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WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2009

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. John Mickel, Logan) read prayers and took the chair.

Mr Gibson signed prayers using Auslan, Australian sign language.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

National Week of Deaf People

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member for Gympie for his signing of the Lord's Prayer at the start of today's proceedings. Later on in the House the member for Pine Rivers will be extending a similar courtesy to our distinguished visitors today.

As honourable members know, next week is the National Week of Deaf People. In support of this, the Queensland parliament has invited the Queensland deaf community to parliament today to observe proceedings. I welcome them now and will do so again quite formally a little later. Interpreters from Deaf Services Queensland will be in the public gallery providing an Auslan sign language interpretation for the first two hours this morning. I have also given permission for the media cameras to film the interpreters in the public gallery.

At the conclusion of question time today I will be hosting a morning tea to welcome all members of the deaf community who are visiting us here today. I invite all honourable members who are able to join us on the level 3 colonnade.

REPORT

Members' Daily Travelling Allowance Claims

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the annual report of daily travelling allowance claims by members of the Legislative Assembly for 2008-09.

Tabled paper: Daily Travelling Allowance Claims by Members of the Legislative Assembly—Annual Report 2008-09 [\[1011\]](#).

PETITIONS

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

Abortion Law

Mrs Cunningham, from 1,239 petitioners, requesting the House to not pass legislation, as the Victorian Parliament has recently done, compelling doctors or nurses to be directly or indirectly involved in performing an abortion [\[1012\]](#).

Lamb Island, Police Resources

Mr Dowling, from 102 petitioners, requesting the House to authorise a permanent Police presence on Lamb Island [\[1013\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE ACTING CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Acting Clerk—

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Hinchliffe)—

[1014](#) South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031

[1015](#) South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 State Planning Regulatory Provisions

[1016](#) South East Queensland Koala State Planning Regulatory Provisions, July 2009

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE ACTING CLERK

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

Member for Redlands (Mr Dowling)—

[1017](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the lack of police permanent presence on Lamb Island, Moreton Bay

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Commonwealth Games Bid; Queensland Events

Ms Bligh signed using Auslan, Australian sign language.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am): I welcome the deaf community here to Queensland's Parliament House.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms BLIGH: I sincerely hope that their interpreter does a better job at signing than I did! You are very welcome.

Tomorrow I will be travelling to Delhi to meet with Commonwealth Games officials about the potential for the Gold Coast to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Securing this massive international sporting event would be a huge coup for the coast and a huge coup for Queensland. The Commonwealth Games is one of the biggest international sporting events in the world. As Queenslanders we know that the biggest defining moments for modern Queensland were hosting two large international events, the Commonwealth Games in the early 1980s and Expo 88.

The Commonwealth Games is a big international event, and hosting it would be a mammoth task. Therefore, in the lead-up to my trip to Delhi the Queensland government has undertaken an investigation to determine if the Gold Coast has the capacity to bid for the games. I am very pleased to report that the investigation has found that the Gold Coast is indeed very well placed to launch a successful bid and we now have an outline of what would need to be done to prepare the region for such a huge event.

Today I am releasing the preliminary plans for how the Gold Coast would stage the games if chosen as the host city. The preliminary plans include a proposal for a major suite of infrastructure projects including a new velodrome; an upgrade of the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre; further works on the new Carrara Stadium to accommodate track and field events; the construction of accommodation for the Athletes Village at Gold Coast Parklands in Southport—

Mr Lucas: Any accommodation for Peter Dutton?

Ms BLIGH: Not on the Gold Coast, I am afraid—the temporary conversion of existing non-sporting facilities for use as squash courts, boxing and weightlifting arenas; and the conversion of the Warner Bros. sound studios for use as the international broadcast and media centre, as well as the location for badminton events. As members can see, this would be a huge boost to infrastructure on the Gold Coast.

After the games, the accommodation built at Parklands for the Athletes Village would be converted to new high-density housing and office space for the region. It would be close to Griffith University, the new Gold Coast University Hospital and the rapid transit stations. This would be a win-win for the community and shows how smart planning could turn the Commonwealth Games facilities into long-term infrastructure for the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast already enjoys a very solid international reputation as a training location for elite athletic teams and other sports, and this infrastructure would allow it to grow in that area of activity. It is estimated that more than 30,000 jobs across a range of industries would be generated if the games go ahead here in Queensland. Those jobs would be in construction, manufacturing, recreation, cultural and business services. Of course, the games would deliver a huge boost to the tourism industry, not just on the coast but throughout the state.

All of Queensland stands to benefit from an event of this magnitude. If the bid proceeds, we will be marketing the whole state. We will be telling the world to come to our games and stay on for a visit to other great Queensland destinations. Under the initial proposal, the Gold Coast would host all of the core sporting events, but a number of additional events would be held outside the Gold Coast—in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville. This would be an event to showcase Queensland to the world. I look forward to outlining our early ideas to the Commonwealth Games officials at the annual general meeting of the world's Commonwealth Games Association to be held in Delhi this week.

There is no doubt that it will be a stiff competition with representatives from Abuja, Nigeria and Auckland, New Zealand also meeting with officials in Delhi this week as part of their consideration to bid for the games. However, I am confident that if we decide to formally bid for the games there would be no better place than the Gold Coast to put on a great show for the world. Not only is the coast home to spectacular beaches and glorious weather; it also has a proven track record of hosting successful international sporting events. This is a key factor that I will be promoting during my meetings in India.

Making a bid to host the Commonwealth Games is a significant decision for government and not one we will take lightly. Initial estimates suggest it could cost around \$970 million over the next decade to prepare for and stage the event. That includes the cost of building the new infrastructure. A final decision on whether Australia will bid for the games will be made by both the Queensland government and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association early next year, based on the initial response

that we receive later this week, with the formal bid to be lodged with the Commonwealth Games foundation by 2011. My trip to Delhi is an exciting first step in this process and I look forward to updating the House as we make progress in this area.

While I am talking about the Commonwealth Games, I would like to take the opportunity to announce the appointment of the Chief Executive of Queensland Events, Mr Michael Denton, to head the directorate that is being set up within my department that will progress the government's interest in pursuing the Commonwealth Games for the Gold Coast and Queensland in 2018. After 11 years at the helm of one of Australia's most successful event agencies, there is no-one better suited to ensure that the Gold Coast and Queensland are best positioned to participate in what will no doubt be a highly competitive and fiercely fought battle for the 2018 games.

I understand that the chair of Queensland Events, Mr Geoff Dixon, and Mr Denton will today be issuing a joint media statement confirming Mr Denton's appointment and the commencement of an international search to find a replacement at Queensland Events that will build on the corporation's many successes.

Many people in this House across all sides of the chamber will have worked with Mr Denton and his team on local events across the regions of Queensland. I take the opportunity today to thank him for his substantial contribution to some great Queensland events and to our tourism industry. I am very pleased that his talents will not be lost as we move to compete for the Commonwealth Games.

Gateway Bridge Duplication

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Later today I and the Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, will recreate history by shaking hands across the gap that is separating the 260-metre main river span of the Gateway Bridge upgrade project. The 1.63-kilometre bridge superstructure will join by the middle of this month. Many in this House will remember the famous moment when Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Russ Hinze shook hands just like this in 1986.

Mr Springborg: Cameron Dick's hoping for a strong gust of wind! He'll be right.

Ms BLIGH: I do concede there will not be as much ballast as there was in that pair. In 1986 they arrived on the bridge by helicopter, they had a press conference on a podium and they celebrated in a marquee. We will be doing things a little differently from that today. But the joy of seeing this magnificent piece of infrastructure join up is just as special as it was back then. One thing we are doing differently is adding on a pedestrian and cycleway to the new bridge, so I do not think it is too cheeky to say that we are doing it bigger and better this time round.

It took six years to construct the original Gateway Bridge, but thanks to modern construction methods the new bridge will be completed in just over three years. This bridge is an example of the legacy that our record building program will leave for the people of Queensland. The project will have provided some 6,000 jobs when it is opened in the middle of 2010 and 50,000 vehicles are expected to start using it on a daily basis.

Modern construction methods, such as the use of match casting of bridge segments for the approach span and the use of temporary rock islands in the river, are halving the construction time for the bridge. Today more than 100,000 vehicles travel across the bridge each and every day. When it was first opened in 1986 it saw just 12,500 vehicles per day in its first year.

The Bjelke-Petersen government, on opening the bridge in 1986, predicted that the bridge would not reach its capacity for 50 years, but here we are, less than 25 years later, more than half-way through the construction of its duplication. I think that tells us something of what has happened to population in this part of the world in that time.

What all of this really means is that this bridge is a massive undertaking by any government at any time in any era. The 3.5-metre gap in the middle of the 260-metre main river span will be filled with concrete and steel in the coming weeks. I take my hat off to the workers and the people who have been designing and engineering this project. It is a great example of Queensland know-how and a great credit to those people who are associated with it. I take my hat off to them.

Motorists who regularly make the drive over the current Gateway Bridge would have noticed the gap in the middle closing at a very rapid rate. It has been closing at the rate of 10 metres every four days. This project is now a number of months ahead of schedule, with completion of the bridge due by the middle of 2010 and the entire project is expected to be completed in early 2011. I look forward, with the Deputy Premier, to recreating history and to marking this very important milestone of great Queensland bridge-building techniques.

Traveston Dam

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): Queensland's Coordinator-General yesterday finalised his report giving conditions of approval for the Traveston Crossing Dam. The report has now been sent to the federal environment minister for his final assessment and decision under his legislation.

The Traveston Crossing Dam is the remaining vital piece in our water grid to put South-East Queensland on the front foot for climate change and population growth into the future. If this dam is approved by the federal government, it will hold an estimated 153,000 megalitres of water and provide a yield of up to 70,000 megalitres every year. Simply put, this dam will provide enough water for around 800,000 people in South-East Queensland every day.

It will be Australia's greenest dam, with the Coordinator-General's assessment and conditions based on the best scientific advice. The report is the result of a very lengthy assessment. Never before has a project of this scale undergone such a stringent environmental impact survey. The sad reality is that around 150 years of clearing and cultivation has seriously degraded the Mary River catchment. The Coordinator-General has taken a precautionary approach with his conditions.

Mr Horan: You like milk on your Corn Flakes every morning. That's where it comes from.

Ms BLIGH: Those opposite are living in the fifties as usual. Even though the environmental impact statement's proposed measures that were supported by sound science would improve the situation for these species, the Coordinator-General has gone much further in his required conditions.

Where 310 hectares of riparian vegetation was to be restored and protected upstream from the dam wall, he has required around 2,000 hectares of riparian vegetation to be restored—more than six times as much. This includes a one-kilometre section downstream from the dam wall to improve connectivity for freshwater species. In addition to habitat restoration within the area, the Coordinator-General has required a \$10 million catchment enhancement program to protect, create and rehabilitate habitat elsewhere in the Mary River catchment. He expects that this will relate to at least 20 kilometres of creeks and rivers, with 250 hectares of surrounding riparian vegetation.

Other measures include in-stream rehabilitation work to be carried out across more than 50 kilometres of waterways—for example, the placing of large logs within streams at key locations to create snags. They include establishing islands and sand refuges for Mary River turtles in the main water storage area and secure fencing in habitat areas to restrict the current destructive grazing practices, as well as replanting vegetation, where necessary, to support natural regeneration of native vegetation common to the area. In addition to a fishway and turtle bypass system at the dam wall, the Coordinator-General has also required that an existing waterway barrier in the Mary River catchment be retrofitted.

All of these reasons and more is why the Traveston Crossing Dam is set to be Australia's greenest ever dam. It will bring a wealth of community benefits to the Mary Valley, with \$75 million allocated in this year's budget and a long list of environmental job creation and community support projects awaiting the federal government's approval. The decision to move ahead with Traveston Crossing Dam has not always been popular, but water is not a luxury. Water is a necessity and we are planning for its future security.

Q150 Orchid

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.48 am): It is beautiful and it is in full bloom and it is the new flamboyant pink—I have to get this right—

Mrs Sullivan: Doritaenopsis.

Ms BLIGH: Doritaenopsis—I thank the member for Pumicestone for her assistance. It describes the Bribie Q150 orchid. The member for Pumicestone and patron of the Bribie Island Orchid Society and I were joined here at Parliament House yesterday by the developer of Queensland's newest orchid, Mel Wheeler, a member of the Bribie Island Orchid Society, and also the president of the society, Judith Carleton, and the secretary, Lynnette Hauck.

Mel is also Registrar of Judges for the Sub Tropical Orchid Council of Queensland. He developed the Q150 orchid by crossing Formosa Ruby and I-Hsin Lucky Girl, which has produced a very, very beautiful bloom. The Q150 Orchid is now registered with the Royal Horticultural Society in London. In short, the state government granted the Bribie Island Orchid Society a small grant towards propagating the orchid for the Q150 October Orchid Bonanza show. It is on this weekend at the Bribie Island State High School.

As patron of the Queensland Orchid Society, I find it very gratifying to know that a new variety of this very beautiful plant will form part of Queensland's anniversary year. I urge people who have a chance to go along to the weekend show to do just that, and I wish the society all the best with its coming challenges.

Swine Flu

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.49 am): Since April, when human swine influenza first arrived on Australian shores, the Queensland government has worked closely with the Commonwealth to manage the impact of the disease. Whilst the influenza season has peaked in Queensland and is on the downturn, the World Health Organisation has warned the pandemic will persist in the coming months as the Northern Hemisphere moves into its peak season.

Last week Queensland rolled out a coordinated and extensive vaccine program from the Tweed to the Torres Strait. Vaccination manufacturer CSL has been delivering orders of the vaccine to GPs and health facilities across the state. The Commonwealth government has funded the purchase of 21 million vaccines nation-wide, and more than one million doses of the vaccine have already been ordered for Queensland.

While the flu season has peaked in Queensland, the human swine flu virus remains on our shores and there is a very real risk we will see a second wave of the virus. This was demonstrated over the weekend, with around 50 presentations reported in Aurukun. Those in a vulnerable group were given Tamiflu, and testing confirmed that many have human swine flu. A clinic for human swine flu vaccination started operating at Aurukun on Monday. This surge in presentations is a reminder of the importance of vaccination against the virus.

The number of deaths associated with pandemic H1N1 in 2009 remains at 183 Australians, with 41 Queenslanders having died as a result of the disease. It is essential that we are prepared in the event of a second wave, and vaccination is our best protection. Each year more than 450,000 Queenslanders are vaccinated against seasonal flu. The human swine flu vaccine is available free to everyone aged 10 or older through the \$120 million program, but some GPs may still charge a consultation fee. It has been approved by the TGA after meeting rigorous requirements for registration. The vaccine is made by CSL Ltd, which has been producing seasonal vaccines in Australia in the same way for 50 years. As with all vaccinations, people should talk to their doctor about their personal circumstances.

Queensland undertook extensive planning for the vaccine's rollout, including prioritising vulnerable groups and facilitating appropriate distribution for the state's decentralised population. Queensland has prioritised the rollout for groups at higher risk of exposure as an immediate priority, including people most vulnerable to more severe outcomes and healthcare workers. Vulnerable groups include Indigenous people, people in remote and isolated communities, pregnant women and those with chronic conditions such as heart disease, asthma and other lung diseases, cancer, obesity, diabetes, kidney and liver diseases and neurological diseases.

As the most decentralised state, Queensland is doing more to ensure the vaccine is widely available across the state. Each region is implementing plans tailored to the unique needs of communities in that region. The vaccine is being made available through hospitals, community health centres, specialist vaccine clinics and general practitioners. Over 1,000 general practices have now placed orders for the vaccine, with the second round of vaccine deliveries underway from CSL at the Commonwealth government's request.

Existing chronic disease networks are being utilised to maximise the rollout of the vaccine to help protect people who tend to become sickest if they do contract human swine flu. In addition to this, mobile nursing teams are travelling to the more remote Indigenous communities. This has proven to be an essential measure, particularly in areas such as Cape York and the Torres Strait.

To date, 1.1 million doses have been delivered to vaccination providers across Queensland. Five thousand have already been administered by Queensland Health and others have been administered by the private sector. All travellers heading overseas from Queensland have also been advised to have the vaccine before they leave. Parents and guardians of infants up to six months old and children aged 10 and over in special schools will also be a high priority for vaccination. Vaccinations for children under the age of 10 will commence once TGA approval has been given for the dose to be used in this age group.

I cannot stress enough the importance of protection as our best defence against this virus. I would urge all Queenslanders to speak to their regular GP, health practitioner or health clinic for advice about how best to access the vaccine.

Interest Rates

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (9.53 am): Yesterday's decision by the Reserve Bank of Australia to increase interest rates by 25 basis points to 3¼ per cent is the RBA's official sanction that an economic recovery is underway. The three per cent cash rate—the lowest ever—was described for a long time by the Governor as an emergency setting. Moving from this setting was inevitable. Having slashed 425 basis points off the cash rate since September, rates being pushed down further would have only occurred upon the risk of a significant further deterioration. While the Reserve had left itself capacity to respond to such an event, the stabilisation of recent times turned its bias towards tightening. History will be the judge of whether it has the timing right.

At 3¼ per cent the official rate remains near historic lows. It is clear, however, that the bank is foreshadowing further action. As the Governor's statement said yesterday, 'It is now prudent to begin gradually lessening the stimulus provided by monetary policy.' Should the Reserve's confidence prove well placed and the recovery truly be underway, there is clearly only one way rates will go—and it is not

down. Rates rising is a sign that the economy is rising. It is the exact opposite of the harsh reality, as I have said many times before in this place, that when it comes to interest rates the bigger the cut, the bigger the problem. The cut in interest rates has clearly been appropriate monetary policy stimulus to the economy.

In explaining its decision, the Reserve yesterday explicitly pointed to a stabilising global outlook and improved forecasts. We have seen that in the IMF's latest *World Economic Outlook*, which was released in recent days. The analysis contains some better news for Queensland's own outlook. Based on IMF data, Queensland's major trading partners are still forecast to contract in 2009, but now by 1.8 per cent in a substantial upward revision from the contraction of three per cent forecast at budget time. In short, the nations we trade with will now have a shallower recession than first feared.

More importantly, in 2010 the economies of our trading partners are now forecast to grow by 3.1 per cent, up from 1.6 per cent forecast at budget time. This represents a positive development for the Queensland economy and should support export growth into the future. However, the strength of our economy and the rate decision will likely lead to the Australian dollar continuing to strengthen, which of course does put pressure on our exporters.

Having just returned from the Queensland Treasury Corporation annual investor roadshow program, I feel that there is clearly a widespread confidence in our fundamental prospects. Our engagement with the region remains central to these prospects, and during the last week I met not only with key investors but also with leading Asian players in our LNG and coal industries. Their future is our future; you cannot have a shop without customers. It is this continued dialogue that helps Queensland maintain its excellent reputation overseas as a place to do business and a government to do business with.

Traffic Congestion

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (9.56 am): Our new heavy vehicle response units, referred to by the Premier in the House yesterday, have attended their first job. The Bligh government is committed to reducing congestion on our roads and we are delivering on our big plans for Queensland. We made a commitment during this year's election campaign to introduce Australia's first heavy vehicle response units, or HVRUs, as part of a \$12.3 million fast incident response plan. They began operating last week, and yesterday afternoon they were sent out on their first job to help with retrieving an overturned vehicle on the Cunningham Highway near Redbank Plains.

The new, specially designed vehicles are able to move or lift vehicles and semitrailers from the road network quickly and safely, significantly alleviating congestion caused by rolled or immobile heavy vehicles, particularly during peak traffic periods. When accidents like yesterday's rollover occur, the HVRUs will be called upon by the Brisbane traffic management centre to attend the scene. They will tackle congestion in the greater Brisbane network, cutting the time to move heavy vehicles and their loads from three hours or more to an average target time of 45 minutes.

Incidents involving heavy vehicles and their spilled loads can close multiple traffic lanes for considerable periods in both directions of travel, causing severe congestion on major roads throughout the greater Brisbane area. The HVRU's key features include: five hydraulically controlled winches and associated anchor points to assist in the rolling and movement of heavy vehicles, and this design in recovery units is considered a world first; a hydraulic blade to assist with clearing road debris; and traffic warning signs and lights, fire extinguishers and remote cameras at each end of the vehicle.

These vehicles join the impressive suite of traffic incident response services currently on our roads, which include more traffic response units, or TRUs, the new TRU Max vehicles and the heavy vehicle breakdown response service. In fact, according to statistics gathered by the Brisbane Metropolitan Transport Management Centre in August 2009, incident clearance duration is down 33 per cent on the previous year and the percentage of incidents cleared within 90 minutes is now at 92 per cent, which is a 15 per cent improvement on the previous year. This is good news for motorists. It shows that these services are providing real improvements on the road network by tackling congestion and keeping traffic moving.

Sheep Lice

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (9.59 am): In research that could have international significance, Queensland scientists have conducted successful trials to control sheep lice using environmentally friendly biopesticides. Livestock industries, including sheep, are extremely important to our economy. Sheep lice cost the industry \$123 million annually by damaging wool and reducing yields. Our scientists were able to control sheep lice using a naturally occurring soil fungus called *metarhizium*.

Trials conducted by scientists showed that, when the fungus is applied to sheep, it causes a significant reduction in lice. The fungal spores stick to the lice as they move around in the fleece and the lice also consume spores as they feed on wool grease. The spores germinate and the fungus grows throughout the insect and kills it. The biopesticide protects fleece from damage caused by a lice attack, ensuring higher prices for wool and boosting our local economy.

This is a world first. There are no treatments of this type currently available, and there is an urgent need for environmentally friendly lice control. Producers are reporting that lice are building resistance to current chemical treatments, and one of these treatments—Diazinon—has just been banned. Given the increasing demand for organic wool, we believe this form of lice treatment will be adopted worldwide. This research could put Australia on the world stage in terms of treatment, and boost our wool and sheep industry.

Our investigations into applying fungal spores to control parasites on sheep could also be used in other livestock industries. Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries and Australian Wool Innovation Ltd have signed an agreement with Becker Underwood Australia. This is the first step towards commercialisation of this biopesticide for lice control. Becker Underwood Australia will conduct field trials required for registration of the fungal biopesticide with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. This is yet another example of our scientists breaking new ground in research—research that I believe will be adopted internationally and will help drive the value of Queensland's primary industries to \$34 billion by 2020.

I congratulate QPIF scientist Diana Leemon and her team for their dedication to this project. I table for the information of members some photographs of the fungal spore and the progress audit report of Biosecurity Queensland response activities at Cawarral.

Tabled paper: Photographs relating to fungal control of sheep lice [\[1018\]](#).

Tabled paper: Report, dated 3 September 2009, by AusVet Animal Health Services Pty Ltd titled 'Progress audit of Biosecurity Queensland response activities at Cawarral in August 2009' [\[1019\]](#).

Local Government Reform

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.02 am): Every level of government has felt the impact of the global financial crisis including local governments, big and small. Ratepayers have felt this in the hip pocket with amalgamated and non-amalgamated councils alike raising rates this year. The pattern across the state indicated that the reported rate rises were most frequently between five and eight per cent. Some examples are Balonne Shire Council, non-amalgamated, up five per cent; Tablelands Regional Council, amalgamated, up six per cent; Ipswich City Council, non-amalgamated, a 5.7 per cent rise; Gladstone Regional Council, amalgamated, a 5.3 per cent rise; Brisbane City Council, non-amalgamated, up 6.4 per cent; Townsville City Council, amalgamated, up eight per cent; Burdekin Shire Council, non-amalgamated, up 7.5 per cent; Cairns Regional Council, amalgamated, up eight per cent; Redland City Council, non-amalgamated, up 7.92 per cent; and Isaac Regional Council, amalgamated, up eight per cent.

For some ratepayers, the pain was especially acute. On the Gold Coast rates rose by more than 11 per cent while Mount Isa's increased by 17.5 per cent. Neither council was amalgamated. The conclusion, therefore, that rate rises are due to amalgamation—one encouraged by the LGAQ—is faulty. Councils increase rates to keep pace with costs and to continue delivering, for example, roads, bridges and libraries. Are amalgamated councils finding times tough? You bet they are, but so too are non-amalgamated councils.

There is no doubt that the business of local government is much more difficult than it was a few years ago, and this is due in part to amalgamations but due to other reforms and pressures as well. For example, financial sustainability in local government was not even a talking point five or 10 years ago. The standards for councils' financial planning, management and budgeting have risen dramatically in recent years, not least because of the national local government frameworks for sustainability program, which Queensland councils have taken up enthusiastically. In the meantime we have the new Local Government Act and a new sustainable planning act. Councils are working on priority infrastructure plans and charging, implementing the new Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act. New rules have been announced for swimming pools, and not only in South-East Queensland but throughout the state there is water reform. If that is not enough, a new local government electoral act will be developed in 2010.

On top of all this reform, the global financial crisis has put pressure on council bottom lines everywhere. I commend them for their determination to keep rolling out infrastructure and jobs in their local communities. In these tough times, local governments need support and leadership. The LGAQ's approach highlighting the negative and pointing the finger of blame elsewhere risks encouraging councils to do the same rather than providing them with the support and leadership they need to get through this difficult time and come out on top of the huge reform program. As minister, I offer the LGAQ my willingness to look to the future to find what is positive rather than negative, to seize the challenges and turn them into opportunities. In this context, I offer the LGAQ my hand in partnership for the benefit of local governments, large and small, across Queensland.

Traveston Dam

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.06 am): As the Premier has advised the House, after a three-year environmental impact assessment process the Coordinator-General has published his conditions of approval for the Traveston Crossing Dam. This report has been sent to the federal environment minister. The project is now going through the Commonwealth assessment in accordance with the requirements of the state-Commonwealth bilateral agreement for environmental assessment. This morning I was advised that today has been defined as day zero of the 30-day process.

The Coordinator-General's assessment of conditions is based on the best scientific advice including some of this country's foremost scientific experts on the Queensland lung fish, the Mary River turtle, the Mary River cod and the giant barred frog. I table letters from leading experts including Emeritus Professor Gordon Grigg from the University of Queensland. Professor Grigg is one of Australia's pre-eminent zoologists, with more than 35 years experience. He states—

It is my opinion that, if the mitigation measures proposed by QWI as part of the construction of Traveston Crossing Dam are implemented, Queensland Lungfish as well as the other three species should end up with their security enhanced, not compromised.

He goes on—

... a 'do nothing approach' will almost certainly see further deterioration in the long-term security of these four species.

Tabled paper: Bundle of letters relating to the response by Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd to reports by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts relating to the proposed Traveston Dam [1020].

The experts believe environmental measures for the Traveston Crossing Dam project will improve the situation for these species through extensive work to improve their habitat and research for the \$35 million Freshwater Species Conservation Centre. The leading experts on the species noted the impact the current state of the Mary River has had on these species.

The environmental community benefits for the Mary Valley contained within the report are both immediate and long lasting. \$75 million is allocated in this year's budget and a long list of environmental and community job creation projects await the federal government's approval. These projects include a \$20 million community and economic development program, including a \$12.2 million program of works to improve the productivity and quality of the Mary Valley agricultural practices, and \$7.8 million for tourism and recreation. The community and economic development program includes \$3.45 million to assist the establishment of, or transition to, new agribusinesses in the Mary Valley. Under the program, tourism and recreation measures will include a \$4.2 million series of walking, canoe, horse and mountain bike trails, and \$1.15 million to ensure the future of the iconic valley rattler steam train.

In addition, \$10 million will be spent on the township of Kandanga including \$4 million to upgrade the sewage and water supply, \$3.5 million to implement a Kandanga master planning consultation with the local community and \$2.5 million to construct a new Kandanga bowls club and provide land for community facilities such as a public hall, swimming pool and sports fields.

It is estimated that 770 jobs will be created during the construction of the Traveston Crossing Dam project. The Traveston Crossing Dam is another example of the Bligh government delivering on big plans for Queensland. Just six months into our term, the state continues to come good on election commitments including this promise to provide water security for South-East Queensland well into the future.

Mr Gibson: Don't stand in this House; tell the people of the Mary Valley. Coward!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You will withdraw that comment.

Mr GIBSON: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. There is far too much interjection. I call the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Traveston Dam

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.09 am): The Department of Environment and Resource Management has contributed heavily to the evaluation process of the Traveston Crossing Dam and had a major bearing on the Coordinator-General's final report. The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning has tabled letters from a number of scientific experts on local species. I quote from University of Queensland Professor Craig Franklin, an expert on the Mary River turtle. He states—

I believe the mitigation measures, offsets and recovery plan proposed by QWI as part of the construction of Traveston Crossing Dam, is likely to provide the necessary support to ensure the long-term security of the Mary River turtle.

A letter from Associate Professor Jean-Marc Hero from Griffith University, an expert on the giant barred frog, says—

If the mitigation measures, habitat restoration objectives, and frog research outcomes are achieved as a requirement of the Traveston Dam proposal, I am confident the long-term viability of Giant Barred Frog populations in the Mary River catchment will be enhanced.

There was also an additional level of independent, expert peer review from Australia's preeminent scientific research organisation, CSIRO. A letter from CSIRO, also tabled by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, confirms that environmental issues have been identified and addressed in a rigorous, robust, transparent and scientifically valid manner.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management has been instrumental in requiring a \$35 million freshwater conservation centre that will be ready to be implemented on approval of the Traveston Crossing Dam project. The primary goal of the centre is to study and protect the Mary River's freshwater species.

Mr Messenger: How much are you setting aside for Labor mates?

Ms JONES: I take the interjections from the members opposite that they do not think 150 years of agricultural practices have affected the area. The primary goal of the centre is to study and protect the Mary River's freshwater species.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. There has been far too much interjection. I know that for some members this is a great issue for their electorates. I have been very tolerant. I think the level of interjection is getting pretty personal. I ask you to keep that in mind. I call the honourable the minister.

Ms JONES: The Department of Environment and Resource Management has been instrumental in requiring a \$35 million freshwater conservation centre. Scientists at the centre will conduct research to ensure the long-term future and improve the status of the Queensland lungfish, Mary River cod, Mary River turtle and giant barred frog.

The creation of the Freshwater Species Conservation Centre and the Coordinator-General's findings indicate that the Traveston Crossing Dam will not just help a particular species but also provide lasting benefits for a whole ecosystem across the Mary River catchment that, as I have said, has been degraded by over 150 years of agricultural practices.

Pacific Island and Indonesian Communities

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.13 am): As the Minister for Disability Services, I, too, would like to welcome members of the deaf community to Parliament House. I would also like to advise the House that last week I approved \$20,000 for the provision of interpreter services for an international conference on deaf services to be held this year.

As multicultural affairs minister, today I will be meeting at Parliament House with leaders from Queensland's Pacific Island and Indonesian communities. The Bligh government is getting right behind these communities as they come to terms with last week's devastating natural disasters. Many Queenslanders from these communities have lost loved ones in these tragedies, and others fear for injured and missing relatives.

I want to assure these communities that the Bligh government is working with them. We will stand by them in their time of need and give them the support they need to get their lives back on track. These vibrant communities form a vital part of Queensland's strong multicultural identity, and they contribute to the state's ongoing prosperity.

The Premier has asked me to lead a whole-of-government effort to support local Queensland communities affected by the disasters. Representatives from Emergency Services Queensland, the Red Cross and my department's community recovery unit will attend today's meeting. They will update community leaders on Queensland's disaster relief efforts and the local support services available for affected families. I have appointed Mr Arti Mamoe as a dedicated liaison officer to support the local Pacific Island community.

We have already set up a network of neighbourhood centres to help communities get the support they need. Ten are up and running at existing community centres around South-East Queensland. On Monday I attended one of these centres, at Inala Community House, which is in my electorate of Inala. Today I am happy to announce that we are expanding this network to a further 29 locations across Queensland, in Far North Queensland, North Queensland, Central Queensland and the Wide Bay-Burnett. Staff will be available at these centres to help those affected get their lives back on track.

Community leaders and churches will link people from their communities with these centres. The centres will provide assistance with translation, culturally appropriate support and advice about how to access other services such as counselling. I also insisted that brochures outlining the key support services available to these communities be translated into Samoan, Tongan and Indonesian.

In addition to this, my department is working with Education Queensland to ensure children can access the appropriate support they need at school. Our message is very clear to all Queensland communities affected by these terrible disasters—that is, we will stand by you. The government, along with all Queenslanders, will help you through these very difficult times.

Suicide Rates, Construction Industry

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.16 am): It is very timely, during Mental Health Week, that I inform members about a partnership forged by the Building Services Authority and OzHelp Queensland to address suicide in the building and construction industry. OzHelp Queensland was set up in September 2007 by the Building Employees Redundancy Trust Welfare Fund and it receives financial support through Queensland Health.

OzHelp aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people working in the construction industry and aims to lower the rate of suicide in the industry. The exact number of workers who have died of suicide is often hard to ascertain, but it is known that as many as one in 20—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It is a very serious subject, Mr Speaker. The exact number of workers who have died of suicide is often hard to ascertain, but it is known that as many as one in 20 Queensland construction workers have considered suicide each year. That is an alarming figure.

This is even more alarming. OzHelp has found that young people up to the age of 24 on building sites are 2.3 times more likely to suicide than Australian men generally, and one is more likely to die of suicide than a workplace accident on a construction site in Queensland.

The demand for OzHelp's services has grown rapidly, and calls to the 1300OZHELP hotline are increasing. For example, in July 2008 there were 11 calls to the OzHelp line and for July this year there were 55 calls. The time spent counselling clients has more than doubled in two years. The number of new clients has risen sixfold from July 2008 to July 2009.

The BSA is now taking its strategic relationship with OzHelp Queensland to a new level and has pledged to put its staff through a general awareness program conducted by OzHelp. The BSA's contact centre handles more than 250,000 telephone inquiries from contractors and consumers each year, and the authority's various divisions and regional offices also deal directly with contractors.

The OzHelp general awareness program will introduce BSA staff to the problem of mental health and suicide in the industry. OzHelp has trained more than 3,500 Queenslanders in its general awareness program, with another 350 people undertaking its more advanced training program.

I commend Jorgen Gullestrup, the manager of OzHelp Queensland, and Ian Jennings, the general manager of the BSA, for their efforts—

Mr Wilson: Hear, hear!

Mr SCHWARTEN: I take the interjection from the Minister for Education. I thank them for their efforts in raising awareness throughout the industry of this very serious issue.

Mooloolaba Spit Futures Study, Master Plan

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.18 am): Mooloolaba Spit is a unique place within South-East Queensland. It boasts a number of regional attractions including the long sweeping surf beach, foreshore parkland, restaurants and cafes, and iconic entertainment facilities. Today I am pleased to announce the release of the Mooloolaba Spit Futures Plan. Development of this plan has been a collaborative exercise between the Bligh government and Sunshine Coast Regional Council. It is the result of extensive negotiations with stakeholders, businesses and local residents. The plan seeks to ensure a sustainable future for the iconic holiday precinct as well as establish a vision for the area to 2025.

The government has listened to the feedback from residents, stakeholders, the community and council and created a plan that preserves the natural qualities of the region whilst allowing for economic development. The key components of the plan include confirmation of the development controls over the Spit and the council's planning scheme; the creation of a whole-of-government water based services centre at the eastern end of the Spit; relocation of the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol into the new government centre once it is developed and its current site redeveloped as open space; rationalisation of beach access within the existing residential precinct to control erosion and degradation of the dune systems while maintaining a reasonable level of community access to the beach; traffic and parking enhancements within the Spit while recognising that a wider solution to be developed by the council is needed for these issues across Mooloolaba; greater community access to the Spit through bikeways and pedestrian corridors; and, importantly, retaining the Mooloolaba Spit caravan park. Indeed, the Bligh government is determined to preserve caravan parks across Queensland to make sure that all Queenslanders have access to affordable accommodation in some of our most popular destinations.

The sustainable development of the Mooloolaba Spit area is vital to employment, wealth creation, tourism and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This plan provides a way forward to protect the environment and lifestyles of the community and the viability of local businesses. It is another example of this government working in consultation and developing plans that deliver a sustainable future to our iconic Sunshine Coast.

Emergency Services Resources

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.21 am): The Bligh government is delivering on big plans for Queensland. Since the election I have opened police stations at Ayr, Holland Park, Mount Morgan, Burpengary and Sippy Downs; stage 1 of the new Fortitude Valley station; and the north coast joint communications centre. In the coming months I will open police stations in Crestmead, Whitsunday, Ravenshoe, Port Douglas and Carseldine. All up, that is more than \$62 million worth of infrastructure. Since the election we have purchased 25 new police vehicles, including the all-terrain Rhino vehicles for the Gold Coast and additional high-visibility patrol cars to fight the road toll. We have also commissioned four new water police vessels worth more than \$11 million. In the same period, nearly 400 recruits have graduated from the Queensland Police Academy and are now out on the beat.

The good news on delivery continues with the Queensland Ambulance Service. Since the election we have hired 111 additional front-line ambulance officers and opened eight new ambulance stations at Tambourine Mountain, Mitchell, Clermont, Pimpama, Julia Creek, Redcliffe, Mount Morgan and Burleigh Heads worth more than \$12 million. In spite of increased demand, 50 per cent of code 1 life-threatening incidents have been attended to within 8.3 minutes this quarter compared to 8.6 minutes for the same period last year—a significant improvement. We have put 96 new ambulances on the road, fitted 411 GPS devices and purchased another 35 defibrillators at a cost of more than \$13 million.

Since 21 March our Fire and Rescue Service has gained more than \$12 million worth of new appliances. A further \$1.5 million in ancillary and road crash rescue equipment has also been provided. Two new rural fire brigade stations have been opened, an additional four more are in the final stages of construction, 21 medium fire appliances have been built and 68 slip-on units have been provided. The State Emergency Service has also benefited from more than \$2 million in equipment since 21 March, including nearly 22,000 items of personal protective equipment, 20 flood boats, four rescue trailers and a communications trailer. The united Bligh government is delivering for the people of Queensland.

Domestic and Family Violence

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.23 am): The Bligh government is working with the federal government, other states and territories to deliver a national plan to reduce violence against women and children. The Attorney-General and I gave Queensland's commitment at a recent ministerial council meeting in Sydney. Over the past five years there have been up to 60 domestic violence related deaths in Queensland. Domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities is particularly alarming. Indigenous women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than any other Queensland woman. We simply have to turn this situation around.

That is why Queensland has agreed to work towards a three-year national plan to reduce violence against women. A national plan will build on the Bligh government's groundbreaking five-year strategy to tackle domestic violence in Queensland that I released this year. It includes the new death review panel, a team of experts who will investigate all domestic violence related deaths in Queensland over the past five years. We are also conducting a review of the Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act so that it truly reflects the needs of women and children today. As well, a 20-month trial is about to get underway in Rockhampton. We are setting up a case coordination team with police, child safety officers and a specialist domestic and family violence worker.

The Bligh government is spending more than \$170 million this year to tackle domestic violence in Queensland. This is on top of millions of dollars being spent to house women and children fleeing domestic violence. We are giving them somewhere to turn to and somewhere to go in troubled times. We want to bring domestic violence out from behind closed doors and deal with it. We owe it to our sons and daughters.

Personal Injury Compensation Legislation

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.25 am): Today I will be introducing into the House the Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which will increase the maximum amounts available for personal injury compensation in Queensland. Suffering a personal injury can have a significant effect on every aspect of someone's life. The increase in the amount of general damages is a recognition of the pain and suffering an individual can experience as a result of a devastating personal injury. We know that money can never truly compensate for injuries of this type, but the Bligh government is ensuring compensation levels are fair and reflect current costs of living.

The legislation will increase the maximum caps for the first time in six years on general damages available under the Civil Liability Act 2003 for personal injuries. These amendments will afford injured persons the monetary compensation they need to help them get on with their lives. The amendments will also abolish the statutory limitation period for dust related disease claims including asbestosis,

mesothelioma and silicosis. The removal of the statutory limitation period for dust related diseases will deliver significant benefits to sufferers by improving their access to justice and reducing the costs and stress associated with pursuing a claim.

While the dangers of asbestos are now well known, the harmful effects on an individual's family and society continues. Few precautions and protections were available to workers exposed to asbestos in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This amendment will have a retrospective effect to ensure it captures current cases of dust related disease originating from exposure during the 1950s, sixties and seventies. The new caps on general damages will apply to injuries arising from 1 July 2010. The amendments also ensure that the caps will be annually indexed to average weekly earnings. Under the new legislation, the maximum damages available will increase from \$250,000 to \$294,500.

2 October 2009 witnessed the centenary of the election to this parliament of TJ Ryan, the first Labor Premier to lead a majority Labor government in Queensland. For a century Queensland Labor governments have sought to deliver fairness, equity and social, political and industrial justice for Queenslanders. We have big dreams and big plans for our state. The Bligh government stands firmly in that tradition, and the Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is yet another example of Queensland Labor's historic mission to deliver a fairer, more just and more compassionate society.

Rail Infrastructure

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.28 am): The Bligh government is one of the few in the country that is building new railway lines and more trains to deliver green public transport to our growing communities. Just over a week ago, along with the member for Burleigh, Christine Smith, I inspected yet another major milestone at the government's Robina to Varsity Lakes rail extension project. I am pleased to inform the House that the new 4.1 kilometre dual rail track is now complete. Upon becoming transport minister in March, one of the first things I did was visit this project, alongside the Premier, to commence track laying. Now, just six months later, the 4.1 kilometre track is complete and extends all the way to the new Varsity Lakes station. In six months around 12,000 concrete sleepers, more than 1,000 tonnes of rail, 23,000 tonnes of ballast, 132 masts and 40 kilometres of overhead wires have been used to construct the bidirectional electrified track. This \$324 million project forms a critical part of the Bligh government's job-creating \$18.2 million infrastructure program, and running alongside the new track is the largest delivery of new trains since electrification.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Pensioners, Public Housing Rents

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House opposes any move by the Bligh Labor government to use the recent changes in the pension to increase public housing rents for pensioners.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, we have two special people we need to welcome publicly today. So it will fall to me to do the Auslan sign language, and let me do that in this way.

Firstly, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr Alberto Leopoldo Fajardo Klappenbach, who is the Ambassador of Uruguay in Australia. Welcome.

Mr Speaker welcomed the deaf community using Auslan, Australian sign language.

I would also like to welcome the deaf community here to Parliament House. Hello. I wonder if they will still be clapping when they see what is going to happen next.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Traveston Dam

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Moscow, St Petersburg, India and Abu Dhabi are all places that the Premier will visit later this week. Now that the state government has announced that it has given the final green light to the Traveston Crossing Dam, will the Premier tell the House when she will visit Gympie and the Mary Valley to explain the government's final decision?

Ms BLIGH: I was asked this question yesterday in a press conference and I am happy to advise the House of my answer then, and that is that while the federal government is still going through the assessment process this dam is still formally in its assessment phase. Queensland has made its decision but there is still potentially quite a bit of work to do before we see a decision from the federal government.

I am advised this morning that the federal government has formally taken receipt of the report. This means that under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999—the EPBC—the clock on the Commonwealth's decision effectively starts from today. Under that legislation there is a 30-day period during which the federal minister is required to make the decision. However, it is open to the federal minister to stop the clock at any point should he believe that he requires further information or any clarification on any matter. So while it is possible that we could see a decision from the Commonwealth as early as 30 days from today, it is equally possible that a decision could be some months away. That is a matter entirely in the hands of the federal minister.

So we have some way to go before we have a decision on this dam. When we have that decision from the federal government and we know one way or the other, then, yes, I will, as will my minister, be meeting with appropriate organisations and individuals in the Mary Valley and in affected regions to talk through what the implications of that final decision are.

Public Hospitals

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the recent case of an 84-year-old patient who collapsed one block from the Beaudesert Hospital but had to be taken 54 kilometres to the Princess Alexandra Hospital and waited in the car park for two hours and 45 minutes for care. I ask: given the fact that ramping is endemic to the point that ambulance stretchers are now hospital beds, where does the buck stop?

Mr LUCAS: I know where the buck did not stop. The buck did not stop with the Howard government when federal health funding was reduced.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I know where the buck did not stop. The buck did not stop when the Howard government reduced its share of health funding from about 50 per cent to about 34 per cent—an enormous failure of federal governance. It failed to match the massive increase in state expenditure in health in this state—and you said nothing. In the meantime, without any assistance—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr LUCAS: That is true. The member for Toowoomba South had a hospital tax, which actually reduced his capacity to deliver things.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Clayfield.

Mr LUCAS: Queensland Health's capital building program is the envy of other states not only in relation to health but also in relation to other areas as well. When you look up and down Queensland, you can see more beds being built, more hospitals being built, upgrades to emergency departments and the like.

The honourable member did not provide any details in relation to the particular circumstances involving this gentleman and I am more than happy, if he wishes to do so, to examine that. I will say this, though: yesterday we had a public discussion about an incident on the Sunshine Coast that the government is taking very seriously. One of the reasons I am so concerned about it is that any category 1 emergency is treated immediately at any hospital that that person attends. In fact, our immediate admission rate, which is a requirement for category 1 emergencies in our hospitals, is 99 per cent. I would like to understand why that gentleman involved was not conveyed to that hospital. This is a matter that ought to be investigated because, clearly, someone took a decision that that should not take place.

I note today in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* that this gentleman's family has indicated, with some dignity—unlike the shadow minister—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LUCAS: The member attributed the cause of his death to this incident. I am not medically qualified. I cannot make that attribution. This gentleman's family did not indicate anything other than they wished to have the matter fully investigated, which is to their credit. Of course, that says something about their dignity. We are building more hospitals, more hospital beds; we are funding—

Ms Simpson: Not on the Sunshine Coast.

Mr McArdle: Not on the Sunshine Coast, you're not.

Mr LUCAS: Yes, we are.

Ms Bligh: We are, earlier and more.

Mr LUCAS: Earlier and more. You only have to look at Nambour Hospital at the moment to see that there are beds being built. They know that beds are being built at Caloundra as well. We will continue to do that.

Mr Dickson: You don't care.

Mr LUCAS: My oath I care.

Mr Dickson: You don't.

Mr LUCAS: I spend every day caring about Queensland Health.

Gateway Bridge Duplication

Ms Male signed using Auslan, Australian sign language.

Ms MALE: I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming the deaf community here to Queensland's Parliament House for the second time. I would also like to say thank you to the interpreters for their work today. My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the House of the benefits of the Gateway Bridge duplication project?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for her question about the duplication of this project, and it was great to see her duplicating her question both in sign language and verbally. This bridge is a perfect example of our determination to build the infrastructure that a growing Queensland needs. This is a great piece of infrastructure that will be a long-lasting legacy not only for the people here in the south-east corner but also for the many visitors who arrive at our airports or who are seeking to visit the Queensland TradeCoast.

The Gateway Motorway is a national road. It is being built by the Queensland government without one red cent of federal government money. Given the enormity of the project, given its absolutely critical importance to not only commuter traffic but also one of our major ports and one of our major industrial areas, I think Queenslanders are entitled to ask how that could have possibly happened. Not once did John Howard and his government agree to work in partnership with the fastest growing state in Australia to ensure that this piece of national road was upgraded and duplicated when necessary. Not only was it busy pulling money out of health; it was hiding money and squirrelling it away from states like Queensland.

It was the Queensland Labor government that stepped in and fixed the failure of the John Howard government to build the Gateway duplication. Did we once hear one member of the Liberal or National parties in this state seek to hold the Howard government to account for its criminal failure to invest in the future of this state? Not once in that entire time. They sat silent.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Here they are justifying it again.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Both sides of the House, order!

Ms BLIGH: Not only did it comprehensively fail to raise this with the former federal government; here it is again today seeking to justify its silence. It is this government that will get on with the job. The Gateway duplication will be a massive congestion buster. With the two upgrades north and south of the bridge we will see up to 20 minutes taken off the average trip.

Those opposite hate it. Here is another bridge that does not have the support of the Liberal National Party. Here is another piece of infrastructure that it seeks to knock. It is a piece of infrastructure that not only should be supported by it but also should have received its support by lobbying the federal government. We stepped in where John Howard failed and as a result Queenslanders are going to get one of the best bridges in this country. I look forward to being out there today.

Queensland Health

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Yesterday Kroy Day from the Miscellaneous Workers Union said that ambulance ramping at hospitals across Queensland was endemic and claimed that the Deputy Premier had known about the underresourcing of emergency departments for two years and done had nothing. When did the Deputy Premier inform himself of underresourcing in emergency departments? Or is the Deputy Premier the next Gordon Nuttall of Queensland Health who claims to have never been advised of government failings in health in any way?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that he was very focused on the last election when he lost for the third time. Clive Palmer has written him off now and said that he does not want him to take the job. I was not the health minister two years ago; I became the health minister at the last election. Clearly this government is aware of issues and pressure on our emergency departments. That is why we are building extra capacity at our hospitals—hospitals such as Cairns and Princess Alexandra. We are acting on the issue. Of course we are aware that ramping is an issue.

Let us make one thing critically clear about that incident that occurred the other day: it had absolutely nothing to do with ramping. For the representative of that union to claim that is disingenuous at best. Yes, we are aware of the fact that we have significant growth pressures on our hospitals. That is why we have a massive building program. Earlier the honourable member for Clayfield was talking about the GST. Do members know how much we get in GST? Less than \$8 billion. Our current budget in Queensland Health is \$9.6 billion. We will continue to put more money into our emergency departments. We will continue to act in relation to that.

We are acting, and we are acting like no other government in Queensland or indeed in Australia when it comes to building. On the Gold Coast we are building a new hospital that will be massive and will be built for future expansion. Also on the Gold Coast we have upgraded the Robina Hospital. Not only are we building the new Children's Hospital in Brisbane; we are significantly upgrading emergency capacity, particularly in a paediatric sense, at a number of hospitals around South-East Queensland. On the Sunshine Coast we are entering into an arrangement with the private sector to ensure that we can deliver beds sooner. Of course, the old soviet over there, the soviet member for Clayfield, who before was decrying the privatisation—

Mr Seeney: You hate being the health minister.

Mr LUCAS: I love dealing with you, brother. I love dealing with you every day because I tell you what you hate: you hate that you are sitting there now and he did you in—and he did you in and he did you in. I love it. I love working for an organisation, for example, that in the past 4½ years has employed 12,500 more doctors and nurses. The entire employment of Queensland Health at the moment is about 15,000. That shows where this government is heading in the future: more doctors, more nurses, more allied health professionals, more health beds, more EDs. That is what we are doing.

Community Cabinet

Mrs KIERNAN: My question without notice is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Since the government's election in March, community cabinet meetings have been held at Toowoomba, Southport, the Ekka and Bundaberg. Continuing the government's engagement program, where and when will the next community cabinet be held? Is there any chance that the government might again be coming to the state's west?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the honourable member for Mount Isa to repeat the question. I could not hear a word of it. That is my final warning. After that I will take members down the process of taking action under the standing orders. Members are far too boisterous this morning. I ask the honourable member for Mount Isa to repeat the question.

Mrs KIERNAN: Since the government's election in March, community cabinet meetings have been held at Toowoomba, Southport, the Ekka and Bundaberg. Continuing the government's engagement program, where and when will the next community cabinet be held? Is there any chance that the government might again be coming to the state's west?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Mount Isa. She, along with other members, knows the value of these community cabinets. The member for Mount Isa is particularly well acquainted with the process having hosted one—in fact my first as Premier—in 2007.

I take a moment before addressing the rest of the question to send my best wishes to all members of the community represented tonight at the function to recognise the 85th anniversary of Mount Isa as the capital of the state's north-west. I know that the member for Mount Isa will be there.

I am very pleased to advise the House that, for the second time this year, we will be heading west of the divide for our next community cabinet. We will be heading to Barcaldine and Longreach in early November. This reinforces my government's commitment to meet with Queenslanders on their turf and on their terms. We will hold a two-day community cabinet, on 1 and 2 November. The Sunday community forum will be held at the Barcaldine Shire Hall starting at 1 pm.

These are very important opportunities for Queenslanders, particularly those who are a long way from the capital city, to sit down with cabinet ministers and directors-general. My experience is that particularly people in far-flung places never miss the opportunity. I look forward to meeting with the people of Barcaldine and Longreach. It is certainly in my memory, and the member for Gregory I am sure will agree, that one of the best community cabinets the Beattie government ever hosted was in Barcaldine and Longreach in July 2002. I think it is time that we went back.

Maybe the member for Gregory could help me with this one. I am hoping that he can arrange a deputation or a delegation from the Australian Workers Heritage Centre. He might like to talk to the board members, although he had better check with the opposition strategy group. I would be very happy to sit down with the Workers Heritage Centre and talk about its future as one of the great iconic tourism destinations of the nation. On the Monday at the Longreach Civic and Cultural Centre directors-general and parliamentary secretaries will be available to talk to deputations.

I look forward to this being a real opportunity for all members of the government and senior public servants to travel to the west and talk to the people about matters that concern them. I look forward to working with the member for Gregory. I think it is important that these events provide that opportunity. We can take full advantage of that opportunity only with the active assistance of local members. Certainly we will be providing the member's office with information about it. I look forward to seeing everybody out there.

Public Hospitals

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Kroy Day said that hospital ramping is the norm in Queensland. I ask the minister: is it a fact that it is the government's policy that ambulance stretchers are to replace emergency department beds?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. This government is putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to a program of building emergency department expansions throughout the state. As we speak, a massive expansion is taking place at the Cairns Hospital. At Mackay, a totally new hospital is being built. There are further upgrades being undertaken at the Townsville Hospital. At Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Mackay work is being done. I started at the top of the state and worked my way down, and then started at the bottom and worked my way up. If we want to look west, work is being done at Mount Isa. This government is about building more beds.

Today we see the new comrade from the union movement, the member for Caloundra, taking a new-found interest in industrial issues and seeking to play a role in what is essentially an issue of competitive unionism in the ambulance sector. I will say this: we will fund the ambulances and we will continue to do so at an appropriate level. I am delighted that someone of the calibre of the minister is dealing with that in this place. In the meantime we will continue to fund more and more and more hospital beds, nurses and the like.

It is very interesting to look at the *West Australian* of today. One can see what the Leader of the Opposition's model government has done. According to that paper, budget cuts have cost 471 jobs at the Royal Perth Hospital. A leaked internal document has revealed that, to meet its reduced budget, more than 470 full-time jobs will be axed at the Royal Perth Hospital, including 52 positions in its cancer and neurosciences division, 90 in the surgical unit and 74 in critical care. I table that article.

Tabled paper: Copy of an article, dated 7 October 2009, from the *West Australian*, titled 'Budget cuts cost 471 jobs at RPH' [1021].

That is what we get under the Liberal and National parties. That is what they want to emulate. That is what they want us to do. The whole job is 'de-necessary'. Queensland has the shortest elective surgery waiting list in Australia and our ED wait times are third in Australia, which is up from a placing of fifth. We will continue to work and work and work to deal with the issue of increasing health pressures. We are delivering on hospital beds and we are delivering on these issues. The opposition could never put any pressure on John Howard and they still cannot do it now. In the federal parliament people such as Peter Dutton are opposing an increase in dental services funding and being tough in relation to alcopops and the like. They cannot oppose anything because they stand for nothing.

Federal and State Health Initiatives

Mr MOORHEAD: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Can the Deputy Premier advise the House how strong cooperation between federal and state governments is necessary to deliver Queensland's health priorities such as better dental services, healthier lifestyle choices, and better health and hospital funding?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. One of the great things about the fact that the Rudd government is taking health policy seriously is, of course, that for the first time the federal government has entered into fundamental health reform. Do members remember what Tony Abbott used to do? He wanted to know nothing about issues related to the pressures on the states. The best that they could do was to buy the Mersey Hospital in Tasmania, which was the worst example of pork-barrelling policy ever seen in Australia's political history. Now under Kevin Rudd's hospital and health reform process, we are working towards a fundamental rewrite and rethink of how we deliver health services in this country.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr LUCAS: No, the money is already flowing and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would do well to remember that in the federal parliament people such as Peter Dutton are blocking further dental services funding from the federal government. That is their contribution. Speaking of Peter Dutton, it is worthwhile examining contemporary events in relation to—

Mr Messenger: That is the face of your dental policy: an eight-year waiting list.

Mr LUCAS: Federal government funding would increase by 20 per cent the places available for dentistry in Queensland, and what has the member opposite said to his federal colleagues about passing that through the Senate? Nothing! I thank him for pointing out that he is willing to subvert the interests of his electorate for political purposes.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. I will wait for the House to come to order. Honourable member for Burnett, do not push your luck with me this morning. Do not hold that up again. I have given the House a warning before about placards.

Mr LUCAS: I remind the honourable member for Burnett that under Howard health funding for dentistry was withdrawn and Queensland was the only state that kept funding levels up—the only state. In relation to Peter Dutton, it is no wonder that he has been rejected by the rank and file if one looks at what he has done in health. Of course, he is the greatest hypocrite. He was more than happy to get stuck into the member for Kurwongbah when she shifted electorates. Now he has been hoist upon his own petard. All of a sudden, the arguments that he wanted to use against her are being used against him. Irony is the most delicious thing in politics. Where did he seek to go? He wanted to go to the Gold Coast, but the Leader of the Opposition could not deliver for him. The Leader of the Opposition is so weak that the old National Party on the Gold Coast squared up.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that Carnarvon was not a seat hotly contested in ALP preselections. In fact, the first time I ran for it I won one-third of the vote and when I ran for Lytton I won two-thirds of the vote, so I did a lot better the second time. Obviously I learned lessons from Carnarvon.

Jake Smith, the former chief of staff of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, has written an excellent book, which I will be buying soon, about dining with emperors. I think it will be a cracking read. Regrettably, two menus will not be in the book. The first is the 'Fettagate' menu, so we will not see what the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Condamine ordered, nor will we see the menu or the guest list from the \$20,000-a-plate dinner. I wait for version 2 of the book, but I recommend that people get Jake's book. It will be a cracking read. It is well written.

Mr SPEAKER: After that brief advertisement, the House will come to order.

Traveston Dam

Mr GIBSON: I join with all members of this House in welcoming the deaf community here today. Mr Speaker, I thank you for the parliament's assistance in helping the deaf people to come here today and to understand what the Queensland parliament does, both good and bad. With that, I will allow the interpreters to cover my question.

My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. I refer to the over 1,200 conditions that the Coordinator-General has placed on the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam—conditions that clearly reveal the high environmental risk associated with that project. As the government has failed to provide any detailed costings to date, will the minister advise the exact dollar cost of implementing those 1,200 conditions or has the state government given approval without knowing the figures?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the honourable member for his question. The core of his question goes to the cost of the Traveston Crossing Dam. As reported in SEQIPP this year, the Traveston Crossing Dam in 2009 dollars is costed at \$1.8 billion. As the honourable member is aware, the Coordinator-General's report was finalised yesterday and the proponents of QWI, along with government, have only had a preliminary opportunity to look in detail at all of the conditions.

The preliminary advice is that the conditions can be delivered within that budget of \$1.8 billion—\$1.8 billion for a project that will deliver water security for South-East Queensland for decades to come; a project that will, as the Premier mentioned earlier today, provide water for 800,000 South-East Queenslanders each and every day; a project that will also provide 770 jobs in the construction of the dam; a project that, with the high bar of conditions—the outstanding conditions that have been recommended by the Coordinator-General in his report to the federal minister—will deliver the best opportunity for the vulnerable and threatened species in the Mary River that we could currently contemplate.

As we heard from the scientific experts today, the do-nothing approach is not an option for those species. This dam is clearly the best option for those species. As we have heard from expert Gordon Grigg—

It is my opinion that, if the mitigation measures proposed by QWI as part of the construction of Traveston Crossing Dam are implemented, Queensland Lungfish as well as the other three species should end up with their security enhanced, not compromised.

Ms Bligh: And he's a professor of zoology, isn't he?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Dr Gordon Grigg is an Emeritus Professor of Zoology. He is a doctor of philosophy and a doctor of science—so he is two doctors. It reminds me a little of the episode of *Fawlty Towers* when there were two doctors involved. This week is also the 40th anniversary of the first broadcast of the Monty Python television series, and I remember we had a great interest in dead parrots. I think some parrots will be protected by this as well.

Green Army

Ms FARMER: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Can the Treasurer update the House on the progress of the Green Army?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Bulimba for her question and her interest in this project. I recently visited Bulimba State School with the honourable member—a school with which she works closely—to talk to 13 people who are working on a fantastic project at that school which embraces environmentalism. Those 13 people are getting the opportunity of a lifetime to gain the sorts of skills that are needed for a new, greener economy and to gain the sorts of skills that you can only ever achieve by working on the job.

The Green Army is marching forward—40 projects approved, 29 underway, 572 young Queenslanders and unemployed Queenslanders getting the chance to gain skills and real life experience that comes from the Green Army. The Green Army allows us as a government to deal with two central challenges—the challenge of dealing with the economic downturn and employment and the challenge of confronting the tide of climate change, which represents not only the environmental challenge of our generation but also the central economic challenge of our generation.

There is no bigger policy debate to be had over the coming months than what this nation will do in dealing with climate change, in pricing carbon into the economy, in undertaking that important economic structural reform. On that front, what do the people of Queensland know about where this Leader of the Opposition stands on climate change? Of course, like on all other matters, they know nought because, while he has been promising policy, quick as a flash nothing has happened. We do know where the powerbrokers of the LNP stand, because they have resolved unanimously to oppose dealing with climate change by introducing a carbon pollution reduction scheme. They did that at their conference recently. We know where the last Leader of the Opposition stood. He thought it was the result of volcanoes and cows.

You have policy leaders like Senator Ron Boswell—the erudite Boz; the policy equivalent of an extra from *Jurassic Park*—who has been out there declaring war on climate change. Then you have good old Barnaby Joyce—another policy leader who is out there telling it like it is, or at least in his own little world. He was asked last month whether he thinks the Nationals are leading on climate change. What did he say? He said—

I think on this one we are. I think on this one the National Party are leading.

Too right the Nationals are leading! Just as they led in McPherson, they are leading on this one. Where are the old Liberals? They have been bulldozed like 85 per cent of the trees in the Mary Valley—bulldozed out of the way, not able to take a position. They are climate change deniers.

The people of Queensland need to know where the Leader of the Opposition stands. Does he stand with his fake email brother in arms, Malcolm Turnbull, or is he going to be dragged to the dance with 'Tyrannosaurus Rex' Joyce and the rest of the policy dinosaurs? The old rule of politics is 'dance with the one that brought you'. I pass over to another extra from *Jurassic Park*.

(Time expired)

Hendra Virus

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries. Can the minister advise the House why he sat on the independent report into the Hendra outbreak near Rockhampton for over a month? What is the minister doing to address the key finding that emergency response staff lacked training and sufficient funding to do their job?

Mr MULHERIN: I thank the member for Condamine. I received the report by Dr Perkins on our response to the biosecurity effort at Cawarral in relation to the recent Hendra incident, which had tragic consequences with the death of Dr Alistair Rodgers. As the member would know, when I received the report I had leave from parliament because of an illness in my family. I was based in Mackay. This week was the first opportunity I had to release the report. Unlike the opposition, I am into open and transparent government. With any incidence of Hendra I have had an independent evaluation of our response conducted and I have tabled it for public consumption.

I do not know why the member for Condamine is such a knocker. He is always attacking the good, hardworking staff of Biosecurity Queensland for the excellent work they do. The issue with the member for Condamine is that if people do not agree with him he is out there attacking them, just as he did last week with AgForce. Who will be next? Will it be the Country Women's Association if they do not agree with him?

In relation to the issues around training, I can inform the House that the Emergency Management Unit is a relatively new unit aimed at improving biosecurity preparedness for management of emergency responses. It was established in 2008. In its first year of operation it has focused on a broad range of training, from foundation training in emergency response to more specialised training in aspects of

emergency management. Over 200 staff have received foundation training in emergency response to ensure that all staff involved in biosecurity incidents have an understanding of response management principles and a core set of skills.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr MULHERIN: If the member would stop interjecting and listen, he might learn something. A dedicated first-response unit was established, with 32 members receiving focused, high-level training. Thirty-seven people identified to fill management roles have received training in leadership and teamwork and emergency response, and 37 front-line people have received specialised respiratory management training, which can be used in a range of responses including avian influenza and Hendra. At this point we have scheduled training over the next three months for 130 staff in managing biosecurity incidents. Over the next 18 months there will be exercises in functional training. We have allocated money in the 2009-10 budget of \$780,000 for training for Biosecurity staff.

(Time expired)

Land Management

Mr WETTENHALL: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. Yesterday the Bligh government introduced significant reforms to land management regulations in Queensland. Could the minister please outline for the House what other measures the government is taking to support landholders and protect Queensland's environment?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question. Today I am announcing yet another significant milestone in this government's ongoing commitment to rural communities—the renewal of the first lease under the Delbessie Agreement. Also known as the State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy, the Delbessie Agreement aims to secure the productive and sustainable management of Queensland's rural leasehold land. It was developed through a groundbreaking partnership with industry and environmental groups.

We are delivering on big plans for Queensland. The Delbessie Agreement can cover about 1,800 rural leases and about 86.7 million hectares, or half of Queensland. The agreement provides incentives to farmers and graziers who lease state land by linking longer lease terms to the condition of the land, protection of environmental values and Indigenous access and use.

Craigs Pocket, a 22,000-hectare cattle grazing property in North Queensland, is the first lease to be renewed under Queensland's new leasehold arrangements. As part of this process, Craigs Pocket underwent a rigorous science based assessment which established that the land was in good condition based on pasture, soil and biodiversity attributes. As a result of that assessment, the Marsterson family, who own and lease the property, were granted a 40-year lease term instead of the standard 30-year lease term. The Marsterson's property was Queensland's first land management agreement, which is negotiated between the lessee and the government, and underpins the Delbessie Agreement.

On matters environmental, I note in the news today that, according to the opposition spokesperson, the Liberal National Party intends to vote against the bill that I presented to the House yesterday. Whilst not commenting on the bill, I will just make this point to the backbenchers up there. If you vote against tree-clearing laws, then every day between now and election day that we get an opportunity, we will be reminding your constituents that when push came to shove, when you had the opportunity to nail your colours to the mast in terms of environmental credibility, you squibbed it. You squibbed it because when the Neanderthals from the National Party came to town and knocked on your doors, you said, 'Of course, Jeff. We're not going to go against the National Party.'

The Liberal Party used to have a proud heritage of protecting the environment of this state but no longer. So the good people of Aspley, the good people of Mudgeeraba and the good people of the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast will be told at every opportunity that, when you had the opportunity to protect the environment, you squibbed it. Even AgForce supports what we are doing. Even AgForce supports us, but when push came to shove you guys squibbed it. We will remind your constituents on every possible day about how spineless you lot are.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It would help the House if you would address your comments through the chair, Minister.

Deaf Community, Emergency Services

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Current telecommunications regulations prevent hearing impaired people from using SMS to access 000 emergency assistance. Will the minister lobby his Commonwealth colleagues for the implementation of an SMS '00' emergency system so that Queensland lives are not put at risk?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question, and I take the opportunity also to acknowledge members of the deaf community here in the House today. The issue of the national emergency warning system is one which has been developed in consultation with all of the states and the Commonwealth. Victoria has got the lead agency role in that matter in terms of the contract, and that contract was recently awarded to Telstra. The states, as I have indicated through Victoria, are now working with Telstra in terms of the actual components of the system and how it will be delivered across the state. The issue of accessing and providing messages to people from the deaf community is a significant one, and I take the issue on board and will certainly make some inquiries in relation to that.

In terms of the national emergency warning system, it is something which I do caution the community about. It is not the panacea to delivering messages about disasters into the community. Our primary response role for disseminating messages will be and always has been radio and television based messages. With the deaf community, we certainly need to be looking at—

Mr Gibson: Triple 0. They can't text that.

Mr ROBERTS: My apologies. In answer to the question, I am happy to raise those matters on behalf of the community.

Computers in Schools

Ms DARLING: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Could the minister please update the House on the rollout of the laptops for teachers and computers in schools initiatives?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable the minister, I have noticed in the House this morning a trend back towards the Westminster system of members closing down their computers and actually taking part in the parliament. I do not know whether it has been a good thing for me or not this morning, but I have noticed that. I call the minister.

Mr Wilson signed using Auslan, Australian sign language.

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let me see if I can get this right, as I attempt to sign my next sentence. I welcome the deaf members of the community here to the Queensland Parliament House. I think I missed one point.

I thank the honourable member for the question. The Rudd government and the Bligh government are undertaking an education revolution, not just in new programs targeted at literacy and numeracy but also in infrastructure and digital technology. The Bligh government is rolling out a \$50 million Laptops for Teachers Program. We have provided 34,600 teachers with laptops and we have 8,900 to go. We are about a year ahead with the program.

This program is vital to the development of the future education opportunities for Queensland students and teachers in our schools. It is well complemented by the federal government program—a multimillion dollar program of rolling out laptop computers for every Queensland student. This is revolutionary stuff in terms of technology for our schools, not just in Queensland but across the country.

So how astonished was I to find out that the shadow minister's website—posted I believe on 16 September—has a claim that extra computers are going to be provided to Kenmore State High School under the federal government program. The claim being made by the honourable member for Moggill, Dr Flegg, is that as a result of his efforts extra computers are going to Kenmore State High School—indeed, about 297 computers to the value of about \$166,000. It just so happens that that information comes from a letter that I wrote to him on 8 September explaining that the federal government computer rollout for students involves an additional 297 computers for the Kenmore State High School to the value of about \$166,000. This is about the 15th furphy that the member for Moggill, Dr Flegg, has been responsible for in this chamber.

So we have this furphy on his website on 16 September. But if you go to the LNP website, you will see no policy on education or training. This is the 202nd day since the election and LNP members do not have anything on their website about what their education and training policy is. They have no ideas, no policies and no plans for Queensland students and teachers.

(Time expired)

Koala Protection

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I refer the minister to the land recently gifted to Redland City Council for koala protection. Given that koala experts have said that the land is only sufficient to support one koala in its present state, will the minister provide funding to make this land a true and safe koala reserve?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to put some of his comments on the record in regard to these 5.6 hectares which are mapped as high-quality koala habitat. I also want to put on the record my thanks to the member for Capalaba for lobbying to have this land supported and locked up forever as koala habitat.

I also want to thank the Redland City Council for its support. As honourable members are aware, 5.6 hectares have been gifted from the state government to the Redland City Council so it will be forever locked up as koala habitat. The council and the state government are working together to protect koala habitat in South-East Queensland, particularly in the honourable member's electorate. This is what he had to say when it came to protecting this land. He said, 'It is just not a good piece of land and it is not a good strategy.' He is continually knocking the efforts of the state government to protect land.

Last month I joined with the Deputy Premier to announce another 22,000 hectares of national park in Queensland. Approximately 3,600 hectares—

Mr Gibson interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. I will wait for the House to come to order.

Ms JONES: As I was saying, this month I have locked up a further 3,600 hectares of koala habitat in South-East Queensland. Some of this is on the Sunshine Coast, so the member for Gympie might be interested in that. In addition, I am working very closely with the Minister for Infrastructure, Stirling Hinchliffe, in developing a state planning policy which will protect koala habitat in South-East Queensland. We have a strong record of protecting the environment here in Queensland.

What we have seen this morning is constant denial of what is happening with the environment here in Queensland. We once again heard the opposition say that the farming practices which have occurred in the Traveston Dam area for the last 150 years have had no impact on the Mary River catchment. That is their proposition. They argue that the reasons why this—

Mr Gibson: You can't even get the facts right.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will wait for the House to come to order.

Ms JONES: They argue that the agricultural practices in the region over the last 150 years have had no impact. I just want to make it very clear. That is what the member for Gympie is saying. I say to the member for Gympie: why do you think these species are vulnerable? If you really believed in protecting these species, then you would support the legislation that the Minister for Natural Resources introduced into the parliament yesterday. I look forward to your support in protecting the Great Barrier Reef when we debate that. I look forward to your support of the continued environmental regulation that we bring into this House—and you continually oppose. When the member for Gympie doorknocks his constituents, the farmers who have been degrading this land—and you know they have applied for funding from the federal government, acknowledging that they have had an impact. It is time that the member for Gympie acknowledged it, too.

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act

Ms CROFT: My question is to the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Can the minister outline new developments in relation to the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008?

Ms BOYLE: I too welcome the deaf community who are joining us in the gallery today. I have no doubt that they will be interested, as surely many of them are family pet owners, in the answer to this question. I do thank the honourable member for the question. The registration and microchipping provisions of the new Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 came into force on 1 July this year in South-East Queensland, Gladstone and the Central Highlands. I must mention Gladstone in particular. I am sure the local member will join with me in putting on the record that Gladstone has been doing a tremendous job championing this cause. There is more good news of other councils leading by example.

While the rest of the state has until 10 December 2010 to put in place their systems and processes to support the new laws, the legislation's flexibility means that councils in a position to start earlier can do so. I am pleased to announce that four councils are doing that. Banana Shire Council will commence mandatory registration and microchipping of cats and dogs from 1 March next year. They will be followed by Charters Towers from 1 July 2010, then Cassowary Coast and the Tablelands from 1 December next year.

On the Gold Coast there is also good news, and I must take a moment to really let the House know about the tireless efforts of the local member for Broadwater, Peta-Kaye Croft. She has reminded the various ministers in this job, and certainly me in the last six months, of our duty and our opportunity to do better by the family pets and the pet owners of Queensland, particularly towards reducing the horrible rate of pet euthanasia. In fact, it was the member for Broadwater who encouraged me to visit the Animal Welfare League on the Gold Coast to inspect its facilities and meet its hardworking staff. I was blown away by the size of the facility, by the professionalism of the care and by the number of hours put in by the devoted volunteers.

I was amazed that, with the very many healthy dogs and cats on display, most of whom were already owned but some who were available for ownership, you need to be interviewed if you think you would like an animal. Your suitability will be checked and you will be vetted before a beautiful pet will be handed to you for responsible ownership and care. I know the member for Broadwater has a special place in her heart for the league and has been a strong advocate of responsible pet ownership for years. The Gold Coast City Council has also been a leader, and I commend the council on its participation—

(Time expired)

Heavy-Vehicle Logbooks

Mr Foley signed using Auslan, Australian sign language.

Mr FOLEY: On behalf of the Independents, I say to the deaf community this morning: ladies and gentlemen, you are very welcome in this House. My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. Why are truck drivers being fined for entries in their logbooks based on the RACQ online trip planner time frame, which is only a suggested guideline that has been worked out at 80 kilometres per hour rather than the 100-kilometre per hour zones that cover the larger portions of distances travelled in Queensland? I table documentation showing four instances of this practice.

Tabled paper: Copy of a complaint and summons, dated 26 August 2009, directed to Chris John Chambers [1022].

Ms NOLAN: I apologise to the deaf community that I can only respond verbally to the question. I am really happy to receive that information that the member for Maryborough has referred to and to have a look into that matter. Broadly speaking, members would be aware that in Queensland we have what has been a really effective mechanism for minimising road fatalities, particularly among heavy-vehicle drivers, by implementing very stringent fatigue laws. My recollection is that we were the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce very strong chain of responsibility laws so it was not just drivers who got themselves into trouble when they were forced by bosses to do unreasonable things. We also very actively monitor vehicles that are overloaded and excessively weighted.

We do have a very stringent mechanism for ensuring that heavy vehicles operate safely. That includes those logbooks to which the member for Maryborough has referred, but in relation to the specific concern I will certainly investigate the matter and report back to the member.

Child Safety

Mrs SMITH: My question is to Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. I recently visited the child safety office at Mermaid Beach as part of the 'Stand in my shoes' campaign and saw the valuable work being undertaken there. Can the minister please advise the House how the Bligh government is delivering on its child safety commitments?

Mr REEVES: I would like to thank the member for the question. I have visited two child safety offices with her. We have seen firsthand the great work they do. On this side of the House we are united and we deliver. We are delivering on our promise to protect Queensland's most vulnerable children and young people.

Since 2004 we have doubled the workforce and tripled the budget for Child Safety Services. While we are delivering, the LNP is dithering. The opposition repeated calls for a reduction in the number of children being taken into care, yet they still will not and cannot provide the people of Queensland with a child safety policy. The LNP is content to sit on the sidelines and criticise without one decent or original policy idea.

We probably cannot blame them. If we look at the last time those opposites had a child safety policy, it was when the opposition released its 2006 election policy. As reported by Tony Koch in the *Australian* newspaper, part of that policy was blatantly plagiarised from the Victorian ALP's 2002 child safety policy and various other state and federal government reports. We can understand why those opposites are a bit reluctant to put up a policy.

During the last election the opposition still could not get its act together and produce a child safety policy. I am sure the member for Bundaberg thinks that just releasing press releases is part of child safety policy. Putting out press releases that knock the government do not amount to child safety policy.

If we look at the LNP's child protection budget when it was last in government in 1997-98 we see that it was \$35 million. Today under the Bligh government it is \$638 million. It is this government that is investing in family intervention services.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr REEVES: They do not like to hear the truth. It is this government that is investing in family intervention services and referral for active intervention and seeking to establish safe houses in Indigenous communities. It is the Bligh government's long-term vision that saw \$70 million invested in prevention and early intervention incentive pools to drive innovative policy aimed at preventing human and financial costs that can otherwise be avoided.

We are also working to strengthen preventive and early intervention services that can keep children safe at home. It is clear that the opposition, unlike the Bligh government, does not have a plan for child protection except to play politics with it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time has ended. During question time today it was our pleasure to welcome to the public gallery the Wynnum North State School in the electorate of Lytton.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Service Delivery

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.32 am): This morning in question time we heard confirmation again from the state government about its inability to plan, build and deliver services. In the area of health today we heard the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health use a smorgasbord of abuse. Every time he was asked a question he looked for someone to blame. We had blame attributed to the Howard government, which fulfilled every aspect of the financial requirements of the healthcare agreement that it negotiated with Peter Beattie, the then Premier. He was dragged kicking and screaming to provide more healthcare funding after the Bundaberg crisis. That is why this government then increased spending and said that the federal government should do the same. It had in good faith negotiated its healthcare agreement with the then federal government.

Then the Deputy Premier turned his attention to his parliamentary colleague the member for Stretton, the Minister for Natural Resources. The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, acknowledged in November 2007 that this state government was failing and that is why he was looking to take over public hospital health services. Clearly, this state government has failed to plan, has failed to build and is desperately trying to spend about 50 per cent of what the entire Beattie government spent in its term of government. It is now trying to build to play catch-up. That is why we have ambulance ramping instead of hospital beds.

The Deputy Premier had a go at Minister Stephen Robertson, the member for Stretton, who has moved on to another portfolio—that is, Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. What do we see there? The 19th and the 20th centuries were the centuries of electricity. But now the Minister for Natural Resources is saying that to save money for infrastructure spending people who build pools and use pool filters will have to use off-peak power to clean their pools.

This government stripped billions of dollars from the electricity sector in terms of dividends. Now it is going to make sure that pool owners in this state—a resource-rich state—cannot use their pool filters the way they should be and they have been able to in the past. It is an indictment on this government.

Logan City, Samoan Community

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (11.34 am): When adversity strikes, our community in Logan really shines. Such has been the experience since the tragedy of the tsunami struck the beautiful islands of Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga. Samoans are people of great faith. While their hearts are heavy and they are grieving terribly, they cling to their strong faith and are lifting up their voices in praise to God.

Our community, made up of people from many cultures, has surrounded them with love and support. They are very grateful for the quick response from our state and federal governments, along with the government of New Zealand, and grateful to the Premier for the time she spent with community members here at Parliament House last Thursday. Their radio broadcast held over the weekend was well supported, and on Monday evening many from the community came together at the invitation of the Deputy Mayor of Logan, Russell Lutton, to plan for a Logan tribute and fundraising concert on 18 October.

In our schools, teachers, counsellors and chaplains are there supporting our large number of students, many of whom will have lost extended family members. I understand that Woodridge State High School is mobilising our schools to come together for a concert this weekend.

When I speak to elders of the community such as John Pale and Vaa Alifipo and High Chief Lemalu Felise, I realise that they are overwhelmed by the kindness and care their community is receiving from all quarters. The families in their homeland whom they represent may take a long time to rebuild their lives. So many have lost little children. Six whole villages have been swept away. At the moment they are afraid. The sea which once was a source of food and a thing of beauty is now like a sleeping monster. They are afraid to return and will rebuild on higher ground. However, they are resilient people. With so much practical, moral and spiritual support they will once again learn to live in peace. We hope never again to face such trauma.

DISABILITY SERVICES (CRIMINAL HISTORY) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.36 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Disability Services Act 2006 to prohibit people with violent criminal histories being engaged as carers of people with a disability. I present the explanatory notes, and 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.

Tabled paper: Disability Services (Criminal History) Amendment Bill [1023].

Tabled paper: Disability Services (Criminal History) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [1024].

Second Reading

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.36 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in our community. With some disabilities requiring people to have intensive, around-the-clock and in-home care, the position of a carer is one that should embody implicit trust. There should be no question marks over the safety of the relationship between a carer and a person receiving that care. When a person with a disability uses services, be they provided by the government or by a community based organisation, they are entering into more than a business transaction.

It is not a simple matter of purchasing a service. The provision of services—on the part of both the carer and the person with a disability—transcends a business relationship and becomes about enabling a greater quality of life. A carer who enters a person's house is stepping over a threshold of trust, and a carer who works at a facility is equally in the home of a person with a disability. When this relationship is abused through violence, it is not only physical harm which results. The social abilities of some people with disabilities, the trust levels and their interaction with other people can all be damaged severely by an act of violence perpetrated against them by a carer. Unfortunately, these incidents have happened and do happen. In view of the time constraints involved, I seek leave for the remainder of my second reading speech to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As such, the LNP feels there needs to be a legislative effort to try and enhance the confidence, not only that people with disabilities can have, but that families and the wider community can have in the integrity of that important relationship between a carer and the people they care for. To ignore the problem is not an option for the LNP. The Bill I am introducing today is designed to help protect people with a disability from being put in the care of someone who has a history of violence or abuse. The Bill will allow people with disabilities to have the confidence in their carer that they need, and it will also allow our service providers to employ carers with confidence.

Carers are exemplary people who give so much of themselves to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Their contribution is very often of a value well in excess of the remuneration they receive. They are essential service providers. They do their work with sincerity and, unfortunately, sometimes they provide the only genuine connection between their clients and the outside world. Indeed, in many cases carers enhance the quality of life of their clients.

Like anything though, there are exceptions. And caring for a person with a disability is such an important role, because they are often very vulnerable, that there should be no exceptions. This Bill introduces a standard—a person with a violent criminal history is not a person we should be entrusting with the care of another person.

The current legislation does not prevent someone with a violent criminal history from being a carer and as a result people with a disability are at risk of relying on someone who has a history of becoming abusive or violent. This bill would change that and prohibit someone who has been convicted of a violent offence from occupying the paid position of a carer to a person with a disability.

This amendment bill also proposes to allow the Chief Executive of the Department of Communities to decide if a person who has a history of violent charges, but who has not been convicted, should be allowed to take a job as a carer. While a prohibition notice will not be issued automatically, as will occur with those with convictions, those with charges relating to violence will be automatically referred to the Chief Executive for their consideration.

Considering that it's relatively common for domestic violence charges to be dropped, it is imperative that a potential carer's history is properly reviewed and that a violent history is not discounted when a person's wellbeing is at stake, especially when that person is as vulnerable as a person with a disability. This Bill will introduce a new level of protection that will ensure carers who are doing a good job can continue their work, service providers can continue to make a difference in people's lives, and all people with a disability can have confidence in their paid carer.

The bill will affect people currently employed in a paid position, as a carer for a person with a disability, with a history of violent or abusive behaviour. The LNP understands that sometimes it can be difficult to secure the services of a person with relevant qualifications and experience to be carers. There may be a perception that this bill may make it even harder to find people willing to do the job, but the LNP argues that a history of violence and abusive behaviour should disqualify someone from providing care to a vulnerable person, such as a person with a disability.

The Queensland community has accepted the need to put in place a system to protect another group of vulnerable people in our society, namely children, with the development and implementation of the Blue Card system. This initiative implemented a screening requirement for those wishing to work with children to ensure they did not have any criminal histories relating to children—in other words, they were appropriate people to be working with children. The LNP considers that the same consideration should be given to people with disabilities, who can be just as vulnerable in care as children.

While the bill proposes to prevent people with violent or abusive histories from working in a paid position as a carer for a person with a disability, it does not prevent from working in other areas of the disability support sector, such as an administrative position. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wallace, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

'Dave' The Elasmosaur

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (11.38 am): 2009 is a year when all Queenslanders in all corners of the state have an opportunity to celebrate the achievements, take stock of challenges and shape the Queensland we want for future generations. In this year, our 150th year, that celebration is taken to all parts of Queensland. That is why it was a great pleasure to travel to Chillagoe on Saturday to assist with the unveiling of 'Dave' the Elasmosaur.

Mr Wallace: Fine town!

Mr O'BRIEN: It is a fine town; thank you, Minister. I know you visited there recently to discuss its roads. Dave the Elasmosaur has put Chillagoe at the pinnacle of Queensland's dinosaur triangle. Queensland has a rich treasure chest of dinosaur bones and fossils stretching back millions of years. Chillagoe is the home of giant 1.2 diameter nautilus shell fossils as well as giant wombats and giant crocodiles with hooves. Dave the Dinosaur was found a few years ago, but he was unfortunately found without his head. He lost his head! However, the model that was unveiled on Saturday by local magistrate Tom Braes is complete with head and it is a fantastic addition and entry statement to the town of Chillagoe.

Chillagoe is more normally known for the excellent caving that is available in that region, but Dave has brought a new facet to the growing tourism numbers that are visiting Dave and it will be a must-stop for people who are visiting the area. The reproduction is five metres long and sits just at the entry to Chillagoe on the Burke Development Road. Dave's original fossil is on display at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane. While a great attempt is being made by the locals to find his head, unfortunately that has not been successful. I urge people to come to Chillagoe to look at the caves and to look at Dave the Elasmosaur.

Public Hospitals; Waiting Lists

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (11.41 am): Kroy Day got it very right when he made the comment that ramping is endemic across the state. In fact, ambulance stretchers are now part of the emergency department bed numbers because these stretchers are there for so many hours on so many days of the week, and I can guarantee that it will not be long before we see these stretcher numbers appear in the official Queensland Health bed count along with trolleys, chairs, virtual beds and sofas. The real risk is this, however: every minute a paramedic is kept waiting at a hospital because Queensland Health cannot get its act together, people in the community are placed at greater risk. It means that you or I or our family members are waiting longer for an ambulance and in particular category 1 patients are placed at significant risk of not getting to a hospital and dying because of the incompetence of this government.

I turn to a second point in relation to Queensland Health, and that is those poor people who are on a waiting list to get on the waiting list. In 2007 a report titled *A report on access to specialist outpatient services in Queensland public hospitals* by Dr Ken Donald was released to Queensland Health. At that point in time it said that at 1 March 2007 there were 143,940 Queenslanders waiting to see a specialist to see if they could get on the waiting list for elective surgery. At 1 March 2009 that figure had blown out to 180,582—an increase of 36,500 people. That second figure appeared in the March quarterly hospital report of 180,000-plus. Those details did not appear in the June quarterly hospital report. This document is now going to be sanitised, because I can guarantee what is going to happen. It has been deliberately left out and will be sanitised in the next report.

(Time expired)

Deagon Sports Precinct

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (11.43 am): *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, the Bligh government's state-wide plan for the future, has a goal to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. The Deagon sports precinct is a vital sport and activity facility for residents of the Sandgate electorate. The Brisbane City Council fields include amongst its tenants the Sandgate Redcliffe Cricket Club, the Sandgate Tennis Centre and the Sandgate PCYC, and many other sporting clubs and schools utilise the fields. A jointly funded federal, state and local government \$750,000 upgrade is underway and the federally funded first stage is now complete. Three water tanks with 260,000 litres of capacity and over three kilometres of pipes for irrigation are now in place. Stage 2 will see the \$250,000 of state government major facilities funding and the \$250,000 local government matched funding spent to restore the sporting fields, irrigation and drainage work.

I want to congratulate local councillor Victoria Newton for her advocacy and success in ensuring the replacement of the Sandgate PCYC's damaged roof is included in the council's scope of works. Councillor Newton and I have been working with the PCYC for some time to deliver a sensible outcome for the club. I also want to acknowledge the enormous contribution of the PCYC, especially branch manager Sergeant Nichole Sampson and Acting Sergeant Scott Jensen who worked so hard to raise funds for the roof replacement. The new roof will provide an excellent water catchment function for the entire irrigation project and I am pleased to see a sensible solution to the improvement of this council facility for the benefit of so many users of the Deagon sports precinct. I am delighted that the state can once again partner with council to deliver for the residents of the Sandgate electorate, just like the \$1 million of state funding for the new Taigum and Fitzgibbon bikeway. Queensland taxpayers can be assured that the state government is allocating funds in practical ways to improve council and community sporting facilities around the state.

Tugun Desalination Plant

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (11.45 am): The showpiece of this government's \$9 billion water grid at Tugun is being labelled an expensive dud by many locals in Currumbin. Reports in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in May 2006 stated that if the plant goes ahead it would cost in excess of \$260 million. We were told that the Gold Coast City Council would decide in September 2006 whether it would go ahead. And, yes, the plant did go ahead and it did cost in excess of \$260 million. The Beattie government took the project from council, expanded its size from 55 megalitres to 125 megalitres and, without including it in that year's budget, committed in excess of \$1 billion, telling the operators to build it in a two-year time frame. The Premier tried to fool us that it would be ready in November last year, with her open day at Tugun and media opportunity in front of 7,000 people and a barrage of TV cameras. But all we got to do was to taste first water, as they call it. Real opening dates in January 2009 did not eventuate, and neither have any others since! Now almost three years since it started, we have a plant that the government will not commission because it has serious faults, has damaged properties in our suburbs, has caused a footy field to sink and has created all manner of turmoil for our residents.

Environmental concerns about brine output from the plant into the local marine habitat existed from day 1 of this project. Recent reports from local fishermen indicate close monitoring is required. Brad Smith of the Fix Currumbin Creek Committee believes an independent system to monitor marine life and salinity levels around the output pipe is needed. He disputes claims by WaterSecure that its underwater footage is sufficient. Locals are calling for rigorous monitoring and want to know just what is currently being done so before and after results can be compared. This government's incompetence knows no bounds. It has turned its back on the people of Tugun and Currumbin. The turmoil at the desal plant has caused widespread problems for our local community and there is no guarantee it will last the distance it was intended to, nor will the Tugun bypass for that matter. The track record of this government does not rate a blip on the radar. Even the ministers are flicking it between each other!

(Time expired)

Clean Start Collective Agreement

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (11.47 am): I rise to commend the Queensland Labor government on its recent announcement that it will support the Clean Start Collective Agreement. The Clean Start Collective Agreement is about providing a fairer deal to workers in the cleaning industry. The agreement is about respecting and valuing cleaners. The government's decision means that cleaning staff contracted to work in Queensland government owned or leased buildings in the Brisbane CBD will work under improved conditions and will receive a better employment deal. The new arrangements will replace the QBuild code of practice for cleaning contracts. The changes mean that tenders will now be assessed on both price and non-price criteria. The non-price component of the cleaning contract will take into account aspects of workplace health and safety legislation, minimum engagement hours, employee training, work performance evaluations, environmental best practice, and provision for industry best market rate remuneration.

Whilst I commend the Queensland Labor government on this step, which will improve the working conditions and pay for many workers in the cleaning industry, I also take this opportunity to commend the organisers and members of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union on their advocacy and support of workers through their nationwide Clean Start campaign. The miscellaneous workers union is a union committed to supporting and improving the working conditions of some of the most vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged workers in Australia. I am proud to be not only a member of the miscellaneous workers union but also a member of the government that makes the hard decisions to improve the working conditions and pay of workers who have historically not been valued by their employers, been paid poor wages and been provided less than reasonable working conditions. Well done to the Missos and also well done to the government on this great achievement for the cleaners of Queensland!

Akuna Oval, Sports Facilities Grants

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (11.49 am): On 20 September I had the honour of visiting Akuna Oval. The occasion for that visit was the annual awards of the Kenmore Bears Australian Rules Football Club. Their under-16 team won a rare premiership in the Brisbane junior AFL under their coach, Paul Thymme, and the clubperson of the year was Denise Wayne.

I looked around at that group of fabulous young people and their parents—and around 2,000 play at those grounds every weekend—and I thought about how important the area is for their social development and their physical activity. As members are aware, housing density throughout Brisbane is being increased as a matter of policy. It is important to get these young people out, active and socialising together. It made me even angrier at this government's refusal to support the infrastructure at that ground that is helping 2,000 of our young people every weekend. That was through the rorted process of the department of sport, which has rejected repeated applications to fund lights to replace the currently dangerous lights that will no longer be able to be used.

Government members interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I hear the interjections from the members opposite. I am aware that this matter is under investigation by the CMC and that one of the assessment officers has now been forced out of the department. But I want to bring it back to the fact—

Mr REEVES: I rise to a point of order. Those comments by the member for Moggill are untrue and I ask them to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): There is no point of order.

Dr FLEGG: I did not make any comment about the minister.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr FLEGG: It is the failure of this government to care and support young people in these sorts of vital activities as it plays its political games to rort the allocation of things like major sporting facility grants.

(Time expired)

Funeral Industry

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (11.51 am): Earlier this year I made a speech in this House about being green when it comes to funerals. I want to thank the *Courier-Mail* for picking up on my speech and publishing an article on this subject. After I gave my speech and the article appeared in the *Courier-Mail*, along with other members of parliament I received questions and opinions from people within the funeral industry and from community members. I am very pleased that this debate has started in our communities.

With the increase in our population, cemeteries have become vast acres of monuments, some not visited, with all care left to councils and trusts to look after them. Recently there have been articles in local papers regarding council laws and requests for families to limit what they leave on their loved one's gravesite, which has sparked debate and also has drawn attention to the maintenance that is required. I say to those councils and to others to consider natural bush cemeteries. Green cemeteries require little maintenance, as the idea is to encourage reforestation and also encourage native wildlife flora and fauna.

During my time as a member of parliament I have had a number of people come to see me regarding their experiences with the funeral industry. Usually they have had bad experiences and they are looking for an avenue through which to complain. Often the outcome they want is for other families not to experience what they went through at such an emotional and sad time. The other inquiries that we probably all receive are about pricing. We also often hear from people about what is really required for funerals rather than a full sales job that many of my constituents say they experience.

When I raised this issue with Metropolitan Funerals, they certainly said that they were interested in hearing from MPs and from the community and quickly offered to arrange a forum. I want to thank Mr Brian Gill, who is the general manager of Metropolitan Funerals, and Ms Annette Lourigan, the community relations manager, for organising a forum this Friday at Metropolitan Funerals, Mount Gravatt.

At this forum we will hear from a wide range of guest speakers about pricing, practices, standards and the challenges that face the industry. This forum will also provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions. The member for Pumicestone and I will certainly be putting forward our views and the feedback that we get from our communities.

(Time expired)

Pacific Motorway, Safety Barriers

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.53 am): Recently a victory for people power occurred, with the Minister for Main Roads announcing temporary concrete crash barriers to be installed along sections of the southbound lanes on the Pacific Motorway between Nerang and Worongary from this week. Since launching the petition for the immediate installation of safety barriers on the M1 my office has been inundated with support from the local community and from motorists who regularly travel the M1.

The minister acknowledges that the stretch between Nerang and Worongary is the busiest section of the M1, with over 100,000 vehicles per day travelling on it. Yet it is only now, after pressure from residents and community groups, that the minister and the Bligh Labor government are prepared to put the safety of motorists first. Since 2000, 10 fatalities and 126 hospitalisations have been recorded on this 10-kilometre stretch of the M1 between Nerang and Mudgeeraba—the only section of the Pacific Highway from Brisbane to Nerang that had no safety barriers.

Funding for the widening of the M1 between Nerang and Worongary was first announced by the Beattie government way back in 2004. Five years on, five funding announcements later, it has taken the loss of a young person's life and a mother's determination for this government to react and promise something that should have been delivered many years ago. Safety barriers save lives. It cannot be made more simple.

I note that yesterday the minister said in his press release that he is determined to be responsive to the community's needs. I call on the minister to adhere and abide by his own words and provide some much-needed funding to upgrade Worongary Road, which was ignored in the recent road implementation plan. This road is a major thoroughfare that is being used by TransLink as a bus route up to 10 times a day. Alternatively, given that this Labor government is holding a fire sale of our assets and is currently \$85.5 billion in debt, now would be the time to reopen discussions with the Gold Coast City Council in relation to demaining Worongary Road.

Either way, the residents of Worongary Road are not prepared to wait another five to 10 years for their road to be fixed. If there are any future fatalities on this road, the finger of blame will be pointed squarely in the direction of the Minister for Main Roads.

CivSkills

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.55 am): The economic downturn has hit the construction industry in a particularly bad way. But there is growing optimism that the worst may soon be behind us and that, with the freeing up of credit, the industry will again thrive. As this happens, attention will again turn to the need for qualified tradespeople to fill the positions vacant within the industry. Those apprentices who have managed to maintain their training throughout the difficult times of the downturn will be well placed to take advantage of that growth.

The construction industry can reasonably fairly be described as a blokey environment, but I know of one young woman who has set her goal as succeeding in the industry and is proving that being a woman is no disadvantage in that pursuit. Nineteen-year-old Emily Kemp from Beenleigh has gone from being a disillusioned school leaver to an award-winning apprentice in the construction industry in just two years. Emily's first experience after year 12 working as a casual labourer with a civil construction company was far from wonderful. So, determined to find a better way, she joined the CivSkills program, where she completed a certificate I in resources and infrastructure and took on additional units from the certificate II course in civil construction.

CivSkills is a construction training program that brings together the forces of SkillsTech, Bremer TAFE, BoysTown and the Construction Training Centre to provide training, job preparation skills and workplace preparation. It is partly funded through the state government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

With her job preparation at Civskills complete, Emily was hired as a labourer on a construction site and was soon snapped up by the company as an apprentice plant operator. Emily is now completing her certificate III in civil construction. The icing on the cake for Emily is that her efforts and talents were officially recognised recently, when she won the inaugural Construction Training Centre New Beginning Recognition Award at the annual National Association for Women in Construction Crystal Vision Awards, held in Brisbane. I congratulate Emily on this award and encourage other women to consider how they might carve out a successful career in this industry.

Birkdale, Public Housing Development

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (11.57 am): I rise to call on the government to reverse a very unpopular decision to build a multistorey public housing development in Napier Street, Birkdale. The development is for two two-storey and two three-storey buildings. Although I support the provision of

public housing to alleviate homelessness, this housing project is not the best use of this particular parcel of land. The land borders the current railway car park that is constantly full, with parked cars overflowing on to the street. Many commuters park illegally every day as they have no other choice in order to get to work in the city.

Birkdale rail commuters and other commuters living in the Redlands have suffered from a serious lack of car parking for far too long. Whilst I welcome the recent announcement of 50 new car spaces—a result of my call for more car spaces—the total number of available bays would still fall desperately short of demand. Further, the small piece of land that the government has set aside for car parking has important koala habitat on it that will need to be cleared. This is not a koala-friendly outcome.

The vacant bigger block has all the credentials to help alleviate present and future parking woes and is a more koala-friendly option. It has the capacity to provide for at least an additional 100 car parking spaces and is next to a disabled access ramp.

Those living in the area expected this would be the railway car park. In fact, over 500 residents have voiced their opposition to the government's public housing plan via petitions. The Redland City Council and the Birkdale Progress Association also oppose the development. I ask the government to listen to the residents of Birkdale to stop this unpopular public housing plan forced on the locals of Birkdale and to build the needed car parks on the larger block of land. I support local residents in saying no to this unwanted development.

Kurilpa Bridge

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.59 am): I must admit that until last Sunday morning I had no idea what 'tensegrity' meant. When the Kurilpa Bridge was opened to the public on a glorious Brisbane Sunday morning I soon learnt from the Premier and Minister Swatten that it was the means by which the bridge was built. By 'tensegrity' I mean that the bridge balances tension and compression components to produce a light but incredibly strong structure.

It was a great day. We were joined by over 20,000 people to officially open the bridge and be amongst the first to walk across it from South Brisbane to Tank Street in the CBD. The new cycle and pedestrian bridge spans from Kurilpa Park to Tank Street and it gives easy access to the central business district. It has many viewing platforms where the William Jolly Bridge Q150 lighting display can be viewed without interruption.

Currently the Goodwill Bridge, which was built amidst some criticism whilst I was on the South Bank board, boasts around 53,000 people per week crossing the structure. It is expected that similar numbers will cross the Kurilpa Bridge per week.

I think the bridge looks fantastic. It is a fine piece of architecture. I congratulate all involved—designers, builders and workers—on a job well done in providing an environmentally friendly bridge which, whether one likes it or not, I am sure will be admired as a great piece of infrastructure.

Already the bridge has been painted by local New Farm artist Philippa Webb, who has done an excellent job in portraying the bridge in its full glory. When people ask, 'What will I do whilst I am in Brisbane?', take my heed: what could be better than to suggest to visitors and residents alike to take a walk across the Kurilpa Bridge, venture into the GoMA and art gallery district, pass the beautiful South Bank Parklands, cross the Goodwill Bridge and shop in our wonderful CBD.

For those in the House and all Queenslanders who have not taken the opportunity to experience a walk on the new bridge, I urge you to do so as soon as possible. It is a great experience.

Prosthetics, Replacement

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.01 pm): There are many things that should make this parliament cringe in shame. Today I bring to the attention of the House what could only be described as the great government 'booby' heist which has been perpetrated by the Queensland government against women. How embarrassing and demoralising is it that a female age pensioner has been forced by this government to reveal to me extremely intimate and personal aspects of her life, details I believe would not have been revealed at all if I had been a man.

Because this government saw fit to change the rules, this woman, who underwent a mastectomy seven years ago and who is entitled to a new prosthesis every two years, will not get a new replacement breast. This proud woman will make do with a leaking, deteriorating prosthetic breast. Why? Because instead of simply handing over her physician's letter to obtain a prosthesis as she has done several times in the past, she is now informed she must pay \$400 upfront for it. This is money that she does not have. What is worse, this proud woman, when she declined to take a new prosthesis because she could not afford it, was made to feel a bit like a pauper when she was offered a helping hand from the hospital's slush fund for emergencies.

How dare this government do this to any woman. In the past the prosthetic providers recouped the money directly from the government, so what is the warped reasoning behind submitting women who have already suffered this enormous emotional trauma to a little bit more? Why is this government

forcing these women to undergo the possible embarrassment, discomfort and in this case shame of having to lay their souls bare to strangers who would never have known of their intimate surgery or their fragile financial position?

This great government 'booby' heist has to stop. I ask the minister to do the right thing and review this absurd situation and give back women like my constituent their dignity so that they can keep such personal, intimate details to themselves where they belong. The former system worked, so why change it?

Blue Skies

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.03 pm): In Queensland there are around 180,000 people with moderate to severe disabilities. During Disability Action Week I met with Mark Henley of the Spinal Injuries Association to learn more about Blue Skies, a new blueprint that challenges all areas of our society to work together like never before to produce a better future for people with a disability. It can no longer be left to government; the broader community also has a role to play.

The Blue Skies vision calls for equality in education, urban planning and private construction and targeted assistance for different disabilities rather than one-size-fits-all funding. I was also pleased to hear that a national disability insurance scheme is back on the agenda. After all, it was mooted in the Whitlam era. Such a scheme would ensure funding for all people with disabilities, not unlike Medicare, and would help a lot of families that are doing it tough. I know that Minister Palaszczuk has called on the federal parliamentary secretary, Bill Shorten, to release the feasibility study as soon as possible so that we can contribute to the debate in a meaningful and constructive way. The Queensland government will use the Blue Skies vision as the foundation for its 10-year strategy to shape the future of disability services in delivering on the Toward Q2 ambition of fair and inclusive communities across Queensland. The realisation of the Blue Skies scenario cannot come soon enough.

I am proud to have some strong and active advocates for the disability sector in my electorate, such as Ian Chill, a member of the Disability Council of Queensland, who is contributing to the development and design of the \$448,000 all-abilities playground at Edmonton. The project is being managed by the Cairns Regional Council and is expected to commence after the wet season in 2010. I am also proud to have in my electorate the members of the Innisfail District Disability Awareness Group who provided input during the construction of the MaMu Rainforest Canopy Walkway to ensure that it met the needs of people with a variety of disabilities. As a result, all facilities and walking tracks are accessible for visitors with vision impairment and all except the top viewing deck of the observation tower are accessible for wheelchairs with assistance.

Blue Skies makes it clear that in order to develop a truly inclusive society the whole community must accept disability as a social issue and acknowledge the inherent rights of people with a disability as citizens. I support the Blue Skies vision in the strongest possible terms.

CIVIL LIABILITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.05 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Civil Liability Regulation 2003, the Law Reform Act 1995, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2004, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Personal Injuries Proceedings Regulation 2002 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and 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.

Tabled paper: Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [1025].

Tabled paper: Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [1026].

Second Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The objective of the bill is to improve the civil liability and personal injury regime in Queensland, while at the same time maintaining the affordability and availability of insurance. Many of the amendments contained in the bill are in direct response to stakeholder feedback.

Firstly, the bill will re-base and facilitate the future indexation of monetary amounts in the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 and the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002, including the thresholds used to determine whether legal costs are recoverable and the caps on general damages. These amounts have not been indexed since introduction. The indexation of the caps on general damages will ensure that injured Queenslanders continue to receive compensation that is fair and that also reflects current standards of living.

The amendment to the Law Reform Act 1995 will ensure that a de facto partner of an injured person is able to claim damages for loss of consortium. The bill also amends the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 to streamline the process if parties agree to the urgent commencement of proceedings.

Other amendments to the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 will remove the requirement that parties must sign a certificate of readiness for trial prior to the compulsory conference. This amendment will address concerns raised by members of the legal profession about signing a certificate of readiness for trial prior to receipt of pleadings and the completion of discovery and interrogatories.

The bill also amends the Civil Liability Act 2003 to partially reinstate *Sullivan v Gordon* damages in Queensland for seriously injured persons. *Sullivan v Gordon* damages compensate an injured person for the loss of their capacity to provide gratuitous domestic services to others. This amendment responds to the decision of the High Court in *CSR Ltd v Eddy* which held that *Sullivan v Gordon* damages are not part of the common law of Australia. As part of its decision, the High Court said it should be a matter for parliament and not the courts to determine whether and in what circumstances *Sullivan v Gordon* damages should be awarded. I note that the proposed amendments will place strict limits on when a court may award damages under proposed section 59A of the Civil Liability Act 1993 for the loss of an injured person's capacity to provide gratuitous domestic services. In order to ensure that section 59A damages are focused on those claimants with the greatest need, the damages will not be available for minor injuries where general damages have been assessed at less than \$35,340.

Furthermore, the damages will not be available unless the recipient is a member of the injured person's household; the recipient was incapable of performing the services personally because of their age or physical or mental incapacity; but for the injury, the injured person would have provided the services for at least six hours per week for a period of six months; and the need for the services is reasonable in all the circumstances.

Other provisions in the bill guard against double recovery by addressing potential overlaps between section 59A damages and other damages, such as common law damages or damages awarded to the recipient following a dependency claim. Proposed subsection 59B(2) has been inserted to specifically address the potential overlap between section 59A damages and damages for gratuitous services provided to the injured person, also known as *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer* damages.

The bill also amends the definition of 'community organisation' in section 38 of the Civil Liability Act 2003. This amendment will ensure that a volunteer undertaking community work for a parents and citizens association who otherwise meets the requirements of the division is entitled to the protection from liability provided by section 39 of the act.

Finally, the bill includes an amendment to abolish the statutory limitation period for dust related conditions. Dust related conditions are defined in the Civil Liability Act 2003 to include conditions such as asbestosis, mesothelioma and silicosis. While the dangers of asbestos are now well known, its harmful effects on individuals, families and society continue. The removal of the statutory limitation period for dust related conditions will mean that a person suffering from this kind of condition will no longer need to make an application to the court to extend the limitation period. The removal of this hurdle will deliver significant benefits to those suffering from a dust related condition by improving their access to justice and reducing the cost and stress associated with pursuing a claim. Given that many of the current cases of dust related disease arise from exposure during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when few, if any, adequate precautions were taken to protect workers and others, I am proposing that this amendment should have retrospective operation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Flegg, adjourned.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 6 October 2009 (see p. 2570, on motion of Mr Wilson—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (12.11 pm): I acknowledge the minister's intention to streamline early childhood education to a universal high-quality system that advantages all Queensland students. The pre-prep program at 35 schools approved by the minister in Indigenous communities for children

older than 3½ years allows children to be registered in the program and provides a foundation of literacy and numeracy in the prep year. The prohibition of the term 'prep' in any presentation by child-care providers will remove the assumption that child-care providers are able to provide formal prep-year education.

Pre-prep is probably one of the biggest issues that will ever come our way. When I was first elected as the local member I was made aware of the concern about the lack of pre-prep places in the Charters Towers region. At present it is heartening to see some private schools involved in rectifying the problem. At times up to 60 families have children on the waiting lists. Hopefully, those problems will be resolved.

Education is one of the most important issues that will ever come our way. In noting educational issues, it is important that good legislation is debated in this House to bring about good education outcomes and initiatives. As an example, the Lions International foundation runs a school based program called Lions Quest, which has met with huge success wherever it has been introduced. Those who have implemented the program state that the students involved became engaged, valued and nurtured. The program is geared at instilling in students a sense of self-worth and direction, steering young people to a future of self-discipline where they have the ability to make good choices and judgements and show respect for themselves and others. The program covers all school years from kindergarten to year 12. It imparts life skills that will enable students to function successfully in a complex modern world.

Because the world we grew up in has changed dramatically, our approach to education must similarly change to embrace the added responsibilities that we have to nurture our children and help them to handle situations that we never had to confront in our youth. The Lions Quest program is producing spectacular results in children's lives. I fully support its introduction into schools that choose to participate in it. The Atherton Lions Club is deeply passionate about introducing that initiative into schools. I often hear about the innovative programs that schools have implemented. I see the outcomes of those initiatives reflected in many schools that encourage students to excel in public speaking, that develop programs to assist those needing or looking for direction and that hold positions in Lions and Rotary clubs. The students of such schools become involved in all manner of activities while still at school.

It is encouraging to note that both children registered in the pre-prep program and children with disabilities who attend special education facilities but who are not prep students will benefit from the protection that this legislation provides to other students. I am familiar with children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida and short stature. Those children are vulnerable, but they are capable of achieving academic heights and/or strong life skills, and they can make a major contribution to our community.

In Charters Towers both state and private schools have a long-held reputation for excellence in education, especially for students with disabilities. A special education unit is located at Charters Towers State High School and another is located at the Central State School. It is very important that students with special education needs receive support and assistance, for example, through increased teacher aide hours and so on. We definitely want to include those students within our schools and within our communities.

Last night when speaking on these education bills many members spoke with great pride about the schools in their electorates. The contributions that our schools make are a source of great pride. The schools form part of the social fabric of our communities. Only a few weeks ago, Blackheath and Thornburgh College held its 90-year reunion. I was proud to be the member for the former electorate of Charters Towers, before the electoral boundary change. The town is a hub for the education industry. It has three private schools—All Souls St Gabriels School, Columba Catholic College and Blackheath and Thornburgh College—and three primary schools: Millchester, Central and Richmond Hill state schools. In addition there is a high school and a school of distance education. In the surrounding areas of Charters Towers there is the Ravenswood State School, the Greenvale State School, the Homestead State School and the Pentland State School. This community has a population of 13,000 people and it is to its credit that that community provides such a wonderful foundation for those schools. We see that on Anzac Day when the children march down the street. There is an incredible atmosphere. It is wonderful that such a small town has so many schoolchildren who support that parade.

Children who live in isolated and rural areas, including Indigenous children, are in a special category of disadvantage. Many parents are unable to afford the substantial costs of boarding colleges and cannot conquer the tyranny of distance to travel to and from colleges. I would like to bring something to the minister's attention. I am not sure if this can be rectified, but for some people it has been an issue in the past two or three years. Many parents live in isolated areas and their children learn through the School of Distance Education. Some children have the opportunity to participate in distance education but are not allowed to do the prep program because they are a few months short of being old enough to enrol in that program. I believe there needs to be some flexibility here, because many of those young kids sit with their brothers and sisters and are taught alongside them. However, they are not allowed to sit in on the prep program because they are too young. I believe there should be some flexibility in that area. The minister needs to look at that issue.

I have huge admiration for families on the land. They have to face the question of educating their children, especially as those children reach secondary school age. The decisions are not always easy, but with true country grit those decisions are made and carried out with courage and determination. Some of the real heroes in education are the families who make sacrifices to ensure that their children are exposed to education excellence. I take my hat off to those families. It is very important that we support families and communities, especially rural communities, to provide appropriate education and that we acknowledge the difficulties involved with the tyranny of distance.

Some rural schools are very small. The Upper Barron State School had only 16 students and was mothballed about 18 months ago, or maybe a little less, to the great disappointment of the community. The school was almost 100 years old and was about to celebrate its centenary next year. That school was part of the social fabric of the community. Unfortunately, those children now take a two-hour bus trip each day to Atherton and Malanda and back. The Upper Barron State School had beautiful pine trees and lovely dairy farms surrounding it and, even though it was a relatively old school, it had a new undercover area and new buildings. I believe that this school needs to be reinstated so that those families can send their kids to that school.

We hear about the bullying that happens in many of the big schools, but it does not happen in those little schools because a lot of those kids are ostracised if they do bully. They are taught to support one another, encourage one another and support those values. The word 'bullying' does not exist in those schools, and those smaller schools provide hands-on support. Most importantly, the task of teachers on a daily basis is extremely important in providing the next generation of well-educated, well-adjusted young adults. This task must be appropriately rewarded through wages that at least match those of their interstate counterparts. Teachers who feel undervalued are likely to seek their rewards elsewhere. Every day in our schools should be 'thank a teacher day'. I wanted to bring these issues to the attention of the House.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise this afternoon to add my contribution to the cognate debate on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 and the Education and Training Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. Before I add my comments to the debate on the two bills, I would like to publicly recognise the shadow minister for education and training, the member for Moggill, for his work in this place over the last six months in holding the government accountable for the management of education and training services in this state.

The Education Legislation Amendment Bill amends the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Child Care Act 2000, the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 and the University of Queensland Act 1998. The Education and Training Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 also amends the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and it makes several minor amendments to another six acts.

Firstly, I welcome the amendment to the Child Care Act 2000, which provides parents with a greater choice with respect to child-care services offered throughout Queensland. This is about providing a choice of quality of service and also notification of a lack of consistent standards and record of noncompliance breaches issued in the past three years.

Mr WATT: Nothing like government reform.

Mr BLEIJIE: I cannot agree with the member for Everton on that. I note that, while it is so important to maintain standards across-the-board, I have had some involvement with the child-care system as my wife is a family day care provider. I see the rules and regulations that have taken place over the years and sometimes I do wonder whether we are coating our children—the future of this country, the future of our state—in bubble wrap, protecting them from playing games that kids have played over hundreds of years, keeping them away from the germs that allow our body to build natural immune systems all for the sake of one's minority views. So at times I do feel for the child-care industry which, with respect to the issues that I have just raised, is forever tied up in red tape and bureaucracy rather than allowing kids just to be kids. It did not seem to do any harm to me.

Mr Watt: You're living proof!

Mr BLEIJIE: I was not deliberately baiting. I certainly did not hang the carrot for the member for Everton. But I am not surprised that those opposite would not agree. I might say that, for those of us in the chamber, being raised as children when we were has not been so bad for us.

Mr Watt: Some of us.

Mr BLEIJIE: Particularly on this side of the House. I note that in the second reading of the bill, the Minister for Education and Training announced that the Bligh government is committed to openness and transparency and believes it is vital that parents have access to crucial information about services such as schools and child-care centres. I thank the minister for this. It is unfortunate that the Bligh government does not extend this commitment of openness and accountability to the overall operation of government and management of the state of Queensland. I welcome the other amendments in both bills we are debating in this cognate debate. Since both of the amendment bills being introduced by the government deal with some similar issues, I will speak about both of the amendment bills en bloc.

Firstly, the Indigenous pre-prep program offered in 35 communities throughout the state is designed to give Indigenous children a head start in developing literacy and numeracy skills. In introducing this program, the government failed to recognise a gap in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 when the compulsory preparatory year was introduced in January 2007. From the EGPA review of 2004-06, a discretionary provision to the act was recommended that would enable the delivery of programs and services to children below compulsory school age, other than the preparatory year. This was intended to assist those children previously identified as being at high risk of having some numeracy and/or literacy deficiencies compared with the standard expected of children commencing grade 1 at schools throughout Queensland. It has been recognised that some children do not have the support at an early age to metacognitively develop their speech and literacy skills, and this provision allows for all Queensland children entering grade 1 to be on as close to a level playing field as possible.

Secondly, the amendment provisions proposed to assist the Queensland College of Teachers with respect to the eligibility to teach gives the college greater flexibility and encourages more people with relevant industry experience to take up the teaching profession. The recent NAPLAN results were welcomed by the Minister for Education and Training. While they did improve, let us have a look at our report card, when comparing Queensland student's literacy and numeracy skills to students in other states in Australia. I concur with the shadow minister for education in saying that there was nothing encouraging about the results at all: year 3, seventh overall; year 5, seventh overall; year 7, fifth overall; and year 9, sixth overall.

When compared to the national average for 2009, Queensland also struggled. For each of the four year levels that the NAPLAN tests are administered, Queensland students are below the national average. Some people may say that this illustrates the need for a national curriculum. To that may I suggest that, before we go ahead and lose each of our states' individuality, teachers and schools are given more support and dedicate more time to teaching basic reading, writing and arithmetic. I can remember a time in primary school when this was the core to education and our training, when every morning we would recite the times table with a robotic tape in the background. This taught us to add up without the use of calculators. If we did not do it, we would have a piece of chalk thrown at us.

Mr Watt: That's the way, isn't it!

Mr BLEIJIE: I would certainly hate to think what would happen if a teacher wanted to administer some sort of discipline in the education system that we have these days.

Ms Grace: Not to mine.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I said in this place, it certainly did not do anything to me. It certainly engendered a sense of community spirit and respect for my teachers and principals. These days, with the education system that Labor has engendered into Queensland over the past 11 years, for a student to have a piece of chalk thrown at them or to be spoken to harshly or disciplined—I can recall red pens—we would have children with psychology reports, seeing psychiatrists. The point I make is that it never did any harm for a child to have respect for their teacher and to have discipline in our schools.

At a community meeting I recently attended, many of the constituents made mention of the lack of practical experience incorporated into university study and how this is often reflected in the competence of industry professionals right across-the-board—be they nurses, lawyers and teachers. I continually speak to students who have completed education study or are currently studying education. The students I have spoken with have made mention of the lack of practical skills offered as part of their university degree. There is a practical component, I would agree. However, all of the students have given me feedback that their courses severely lack the practical teaching measures and skills that would benefit them when they actually begin teaching students, the future generations of Queenslanders. I welcome the provision for the Queensland College of Teachers to tighten the standards which we impose on those wishing to register to teach in Queensland. We need to get the best here teaching, and if you pay peanuts you get monkeys.

I would like to mention and commend the government for the amendment to the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002. I welcome the ability for the international schools to be acknowledged by the department of education as 'recognised schools'. This will hopefully encourage schools like Mountain Creek State High School, which is on the border of my electorate and the member for Buderim's electorate, to offer an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, which is a two-year pre-university program.

The diploma not only provides students with an enhanced academic focus but also provides a curriculum with an international perspective. The diploma suits highly motivated senior students and is designed to equip candidates with the skills and attitudes necessary for success in higher education and employment. In 2005 Mountain Creek State High School commenced the diploma as an alternative senior/pre-tertiary curriculum for years 11 and 12 students. This program has so far been highly successful and has allowed Mountain Creek State High School to be recognised in the international community as a school of choice.

Mr Watt: A very good school.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely. The entire international program offered at Mountain Creek State High School is one that I would recommend all high school principals in Queensland look at. I take this opportunity to congratulate the principal, Mr Greg Peach, and his administration for the vision in implementing the program at Mountain Creek, which as I said is unfortunately just out of my electorate but on the border and I have many students in my electorate attending the school.

The Education and Training Legislation and Amendment Bill 2009 is supported by the opposition, and I welcome its introduction into the House. In the formation of the legislative amendment, extensive consultation was sought. This consultation included input from Queensland Catholic Education, the Creche and Kindergarten Association, the Queensland Teachers Union and the Queensland Association of State School Principals. I welcome this extensive consultation process. It is my belief that more community consultation should be sought during legislative reform. These are the people who will feel the effects of any legislative reform as they are at the coalface of education provision in this state.

As a husband of a family day care provider, I certainly understand and advocate for various child-care options being offered in our community and the transparency of these child-care institutions for the benefit of choice for parents. It is important for parents to see those child-care providers who are consistently noncompliant with state legislation and standards or who have been issued with a serious noncompliance breach. I believe that the approach outlined by the minister does strike a balance between ensuring services are viable and ensuring parents have easy access to important information about those entrusted with the care of our children.

I also concur with the minister and congratulate the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care for the high standards of child care maintained across the state. It is disappointing to have to say that this is the first real piece of positive education news we have seen from this government in terms of legislation since the election in March. First we had the teachers' pay dispute, which continues to linger as the government continually fails to negotiate with the Queensland Teachers Union. We have seen the escalation of bullying within our schools so that we now lead Australia, the lapse and constant watering down of school discipline and behaviour management policies, funding for new IT equipment tied up in red tape and bureaucracy, the overcrowding of many classes including our prep classes, P&C committees in some schools having to foot the bill for building maintenance, truancy rates which continue to rise, the neglect of regional school leavers in apprenticeship and cadet training programs, the exponential cost hike of child care, audits required to examine how school funding allocated is actually being spent just to name a few—

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Member for Everton, you do not have to add to my list. I have a hefty list and I certainly do not need you to add to it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! All comments from both sides will be made through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: We lead the way in truancy and bullying but are last in terms of literacy and numeracy. What a sad indictment on Labor governments in this state over the last 11 years. It is no wonder teachers in Queensland are leaving in droves, having to work in those conditions. It is time this government put our children's future back at the top of the agenda and started to fix the education system in this state. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (12.33 pm): It is always a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on education, and in this case I wish to direct my remarks to the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2009, which covers issues in the child-care sector as well as extending the reach of our senior high school syllabus. The first few years of a child's life are of vital importance. The first and foremost responsibility lies with parents who are the first caregivers to be able to spend as much time as possible with a young baby and then a toddler to form those close bonds of love and nurturing that form the basis of a lifetime of trust and shared experiences.

Extended family, friends, neighbours and community members can always play a vital role in the early development of a child and form part of the network which makes for a healthy wholesome childhood experience. Child-care services including kindergarten, long day care and family day care now play an increasingly important role in both ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for children and in providing experiences which will enhance a child's early education and contribute to their readiness for effective learning.

Nurturing a young child's sense of wonderment, their vocabulary through stories and books, educational games and the social development of their interaction with other children and adults can contribute greatly to their early development. Sadly, for some children whose home life is lacking in encouragement and nurture, and even the basics of what would be considered adequate parenting, the child-care centre plays an even more vital role.

Both state and federal governments have recognised the importance of the early years. Premier Anna Bligh has committed the state government to an additional 240 kindergartens throughout the state and has a goal for each 3½- to 4½-year-old to have access to quality programs through *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*. Similarly, the federal government has identified the importance of the first five years of a child's life through the Early Years Learning Framework.

The future welfare and educational outcomes for our young children make this legislation of vital importance. Parents and carers need to be totally assured that the centre they have chosen will give the best care to their children and information needs to be available. Fortunately, most centres are of high quality but when serious breaches are found and not rectified the information will be published on the internet—issues such as building or playgrounds being unsafe, staff without required qualifications, or poor hygiene which could lead to infection.

The second issue which I will mention briefly is the proposal to enable recognised schools overseas to be granted access to the year 11 and 12 syllabuses by the minister on a commercial basis with the accompanying granting of the Queensland Certificate of Education and statement of results. Good education is a highly valued commodity and internationally Queensland has a good reputation. Many international students already attend our high schools, and this will give many more students the opportunity to gain qualifications to year 12 level, and no doubt it will increase the number able to then enter our tertiary institutions.

Rather than focus on the results of tests which I personally believe are skewed against our students in Queensland due to the different age levels and starting times and curriculum differences, it is interesting to note that when our students reach university entrance they are as brilliant as any of our interstate counterparts. I am constantly meeting students at tertiary level from my own high schools who are performing magnificently, and it is often our state school graduates who are shining the most. I applaud our education system and in particular our principals, teachers and staff.

While our system is not perfect, I see so many children with huge disadvantages to overcome in my own schools, many who come with not a word of English and many who have never attended school. In fact, two years ago the dux of Woodridge primary school had come to Australia just two years earlier knowing no English at all. In two short years she was working at a very high level. Whether the student is a high performer or struggling, it is the distance travelled that I am always interested in, and my schools are great examples of nurturing whatever talents a student may possess to help them reach their highest potential. I thank the minister for his leadership, and I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (12.38 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the second reading debate on both bills. I propose to make some general observations in response to a number of the contributions made by the different members.

The most important objective of the ELAB is to provide parents with open and transparent information about child-care services in Queensland. Parents have a right to know that child-care centres are meeting the high standards we set for those caring for children. This is yet another step in the Bligh government's major reform of this sector and an example of this government delivering on our commitment to increasing openness and transparency.

We believe that when it comes to their child's education parents deserve easy access to accurate, detailed information about schools and child-care services. That is why, since becoming education minister, I have regularly released vital information about individual Queensland schools. Parents can now go online and see how their child's school fared in the NAPLAN testing this year and compare that information to last year's results, for example. They can find out how many exclusions or suspensions there have been at a particular school and they can find information about the outcomes for year 12 school leavers. Soon they will also have access to information about possible asbestos-containing building materials at schools and the number of students in each class state-wide.

We are providing parents with this information because it helps them make informed choices about where they send their child to school, although data can never paint a full picture of a school. Parents should always visit the school and meet the teachers and the principal and have lengthy conversations with them about their points of interest and concern. It is useful information that can help parents know what questions to ask when they get there. We are committed to continuing to provide this data for parents because we want them to have the most accurate, up-to-date information possible.

I suspect that the member for Moggill, the shadow minister, does not really have an interest in ensuring parents know more about the schools and child-care centres their children attend. He has dubbed our effort to provide more openness and accountability in terms of child-care centres as 'naming and shaming'. That is no surprise. Frankly, by providing thorough, accurate data we are interfering with the ability of the shadow minister and anyone else to make criticism of our system based upon incomplete and wrong information. His position also puts him at odds with his leader, who applauded our decision to release, some months ago, data on suspensions and exclusions. But, as I said in the chamber earlier today, that is no surprise. Getting a consistent position, let alone an actual policy, on education and training out of the opposition is an impossibility.

Unlike those opposite, the Bligh government is united and we are delivering on well-founded policy. Today we are delivering on our promise to provide more transparency and accountability for parents and better services for children. Our move to extend this release of information to child-care services is an acknowledgement by the Bligh government of the importance of early childhood education.

I can confirm that more than one compliance notice in a three-year period for more than minor noncompliance can trigger the publication of information about a service, but they will have an opportunity to appeal. That is an opportunity that they did not previously have. If the noncompliance notice is in relation to more than minor noncompliance they now get a right to review, which they did not have before. If the matter is serious it can be published after one breach. Parents deserve to know that the centre caring for their child is meeting the high standards we set for them.

We make no apologies for having high expectations and setting high standards. That is why we are working closely with the federal government around a range of reforms including national quality standards. Parents have every right to expect the best care for their children, and we want to ensure that all parents can be confident in the quality of services in Queensland. But we also need to ensure that child care remains affordable and accessible.

We have been consulting with key stakeholders to ensure that the new kindergarten funding models are sustainable and will support services to remain affordable for parents and viable for operators. The member for Moggill's claims of uncertainty for operators is really not well founded. I understand the legitimate interest of the sector to get important matters clarified as soon as possible. We are working closely with the sector to do that.

No-one is missing out on any funding. Those services currently receiving funding under DECKAS will continue to do so until the transition to the new model from 2011. We have met regularly with all key stakeholders, including Childcare Queensland and C&K. I have personally met with Gwynn Bridge, president of CCQ, on several occasions and recently, and she has raised a number of issues with me which I have been pleased to respond to and to address to allay any misconceptions she might have had at that point about what is being proposed in this bill. I am pleased to say that we were able to make some changes to the amendments prior to introducing the bill that addressed Childcare Queensland's clear concerns. The department is also setting up a legislation review committee at my express request to ensure key stakeholders such as Childcare Queensland are able to remain well informed during the implementation of these changes.

In response to members' questions around religious affiliations, I can advise that the Queensland government is not interested in placing restrictions on the names centres use or on their signage. We are interested in ensuring services are accessible to all, that they meet the high standards we set and that they are providing top-quality care. The funding model will allow all types of services access to these funds, as long as they meet expected standards that go to the educational outcome.

Part of our commitment to improving standards is the development of guidelines to help kindergarten teachers deliver a quality program. The Queensland Studies Authority will develop these guidelines because of its strong experience with curriculum development and working across education sectors. It will also ensure a clear progression for students from kindy through to the prep year and onwards. The QSA will also ensure that the kindergarten guidelines provide a solid foundation of learning which will align with the national K-12 curriculum, which includes our prep to year 12, to be implemented from 2011.

We are committed to giving all Queensland children a flying start in life by providing universal access to a quality kindergarten program taught by a four-year trained early childhood teacher or a registered teacher with early childhood qualifications. I noted some concerns from the member for Moggill about the possibility of child-care workers being upgraded. It is another baseless concern, but it is interesting to note that the member has once again put himself at odds with other members of his party.

Earlier this year the member for Burdekin slammed the decision to enforce the need for teachers to be university trained. Like the federal government, we believe that our children deserve the best. We want to ensure all 3½- to 4½-year-olds get the flying start they deserve, no matter where they live. We will also be wanting to make sure, in collaboration with the sector, that those already working in the sector have appropriate opportunities for the upgrading of their skills and recognition of the great skills that they have already acquired in the school of hard knocks in the industry in which they have been working for many years.

The member for Moggill's allegations on another front of pork-barrelling in the rollout of the kindergartens are baseless and offensive. These kindergartens are being located to provide access in areas where children are not currently able to access a quality program. We will work closely with communities to ensure that proposed locations are in the right areas to meet demand, particularly unmet demand. There is no intention for these centres to compete with already existing services. This is about providing access for children not currently benefiting from a kindy program and at a holistic level making sure that, region by region, there is sufficient supply to meet unmet demand or total demand.

Only around 29 per cent of children aged 3½ to 4½ are currently accessing a kindergarten program. The government's more than \$300 million investment in this building program will provide access for around 12,000 children in this age group throughout the state.

I would like to briefly address the issue of the amendment regarding the University of Queensland. The member for Moggill referred to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Legislation Alert No. 9 of 2009*, published yesterday, in which the committee expressed concern that clause 40 may not be drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way to achieve the objectives stated in the explanatory notes.

As the member for Moggill indicated, the committee has sought its own legal advice in relation to this clause and of course the government has sought Crown law advice in its own right. The objective of the clause is to extend the expiry date for the two university statutes by one year to 1 September 2010. The Acts Interpretation Act, in particular section 14B, provides that in the interpretation of a provision of an act consideration may be given to extrinsic material capable of assisting in the interpretation if the provision is ambiguous or obscure in any other case to confirm the interpretation conveyed by the ordinary meaning of the provision. Extrinsic materials include explanatory notes and second reading speeches and any official record of the debates here in the Legislative Assembly.

Therefore, in response to the committee's concerns and in response to the concerns raised by the member for Moggill, I wish to ensure the utmost clarity of the intent of clause 40 for the benefit of the House and to aid in any possible future interpretation of the clause. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure the seamless continuity of continuation of the university statutes. This means that all actions taken in reliance on the statutes and any rules made under the statutes will therefore be valid. This position is to apply even during the period after the statutes expired and before they are revived by this amendment because the purpose of the amendment is to ensure that the position of the university and those affected by the statutes is as though the statutes never expired.

Further, I would add that the Office of Parliamentary Counsel has drafted this provision specifically to address any concerns about the unintended expiry of the statutes. The department's position is that clause 40 is by itself capable of sensible and rational application. The intention of clause 40 will achieve the policy objective of extending expiry dates of the two statutes by one year to 1 September 2010. In this respect, I refer to the comments in the explanatory notes which aid the interpretation of the remedial effect of clause 40. In particular, pages 3 and 4 of the explanatory notes explain the purpose of the amendment, which is to ensure that the awards statute and the fees statute did not expire on 1 September 2009. Page 8 of the explanatory notes explains that the amendment achieves the policy objective to provide that the awards statute and the fees statute do not expire until 1 September 2010 or unless otherwise earlier repealed. The explanatory notes make it clear and again I make it clear that the purpose of the amendment is to ensure that in legal terms the statutes never expire. This avoids the adverse consequences envisaged in the legal advice obtained by the committee.

In relation to a number of comments from particular members in the debate, I refer to the member for Glass House's question around why the pre-prep program applies only to a limited number of schools. The amendment in the bill is to address a specific situation in remote areas where there are no other options for parents to access pre-prep. It will not, as one member opposite suggested, impact upon the surrounding services. We are dealing with very remote circumstances where the marketplace does not in fact provide an alternative. These services are designed to specifically cater for those areas where it cannot otherwise be provided. This pre-prep program is funded through the Department of Education and Training, and this is extra funding and schools will not be required to cut other programs to provide it and indeed to continue doing what they are already doing.

The member for Redlands asked about how the College of Teachers treats applicants for registration who have criminal convictions. I can advise that when these issues arise the college considers matters such as when an offence may have been committed and the nature of the offence. The college can also take into account consideration of any other material matter that it believes to be relevant in determining an applicant's suitability to teach. The honourable member also asked about what happens to the holder if a statement of attainment or qualification is declared invalid. The holder has the right to appeal that decision. The department also has preventative measures in place to prevent RTOs—registered training organisations—acting outside the scope of their registration.

Finally, I want to clarify the issue raised by the member for Nicklin around reporting obligations of staff at state and non-state schools with regard to suspected sexual abuse. This was a particular issue that the member for Nicklin raised. These amendments extend the protections currently provided to children from pre-prep onward in our existing schools or new schools to those attending schools for pre-prep and those below pre-prep age being provided with special education at school, and here with pre-prep I am referring to kindy. This is an extension of existing protections offered under already operating mandatory reporting laws for school staff. So it is an extension of existing obligations on reporting that apply within the school setting—an extension to the early years.

I have aimed today to address the broader issues raised in relation to these amendments. I can assure those members whose questions I have not directly addressed that I will and have during the debate given careful consideration to their queries, particularly those that were relevant to the debate and to the bills before the House. With regard to those queries around the kindergarten universal access program, I will consider the matters closely and also raise them with the task force that is working on the implementation plan. I particularly want to acknowledge that there were a number of members who were

making important and, I thought, thoughtful comments and observations about the challenges going forward. I am happy to take those on board to ensure that we have the strongest program and initiative being rolled out as time goes by.

This is a key to a child's future and success in life—that is, focusing on the importance of early childhood education, and that is where the Bligh government is putting a strong focus. These amendments will put us further along that road to major reforms we are making in this area. I have great pleasure in commending the bills to the House, with one caveat. I want to ask for the leave of the House to table my response in a letter dated 6 October to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee report.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 October 2009, from the Minister for Education and Training to the Chair, Scrutiny of Legislation Committee regarding matters raised by the committee in relation to the Education Legislation Amendment Bill [1027].

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 12.56 pm to 2.30 pm.

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Education Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

Dr FLEGG (2.30 pm): This clause deals with amending, suspending, revoking or refusing to renew a licence, which are obviously all pretty grave and terminal offences. Those actions are obviously taken for some pretty grim reasons. Could the minister indicate how frequently these things occur and what the usual grounds for their occurrence is?

Mr WILSON: My understanding is that this power is rarely used. As the member would appreciate, it is an extreme. It is refusing to renew a licence, or suspending or revoking a licence. This would be in respect of the gravest of breaches of the licence conditions and the way in which the centre operators have been operating the centre. My expectation is that the action would be based upon a thorough investigation by the relevant investigating officers. In any event, as I understand it there is a right of review in relation to the exercise of this provision. So it is the most extreme of circumstances and, as the member would expect, the least occurring, because overwhelmingly the conduct of centres in the industry is generally quite good. So it is an exceptional provision and is used in exceptional circumstances. I am advised that, prior to the financial year 2009-10, the last recorded serious sanction was the suspension of a licence issued in 2008, later lifted in May 2009 following compliance of the service provider with the relevant child-care laws.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Dr FLEGG (2.33 pm): This clause relates to the two or more compliance notices and naming and shaming. I guess it is fair to say that this is the clause that has caused the most angst and has certainly caused the most correspondence to me by people who are concerned about it. I want the minister to clarify a few things, although I dealt with them in my speech. My reading of this clause is that new section 143A(c) would require two breaches. New paragraph (c) seems to talk about a single compliance notice. I am just seeking clarification in relation to whether there are circumstances under which naming and shaming would occur with a single compliance notice or whether it always has to be more than one.

Mr WILSON: As stated in my second reading speech, the occurrence of two or more compliance notices in relation to an act or an alleged breach for a matter that is more than a minor matter triggers the entitlement for the fact of that second breach and the earlier one to be published. So you need two in the period of three years, not one.

Dr FLEGG: In relation to noncompliance, I want to seek further guidance from the minister as to whether a schedule of the type of offences that would be considered to be not minor will be produced to give the industry further clarity—or is it simply a matter for the discretion of the person conducting the inspection? In relation to the current practice—and I was a bit surprised by the minister's comments—it has been confirmed to me that funding through the DECKAS program will not be made available to religious organisations where the name of their kindergarten implies that it is associated with an order. For example, you could not—

Mr Wilson: The government has no such position. We have no restriction on their access to the funding.

Dr FLEGG: The government money is being administered by C&K and I am informed quite reliably that if a religious denomination is contained in the title—for example, if it is referred to as ‘Albion Catholic Kindergarten’, implying that it is for Catholics—it would not be funded. I have had that confirmed to me. I am concerned about that practice anyway, obviously, but I would be concerned if things like that were to be considered a breach.

Mr WILSON: Just let me confirm that the government places no restriction of the sort indicated by the shadow minister in the application of DECKAS funding and, more to the point, we are going to reinforce our position as to neutrality on that point in the new funding model when it is rolled out. As I said in my reply, any organisation that satisfies the educational requirements—the high standards, the quality of service and what have you—whether they are of a religious nature or not of a religious nature, would be in a position to apply for the funding made available for kindergarten enrolment under the new funding model. So it will be absolutely clear as to that point.

On the first point that the member raised in relation to information regarding the distinction between matters that are more than minor and minor matters, there will be guidelines drafted by the department. They will need to be consistent with the express provisions of the amendment that we are proposing to pass today as illustrated in those examples that are in clause 6 that will amend section 143A. The Office of Early Childhood Education and Care within my department will, of course, work closely with the industry, as it has been doing, around this. It will also provide training to staff to ensure that they are appropriately ready for changes and well prepared to support the sector.

The staff will be provided with tools to assess compliance issues to ensure standardised application of the legislative requirements. The office has been working closely with the sector to develop a new system and will continue to encourage the sector to engage where they have concerns. As I also indicated in my summing-up, at my direction the department is in the process of setting up a legislation review committee that will engage the industry stakeholders so that they are closely involved in at least the first 12 months of the implementation of these amendments to ensure that in the event that there are any concerns they can be addressed as quickly as possible.

Underlining my last point, the objective of the office is to achieve the high standards of safety, care and quality that are laid down in legislation and in doing so work in a very close and constructive way with the sector for the purpose of the most desirable outcome, and that is that the standards required are indeed being met. No-one has a particular interest in establishing that people do not meet the standards. Everyone is committed to them actually meeting the standards. That is indeed how the officers have worked over the last short while and will continue to work in such a collaborative and constructive manner with the industry because we want them to succeed in the sector.

Dr FLEGG: I thank the minister for that. However, the naming is already in practice. In fact, I googled some kindergartens that I know of personally and saw some bizarre name changes to take the religious reference out. It is in practice at the present time. Can I take the minister’s comments to mean that he is going to stop that practice?

Mr WILSON: The government’s position historically has always been that that is an issue that needs to be sorted out case by case between C&K and the relevant agency that is seeking to affiliate with C&K. It is certainly not the government’s position and we will enshrine that it is not the government’s position in the way in which the funding model is being developed. For example, the Lutheran Church grouping that is actively involved in providing kindergarten services will be in a position to access public funding under the new funding model, as will, of course, the Office of Catholic Education and any other group that satisfies the standards that will be set for the bodies that receive public funding and then disburse them to kindergartens.

We have no interest in setting those sorts of preconditions on those who would be operating these services. We are focused and only focused on the quality of early childhood education and the standards and other relevant obligations that apply. I am aware that from time to time there has been some issue between some services and C&K in addressing whether or not they satisfactorily operate as a community based organisation. I urge those parties to reach sensible arrangements about that to ensure that there is the maximum access by children to the services that they provide.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

Dr FLEGG (2.43 pm): I seek clarification from the minister on how long the review period is.

Mr WILSON: As it says elsewhere in the notes, 28 days.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—

Dr FLEGG (2.45 pm): I seek clarification from the minister on how many schools he was aware of that were interested in applying and in general what types of schools. For example, are they international schools in other countries? I wonder if he has had an indication of how many schools we would be dealing with?

Mr WILSON: Firstly, the particular number is not at my fingertips. Secondly, this is a provision to indeed recognise schools that are overseas. Thirdly, the predominant number of them are in Middle Eastern countries where there are a lot of Australians as well as local students who are wishing to access the Queensland based curriculum and teaching at schools within their own country. That is the other side of the coin to the reality that there are an unprecedented number of international students studying here in Queensland in Queensland schools, many of them not only from Asia but also from the Middle East and Middle Eastern countries. What we are really doing is completing the picture. Those international students will be in a position to obtain a Queensland quality education in a school setting at home, just as they are able to by travelling halfway around the world to Queensland to obtain that education.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 14 and 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Dr FLEGG (2.47 pm): In relation to the QSA and its role in the pre-prep syllabus, the bill refers to sourcing and purchasing and so forth. I imagine that there is already some idea of where the syllabus will come from. Can the minister give us some guidance as to where we are looking to purchase or otherwise acquire the syllabus? Is it based on something being done in another state or are we going to write up our own Queensland version of it?

Mr WILSON: We are, in effect, conferring on the QSA the breadth of powers and functions it presently has in relation to curriculum development for the schooling sector. We are conferring that on them in relation to pre-prep or kindergarten programs. We are essentially reinforcing the existing powers and functions of the QSA in the way in which it goes about developing curriculum and saying that the way that it presently goes about devising curriculum can also be done in relation to the kindergarten sector. Therefore, in relation to the kindergarten area, they would have the same types of approaches as they have with the schooling sector itself. They would take on board existing programs and work with those existing programs and the sectors in the development of new curriculum. Obviously they would also take into account the emerging national curriculum that is being developed by ACARA.

In regard to working with existing programs, as I understand, in Queensland the Building Waterfalls curriculum is essentially the syllabus base that is most times used within the pre-prep or kindergarten sector, both by C&K and other providers. That would be the principal basis upon which the QSA then commenced its work in developing curriculum in this area. I underline that the QSA has probably one of the most collaborative and inclusive mechanisms that exists in government, as all sectors of the industry are involved and have a say in the development of curriculum and its content. Particularly under the new chairmanship of Bob McHugh, there is no reason to think that the QSA will conduct its curriculum development processes in relation to kindergartens any differently from how it operates in relation to the schooling sector.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

Dr FLEGG (2.51 pm): Clause 20 replaces section 8. New section 8(h) refers to the professional development of child-care workers. This bill is principally about kindergartens and, obviously, is not principally about child care. I was wondering whether this clause indicates that the professional development of child-care workers is aimed at turning those workers into kindergarten workers, which would be a fairly significant issue. Perhaps I have taken the wrong meaning from that?

Mr WILSON: The last section of the sub-paragraph gives the gist of this. It states, '...in support of the implementation in child care services of approved kindergarten guidelines.' That is what the QSA's functions will be directed at when it exercises the entitlement to develop resources and services for the professional development of carers. There are two providers of kindergarten services to the community. Kindergarten services are provided within the C&K sector and some kindergarten services are provided within the child-care sector. Instead of seeing them as two separate parts of the sector, this ensures that there is a focus across what otherwise might be a divide. There will be a focus on those 3½- to 4½-year-olds, whether they have been in one sector or another, thus maximising the opportunity for children in that age group in child-care centres to access early childhood education. The QSA's functions would be targeted at the development of professional development for the early childhood education area, whether it be within the child-care sector or the kindergarten sector itself.

Dr FLEGG: I understand about kindergarten services being developed in long day care centres. Certainly I do not have a problem with that. From the minister's other statements it seems that there is a clear differentiation in that a kindergarten or pre-prep education program would be delivered by a four-year university trained early childhood teacher. On my reading, the professional development of child-care workers in support of education seems to be somewhat at odds with that. I am looking for some clarity on this issue. Does it mean that child-care workers are being upskilled through professional development for the purpose of conducting kindergarten programs, or does it have a different meaning?

Mr WILSON: It is my expectation that under the kindergarten guidelines, the key point of focus of section 8(h) will be to build on the child-care service functions in a number of ways. For example, providing guidance to teachers by setting clear expectations for children's learning and teaching and assessment practices, with a key focus on early literacy and numeracy skills; providing consistent models for recording and reporting children's progress to support the communication of meaningful information to parents for transition to school; providing consistency in learning programs across kindergarten services; and building clear and consistent communication tools and common language for kindergarten services and parents.

The Queensland kindergarten guidelines will provide the learning foundation to support the transition to the QSA's early years curriculum guidelines for prep and, as I adverted to earlier, the national curriculum for K through to 12, which encompasses the prep year through to year 12. The guidelines will align with the Early Years Learning Framework being developed under the COAG arrangements and the ministerial council dealing with early childhood education and, therefore, support services to meet the curriculum requirements in the proposed national quality standard that is being developed by all the states and the industry sectors over the next year or so.

Dr Flegg: So are we upskilling child-care workers to work in kindergarten programs? Is that what that clause means?

Mr WILSON: We are providing for the opportunity for child-care workers to have access to upskilling opportunities.

Clause 20, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—

Dr FLEGG (2.58 pm): I will skip that one.

Clause 27, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 30, as read, agreed to.

Clause 31—

Dr FLEGG (2.59 pm): This clause relates to a student account and dealing with information from that account, particularly information that may go to the child's parents. At this stage do we have any idea how information would be communicated to the parents? I have received some inquiries from the industry in relation to this. Are we looking at parents having access to student accounts or are we looking at parents being e-mailed or sent a letter, for example? In relation to the disclosure of information on students to parents, how do we deal with issues such as custody issues and step-parents who may or may not have right of access to that information?

Mr WILSON: This provision applies where a person is enrolled in certification studies at a recognised school. If I recall this correctly, dealing with the situation we spoke about earlier in the recognition of schools overseas, the name and address of the parent are recorded in the student account. The amendment ensures that the authority must give the parent access to the information recorded in the student account to help the parents support the person's progress towards obtaining a certificate of achievement or a statement of results. The methods by which that would be done, the mechanics of communication, would be no different I would expect than what happens presently with existing Queensland based students within the education system, taking appropriate account of the fact that some of these students may now be in overseas schools that are operating the recognised courses.

Clause 31, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 32 to 37, as read, agreed to.

Clause 38—

Dr FLEGG (3.01 pm): This is dealing with the definitions. In particular, I am interested in the definition of a teacher. On my reading of this definition, we would not be including a pre-prep teacher under the definition of a teacher. Perhaps the minister could speak in general terms about how he sees this definition of a teacher and in particular what recognition as teachers the pre-prep teachers will have.

Mr WILSON: I will just take some advice. It has nothing to do with pre-prep. It is to do with recognised schools overseas and applying the definition that presently applies in the legislation to teachers in the school system here in Queensland to recognised schools overseas.

Clause 38, as read, agreed to.

Clause 39—

Dr FLEGG (3.03 pm): I think the minister probably addressed the issue of the University of Queensland in his summing-up, so I do not know that they need to add anything more there.

Mr WILSON: I recognise the shadow minister's very reasonable and sensible approach to clarifying that issue.

Clause 39, as read, agreed to.

Clause 40—

Dr FLEGG (3.04 pm): I am satisfied on that one.

Clause 40, as read, agreed to.

Education and Training Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

Dr FLEGG (3.05 pm): Clause 7 states that state operated pre-prep in 35 remote communities shall be free, which we are certainly very happy to support. But it does raise the question as to what the likely cost of pre-prep will be for parents who are not involved in the service the state is providing in those remote communities.

Mr WILSON: The kindergarten program that is being rolled out over the next several years is a voluntary program. It is being funded out of a pool of approximately \$800 million—I stand to be corrected on that figure; it might be more like \$650 million or thereabouts—spread over capital and recurrent expenditure over the next four to five years, incorporating the existing \$40 million or thereabouts in 2009-10 that is presently the DECKAS funding. What the new arrangements will do is provide for a continuation and an extension of the funding arrangements to support the delivery of kindergarten services in this voluntary setting for those aged 3½ to 4½ years.

The pre-prep initiative, at a broader level, is an important step towards reaching the Q2 target of lifting the 29 per cent participation rate of 3½- to 4½-year-olds in early childhood education in Queensland up to about 90 to 95 per cent participation within four to five years. It also supports the COAG targets that have been established in particular in Indigenous communities under the Closing the Gap strategy that is happening there.

Finally, the provision that the member is focusing on here is directed towards, in effect, regularising in this provision and a number of others what is potentially a gap between the operation of the Child Care Act and the education act which will be addressed in a more thorough way with the full review of the Child Care Act. I think this was provided to the member in the briefing some days ago.

We believe that it would be a rare occurrence for the pre-prep program to be provided to a child whose parents would have to pay for the program given the program is in remote communities. Really what this provision is doing is providing a more secure legislative basis for what is actually happening now in those remote communities where there is no commercially available kindergarten service and the relevant state schools in those 35 communities are providing that service in a sense as an extension of the existing school service.

Consequently, no fees are being charged there. What we are doing here is regularising the fact that no fees are being charged there. Just to underline the figures I was mentioning before, I was right when I first started. It was \$800 million total funding—recurrent and capital—over five years. That funds the \$320 million infrastructure spend on 240 additional kindergarten services as well as the remodelling of the DECKAS funding program to support the kindergarten sector and the child-care sector.

Dr FLEGG: The opposition is very supportive of the remote area initiative. I hope I did make that clear. I am left to read between the lines of what the minister has said. Obviously the state will only be operating out of state schools in that manner in the 35 remote communities. I think I understood the minister to indicate that the level of funding would be similar per child to what it is at present. It might be reasonable to assume that the cost to parents of pre-prep would be similar to the current cost of, for example, a community kindergarten funded through DECKAS.

Mr WILSON: The affordability of child-care services and kindergarten services is uppermost in the mind of the government, as is working well with the industry sector to continue to raise over time both standards and the quality of educational services provided in that setting. In doing so we want to ensure that all the key stakeholders are working together with government in delivering those major objectives of the sector. Affordability is a key issue and we will keep our eye very clearly, as the industry will, on that important issue.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Dr FLEGG (3.12 pm): I have a question regarding the free pre-prep in the 35 remote communities. Clause 8 provides the right to charge a registration fee for children attending pre-prep facilities. Can we get any indication what that registration fee might amount to?

Mr WILSON: It is free if you are an Australian resident. If you are not, there is a power to be exercised at the discretion of the chief executive to chase the fee.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Dr FLEGG (3.13 pm): I have a few questions for the minister on clause 12. I note that it refers to the minister approving a program for pre-prep in a school. I just wanted to know if that would be the case across the whole of pre-prep or whether that applied to only those operating within the 35 communities that we have talked about. I note that this provision must be reviewed within five years. I wonder whether the minister might comment on the implications of what might happen after five years. On page 12, I note that the principal has the right to approve or reject applications to a pre-prep learning program, which I do not think in principle we have any objection to, but I would like some reassurance that rejection of children entering pre-prep would only happen after a full investigation of the facts and that parents would have some right to put their case.

Mr WILSON: The answer to your last question is yes. I will get some advice on the earlier part. I am advised that the power conferred on the minister in this regard is confined to the 35 Indigenous communities, and the review that is spoken of is a review of the Child Care Act that I spoke of earlier that will be taking place in the near future to address what I described earlier as the legislative gap between the Child Care Act and the education act in relation to these Indigenous community kindergartens.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—

Dr FLEGG (3.16 pm): Clause 21 strikes me as one of the more significant clauses in the bill. To summarise it, the eligibility for registration of a teacher, which is a fairly important issue, has a subtle but nonetheless significant change in wording which appears to be a tightening of the circumstances under which a person can be registered as a teacher. I do note that this provision has been supported by the Queensland College of Teachers. I did take the liberty of contacting them and they confirmed that they did support this. It seems to me that that could be very significant. I wonder whether the minister would elaborate on the reason the Queensland College of Teachers felt the criteria needed to be tightened. Were we having a problem?

Mr WILSON: This is an amendment in response to an application by the Queensland College of Teachers that an amendment be made. The amended terminology, I am advised, better reflects the matters that the college considers when addressing a person's eligibility for registration, which I take it means that it more accurately reflects what they presently do.

The amendment is made in response to the college's advice that having 'contribution to education' as a separate eligibility component is potentially misleading. The term 'contribution to education' can be interpreted broadly to include achievements in academia, administration, policy, resource and performance management. However, the contribution that is relevant for the purposes of registration or approval with the college is the specific knowledge and skills required to be an effective teacher.

The amendments are likely to make it easier for people to make a case for registration as they clarify the requirements. Knowledge and skills are more easily demonstrated for the purpose of teaching than a contribution to education. These amendments will provide clarity both for the college in exercising its function in the manner in which it presently does to determine a person's eligibility and for those people applying for registration.

Clause 21, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 47, as read, agreed to.

Clause 48—

Dr FLEGG (3.20 pm): Clause 48 deals with the amendment of vocational qualifications. In particular my attention was drawn to that part of the clause that deals with the cancellation of qualifications or statements of attainment which are obviously a fairly serious set of circumstances. As this has cropped up in this bill I wondered whether the minister would indicate whether there has been a problem with qualifications being issued that subsequently needed to be cancelled. What is the reason behind changing the law in relation to the cancellation of vocational qualifications?

Mr WILSON: I am advised that presently the Training and Employment Recognition Council does not have the capacity to cancel qualifications and statements of attainment. When qualifications or statements of attainment have been issued inappropriately—and I am advised that that is not a common practice—a harmful outcome could occur if, for example, a person were to rely upon those qualifications to get a job in a high-risk industry such as mining.

In another setting, some years ago there were some experiences like that. If I recall correctly, a registered trainer undertook some fraudulent activities that produced qualifications that needed to be cancelled. Therefore the bill enables the TERC to regulate this activity more closely by amending the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act to give the TERC power to cancel a qualification or statement of attainment issued in these circumstances and give the TERC the necessary powers to investigate if it reasonably believes that a qualification or statement of attainment has been issued in inappropriate circumstances.

Clause 48, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 49 to 57, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (3.23 pm): I move—
That the bills be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (3.23 pm): I move—
That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GAMBLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 3 September (see p. 2137), on motion of Mr Lawlor—
That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.24 pm): I rise to speak on the Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. It gives me great pleasure to respond on the opposition's behalf. As the shadow minister for tourism, fair trading and racing, I have been in consultation on this bill with many industry stakeholders in the gaming, liquor, racing, residential services and community living areas. This has given me an insight into the improvements that these industries need. I will explore those later on in my speech. We will very much be supporting the bill. I would like to raise a few concerns in the House this afternoon to qualify our position on that support.

The Liberal National Party is committed to ensuring that there are laws and regulations with regard to the liquor, gaming and racing industries that find the right balance between industry development and protection of participants through significant harm minimisation strategies and reforms. The briefing we had from the minister's staff was excellent. They assisted with our consideration of this bill. Quite clearly, harm minimisation was at the forefront of this bill's intent.

I believe that this balance can be achieved through all stakeholders coming to the table and being included in any discussion and subsequent changes to existing laws. The four areas the bill addresses are gaming, liquor, racing and residential services. It focuses on amendments that refer to many issues that have been in the media quite recently.

One issue that will be explored in this bill and has been quite a contentious issue and resulted in public angst was the extension of trading hours for licensed premises. On 16 September 2009 Premier Anna Bligh announced the moratorium on all applications for extended hours between 12 am and 5 am. This moratorium will be dealt with, I believe, at a later stage. She went on to say that the moratorium is to take effect immediately and will be in place for 12 months pending the outcomes of the Law, Justice and Safety Committee inquiry into alcohol related violence. The 12-month freeze applies to all existing extended hours applications currently before the OLGR.

I entirely agreed with this move. I made calls about this several months ago. I made them to the minister, as he would be aware. In terms of the residential areas that a lot of these applications referred to, I found it absolutely abhorrent that they would be considering going to these much extended hours which virtually turned them into entertainment precincts.

This announcement unfortunately went against what the Minister for Fair Trading was saying for months on end—that is, that the decision was out of his control and in the hands of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation. But lo and behold, the Premier came out and completely overruled what the minister was saying and made the decision to have a 12-month moratorium on all applications for extended hours. Obviously the Premier has not been talking to her minister as much as she should or perhaps the minister has not been talking to the Premier as much as he should. It really upset a lot of community members. I am very pleased that they are finally singing from the same song book on this particular matter.

The Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 seeks to amend the following acts: Casino Control Act 1982; Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999; Gaming Machine Act 1991; Interactive Gaming (Player Protection) Act 1998; Keno Act 1996; Lotteries Act 1997; Wagering Act 1998; Liquor Act 1992; Racing Act 2002; and the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002. This bill is quite an involved piece of legislation given the amount of legislation it seeks to amend. Quite clearly, there has been an excellent outcome in consideration of all those pieces of legislation.

The main areas that will be changed as stated in the explanatory notes dealing with the gaming acts are that there will be a cap on gaming machines in clubs; a reallocation of slot machines within that capped area; a direction that promotional material forwarded to excluded persons will be made a serious offence; mandatory responsible services gaming training; offences for minors for gambling; card based gaming; removal of gaming rules from subordinate legislation; provision for P&F associations to conduct category 3 games; art unions; sale of Queensland approved lottery products outside of Queensland; criminal history reporting, which relates to clause 4 of the bill which inserts section 17 into the Casino Control Act 1982; note accepters; and other minor amendments to the gaming acts, including the Wagering Act 1998.

An amendment to the Liquor Act will be for an approved manager's presence during early extended trading hours and also for them to be reasonably available, and that is an amendment to the definition to require 'reasonably available' to mean contactable and within one hour's travelling time. These measures in particular are to be commended as I have had quite a bit of input from industry sources in relation to the practical implications and the impractical, if you like, current legislation for approved managers to be there all of the time or within a very short distance. Other amendments to the Liquor Act are the review of approved extended trading hours, exemption from the 3 am lockout during the Gold Coast Motor Carnival—formerly called Indy and now hopefully the A1 SuperGP—and staged payments of Liquor Licensing fees, and that is a matter that I have mentioned to the minister's staff in previous meetings when discussing the difficulties for small operators paying their licensing fees and the cancellation in August with 28 days for them to pay up. That was a matter that I raised because I thought it was appropriate, as the councils do with rates, and it is only fair in these tough economic times to keep those jobs that this government is so keen to protect, and we of course support that at every opportunity.

Mr Lawlor: We looked on your website and couldn't find anything there.

Mr STEVENS: I will tell the minister something about the website later on. The amendments to the Racing Act look at control bodies of the industry and assist them to protect the integrity of racing by requiring licensed operators who hold a race information authority to provide required information and the meaning of 'offence' to become an indictable offence if someone uses Queensland race information without the proper authority. This relates to the control body—in Queensland obviously in horseracing that is the Queensland Racing Board—issuing authorities to other areas, and of course authorities such as UNITAB are issued licences for information. Other information authorities such as other sports betting and horse betting facilities require them, where necessary, if there are matters of integrity that need to be investigated, to provide that information to Queensland Racing, and we would support that in all opportunities to make sure the integrity of Queensland racing is at its highest. The amendments to the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002 refine the definition that an aged rental scheme is a residential service. Aged rental schemes are defined as businesses which provide two services—rental accommodation in self-contained units and food services or personal care services, and I will look at the industries that the bill covers later on.

Firstly, the gaming industry contributes to the Queensland economy significantly, with \$1.018 billion in taxation revenue collected for the 2008-09 year and with \$1.006 billion expected for the 2009-10 financial year, which represents 10.8 per cent of all taxation revenue collected by the state. So we are a state personnel and government that depends on the gambling industry. This indicates how important the gaming industry is to the economy of Queensland and the Bligh Labor government needs to acknowledge its dependency on gambling. Positive and helpful initiatives should be set up and managed so that the industry can develop and appropriate safety nets should be put in place to protect the community from gambling itself into debt. It is bad enough having a government that probably has not realised how much debt it has got itself into over the many plans it has gone forward on over a number of years to finally come up with a figure now of \$85 billion—the highest debt of any state in Australia.

We have to ensure that Mr and Mrs Average are not affected by this dependency on gambling that the state is developing and is not left to its own means to control its own habits in relation to gambling. We have a duty and a responsibility to ensure that we do not let those people down who may develop an overextended dependency on gambling and an overextended hope that gambling will be the panacea to all of the worries in their world. As a gambler myself, I put my hand up to say that I like the odd flutter at the TAB on the horses particularly.

Mr Wallace: What about the dogs?

Mr STEVENS: And the dogs; I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa. I am not particularly a gambler on the slot machines. I have not had a great attraction to them but can see how they do occupy and mesmerise some people, and unfortunately those lower socioeconomic areas suffer greatly in this regard.

Mr Lawlor: What other bad habits have you got?

Mr STEVENS: Plenty. Last year the Office of Gaming Regulation released a strategic plan which focused on achieving the right balance between regulation of the gaming industry and harm minimisation. In its words, its aim was to regulate gambling to maximise benefits to the state and community as a whole while minimising harm. The QOGR regulates and monitors the conduct of gambling within Queensland and is responsible for the implementation of policies and programs designed to ensure that, on balance, the state and the community as a whole benefit.

At this point I want to make a statement on the imbalance that was brought to the media's attention and reported in the *Courier-Mail* on Monday, 21 September 2009. With the jobless rate in Logan expected to surge, this area has the highest usage of pokies within the state and to me that really sends the wrong message on where we are extracting our money from for running this state.

Mr Lawlor: What do you want? Take them all out to Dalby like your mate from Beaudesert?

Mr STEVENS: I take the interjection from the member for Southport. He is happy to see the good folk of Logan lose their money in excessive amounts in Logan, and I find that a very disappointing interjection from a member who is supposed to have some social responsibility to the folk in Logan. It is a lower socioeconomic area and quite clearly the member should have some recognition and direction that harm minimisation should be directed towards the people of Logan where they have this excessive dependency on poker machines. If the member for Southport has a problem with that, he should tell the folk of Logan. If he is genuine about the harm minimisation intent of this bill, he should be supporting the fact that there is great recognition that lower socioeconomic areas have been, if you like, extracted from more than other areas throughout the state.

It was reported that last month Logan's poker machines generated an average of \$5,803 each, which is apparently 50 per cent higher than the state-wide average. If anybody is proud of that, I think they should be very disappointed with themselves. I would like the minister to reassess offering the community access to poker machines willy-nilly and to look at whether there is any detrimental effect in any particular community—in other words, not just have open slather in every community across the state. That is an area the minister should be looking to address as part of his community and social responsibility. I am sure the minister has his heart in the right place and can see the need for an ongoing assessment of the development of the gaming industry, but he needs policies in place to act upon.

There is not enough research and data collected in relation to the gaming and gambling industries in Australia. That became evident in a research paper review, undertaken and commissioned by the Victorian Department of Justice on behalf of Gambling Research Australia, called *A review of Australian gambling research—August 2008*. This was a critical review of recent Australian gambling research and the extent to which it can be used to inform interjurisdictional and national public health policy.

Research into the gaming industry is vital for overall industry development and control over excessive use and detriment or harm that can come from obsessive behaviour. Although the state government appreciates the taxes that it draws from gaming, there needs to be a balance between protecting the individual, protecting the industry and the consumers' right to choose.

The Productivity Commission's 2009 gambling inquiry is the result of another of the Howard government's initiatives back in 1999, when the Productivity Commission issued a report into Australia's gambling industry. This report looked at everything from the impact of gambling on the community to the growing popularity of gaming as an entertainment and leisure activity. From this 1999 report, the Australian Casino Association was proactive in investing heavily in harm minimisation, skills and training. That investment has been effective in terms of the self-regulation of the casino industry, but local venues that do everything to encourage poker participation need to be monitored.

There is also the need to address the impact and the growth in certain areas of the gaming industry, which over the past 10 years has become a popular form of regular leisure activity for lower socioeconomic communities. From my own experience in local government I know of one particular instance where some people came up from South Australia with \$7 million to pump into a pub with 40 poker machines. They put in two beer taps, the maximum amount of poker machines, wonderful areas for the kiddies to play in, wonderful service areas for the mums to gather around, and they are reaping an absolute fortune. To me, that is hoodwinking the local people who cannot afford to involve themselves with these poker machines as much as they do. I know that it is their choice, but as a government and as politicians we have a responsibility to guide these people in the right direction.

Internet and sports betting has developed significantly over the past few years and it has become very popular. Internet betting is a concern as the use of the internet itself can become an obsession for some. When you combine this with the ability to access online betting in the home, at the office or in an internet cafe, you see that there is a real and greater chance of certain people becoming addicted to gambling.

The 2009 Productivity Commission gambling inquiry is an extension of the Productivity Commission 1999 report into gambling. The terms of reference were to look at the nature and definition of gambling and the range of activities incorporated within this definition; the participation profile of gambling including problem gamblers and those at risk of problem gambling; the economic impacts of the gambling industries, including industry size, growth, employment, organisation and

interrelationships with other industries such as tourism, leisure, other entertainment and retailing; the social impacts of the gambling industries; the incidence of gambling abuse and the cost and nature of welfare support services, of government and non-government organisations, necessary to address it; the contribution of gambling revenue on community development activity and employment; the effects of the regulatory structures—including licensing arrangements, entry and advertising restrictions, application of the mutuality principle and differing taxation arrangements—governing the gambling industries, including the implications of differing approaches for industry development and consumers; the implications of new technologies, such as the internet, including the effect on traditional government controls on the gambling industries; the impact of gambling on Commonwealth, state and territory budgets; the impact that the introduction of harm minimisation measures at gambling venues has had on the prevalence of problem gambling and on those at risk; and evaluate the effectiveness and success of these harm minimisation measures used by the state and territory governments.

The growth of gaming and gambling is a worldwide trend, with casinos popping up all over the globe. The development of casinos has major links to gambling tourism, where a host of tourist activities are set up around the central focus of gambling. The Monte Carlo casino is one of the most famous tourism attractions in Monaco. The casino complex is a gambling facility that includes the Grand Theatre de Monte Carlo, an opera and ballet house and the headquarters of the Ballets de Monte Carlo. Las Vegas is also a prime example of a gambling tourist mecca. Vegas is located in the middle of the desert and its prime focus and industry is gambling. The sustainability of the city relies solely on tourists who want to gamble. Visiting the Grand Canyon is second on everyone else's list, even though the Grand Canyon, created over 5.4 million years, is one of the most spectacular naturally formed rock formations that the world has to offer. I am pretty certain it is a World Heritage listed geological formation.

The other interesting point to note is that the development of casinos usually happens in places or close to places that want to break free of society's restrictions and regulations, hence the development of another gambling tourist destination that I have seen in recent times on Macau, which, as we know, was occupied by the Portuguese for many years before Chinese rule. I can assure members that gambling is the economy of Macau.

In Australia, there are casinos that also rely on gambling tourism as part of their revenue. They include Crown Casino, Star City Casino, the Skycity casino in Darwin, the Christmas Island casino off the north Western Australian coast and, in Queensland, Jupiters Townsville casino, the Conrad Treasury casino in Brisbane, the Reef Hotel Casino in Cairns and Jupiters Casino on the Gold Coast.

Industry development in Queensland needs to be assisted as there have been no significant development investment funds allocated to the casino industry for many years. At this stage of my speech I would like to refer to the many media releases that the minister has issued recently about the allocation and distribution of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, the Breakwater Island Casino Community Benefit Fund and the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund. I am pleased to say that nearly all electorates in Queensland—even including LNP electorates—have received benefits from the gaming industry and that the community groups involved in those electorates are very thankful for gambling in Queensland.

While I am talking about the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, I note that community groups will have to use an online form to apply for their community grants. Hopefully, there is a transition period as some senior people who do not have a lot of experience in these matters are having quite a bit of difficulty with new grant applications.

Mr Lawlor: You can still put them in the hard copy.

Mr STEVENS: I thank the minister. The website of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation states—

Gaming Licensing deals with licensing organisations and persons under all legislation administered by OLGR. It services clients such as companies, clubs, hoteliers, solicitors, consultants, charities and the general public. The Licensing activities constitute a significant component of OLGR function.

The website states further that the main responsibilities of the office include the investigation and licensing of gaming nominees, gaming employees and gaming repairers; key employees of casino, keno, lottery and wagering; casino employees; manufacturers; licensed monitoring operators and service contractors; gaming machine licences for hotels and clubs; oncourse wagering permits; charitable and non-profit art union operators; bingo centres; and lucky envelope printers.

In addition, Licensing are responsible for the processing of gaming machine increases and decreases, gaming machine surrenders and trading hours increases. Additional responsibilities include secretarial duties to the Queensland Gaming Commission, authorised sales and tenders of gaming machine operating authorities and advice on trade promotions, bingo and art unions.

While we appreciate the work of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation, in my meetings with industry stakeholders the one consistent concern is the lack of communication between the department and industry. I will explore this later in my speech. However, I will point out one example of the lack of communication that occurred earlier this year. The Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading had allowed the introduction of \$50 and \$100 notes into gaming machines. Gaming machine operators changed the configuration of those machines to allow acceptance of those large bills. Very quickly the Premier started talking to the minister and decided that access to those large \$50 and \$100 notes would lead to

another trend away from harm minimisation. The minister and his Premier were out of sync. It would help all industry participants if the minister and the Premier were able to sing from the same song book on all of these issues and make sure that changes, when they are allowed by the minister, are able to continue and do not cost those people in the industry a lot of money as a result of government changing its mind and approach on these matters.

In the Casino Control Act 1982, clause 12 relates to what a regulation can be about and inserts tournaments for games, the naming of a game or wager, the permissible minimum or maximum wagers for a game and the maximum denomination of currency that may be inserted in a note acceptor in a casino. Recently it has been highlighted that Woolworths, one of the largest poker machine operators having more than 11,000 machines across Australia, should be looking at the protection of children in its gambling venues. Independent Senator Nick Xenophon has collected signatures for a motion to be put forward at Woolworths' annual general meeting on 26 November 2009 in Sydney. The petition calls for an overhaul of venues to mitigate any risk to children.

I note that in one particular area of this bill the penalties have increased for a casino. In effect, penalty units have increased from what is \$1,000 to \$2,500 for minors even being in an area where gambling is carried on. I think people agree that children should not be in gambling areas. Casinos are self-regulated and they have been known on numerous occasions to say that there has been a breach of this rule and a child has gotten away from mum as they have walked from the restaurant to another area. It might be a very small child and they have run into the gambling area. As a result the casino has been fined. That fine will now increase as per these new regulations from \$1,000 to \$2,500. They understand the implications of that, but I think where they see the difficulty is that there is one law for them and perhaps another law for clubs and hotels where there is not such a great discrimination between the areas of gambling and dining and not such a self-determination in regulation that sees the allowance of minors crossing over into these areas where poker machines exist in these clubs and pubs. It has to be consistent across all levels of the entertainment and hospitality industry.

In regard to the Casino Control Act 1982, clause 4 of the bill inserts a new section 17 providing for notification of criminal history from the police to the chief executive or an employee of a casino. I believe this to be very important to maintain the much needed security in casinos. Clause 10 inserts a new section 100E regarding the distribution of promotional or advertising material about a casino to an excluded person with the maximum penalty being 40 penalty units. This is also important to ensure that problem gamblers are not tempted even more with promotions and giveaways that businesses might distribute. Even if it is accidental they will still be heavily fined on the matter because quite clearly that will make the providers of the entertainment more stringent with their controls and who they send the promotional material out to.

In relation to the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, clause 15 relates to amendments to the act where it inserts subsection 39(c) and allows for P&F associations from non-government schools to apply for a category 3 gaming licence, which as we know can be a Calcutta or an art union that P&Fs like to run to raise funds. I understand that the matter was allowed across the state school area but the non-government schools were not able to conduct them. This rectifies an anomaly in that particular legislation. Clause 16 inserts a new section 72(2), (3) and (4) for the minister to notify the making of a rule in the gazette.

In regard to the Gaming Machine Act 1991, clause 19 inserts a new section 32(4) and states which persons can appeal to the commission. Clause 41 provides for the reallocation scheme which will be a market based transfer model and allows for transfer entitlements between category 2 premises, which I understand are premises with less than 30 machines, either permanently or for a temporary period between one and eight years. Again through consultation with the industry, I understand that it is concerned about how that will operate. The clubs say that the departmental officers have assured them that there will be a review of that transfer allocation if it is not proving effective in its service to that particular industry.

The liquor industry in Queensland employs approximately 80,000 people. Government must do everything in its power to maintain them for the future development of the industry. The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation is responsible for the administration of the Liquor Act 1992 and the Wine Industry Act 1994. I suppose in some ways that makes the minister and the shadow minister responsible for matters relating to the wine industry that the former member for Albert used to look after. We are now embracing a wide area of very important industries to Queensland.

OLGR has a broad mandate which includes a key role in developing a contemporary liquor and hospitality industry. The main responsibility of the Liquor Licensing Division is to regulate the sale and supply of liquor in Queensland through issuing liquor, wine and adult entertainment licences and permits, investigating complaints about licensed premises, collecting liquor fees and fines, implementing initiatives to minimise harm and prevent crime associated with the consumption of liquor, working in partnership with Indigenous communities to implement alcohol management plans and minimise the negative impacts of alcohol abuse and misuse and providing educational material about the responsible service of alcohol to industry participants, including licensees, their employees and consumers.

The amendment to the Liquor Act 1992 covers the following areas: it is proposed that approved managers be present or for them to be reasonably available during early extended trading hours. This is alleviating the burden of the managers being on the premises when the businesses are open till all hours. The amendment states that the definition of reasonably available means contactable and within one hours' travelling time. I believe this to be a sensible definition as usually there would be an assistant manager along with a bar supervisor who would be able to look after any unforeseen issues that might arise. It is also understood that in some licensed premises in regional areas where there is a lack of staff the time period reasonably available can be amended by the chief executive if appropriate and a risk assessment to the premises reveals no concerns.

The bill reviews approved extended trading hours. Currently licensing hours are from 10 am to midnight, with the ability for a separate licence for extending trading from 12 am to 5 am and 9 am to 10 am. A special facility licence to trade for 24 hours may be obtained at a charge of \$27,500. That fee will cover up to 10 outlets within the one business; any outlets over 10 will incur a further fee of \$1,000. Special facility licences can be approved by the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation for specific businesses such as airports, casinos and tourist facilities.

The exemption from the 3 am lockout will allow for the continuation of trade through the—we hope—Nikon A1 SuperGP carnival to be held latter this month. The standard 3 am lockout will apply, but this will allow premises to apply for extensions beyond the 3 am lockout time so that they can continuing trading, as happens within the special Surfers Paradise precinct under the Indy legislation, in place since the Indy carnival began.

I believe the staged payments of liquor licensing fees is a very important initiative that the minister should be congratulated for. It allows for struggling businesses to continue to operate without the burden of a one-off payment, which has been placed on them in the past. I have consulted with industry stakeholders and some of them told me that they are not happy with the lack of engagement from the government. Communication has been difficult. The important part of the message that I hear loud and clear is that it is nearly impossible to get any decision.

The Queensland Hotels Association reinforces that the lack of a consultation process is of major concern. Their representatives say that we have layer upon layer of new initiatives and regulations, with very few being effective enough for the industry to progress. The QHA has stated that the licence industry, the public and even the media are beginning to realise that the government needs to focus on bad patron behaviour, because that is where the problem lies. Until patron behaviour, standards and personal accountability are addressed, no amount of increased compliance measures on the supply side will solve that aspect of antisocial activity and violence.

I turn to the background of the racing industry. Over the past few years in Queensland the thoroughbred industry has gone through a very tough time. I agree with any amendments that can improve the industry as a whole. One of the good things that the chairman of Queensland Racing has done, here in Queensland and also as chairman of the Australian association, is to recognise the extremely important threat to the racing industry posed by outside betting avenues that will leave the Queensland racing industry without sufficient funding to grow the industry. Initially, I thought that this amendment was aimed at more disclosure from those other avenues for betting and gambling that do not return to the industry a good portion of the money that they generate. However, I have been absolutely assured that these amendments apply purely to matters of integrity relating to the obtaining of information and will only apply in cases where there have been suspicions of racing malpractice that will then need to be investigated by the proper authorities. Through this legislation, those authorities will have the capacity to obtain information from those other bodies.

As to the compulsion on the other bodies to provide that information, I am still uncertain—and this is one of the qualifications that I bring forward and perhaps the minister can address it—that even though it is legislated in this state that they have to provide all the information, apart from going through different supreme and federal courts—and as a solicitor the minister would know which ones are more appropriate than I do—the interstate operators will feel no compunction to come forward with information other than what they want to give if they lose financially. Obviously they would be keen to give that information. However, if they win on a matter, they might not be so keen to give that information. There are certain matters for the minister to address relating to the enforcement of this legislation to empower those authorities issued with the authority to hold information on Queensland racing.

I would like to comment briefly on another matter that has been politicised in recent times relating to the Australian Racing Board and animal protectionists. I have had a long history with horses, as a child and through my involvement in the racing industry, probably for about 51 of my 56 years. I refer to the current rules relating to the jockeys using the new padded whips. I know this is off the bill, but it is a brief move off the bill. I thought it would be very appropriate to mention it while we are dealing with racing matters as it will affect the integrity of racing matters. When undertaking investigations, they will need to look at matters such as whether whips were used. They will need to access that sort of information for appeals. I simply make that comment.

I move now to the residential services and retirement industry, which is the major growth area of community living in Queensland. As I mentioned, this bill refines the definition that an aged rental scheme is a residential service. Aged rental schemes are defined as businesses that provide two services: rental accommodation in self-contained units and food services or personal care services. This amendment clarifies the definition so that residents can be serviced appropriately.

The amendments that have recently come forward raise some issues. The minister proposes to introduce an amendment relating to the moratorium, which I support. The moratorium puts it off for 12 months. I understand that. It gives the committee the power to look at the appropriateness of the matter. Whichever way the committee looks at the matter, as a community representative I am of the very strong opinion that extending hours in residential areas for pubs and hotels should not be allowed and that that moratorium should turn into a permanent ban in those particular areas.

The amendments deal with the issue of glassing. As we have noted from the Premier's and the minister's statements, following the approval of this legislation by the Governor in Council, as I understand it, premises that have had an incident in the previous 12 months from the date of the issue of the show cause will have to remove their glasses and use tempered glasses. I congratulate the minister and the Premier for that. However, I ask for caution in this matter. I understand that of the 41 venues named, several are of the opinion that in the last 12 months they have not had any glassing incidents.

Mr Lawlor: That is why they have 14 days to show cause.

Mr STEVENS: Correct. In a couple of cases, they already use tempered glasses. They feel that this then becomes a naming and shaming exercise, which they feel they do not deserve. Obviously there will be other amendments in relation to the servicing over a 24-hour period of accommodation areas that have mini bars, et cetera, and they want to continue that service area.

The other amendment, which I support wholeheartedly, is that the CEO must take into account harm minimisation when considering extensions to licensing applications and of course must also take into account community impact statements. The CEO must do that—it is not a matter of choice—and I support that entirely.

The most important angle which we come from is that there has to be a balance between encouraging industry development and trying to effect harm minimisation and protection for the community, which an elected LNP government would ensure. The industry has been disillusioned with the management by the government of their side of industry regulation. There has been consultation, and I note that. But they feel that their concerns are ignored, even though there has been consultation. It is a case of, 'We're going to do it our way anyway. We've had our consultation.' There are concerns that licensing fees will increase significantly over the next few years due to the dire situation of state finances, although I am assured by the minister in answer to a question on notice that there will be no increase to liquor licensing fees—

Mr Dickson: Doesn't mean it's right.

Mr STEVENS: No. Then again, I should go and check with the Premier perhaps, as the member for Buderim has just interjected. I thank the member for Buderim. Another concern is the breakdown in communication between departments since the restructure, especially between the old liquor licensing division and the Queensland gaming regulation office. Many say that the lack of communication is resulting in extreme inefficiencies.

With regard to red tape, there seems to be a focus on forms and procedure rather than outcome driven results. There are more resources needed in harm minimisation strategies as the revenue that comes in from gambling taxes is not in proportion with what should be outlaid for community protection against the dangers of excessive habitual participation.

There have been long delays in the processing of liquor licensing and gaming applications. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland report *Blueprint for fighting Queensland's over-regulation* states that Queensland government agencies with a high level of red tape burden include the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation, with a high rating of 41.8 per cent. In conclusion—

Mr Ryan: You still have 12 minutes, though.

Mr STEVENS: I can see that everyone is nodding off. In conclusion, I thank the minister and his departmental and ministerial staff for their briefings on this bill which were very full, frank and informative. I would certainly like to mention that a Liberal National Party government would ensure that a balance is achieved between the opportunity to access gaming activities and protection and the delivering of harm minimisation strategies for the community. I support the passage of the bill through this House. I commend the minister on his harm minimisation efforts.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (4.13 pm): First of all, I thank the shadow minister for his speech on this bill. It was very comprehensive. I commend any initiative that addresses problem gambling in our community. I intend to address my comments on this bill to some of the provisions that relate to gaming machines, which are the biggest contributors to problem gambling, and to the proposed changes to the Liquor Act in relation to extended trading hours.

The cap on the number of gaming machines across the state has at least ensured there is a control on how many machines are provided and we do not have unlimited growth. The question remains: how many poker machines is too many? I would like the assurance from the government that the pressure from licensed venues will not lead to an increase in the cap that has been put in place. The amount of money that is poured into poker machines is extraordinary and of great concern. Queenslanders lost \$1.8 billion on them last year and that record could be exceeded this year.

I understand that the Productivity Commission is currently looking into the economic and social impacts of gambling, and I urge the government to take note of that report when it is released. We may need to consider further amendments to our gaming laws. On average, more than \$3,000 was put through each poker machine on the Sunshine Coast in August alone. The average in Logan, in an area of high unemployment, was closer to \$6,000, as the shadow minister spoke about earlier. We should all be concerned about that, because it is an alarming situation when in an area of great unemployment money is being extracted out of people's pockets. There is only one consequence, and I think we know what that is.

The proposed reallocation scheme for clubs in this amendment bill will provide an opportunity both for new licensees to enter the market and for machine entitlements to be transferred in line with market demand. While protecting the community, we need to ensure that clubs, as businesses, are able to compete fairly in the gaming market. They are significant employers in this state. Having said that, we need to consider the amount of money lost on gaming machines and the social impacts of problem gambling, not just on the gambler but on their families and the wider community.

Clubs claim that they need gaming machines to maintain viability. The government claims that reducing gambling revenue would cut back on the ability to fund community programs through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. When you think about the \$2 billion or so that will be lost on gaming this year, you have to ask whether we have our priorities right in this state.

The amendments that will allow for a restriction on the denomination of currency that can be used in note acceptors are entirely appropriate. We cannot allow a repeat of the situation where the minister approved the use of \$50 and \$100 notes in so-called 'high roller' areas.

I am pleased to see that it is proposed to legislate for additional measures to protect problem gamblers, or potential problem gamblers. These include making it an offence to distribute promotional material to excluded persons and the introduction of mandatory responsible gambling training for all employees in gaming venues. It is important that all employees understand the meaning of responsible gambling and the potential harm that problem gamblers cause—in the same way that we require staff in licensed venues to undertake training in the responsible service of alcohol.

Section 457 of the Gaming Machine Act requires that mandatory training be completed by July 2011. If it is not possible to bring that date forward, I would like to see an interim measure implemented that will increase gaming venue staff awareness of problem gambling. This would be a small cost for venue operators to bear compared to the revenue gaming machines generate. I would be interested to know who will have to pay for the responsible service of gambling training—individual staff or venue operators. My own view is that training should be the operators' responsibility as they are the ones making the profit from these machines.

I also support the proposed penalties relating to gambling by minors. It is appropriate that all of our gambling legislation should be consistent and that venue operators who do not police gambling for under-age people are penalised appropriately.

It is proposed to extend card based gaming so that it can be applied under the Casino Control Act. If there is evidence that using cards helps patrons manage their gaming expenditure, this is a positive. However, I would like to see measures considered such as controls on the spin time of poker machines. This would be a means to control the number of spins patrons can have within a given time. It would offset the advances in technology that have greatly increased the number of spins a machine can make in a short space of time. Importantly, it would impose a limit rather than rely on the patron's own self-control.

Currently, poker machines take between 3½ and five seconds to complete each game or spin. This allows for between 12 and 17 spins per minute. Introducing a minimum spin idle time between games of between five and seven seconds would reduce the number per minute to six or seven. The result is that a player would lose less money in a given time. This measure would be particularly effective in reducing expenditure by players who work to a time limit—that is, by spending a fixed amount of time playing the poker machines in one session. It would also reduce the revenue generated per machine per hour, so I do not expect it to be an attractive proposition for the industry. But this is an industry that is making massive profits, and I do not believe it is our role in this House to put unlimited profits before the people of Queensland. I am sure that the venues would still be able to operate very successfully with such a restriction placed upon them.

The amendment to the Liquor Act that will allow the chief executive to withdraw extended trading hours is another amendment I support. I applaud the government's recent moratorium on the extension of trading hours and would like to see it go further, with a complete review of trading hours. There is no justification, other than commercial profit, for licensed premises across the state to be open until 3 am or even later. It may be appropriate for late hours in certain areas but not across-the-board.

We have recently seen a number of applications for extended hours in hotels owned by the likes of Woolworths and Coles. Two of those are in my electorate. They are not venues in tourist areas but are located in quiet areas that are predominantly residential. We know that violence due to alcohol and drugs is most common in the early hours of the morning. There is no public transport other than taxis, which may or may not be available.

I believe that we need to put the community's safety ahead of profit and take a more proactive stance in limiting trading hours. We also need to look at what measures should be taken to prevent gambling getting even worse in our society. I call on the government to make a much greater investment in harm minimisation programs which will address problem gambling. Not enough of our gambling tax revenue is directed towards those programs, and that could make a real difference to our community.

I call on the minister to seriously look at the idea of the change in spin time on poker machines. We need to look at this issue very seriously because of the human misery that these machines are causing—the family breakdown, children going without food, grandparents losing the nest egg they have been left with when they become a single grandparent. This is happening every day in our society. We all know it. It is a matter of whether we will do anything about it or not. I think the idea I have put forward relating to the spin time on poker machines is not a bad one. To make it very clear, there is no cost in hardware whatsoever—and I hope the advisers in the chamber take this on board; it has to do with changing the program itself. That can be done at a very minimal cost but the rewards to our community would be very high.

I know that cutting back the revenue for these clubs will be an impost on them, but what are we here for? Are we here to look after big business or are we here to look after the people of Queensland? I think this is a pretty sound idea. I have studied this in great detail. It is cheap to implement, and if we do not do it it is only because we do not want to. The means are there to make this happen. I leave that in the minister's hands. It is what I consider to be a reasonably good idea.

I think we need to look much more seriously at the issue of alcohol and trading hours. A lot of young people drink late into the evening. We have all heard the One Punch Can Kill campaign. It does not happen because people go out looking for a fight. They go out, they get on the grog, they think they are bulletproof, they have a blue with somebody and they knock them down and they can die. At the very worst, they end up in a wheelchair and someone has to look after them for the rest of their natural life. Death is the easy way out, but living in misery in a wheelchair does not impact just on them; it has an impact on their family, their friends, our health system and this state. We are going to have to pay for that, and the cost goes on and on and never stops. Until that person dies, that one drink, 10 drinks or 20 drinks do not go away. We do need to look at the issue of trading hours seriously. It is not about prohibition or stopping people having a sensible drink. It is about whether we are prepared to let big business have their way.

There is a group that goes by the name of the 'Fresh Food People'. It has a really nice ring to it, but the 'Fresh Food People' own most of the hotels and most of the poker machines. They are making a pretty good profit out of tucker alone. They are going to make a bigger profit out of poker machines and they are going to make a bigger profit out of alcohol if we extend these trading hours. I think it is high time we told big business, 'You need to think about what you are doing socially to our community, to the people of Queensland, to our children,' because the 'Fresh Food People' are causing a hell of a lot of brain damage in our youth. I think that needs to be taken on board. I think the minister has an opportunity to send a clear message to the 'Fresh Food People'. It is about time they became socially responsible to the people of Queensland and they did the right thing.

Lifeline is at the end of the food chain. I used to own caravan parks in Brisbane, and many people would move into a caravan park when they were doing it pretty tough. They had lost their money on poker machines or they had become alcoholics. It was a cheap place to live. They would blow their money, their kids would have no food and they would be on the telephone, 'Hello, Lifeline. Can you bring me a cheque? We need to feed our children.' Just think about that complication alone. We give money to Lifeline and we hope it goes to a really good cause. It knows it is doing the right thing.

I remember talking to the fellows from Lifeline when they came around. I said, 'Why do you do this? Why do you give these people this money? You know they have gone out and blown the money on poker machines.' They said, 'It is not about them; it is about their children. We have to be responsible because they are no longer responsible. They do not have the mental capacity to look after their children because they are either too drunk or too addicted to gambling.' Lifeline has to give them the money that we give to Lifeline. I would like to see money that I give to Lifeline go to people who really need it, who are down and out because they have fallen out of work or something has happened and they cannot get a job in our society. That money should be used effectively and efficiently, but instead

the flow-on from the 'Fresh Food People' and the like is having its way in society. I think it is time we as a parliament took a stand in Queensland and let them know that it is not good enough. Be socially responsible. We can start it from this House.

I know that the minister is not a bad fellow. We have had our tiffs in the past, but this is about moving forward in the future. I ask the minister to think about taking on board the idea about spin time that I have put forward. If it does not work, do not do it. But if it is a good idea, use it. I think we need to tell big business in this state: we are not going to let you run the show. That is why we have a parliament. That is why we put out bills that regulate this state—so that people can live a healthy, normal life without becoming alcoholics or gamblers.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (4.25 pm): I rise to speak in general support of the Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009, which is before the House this afternoon. I start by thanking the shadow minister for his worthwhile and positive contribution to the debate. This bill will bring about reform to the regulation of gambling throughout Queensland. Amendments to the Liquor Act, the Racing Act and the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act seek to improve the regulation of such industries. The bill will amend several pieces of legislation including the Liquor Act 1992, the Racing Act 2002, the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, the Keno Act 1996—and the list goes on.

In the second reading speech the minister boasted that the Queensland government continually aims to improve on the delivery of government services and reduce red tape and that this government seeks to reduce the regulatory burden. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland recently released a report in July this year entitled *Blueprint for fighting Queensland's over-regulation*. In that report, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that the difficulty with red tape is that each individual regulation can normally be justified by government as being in the public interest. However, when we sum up all these individual regulations, together it creates a staggering regime that essentially blunts business from growing and employing. Inappropriate and inefficient regulation acts as a constraint on business growth, productivity and investment and reduces Queensland's competitiveness, both nationally and internationally. The report revealed that Queensland has over 70,000 pages of regulation and statutory laws.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of the member for Morayfield—because I hear the interjections—I agree that this piece of legislation may reduce the regulatory burden and is intended to move towards protecting the community. The difficulty I have is the government's implementation of it. The amendments to the gaming legislation will seek to minimise the potential harm from gambling in the community, ensure the integrity of gaming, and increase administrative efficiency and consistency. The amendments to the Liquor Act 1992 seek to increase administrative efficiency and flexibility, minimise the potential harm from liquor in the community, reduce the regulatory burden on industry, and ensure consistency and clarity to the provisions of the Liquor Act.

I strongly support the state-wide cap on gaming machines in clubs of 24,705. Currently there is no state-wide cap but, rather, a cap of 280 machines per site. The state-wide capping of gaming machines will ensure tighter regulatory monitoring of the distribution of gaming machines, which is a step towards minimising the harm that these machines have on users and the members of our society. We must create a balance within the community and industry to reduce the impact that gambling has on our community. We must encourage education on the impact that gambling has on the community, not just individual gamblers.

I commend the minister for creating an offence for the gambling operators who distribute, or cause a person to distribute, advertising and/or promotional material to the known excluded person—excluded either by the venue for problem gambling or subject to self-exclusion—where previously the advertising to such known excluded persons would have resulted in a mere slap on the wrist. There must be zero tolerance of those venues that are lax in their promotion of responsible gambling and that do not fully appreciate the impact that gambling has on the individual gambler and the society and community.

I strongly support the move to create an offence for minors who gamble and the amendments to bring consistency to those inconsistent penalties with respect to the offences related to minors who gamble. I support the proposed mandatory responsible service of gambling training to all staff whose positions relate to the conduct of gambling in hotels and clubs. Once again, there must be a zero tolerance towards hotels and clubs that demonstrate an unwillingness to commit to the responsible service of gambling.

The club industry employs just over 27,000 in Queensland. It has been found that on average each club is able to provide some \$711,000 annually to their local communities in economic benefits. However, the amount of revenue that is raised as a result of gambling taxes is not proportionate to the amount that should be invested in educating and protecting the community against the dangers of excessive regular usage.

Too often we hear of cases of individual gamblers whose family and living circumstances are affected by their own excessive regular gambling. We need to educate and fight to protect our community against this harm. In closing, the issue that I see as a balancing act that we as a parliament,

we as a community and we as a society must play is to try on the one hand to limit gaming machine operations throughout Queensland to have a beneficial impact on society but also realise that our local surf clubs, RSLs and so forth use this as major fundraising for the community. So in any legislation now or in the future we must use a balancing approach—that is, to balance the way forward for a positive society and certainly not promote gambling within the society but decrease it and also maintain the amount of money that these local clubs and societies in our electorates give to local communities which is a benefit.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (4.31 pm): The Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to make changes to a number of acts with a view to improving the regulation of the associated industries by clarifying their scope, minimising harm and reducing the impact of red tape on industry and community. Gambling and the consumption of alcohol constitute activities that generate an enormous amount of consternation and debate in our society. The views about each of these activities range from complete opposition on moral and ethical grounds to the position that asserts that these activities form integral and desirable components of the Australian psyche.

I believe that drinking and gambling are legitimate and legal activities for adults but that they have become all too frequently the target of abuse for people who have vulnerability to addiction. Like many of life's pleasures, these are best taken in moderation.

The Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 contains a number of amendments to the various gaming acts which will minimise the potential harm that gambling can cause in the Queensland community. This government recognises that the majority of Queenslanders derive direct and indirect benefits from gambling, from the provision of entertainment venues and facilities, funding for community groups, and infrastructure and services funded from taxes on gambling.

However, around 0.47 per cent of adult Queenslanders are defined as problem gamblers. I would rather say that they have a problem with gambling than call them problem gamblers. This is a small number but the government is committed to keeping the number at an absolute minimum. This bill gives legislative effect to a range of harm minimisation initiatives. These initiatives are aimed at reducing the effect of problem gambling on members of the Queensland community and protecting the vulnerable such as children.

The bill introduces mandatory responsible service of gambling training for employees involved in the conduct of gaming in clubs and hotels. This ensures persons who provide gambling services to the community are aware of their responsibilities and have the necessary knowledge to minimise the harm gambling can cause. The government recognises that trained staff play an important role in ensuring responsible gambling. Responsible gambling occurs in an environment where the potential for harm is minimised and people make informed decisions about their participation. Staff can play a big role in shaping this environment.

This bill also gives legislative effect to a state-wide cap on club gaming machines. Clubs are currently subject to a cap of 280 gaming machines per site. There has been no state-wide cap on club gaming machine numbers; only hotels have been subject to a state-wide cap prescribed in legislation. The cap introduced in this legislation restricts the spread of gaming machines across our state in order to minimise the potential harm these machines can cause in the community.

The bill also contains amendments that demonstrate the government's commitment to ensure gaming licensees are serious about providing responsible gambling. There will be zero tolerance of licensees who do not respect exclusion provisions for gamblers who have problems.

The gaming acts currently contain provisions that allow a person who experiences problems with gambling to either exclude themselves or be excluded by the venue. It is important to protect gamblers who have problems and who have been excluded, and that they not be tempted to re-enter gambling venues to continue gambling.

Currently, if a venue sends promotional material related to gambling to a person excluded from that venue they have breached a voluntary code of conduct. However, this bill now makes such an action an offence with clear penalties imposed on those who do not comply with the legislation.

In addition to protecting those who experience a problem with gambling, it is important to ensure that minors are adequately protected from the potential harm of gambling. Children are a vulnerable group within society. It is important that the gambling acts provide sufficient consequences that will deter them from participating in gambling. It is also essential that there are sufficient penalties to ensure that adults do not allow a child to gamble. Most of the gaming acts provide for penalties for minors who gamble but the wagering and lotteries acts do not. To rectify this, the bill creates new offence penalties for minors who participate in lottery or wagering activities.

The bill also amends the Casino Control Act and Keno Act to ensure there are consistent penalties for minors who gamble in licensed venues. It also increases the penalty for an adult who permits a minor to participate in keno gambling to ensure that it is consistent with other gaming acts. The bill amends the Casino Control Act and the Gaming Machine Act to allow a regulation to limit the maximum denomination of currency that may be inserted into a gaming machine note acceptor in casinos, hotels and clubs.

This bill also contains amendments to the Casino Control Act to provide for card based gaming technologies. Whilst these arrangements are primarily to provide the technical aspects of card based gaming, they do have the potential to minimise the harm gambling may cause by allowing for precommitment technologies which allow players to manage their gambling behaviour by setting predetermined limits on expenditure.

Card based gaming is now ready to be implemented in Queensland's hotels and clubs subject to acceptance of the new system by the venues. However, legislative amendments are required before card based gaming can be extended to casinos as the Casino Control Act does not provide for such technologies. The initiatives contained in this bill are important components of the government's commitment to minimising the potential for harm from gambling while preserving the benefits it can provide to our community.

We have endorsed a clear position of harm minimisation in relation to both gambling and the consumption of alcohol. As a government we do not aspire to create a nanny state but we will act to mandate responses to protect consumers from direct and indirect harm that arises out of overindulgence or inappropriate use of either of these activities.

The prosecution of this position is absolutely apparent in the decision of the minister to take action to stem the growing incidence of glassings in our licensed venues. One of the amendments that has been circulated and will be moved during consideration in detail allows the chief executive to prohibit the use of regular glass in high-risk licensed premises at all times during trading. This is a big step to take and one that does not pretend to be the whole answer to preventing violence related injury in pubs and clubs. But it is, in my view, a reasonable step in the right direction.

I understand that a number of licensed venues of their own accord have moved to replace glass with some form of plastic or tempered glass as a step towards improving the safety of their patrons. I commend these licensees for their proactive attempt to minimise the potential for harm to their patrons.

While there is an initial cost involved in this replacement process, it is thought that much of this will be clawed back over time as breakage is reduced and the product becomes cheaper with growing demand in the marketplace. I am pleased to note that the chief executive has the discretion to exempt a precinct or precinct within one of the establishments—for example, the prohibition on glass may exist in the public bar and beer garden of a premises but not in the restaurant or bistro if it is considered that these are lower risk areas.

As I have already noted, the prohibition on glass in high-risk venues is only one aspect of improving patron safety in circumstances where individuals refuse to act responsibly, but it is a positive step and should be seen as part of this government's determination to make harm minimisation the central plank of its response to a serious social issue. I also want to commend the minister for moving to correct an oversight in the previous amendment to the Liquor Act that failed to exempt premises operating on a commercial special facilities licence from serving alcohol in a resident's unit of accommodation. In effect, this made the service of alcohol in room minibars unlawful outside of the normal hours of trade. This was of course never the intention of the government, so I am glad that the half dozen or so premises—typically resorts—that were impacted by this oversight can continue to provide these guest services without incurring a breach. I thank the CEO of Hamilton Island for bringing this matter to my attention and the minister for ensuring that it has been addressed in a timely fashion. The amendment bill contains a range of measures that seek to protect both providers and consumers as well as bring common sense and flexibility to the way in which the law is applied. I welcome the measures and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (4.40 pm): I rise to support the Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 and note that this bill amends a number of acts relating to liquor and racing acts as well as the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act and have a few comments to make on each of those. I start by declaring that, although I am the member for the inner-city seat of Brisbane Central, which has many pubs, clubs, nightclubs and gambling establishments, I do not generally partake very much the way my colleague the member for Mermaid Beach does. However, I do have a once-a-year flutter on the Melbourne Cup and if the member for Mermaid Beach has a good tip could he let me know, because it is about the only time of the year that I put any money on the horses.

Ms Croft interjected.

Ms GRACE: My good friend the member for Broadwater says not to trust his tip, but I will take it into account if he wants to give me one of his recommendations.

Mr Lawlor: His last tip was Peter Dutton!

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection. There is a concern in the community that we do not check the number of gaming machines that are in the community, that we do make a number of amendments which do not allow what is supposed to be a pastime for the majority of people to become a problem for them, thus making it a problem for the larger community in Queensland. When we look at the many thousands of people who entertain themselves in clubs and pubs and also entertain themselves on gaming machines, the large majority of them—in fact, I think there is only a small minority who ever do

have a problem—are responsible and take a very responsible attitude towards their gaming and drinking. However, we cannot allow this industry to go unchecked and I support many of the amendments that are contained in the bill before the House.

Since April 2008 there has been a moratorium on the release of new gaming machines in clubs and hotels. In November last year we capped the number of those gaming machines to 24,705, and the cap on that number is now given legislative effect through this bill. Having served for 11 years on the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund, that is one way in which we can look at gaming machine revenue doing some good in the community. It does a remarkable job in providing many community groups with much valued funds for them to inject into their community activities. But I must admit that in the 11 years I was on the fund I was amazed at the increase in the amount of money that we were handing out to the community. More and more people were unfortunately pouring lots of money through these machines. Under the legislation which gave money to the community, we saw the gaming machine fund grow to incredible numbers of millions of dollars and the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund doing the same. It went to worthy causes, but this is all about stemming the growth of gaming machines in this state and hopefully at the same time stemming the causes and the temptation for people to use these machines in an unhealthy way.

There are of course many people employed in the club industry, and we have heard figures of around 27,000. Indeed, it is a high employer of what are often regarded as casual or part-time workers. Nevertheless, there are many people in numbers in this industry and we certainly do not want to cripple people's livelihoods. I would be far from the person who would want that to occur and I do not believe that any of these changes are going to do that. These machines contribute much money to the community not only through the funds that I have mentioned but also via sporting and recreational facilities. However, what we need to note about this bill in capping the number of machines is that no machine will be taken from clubs because of the cap. Rather, this bill gives effect to a reallocation scheme.

A reallocation does not increase the number of machines but will move those gaming machines around where they are required. Some clubs may not require the number that they have. My understanding is that they will then go into a pool where other clubs that may want to expand will be able to purchase those machines as part of the cap. In a way, it is transferring machines from where they are not needed to where they are needed while maintaining the cap but not disadvantaging any clubs that may want to increase the number of their machines. They will be able to utilise those clubs' machines that are not being put to proper use. This is a reasonable approach. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable input in the development of the reallocation scheme by the Queensland club industry. There are many of those licensees and proprietors in my area. The majority of them do a wonderful job and are very keen to ensure that their premises are first-class, professional and offer entertainment for their guests.

There are of course further measures in the bill that I want to refer to. I support wholeheartedly the zero tolerance approach to gambling operators that provide distribution and promotional material to known excluded persons. It will now be an offence under the bill. This is aimed at protecting those vulnerable problem gamblers in our society, and I fully endorse the fact that gambling operators will now face clear financial penalties if they aim to distribute this promotional material to known excluded persons. I very much welcome the provisions of the bill which include training for staff in these facilities. They will now have to undertake mandatory responsible service of gambling training for those hotel and club staff employed in gambling related roles. Obviously training goes a long way to highlighting the harms and some of the responsibilities that should be associated with gambling services. I fully endorse that. That will assist those staff to understand, identify and do their job a lot better. Most staff in hotels and clubs would welcome being able to be part of the industry in a more meaningful way, say, than the role that they are currently undertaking.

I also endorse changes to the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act. This bill corrects an incredible anomaly where unfortunately P&Cs of state schools can run an art union but not non-state schools. It was a ridiculous anomaly. We all agree about that in the House, and it is good to see that this bill rectifies this inconsistency. I like the flexibility that this bill introduces—for example, things like changes to the definition of 'reasonably available' in terms of the manager with regard to clubs. That gives the chief executive discretion based on distances in regional areas to vary the time needed to travel to the premises. It makes eminent sense. Obviously we do not all live in the CBD as I do and often travelling from where a person lives to where they work can take a lot longer than an hour. This bill introduces much flexibility for the chief executive to give that flexibility where it is warranted.

The chief executive also can approve a schedule of part payments, and this is in recognition that natural disasters occur throughout Queensland. We know that the new legislation that we brought in last year increased the fees quite substantially in this area. This legislation now gives a discretion for the chief executive where it can be proved that a natural disaster has caused hardship to a club or pub's ability to pay the increased licensing fees and allows them to make a schedule of part payments. There is no doubt at all that that makes eminent sense. The chief executive is also able to review extended trading hours, particularly where they perceive that there have been problems. This is based on the premise that extended trading hours are a privilege, not a right. They are something that is given to

those facilities that have a proven good track record. Obviously where the chief executive believes that that track record has been breached, this bill gives the chief executive the ability to review extended trading hours.

The bill also makes a number of amendments to which I would like to pay a little bit of attention. The chief executive will now be able to ban the use of regular glass, particularly in areas where there is a history of glassing or a history of excessive violence. I note that the list contains five such places that are located in my electorate: two in the CBD and three in the Valley. I also wish to note that at this stage it is a 'show cause' as to whether or not those premises should have glass banned totally during all hours. I know that the minister is at pains to ensure—and I commend him for this—that these premises are given every opportunity to show cause as to what should occur with regard to glassing. Where we have areas where there is a history, where there is a high risk, I think this is a step in the right direction. My understanding is that these days much of the tempered glass is of a very fine quality and really should not impact significantly on the clients that these places entertain.

I note that the Law, Justice and Safety Committee, chaired by my good friend the member for Springwood, Barbara Stone, is looking into alcohol related violence, including this whole issue of glass products in pubs and clubs. I think that committee is comprised of an eminently sensible group of people who can look at all of the issues associated with alcohol related violence. I await its report and support very much the moratorium on extended trading hours beyond midnight for a period of 12 months.

I also welcome in the amendments the exemptions for a part of the Brisbane Central electorate, namely the CBD and the Valley Entertainment Precinct, from the moratorium. I believe that this amendment makes eminent good sense and does not necessarily, in the case that some would not be able to extend their licence, disadvantage those licensees during the 12-month moratorium. These areas are known as club and pub areas. The proprietor of Limes Hotel is a very good proprietor. Damien has emailed me in relation to this subject. He was very keen to ensure that his hotel was part of the Valley Entertainment Precinct and not disadvantaged in his application for extended hours. I think this would be good news for him. Of course he will have to undergo the process, but where he is located will be exempt under the 12-month moratorium.

I also like a couple of other amendments that are made to the liquor licensing legislation. Under this bill, the chief executive must take harm minimisation—the main objective of the legislation—into account and apply a public interest test when we are looking at extending liquor licensing rights to those individuals who may make application or ask for extended licences. As the member for Whitsunday pointed out, it is good to see clarification that room service and mini bars are only for those who hold certain special facility licences. I think we all endorse that and realise that, obviously, the anomaly is now being corrected.

This bill amends the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act. A number of issues have arisen in my electorate in relation to this act. These amendments provide clarity and certainty as to the coverage of the act. The residential services sector provides both accommodation and a food or personal care service to older members of the community. Aged rental schemes provide rental accommodation and a food service to older members of the community in privately owned premises. As we know, these residents are vulnerable. They tend to be elderly and rely on the age pension for income support. The residents pay the majority of their age pension—sometimes up to 85 per cent—and all of their rent assistance to service providers and have limited other accommodation options.

This sector differs from other residential services, such as boarding houses, in its organisational and management structure. Whilst boarding houses tend to be owned and managed by the same person, aged rental schemes are often owned and controlled by different persons. Consequently, sometimes there is uncertainty as to whether the act covers aged rental schemes. The act was always intended to cover the aged rental scheme sector of the residential services industry. However, there has been some uncertainty as to whether the act adequately captures aged rental schemes, particularly those where accommodation and food service or personal care services are not provided by the same person—that is, if they have been outsourced.

To provide certainty, key definitions in the act for a residential service and a service provider are being amended to make it clear that aged rental schemes are residential services and, as such, may be regulated by the act. A definition for an aged rental scheme has also been added to the act. This makes eminent sense. It makes it very clear. It makes it much easier for me, when I have situations arise in my electorate, to apply the 38 parts of the regulation as to how these premises should be run. As I have said, these amendments will clarify the coverage of the act and deliver consumer protection to residents of aged rental schemes, many of whom are on fixed incomes such as age pensions and have limited other accommodation options.

The bill also amends the Racing Act 2002—an act that I must admit I know very little about. Since 30 June 2009 the Racing Act has required wagering operators who wish to use Queensland race information in conducting their wagering business to obtain an authority from the Queensland control bodies and pay a fee to them for the use of the Queensland racing information. The Queensland control bodies are Queensland Racing Ltd, Queensland Harness Racing Ltd and Greyhounds Queensland Ltd.

To assist the control bodies to protect the integrity of the Queensland racing industry, the bill gives the control bodies the power to obtain betting information from TABs, bookmakers and betting exchanges that hold a race information authority. The purpose of the amendments is not to persecute punters. Racing Queensland control bodies do not have jurisdiction over non-licensed persons. The purpose of the amendments is to enable the control bodies to obtain information that will help identify any offences committed by licensed persons under the rules of racing.

The amendments give the control bodies the power to obtain betting information and betting trend analysis from wagering operators using Queensland race information and to require wagering operators to be subject to betting monitoring systems. For example, if an analysis of betting patterns on a race show that large amounts of money had been bet on a particular horse that did not warrant such bets, that could be an indication of an attempt to manipulate the result of the race. The control body could use that information to conduct an investigation and, if necessary, charge and prosecute those licensees who may be a party to the corruption of the race results or wagering markets.

I think many members in this House would remember the infamous Fine Cotton ring-in where another horse, Bold Personality, was substituted for Fine Cotton which resulted in bookmakers Bill and Robbie Waterhouse being warned off racecourses. The analysis of betting on Fine Cotton showed that large amounts of money had been bet on the horse, which was in poor form and not expected to win. This bill will give the ability, where those trends are identified, to highlight those trends and make further inquiries.

For all of those reasons, I fully support this legislation. I congratulate the minister on the number of amendments that are before us in this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (4.58 pm): According to the minister in his second reading speech, this bill 'enables a number of important reforms to the regulation of gambling in Queensland'. The changes that are proposed seem minor and superficial. They will not change much of the difficulty that affects individuals from gambling nor the consequences of the officially sanctioned gambling avenues in this state. The LNP intends to support the bill but would wish to see some significant amendments to the legislation to improve those few changes that the government has seen fit to change.

Damon Runyon in *More Than Somewhat*, with reference to Ecclesiastes 9:11, states in summary—

The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet.

Rather than list the changes, I intend to discuss the issue of gambling as it is occurring and highlight those areas that the minister, representing the Bligh Labor government, has addressed with the proposed legislation.

Broadly, there are four major areas. They are poker machines, the lockout imposed on the A1GP, the Racing Act changes and, strangely, changes to the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act. I wish to put some interesting figures to members here today that might shock a few of them. Organised crime in Australia is estimated to be a \$70 billion a year industry; poker machine revenue in Queensland to the state is currently \$550 million per year in income—it was \$1.68 billion in New South Wales in 2008-09; total gaming revenue in taxes and fees was estimated to be \$1,006 billion in 2009-10; possibly 40 per cent of all poker machine payouts are paid to professional money laundering groups; and poker machines return roughly 70 per cent of all turnover directly back to the consumer.

There is a difficult formula, but for those who may not understand, the sliding scale in clubs is up to 35.91 per cent and hotels pay 35.91 per cent plus an 8.5 per cent health levy; hotel poker machines have a higher rate of return to the state for the money expended; all poker machine consumption is largely anonymous gambling; and 25 per cent of the ATMs in Australia are in pubs and clubs and \$9 billion is withdrawn from them each year. It can be implied that organised crime is laundering \$2.2 billion annually through Queensland poker machines. When this amount is added to the state's turnover we have a serious issue affecting our state and nation. I am not saying that money laundering is restricted to this industry. Money laundering occurs everywhere. But this is a major newly emergent area. In return for a sum well short of \$1 billion we are allowing a massive amount of money laundering. Those involved in organised crime do not commit crime unless they can launder the illegal profits of crime. If it does not pay and the internal rate of return is not good enough they do not do it.

I intend to continue to restrict this issue to poker machines before moving to racing. There are some other major issues. Woolworths and Coles Wesfarmers hold over 30 per cent of all Queensland poker machines via their hotel ownership. To illustrate their hotel purchases, including ownership of all poker machines in those hotels, Coles owns 79 major hotels here and Woolworths has 110. Woolworths has 11,000 poker machines nationwide but an estimated 6,000 in Queensland. The casinos have largely become poker machine palaces under the stewardship of Tabcorp, but they are in the minority now. Clubs across the state, overwhelmingly the larger and more successful ones, require at least 60 or more poker machines to be profitable. Poorer areas are being constantly targeted by sporting groups for easy revenue. For example, in Logan City when a recent attempt by the Brisbane Lions AFL franchise was thwarted it drove very hard to get that franchise through. There is evidence turnover and therefore profitability is much higher in blue collar, poorer socioeconomic areas.

We have capped the limit of poker machines at 24,705 in this state with a proposed cap of 280 in each site. Hotel numbers were capped in 2003. The relocation scheme proposed under this bill will only compound the problem of excessive placement of machines in lower socioeconomic areas. It could be that proportionally the majority of machines could end up in areas of high unemployment and mixed levels of crime. Crime will increase as a result of this policy. What is the minister's response to this serious problem and what has emerged? He proposes a cap on gaming machines in clubs, relocation of gaming machines, optional card based gaming, criminal history reporting and mandatory responsible service of gaming. The first two proposals will do nothing other than increase the price of the machines as they move from areas of little use to high use. It will accelerate their translocation. There will be a further concentration of ownership. Optional card based gaming should be replaced with a mandatory ID driven system and criminal checks should be mandatory and attached to those cards.

Furthermore, all payouts including jackpots need to be registered and paid as direct deposits to trackable accounts as is dictated. Why, might members ask? Well, the current method chosen by organised crime is to recruit a number of seemingly genuine poker machine players, giving them floats of \$2,000 to \$3,000 for them to push through the machines, knowing that the poker machine has a guaranteed fixed rate of return, in all probability, of 70 per cent. Enough machines used regularly enough by the groups ensures this outcome. This way the government, clubs and community groups, after collecting their minimum 30 per cent shared intake, derive a benefit. The money launderers wash units of \$1,000 into \$600 units, after costs, of clean money. The state government gets its guaranteed collect, as do the clubs, but that washing of the average of 70 per cent clean money leads to greater occurrence of primarily drug crime that requires increased amounts of policing and costs. It also leads to an increased need for correctional services since 80 per cent of inmates are there for drug related crimes. As new jails are developed the local areas move from low-level drug activity to high-level drug activity and the cycle perpetuates.

The closest example to this in Queensland is in the Maryborough region where police are now seeing much greater activity with more serious drug offences and a greater involvement of organised crime. This has become entrenched on the Gold Coast and certainly in Sydney and Melbourne. Crime is increasing and is directly proportional to money laundering occurring right before our eyes in poker machine venues. Can it be eradicated, I heard the Minister for Child Services ask before? Yes, it can. But there are deeper questions to be answered at present. Gambling is a discretionary business and in harder times people cut back. Official data showed the biggest falls in the latest year in spending on poker machines was 5.8 per cent in Queensland and in New South Wales and Victoria it was down 1 per cent but their market is more mature, they have had poker machines for a longer time and they have intergenerational problems.

Citygroup says the weaker gaming revenue following the withdrawal of stimulus payments reveals ongoing weakness in gambling demand. There is some evidence that the bulk of the second stimulus payments was shared equally between alcohol purchases and retail spending. Some of this is nondiscretionary. It was not increased in poker machines as is commonly thought. Some of this evidence strongly supports the money-laundering issue since these groups had less income during these harder economic times but received no stimulus payments. The members of the Bligh Labor government, if they missed this, are fools and their eyes are off the ball. Heads must roll. Nothing short of an immediate review is acceptable. It is not for the LNP to direct government policy, especially in relation to gaming and the administration of it. This Bligh Labor government has demonstrated mixed signals, everything from 'steady as she goes' to deliberately turning a blind eye and attempting to install political hacks in positions of authority.

Gaming is complex, highly technical and evolutionary. This bill is probably totally useless at best and at worst will make poker machine management even harder to regulate. I do not accept that the department is unaware of what is going on and has no plans to make illegal money laundering harder. I suspect the greatest fear within the department is that there could be a transfer of money to wagering, be that on horses, dogs, harness racing or sports. According to reliable evidence, again from Citygroup, there is an ability to alter jackpots, rebates and pricing, and this is occurring. This stands in contrast to the set takes from poker machines that are decided by regulation. Why do members expect the racing authorities are pursuing a set take on turnover and even governments want a higher percentage of turnover? It is because if the laundering moves back to racing their take is guaranteed and any increase in turnover gives these groups compounding results.

Governments must not yield to the launderers. Not knowing is not a defence. Wagering is recovering after years of difficulty due to equine influenza and the ThroughOnVision/Sky racing broadcasting problem. Betting remains flat despite online TAB, phone TAB, Sportsbet and Betfair. There is 24/7 broadcasting of racing on cable and PubTab is universally available. I think racing is not immune from the possibility of the return of more widespread money laundering as opposed to increases in legitimate wagering. Crowds are falling, state Labor governments are amalgamating tracks and sports betting off-course online is rising.

The changes in this bill have the support of the racing industry. I respect their view and I have directly consulted with them. They support the move to give control bodies the power to obtain information from wagering operators where it is necessary to protect the integrity of racing. It is clear

that stewards, in having access to betting data and associated information, have been the key to the correct discharge of their duties while some interstate wagering and betting data assists the control bodies in relation to inquiry and investigations regarding racing integrity issues. It was felt that the provision of such information was so critical that the provision of that information needed to be mandatory. That will come about in this bill.

These changes have followed a number of major inquiries that have occurred in all states. The notable inquiry, and it was not the Fine Cotton inquiry of the past, was the inexplicable blowout that occurred in Queensland of short-price favourites who subsequently won where it could not be explained. The minister would know exactly the cases that I am discussing. Major bookmaker after bookmaker could not give a satisfactory explanation of how this could be. The continuing fear in the market may be of the role of Betfair which allows for significant wagering on losing horses. For the complicated wagerer this allows for offset betting and it lends itself to the types of wagering that organised crime wishing to money launder will use. By registering betting this can be somewhat regulated.

Online punting saw Queenslanders lose \$1.83 billion last year, or \$5 million per day. In New South Wales it is estimated that \$300 per adult per month is being spent on online internet gaming by people aged between 18 and 60. Most of the companies—and they are largely overseas companies but some are Australian based—are offering free bets and \$1,000 sign-on bonuses, yet there are no new laws proposed to regulate this type of activity. It would appear that the minister does not even read the many reports about it or that his department research is inadequate.

'In a bet there is a fool and a thief.' That is an old Chinese proverb. Sadly, many times that is quite true. What a shame that nothing was done to protect the people's interests. Those online betting schemes have an enormous ability to distract Labor parliamentarians and former Labor parliamentarians in all states. The names of the local businesses were Gocorp and Hippodrome. In 2008 ASIC banned Hippodrome director Darren Lelliott from providing financial services over statements made by the company. Strangely, the former Labor member for Greenslopes travelled to Lithuania on a taxpayer funded study trip before setting up the online gaming company Hippodrome, partly owned by the member's former family company. This development was being marketed overseas as a \$500 million investment.

This is big business, yet what is the response in the bill before us today? Nothing! The minister did know something about this and he amended the Lotteries Act 1997 so that a lottery can be conducted in another state or country. The changes go some way to defining who a player is and allowing them to have an account. This is pretty soft stuff when we have an emerging serious gaming problem that has received significant publicity and detailed technical analysis, yet nothing is delivered in this bill.

On the local scene, other significant and well-documented issues have emerged. There are links between sportsmen, sports betting and organised crime; gambling addictions in young people; gambling problems in housewives; and gambling issues affecting the elderly and, tragically, the disabled. The department response in this bill is to state that it is an offence for minors to gamble, that the distribution of promotional or advertising material related to gambling for excluded persons is now an offence and that the Gaming Machine Act will allow regulation to prescribe a maximum denomination of currency that can be inserted into a note acceptor. Am I missing something here or are there two policies being conducted through the department at one time?

I table the headline from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 10 days ago regarding the Roosters versus Cowboys match, where some unusual betting occurred. It speaks for itself. Sports betting is big business. Not only can big money be made; some pretty interesting results can develop when it appears that a professional sportsman's performance is strange at best.

Tabled paper: Copy of an article from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, dated 26 September 2009, titled 'Results "fixed" in betting swindle' by Eamonn Duff, Jessica Halloran and Jacquelin Magnay [1028].

The other areas that I remain concerned about include poker machine addiction in young people and increasing wagering by young people, especially those with a lower discretionary income. There are some concerns that there may be links between other addictive behaviour and the suicide of young gamblers, especially in relationship to offences by young people and women to fund their gambling addictions. It is estimated that 10 to 25 per cent of problem gamblers commit gambling related offences. A study of offenders on community protection orders in the ACT found that, of those who reported problem gambling, 26 per cent admitted that it contributed to their offending and 46 per cent said that they had obtained money illegally to pay for gambling or related debts. In the past decade more than \$250 million may have been lost to fraud related to gambling which was never recovered. Sixty-two per cent of the frauds lasted one year and 26 per cent lasted at least three years. Fifty-six per cent of cases funded poker machine losses. Show me a gambler and I will show you a loser.

The LNP is committed to being responsive to the industry's requirements and believes that the government should facilitate rather than dictate. The club industry employs 26,900 people. Each club provides \$711,000 per annum in economic benefits to their communities. They are doing a great job with

their 10 per cent. The Bligh Labor government, with its 20 per cent share of the poker machine revenue, is letting Queenslanders down massively. Rather than being a serious response to the major issues of gambling, this bill is weak. It is window dressing.

I wonder whether Labor finds this all too hard after years of driving up actual on-the-floor poker machine numbers, then seeing the massive consolidation of the industry as the two monopoly retailers, Coles and Woolworths, dominated the industry, including PubTAB, via their massive chain purchases of hotels. As Labor vacillated over liquor outlet numbers attached to hotels, two public companies with massive advertising budgets very quietly swallowed our gambling environment in one gulp on the back of fresh speculative capital from our then booming stock market. Coles and Woolworths went for the machines, not the pubs themselves. Those companies are hopeless at running restaurants and selling liquor in glasses. However, they chose to wear the losses in the pubs and got the original owners back where they could. That has occurred partially. They own the poker machines.

The minister's second reading speech on the gambling bill raises three issues: the reduction of red tape, the reduction of the regulatory burden and the government's introduction of a number of reforms designed to minimise the potential harm caused by gambling. This bill does not reduce red tape. It increases process and fails to address outcomes at all. The state Bligh Labor government is reported as one of the highest regulators of any state or territory in Australia. The greatest failing of the bill is the harm caused to our state and Queenslanders by ignoring the tough decisions that it faces. Nothing in this bill addresses the \$2.2 billion being laundered through the 24,705 Queensland poker machines for a paltry \$400 million in return in revenue to the state. It almost guarantees our local lower socioeconomic regions, many represented by members on the other side of the House, will be swamped with traded poker machines and the monopoly providers will grow their monopolies. This bill tries to buy silence from the clubs as they share the crumbs falling from the mouths of the monopoly supermarket retailers.

I ask honourable members: who wins here? It is not the clubs, it is not the manufacturers and it is not the public. Therefore, what is the point of this legislative step? There is a very easy way to actually return from a casino with a small fortune: go in there with a large one.

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (5.16 pm): Governments across Australia have become addicted to the revenue raised from poker machines, and Queensland is a good example of how this habit has grown and the addiction has worsened. When poker machines were introduced to Queensland clubs and pubs by the Goss government in 1992, it was calculated that the boost to state revenue would be about \$45 million in the first full year of operation. This year it is expected that the take from gambling machines will be more than half a billion dollars. Many charities, community groups and sporting clubs have benefited substantially from grants funded from gambling revenues. As a strong supporter of ensuring personal freedom, I do believe it is up to individuals to decide how they legally spend their money. Of course, coupled with that is the need to take personal responsibility for one's behaviour. Members of this parliament need to be aware of the damage suffered by individuals and families when there is a failure to control the urge to gamble.

Last year Wayne Goss, the Premier who 17 years ago introduced pokies to state pubs and clubs, was asked if he had any regrets about his political career. He said—

I wish I'd never brought in poker machines, I think they're a scourge.

He later added—

Introducing poker machines to give clubs a fair go was Labor Party policy for a long time and we implemented it.

The problem with poker machines in my view is that the people who mainly play them are the people who can least afford to do so. I wish I hadn't done it.

A recent Roy Morgan survey found that, while fewer Australians are playing the pokies these days, those who do are losing more. The survey found that seven years ago about one-third of all Australians played the pokies compared with less than one-quarter now. Those still playing the pokies said they did so less often, averaging less than six times in the three months to the end of May. That may be some good news, but it is not surprising that the poker machine industry's earnings are even greater with even fewer people playing the machines, because heavy gamblers are where they get their money from. Clearly, poker machines are not cost-free entertainment and the state government has become too reliant on the gamblers of Queensland for its income. Sadly, given the massive deficit, huge debt and high interest payments because of the loss of our AAA credit rating, it seems extremely unlikely that this government can wean itself off pokie revenue.

This bill proposes to make several amendments to the various gaming acts by confirming the state-wide cap on club gaming machines that was first introduced as a temporary measure back in 2008. This particular amendment goes hand in hand with the policy objectives outlined in the explanatory notes that state that the aim of this amendment is to minimise the potential harm from gambling in the community—something I greatly support. In his second reading speech, the minister noted that this amendment follows on from the 2003 cap that was introduced at a state level for hotel gaming machines. I look forward to hearing from the minister at a later date about how effective this amendment was in minimising harm to the community.

The bill goes on to explain that following the cap that is to be legislated a reallocation scheme is to be introduced. This reallocation scheme is necessary to allow for new clubs and licensees to enter into the industry, to manage demand and to allow for some movement of gaming machines between various licensed venues without having to exceed the state-wide cap. This reallocation scheme is based on a market transfer model with entitlements transferred on either a temporary or more permanent basis. Despite the various incentives that the bill speaks of providing for licensees to participate in the market transfer scheme, it does appear that the cap will give the majority of power to the already established larger clubs and leave new entrants to the market vulnerable and left to rely on the goodwill of other industry participants. I do support some of the concerns raised by my colleague the member for Gaven on that.

The bill also intends to protect vulnerable people by creating the offence of directing promotional material to an excluded person. Prior to this amendment, supplying excluded people with advertising material was only a breach of a voluntary code of practice. The bill outlines that operators found to be in breach of this new provision will face harsh financial penalties. While it is not outlined where this revenue will be spent, I suggest to the minister that he use these funds to further educate the community on the effects of gambling to excess.

I appreciate the type of job that staff, security guards, licensees and venue operators have in preventing minors from partaking in gaming activities and I am glad to see that the bill proposes to ensure consistency across all gaming acts regarding the offence of allowing a minor to gamble. The bill also includes provision to allow P&F associations to conduct category 3 games. Currently, under the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act, it is illegal for parents and friends associations of a non-state school to conduct art unions in their own right. This inconsistency will be rectified through this bill. The Indooroopilly electorate is home to several non-state schools, all of whom have P&F associations that actively operate in order to benefit the school community, to raise revenue and to continue to provide high-quality education and learning for the students. I am sure they will welcome this change.

It is also proposed to amend the gaming acts to allow for the Commissioner of Police to notify the chief executive when the criminal history of a gaming person of interest or person involved in the operation of gaming in Queensland is altered. Previously the chief executive was given direct access to the Queensland police database, a highly confidential system of record keeping. Access to this system was removed on 1 June 2007. It is important that the chief executive is aware of the criminal history of people involved in the industry and they should be kept up to date on changes or alterations that are made. Previously, criminal background checks were only made when a person applied for a new licence or renewed an existing one. This is a positive step towards maintaining the privacy of the individual and ensuring the veracity of the gaming industry. I do support the bill.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Gambling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. The Liberal National Party supports a cap on club gaming machines, mandatory responsible service of gambling and zero tolerance towards venues that demonstrate an unwillingness to commit to gambling and related exclusions. The objectives of the bill are to amend the gaming acts—the Casino Control Act 1982, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997 and Wagering Act 1998. These amendments are to minimise the potential harm from gambling in the community, to ensure the integrity of gambling, to increase administrative efficiencies and to allow for the introduction of card based player account credits for gaming and winning wagers in casinos in addition to the use of chips, cash and cheques.

This bill also serves to amend the Liquor Act 1992 in order to minimise the potential harm from liquor to the community, reduce regulatory burdens on industry and also increase administrative efficiencies. The bill seeks to amend the Racing Act 2002 to assist control bodies to protect the integrity of racing. Finally, it amends the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002 to clarify that this legislation is intended to cover the aged rental scheme sector of the residential services industry.

I turn to the cap on gaming machines in clubs. Prior to 2008 clubs were subject to a cap of 280 gaming machines per site. Following a moratorium on the release of additional club gaming machines effective until 2010, the government announced that this moratorium would be permanent and club gaming machines would be capped at 24,705 across the state.

The responsible service of gambling training is proposed to be made mandatory for persons who carry out employment roles related to the conduct of gambling in hotels and clubs. In relation to the offences for minors who gamble, all the gaming acts excluding the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 contain provisions making it an offence for a person to allow a minor to participate in a gambling activity.

In relation to card based gaming, throughout Australia the gaming industry is continually adopting card based gaming and other emerging cashless gaming technologies. Card based gaming technologies have the potential to minimise harm from gambling by providing for precommitment technologies that allow players to manage expenditure and time by setting predetermined limits. Trials of these technologies have been undertaken at two clubs and evaluations conducted. Results have shown that there was overall support for this card based system by the venues, the players and the system suppliers.

I turn now to provisions for P&F associations to conduct category 3 games. Section 39 of the charitable act provides that incorporated eligible organisations and parents and citizens associations—P&Cs—may conduct category 3 games, or art unions. P&Cs are incorporated bodies and relate exclusively to state schools. Parents and friends associations—P&Fs—which exist in the private school sector, are not incorporated in their own right though their head body may be incorporated. Currently P&Fs are unable to conduct art union games in their own right under the charitable act. Therefore, an amendment to this act will now allow P&Fs the same right as P&Cs. Therefore amendment is proposed to the charitable act to allow for P&Fs associated with non-state schools to be applicants for an art union to align it with current provisions for P&Cs associated with state schools.

I turn now to the amendments to the Liquor Act. There is a review of approved extended trading hours. As per the briefing note, the proposed amendment to the Liquor Act is to clarify that the chief executive has the ability to review approved extended trading hours of licensed premises. The ability to trade extended hours is a privilege extended to licensees who can demonstrate that they can operate their businesses in a lawful and responsible way. The amendment will ensure that licensees are aware that there is no permanent right to trade during extended hours and that the chief executive may remove the privilege if they fail to comply with this legislation.

I turn to the exemption from the 3 am lockout during the Gold Coast motor carnival. The 3 am lockout for licensed premises was introduced in 2006 following concern over the level and escalation of violence in and around venues late at night. There is an exemption in the Liquor Act from the application of the lockout for the Gold Coast during the motor carnival weekend previously referred to as Indy. Based on the findings of a regulatory impact statement and requests from the Gold Coast City Council citing alcohol misuse as a problem, it is proposed that this exemption be removed.

The Liberal National Party supports this bill with some reservations and concerns which are reflective of industry concerns. There must be a balance between encouraging industry development and promoting harm minimisation and protection for the community. The LNP supports a cap on club gaming machines, mandatory responsible service of gambling and again zero tolerance towards venues that demonstrate an unwillingness to commit to gambling and related exclusions.

The club industry employs 26,900 people and each club provides \$711,000 per annum in economic benefits to their community. There are concerns throughout the industry that licensing fees will increase significantly over the next few years due to the critical conditions of the state's finances. The government should invest more resources in harm minimisation strategies. Gambling is a serious social issue and at present the revenue that comes in from gambling taxes is not in proportion with what should be invested in community protection against the dangers of excessive habitual participation.

The second reading speech makes reference to the Bligh government's commitment to reduce red tape and reduce the regulatory burden. The report by the CCIQ states—

Queensland undoubtedly is one of the highest regulators of any state or territory in Australia ...

The LNP is committed to being responsive to the industry's requirements and believes that governments should facilitate rather than dictate. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bates, adjourned.

MOTION

Pensioners, Public Housing Rents

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House opposes any move by the Bligh Labor government to use the recent changes in the pension to increase public housing rents for pensioners.

This evening members of the House have an opportunity to deliver hope for Queensland pensioners who live in public housing. It is an opportunity to put on the public record whether they support ripping off Queensland seniors.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I look forward to the honourable member for Ashgrove coming over to this side of the House to support our motion and all the other Labor members standing up for pensioners, whom they claim to be in their heartland constituency. It is a test of the trust that we know this government has abrogated on behalf of its pensioner constituents when it now claims to be able to take a quarter of the pension rise that has been given by the Rudd Labor government.

Last week we had the Premier saying it is well known that people in public housing have to pay a quarter of their income for public housing. The next day there was an outcry, and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Treasurer Wayne Swan said that is not something they should be doing and they had actually discouraged Labor governments from doing it. Then the Premier said that she would look for a national

approach. We do not want a national approach in Queensland. We want a Queensland approach to our public housing and to our pensioners. They should not have to lose part of the \$30 increase that was recently given to them next year following the end to the moratorium on rents. They should not lose another \$7.50 from their \$30 rise.

As I have said, it is typical of this Labor government. It is typical of the Premier last week waking up with a bad headline and trying to do anything she can to get rid of that headline by 6 pm that day. The Premier backflipped on the position whether pensioners had to pay 25 per cent of their \$30 a week increase next year. She backflipped on that, saying that she would look for a national approach. As I have said, Queenslanders want a Queensland approach. It is very clear she is at odds with her federal masters and there is no way that money should be taken from those pensioners. This is an opportunity to put the worries of those 27,000 single pensioners who live in Queensland public housing to rest.

When the Rudd government announced its intention to raise the single pension by \$30 a week, the Prime Minister promised pensioners that aged-care facilities and state housing authorities would not be able to skim profits off the top. Now we are seeing Labor governments around the nation lining up for their share. Isn't it interesting that when the Premier looks for a national approach on public housing she does not look for a national approach on how to manage the economy, or how to balance the budget, or how to keep a AAA credit rating? On all those aspects the Premier has failed. She has failed to keep a AAA credit rating, has failed to manage the economy properly and is giving us budget deficits greater than any other state in the country.

This is a Premier who, with her own Queensland style approach, has given us borrowings that are about 50 per cent of all the other states combined in the next year. That is the sort of management that the Premier has given us in Queensland. Yet when it comes to public housing the Premier is happy to take a quarter of the pension increase in rent. That is in the Labor DNA: take the money from whomever you can whenever you can to try to balance the budget. The Bligh Labor government has said it will not touch the increase for 12 months, but the Premier will not guarantee that the money will stay in pensioners' pockets. As I said, the Premier has indicated that department of housing rents will rise in line with increases of previous years. Her statement was, 'The only difference this year is we are giving a 12-month holiday in recognition of how long it has been since there has been a pension increase.'

Queensland pensioners are doing it tough. Even with the increase, a single pensioner receives just \$330 and typically spends about \$75 on food for the week. This state government literally wants to take away 10 per cent of these pensioners' hard-won food allowance. The increase in rent of \$7.50 a week, or \$400 each year, will be a burden for every single pensioner in Queensland. These pensioners have also been hit by higher electricity prices. The price of electricity has gone up by 40 per cent over the last three years. I know that gas prices in Toowoomba have gone up a massive amount. We had a fuel tax overnight of more than 9c a litre and have seen the rising cost of groceries.

To put it into perspective, what the Premier will be taking away from pensioners when housing rents are allowed to increase is two litres of milk and a loaf of bread every single week. In return, this government will receive just over \$200,000 in revenue—straight from our pensioners living in public housing. That is an additional income for this government of \$10.5 million a year. It just shows how desperate they are in a government where we have an income of \$37 billion. But thanks to the economic mismanagement of this state by this Premier and this Treasurer, we are now spending \$39 billion a year. With some proper fiscal management, they would not have to try to extricate that \$10.5 million a year from our pensioners.

Let us look at the expenditure of this government. It spends \$38 million in salaries alone to employ 640 spin doctors and \$65 million to \$70 million a year in government advertising. This government spends more on advertising in this state than McDonald's, Coke, Qantas, Myer, Mitsubishi and Toyota. That is what the government spends its money on. Yet it is trying to extricate \$10½ million from the pensioners in this state. It spends \$1.2 million on pot plants, \$54 million on stationery, \$7.2 million on subscriptions and \$9.23 million to purchase 2.3 million reams of desktop printing paper.

A great example that we have seen from this government is the \$5 million spent on the defunct North Bank project, which we were told would not cost taxpayers one cent. \$5 million was spent on North Bank. The honourable Deputy Premier used to come in here and say, 'We'll take it back and look at it again, but it will not cost taxpayers one cent.' A million dollars has been spent on advertising and promoting the largely abandoned Toward Q2 program, which was a straight lift from New South Wales. Most recently, another million dollars was spent on the 'saving the Premier's job' campaign as she went around the state. And we have the promise of even more—perhaps a letter being sent to every resident of Queensland to promote the asset sales that the Premier misled the people of Queensland about in the lead-up to the last election.

Perhaps there would be some comfort for pensioners if they felt their \$400 a year was going to additional housing or to improve the standard of housing stocks, but the state's own contribution on social rental housing dropped last year as the Bligh Labor government shirked its responsibility to the federal government. The Labor Party is now split over this issue with one side—the federal side—promising one thing and the others taking it away.

Even those from their own side are criticising this government and this Premier. Wayne Swan, the Treasurer, accused the Premier of pickpocketing pensioners. He told ABC Radio—

We put in place a one-off permanent increase in the pension and that is meant to go directly to the pockets of pensioners, not to be clawed back in some sneaky way by the state premiers.

...

For the state governments to come along and pickpocket some of that is unacceptable.

Those are the words of the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan. There is no justification whatsoever that any Premier can claim for the rent increase—absolutely none. The federal community services minister, Jenny Macklin, described the move to gobble up the pension increase by rental increases as totally unacceptable. She said—

It is totally unacceptable that the states are only going to allow the full value of the pension rise to go for a year.

She said—

They have waited a long time for this pension rise. We want it going into their purses and wallets, not gobbled up by rents.

Ms Struthers: Eleven years they waited.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is from a fellow member of EMILY's List. Even the erstwhile Julia Gillard, the Deputy Prime Minister, said—

That conversation is continuing but I believe the goal is clear. We want to make sure that pensioners benefit from the pension rise.

That is the Premier's chance to help Queensland single pensioners—the widows and widowers who are struggling to cope financially after losing a spouse. This is the Premier's chance to give some hope to people who fought hard for their pension rise and who deserve their pension rise only to see a greedy state government try to take it away. To have members opposite screaming and yelling out shows their real position with regard to pensioners who have had a \$30 a week pension rise. There they are over the other side when they should be over this side supporting this motion because it will help pensioners throughout the state who deserve their pension rise. To see those opposite carry on in such a feral and disappointing way is disgraceful. We are standing up for the pensioners of Queensland. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier! The member for Burdekin, are you seconding the motion?

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (5.40 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Pensioners are amongst the state's most vulnerable people. In the words of the federal Treasurer, this government is pickpocketing pensioners. The federal government, to give it its due, has increased the pension payments, and significantly so for single people. This was a much-needed rise to keep up with current costs of living. I know this firsthand from constituents outlining their expenses to me.

Now we see a greedy state government that wants to take 25 per cent of that increase for itself. The increase in rent that this government would take will equate to 10 per cent of a typical weekly food budget. \$75 would be a typical weekly food budget. As Madonna King said, that \$7.50 is two bottles of milk and a loaf of bread every week which is most significant to a single pensioner.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: Good heavens above. This government will take 25 per cent of a much-needed pension rise. This is adding to the slap in the face for pensioners struggling with increasing electricity, grocery and fuel costs. This government has again shown its disregard for pensioners doing it tough. So many single pensioners are still struggling to make ends meet on a pension, often coping with life alone after the death of a spouse and surviving on bare minimums.

What we are seeing is that pensioners will have just 12 months of receiving the full increase in the pension. Then they will hand over an additional \$390 a year to the government. They will not receive anything extra for the money. The quality of their tenancy will not improve. The government just wants more.

In the meantime the government will pocket an additional \$10.5 million a year in revenue from the move at the expense of our 27,000 single pensioners. This is depriving our most vulnerable citizens. This is from a government that has extensive waiting lists for housing because it fails to update its housing stock to meet demands, particularly with the shortages we are seeing in single accommodation.

The chief executive of National Seniors has rightly condemned the move to slug pensioners a quarter of their hard-fought increase. Michael O'Neill said the move amounted to a cash grab that would deny pensioners basic nutrition as they spent proportionally more of their income on food. He said that to have expectations raised with an increase of \$32.50 a week really lifted pensioners' spirits considerably. He said that now they get a kick in the guts, some of them, from greedy state governments who are wanting to put their hands in their purses.

But the state government's attitude is reflected by the Premier's comments that pensioners had already enjoyed a 12-month moratorium on rent increases. This year we are giving a 12-month holiday in recognition of how long it has been since there has been a pension increase. This 12-month holiday is the latest insult in this government's treatment of pensioners and seniors generally.

How patronising is that? This is a government that is refusing to listen to seniors and refusing to establish an office for seniors. For some time I have been calling on the Bligh government to replace its ineffectual seniors program with an effective office for seniors. The seniors budget accounts for just three per cent of the Community Services budget. The minister herself said in estimates that 44 per cent of the primary tenants in our social housing are people aged 55 years and over. We are providing a lot of housing for seniors and we will continue to do so. Seniors, as members know, have significant needs. Can I say to the minister: yes, seniors certainly do have significant needs and financial constraints are definitely one of those needs. Seniors have been put on the backburner and virtually forgotten.

The Premier would do well to listen to her federal colleague Wayne Swan. What did Wayne Swan say? What did the federal Treasurer say? He said—

For the state governments to come along and pickpocket some of that is unacceptable. There is no justification whatsoever that any Premier can claim (for the rent increase) ... absolutely none.

We put in place a one-off permanent increase in the pension and that is meant to go directly to the pockets of pensioners, not to be clawed back in some sneaky way by Nathan Rees and the state premiers.

Mr Speaker, let me put it to you: is this government really so desperate for money that it is willing to take the food off the tables of our pensioners? I oppose any move by the state government to use the recent changes in the pension to increase public housing rents for pensioners. It is an appalling situation.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.45 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after "House" be deleted and the following words inserted:

- notes that a percentage of assessable income rent policy for Social Housing has applied in Queensland for decades;
- notes that the Council of the Australian Federation has recently agreed to place an initial 12 month moratorium on rent increases for single pensioners in Social Housing; and
- notes that the Council of the Australian Federation will further consider the existing rent policy for Social Housing with a view to obtaining a consistent national approach regarding rent setting policies for pensioners.

There is no doubt that all pensioners in Australia have been doing it tough. This side of politics very much welcomes the decision by the Rudd Labor government to increase pensions for age pensioners. We heard a lot from the previous two speakers about how tough pensioners have been doing it and how long they have had to wait for an increase. Why have they had to wait so long for an increase? Because their side of politics under the leadership of John Howard, a Liberal Prime Minister, denied pensioners in this country an increase for 11 years straight. It was 11 years and those opposite sat by silent. In fact, the increase delivered by the federal Labor government is the largest increase in pensions in 40 years, since the Whitlam government.

As if that hypocrisy was not enough, we heard the unctuous wailing from the Leader of the Opposition about age pensioners in public housing. This is from the member for Surfers Paradise who is campaigning against public housing in his own electorate. He is a fraud on this issue. We have them railing against borrowings. But what is the state government borrowing for? It is borrowing for more public housing. What we have seen tonight is hypocrisy oozing its way across the chamber.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms BLIGH: It is a big word, a very big word, for the member for Southern Downs. Google it and you will find out something. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to put the position of the states on the public record tonight. Some of the commentary on this issue, I have to say, has been little more than puerile, particularly from some of the media commentators.

The idea that the Liberal Premier of Western Australia or the Premier of Tasmania or the Premier of Queensland are somehow pension-hating money grabbers is an absolute nonsense. The suggestion that there are not some very important policy reasons for us to take 12 months to get this right is wrong.

What are the concerns of state premiers? They are these. The federal government is not seeking a change to the rent policy for carer pensioners in public housing. It is not seeking a change in rental policy for people who are receiving a disability pension. So if the states implement what it is the federal government is asking us to do, then what we will have is married age pensioners paying 25 per cent of their income but singles paying less than 25 per cent of their income, people with a disability paying 25 per cent of their income and people on a carers pension paying 25 per cent of their income but this category of pensioners paying less. There are serious equity issues here. We owe it to people on a carers pension and we owe it to people on a disability pension to do this. They did not get an increase in this federal budget but those opposite say they should be charged more.

The other nonsense we hear from those opposite is that this is somehow something that has been hidden. I listened to the mock outrage from the shadow minister. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the shadow minister asked a question on notice on this issue and received advice from the minister about how the rent policy would apply. When did she ask this question? In June. So outraged was she by this policy that she said nothing. She did not say a word—not a peep—until it appeared on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and then she discovered her morale outrage.

This government, along with every other state government in Australia, cares about the people whom we house in public housing. We care as much about them as people on a disability pension, as people on a supporting parents pension, as people on a carers pension, and we want to make sure they get a fair go. I think there are serious equity issues here. To listen to the moral outrage from those opposite, who are campaigning against single age pensioners getting a house in their own electorates, is nothing more than fraud. The state governments and territory governments will work over the next 12 months to develop a policy that is fair to all tenants in public housing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the minister, member for Coomera, I have tolerated your interjection, which is disorderly, but it is inherently disorderly when it is not even from your own seat. So I ask the member to desist from any further interjection.

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (5.50 pm): I second the Premier's amendment and, in doing so, I acknowledge that many seniors are doing it tough right now. We know that, and we are working on a number of fronts to give them a helping hand. But how long did they wait for a pension increase? Eleven years they waited. John Howard, the Prime Minister of this country, starved pensioners of an increase for 11 long years. The Leader of the Opposition is irresponsible in causing unnecessary angst and anxiety for seniors who are hurting right now. He would be well aware that the state government's announcement of a 12-month moratorium was genuine and that any rent increase for single pensioners in social housing was on hold for that 12 months. He would be well aware that pensioner couples were never facing a change in rent from their pension increase. They received a \$10 boost from the federal government. It is not rent that is assessable under our policy. He would be well aware that the \$35 a week increase for single pensioners is assessable income. He would be well aware that we moved swiftly so that singles, like couples, would not get a rent increase. I am talking about 10 per cent of single pensioners who live in social housing. As the Premier outlined before, there is an equity issue here. What about the other 90 per cent of pensioners? What happens for them? The majority of them are at the whim of private lessors. It is beyond our control to do anything about that at all.

But back to the Leader of the Opposition's convenient memory loss. He would also know that the Premier announced last week that she would put the issue on the national agenda at the next meeting of premiers and chief ministers next month, and she is doing that. We know that times are tough for pensioners and seniors. We are doing everything we can to help them, and that is why we want this issue resolved at a national level so they have certainty. Rent for every tenant in social housing is pegged at 25 per cent of their income. Pensioners received a welcomed pension increase from the Prime Minister, and good on him for that because how long did they wait? Eleven long years they were starved of a pension increase under the mean-spirited John Howard. Did any one of you write to the Prime Minister? Did you write to John Howard and ask him—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will direct her comments through the chair.

Ms STRUTHERS: Did any of the members opposite ever write to John Howard and ask him to provide more social housing in Queensland? Did they ever write to John Howard and ask him for a pension increase? Pensioners received a welcomed pension increase from the Prime Minister, and good on him for that! Kevin Rudd has taken the lead on social housing in this country, and good on him!

An opposition member interjected.

Ms STRUTHERS: I will answer that question. I have raised social housing in Labor policy committee meetings every year. Did you ever raise this at the LNP policy committees? Do you have policy committees? Do you have policy conferences where these issues are discussed? Let me tell you, on this side of the House we have robust discussions about social housing. We are proud of social housing. We support social housing. The leader of your party actively objected to housing on Skiff Street. Do you know what happened to those people on Skiff Street or might have happened if we did not press ahead with our project? Those seniors and others in that development would have been on skid row. Who knows what skid row is? It is not a pleasant place. That is where he wanted to put those social housing tenants.

Does the member for Southern Downs care about social housing? I do not think he does. Because guess what? In Warwick there is a great project in Dragon Street, but he is draggin' the chain on that. He is silent in his opposition to that. Local people have said they have some concerns about social housing in Warwick. Is he the great defender of social housing? No! Is he speaking out in support of the Dragon Street project? No! That is the sort of leadership you have on that side of the House. It is unthinkable hypocrisy the way you come in this House and talk about our issues in relation to seniors and public housing and social housing.

It is the Labor Party and Labor member of this House who have actively supported the need for social housing. It is the Labor members of this House who have actively defended pensioners and seniors in their need for social housing. It is you who rev up unnecessary fear and concern. It is you who remain silent when people oppose projects in their local area. It is members like the member for Southern Downs who is dragging the chain on Dragon Street. Dragon Street is a great project in

Warwick providing housing for seniors, but that has been a bit delayed. Has he been the great defender of that project? No! Are seniors and pensioners in his area getting the opportunity for more social housing thanks to him? No! It is this side of the House—

(Time expired)

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise, and seconded by the shadow minister for community services, housing and women, the member for Burdekin, and oppose the amendment moved by the government. As was mentioned earlier, after the recent \$32 a week increase in the single pension, the single pension is now \$336.68. The state Labor government here in Queensland now proposes to increase public housing rents for single pensioners by \$7.50 a week with just a 12-month respite from the money grab, which is an attempt by Labor to try to hose down the political fallout. This is an additional annual cost to a pensioner of \$390.

There are 27,000 single pensioners who will be affected by the increase. In terms of government revenue, an additional \$202,500 will be squeezed every week out of pensioners in public housing and put into the coffers of the state government who are professionals at squandering it. This total additional income to the state Labor government is \$10½ million a year. That is almost \$11 million a year extra for the Bligh Labor government as it runs up a debt of almost \$85 billion, loses the AAA credit rating, flogs off state owned government assets at the bottom of the market and increases taxes, fees and charges on fuel, energy and motor vehicle registration.

From talking to many pensioners in my electorate of Hinchinbrook and across North Queensland, I get the feeling that they are concerned about these policies of the Bligh government. Pensioners have cottoned on to the charades being played by Labor. Pensioners have got a lot of life experience. Some of them went through the Depression in the thirties and some of them went through the rationing in the forties and a lot of them have endured the ups and downs in the economy since that time. They understand the need to save during the good times in preparation for the tough times, and this is why pensioners are angry with the state Labor government because it went bust in a boom. Other living costs have also increased, in particular the new fuel tax which hurts North Queensland pensioners not only when they fill up their tank at the petrol station but also when they go shopping, because we rely heavily on heavy vehicle road transport and the groceries become more costly. Just when pensioners have secured a modest increase in the pension, the state Labor government has conspired to take it off them. What a backhander to Queensland pensioners!

I now want to canvass public housing issues and I want to talk about some letters. The last few times questions have been asked in question time of the Minister for Housing, the member for Algeester, in relation to public housing issues, it has not taken long for the minister to start ranting and raving with a tired, out-of-date argument that somehow LNP members of parliament are opposed to public and social housing initiatives in their electorates. I object to that accusation. I object to that accusation of the NIMBY syndrome, because that accusation is false. I have been writing to the state government for almost 2½ years now asking the Minister for Housing to give consideration to providing more public housing in the Hinchinbrook shire. I first wrote to the former minister for housing, the member for Rockhampton, in May 2007 and I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 July 2007, from Hon. Robert Swarten MP, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology, to Mr Andrew Cripps MP, member for Hinchinbrook regarding the shortage of housing in the Ingham district [\[1029\]](#).

The then minister's reply was that there were more pressing issues elsewhere, with median rents rising in Hinchinbrook by only 25 per cent in comparison to rises of 46 per cent in other areas of Queensland. The answer from the minister for housing at that time was polite, but the answer was no. Like a good local member, I showed no signs of the nimby syndrome. I wrote back to Minister Swarten, arguing that because the Hinchinbrook shire had not experienced the huge increases in property prices that the rest of the state had experienced there was an opportunity for the department of housing to expand its portfolio of public housing properties and maximise the value of taxpayer dollars that were available rather than purchase fewer properties at a greater cost in other areas where property values had skyrocketed.

Not to be discouraged, when there was a change of minister in Queensland and the announcement of a \$6.2 billion public housing spending spree by the federal government, including provision for 4,000 dwellings in Queensland, I wrote to none other than Minister Struthers in May this year to once again argue for public housing projects in my electorate and in North Queensland. In particular, I argued for public and social houses and dwellings for pensioners, especially single age pensioners and people with disabilities. The minister's reply was again quite polite, but it said absolutely nothing. This is the minister who has the gall to turn around and have a go at LNP members for supposedly having a nimby attitude to public housing. What hypocrisy! The minister's attitude is archaic, it belongs in another century and her accusations are wrong in fact. I table the letters that prove that her accusations are wrong in fact.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 May 2009, from Mr Andrew Cripps MP, member for Hinchinbrook, to Hon. Karen Struthers MP, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, regarding investment in public housing in North and Far North Queensland [1030].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 May 2009, from Hon. Karen Struthers MP, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women to Mr Andrew Cripps MP, member for Hinchinbrook, regarding expenditure in North and Far North Queensland for public housing [1031].

The Bligh government should leave—

(Time expired)

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (6.00 pm): The bottom line is that the Bligh government has agreed to a 12-month moratorium on any rent increases for single pensioners in social housing. We also agree with the federal government that pensioners and seniors are doing it tough right now. We know that every little bit helps. The Leader of the Opposition knows this, too. He knows full well that we agreed to a moratorium. He knows full well that the Premier has placed this issue firmly on the national agenda at the next meeting of Premiers and Chief Ministers in November. Today's charade by the Leader of the Opposition serves just one purpose: to cause unnecessary concern and angst in our community. It is scaremongering and sensationalism at its very worst.

The Leader of the Opposition should also know that the Bligh government has embarked on the biggest ever investment in social housing: \$1 billion plus. He also knows that for 11 years public housing languished under the Howard government. Already in Townsville I am seeing the spin-offs of this unprecedented investment. I am thrilled to see a significant boost to social housing stock in my own backyard.

As with any other development in my electorate, I support projects that stack up environmentally, socially and financially. The social housing that is being built right now in Townsville ticks all the right boxes, especially when it means that seniors in my community have a place to call home—like Auntie Beryl Gorringer, who has just moved into her brand-new seniors unit on Palm Island.

Ms Struthers: She has a lovely garden.

Ms JOHNSTONE: She has. I have been there three times now. She is a wonderful woman and she is very grateful to have a place to call home. The benefits of the building work in social housing in Townsville are twofold: we are putting roofs over people's heads who desperately need them and we are generating jobs for workers in the local building industry. It does not get much better than that.

Let us talk about housing and seniors. We have 10,470 dwellings across Queensland for people who are aged 55 years or older. Forty-five per cent of households in social housing have at least one member who is aged 55 years or older. We are rolling out more homes for seniors, with our unprecedented investment in new social housing in Townsville, Toowoomba, Tugun—you name it. There is also Home Assist Secure, whereby we provide free information to seniors about home maintenance and repairs. That is another state government initiative to make life safer and more secure for seniors. There is also Home and Community Care Home Modifications Services, helping frail and elderly people who need support with modifications around the home and helping them to get around that bit easier. These modifications mean that seniors can stay in their homes longer. Last year more than 1,000 homes were modified for seniors or people with a disability.

We have bond loans and rental grants to help seniors get into the private rental market. Our concessions for seniors are among the most comprehensive in the country. We provide a range of concessions on the cost of electricity, reticulated natural gas, ambulance, car registration, dental, spectacle supply, medical aids, electricity and life support, fishing permits as well as public transport costs, including local rail, bus and ferry travel and long distance travel within Queensland and a wide range of business discounts.

Mark my words, the Bligh government does not turn its back on our battlers. We are doing everything we can to make their lives that little bit better. That is what good, responsible governments do.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.04 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. If you are a single age pensioner, the maximum you will get in your fortnightly pension is about \$671.90. Of that amount, you will receive around \$56 to assist you with pharmaceuticals, utilities, the GST and the telephone at the higher internet rate. Our pensioners cannot afford any more penny pinching from this government without a complete review of their living expenses in today's world.

I speak firsthand with the knowledge of how this group is already suffering under the burden of other increases that have already been placed on them. In my community there are a number of public housing units. The Labor government is giving with one hand and taking with the other. That is nothing short of pickpocketing the most vulnerable people in our community.

My wife, who is on our local Meals on Wheels committee, sees firsthand how hard it is for these pensioners. Over the past couple of years her committee has not increased the cost of meals and instead chooses to fundraise to keep these meals at an affordable price to make sure that this section of

our community has the nourishment that they need and that they are at least able to afford good, nutritional food. Some of these people are confined to their homes and they have little or no prospect of getting out from under the huge burden that is already placed on them by spiralling costs, such as the cost of electricity, the cost of petrol when the fuel subsidy was done away with and the cost of food. Also, some of these older pensioners are experiencing rises in the cost of health care. Recently, a pensioner was sent home from the hospital at Hervey Bay at about 9.30 at night in a taxi. She had to pay for that ride when she got home. Things like that are pretty expensive for those people.

At Christmas I also have the pleasure of delivering meals on wheels to the pensioners in my area and I see some of the people who are out there, such as the lady in the wheelchair who cannot get around much and who has to pay taxi fares so that she can go down town. People like to have their mobility scooters. Without this \$400 increase, people could pay for their mobility scooters just so they could get around. Recently we had the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs in Hervey Bay when we broke the world record for having the longest convoy of motor scooters. It was great to see those pensioners getting out and about and being able to participate in our community. But we cannot keep burdening them with costs such as this \$400 increase in one year. It is an enormous increase for these pensioners who have fought for this country.

I have also seen an old guy with an oxygen bottle who gets around in a wheelchair. I have seen people suffering from cancer in their homes. Sometimes it is heartbreaking to see them. You sit there and talk to them, but you cannot spend the time with them that you would like to.

By increasing the rent, what choice do these people have but to cut back on the necessities of life? I am afraid for the outcome of this increase on their day-to-day living and the untold stress that it will create. Therefore, I call on this government to abstain from increasing these rents. Under this government's public housing rents, the rental cost for a single pensioner will rise by \$7.50 a week next year. This is just a money grab from these pensioners. It is only going to increase government revenue by around \$200,000 a week, totalling about \$10 million a year. You only have to read what Wayne Swan had to say about this issue. He accused the Premiers of pickpocketing pensioners as they vowed to take whatever action—

(Time expired)

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (6.10 pm): I rise to support the Premier's amendments. I particularly want to talk to the people who are sitting in the public gallery, ordinary Queenslanders, because I want you to hear—

Mr SPEAKER: You will talk through the chair.

Ms JONES: Through the chair, but I want them to listen loud and clear to the hypocrisy that I have seen here tonight. As members will know, I worked for the Minister for Housing for many years. That is one of the jobs I am proudest to have had. The reason I was so proud to work with the minister was that every year that this government has been in power it has increased the money to build public housing in Queensland.

It is very appropriate that we are debating this motion on the day that Peter Costello announced his retirement. Let us talk about Peter Costello's legacy. His legacy was not increasing the pension for 11 years straight. Pensioners in Australia had to wait for the Kevin Rudd government to get elected to see the largest increase in 40 years. That is what Labor governments do when they are in power. It was the largest increase to the pension since Whitlam.

Do members know what else Mr Costello did? He cut public housing for Queensland every year that he was the Treasurer. When he was the Treasurer Peter Costello cut \$500 million from public housing here in Queensland. That is Peter Costello's legacy. Even in the face of losing \$500 million from the federal government under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement that has been in place in Australia since the 1950s, even when it walked away from the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, not one of the Liberal and National Party members opposite stood up against that.

Mr Nicholls: What about rental assistance?

Ms JONES: Let us talk about rental assistance. I really want to take that interjection from the member for Clayfield. A pensioner living in the private sector does not benefit from a 25 per cent cap on their income in their liability to pay rent. They are at the whim of the private sector. The big winners are the ones that are in public housing. If the member for Clayfield really cared about pensioners he would want more public housing, because he would want more pensioners able to have the cap of 25 per cent of their income towards rent. What the Liberal National Party did when it was in power was cut public housing and send more pensioners out into the private sector. They sold them out to private landlords. Let me tell the member for Clayfield how much rents have increased in the private sector under John Howard. They have increased by 50 per cent. What those opposite did is privatise housing assistance, force pensioners into the private sector and force them to pay more.

On our side of the House we expand public housing so that what tenants have to pay in rent is capped at 25 per cent of their income. The reason we do that is that it is fair. We do not believe in privatising public housing assistance which is what those opposite did. We had 11 years of diverting funding away from the construction of public housing and putting it into a privatised system. Their policy was to move people out of the public system and into the private system. The Liberal National Party sold them out into the private sector. We have more public housing here in Queensland than when we came into government.

I will finish on this point: when we came into government the Housing budget in Queensland was \$330 million. When those opposite were last in government they gave up \$100 million in the Housing budget to the Howard government. Every other state diversified it across their portfolios but not the mob opposite; they took it straight out of the Housing budget. Our government will spend a record \$1 billion on public housing construction in Queensland. We will be spreading the availability of public housing so that ordinary pensioners can get the 25 per cent cut. That is opposed to the position of the member for Clayfield which is to privatise housing in Australia. That is his policy. Do not ever be fooled by those opposite.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. There is an old saying that there are two things in life that are guaranteed: death and taxes. In this state there are three things that are guaranteed: death, taxes and an old unchanged Labor Party that can never change. I ask members how could a cash-strapped state government such as Queensland, which is already selling off its assets to pay the bills, manage without taking \$7.50 each week from its publicly housed pensioners? Here are some suggestions: firstly, not paying the former Reserve Bank Governor Bernie Fraser \$2,500 a day to sell the Bligh government's privatisation plan; secondly, what if we wiped out the \$38 million in salaries it pays to 640 spin doctors; and, thirdly, what if we cut the \$65 million it spends annually in government advertising?

In terms of public housing, which speaks to the heart of our motion, in my electorate alone there are 620 individuals and families registered for long-term social housing. In the minister's own words in answer to a question on notice, of those 68 are very high need, 200 are high need, 325 are moderate need and 27 are lower need. Of all 380 social housing dwellings owned by the department in my electorate I ask: how many are available? What are the chances for the 620 desperate families seeking a roof over their heads? I tell my colleagues, and it pains me to do so, that there are just three vacant homes, due to the general maintenance and turnaround times, which of course will then be made available.

With seniors, particularly single seniors, taking up a fair portion of available public housing, the increase in rent would generate significant revenue for the government. Will they use this money to build social housing? We do not know. This brings me back to something I raised in this House some time ago and that is: what is the DNA of the Labor Party? For those members who cannot remember or have chosen to forget, 'D' is for debt, 'N' is for negligence and 'A' is for arrogance.

Let us talk about debt. Through the 1990s this state had a balance sheet that was the envy of all other state treasurers in Australia. The rot began when then Treasurer Bligh began borrowing far beyond what was required and losing complete control of expenditure. Now we have this Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha—the man the polls suggest is the most unpopular member of this House, the man responsible for delivering \$85.5 billion in deficit that will see a staggering \$14 million per day just in interest payments for each Queenslanders. The socialist lie is well and truly at work here—that is, you get better services but you have to pay higher taxes.

Mr SPEAKER: The expression 'lie' is unparliamentary. You will withdraw it immediately.

Mr BLEIJIE: Withdrawn, Mr Speaker. The global financial crisis is to blame, it says, even though this government managed to rack up \$64 billion in debt before the letters GFC actually meant something other than the Geelong Football Club. This government gives with one hand and takes more with the other. I never thought I would see the day that the federal socialists give with one hand and the state bolsheviks take with the other. The pensioners of this country are always the ones that seem to suffer the most. The federal government needs to show with a firm hand the priority it puts on the needs of pensioners.

To reiterate the sentiments of the federal Treasurer, stop pickpocketing the pensioners of Queensland. Queensland pensioners should get a fair go. They should not have every last cent squeezed out of them. The government should stand up for the pensioners of this state and support the LNP motion that vetoes this heartless rent hike for struggling Queensland pensioners.

I am known in this place for at times belting out the odd tune. I will not entertain the House with one today, but I do often wonder, in the event that the Labor Party had the same flair as I do, what it would sing about. Let me set the scene. We are sitting in the caucus and the rent increase is being discussed. The members of the backbench are quite hesitant and reluctant to go with this policy. I can see the arrogance of the Premier and the Treasurer as they sing to comrades, 'We'll knock 'em down but they'll get up again, we're never going to keep them down.' People are continually being knocked down by this government; they have already been knocked down to a point of no return. The LNP care.

I say to Queensland pensioners that they have been continually knocked down by this Labor government, but we on this side will not knock them down; we will pick them up again. We oppose any move by this incompetent, uncaring government to use the recent changes in the pension to increase rents. The government should be ashamed of—

(Time expired)

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (6.19 pm): That contribution was about as funny as hessian underwear. The reality is that this is a very serious issue and those opposite have shown their ignorance of what good housing policy is all about. The reality is that I spent 10 years in this place fighting the then federal government, which those opposite align themselves to, to try to get money for Queensland housing. During that time, the Queensland government did all the heavy lifting—every single stick of it. We started with about 45,000 houses in Queensland and when I finished we had about 65,000. All of that heavy lifting was done by the Queensland government. It was not done by the tories federally. That is for certain. That is absolutely without a doubt.

We introduced the one social housing system to make sure that the poorest got the fairest go, and that was opposed by those who sit opposite. About 65 per cent of the people in housing are our most needy citizens. I must say to the federal government that what it is now proposing to do is something that I fixed up back in 2005, when there were two groups of people, one at 22 per cent and one at 25 per cent. Our view was that everybody should be on 25 per cent. That is what we signed up to with the Commonwealth government.

I ask those misinformed individuals opposite: what did the Howard government expect of us? It expected us to charge everybody the same rate, regardless of their earnings, and that charge was 25 per cent of earnings. Why? Because 25 per cent is what is charged for public housing. What is the rate for after-housing poverty? It is when 30 per cent of your income is spent on rent. Those are the people I worry about the most. That is the group of people who have fallen off the other side of the cliff.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I heard somebody saying \$390 a year extra for a pensioner. I can take members to people in my electorate who are paying about \$280 a week for rent and they are single pensioners. I heard the contribution from the member for Hervey Bay. I know that when he was in the council, the council did not suddenly waive the rates for pensioners. They received the increase like everybody else. In my electorate, for example, single pensioners who live in their own homes will be paying anything up to \$150 every week just to hold on to their homes. They are the real poor. Are they going to get anything out of this? No, they are not!

Have we heard those opposite say anything about that? No, we have not! What they are doing is playing petty base politics, which is actually what they are good at. They are good at getting down to the really basic, hypocritical stuff of opposition. What they are not good at is looking at the broader policy views. The real battlers are the people who are trying to get into the public housing that the Rudd government is providing. That is what Labor believes in. We believe in putting people into those houses and charging them 25 per cent of their income, not 30 per cent or 45 per cent of their income. We have heard nothing said about those people.

Do members really believe for a moment that the extra money that these people receive a year will not suddenly be engulfed by landlords? Do we believe that for one minute? Does anyone believe that anybody out there who is on the pension will not have this taken away from them by private landlords? If they believe that, they are not living in the real world, and members opposite do not live in the real world on this issue.

In public housing we propose that 25 per cent of income goes towards rent, whereas people in private rentals could be paying anything up to over half of their income. The number of people in Queensland who live in after-housing poverty is a concern to this minister, as it was a concern to me when I was the minister. Guess who it was not a concern to? It was never a concern to the Howard government. We hear about the \$2 million that went into rent assistance. Can members opposite show me where that went to? It disappeared like water through sand. It is nowhere to be seen. There is no new product on the ground. Now the Rudd government is injecting cash into it.

But can members guess what we have a problem with? This is what people opposite do not understand. You have to maintain public housing. When I took over this portfolio, we spent about \$80 million on maintenance and now we spend about \$300 million or \$400 million on public housing maintenance. The money that comes in is spent on maintaining the houses to a proper standard for people to live in, because we do not get recurrent expenditure from the federal government to maintain those houses. In other words, I say stick with 25 per cent. I agree with what the Premier is doing in trying to have a broader policy debate on this. The finite end of that debate tonight shows how shallow and pathetic this opposition really is when it comes to embracing proper policy frameworks in this nation.

Division: Question put—That the Premier's amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: Ring the bells for two minutes.

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

AYES, 47—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

NOES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- notes that a percentage of assessable income rent policy for Social Housing has applied in Queensland for decades;
- notes that the Council of the Australian Federation has recently agreed to place an initial 12 month moratorium on rent increases for single pensioners in Social Housing; and
- notes that the Council of the Australian Federation will further consider the existing rent policy for Social Housing with a view to obtaining a consistent national approach regarding rent setting policies for pensioners.

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

MOTION

Order of Business

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.35 pm), without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 to 12 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE (HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 19 August (see p. 1722), on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (7.35 pm): For students of history and *Hansard*, let me apologise if this all sounds very familiar. However, we can all be forgiven for being overcome with a sad sense of *deja vu* this evening. Although this bill has a new title, it is identical to a bill proposed by the then opposition in August last year. Excluding a new title, not a single, solitary word has changed in the bill. But this is perhaps quite appropriate, given that the position at law across Australia has not changed, the position in the United Kingdom has not changed and, most distressingly, the fundamental flaws in the LNP's arguments have not changed.

None of this should be cause for surprise because the LNP is not a political party open to change. The LNP is, as is becoming increasingly obvious to those of us in the 53rd Queensland Parliament, a party that is fundamentally reactionary in its approach to issues of public policy. If, after 12 months, the best the LNP policy tumbleweed can achieve is a trip back to failure and the best the LNP bankroll can afford is a photocopier, then all that can be said is that those opposite have yet again demonstrated they are unfit to govern Queensland. All of this has occurred in the very first bill that the member for Surfers Paradise has introduced in this parliament as the current Leader of the Opposition. There is no innovation, no policy direction, no policy ideas, no vision for Queensland—just five pages of photocopying to reproduce a historical anomaly that will assist the people of Queensland not one iota.

Let me assure the House that the government will be opposing this bill. In 2006 the Criminal Code was amended in this place to remove section 57. The bill before the House seeks to reinstate that provision of the code and, in doing so, opens members and nonmembers who come before this parliament to give evidence to criminal prosecution in Queensland courts. I acknowledge those members of the parliament from this side of the House who have stood in this parliament and in previous parliaments and have made these arguments before me, for I will cover much of the same ground. The issue, I am afraid, is not a complex one, but it is one that those opposite seem completely incapable, or are deliberately unwilling, to understand. The Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, at section 8, is very clear. It states—

- (1) The freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in the Assembly can not be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of the Assembly.
- (2) To remove doubt, it is declared that subsection (1) is intended to have the same effect as article 9 of the Bill of Rights (1688) had in relation to the Assembly immediately before the commencement of the subsection.

In turn, article 9 of the UK Bill of Rights states in near identical terms—

The freedom of speech in debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament.

This principle forms a central pillar of Westminster democracy and the Westminster system of government that those on this side of the House, at the very least, believe is worth protecting. So much for the political opportunists opposite who so readily cloak themselves in the conservatism and traditions of Westminster parliamentary democracy, but only of course when it suits their selfish political purposes, not the political strength of the people of Queensland.

The question before the House is, therefore, very straightforward: do members believe in the primacy of the parliament and the principles set out in the Parliament of Queensland Act? If the answer to that is yes then the reintroduction of section 57 is quite simply untenable. It is inconsistent with the primacy of the parliament and, in being so, threatens to stifle debate and expose to criminal sanction those who may be legitimately called before this House to assist in the robust and passionate debate that the people of Queensland deserve.

It also has the potential to drag the courts into the political debate that most appropriately should remain the province of the parliament. This question has previously been answered by the parliament in the affirmative—not only in 2008 when the original of this photocopied bill was rejected, not only in 2006 when the section was removed but also in 1995 when the Criminal Code was reviewed and redrafted.

As members will remember, this code was passed by the parliament and given royal assent but never proclaimed due to the change in government. This is the same question that the voters of Queensland have been able to consider at two elections and that has been twice rejected. So much for respect for democracy. So much for respect for the Queensland people. So much for respect for the outcome of elections. We have seen since the election of this parliament the robust affirmation by those members opposite to reject the decisions of the Queensland people. They have rejected consistently the decisions the Queensland people have made to re-elect this Labor government, much to their shame. The position of the opposition has been rejected on successive occasions.

How has this question been answered in other houses of parliament across the country? As has been noted previously, there is not a parliament in this country where this provision exists as the opposition would have it exist here. Neither the Commonwealth House of Representatives nor the Australian Senate are subject to a criminal offence, preferring instead to adopt the accepted sanction of a contempt enforced by the parliament. In New South Wales there is no provision that seeks to subject members of the parliament to a criminal sanction for giving false evidence. Similarly, in South Australia members of the parliament are not subject to criminal sanction for perjury before the parliament, while in Western Australia the law has been interpreted to also not apply to members of the parliament. Finally, in Tasmania, where the Queensland code has been largely replicated, section 57 has simply been omitted.

From the mother of all parliaments in the United Kingdom to the parliaments of this country, the proposal suggested by the opposition has been rejected. It has been rejected because it is in open conflict with the principle that the parliament is, and should always be, the guardian of its own affairs. This chamber is intended to be a place of debate—debate carried out frankly with vigour and with passion. It is where the ideas that will shape the future of our state are proposed and discussed, where

all Queenslanders can find a voice through their local member, and where difficult issues can be addressed, attacked, defended and ultimately determined. This is a place that, by its very nature, must ask questions of all who are called to enter and those questions must be met with answers that are robust.

As these debates progress, parliament is not helpless, unable to act in the face of deceit or slight of character. Contempt of this parliament can and has been punished by the parliament—not by the courts and certainly not on indictment by the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Liberal National Party would have the Queensland public believe that the removal of this provision somehow promotes 'lying' in parliament; that it diminishes the integrity of this House and its members. Honourable members, do not be fooled. It is one of the most disingenuous and misguided arguments ever to be prosecuted through this chamber.

Did the previous existence of this provision stop the former deputy leader of the coalition, Joan Sheldon, from making deliberately incorrect statements in this House on 9 October 1997? No, it did not. Did the existence of this provision stop the former coalition member for Ipswich, Jack Paff, from making deliberately misleading statements in a tabled document on 16 September 1999? No, it did not. Did the existence of this provision stop the current member for Callide from misleading this House through what the press dubbed a 'tactical lie' on 9 April 2002? No, it did not.

The opposition's record on these matters reached a new low this year when the federal Leader of the Liberal Party—or the leader of some part of the Liberal Party that he proposes to lead—Malcolm Turnbull, used fraudulent information to embark on a deliberate and dedicated attack on the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, following evidence given by a Commonwealth public servant, Mr Godwin Grech, before a committee of the Australian Senate. I would express my sympathy towards Mr Grech, who is unwell and who was clearly used and abused by the federal counterparts of those members opposite for their own base political purposes. But all Australians know—and they know well—that he was aided, abetted and encouraged to embark on the course of conduct that he did by the federal coalition leadership including the federal opposition leader, Malcolm Turnbull. If members opposite are genuine in their motives, I look forward, as do all members on this side of the House, to them moving changes to their state and national platforms to ensure the conduct they seek to criminalise at the state level in this parliament is also criminalised at the Commonwealth level so that Mr Turnbull can be prosecuted for his conduct in using false information in questions asked in the House of Representatives.

A government member: It won't happen.

Mr DICK: I am sure those of us on this side of the House will be waiting in vain. If the opposition were sincere about this proposal, however misguided it may be, its proposal would amount to more than \$1.40 in photocopying their last failure, but it would apply the criminal sanction to all parliamentary debates and not simply to committee and evidentiary hearings. But they have not. Yes, it would be bad policy but at least it would be sincere, honest and consistent bad policy. It speaks volumes of the LNP that their fundamental policy is not only unsound and unnecessary but also insincere and nothing more than a political stunt, aimed at obfuscating the bottomless well of inadequacy that lies at the heart of those members opposite.

The LNP's apparent desire to bring this issue back to the parliament once again is not borne out of some newly discovered moral indignation at dishonesty; it is borne of a fundamental inability to understand the law, the constitutional systems of our state, an unwillingness to understand the role of parliament and a fundamental lack of policy direction and leadership to address the very real issues that all Queenslanders face. I encourage all members of the House to oppose this misguided, improper and incorrect bill.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.45 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of this private member's bill, the Criminal Code (Honesty and Integrity in Parliament) Amendment Bill 2009, introduced by my colleague the member for Surfers Paradise and Leader of the Opposition, John-Paul Langbroek MP. The main objectives of the bill are to ensure that members are held accountable for providing false evidence before the House or one of its committees, section 57; and to amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 37, to ensure that a contempt of parliament that equates to providing false evidence can only be dealt with under the Criminal Code.

In 2006 this provision of the Criminal Code was repealed for questionable reasons that subsequently led to allowing members of parliament to deliberately mislead the Legislative Assembly and its committees without fear of criminal sanction that had previously existed since the Criminal Code was drafted in 1899. In 2006 the then Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, introduced a bill that amended the Criminal Code to repeal section 57 of the code and remove the offence of lying in the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly. This was done at a time shortly after a CMC inquiry found that a disgraced former member of the Labor Party had lied to an estimates committee. At the time the Queensland opposition strongly opposed the move on the grounds that it would undermine the integrity and standing of the Queensland parliament. Maintaining a high standard of honesty and integrity in the Queensland parliament is the cornerstone of an open and accountable government, and this bill seeks to restore that standing.

The objective of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code and Parliament of Queensland Act to introduce the offence of giving false evidence to parliament and the committees of the parliament. Honesty and truthfulness are expected of every politician in the Queensland parliament. This bill seeks to restore that honesty and truthfulness which the people of Queensland expect and deserve. The bill will create the offence of providing false evidence to the Legislative Assembly or a committee. The bill also amends the Parliament of Queensland Act to ensure that acts of contempt of parliament that amount to providing false evidence are prosecuted under the code offence.

Queensland currently has a unicameral system of government. This state Labor government currently has the absolute and unfettered power of this place, and the changes made in 2006 mean that the courts will no longer have any role in the conduct of its members. There is no accountability for any minister of the Crown, including the Premier, since this bill was passed in 2006. Section 57 of the Criminal Code was repealed to ensure that the principle inherent in article 9 of the Bill of Rights is preserved and reinforced, and it was purported to bring Queensland into line with the position in the House of Commons, the Commonwealth houses of parliament and the parliaments of other states and territories. The stark difference is that the Commonwealth parliament and the parliaments of other states and territories all have an upper house—a house of review. We in this state do not have that. We do not have an upper house to keep the ministry in line and allow review of the unfettered power of government. Even the public shows a lack of trust in the government. Recent polls in the *Sunday Mail* have revealed that 65 per cent of people believe corruption and cronyism are widespread in the Bligh government.

This follows a report by the Crime and Misconduct Commission into police misconduct and a speech by 1980s corruption buster Tony Fitzgerald QC. A recent Galaxy Poll published in the *Sunday Mail* revealed the following—

Two-thirds of Queenslanders believe corruption and cronyism is widespread in the Bligh Labor Government, an exclusive Galaxy Poll has revealed.

The poll, conducted for the *Sunday Mail* has revealed anger, contempt and complete dissatisfaction with Premier Anna Bligh and her ministers.

Corruption fighter Tony Fitzgerald's savage attack on Labor's 11 years in power has resonated with voters, who are obviously fed up with the government and would kick them out now if they could.

Ms Bligh, at her 2009 election campaign launch and victory speech, called on the public to trust her—but they have turned their backs on her and the government.

We are facing government debt of \$85.5 billion. To put it in simple terms, for an average family of four that is a \$78,000 debt each. Yes, a massive \$78,000 each—not per household, each. It is going to cost Queensland taxpayers \$14 million a day, every day to just pay the interest bill on this \$85.5 billion of debt.

We are the only state in Australia to have lost its AAA credit rating. Having previously been the nation's economic powerhouse—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I would invite the honourable member to come back to the provisions of the bill currently before the House.

Ms BATES: This is the same government that went to an election stating that the fuel levy would remain in place and it has not. This is the same government busily selling off our assets to try to dig itself out of the financial black hole that it has put this state in over 11 years. This is the same government that, whilst introducing a charter of budget honesty bill before the election, called an early election to ensure the public did not know what level of debt we were in. It is the same public who were not consulted about selling off our assets.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member, that is a bill that is currently before the House. You are anticipating debate. I will invite you for a final time to come back to the provisions of the bill currently before the House.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Obviously I am speaking about the Criminal Code (Honesty and Integrity in Parliament) Amendment Bill. I might remind the House that the Howard government quite some years ago imposed a statutory obligation by introducing similar legislation following the black hole left by another Labor government in 1998. I quote from *Hansard* part of the speech by Senator the Hon. George Brandis about honesty and integrity. He stated—

But that more than anything else it is not a token, not a rhetorical gesture but a statutory obligation, which this government imposed upon itself and has faithfully observed ever since to ensure that in government's most fundamental obligation—its obligation to be honest with the Australian people about how it manages their money—both sides of politics and whichever party is in government at any given time are held to neutral, objective scrutiny and accountability by the departments of Treasury and of finance.

Queenslanders now know why we went to an early election. We went to an early election because this government misled every Queensland, including its union mates, about the real state of affairs with our coffers. If the Criminal Code Amendment Act 2006 had not been introduced in the first place to protect government politicians from telling mistruths to the opposition and the people of Queensland, we all know that the outcome of the early election would have been very different.

I wholeheartedly support this bill, which introduces an offence of providing false evidence to the Queensland parliament. If the Premier was upfront about stamping out cronyism and restoring integrity to regain the trust of the Queensland voters then this bill today need not have been introduced to counter Labor's cover-ups over the past 11 years. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (7.53 pm): I am very happy to speak in the debate on the private member's bill that has been introduced by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the LNP, the member for Surfers Paradise—that is, the Criminal Code (Honesty and Integrity in Parliament) Amendment Bill 2009. This bill should get bipartisan support if we are to avoid further scandals such as those we have seen in this parliament.

I was quite appalled when listening to the comments made by the Attorney-General a few moments ago. I have to condemn the comments he made about the LNP. How absolutely ridiculous they were. He was talking about no vision, no change, no innovation—all those sorts of incredible statements. What this bill brings to the parliament is a commitment to the people of Queensland that the LNP will bring openness, honesty, integrity and ethics to the parliament in Queensland. At the moment that is not what we are seeing from the current state Labor government. We are not seeing an open and honest government for the state of Queensland.

The comments that the Attorney-General made were quite hypocritical. The only reason I could possibly forgive him for that is that he was not here in December 2005 when we saw that absolutely appalling performance in state parliament. This bill aims to restore a high standard of integrity to the parliament and to further the notion of open and accountable government. It introduces criminal penalties for telling untruths to the House. That is what the people of Queensland demand. It has nothing to do with what the Labor members over there expect; it is what the people of Queensland expect.

Whilst I support freedom of speech, we as elected members of parliament cannot condone, allow or excuse knowingly false or misleading information being given to the parliament or to a parliamentary committee. Parliamentary privilege is the freedom of the House to conduct its proceedings without interference from outside bodies and without interference from the courts. However, there is a huge difference between maintaining freedom of speech to protect a member from libel and using freedom of speech to knowingly give false answers to the House or to a committee of the House.

As members of this parliament we are responsible and accountable to ourselves, to our fellow members and to the public of Queensland. Just as we support freedom of speech, so should we decry the abuse of freedom of speech. The expectation that at all times we are honest should be balanced with the responsibility that goes with it.

Section 57 of the Criminal Code provides that any person who knowingly gives false evidence in the course of an examination before the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly is guilty of a crime and is liable to seven years in prison. In 2006 the then Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, introduced a bill that amended the Criminal Code to repeal section 57 of the code and remove the offence of lying in the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly. This was done at a time shortly after a CMC inquiry found that disgraced former member for Sandgate Gordon Nuttall had lied to an estimates committee. Gordon Nuttall made statements found to amount to lying to a Queensland parliamentary estimates committee about his knowledge of the 'Dr Death' scandal.

The offence of providing false evidence to parliament or one of its committees was enshrined in the Criminal Code by Sir Samuel Griffith, Attorney-General of Queensland and Premier more than 100 years ago, and was said to be a forward-thinking provision that set a standard for parliament. The Criminal Code Amendment Act 2006 repealed the section so that a person cannot be charged with, prosecuted for or further prosecuted for or convicted of an offence against section 57 or punished for doing or omitting to do an act that constituted that offence. This then permits a parliamentarian to provide untruthful statements to this parliament.

In December last year former LNP leader Lawrence Springborg introduced a bill—the truth in parliament bill—to try to restore some respect for the members of this House. This was voted down by this Labor government—a move that totally shows it does not really believe it can tell the truth. Why would it when it changes our laws to protect liars as it did with Gordon Nuttall? The Premier, as Acting Premier in January 2006, was the one who announced the changes to the Criminal Code. This is the Premier who insists that she wants an open and accountable government. At the time of the Nuttall scandal the now Premier stood up for him, saying—

For those of us who are colleagues of the member for Sandgate, for those of us who have worked with him, for those of us who have sat with him around a cabinet table and know him to be a decent man ...

The current Deputy Premier said—

I know the member for Sandgate well and I believe that he is a good and honest man.

Time showed that the Premier and her Labor colleagues did not know him as well as they thought, because he has been tried and sent to jail this year on corruption charges. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald report—a report that brought many changes to Queensland; changes that were brought into being by the Goss Labor government; changes that have now been watered down to the extent that they allow parliamentarians to lie without fear of retribution.

It was the Beattie Labor government that changed the rules to try to save its mate. When the accusation of knowingly giving false evidence was made against Gordon Nuttall, what did the Labor government do? Did it make him stand aside while this serious complaint was investigated? No, it did not. The Beattie government instead moved him from the Health ministry to the Primary Industries ministry. Pity help the primary industries! The former Premier had a duty to all Queenslanders to protect the integrity of the system of parliamentary committees and should have insisted Gordon Nuttall step down while he was under investigation. But what did he do? He moved him! He moved him from Health to Primary Industries. What sort of punishment was that? The man lied to the budget estimates committee hearing over his knowledge of issues relating to the qualifications of overseas trained doctors. He was publicly contradicted by his own deputy director-general at a parliamentary estimates committee, but who got sacked over that? Was it Nuttall, who told the lie? No! It was his deputy director-general. Nuttall was found by the Davies royal commission to have engaged in conduct that was misleading, unreasonable and careless. But he still remained in the Labor government ministry. He was also implicated in a conflict of interest issue regarding a proposed new regional hospital on the Sunshine Coast.

It was for this man now sitting in jail on corruption charges that the Beattie government recalled parliament in December 2005 to pass special legislation to remove potential legal action against ministers who do not tell the truth before parliamentary committees. The Labor government then and now has no respect for the Westminster tradition or the reforms brought in through the Fitzgerald report. If this current government has any shred of self-respect—any shred of self-respect—left, it will support this bill, the Criminal Code (Honesty and Integrity in Parliament) Amendment Bill 2009; support the reintroduction of truth in parliament; support an open, honest and accountable government.

In Queensland there is no upper house. There is no upper house to keep the executive in check. There is no upper house to ensure that the people of Queensland are getting an honest, open and accountable government. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties President, Michael Cope, said in an article released in July that the conviction of Gordon Nuttall called into focus the effectiveness of government probity measures in this state. He concluded that the measures we have in place are not adequate and that ministerial probity standards should become law and should be overseen by a statutory body with strong enforcement powers. Mr Cope said the CMC's *Dangerous Liaisons* report showed that cultural transformation demanded by the Fitzgerald report was breaking down. He said that, whilst the CMC has some capacity to mandate and powers to proactively audit for and enforce compliance of rules, its role is very much after the horse has bolted, as Gordon Nuttall's case showed.

Members of this House have privilege that must not be abused. The ethics committee monitors and reports on suspected breaches and inadvertent breaches are an occupational hazard in the House, but inadvertent breaches are not the same as knowingly and willingly giving a false answer to a lawful and relevant question to the House or to a parliamentary committee. Inadvertent slips at committee hearings are inevitable and forgivable, but deliberately misleading and false behaviour is avoidable and it is inexcusable and should be punished to the fullest extent by this House. We need to reinstate the offence of providing false evidence to the parliament and to its committees.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (8.03 pm): After listening to the Attorney-General tonight, one would be forgiven for believing that the LNP is in fact putting in place a new provision—an unheard of provision—in the Criminal Code in this state. It is not. It has been there for well over 100 years—well over 100 years until this government for its own base purposes, its own political purposes, had to remove it. It had to remove it. So let us be very straight here tonight. What we are doing is putting the Criminal Code back into the position it was before a corrupt government moved to get it out to protect one of its own. That is what we are doing, and the Attorney-General would have the people of Queensland believe that it is only the Labor Party that has the wisdom to define what is right and what is wrong. The fact is that it is only the Labor Party which has a monopoly on lying to the people of this state. It has a monopoly on the issue of lying to the people of this state and using the law for its own effective means irrespective of the long-term consequences.

The bill tonight corrects three great wrongs—three great wrongs that occurred in 2006. It restores an obligation on the members of this parliament removed by the Labor Party. It says that members of parliament are required to meet a higher standard when they step into this chamber and take an oath or an affirmation to be members of this House, and this bill restores that obligation. It also restores a protection—a protection for the public that if a member of this House lies to the chamber or lies to a committee that member can be punished. That protection is restored by the terms of this bill. It also restores the integrity in this House lost—torn apart, thrown away—by a Labor government. They are the three great rights that are restored as a consequence of this bill being passed by the House tonight.

There are few here who can remember 9 December 2005. There are few here who can remember what led up to that sitting on the Friday, and there are few here who can remember why parliament was called back. It was not to debate the issue. It was not to argue whether Gordon Nuttall was guilty or innocent. That had been decided by Premier Beattie on 7 December when he decided that he was going to recall parliament to exonerate Gordon Nuttall because he knew if there had been an investigation at that time all hell would have broken loose. So 9 December was about absolution. It was not about a debate; it was about pardoning a criminal for an action. It was about giving a man a 'get out of jail free' card. It was about giving Gordon Nuttall the right to continue in this House for as long as he desired.

Luckily, what transpired was that the CMC took the matter further and it proved the lie of the Labor government—the lie of the Labor government in exonerating a man who should have been investigated by the ethics committee at the time. I can recall Mr Lingard standing on 9 December and raising with the Speaker that this issue was with the ethics committee and the Speaker had ruled prior to that that he would not allow any words to be debated in this chamber on that issue. But the government had made certain that it would stymie that. It moved that standing orders be set aside, which washed away the ethics committee, because I tell you what: if the committee had taken action, then what would have happened clearly is that this thing would have come to a head a lot quicker in relation to the criminal activities of Gordon Nuttall and we would not be sitting here tonight and the last time we sat here debating this bill to find out how corrupt this Labor government is.

When you read the *Hansard* of December 2005, you have to cherish the words of then Premier Beattie, don't you? You love reading those words where he said—

This government has moved quickly and effectively to deal with the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report on allegations concerning the Hon. Gordon Nuttall MP. We have done so in an honest and transparent way.

Mr Springborg: He used those words all the time!

Mr McARDLE: He used those words all the time—honest and transparent. But don't you love the way the Premier used the phrase that 'the government moved quickly and effectively'? On 7 December the report came out. They moved all right! On 9 December the boy was out the gate! He was as safe as houses!

Mr Messenger: And they demoted him from Health to Primary Industries!

Mr McARDLE: They made certain that this man was dealt with quickly and effectively all right, and didn't they deal with him!

An opposition member: A whitewash!

Mr McARDLE: It was a complete whitewash! You may as well have gone around the chamber with the old whitewash and gone around the walls! There was no blood here that day, because the judge and jury were the Labor Party. That is what it was going to do.

Mr Springborg: There was no smell. Out with the Glen 20!

Mr McARDLE: That is right. There were no overly pungent odours that day. But don't you also love those words: 'they were honest and they acted in a transparent manner'? Honest! Honest! They would trip over the word if they met it in the hallway. Transparent! Transparent means in essence, 'Let's get together, fellas and girls, and we'll make up our mind what we're going to do. How do we circumvent the standing orders? How do we circumvent the CMC? How do we circumvent the ethics committee? How do we exonerate the man who was subsequently found to be guilty of serious crimes and who is now under further investigation?'

But let us go to the seconder of the motion on that day. Who was that? Somebody tell me. Was it the current Premier who leapt to her feet in defence of her good friend Gordon Nuttall?

Mr Springborg: It wasn't, was it?

Mr McARDLE: It was. I have to tell members that it was the Premier who leapt to her feet. The problem is that the Premier is as complicit in the crime as every other Labor member who cast their vote on that day to exonerate that man. The Premier now leads the state. What a shining example we have!

Today the Attorney-General made, shall we say, some rather facile comments in relation to the LNP and the decision by the people of Queensland, having rejected the fact that we have put this bill before the House on at least one other occasion. Has the Premier forgotten that she did not tell them about the fuel tax? 'Oops, what fuel tax? Don't mention the war. Don't mention the fuel tax.' Talk about porkies out of the barrel—'Don't mention the fuel tax and, whatever we do, let's not talk about the asset sales because if we do that they may not vote us in.' What a mob of hypocrites! As I said before, if they saw the word in the hallway they would trip over it.

Mr Hoolihan: How did you stay out of jail?

Mr McARDLE: Oh! Steady there, son; the blood pressure is up. You cannot handle the truth, can you? No, that's right. You can't handle the truth.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I call the member for Caloundra and ask him to direct his comments through the chair.

Mr McARDLE: I think there was a comment by a government member that the government won the election. Let us put that in context. They won the election because they lied and they have continued to lie ever since. They have bent the truth. They have broken the truth. They have buried the damn thing so deep that they do not know where to look for it anymore.

This issue goes back to 9 December 2005. Once you start down that slippery slope you cannot stop, and they have not. I tell you what, when we win government we are going to open up the books and we are going to find out really what took place. I tell you what, you will be happy—

Mr Wallace interjected.

Mr Wettenhall interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Main Roads and the member for Barron River will cease interjecting.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I value your protection. I guarantee that when we get the power of government this issue will be looked at again and section 57 will be back. I guarantee that there will be a few of the members opposite before the break. I am looking forward to the day when the Treasurer opens the books and we start going through the papers. Then we will understand the other reasons the section was removed, because that mob could not lie straight in bed unless it was to protect one of their mates. I guarantee that the day will come when we put this section back.

(Time expired)

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (8.13 pm): I believe it is an indictment on the Labor government that this bill is before the House. It is a sad day that we have to introduce legislation to enforce honesty and integrity in this parliament, but the actions of the previous Labor government give us no choice.

On 9 December 2005, the Queensland parliament was recalled to consider a report by the Crime and Misconduct Commission into evidence given to the parliament's estimates committee by the then member for Sandgate. It had been alleged that some of the evidence may have been in breach of section 57 of the Criminal Code. The parliament was recalled in accordance with section 487 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to determine whether the offence should be dealt with by prosecution or as a contempt of this parliament.

The previous Premier moved that Gordon Nuttall should be dealt with by the parliament rather than under the Criminal Code. He told this House that the member's resignation as a minister and his apology to the House were an appropriate penalty for lying to the estimates committee. The current Premier seconded the motion. In doing so, she described Gordon Nuttall as 'a decent man—a man of integrity'. I think the subsequent events prove otherwise.

The former Premier told the parliament that the member had not deliberately misled the House. What was the evidence of that? The member had said so in his statement. He was a man whom the CMC believed had breached the Criminal Code, who had already lied to the parliament. But the former Premier and the current Premier said that the parliament should believe him and deal with him as we would deal with any other less serious matter.

The member for South Brisbane stood here and said that political differences should be put aside in considering how we deal with Gordon Nuttall. It would perhaps have been more appropriate to put aside political cronyism and the desire to look after one's mates no matter what they have done. Premier Bligh also said—

... further action through the criminal process is not only not warranted; it is destined to failure. There is simply inadequate evidence to establish a prima facie case.

The real issue is not what the former member did or did not do or whether the case against him would succeed in court; the point is that the CMC found that the Criminal Code had been breached. The CMC believed that prosecution should be considered. It was not up to the Premier or the parliament to decide whether the prosecution could proceed successfully; it was up to them to let the legal process take its course. But how did the government respond? It used its numbers to protect one of its own by allowing him to resign and apologise. The members opposite described Nuttall as a decent man who had integrity. They offered him the protection of parliament.

In this instance, not only did the Labor government protect Gordon Nuttall from prosecution; it went further and in 2006 legislated to allow lying in parliament. The repeal of section 57 of the Criminal Code removes the offence of lying to the parliament or to a committee of the parliament. That means that there are no criminal penalties available to deal with a member who knowingly and deliberately misleads the parliament. They can be dealt with only as Nuttall was dealt with—through the contempt of parliament process.

The government claimed, as it did when parliament was recalled to consider Nuttall's case, that this change was necessary to protect parliamentary privilege. What a nonsense! Parliamentary privilege quite rightly gives members the ability to speak freely in parliament without fear of prosecution. I do not believe that it was ever intended to allow members to deliberately mislead parliament or to try to protect themselves or others from not telling the truth.

Of course, we are not suggesting that every breach of parliamentary privilege should be dealt with under the Criminal Code. The existing parliamentary processes are more than adequate to deal with the vast majority of issues that arise. All of us are human and we can make errors. But that is not what we are talking about here and to confuse the two is misleading. We are talking about deliberately giving false evidence. As members of parliament we should not be above the law. If we deliberately give false evidence to the degree that Nuttall was judged by the CMC to have done, we should be dealt with by the law, not by our peers.

Popular surveys show that politicians are among the least well regarded people in our society. That is not surprising when we do things like change the law to protect ourselves and our mates. This government talks a lot about accountability and integrity. Last month in this House I spoke about the so-called public forum on accountability that was held on the Sunshine Coast. There were only four members of the public present. No-one seemed to have been invited. That speaks volumes about the Bligh government's approach to integrity—'Don't invite people to a forum. You may not like hearing some of words they say.' That is the same sort of approach that the government and the previous Beattie government took in relation to the issue of lying to parliament—'Don't listen to the CMC, the authority responsible for investigating serious matters like this. Don't take seriously the CMC's recommendation on dealing with members who have given false evidence. Don't let the legal process pursue the issue and determine what action should be taken. Instead, give the member a slap on the wrist and let him resign. Take his word for what he did against the word of the CMC. Say he's a good bloke and accuse this side of the House of being political.' That is their way.

Worse still, the government made sure that no-one else could be put in Nuttall's position. It does not like the law so it changed it. That is not accountability; that is political opportunism. If this government really wants to show integrity it will vote in favour of this bill to demonstrate that it no longer supports giving false evidence and lying in parliament. Voting against it will send a very clear message to the electorate about what this government really stands for. We need to know if that is honesty.

I am sure that the fathers of the Labor Party would roll in their graves if they thought about the Labor Party in this House tonight and the Labor Party from 2005 that changed the rules to suit one of its own when it looked after the policy of lying in Queensland. That should not be supported any longer. We have the opportunity in this House tonight to change that law back to the way it was. It was good for 100 years before it was changed. It was not broken, but those opposites decided to fix it for one guy—a guy by the name of Nuttall—to support the act of lying in parliament and lying to the people of Queensland. How does that feel? Does it give members opposite a warm fuzzy feeling? It must make them feel really good. Nuttall is now in jail. I am sure there will be plenty who will follow him.

The people of Queensland do not trust the Labor Party anymore. The Labor Party went to the election and made many promises. After the election it made a lot more promises. Those promises were about selling the assets of Queensland. Our forefathers worked extremely hard to create assets such as the ports. Brisbane is the third busiest port in Australia. It makes a great income, but the government has decided to sell it off. It might get \$2.4 billion; the Premier told us she could get about \$4 billion. There are a lot of mistakes being made by this government. I do not know if they are just mistakes or intentional mistakes that lead to lies. Once one starts to lie it becomes contagious and spreads throughout the party. I hope we can contain it just to the Labor Party. It gets so good at it. We need to abolish lying, we need to abolish the Labor Party and we need to get on top of things for the sake of the people of Queensland.

Government members interjected.

Mr DICKSON: Those opposites continue to lie so they should be abolished. My grandfather helped start the Labor Party. He was a really proud man. Those opposites may have brought him back to life tonight. I reckon he would be rolling around in his grave. I know that it upsets the other side of the House to hear the truth, because it is the opposite to what it likes. It likes to lie. The truth is a different word. It is 180 degrees away from where those opposites want to be. Once one gets into the mud it sticks and gets deeper. The more one moves forward the deeper one gets.

Let us talk about a hospital that was promised on the Sunshine Coast. It was going to be built at Sippy Downs at a cost of \$500 million. Then there was the lie again. It moved to Kawana and grew to \$900 million. Then the lie grew a bit further.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The matter that the member is raising is not contained within the provisions of the bill. I invite him to return to the provisions of the bill currently before the House.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you for your guidance. It is like taking money out of a pensioner's pocket. The government lied about it. These people would love to live and be able to buy food and have a healthy lifestyle, but those opposite saw a bit of money in a pensioner's pocket and just jumped at it. The government took it and is going to spend it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I invite the member for a final time to return to the provisions of the bill currently before the House.

Mr DICKSON: Again I appreciate your guidance. Truth, integrity and honesty is a hard thing to live by. I know that the other side of the House does not know how to honour truth, honesty and integrity. That is why we need a royal commission. We need a gentleman by the name of Neil Laurie to draw up the terms of reference, because he is an honourable man and knows what parliament is about and he will do the right thing.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I rise to a point of order. Like everybody in this House I have listened to the use of unparliamentary language, but I find the comments of the member offensive, untrue and obnoxious and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has not made a personal reflection on the member for Keppel so there is no point of order. The member for Buderim has the call.

Mr DICKSON: As I was saying, Neil Laurie is an honest man. He is a man who I trust. I think the members on this side of the House trust him and I hope that the Labor Party trusts him. He is the one who should draw up the terms of reference for a royal commission so that this place can be gutted, so that we can find the rotting, smelling fish that created the lies. They are still here. We know they are here. They have to be found out. They have to be got rid of for the sake of Queensland.

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (8.24 pm): The bill before the House rests on the assumption that it is possible to tell with infallible certainty who is telling the truth and who is telling a lie. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell with infallible certainty who is telling a truth and who is telling a lie because nobody is infallible. The opposition is not infallible, the government is not infallible and the judges who would presumably be asked to decide this question are not infallible. Indeed, if one persists with a proposition that rests upon an assumption that one can infallibly tell who is telling a truth and who is telling a lie one puts their foot on a slippery slope that goes to a very, very dangerous place.

If it became the case that judges were routinely determining whether somebody in this House who stood up and made a speech was telling the truth or was telling a lie, I am sure that judges would do their very best to get it right. I am sure that the government would have an attitude to the decisions that the judges made. Who appoints the judges? The government. If the judges started making decisions that were inconvenient to the government of the day, what would whoever the government might be do? It would start to appoint judges who would get it more in conformity with the wishes of the government of the day. The arbiter of the truth would then become not the parliament, not the judges, but the government of the day.

That would be very bad news indeed for the opposition because the proposition that it is possible to tell with infallible certainty what is true and what is false is a proposition that has had many martyrs. Socrates was forced to drink the hemlock because he was said to have told something that was false. Yet we know that what he spoke was the truth. The Inquisition was absolutely certain that they were the infallible bearers of the truth. They were not inconsistent. They just followed things through to the logical conclusion. The people who fearlessly spoke what they believed to be the truth and said that the earth was round were persecuted by those who just knew that it was infallibly true that the earth was flat. In the 20th century the thought police of the totalitarian states of that era just knew that they were right and they were the infallible bearers of truth.

The proposition that there is somebody who can determine with infallible certainty what the truth is is one that has a long pedigree. It is astonishing and sad to hear the opposition standing up and putting forward a bill that is predicated on such a discredited and opportunistic presumption. It would be very convenient for the opposition if this legislation and the events surrounding it were all about Gordon Nuttall. It would be very convenient if it was all about a convicted criminal. But it is not about a convicted criminal. It is actually about democracy. In a democracy it is not the government, it is not the judges, it is not the auspices that determine what is true and what is false. In a democracy the people who should judge whether somebody is telling the truth or whether they are lying are, in fact, the people. The people of Queensland are the ones who should determine what the truth is. If somebody stands in this House and they say something that the people of Queensland believe to be false then the people of Queensland can cashier them. In a democracy that is the sanction that is available. That is the stimulus.

Indeed, the proposition that we have heard asserted time and again by those on the other side of the House that at the moment the law allows politicians to lie is itself untrue. It is blatantly untrue. The law does not allow that at all, because the standing orders of this House ensure that somebody who lies to the parliament will receive a sanction. They will have to resign if they happen to be a minister, and they will be sanctioned in other ways if they are not. They will also have to face an enraged electorate that will know what they have done or that believes, on the basis of the best evidence available, that

they have done something wrong. It is the judgement of the people that should be final. We should not try to invest any individual or group of individuals with the capacity to determine with infallible certainty who speaks the truth and who does not.

However, the opposition bill before the House will not primarily put politicians at risk. The proposition within the bill will apply to everybody who gives evidence before a committee of the House. If the public works committee, the public accounts committee or any other committee of this House takes testimony from a person and decides that it does not like that person, that person would be putting themselves at risk of prosecution by appearing before the committee. We might as well put a sign on the door of the parliament for any who in our own participatory way we wanted to involve in the determinations of this place warning them, 'Enter at your own risk'. That is what this would be doing.

Opposition members: Oh!

Mr WELLS: I notice that they object because they do not like it to be drawn to the attention of the world that the measure that they are introducing can be brought not against politicians but against the citizenry. Every such law that has ever been introduced has been used not primarily for the rulers, but primarily for the ruled; not primarily for the incarceration of those who are making the law but primarily for the incarceration of those people the law-makers would like to control. That is what this proposition stands for.

In his second reading speech on this bill, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that this government is constantly criticising the opposition for not understanding the separation of powers.

Mr Wilson: With good reason.

Mr WELLS: Indeed, with very good reason. While there is clear evidence that they do not understand the doctrine of the separation of powers, I lament the fact that they do not understand fundamental democratic theory. Fundamental democratic theory says that, when a man or a woman stands in a parliamentary chamber, they speak the truth fearlessly as they believe it to be the case and there is no impediment to them speaking the truth fearlessly as they believe it to be the case because there is no inquisition standing around to say, 'No, you were lying and you can go to jail.' There is no person invested with the halo of infallible certainty who can nab them for what they say in here. If they get it wrong, they face the people. Democracy is about the people. Truth is not something for mortals to determine; truth is something for reality to determine. The best approximation we can get to a judge of what is a true and what is false is the people themselves. We believe in the people. We oppose this bill not because we believe in any of the things they have suggested we believe in, but because we believe in democracy and the people.

(Time expired)

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.34 pm): The last time I looked at the record of who comprised the courts of Queensland, I saw that they were made up of mortals. They were not made up of supernatural individuals. From time immemorial, ever since human beings have established courts, those courts have been adjudicated by mortals. I am not quite sure which planet the honourable member who spoke before me is on when he talks about supernaturals. Maybe he has been watching too many supernatural programs on television and has not been gravitating very much towards earth when it comes to understanding the proposition before the parliament today.

It might be wise to consider why we are debating this issue today. This has happened because of the confluence of circumstances that is an appalling indictment and nothing but a dark stain on public administration by the Labor Party in Queensland in recent times. It goes back to 2005 when the then Minister for Health, Gordon Nuttall, was called before the parliamentary estimates committee, as all ministers are, and was asked repeatedly by the shadow minister if he was aware of any issues with regard to the lack of qualifications of overseas trained doctors.

An opposition member: Again and again and again.

Mr SPRINGBORG: He was asked again and again and again. Indeed, I understand that he was asked on more than a dozen occasions. In addition to being asked the question on more than a dozen occasions, it was also pointed out to him that section 57 of the Criminal Code contained a criminal penalty that could apply if he provided deliberately false evidence before a parliamentary committee. Notwithstanding that particular fact, then Minister Gordon Nuttall continued with the proposition that he was not aware that there were any particular issues.

We also saw the extraordinary set of circumstances where a senior departmental officer—indeed, I believe it was the deputy director-general or the director-general—was asked if the information or evidence given by the minister was correct and he said that it was not and that the minister had been briefed on the issue. He said that the then minister was aware of problems and had been briefed on issues with regard to the lack of qualifications of certain overseas trained doctors. Despite that direct contradiction, the member of parliament continued with the false proposition that he was unaware of it, even though it was brought to his attention over and over and over again that he could have been contravening then section 57 of the Queensland Criminal Code.

Therefore, let us not hear any more nonsense from members opposite about this being some sort of misadventure for a member of parliament who was ill informed or that it was a misadventure for a member of parliament who made some sort of slip that was not calculated. This was a deliberating misleading. Indeed, it was a lying to the parliamentary estimates committee that was investigating the health department's estimates.

Earlier on we saw a disgraceful performance by the Attorney-General. He sought to portray this section of the Criminal Code, which was taken out by the Labor Party and is to be brought back in if we pass this bill tonight, as some sort of antiquated proposition. In many ways the father of the current Australian Constitution was Sir Samuel Griffith. He was one of the pre-eminent legal minds of his time. He was a Chief Justice and an Attorney-General.

Mr Cripps: He was the first Chief Justice.

Mr SPRINGBORG: As the honourable member for Hinchinbrook said, he was the first Chief Justice and a Premier of Queensland. He has been acknowledged as making significant contributions to the development of the Australian Constitution, which still stands today. Many sections of that document were put forward by that honourable gentleman. That was the nature of the man. This is the person who wrote the Queensland Criminal Code, which has stood the test of time and which has not been amended very greatly since it was written and adopted by the Queensland parliament over 100 years ago. This is a person who has stood the test of time in an intellectual and a legal context—more so than any other person who has sought to stand in his shoes since then.

We have also heard a proposition tonight by the Attorney-General that former deputy premier Joan Sheldon was found to have deliberately misled the parliament. That is not true. Whoever wrote that in his speech has misled him, and I hope he has not deliberately misled this parliament. The former deputy premier was found to have inadvertently misled this parliament, as had the opposition leader of the time, Peter Beattie, and other members of parliament. The Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee simply advised that member that they should do the right thing and correct the record and actually apologise for inadvertently providing that information to the parliament which they may have believed to be true but was indeed not true. There is a very big difference between that and the proposition that somebody deliberately and maliciously in a most calculating way misled the parliament.

One member has been found to have deliberately misled the parliament and that is a former member for Ipswich West, Jack Paff. Very few people have been found to have deliberately misled a parliament in the Westminster system. Mr Paff was one of those and the parliament dealt with him. However, there is no correlation between what happened in that case with Mr Paff and what happened with Gordon Nuttall. In that case we saw the Labor Party of the time adjudicate on one of its own. It circumvented the normal process of this parliament and snuffed out the opportunity for the MEPPC to adjudicate the truth of the proposition which was put forward by the former member for Sandgate, Gordon Nuttall.

The Labor Party knew that he was guilty. It did not want to expose him, so it sought to exonerate one of its own in the most appalling display of partisanship and circumvention of that particular committee that we have seen in recent times in this parliament. Who knows what would have happened if that committee had the opportunity to adjudicate the facts of the matter and to deliberate? Who knows what sort of penalty it might have been able to impose upon that member of parliament? Members should keep in mind that the then member for Ipswich West, Mr Paff, was suspended from this parliament for 21 days.

That is why we cannot trust the Labor Party. We cannot trust the Labor Party to do the right thing by this parliament. As far as the Labor Party is concerned, it will always hold blood above principle; that is, it always holds its blood brothers above principle. That is protection of blood above principle. If it were interested in principle it would have let the MEPPC do its job—if it had wanted to properly deal with it as parliamentary contempt. That is if we believe in its proposition that it was not for an external agency such as the DPP or the courts of Queensland to adjudicate this matter. Rather than judge it itself and exonerate its mate, it should have let the MEPPC deal with the matter. However, it did not do that and therein lies the problem. When it comes to partisanship and protection of its own, the Labor Party will always revert to type. It is fundamentally in its DNA.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee also put forward another extraordinary proposition—that is, that the judges of Queensland are appointed depending upon the partisanship and the way that the government of the day sees the issues of the day. What an appalling indictment on the independence of the judiciary. What an appalling indictment of not only him as a former Attorney-General but other Attorneys in this parliament. I have never heard a proposition quite like that.

The other thing he said is: who are these people to adjudicate the truth or otherwise of what somebody has actually said? Our courts do it on a regular basis. They actually empanel jurors to look at the charge of perjury. Do honourable members know what perjury is all about? It is about telling a lie to a court. So we actually trust a panel of our peers—jurors—to make a decision on whether somebody has lied or not. With regard to that particular circumstance, does the honourable member lack

confidence in courts to be able to do that? We are saying that the courts have done that all the time, but this government does not have confidence with regard to that. We certainly cannot have confidence in this government to come into this place and to properly deal with the matters at hand. Otherwise it would have referred this issue to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee rather than exonerate one of its own.

It is very important that this legislation is passed tonight because it reinstates an essential provision of the Queensland Criminal Code. It is one which has stood the test of time, one which was developed by a pre-eminent legal mind—one of the great legal scholars of Australian history—and one which should be reinstated. As other members have said, this is a unicameral parliament. It is unique. We need to restore the reputation of our parliament, trust and integrity. These provisions will go a long way towards doing that.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (8.44 pm): I rise this evening in support of the private member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, which introduces an offence to the Criminal Code of the deliberate provision of false evidence to this parliament by honourable members. The bill establishes the offence of providing this false evidence before the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Assembly. The offence can be committed by an elected member or any other person. The offence is a crime and is punishable by seven years imprisonment.

This bill comes after the abhorrent abuse of the parliament by the then Beattie government in 2006 in which this House was used to exonerate the former member for Sandgate, Gordon Nuttall. In 2006 the then Attorney-General introduced a bill to the parliament that amended the Criminal Code to repeal section 57 of the code and remove the offence of lying to the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly. This was, of course, as a reaction to the CMC inquiry that found the former member for Sandgate had lied to an estimates committee about his knowledge of the 'Dr Death' scandal in Bundaberg. Members of the parliament have the responsibility of representing their constituency but also are accountable for the information that is provided to either the House or a committee of the Legislative Assembly.

The integrity of the government is in question now more than ever. In the last few months we have learned of the depth of corruption and cronyism that runs deep in this Labor government. Whether it is the former member for Sandgate and the corrupt payments he received and others or the appointment of certain officers in the state, this government's integrity has been compromised time and time again.

The Public Service in this state has been compromised. In the last few weeks I have found this to be the case. In dealings with various officers from a range of departments I have found that, at the very least, public servants have been gagged and instructed not to discuss any issues with non-government members of parliament unless it is arranged through the various ministerial offices. This is why, at the very least, a royal commission is needed—to look at the Queensland government and the way it manages the state and its affairs. As Wayne Goss commented on ABC's *AM* program 1 August 2009—

I think the longer any side of politics is in power the more risk there is that cobwebs will settle, and that's not a criticism of Peter Beattie; it can happen with either side of politics.

This government has set to turn around the perception that under a Labor government the accountability and integrity of government has been diminished. In August the Premier released a discussion paper *Integrity and accountability in Queensland*. In the foreword the Premier claimed that—

I want all Queenslanders to feel they have access to, and are part of, a healthy democracy in this State and I look forward to your contribution to shaping the future of integrity and accountability in Queensland.

However, when public submissions to the paper were released from the website large sections were blacked out and some were heavily censored until such time that the opposition pointed out the lack of integrity in the actual process. It cannot get even that right.

The introduction of this bill also follows a scathing indictment of the Queensland Labor government by Tony Fitzgerald earlier this year. Mr Fitzgerald commented that, after 12 years of Labor government, this state is run by mates for mates. Queenslanders were right to share the concerns of former Integrity Commissioner Gary Crooke and CMC Commissioner Robert Needham that something is seriously wrong with the way this government operates the levels of bureaucracy.

I have reviewed the integrity and accountability submissions into the corruption and cronyism of the government. There were some interesting submissions to say the least. One particular submission specifically recounted former Premier Beattie's recalling of parliament in 2005 to save the then minister for health, the former member for Sandgate, from prosecution for lying, amongst other things. His submission states—

The political culture that has grown in Queensland is, in many respects, worse than the weaknesses in institutions discussed—in the Fitzgerald report—

This in turn leads inevitably to lack of transparency, an absence of fear of detection or enforcement, poor leadership in ethics and integrity and, most importantly, the growth of a culture that either accepts, ignores or is fearful of reporting unethical conduct.

I heard the honourable Attorney-General talk in this debate tonight about a bill of rights, the upholding of the Westminster system and traditions. Do we as an opposition believe in the primacy of parliament? Of course we do. He then went on and accused the LNP of not having respect for the parliament, the people of Queensland and the Westminster system. I say to the Attorney-General that there is a distinct difference between knowingly misleading parliament and upholding the fundamental traditions of the Westminster system.

Those opposite should know that I am one of the strongest supporters in this chamber of the Westminster system and the laws of our motherland. If a politician comes into this place and deliberately misleads the House, then, yes, the politician should be held to account by the laws and responsibilities that those outside this chamber are held to account. When you look at the amendments and the wording, we are talking about a person who during an examination in the Legislative Assembly or by a committee of the Legislative Assembly knowingly gives false answer to a lawful and relevant question put before the parliament or committee.

How on earth can the Labor Party sit in government and not vote for legislation that says if this person 'knowingly gives false answer to a lawful and relevant question'? That is misleading. That is lying and deceptive behaviour. Those on the government side are voting against a piece of legislation that says it is wrong to lie to parliament; it is wrong to mislead committees knowingly. You would not expect any member of parliament, particularly ministers of the Crown, to knowingly mislead the Legislative Assembly or the Crown, and yet tonight this has been knocked back by the government. Before the election in March this year the Premier rushed through legislation—

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I want to pick up on an interjection in terms of why this legislation was introduced. The member for Keppel made a comment earlier. He said there is no point in this being introduced. That is precisely right if the government had not taken the clause out of the Criminal Code in the first place. We would not have to be debating this. I would not have to be standing up as the member for Kawana and saying to my electorate, 'I am sorry, folks; we should not lie in public life. I have been brought up on good ethics and morals, but in parliament we can get away with it.' If we expect our constituents and the public not to get away with misleading and deceptive conduct, then we should not get away with such conduct as politicians and parliamentarians in this great House.

Before the election in March this year the Premier rushed through legislation trying to catch out business donations to the LNP. How appropriate that it was the Labor Party that was caught out in not declaring the \$225,000 donation from one of its union contributors. This shows the extent to which Labor will ignore the legislation they draft and subsequently introduce. This is yet another example of how the Premier and Labor will say one thing in parliament and do the opposite during an election campaign. We saw it on 21 March this year. There was no talk of an asset fire sale. To tell me that that money is all needed to pay off the severe debts and was not considered by caucus, the Premier or the Treasurer before March 21 would be misleading—and knowingly misleading the House. We also had the fuel tax. Was that mentioned? Tonight in this chamber, only some two hours ago, we were talking about the poor pensioners of the state having rental increases. None of that was mentioned before the election. That goes to the heart of the accountability and integrity that is lacking in this government.

Recently in this place I talked about the integrity forum held at the University of the Sunshine Coast. I was told by the Attorney-General, 'Jarrod, you are most welcome to come but I really don't want you to say anything. It is for the public.' I am a member of the public. I was elected as the member for Kawana. I should be able to stand up at a university that is in my electorate and represent the people who directly elected me to do that job. To be told by the Attorney of Queensland, a minister of the Crown, in front of the Channel 9 camera crew, 'Jarrod, you are quite welcome to this open, accountable and transparent forum in your electorate, but I would prefer you not to say anything,' because it was for the three members of the public who were there is a joke!

The organisation of the Integrity and Accountability Forum was in no way, shape or form, as I said, open and accountable to the people of Queensland. The Bligh government cannot claim to be open and accountable when it does not even make the public aware of these public forums to allow Queenslanders the opportunity to have their say. The poor organisation of this event reflects the attitude that the Bligh government has towards openness and accountability in government.

It is about time that this government was accountable to all Queenslanders, regardless of which political party they may have voted for. On 9 December 2005, when the then Premier Beattie took the unprecedented step of recalling parliament, the current Premier and former deputy premier were heavily involved in the process. We have heard it on this side tonight. Who seconded the motion to say that it is okay for ministers of the Crown to knowingly mislead parliament? It was the former deputy premier—the now Premier who leads this state. At that time she labelled the former member for Sandgate 'a decent man', 'a man of integrity'. Yet he is the one who was involved in corruption and cronyism in the Queensland government.

For what it is worth, I personally believe that the word 'integrity' is thrown around far too loosely these days. Someone with integrity is surely someone true to their word. If the government were serious about transparency of government and preservation of the Westminster system traditions, it would at the very least support this bill and subsequently initiate a royal commission into Queensland government corruption and cronyism.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.54 pm): Do not mention the 'lie' word, the Attorney-General, Cameron Dick, said before. Talk about 'weaselese' and 'legalese'. It does not matter how the Attorney-General tries to contort the issue to suit his party line, this issue is about lying, and Labor's discomfort at being held to a higher standard about that fact is all too clear. The Attorney-General's contribution earlier where he rejected the state opposition's bill before the House is damning. This bill seeks to restore the provision which makes it illegal to lie to parliament—that is, deliberately misleading this parliament with false evidence. We are debating it now because of the stain on the history of this parliament when in 2005 a Labor government recalled the parliament to absolve a Labor minister, Gordon Nuttall, who faced the charge of misleading this House. Then the Labor government went further and struck those provisions from the Criminal Code the following year so no-one could be charged with knowingly misleading the House.

This provision was originally drafted by Sir Samuel Griffith—free from the political connivance that we saw with the Gordon Nuttall affair—with the consideration that parliament required the pursuit of the highest standards of probity and needed these standards embedded in the Criminal Code. What makes me so angry about Labor's dogged refusal to restore the anti-lying provision in the Criminal Code is that we all lose because of this abuse in the parliament and how it was removed. All members of parliament—past, present and future, Independent or party aligned—are maligned by the way the Criminal Code was changed by a Labor majority government and the substance of that change.

Labor members opposite may laugh it off and feign boredom about debating the issue of honesty and integrity, but we should never forget our anger and the anger of Queenslanders. We should never be silent or cease to seek the restoration of standards, and that has to be reflected with laws such as those presented here tonight by the Leader of the Opposition. However, this is a convenient denial of history by Labor as well as a denial of truth. Let us examine that history—an embarrassing history—as to the comments made by prominent Labor ministers in defending the member for Sandgate, Gordon Nuttall, who sparked this extraordinary abuse of executive power in 2005-06. Let us look at the comments of Anna Bligh, the then deputy premier and now Premier of Queensland. She said—

For those of us who are colleagues of the member for Sandgate, for those of us who have worked with him, for those of us who have sat with him around a cabinet table and know him to be a decent man—a man of integrity—this will not be easy.

She thought he was a man of integrity. Former minister Warren Pitt also attested to the good character of the member for Sandgate by saying, '... a character which those opposite sought to tarnish'. The now Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, said, 'I know the member for Sandgate well and I believe that he is a good and honest man.' There was a whole line-up of these guys ready to beatify Gordon Nuttall. Then Labor minister Tom Barton said—

... I want to express my beliefs on the honesty of a member, the member for Sandgate, whom I have known for almost 30 years. He went on in extraordinary detail about what he believed. But the contribution from Labor MP Gary Fenlon was really quite extraordinary. He said—

... the member for Sandgate is one of the greatest members who has ever entered this parliament.

The beatification of Gordon Nuttall under then Premier Beattie and then Deputy Premier Anna Bligh was foolish then, and the changes it brought upon the Criminal Code are still foolish today. But the loopy, loony arguments put forward by Labor to distract from the core issue of dishonesty continue.

Sadly, I have just heard the member for Murrumbidgee give an extraordinary contribution about why we cannot trust the state's judges—

Mr Nicholls: The psycho legal babble.

Ms SIMPSON: I take that interjection. It was extraordinary to hear a Labor member of this parliament say that we cannot trust the state's judges to determine matters of lying as he believes they are not trustworthy or capable of such a feat, though other citizens are judged by them in regard to matters of veracity all the time.

Mr WELLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The assertion the honourable member is making that I said such a thing is untrue, offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The member has asked for that to be withdrawn unreservedly.

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw. I will say that the member for Murrumbidgee's arguments are loopy and loony and the *Hansard* record will attest to what he thinks of the state's judges.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: Absolutely. Perhaps it is time that the people were asked what they think.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, I am finding it difficult to hear. I know that other members are finding it difficult to hear. The member for Maroochydore has the call.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton!

Ms SIMPSON: Perhaps it is time to ask the people of Queensland what they think and whether this provision should be restored. They have certainly been telling us, the state opposition, what they think about this government with regard to its lack of honesty. The people of Queensland were blatantly misled before the election about what this Labor government intended to do, be it in terms of the sale of assets around the state that belonged to the people of Queensland, be it the state's tax rebate on petrol and so many other issues.

I believe that if the people of Queensland were asked whether it should be illegal for parliamentarians to lie to this parliament and whether this provision should be restored to the Criminal Code they would in fact say yes, it should be. That is the trust that we have taken forward by incorporating that into the bill tonight. We believe it is essential that the stain that was brought upon this parliament is finally removed and that this provision is finally restored to the Criminal Code the way that our founding father Sir Samuel Griffith intended it to be back in the 1800s.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (9.02 pm): This bill is a key plank in reversing all that went wrong in the dying days of the Beattie Labor government. It is absolutely critical that all members see that they represent their electorates first and their parties second. The electors of Queensland have overwhelmingly demanded honesty from their representatives. Most Queenslanders believe that the Premier lied to them at the last election when she brought the election on early, despite all her claims that she would run full term.

This bill tonight seeks to replace the bill introduced by former Attorney-General Linda Lavarch where the contentious section 57 of the Queensland Criminal Code was excised from the code with sections 56 and 58. In short, this removed the offence of lying in the Legislative Assembly or to a committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Like most members, I have listened to all the speeches from members on both sides here tonight. I have listened to the opposition argument, and it refers closely to the original for Sandgate, avoiding being dealt with in a criminal court. The government argument seems to be that the government was elected by the public and it won the election fair and square, irrespective of what it claimed or did not claim at the time.

The member for Murrumba has gone one step further and said that if section 57 was left as it was then the government of the day would resort to appointing judges favourable to themselves to decide who is speaking the truth and who is not. Nobody is infallible, even judges, Aristotle discovered. He even went so far as to say, 'Enter at your own risk.' That was to parliament.

Yet here today the former Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba North, says that he did not appoint and never considered appointing any judge on anything other than merit. He refused to accept any notion put by the journalist Lion that he may have appointed a person other than on merit and that on his side nobody would do so in their position.

The member for Murrumba does not understand democratic theory nor the separation of powers. Neither theory ascribes a view in parliament that a member knowingly lies as to allow the parliament or its instruments to manage the orderly process of government. That is a very important point. Equally, under the separation of powers the judiciary is independent of the parliament and discharges its duties to implement the laws enacted by the parliament of the day.

Honourable members, we have a proven corrupt now former member of parliament, a former successor to the Leader of the Opposition at the time, ALP member from 1982, dandy, ministerial incompetent, alleged one-time plotter to dethrone Peter Beattie and now convicted criminal. 'A Labor star is born,' says Terry Sweetman in the *Courier-Mail*. He went on to say—

Warning signs were there at the very start. He is, to an extent, deniable and expendable but the ALP has to accept it not only allowed a man of dubious integrity but protected him long after his character faults were apparent and his venality was suspected.

The Bligh Labor government has the responsibility to make up for these failures of the past. It needs to step up to the plate and accept that systemic changes need to be made to restore integrity to this House. The LNP is offering the Bligh Labor government a chance to redeem itself to both its own consistency and the vast majority of Queenslanders beyond their own constituency.

In a democracy, when you are elected to govern you govern for all and decisions have to be made that might make one examine one's own conscience. This is about truth and honesty. It is about your collective conscience that we are asking you to confront. This is in stark contrast to that facile argument that has been raised by the member for Murrumba tonight.

The history of the issue, as many have stated, is that the former member for Sandgate, Mr Gordon Nuttall, made statements that he knew were untrue to a parliamentary estimates committee. The issue was about knowledge of the tragedy that unfolded in Bundaberg regarding Dr Patel. Question after question was put to the former member, now in jail for another offence committed, and he gave false testimony.

What followed was an ongoing denial, stonewalling, false statements and defiance but no admission of guilt. He claimed the higher moral ground. Honourable government members, your factional colleague adopted what is known as the Voortrekker defence. They erected and encircled the wagons against all opponents and defended their man.

Mr Watt interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: The member for Everton can explain it to his own members. Who cares whether he was a proven liar? It got worse. I was here on the famous night when, just as Judas denied his knowledge of Jesus to the Romans, I was stopped over and over by the Speaker as he called order and asked me to withdraw my statements. The member, rose in lapel, sat there surrounded by adoring members, some of whom are here tonight. Do honourable members know what I said? I said that Mr Nuttall, the former member for Sandgate, had failed in his capacity as an elected member of parliament to ensure his constituents, and the words were 'he treated us with contempt'. These were the words demanded to be withdrawn.

Furthermore, the integrity of the committee process was directly challenged, compromised and impeded by these actions. The decision to repeal sections 56, 57 and 58 of the Criminal Code was viewed by the community with abject horror. The Premier stormed into the House later on and demanded to be heard as he gave an emotional, rambling discussion of what was to be done.

What was done was nothing short of vandalism and it is akin to mob violence. It is basically allowing people to engage in abhorrent behaviour. Many speakers tonight have described what Sir Samuel Griffith originally wrote into the code in 1880. For those who do not know, it was based on an Italian code. I repeat what Griffith said at the time. He said—

... the actions were taking us on a lawless violent path and you are doing an act which is not a bit more justified in the eyes of the law than would be an act of a mob of people rushing into the House and driving honourable members out of it.

He was speaking about former Premier John Douglas being found guilty of contempt by the corrupt and later disgraced Premier McIlwraith. Douglas's offence was telling the truth in giving evidence to the committee. I am sure the member for Toowoomba North knows exactly what I am talking about. This current administration has no moral authority if it does not reverse this terrible decision that was made on 25 May 2006 by the then Attorney-General. What has occurred subsequently regarding the issue of blackmailing, bribery and proven corruption by the former member for Sandgate demands these critical sections be put back in the Criminal Code. The CMC inquiry confirmed this.

Do members know what argument the then Attorney-General and the former Premier made at the time? They referred to the powers, rights and immunities which are collectively referred to as parliamentary privilege. They retreated back to article 9 of the United Kingdom Bill of Rights 1688. This was a detailed but lopsided argument that completely ignored Griffith's original motives when he modified the Italian Criminal Code to include the relevant section that was inclusive of parliamentarians speaking at committees. He referred to it and 130 years later we are now understanding the integrity of this process.

Irrespective of the Commonwealth not including section 57 in the laws, the section was included for the very reasons that we are facing tonight and which are clearly apparent. The primacy argument of the House of Commons, federal houses of parliament and other states and territories cannot be sustained. It was wrong in law and it is morally wrong. The member for Southern Downs was quite right in describing the legislation as a licence to lie. Griffith had great foresight and stands in great esteem throughout our nation as the founder of the Federation. Who amongst those opposite truly believes not only that he was wrong but that they know better? Rudyard Kipling had some wonderful lines from his poem *If*—

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies

...

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;

...

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,

...

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it

Contrary behaviour leads to inheriting nothing. The community of Queensland stands in judgement of you. Will you fail them when you are being asked to do so?

Debate, on motion of Dr Douglas, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.12 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Gladstone Regional Council, Potable Water

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—LNP) (9.12 pm): This morning the Premier said water is not a luxury; water is a necessity, and the Premier almost got it right. A more accurate statement is potable water is not a luxury; potable water is a necessity. This is a message that I hope that the councillors and the mayor of the Gladstone Regional Council hear: potable water is not a luxury; potable water is a necessity. The Gladstone Regional Council has failed to provide potable water to the residents of Bororen. It has been acknowledged that residents must boil the water that comes out of their taps.

It is also likely that the Gladstone Regional Council has failed to provide potable water to Miriam Vale as well. This is an indisputable fact. I had a conversation with Mayor George Creed who has publicly admitted that residents of Bororen must boil the water that comes out of their taps. The question that needs to be answered by the mayor of Gladstone and also the Queensland health minister is how long have the residents of Bororen—the families and the children—been allowed and forced to drink contaminated unpotable water? What have he and the councillors done to protect the children and families of Bororen and Miriam Vale?

Today I spoke to a Bororen gentleman whose name is Tommy Varker. Tommy says that he is 70 years old and retired in 2001 as a plumber. He was the council employee who was in charge of the Bororen and Miriam Vale water supply for about a decade. Tommy says that he is going to go to a public meeting this Monday evening and he is going to tell the truth about what happened at the old Miriam Vale shire council and the new Gladstone council. In summary, he says that Bororen residents have been drinking contaminated water for seven years. That happened because both councils have failed to properly maintain, manage and follow reporting procedures for both town water supplies. This is a very serious public health issue. The fix will be easy: just properly maintain the water treatment plants.

Tommy has agreed to go public with his allegations and will speak to the meeting on Monday evening. I invite the councillors of the Gladstone Regional Council to come to the meeting and also representatives from the health and education departments. I thank the health minister and the education minister for their cooperation and their actions to date, but I must stress: the residents of Bororen need their water tested. They want independent testing of that water. The community does not trust the council to provide those tests. There are a number of key questions to be answered. First and foremost, when did the Gladstone Regional Council first find out that the council's drinking water was contaminated?

(Time expired)

Deception Bay Conservation Park

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (9.15 pm): In the sunshine of last Tuesday morning against the backdrop of 130 hectares of mangrove wetlands, the Minister for Sustainability stood by the high-water mark of the Moreton Bay Marine Park camouflaged by a late blossoming wattle and announced the designation of the Deception Bay Conservation Park. It was the culmination of six years of negotiation and preparation—maybe even seven—but in that moment the minister delivered to the people of Deception Bay a rare prize. Deception Bay now has the distinction of having a conservation park named after itself. Many of my constituents have little personal wealth. Many of them have experienced more than their fair share of life's adversities, yet now they have something nobody else has—a conservation park named after their own suburb. They now have in their backyard taking their name—

Ms Jones: They've also got a great member of parliament!

Mr WELLS: I thank the minister for her kind remarks and the feelings are mutual. They have in their backyard a priceless monument to them and to the natural heritage of our continent. The Deception Bay Conservation Park is home to a wide variety of fauna, including migratory birds. Some come from as far away as Siberia and the Arctic Circle. In ecological terms, the park is part of the internationally listed Ramsar wetlands area, and if it is not sufficiently pristine by our standards to be officially part of that the Arctic tern does not know that.

I have a vision for the Deception Bay Conservation Park, and that is that it will become part of the lifestyle of the people of Deception Bay and our region. Part of the arrangements with the Redcliffe Seaside Estates that secured the land for the people was \$1 million which can now be used for boardwalks and bird hides which will allow people to enter the park and observe the wildlife. Again, I thank the minister for asserting that those funds are going to be used for that purpose. In addition, I hope that some enterprising person will see the opportunity to arrange boat trips through the everglades at high tide.

A number of residents of the bay have decided to join a Friends of the Deception Bay Conservation Park Association which will have its inaugural meeting soon. We cannot have too many Friends of the Deception Bay Conservation Park and I encourage all interested people to contact my office. But the government and the minister have now delivered on their promise to provide the conservation park. It now belongs to the people now and forever. It is up to the people of Deception Bay now to take possession of their new estate and ensure that it realises its full potential as an icon of our community.

(Time expired)

Indooroopilly Electorate, Traffic Congestion

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (9.18 pm): One of the greatest challenges facing my electorate of Indooroopilly is traffic congestion. This has become a nightmare, especially for those residents of Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood, Corinda and Tennyson who daily battle the gridlock along Oxley Road and Honour Avenue as they attempt to travel across the Walter Taylor Bridge. This is particularly difficult in the morning peak period when those driving to work combined with students being driven to school and those attempting to get to the University of Queensland all compete to travel north across the bridge. While Walter Taylor Bridge, Oxley Road and Honour Avenue are the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council, a solution to the issue of congestion must see local, state and federal governments working together. The state government has a role to play and cannot wash its hands of the issue. Sadly, that appears to be exactly what the Bligh government has done.

While its South East Queensland Regional Plan has targeted areas of my electorate for high density, including 20-storey residential towers, the Bligh government says that the consequences of that growth are not its problem. When I asked the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning what plans he had to deal with the extra pressure put on Oxley Road and Honour Avenue from the impact of those density targets that are outlined in the South East Queensland Regional Plan, his only response was to say that that is a problem for the Brisbane City Council. So although the Bligh government wants to cram more people into Brisbane—and pack more people into my electorate—it does not feel any responsibility for the consequences of those additional residents on traffic congestion.

Unfortunately, this is not the only example of the state government dismissing the issue of traffic congestion in my electorate, and especially south of the Walter Taylor Bridge. The transport minister has already ruled out any additional park-and-ride spaces at the Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood train stations in my electorate or at the Corinda station in the neighbouring seat of Mount Ommaney. The failure to provide adequate park-and-ride facilities at these train stations is a significant impediment to encouraging greater use of public transport by Brisbane commuters. It is a disincentive to those looking to get out of their cars and use public transport, and every car we can get off the road before it gets to the Walter Taylor Bridge helps ease traffic congestion.

Unfortunately, the Bligh government is not committed to looking for solutions to deal with traffic congestion in my electorate. It seems only intent on creating additional challenges. I challenge the Bligh government to work harder to deal with the issue of congestion in my electorate.

Tipplers South Stradbroke Island Resort

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (9.21 pm): Gold Coasters are not happy with the Gold Coast City Council's expenditure of \$7 million of ratepayers' money to purchase and shut down the popular and iconic Tipplers South Stradbroke Island Resort. Gold Coasters were not given notice of the council's intention to purchase the resort, Gold Coasters were not consulted on the council's reasons for purchasing it and Gold Coasters are appalled that six months has passed since the resort closed its doors and nothing—nothing—has been put to the community about the Gold Coast City Council's plans for the site and the proposed costs to implement such plans.

Furthermore, the Gold Coast City Council has not revealed how much ratepayers' money the council is spending on the security of the site, the lease fees for the perpetual lease and the costs involved in running the kiosk for the few visitors who now visit the deserted island. Gold Coasters are outraged, having seen recent photos of the condition of the island obtained by and published in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that showed that the resort has been left in a mess. The council could have kept the resort open for locals and visitors while it took its time to decide what it is going to do with the site. Thirty-two locals were employed at the resort, providing the friendly, laid-back, affordable holiday experience for which the resort was so famous. Thirty-two locals lost their jobs during a time of economic crisis.

The local councillor for division 3 would have people think that the resort in its day was a hub for undesirable activities, excessive drinking and violence. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The resort's manager is a well-known Gold Coast identity who ran a friendly, popular, affordable holiday resort for working families, generations of Gold Coast visitors and international tourists to enjoy. The resort had established an excellent working relationship with the Gold Coast Water Police to proactively

minimise problem behaviour. In fact, many people stayed at the resort because of the policing presence and the rapport that the police had with holiday-makers. In addition, the resort had a liquor licence that regulated the consumption of alcohol in the resort. So I ask: where was the council getting this advice from?

I have heard that the Gold Coast City Council and the division councillor have been advising Gold Coasters that the state government forced them to purchase the resort. I have never heard such hogwash. The Gold Coast City Council got this decision wrong and the community wants to hear their admission of this. I call on the Gold Coast City Council to publicly reveal the costs that are being spent on the Tipplers site and the plans for its future and I call on the Gold Coast City Council to surrender the perpetual lease to the state to reduce the cost of this debacle to ratepayers, or return Tipplers resort to its former glory.

Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.23 pm): This year Queensland celebrates its 150th birthday. Also, 150 years ago the rabbit was introduced into Australia. I want to speak about the proposal to abolish the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board, which covers most of the southern end of the Beaudesert electorate. Unfortunately, the board is now in limbo as we are waiting for the report to come down. I think the proposal is environmentally irresponsible and it will also have a huge impact on the landowner, the food producers and the consumer.

Currently the board employs 12 full-time employees and five temporary employees. It covers 550 kilometres of fencing, 150 kilometres of which lies within state and federal land. Yet it does not get a brass razoo from this state government. The state government has put a proposal to abolish that board, which has dedicated its time over the past 116 years to maintain and preserve that fence. Over the past week I have met with some third- and fourth-generation sons and daughters—people who dedicate all their time to maintaining this fence. All they ask for is \$12,000 per annum to reimburse them for the cost of their fuel. Of course, their time is given for free.

Unfortunately, again local government has been given the bill and the eight surrounding councils will have to fund over \$1.2 million for that board to continue the way it is going. The board also has a five-year work plan from 2009 to 2014 set in place and has strategic measures to ensure that this fence protects both New South Wales and Queensland. The fence keeps the ticks out of New South Wales for the cattle there and it also stops the rabbits from coming into Queensland. It is essential that this board remains in place. I implore the minister to make sure that respect is given to a board that has dedicated so many years to ensure the safety of New South Wales and Queensland.

I refer to a report titled *Blueprint for fighting Queensland's over-regulation*. Funnily enough, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland had to produce this document. Unfortunately, for a government that boasts of continual reform, Queensland's 70,000 pages of regulation are the greatest of any state in Australia. That is where the government should be focusing its attention—streamlining to create efficiencies. That is where the government should be focusing its attention, rather than abolishing boards that are tireless in their effort and energy and save this government millions and millions of dollars.

If the board is abolished, it will be a slap in the face for all the generations of people who have dedicated their time to ensure safety for food producers, for landowners and also for the environment, because if one of those female rabbits slips through the fence and finds a happy friend then 12 months later the offspring of those rabbits can reproduce up to 250 rabbits in a year. So this is a very serious issue. I would ask the minister to dedicate time to cutting red tape. This government has to start looking at cutting red tape in the right areas.

Children's Safety Kit

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.26 pm): This morning I had the opportunity to attend the launch of Children's Safety Australia's Children's Safety Kit at the Oxley Police Academy. Present at the event were Acting Commissioner Ian Stewart, Denise and Bruce Morcombe, the director and founder of Children's Safety Australia, Kim Jackson, and many of the volunteers who set up the organisation in April last year.

Children's Safety Australia Inc.—or CSA—has been active in promoting children's safety messages since its inception. It has provided numerous free community awareness workshops, established a website, distributed quarterly e-newsletters and, more recently, developed a range of children's safety resources. That is a lot of work undertaken in a 12-month period for an organisation that is made up entirely of volunteers.

As the local member for Kim and Steve Jackson, I was pleased to support CSA in its application for a Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant to develop and distribute 1,500 children's safety kits to Queensland primary schools in September last year. I was thrilled to learn that the organisation was successful in receiving this grant in the second round of offers in June this year. As Kim mentioned at

the launch, it is not always easy to be the recipient of a grant such as this, and I believe that a lot of hard work went into their application. Certainly, everything that this organisation does is for the benefit of the community and specifically for the education, safety and wellbeing of our kids.

In setting up the department of child safety a number of years ago, the Queensland government has proven its commitment to enhancing child safety and wellbeing. Through supporting organisations such as CSA through the available grants, we are together achieving this important outcome. There were a number of schoolchildren present, along with their teachers and parents, at the launch. I am happy to say that many schools have made good use of the children's safety kit by delivering the four lessons contained in the kits and by distributing the resources to students and parents, as outlined in the kit's instructions.

Primary school age children are among the most vulnerable of our community to the risk of victimisation. Many protective adults are unaware of effective children's safety information, often relying on the well-known stranger danger message, not realising that known people pose a far more likely threat.

The children's safety kit project aims to raise the awareness of four key children's safety messages: I am special, so are you—to build a healthy self esteem and encourage respect and empathy for others; safety is my right—to identify and effectively respond to potentially unsafe situations and environments including bullying; my body belongs to me—to identify, prevent and stop all forms of abuse; I can get help—to access help from trusted adults and relevant organisations. All children's organisations representatives in attendance were encouraged to work with CSA to achieve—

(Time expired)

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Hospital

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.30 pm): On Friday, 11 September the long-awaited and desperately needed state-of-the-art Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary hospital was officially opened much to the delight of animals and humans alike and to warm applause from a devoted local community. In the past 12 months the rickety old facility treated a record 4,500 injured wildlife and was literally falling apart at the seams. I know full well the struggles, the dedication and the considerable skills of staff and volunteers. I am also aware of the obstacles, especially financial ones, that had to be overcome.

This was a dream many years in the making. No-one carried the dream more uppermost in their mind than resident veterinary surgeon, Michael Pyne. To Michael's credit and that of the entire Currumbin Sanctuary team, led by the sanctuary CEO and the President of the National Trust, their determination was absolute. The hospital was made possible by generous donors, but I am very angry to say that the state government has not contributed one single cent towards the running of our sanctuary nor to this important facility to treat ill and injured wildlife. Shamelessly, the Premier used our sanctuary for a publicity stunt two days before the last election. I shall remain steadfast in my quest to lobby for state government funding for our beloved sanctuary.

There is no doubt our koala population is under threat as a result of rapid urbanisation and development in South-East Queensland. I am keen to do what I can to raise awareness to protect this unique Australian marsupial. The recent opening of the much needed wildlife hospital has placed the spotlight on the plight of our native animals and creatures who are subjected to increasing danger from human encroachment into their shrinking habitats. These vulnerable mammals are fighting to survive and I urge all honourable members to get behind the campaign by koala advocacy groups to make sure our councils and the state government take urgent steps to safeguard their habitats.

I have noticed a reduction in the number of koalas in my own acreage neighbourhood where it was once not uncommon to see them. Most nights I hear a lonely male koala grunting out his mating call to no avail. This is not surprising when figures reveal a 20-fold increase of wild koalas requiring medical attention in the past eight years.

On National Koala Day at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary on Friday, 25 September I had the exquisite pleasure of officially naming a female koala joey after placing a successful and high bid at a corporate fundraising event earlier in the year. I named her Yani-Colleen and she is a real cutie at eight and a half months of age. I chose Yani because it means peaceful and Colleen after my mother who passed away during my teens and means young female.

As honourable members have heard, it has been a busy time for Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. The Queensland Heritage Council has entered it in the Queensland Heritage Register after a nomination from the National Trust of Queensland. I urge honourable members to come and visit us soon. Members can come and feed the lorikeets for free and show their support for our Green Guardian program.

Undurba State Primary School Musical

Ms O'NEILL (Kallangur—ALP) (9.32 pm): The Queensland government's \$4 million Q150 community funding program offered grants between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to communities to help them mark Queensland's anniversary in ways that were meaningful to them. In the case of Undurba State Primary School that meant staging a theatrical production that explored the history of Queensland through music, drama and dance by using a grant of \$2,469 given to the Parents and Citizens Association.

Queensland—the musical traces the history of Queensland from European encounters with Indigenous people, through the convict era and the shearers years to the modern day via an inspired medium of time travel disks. The musical traces Queenslanders and how we have become who we are from 1859 to today. What a great way for young people to learn about their history and enjoy every minute of it.

Alex, Kim, Sam and Jo take us on a journey through our history by using cooperation and time travel disks provided by a very mature Mrs Fletcher. Various famous and infamous characters appeared and made our history real. Three narrators in the form of a dingo, a sheep and a bull ensured that we followed the trail of the travellers and appreciated the events and activities. It was written by teacher and director Nicole Christian, choreographed by teacher Fiona Wake and the event was coordinated and also directed by Sandy Symes.

More than 40 year 6 and 7 students, and the year 4 and 5 students participating in the supporting choir, could not wait to learn their lines for the musical. The students were chosen by the simple method of advertising for interested students and all those who applied got a role. It was a great play supported by teachers, students and parents, with parents making costumes and selling tickets.

All of the participants were fabulous, but I must mention the narrators Shaz the sheep, Daz the dingo and Baz the bull. They were a perfect foil to the historical portrayals. Shaz and Daz were the perfect straight players for the comedic talents of Baz, who I am sure we will see on the stage before too long. Congratulations to all three.

The standard was really high and it was easy to forget that this performance was put on by such young people from a primary school. The musical was funny, well-scripted and choreographed, with great music and handled significant events in our history sensitively and, where appropriate, with great humour. I learnt a lot about our history and about our region. I am sure their principal, Mark Hunter, was extremely proud. I congratulate Mark and everyone at Undurba on a very enjoyable evening.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Mark who has been officially dubbed the world's best public speaker. Mr Hunter recently won the prestigious title at the 2009 Toastmasters International Speech Contest in Connecticut, United States. Undurba's motto is 'aim for the best'. It is a great school and it certainly achieves its aim.

Faith Baptist Christian School

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.35 pm): On Saturday evening I had the privilege of attending the 25th anniversary of the Faith Baptist Christian School in my electorate. Our three daughters attended the Faith Baptist Christian School. It offers a faith based education from prep to year 12. Over the years there has been only a handful of principals. Alan Sears was the inaugural principal and has assisted with electives throughout his years. Although he is quite frail at the moment he has been a wonderful and positive contributor to that school. Ernie Trusedale and Lexie Bachmann were the other principals while our kids attended that school. The current principal is Chris McPhail. Pastors such as, again, Alan Sears, Robin Davis and Tony Sullivan have provided a service much like chaplaincy in the state schools; a welcoming ear to students who want to talk and need a willing listener to problem solve.

One of the longest serving teachers has been Mrs Jones. There have been quite a number of teachers who have been graduates of the school, went on to get teaching degrees and who have returned to the school to pass on not only their educational knowledge but also their faith based values. Monitors at the school are similar to our teacher aides and there have been a large number of monitors who have contributed in a paid capacity. There have also been quite a number of volunteers who have added to the quality education at the school.

The core curriculum has a heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It is a self-paced educational system. Students do not progress to the next module of education until they have mastered the module that they are currently learning. In the first three years the emphasis is very critically, but not solely, on literacy and numeracy because it is seen that that is the basis for education into the future. It offers science, history, IT, geography and a broad range of educational streams, but there is also a heavy emphasis on sport, music, craft and platform—or performance.

When the school first started it was not a recognised curriculum, but any students who wanted to go through to tertiary education were able to do so. There is currently no problem in that regard. I congratulate the school on 25 years of sound education based on faith and values and I wish them a happy future and another 25 years of successful education.

Everton Electorate, NAPLAN Results

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (9.38 pm): This year there has been an incredible amount of interest shown in the issue of literacy and numeracy amongst our students and within our schools. I am a very firm supporter of the importance of literacy and numeracy as the real building blocks of education for all children. Also I am a firm supporter of the various initiatives that the Bligh government has underway to improve the literacy and numeracy achievements of Queensland students.

In particular I would like to mention some of the outstanding results that schools in the electorate of Everton have achieved in this year's NAPLAN test. We were all a little disappointed with the results from last year's tests and a considerable effort was put in by the government, schools, teachers, teacher aides and other school staff to lift the results this year. I am pleased to report that, in the schools in the electorate of Everton, some of those efforts are bearing fruit.

At Albany Creek State High School in the year 9 numeracy results, 98 per cent of students achieved above the national benchmark, which was up from 95 per cent in 2008. At the Albany Creek State School over 90 per cent of students achieved above the national benchmark across all measures and across all year levels, with year 3 reading at 97 per cent, which was up from 91 per cent. At Albany Hills State School the year 7 group achieved a staggering 99 per cent above the national benchmark on reading, grammar and numeracy. At All Saints Catholic School at Albany Creek, in the year 3 level, 100 per cent or 99 per cent of students achieved above the national benchmark on all five measures.

At Eatons Hill State School over 90 per cent of students achieved above the national benchmark across all measures and across all year levels, with year 3 recording a great reading result of 98 per cent of students achieving above the national benchmark, which was up from 91 per cent last year. At Everton Park State High School, for year 9 numeracy over 90 per cent of students achieved above the national benchmark, which was up from 79 per cent last year. At Everton Park State School huge improvements were made in each year 5 measure, led by numeracy which was at 94 per cent, up from 77 per cent. My time will run out before I can list all of the schools in the electorate. Hopefully, in the future I will have an opportunity to talk about the schools from 'M' onwards.

To assist those students who are struggling with their literacy and numeracy, this year one of the big reforms has been the introduction of new literacy and numeracy summer schools, which perversely began in the September school holidays. Last week the education minister and I had the great fortune to visit the summer school conducted at the Mitchelton State School, just outside the boundaries of the electorate of Everton. I was really impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm shown by the teachers and students alike. One would think that students would resist the idea of giving up a week of their school holidays to learn more about literacy and numeracy, but their reaction was wonderful. I am sure they will benefit from that education into the future.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.41 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszcuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson