pool of reinvesting in their businesses. They should do that because I can tell them that we have a bright future coming our way.

There will be \$17 million between Pine Rivers and Kallangur in ongoing disability support grants, and there will also be about \$5 million in upgrades to social housing properties between Pine Rivers and Kallangur. We are also delivering an additional 300 new police officers through the state this year—and I spoke about this earlier—and 18 of them have come to our area. There is \$15 million across the state for a trial to assist elderly parent carers of disabled children to make arrangements for the future care of their children. Again, I will be going to two or three homes next week where I know this is a particular issue and worry for them because the parents are over 80 years of age and they are caring for their children who have multiple disabilities and who are actually in their 30s. Those parents are very concerned about where these children will end up so this is a great result for them.

I also have to tell the House that the increase in the payroll tax threshold will be a fantastic boon for the small businesses in my area. That would artificially otherwise hold them there. They now have an ability to plan for the future and actually get into it and start to invest in their growth in their businesses.


I will finish off by talking about the AJ Wyllie Bridge. Holy smokes, what an absolute catastrophe that was under the Labor Party. The bridge was identified as being unsafe just after the floods. In March 2011 it was identified that it had to be rebuilt yet it took more than 11 months for the construction on that bridge to start, although the money was already available in June 2011. I am pleased to tell the House that—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Procrastination? It certainly was procrastination, member for Lockyer. That procrastination hurt people, and it was not just because they could not get across the bridge. I can tell the House that there are only three crossings across the river and one of them was reduced to half and the other one is not there when they open up the dam. So this is a major issue in my area and the member for Pine Rivers and I have been active on it for over two years.

What I am really sad about and what I do not hear the Labor Party cracking up about is that seven or eight businesses went belly up during the time that bridge has been down. What I do not hear the Labor Party carrying on about—and I have never heard them carry on about this—is the jobs that have been lost because the number of vehicles on that road has dropped by 10,000 a day. I have to say that the indignation that I sense on behalf of some of those who sit in this House is actually quite hypocritical.

Overall, for the first time in a long time, our community is starting to get its fair share. I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and the cabinet for their hard work and their efforts. I am convinced that this budget will set the foundation for a good future for Kallangur and Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (11.53 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2012 and what the Bulimba electorate will be able to achieve over the next 12 months. I congratulate the Treasurer on a fiscally responsible state budget. We were elected in March this year knowing that Queensland was not in a financially stable position, having suffered at the hands of Labor for the past 15 years. Now, being the first conservative budget since 1997, as the Treasurer has said, it is the most important budget of a generation. It marks the turning point for Queensland's economy and marks the beginning of our journey to get our state's finances back on track and back in the black.

The former Labor member in her budget address last year stated that Queensland was poised for a new wave of prosperity with economic growth heading back to five per cent next year. She said that the 2011 budget would deliver lower deficits, lower debt, more jobs and nation leading growth. Next year is now, and economic growth has estimated to only come in at four per cent and the wave of prosperity that we were promised under Labor did not eventuate. However, our government has a plan and we are revitalising the Queensland economy.

Recent comments in the media have shown that the Australian Labor Party still do not get it. Accusing us of playing politics, the federal Labor member for Griffith claimed that our government has taken a stance of gross exaggeration and gross distortion of debt. I am sorry, but I cannot turn a blind eye on losing our AAA credit rating and nor did the people of Queensland. I cannot ignore the extra \$100 million we are paying in interest each year. I cannot pretend that the \$65 billion worth of Queensland debt does not exist in the hope that it will magically disappear like the members of the Labor Party believe it will.

We, the current LNP government of Queensland, are not going to turn our heads in denial of the economic situation of Queensland and hope for the best. No, the Newman government is a government of action and we are making the tough decisions now so that we can secure the future for all Queenslanders. We are tackling this head-on and taking action. We are not going to beat around the bush. Queensland needs fixing and we are going to fix it. This is a plan. It is a tough plan, it is a responsible plan and it is an effective plan.

Even with the dire situation we find ourselves in as a result of Labor's mismanagement and irresponsibility with Queensland's finances, the 2012-13 budget has still managed to deliver some key initiatives that my electorate of Bulimba will benefit from. The key highlights include: \$1.28 million to reduce the maintenance backlogs in our seven state schools; \$1.6 million to reduce the impact of the soaring water costs, giving each of the 20,000 households in Bulimba an \$80 rebate; and \$5.5 million in grants to support a range of disability services across Bulimba.

The biggest key election commitment we made was lowering the cost of living and I am determined, as the local member, to see this delivered to the Bulimba electorate. I know that many feel the financial burdens of living from day to day and I am pleased to see that this budget will do exactly that—assist in easing those pressures for the residents of Bulimba.

Let me tell the house about a young family living in Morningside, dead smack in the middle of the Bulimba electorate. Chris and Laura are in their mid-30s, have two young children and two family cars and are on a modest combined income. They currently rent a small three-bedroom house but are looking to buy a three-bedroom town house in the next 12 months and want to stay in the area. Chris catches the train to and from work daily from the Cannon Hill train station. The most recent ABS census figures regard this as the average household make-up living in Bulimba. This family will benefit greatly from our 2012-13 budget through our government lowering the cost of living. They will save up to \$120 on their electricity bill, they will receive a \$80 rebate on their domestic water bill, they will save \$330 on public transport costs through our combined initiatives of halving the planned increase in January 2013 and 2014 to just 7.5 per cent and making all journey's after the ninth free within that week, and they will save on their two car registration fees. All up, this budget delivers up to \$550 extra into the hip pocket of this family in just one year.

But the budget does much more for this family. The brand new \$15,000 First Home Owner Construction Grant initiative available for new homes under \$750,000 will support the hard hit local housing construction industry and will greatly benefit this family. There are two new locations that are on the drawing board to be converted to a variety of housing styles within the Bulimba electorate. The first is East Village, which is Brisbane's exciting new eastside story. It is the new lifestyle focal point of the revitalised Cannon Hill where the old CSIRO site has undergone master planning and is in the midst of being converted into contemporary town homes and stylish apartments centred around a shopping, dining and entertainment precinct. The second location is the old Seven Hills TAFE site which has just lodged their DA whereby they are planning on turning the area into a residential, community and bushland precinct, although much work undoubtedly still needs to be done to gain community support and address traffic flow concerns for the old TAFE site. If you include in this our reinstatement of the

principal place of residence concessional duty, then this family has the potential to save a further \$7,175 when they buy their family home. These new government initiatives could not have come at a better time for encouraging home buyers to these magical parts of my electorate.

But wait, there is even more for this family in the Newman government budget. Education is an area that I will always feel is of the utmost importance to our state and its future. One of the most exciting things Bulimba will see over the next two years is \$200 million towards state school parents and citizens organisations in grants of up to \$160,000 per school to assist in fixing the maintenance backlog that has been long overdue. Forgotten by the previous government, this is just another example of Labor mismanagement and neglect.


With no less than seven state schools in my electorate, I have been fighting for many projects that these various schools so desperately require. I am ecstatic that this budget will see up to \$1.28 million going straight to improving the education experience of our children of Bulimba and strengthening the ultimate future of our state. This family has a choice between three local state primary schools in the near vicinity. Examples of where this money could be allocated to improve these schools for their kids include: Seven Hills State School finally being able to upgrade their large play and outdoor learning area, which has been closed for the past three years due to structural safety concerns; Morningside State School could install covered walkways between their key learning areas to protect them from inclement weather; or Cannon Hill State School could construct the sound barrier for their prep classrooms that are located directly adjacent to the very busy Wynnum Road. All of these things have been requested time and time again.

When those children move into senior school, then they face the disaster that is Balmoral State High School's maintenance program. That money could start addressing that school's very long list of maintenance needs that it has had for such a long time. This facility has received very little attention in the past 15 years. The hall could do with a makeover and could once again be a central focal point for the community. The added bonus of the Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund is that it has the opportunity to further support local businesses, which will have the ability to throw their hat in the ring to win the projects that the schools deem necessary to reduce the backlog of maintenance left by the previous government. As I often quip, it is evident that very little of the \$65 billion of debt that Queensland has been left with has been spent in areas of most need for the schools of the Bulimba electorate.

In addition to this \$1.28 million, several other educational initiatives will benefit this young family of Bulimba as they start their schooling in the next three years, including full-time teacher aides rolled out to an additional 150 prep classes each year in areas of greatest need. Additional speech pathologists will be employed across the state. But wait, there is even more in this budget for this family; yes, even more. This family is planning to have another baby in the coming years and will greatly benefit from the \$28.9 million Mums and Bubs home and community visits initiative. They will also see an increase in health funding of 7.3 per cent, which will see their family have appropriate access to health care and services. They will also see an extra 300 police on the front line over the next 12 months which will ensure that our community is a safe and secure environment for their children as well as other children. Having young children, this family will also benefit from our \$18 million Get in the Game sporting initiatives that will have a positive impact on our many and varied local sporting clubs. We will also see the many local businesses supported through our increase in the payroll tax threshold, our repeal of the industry waste levy and our ongoing commitment to reduce red tape. These will all be key drivers to employ more local people in local businesses.

The two most common concerns raised with me throughout the electorate of Bulimba are the need to have flexible and self-directed disability services and parents' concerns about who will care for their child with a disability when they themselves can no longer do so. We have delivered on both of those fronts in this budget through the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation trial that will deliver a \$15 million initiative to invest in projects that will give parent carers more certainty about the ongoing care for their adult child with a disability and the Your Life Your Choice initiative. I am filled with hope that residents of Bulimba who are in this situation will find security in these programs. Parents of children with disabilities are some of the most selfless, hardworking and inspiring people whom I have had the honour of meeting and they are all deserving of something in return. The least we can do is give them the comfort of knowing that their child will continue to be well cared for when they are no longer able to do so themselves and to have a choice in what services they or their children need.

We are making the tough decisions that the previous Labor government was unable to make. By making these decisions now, we can strive forward for a brighter, more prosperous future for Queenslanders. I congratulate the Treasurer and our government on a strong budget that will no doubt revitalise Queensland's economy and get our state back on track. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (12.04 am): I rise in support of the first LNP budget—the first conservative budget—in 15 years. This is a budget about building Queensland's economy. It is about building a bright future for Queensland. As a former mortgage broker, I understand families' budgets. One of the primary issues which confronted my clients was the increases in the cost of living. This was a

direct result of the previous government's inability to manage our state's finances. It is not the former members of parliament who suffer, but it is the hardworking mums and dads of the Albert electorate who try to make ends meet.

Mr Rickuss: Would you give this previous government a mortgage if you were a mortgage broker?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Definitely not! They have overspent on the credit card. They could not service the mortgage, unfortunately.

Our budget is about building a four-pillar economy focusing on all sectors, not solely relying on the finite resources of one sector. This budget provides corrective measures to rectify the greatest increase in government expenditure—interest. Interest has been the fastest growing expense in the Queensland budget. An amount of \$3.5 billion is needed to service total government sector debt. This will increase to \$5.3 billion, or nine per cent of revenue, in 2015-16. This is a direct reflection of our state living beyond its means. As stated in the independent Commission of Audit report, gross debt is expected to hit \$92 billion in 2015-16 and \$100 billion by 2018-19 if we do not undertake corrective measures now. This would mean a greater burden on every man, woman and child in Queensland. We need to take action. By undertaking responsible fiscal management, we will save taxpayers \$1.3 billion in interest payments over the forward estimates. This represents 1,300 hospital beds, 16,250 additional teachers, or 26 brand new primary schools.


The electorate of Albert is located within the expanding northern Gold Coast growth corridor where good fiscal management is required to meet Albert's future needs as the population increases. This means that the demand for services and facilities will naturally increase. The previous government certainly was not considering Albert or its residents when continuing to increase the state's debt. Such drunken sailor spending has hurt our state and has placed large demands on our limited resources. The inability of the previous government to fund adequate infrastructure has left the state with substandard roads and transport networks. Once again, its poor fiscal management and lack of vision is obvious. To those who have lost their jobs, I say: I am sorry. However, this is the legacy that Labor left to us—a legacy of debt.

Our budget recognises the failures of the previous government to deliver the basic maintenance in our schools. Simple maintenance issues can now be addressed by those who know the issues firsthand—the P&C associations. The Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund gives P&Cs the ability to hire local tradies, therefore, keeping the money local and getting the jobs done effectively and efficiently. This has added advantages to eliminate a large proportion of bureaucratic nonsense which they currently endure. There is one school in Albert that desperately needs to repair a faulty roof which is partly collapsed, and the Advancing Our Schools maintenance fund is delivering the P&C the power to get this fixed. Albert residents are also winning in this budget with the delivery of upgrades to the surface of the M1, capital works programs for the Coomera Springs State School early years centre and upgrades of social rental housing properties across various South-East Queensland electorates. This budget has delivered funding for the construction of a new John Muntz Causeway bridge. This bridge was damaged during the natural disasters which hit our state and is a vital arterial road for the Albert community. The Newman government has listened and has provided for Albert residents.

Another issue which is important to Albert is the delivery of police officers on the beat. Our budget is providing an additional 300 new officers for our region over the next four years. During my roadsides and whilst out doorknocking in my electorate, police and policing are generally the first issues raised with me. Delivering this budget commitment shows that the Newman government is listening. Our government is committed to addressing crime through this budget by establishing a major and organised crime squad on the Gold Coast. This commitment will incorporate an illegal firearms team to fight crime.

As several of my colleagues have already mentioned, the first Newman budget is about supporting new home buyers with a more than doubling of the first home owner grant. This initiative will have a flow-on effect to many industries within Albert. It is not about building high-rises; it is about building the family home, the bread and butter for our tradies. As we all know, it is not just the builders who can benefit but also carpet manufacturers, those selling window-dressings, electricians, those selling kitchen and hardware supplies and nurseries. We all know that there are a number of bits and pieces that go into the construction of a new home. As Albert is located in the growth corridor of the Gold Coast, the flow-on effect of this budget initiative has the potential to influence and benefit a broad range of local businesses.

Finally, this government will continue to fight the cost-of-living pressures on families, singles and pensioners. We have proven ourselves by freezing family vehicle registration and electricity tariff 11 and now by providing a water rebate of \$80 to domestic households in South-East Queensland. I wish to thank the Treasurer, the Premier, ministers and my colleagues. This budget is about getting Queensland back on track.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (12.11 am): In light of the time, being after midnight, I will keep my remarks on the budget bills brief, and I encourage others to do the same. The first Newman government

state budget delivers on key commitments to lower the cost of living, revitalise front-line services, grow a four-pillar economy and help regain the state's AAA credit rating. If we ever needed evidence of that, it is found in the Fitch Ratings report handed down today with regard to Queensland. It states—

As a result of historically weak budget performance combined with large capital expenditures Queensland's debt has more than doubled in the last three years.

And further—

Queensland's debt matrix has weakened significantly and is no longer comparable with its international peers.

The Fitch report says it all. This budget is about righting the wrongs of the previous government and is designed to halt the state's slide into more debt and deficit. Locally in my electorate of Gympie, we know all too well about Labor's financial mismanagement. You only have to look at the Traveston Dam debacle or the way in which the Health payroll blow-outs impacted upon local residents. All of these have paid the price, along with all other Queenslanders, in the hundreds of millions of dollars for Labor's financial mismanagement. As a result, this government has had to make some tough decisions to achieve Queensland's financial and fiscal repair task, so that we can reset the state's finances on a sustainable path. I acknowledge that this has been a difficult and challenging time for people. However, we need a right sized Public Service that provides services to Queenslanders at a price that Queenslanders are prepared to pay.

It is not my intention to go through all of the budget items. I would direct those who are interested to the budget website, which is budget.qld.gov.au. Queenslanders can go online, see this budget and compare it to previous budgets.

I do wish to touch on some of the good news for the local families and communities across the Gympie region, which will reap some of the benefits of budget initiatives. Many of the schools in the Gympie electorate have been celebrating centenaries. In many cases original buildings are located on the school sites. Although the school I refer to has not reached its centenary, I clearly remember that one of our schools had a problem with its sewage treatment plant and the maintenance budget was not able to be directed towards fixing it. So the kids could not play in the playground because of exposure to raw sewage. That is what people in Gympie and across the state of Queensland have experienced under Labor. The \$200 million that this government has committed, with funding of up to \$160,000 for each school, will go a long way to addressing those types of issues.

The Bruce Highway is a particularly strong issue for my electorate. We welcome the \$1 billion allocation. I thank the minister, who is in the House. That funding will improve road safety. Year after year we read reports that said that the most dangerous stretch of highway in Australia was the section between Cooroy and Curra. Over 50 lives were lost between 2000 and the commencement of the work on that. We need to see that work continue.

Other budget initiatives that will have an impact on my community are those that address the cost of living. Families will see benefits from the freeze in car rego costs and electricity tariffs, and the reinstatement of the principal place of residence concession for buying a family home will benefit families in Gympie.


Also of great benefit to those patients who are required to travel from Gympie to other areas will be the boost to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. I thank the health minister for that because it is long, long overdue. Our small and medium businesses will, as will others across the state, benefit from paying less payroll tax. We will see many other benefits in this area.

In light of my connection with the deaf community, I thank the Minister for Community Safety for retaining the subsidy for the deaf smoke alarms. That is an important initiative. It is one that I highlighted in this parliament when we debated the bill—

Mr Rickuss: Who actually brought that up?

Mr GIBSON: I highlighted it, along with others in the parliament. I spoke about how important it is. The subsidy will continue, and I commend the minister for it.

I recognise that this is a tough budget. It is probably the toughest budget that any government would have to deliver. It is a credit to the cabinet and to the Premier that we have a government with backbone, that has been willing to deliver this budget—not trying to achieve any short-term benefit but rather looking long term so that we can deliver better economic management across the state, more efficient services, lower cost of living and stronger economic management. It is, as many before me have said, the most important budget in a generation.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (12.17 am): I rise to speak to the first Newman LNP budget, delivered by the Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, member for Clayfield. This is the budget of a generation. I have long held the belief that the private sector is the engine room of the economy. It is this engine that creates the jobs, pays the taxes, creates both individual and corporate wealth and provides those necessary services for our community. Government is effectively the foreman who oversees the machine so that it runs both efficiently and effectively. It is the role of government to replace the parts,

provide the oil, undertake maintenance operations and overall ensure that this engine is maintained correctly and is not vulnerable to stress.

It can be any machine. Driving and maintaining your own motor vehicle is analogous to this metaphoric engine. Maintaining the motor vehicle and driving it carefully will almost ensure that it lasts for a lifetime. However, if an errant teenager to whom you lend the car drives it carelessly and does not heed the messages coming from the warning gauges, it will be only a matter of time before the engine overheats from not filling the radiator and not watching the gauges. Then the car falters.

This analogy relates to every economy, whether it is the sophisticated economic powerhouse of the USA or the People's Republic of China. The message is to keep an eye on the gauges and watch for the warning signs. Vehicles often drive on smooth roads and sometimes reluctantly on dirt corrugated roads. After all, that is what motor vehicles do and that is what economies do. We do expect for there to be natural disasters. We do expect for there to be financial crises in this globe of ours. Queensland has been through global financial crises and floods and famines. These economic and natural disasters are, after all, natural occurrences. It is for government with its many advisers and experts to forewarn of these disasters or to provide strategies for government to pass through with a minimum disturbance to the economy. It is no excuse for any government to say that the predicament that they have found has been caused by these crises and natural disasters. So what happened to Queensland's engine? This is a state that has an abundance of natural resources, has been the envy of our southern neighbours, has a climate which encourages people to our state to support our tourism, and both pastoral and agricultural lands that not only provide us but also the world.

Mr Rickuss: This was the only government that could go broke in a boom.

Mr BERRY: I will come to that, member for Lockyer. What else do we need? Of course we need a workforce able and willing to work, to contribute to the Queensland economy. Using an analogy, the people of Queensland are the oil that makes the Queensland machine run smoothly and with as little friction as possible, and that includes our public servants. With all these rudimentary elements in place, Queensland had been humming along and bringing prosperity and certainty of rewards for our citizens up to a point in time. So what went wrong? To examine this question, I need to explain where we are now and how we got there.

Akin to running a vehicle on three cylinders, Queensland has lost its AAA rating. We lost the rating because of the state of our economy. The penalty we pay is the payment of more interest on our loans—not only Queensland but also every local government that has had to borrow funds to maintain those local economies. This is akin to not replacing the tyres, not keeping the engine tuned and not eliminating the rust when it formed over time. The cost now of returning that motor vehicle to running condition will cost this economy \$86.3 billion in 2014-15. Of course, I speak of our debt position. That would have happened if in fact nothing was done to repair our economy. Akin to not tuning our car, our vehicle is now running more expensively to the point where the family income has been totally absorbed by paying for the running costs. Even worse, we now have to borrow to maintain this vehicle.

Queenslanders became increasingly worried about the way in which the Queensland economy was being run—so much so that on 24 March 2012 they decided to get expert advice and action from a party that is prepared to deliver. After all, the conservatives have had a long history of balancing budgets, making surpluses and effectively watching the gauges. Queenslanders abandoned the backyard bookkeeper who solved an unemployment problem by having the government employ 20,000 more public servants than were necessary; offering salaries and wages far beyond what the private sector can pay; and funding every program without putting in place the KPIs, benchmarks, performance targets, tender limits and so on. We ended up with a system where the payroll system of the largest health provider in this state did not know who it paid, how much and what work was being done for that pay. We ended up with a government employee fraud being able to unskillfully divest \$16 million of taxpayers' money to finance a lavish lifestyle. We have ended up in a situation where our hospitals have reputedly seven nonclinicians to every doctor or nurse whereas private hospitals have a ratio of three to one. It is not for me to speculate as to the culture of wantonly spending this generation's inheritance other than by setting out the reasons as to why this is not only a budget of a generation but also a budget for a generation.

It is disappointing from an observational perspective for the Australian Labor Party to draw its talent from only unions. Having been employed with unlimited job security is not the fertile soil in which hard work, enterprise and action are nurtured. It is disappointing for union members to unquestionably follow union leaders—for there to be no question about from where they had come and where they are going, being part of the problem and not part of the solution. I have levelled criticism at the previous government's spending. Unfortunately, this so-called social justice spending is both flawed at an intellectual and an economic level. I remember the days of the Australian Labor Party at a federal level where Prime Minister Whitlam's government gave a grant for the development of a surfboard for women. The amount was about \$30,000. In those days one could buy a quaint house in the western suburbs of Brisbane for less than that. The cartoonist of the *Courier-Mail* at that time had his own ideas

about the R&D of the women's surfboard. He depicted a surfboard with two strategic holes cut into the board. The point I am making is that government is the engine—

Mr Rickuss: Did it work?

Mr BERRY: Effectively. The point I am making is that government is an engine as part of a thing which we call the economy; it is not the economy. Government is there to assist business. It is not for business to support and feed government. If we get the balance right, business prospers and in turn government earns revenue and Queenslanders prosper with the improvement of amenities and services expected from government. It was not the straw that broke the camel's back, but certainly the mooted ski jump did little to share faith in the Bligh government. This government has its genesis in small business and in business generally. Its policy embodies the ideal of the individual and allows the individual to nurture, to build business, to create wealth as all Queenslanders in the past have done going back to the seventies and eighties. The Treasurer has delivered a budget which of course is based on reasonable rational assumptions—not the assumption based on a revenue increase of 14 per cent but a more modest and realistic six per cent. This budget is of course to have a fiscal budget surplus in 2014-15, stabilising the debt at \$81.7 billion in 2014-15. Under Labor without any policy change, it was to blow out to \$86.3 billion. Having a sustainable economic growth of four per cent heeds well for our economy.

The Newman LNP government has been entrusted with the task of ensuring that Queensland is put back on track. Whether that attracts the chagrin of the union movement is unimportant to the main game. However, I implore union members to work with government, especially those members employed in government. The unsustainable way the public sector was used by the Bligh government harmed the public sector. History shows that in the 1970s and 1980s Queensland's public sector had punched above its weight in managing Queensland's engine economy—a record for all state government employees to be proud. Those better days will soon return where our public sector will be efficient, effective and recognised as such. As for all Labor government treasurers, in my lifetime I do not think I will see a surplus budget by an ALP Treasurer. This budget has directly benefited—

A government member interjected.

Mr BERRY: I am ageing. This budget has directly benefited Ipswich by providing 1,200 government employees to work in Ipswich, by providing a direct injection of up to \$160,000 to P&Cs of the many schools in our city, by making improvements to the Cunningham Highway, by improving Ipswich's health system in continuing the construction and outfitting of the Ipswich Hospital, and by providing a new fire station complex for the Ripley area with an estimated construction cost of over \$5 million. Ipswich will benefit by the long-term consequences of this budget. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr SHUTTLEWORTH (Ferny Grove—LNP) (12.28 am): I rise in the early hours of a new day to speak about the measures which this government in its early period will put in place to deliver Queensland a much brighter future. Few Queenslanders would have argued in early March that we needed to embark upon a program of austerity to return our great state to the position of strength and prosperity we all desire for ourselves and our future generations. This government, led by Campbell Newman, was tasked with this difficult undertaking in early March.

The measures undertaken are difficult, more so because of the human factor and the impact has upon individuals and their extended families. Although my colleagues have expressed compassion for the human toll that our austerity measures will take, I am sure that each will understand that, with employment expenses accounting for almost half of government expenditure, this simply could not continue. I recall a time when I was made redundant from a senior position as general manager of a local Brisbane company. I had a young family and an uncertain future, which amounted to an emotionally difficult time. I did not have a lump sum payment to provide assistance in that transition. However, with the benefit of hindsight, I am now able to look at the time as perhaps the most lucrative of my career. I know that the measures that we are delivering throughout this budget will further stimulate the economy and drive further opportunities for growth and future employment.

The budget, released by the Treasurer on Tuesday, provides a capacity for the government to deliver its stated commitment to the people of Queensland. Consistently, the people of the Ferny Grove electorate have spoken to me about their difficulty in making ends meet in their family budgets. Their cost of living was difficult to manage and they were looking to their government to deliver some relief. I have spoken previously of Paul from Arana Hills, who with his wife and three children were at best treading water while watching their assets such as their car and home depreciate faster than necessary owing to a lack of sufficient maintenance. There are many measures that are directly focused upon providing this cost-of-living relief, such as the freezing of tariff 11, the freezing of the registration cost of the family car, the halving of the increase in public transport for this and next year, free 10th trip and beyond fares each weak for go card users and a once-off rebate for water costs in South-East Queensland. These measures will deliver approximately \$260 worth of savings this year alone.

Throughout the campaign I also made commitments to the people of the Ferny Grove electorate that, as part of an LNP government, we would reduce waste, strengthen our economic position by

reducing debt and restore our AAA credit rating. This budget ensures that the corrective actions that we have taken will stabilise our forecast debt at \$81.7 billion in 2014-15, \$4.6 billion below the level predicted, and we will deliver a fiscal surplus of \$652 million in 2014-15. Measures such as this will ensure that we will be able in time to reduce our debt so that the fastest-growing government expense, that of interest payments, is reduced over time as we begin to pay down our debt with the surpluses that we have delivered. An undeniable fact is that the loss of our AAA credit rating is costing us an additional \$100 million per annum in interest payments, which would assist greatly in the delivery of additional government grants and programs.

There are other state-wide programs that will provide savings to individuals within the electorate of Ferny Grove. The reintroduction of the stamp duty concessions on the primary place of residence can save homebuyers up to \$7,000 on the purchase of their home. In addition, a newly announced initiative, the \$15,000 First Home Owner Construction Grant, will not simply provide financial assistance to the first home buyer but will also significantly stimulate activity throughout the construction and development sectors. Many of the 3½ thousand small businesses operating within the Ferny Grove electorate that are either directly or associated peripherally with the housing and construction sectors will be the beneficiaries of this initiative.

Throughout the election campaign I made a number of commitments and I am pleased today to be able to announce that the following commitments have received an allocation of funds. There has been \$160,000 committed to the upgrade of field lighting at the Pine Hills Football Club and \$250,000 has been committed to the planning and design stage of traffic signals at the entry/exit point of Keperra Sanctuary on Samford Road, with a further \$1.65 million committed in the 2013-14 financial year for construction. Additionally, the allocation of the following funds have been confirmed: \$73,000 for funding for the demolition of an existing pit toilet block and the installation of a replacement upgraded amenities block with improved waste management to meet the current standard for the Maijala-D'Aguilar National Park; \$120,000 as part of the Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Program for the archery lanes at Samford; \$2.2 million for stage 1 of additional accommodation at the Mount Samson State School; \$18 million for a two-year trial of 15-minute train intervals between weekday peak periods on the Ferny Grove train line; and \$11.188 million for the finalisation of the Keperra to Ferny Grove rail duplication and Ferny Grove station.

Additionally, the electorate's eight state schools will benefit through their share of the \$200 million Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund, with grants of up to \$160,000 for much needed and previously neglected maintenance programs. I have already received significant feedback about the benefit that this allocation is likely to provide our schools, which have in the past sourced maintenance works through local providers and have realised significant cost savings in doing so. This initiative empowers schools and stimulates local economies. It is a real win-win gemstone of this year's budget.

The budget also demonstrates through proactive and positive actions our commitment to the advancement of disability services. The Newman government has committed \$959 million towards special disability services and the introduction of the Your Life Your Choice and elderly carer programs, which will keep Queensland in step with other states and prepare for the NDIS and which will also allow us to carefully finalise processes and structures to support the eventual state-wide implementation of state directed funding in line with the NDIS in 2018.

The people of the Ferny Grove electorate will also benefit directly as a result of the additional \$800 million in Health funding, specifically targeting the reduction of waiting lists and additional weekend staff. We need to look no further than the health department to explain the reasons for the measures we have taken as there is a direct correlation between the wasted funds on the implementation of a continually flawed payroll system and staff reductions. The waste and mismanagement has impacted upon the program maintenance of facilities across the state and \$51.6 million has been set aside for infrastructure maintenance in rural and remote regions of the state.

I mentioned earlier the plight of the family at Arana Hills who were struggling to maintain their assets owing to the rising costs of living and the impact that that has had on their cash flow. The actions of this family and those of the previous government were quite similar. Although the magnitude of expense is clearly different, the actions are identical. With cash flow reducing, debt increasing and no perceived way out, the maintenance of assets is put aside. We know that over the past few years the maintenance of our schools, our hospitals and our public housing assets was neglected as money was redirected into bottomless pits of payroll systems, eggs in national parks and disconnected water grids.

There is much speculation and commentary surrounding the independent Queensland Commission of Audit and the union commissioned Walker report. It is suffice for me to deduce from the actions of the previous government that it knew that the financial position was, in fact, dire. Devoid of ideas on how to resolve the issues they faced, they continually neglected the maintenance and management of our existing asset pool. After having heard some really big hints on Tuesday on how to reform our state's financial position and how to address the debt and deficit, the opposition has instead chosen to continue to perpetuate the denial and deceit.

This week we heard of the document from the Public Service Commission, where 41,000 people were identified by those opposite for potential separation from the Public Service, almost 4,000 of those from within Queensland Health. I raise this point simply to highlight the hypocrisy that the members opposite continue to perpetuate. The Leader of the Opposition stated that they would continue to work with unions, who remained remarkably silent during the much larger and more severe course of action those opposite had planned to chart.

This budget in its entirety delivers the economic outcomes that ensures the Newman government's commitment to build a four-pillar economy, to reduce the cost of living, to reduce waste and to provide better infrastructure and planning. This budget in its entirety delivers better outcomes for Queensland into the future. It will ensure that we achieve our long-term financial objectives and reduce unemployment. This budget in its entirety take steps to ensure that Queensland is, in fact, back on track. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (12.39 am): I rise to say a few words about the Appropriation Bill. This is an important appropriation bill. It is actually the first appropriation bill in the nine years that I have been a member of the parliament that I have had some confidence in. It is an important appropriation bill because the LNP government's budget is for Queensland's future. It is an important appropriation bill because all of a sudden Queensland can look forward with confidence. The budget will save Queenslanders an average of about \$120 on electricity bills. Every householder in Queensland requires electricity. Every person in Queensland uses it at some stage. It is very important to Queensland. This is where Queenslanders will really save some money. The \$80 rebate on domestic water supply for people on town water is important; there is \$7,175 for buying the family home; and \$15,000 for new homebuyers. I see the member for Logan sitting in the chamber. This is important for Greenbank, Logan, the villages of Gatton and Laidley—

Mr Cox: Thuringowa.

Mr Trout: Barron River.

Mr RICKUSS: I will take those interjections. That is where we will get these new houses being built that will create jobs and stimulate the economy. That is what we want happening here.

A government member: And jobs for tradies.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Jobs for tradies, jobs for everyone. We have hospital boards in place. I am sure we can get improvements out of the Toowoomba, Gatton, Laidley, and Logan hospitals through better management. As was stated earlier, the health minister is doing a great job. You would not trade him in for quids. Let us ensure he does a great job. This is what the LNP is about.

Mr King: The Minister for Agriculture is doing a great job.

Mr RICKUSS: Let me get there. The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme is important to rural and regional Queenslanders who have been neglected forever. How many patients fly down from Cairns on a regular basis?

Mr King: Thousands.

Mr Cox: Too many.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It does not cover all their costs but it goes a long way to assisting them. It is something that has not risen in 20 years. South-East Queensland catchments in my area have done a great job with creek and riverbank stabilisation. I see the minister nodding his head. He has visited my electorate and had a look at some of the great work happening around one of the schools. That is the sort of asset we have to protect. We must stabilise creek banks so that the school community at Peak Crossing is protected. That is what it is all about. The \$200 million for advancing school maintenance will be a great scheme. For the unions to come out and say this will be a dodgy deal done by P&Cs is a shame. I am waiting to hear the members on the other side criticise the union members about that statement. It is a disgrace. We have all supported our P&Cs. They work extremely hard and they are doing it for the children in the community. Let us ensure that they have some funding out of this project.

The payroll tax threshold is a great boost to small business. I know that there are some unscrupulous small businesses out there that have a number of companies to pay staff so they do not have to pay so much payroll tax. There are a few of them around. I do not know of too many. I am sure that this will encourage people to pay their fair share because it is less than it used to be.

There are issues that we need to highlight. The Toowoomba second range crossing is an integral freight corridor that needs to be managed. The Warrego and Cunningham highways need to be looked after. Unfortunately the feds have let us down badly on these projects.

Mr Cox: Labor in this state, too.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. They have let us down badly. Funding for the Bruce Highway and all the major highways has been disappointing. This morning I heard the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition. I did an examination of her speech. As you start going through it she talks about a cruel

hoax. This is a cruel hoax of Labor's spin and deceit. She continues further on about there only being a \$24.92 billion debt. That is almost a delusional way to look at this debt. No-one has denied that there was a \$65 billion debt, but somehow the member for Inala has managed to bring it down to \$24.92 million.

Mr Cox: Would that be the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr RICKUSS: It would be the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Shorten: And former minister.

Mr RICKUSS: And former minister. That is the delusional accounting system that they work on. We had the highest unemployment figures since the 1930s under Labor during the global financial crisis. This is the mob that went broke in a boom. How could they go broke in a boom? Even the member for Rockhampton has to shake his head at that.

Mr Cox: No, he was asking you to spell boom.

Mr RICKUSS: Is that what it was. One could not imagine how they could do it. In the next paragraph she blames the disasters. She says because of the disasters we were out of production for six months and that is why we have these billions of dollars worth of debt. It was also the worst global financial crisis. They forget that Howard left them billions of dollars worth of buffer so that they could get themselves over the hump.

Mr Shorten: \$50 billion.

Mr RICKUSS: I will take that interjection.

Mr Cox: He left them with a debit card instead of their usual credit card.

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, that is right. He left them with a debit card and they still did not know what to do with it. There are complaints about LNP members cutting ribbons. Labor represents less than 9 per cent of the state. Of course we are going to cut ribbons. We represent 91 per cent of the state. I think we should cut a few ribbons. Who is going to open it? Those opposite would not have enough time to open anything.

Mrs Scott: If you are opening it, we built it.

Mr RICKUSS: Labor represents 9 per cent of the state. Just remember that is all you represent. Labor recorded budget surpluses in seven out of 11 years. They forget that they actually went into deficit in four years of a boom. They paint it the other way: they were good for seven; they did not go too bad for seven of those 11 years. Can members imagine any small business saying they have done all right in seven years but the other four years they went broke in?

The Leader of the Opposition stated that the amount of money spent on Queensland interest payments when expressed in share revenue is also low relative to international peers. Labor wants to look at the basket cases and say they did really well because they were not quite as bad a basket case. It is like looking at the worst house in the street and saying you only have the second worst house in the street, I am doing well.

Mr Cox: That's Labor logic.

Mr RICKUSS: The old Labor logic, that is right. After 10 years of growth, they still went broke. The Queensland economy went from \$178 billion to \$258 billion.

Mr Cox: How much?

Mr RICKUSS: It was \$178 billion to \$258 billion; that is what the economy grew by. They had 10 years of growth and they still managed to go broke. How did they do that? Through real skill! They had the best Treasurer in the world, although he is not here any more. How much do they represent, again? Nine per cent of the state. Now that this government has lifted the royalties, all of a sudden they are siding with the big mining companies. They have to help out Xstrata and BHP and Rio Tinto, although they are a bit underresourced and cannot help themselves out. Probably those companies could have paid off some of Labor's debt if they wanted to try, but they did not want to do that. The Leader of the Opposition criticised Liberal politician Peter Costello. She seems to forget that Dr Doug McTaggart and Professor Sandra Harding also signed off on the report. They have real credibility.

Mr Nicholls: I think Costello got two credit rating upgrades to AAA, if I recall correctly.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. While criticising the Liberal politician Peter Costello, the Leader of the Opposition omitted to mention Professor Sandra Harding and Dr Doug McTaggart. The omission is the greatest lie and, unfortunately, that is what has happened. The Leader of the Opposition went on to talk about the \$24.92 billion debt. It is voodoo economics that they come up with.

Mr Nicholls: How did that AAA credit rating get lost again?

Mr RICKUSS: I do not know. This is voodoo economics. Then we bring in one of the voodoo doctors, Professor Quiggin. We have a bit of voodoo magic coming in there with Labor debt at more than \$20 billion. They are saying that we are still growing the Labor debt and we are, but it is their debt.

Mr Nicholls: You can't turn the *Queen Mary* around on a dime.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It just goes on and on. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about generational infrastructure. They were in power for 22 years. That is a generation. Of course they have to build some generational infrastructure.

Mr Ruthenberg: Where is the infrastructure?

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It was all delivered late and over budget. None of it was delivered on time. It went on and on and on. Governments have to take some hard decisions and, unfortunately, that is what the Treasurer has had to do.

Mr Nicholls: I am happy to do it, member for Lockyer. I am happy to do it.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. At times, you have to do it. The opposition talks about federal responsibilities.

Mr Nicholls: Do you have a speech in there somewhere?

Mr RICKUSS: I think so. They say, 'The feds have let us down again'. The Queensland economy was projected to grow the fastest in the nation. They seem to have forgotten about West Australia. The Western Australian economy has been out performing Queensland—

Mr Nicholls: Hold the telescope to the blind eye. That is what they will do, like Nelson at Trafalgar.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Again, the omission is the greatest lie. It just goes on and on. The Leader of the Opposition talked about society maximising the shared potential. It is the old Socialist commie spin where everyone else has to pay for it. But who will pay for it?


Mr Cox: Not Bill.

Mr RICKUSS: No, not Bill. Everyone else has to pay for it. Over the border we have the O'Farrell government. Greg Withers is down there worrying about that for us. He has to worry about O'Farrell. The Labor Party wants our society to be one in which every Queenslanders has a fair go, but who pays? Labor values debt. That is all it values and that is about all it can do. The opposition leader continued on with false Labor promises, such as the NDIS. There was no funding for it. The feds will set it up and we are supposed to fund it. That is another false promise from Labor. We will not deliver false promises, particularly to the people the NDIS is designed to help. We will not give false promises; that is just not on.

The opposition leader then said, 'Our party was founded on the important principle that everybody deserves a fair go in life'. That is the bad joke. They took every poor punter in Queensland down for hundreds of dollars a year and thousands of dollars a year. It was just a bad joke. We have to make some long-term hard decisions. The LNP government is the only government with the fortitude to make those decisions. I congratulate the Treasurer for making some of the hard decisions. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture, whom I am sure will support the campus of UQ in the Lockyer Valley by providing a bit more funding and work out what we are going to do with the AACC.

Mr Nicholls: The Lockyer Valley is the food basket of Queensland.

Mr RICKUSS: It is the food basket of Queensland. I am sure the minister will assist me and the Minister for Education in solving that problem. With those few words, I congratulate the Treasurer on a well delivered budget.

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (12.55 pm): I rise to speak briefly on the Appropriation Bill 2012. I start by thanking the Treasurer and his team for the hard work that they have done. They have produced a roadmap to recovery for Queensland. I also commend the Premier for his steadfast determination to get the job done. We could have taken the easy path, we could have just kept spending, but which way is that? That is the Labor way! This government has a hard road to plough to get Queensland back on track. Many people I talk to still cannot come to terms with how Queensland fell into the financial abyss. How did we get into this mess? Former Premier Goss turned around the ship, the *HMAS Queensland Economy*, and sailed off into uncharted waters. The Beattie/Bligh team put it into full speed and went full steam ahead. The Beattie/Bligh government had been living beyond its means and general government sector debt has increased more than 10-fold in the past five years. With no upper house and no review process, mistakes and bad management started piling up. Traveston is just one example, but it is a classic.

Why is that Queensland, a mining-rich state second only to Western Australia in the mining stakes, is paying more interest on debt than any other state? The health payroll debacle, or should I call it the catastrophe, unleashed by former Labor ministers Robinson, Lucas and Schwarten, will go down in history as one of Australia's most expensive mistakes. It is set to cost this great state \$1.25 billion. It was not as if they did not have any warning. Alarm bells were ringing, but no-one was listening. What could have been achieved for this state with \$1.25 billion? How many surgeons, nurses, hospitals or roads could have been paid for?

What are the ramifications of losing the AAA credit rating? There goes \$100 million straight up. It does not sound too much if you say it quickly. Being behind Tasmania in the credit stakes is just deplorable. The member for Stafford made a very valid comment in relation to the mirror. Do the previous government ministers at any point in time have a deep look into that mirror and think about what they have created? The independent Commission of Audit, headed by former federal government Treasurer Peter Costello, delivered some sombre news for Queensland's legacy of debt: the financial recovery would be a greater task than first anticipated and hard decisions would now have to be made.

This budget delivers for Queensland, especially regional Queensland, with 75 per cent of capital expenditure being spent outside Brisbane. In my region of Central Queensland, the Royalties for Regions programs will deliver \$495 million to fund community infrastructure, along with \$285 million for the Roads to Resources Program. At a state level, \$34.7 million will be spent to provide 300 new police as part of an additional 1,100 front-line police over the next four years.

In the seat of Keppel I am especially pleased to see up to \$160,000 to go to school P&Cs for school refurbishment and maintenance. At a local level, there is \$6.4 million for the reinforcement of electricity supply to Yeppoon; \$400,000 for the Byfield National Park refurbishment; the Farnborough State School, I am very happy to say, will receive \$1.3 million for a new admin building; and Yeppoon State High School will receive \$2.4 million. In relation to Health, I am very pleased to say that disability services will receive \$5.7 million. Also, the Rockhampton region will get \$3.4 million towards a 20-bed mental health community care unit, \$4.5 million for a new cancer oncology unit, along with \$32.4 million for the Rockhampton Hospital expansion.

I would like to conclude in saying that it was a tough budget. Hard decisions had to be made. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Young, adjourned.

~~SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT~~

~~Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (1.00 am): I move
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Friday, 14 September 2012.~~

~~Question put—That the motion be agreed to.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~

~~Due to the late sittings of the House, the adjournment debate of the day's sitting will be published on Monday, 17 September.~~